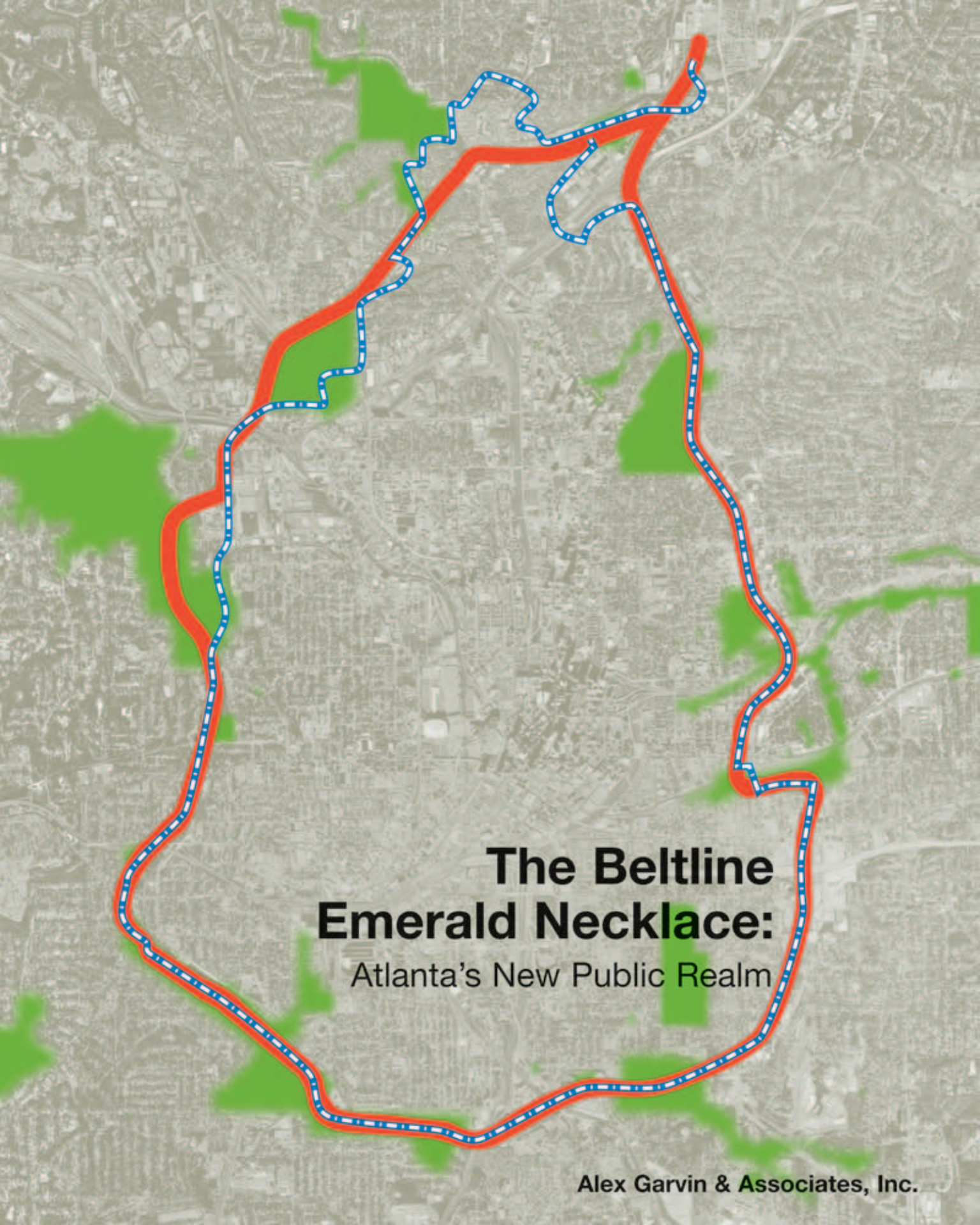

The Beltline Emerald Necklace:

Atlanta's New Public Realm

Alex Garvin & Associates, Inc.

The Beltline Emerald Necklace:

Atlanta's New Public Realm

Prepared for The Trust for Public Land
by
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December 15, 2004

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This report is dedicated to
Frederick Law Olmsted

THE TRUST for PUBLIC LAND

CONSERVING LAND FOR PEOPLE

Atlanta has less park acreage than 85% of similar cities in America.* As a critical part of The Trust for Public Land's core mission of conserving land for people to enjoy as parks and ensuring livable communities for generations to come, we began over three years ago to work to increase public greenspace acreage in the city. These efforts became more intense in the Spring of 2004, as we focused more attention on the Atlanta Beltline concept.

We quickly came to realize two important things: 1) the Atlanta Beltline affords a unique opportunity to create major new parks connected to each other and to existing parks via the green corridor of the refurbished railway rights-of-way, and 2) both new and enhanced parks along the route of the Beltline will become the focal points for new economic development—including affordable housing—as Atlanta reinvents itself and finds new life around the same railway infrastructure that fed the city's first economic life for large parts of the 19th and 20th centuries.

In May, we embarked on an analytical process designed to more clearly define the greenspace and development opportunities of the Beltline. We created a Beltline Greenspace Steering Committee comprised of representatives of neighborhoods, governmental entities and non-profit organizations to assist us in our efforts to define the greenspace future of Atlanta. Informal discussions with nationally-known urban planner Alexander Garvin led to serious consultations regarding a more formal role for him and his team.

Thanks to the generosity and foresight of the Arthur M. Blank Family Foundation, the Kendeda Fund, and the Morgens West Foundation, we hired Mr. Garvin and his team in July to begin full-time investigation and analysis of the Beltline greenspace challenges and opportunities. Over the past few months, the Garvin team consulted regularly with The Trust for Public Land's Georgia staff and the Beltline Greenspace Steering Committee. The Garvin group also worked closely with EDAW, Inc. and its team of consultant companies hired by the Atlanta Development Authority to produce a parallel and complementary effort—the Beltline Feasibility Study.

The result of this collaborative effort among interested citizens and experts gives us all a good foundation upon which to proceed with the next steps in planning and implementing a unique new vision of Atlanta. While we do not propose that the work represented here answers all the questions or solves all the challenges of creating the Beltline and its associated parks, we believe that this study is a good beginning.

As with all compendiums of information of this type, the facts assembled for this report were collected at specific moments in time, and these facts may change as circumstances evolve over time. We hope that you will recognize this inherency and grant Mr. Garvin and his team appropriate leniency in this regard. The Garvin team sought input from a variety of sources in preparing this report, and a collaborative dialogue must continue that involves even more citizens, organizations and governmental officials.

Over the coming months and years, The Trust for Public Land will continue working to assist the city and its citizens in the effort to create new parkland that will enhance the quality of life for all of us, and we hope that future generations of Atlantans will continue to benefit from our work in the decades ahead.

James Langford, Georgia State Director
The Trust for Public Land

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* See pages 1-2 of the attached report.

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December 15, 2004

James Langford
Georgia State Director
Trust for Public Land
1447 Peachtree Street, NE Suite 601
Atlanta, Georgia 30309

Dear Jim,

We present to The Trust for Public Land *The Beltline Emerald Necklace: Atlanta's New Public Realm,* a comprehensive plan for the development of 2,544 acres.

Frederick Law Olmsted produced similar reports for park boards across the country during the nineteenth century. These reports and the parks that emerged from them are the inspiration and the model for *The Beltline Emerald Necklace: Atlanta's New Public Realm*. Olmsted always began his work by examining the "capabilities and the limitations of the site." As you will see, we have followed his lead.

The team that prepared this report spent weeks searching for properties that could be reused as parks. It scoured maps, aerial photographs, and property records. Geographic Information Systems (GIS) maps and databases were used to determine ownership, land values, and other documented features along the Beltline, and to conduct spatial analyses based on proximity between key features of the landscape. Several members of the team flew in a helicopter in order to understand and appreciate fully the corridor's relationship with both the surrounding communities and downtown. And after countless site visits, Ryan Gravel and James Schroder hiked, climbed, and even crawled through kudzu-covered ridges along the entire 20-mile Beltline right-of way.

We believe this plan provides Atlanta with good choices. Once those choices are made, however, substantial additional work will be required to bring them to fruition. As the various components of the plan are executed, each will acquire a more specific development strategy based on detailed analysis of changing local conditions and the experience gained from other Beltline developments. Although considerably more work needs to be done to implement any of the recommendations in *The Beltline Emerald Necklace: Atlanta's New Public Realm*, the fundamental choices are within reach. That work can and should begin immediately.

Sincerely,

Alexander Garvin

Acknowledgements

In preparing *The Beltline Emerald Necklace: Atlanta's New Public Realm*, Alex Garvin & Associates has been helped by countless generous Atlantans without whom this work would have been impossible. We have had the good fortune to have the advice and counsel of Barbara Faga and the team of analysts working on the Beltline TAD study. The list of people who have given us assistance is far too long to print. We would, however, like to thank:

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- Greg Giornelli
- Tina Arbes

City of Atlanta
- Luz Borrero
- David Edwards
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- Robert Hunter
- James Shelby

ADA Beltline Tax Allocation District Steering Committee
- Barney Sims
- Carl Patton
- Ed McBrayer
- Mtamanika Youngblood
- Peggy Harper

ADA Beltline Tax Allocation District Study Team
- EDAW
  - Barbara Faga
  - Fredalyn Frasier
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  - Stanford Harvey
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- Debbie McCown

Tunnell-Spangler-Walsh
- Alycen Whiddon
- Laura Kraul

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TPL Beltline Greenspace Steering Committee

James Langford, Trust for Public Land, Chair

Tina Arbes

Wayne Cary

George Dusenbury

Barbara Faga

Andrew Feiler

Greg Giornelli

Angie Graham

Ryan Gravel

Margaret Gray

Kevin Green

Peggy Harper

May B. Hollis

Garry Long

Ed McBrayer

Debbie McCown

Jim Morgens

Andrew Schock

Cathy Woolard

ADA Beltline Tax Allocation District Steering Committee

Co-Chairs
Carl Patton, President of Georgia State University
Barney Simms, Senior Vice President at the Atlanta Housing Authority

Members
Cathy Woolard—Friends of the Beltline and former City Council president
Renay Blumenthal—Senior Vice President, Metro Atlanta Chamber of Commerce
Peggy Harper—President, Atlanta Planning Advisory Board (APAB)
Ed McBrayer—Executive Director, The PATH Foundation
Charles Palmer—Partner, Troutman Sanders
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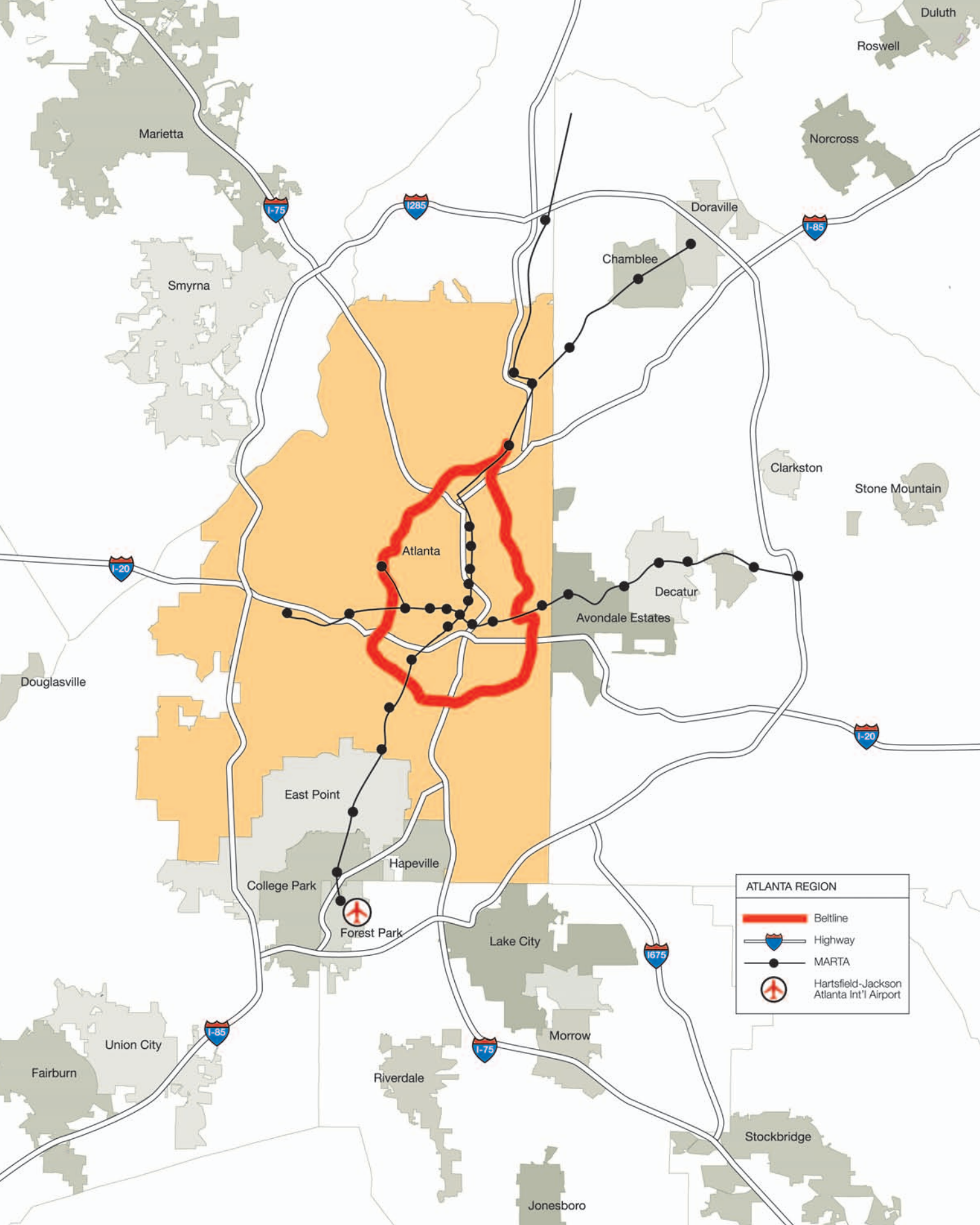
Janis Ware—Executive Director, SUMMECH Community Development Corporation
Jim Young—President and CEO, Citizens Trust Bank
Mtamanika Youngblood—Community Development Consultant, Historic District Development Corporation


Duluth
Roswell
Marietta
Norcross
I-75
I285
Doraville
I-85
Chamblee
Smyrna
Clarkston
Stone Mountain
Atlanta
I-20
Decatur
Avondale Estates
Douglasville
I-20
East Point
Hapeville
College Park
Forest Park
Lake City
I675
Union City
I-85
Fairburn
Morrow
I-75
Riverdale
Stockbridge
Jonesboro
ATLANTA REGION
Beltline
Highway
MARTA
Hartsfield-Jackson
Atlanta Int'l Airport

Executive Summary

The Beltline Emerald Necklace is a public realm framework around which 21st Century Atlanta will grow and prosper. By tying together proposed and existing trails, the 23-mile-long Beltline Trail will provide every resident of the city with strolling, jogging, rollerblading, and cycling opportunities unequaled anywhere in the country. By tying together 46 neighborhoods with each other and with three new MARTA stations, the 20-mile-long Beltline Transit system will provide access to every major destination in Atlanta, including the thirteen jewels that make up the 2,544-acre Emerald Necklace:

4 Expanded Park Jewels

- Enota Park (expanded from .3 acres to 10 acres)
- Maddox Park (expanded from 52 acres to 114 acres)
- Ardmore Park (expanded from 2 acres to 8 acres)
- Piedmont Park (expanded from 185 acres to 217 acres)

4 New Park Jewels

- 65-acre Peachtree Creek Park
- 2-acre Holtzclaw Park
- 63-acre North Avenue Park
- 204-acre Waterworks Park

5 Mixed-Use Jewels

- 87-acre Hulsey Yards (40 acres open space)
- 215-acre Boulevard Crossing (108 acres open space)
- 378-acre Murphy Crossing (189 acres open space)
- 49-acre Simpson Road (7 acres open space)
- 579-acre Bellwood Lake (434 acres open space)

Altogether, the Beltline Emerald Necklace will add 1,401 acres of new parkland to 613 acres of parkland currently along the Beltline. In addition to these 2,014 acres of parkland, the plan proposes an additional 530 acres for mixed-use, public/private developments, three of which will grow around new MARTA stations.

Most of the property that will become the Beltline Emerald Necklace is vacant, abandoned, or underutilized. However, two sites, the CSX Hulsey freight yard and the Bellwood Quarry, are still intensively used. The Hulsey freight yard, only one and one-half miles from downtown Atlanta, would be far more valuable used for something other than shipping containers. Similarly, long before the Vulcan Material Company's lease on Bellwood Quarry expires in 2034, the site will become more valuable as a development site. This report proposes that it become a new lake, surrounded by parkland and new residences.

The Beltline Emerald Necklace provides Atlanta with an opportunity which far exceeds that of any major American city: to create a city-wide system of parks and transit, to create stronger, more attractive communities, and to actively shape a new and improved public realm framework that will positively impact residents' quality of life for generations to come.

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A 20-mile-long opportunity exists in Atlanta: a belt of railroad rights-of-way that circles through the city, two miles from downtown.

Chapter 1

Creating a Great Public Realm

The quality of life of a great city is determined by the character of its public realm: its streets and squares, its transportation systems and public buildings, and its parks. Here the citizens of a city encounter one another, move around, shop, do business, play, or just wander.

When people think of a city, they conjure an image of this public realm. We remember the streets of New York, the squares of Savannah, the canals of Venice and the Boulevards of Paris. A city's parks are the jewels that make a public realm sparkle, and great parks are the pride of any great city. Just imagine the diminished luster of New York without Central Park or Chicago without its lakeshore parks.

Atlanta's booming growth has proved to be an enormous success, but the city's public realm has not experienced equal expansion. The region is expected to grow from 5 million to 7.4 million residents in the next 25 years, yet the City of Atlanta now offers only 7.8 acres of parkland per thousand residents—less than half the 16.2 acre average of U.S. cities (see Appendix A)[1]. This deficit in parkland will only increase as Atlanta's population grows. Expanding that public realm has long been a priority of Atlanta's civic leaders, but the obstacles have been formidable: massive increases in parkland often come at great expense, with hundreds of millions of dollars of public money, demolition of tens of thousands of homes, displacement of thousands of jobs, and substantial operating and maintenance costs.

Still, the goal of reconfiguring the City of Atlanta to absorb some of the region's growth around a series of great parks remains tantalizing. Imagine if acquiring one thousand acres of parkland became economically feasible. Imagine if this parkland displaced almost no occupied housing or centers of employment. Imagine if

Top: New York City's Central Park provides a natural setting, away from the noise and confusion of the city, where diverse populations intermingle.

Bottom: Chicago's 23 miles of parks and parkways along Lake Michigan have attracted billions of dollars in private development.

Percent of City Land Area Devoted to Parks

City	City Area	All Parkland in City (Acres)	Parkland as Percent of City Area
San Francisco	29,884	5,916	19.8%
Washington D.C.	39,297	7,576	19.3%
New York	194,115	36,646	18.9%
San Diego	207,575	38,993	18.8%
Boston	30,992	5,451	17.6%
El Paso	159,405	26,372	16.5%
Minneapolis	35,130	5,694	16.2%
Albuquerque	115,608	17,746	15.4%
Portland, Ore.	85,964	12,959	15.1%
Cincinnati	49,898	7,000	14.0%
Austin	160,969	21,938	13.6%
Philadelphia	86,456	10,621	12.3%
Phoenix	303,907	36,944	12.2%
Seattle	53,677	6,024	11.2%
Baltimore	51,714	5,749	11.1%
Oakland	35,875	3,822	10.7%
Los Angeles	300,201	30,134	10.0%
Dallas	219,223	21,670	9.9%
Milwaukee/Milwaukee County	154,880	15,115	9.8%
Jacksonville	537,000	49,785	9.3%
Long Beach	32,281	2,792	8.6%
St. Louis	39,630	3,385	8.5%
Colorado Springs	118,874	10,150	8.5%
Chicago	145,362	11,676	8.0%
Witchita	86,879	6,773	7.8%
Pittsburgh	35,573	2,735	7.7%
Las Vegas	72,514	5,416	7.5%
Virginia Beach	158,903	11,258	7.1%
Kansas City, Mo.	200,664	13,782	6.9%
Arlington, Tex.	61,322	4,151	6.8%
Detroit	88,810	5,890	6.6%
Denver	98,142	6,251	6.4%
San Antonio	260,832	16,503	6.3%
Columbus	134,568	8,494	6.3%
Tulsa	116,891	7,110	6.1%
Memphis	178,761	10,490	5.9%
Sacramento	62,180	3,694	5.9%
Cleveland	49,650	2,884	5.8%
Louisville/Jefferson	246,400	14,209	5.8%
Houston	370,818	21,252	5.7%
Fort Worth	187,222	10,554	5.6%
Indianapolis	231,342	11,868	5.1%
Miami	22,830	1,138	5.0%
Charlotte/Mecklenburg	337,280	16,472	4.9%
Tampa	71,720	3,408	4.8%
Honolulu/Honolulu County	384,000	17,538	4.6%
New Orleans	115,553	5,228	4.5%
Toledo	51,597	2,206	4.3%
Oklahoma City	388,463	14,684	3.8%
Atlanta	84,316	3,235	3.8%
Mesa	79,990	2,862	3.6%
San Jose	111,910	3,858	3.4%
Fresno	66,791	1,323	3.2%
Nashville/Davidson	321,280	10,272	2.5%
Tucson	124,588	3,175	2.0%

*Note: "All Parkland" includes all parks and preserves owned by municipal, county, metropolitan, state and federal agencies within the boundary of the city.

An expanded Piedmont Park will become a jewel on Atlanta's 2,544-acre "Beltline Emerald Necklace"—a 23-mile-long Beltline Trail connecting 46 neighborhoods to 11 existing, 4 expanded, and 9 new parks.

the new parkland served to improve vacant or underutilized properties and regenerate blighted neighborhoods, connecting communities by bike paths and light rail. If Atlanta were to find a way to expand its public realm while pursuing these worthy goals, surely it would be the opportunity of a lifetime.

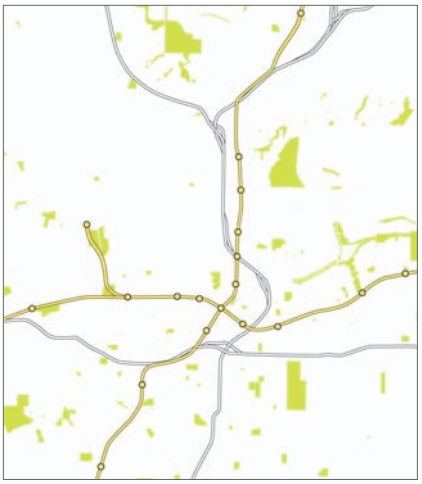
What would such a park resemble? Certainly not a 19th century park, in a time of health clubs and gyms, television and the internet, and countless opportunities for fast-paced, high-intensity leisure. Atlantans do not need a respite from the vulgarities of the industrial city as they did 100 year ago, and they will not be enticed by mere islands of green. After all, many have backyards. Instead, a great 21st century park would provide active, attractive, and varied destinations to lure Atlantans from their private homes to exercise, gather, and explore among a wider community.

After decades of explosive development, Atlanta is primed to become the quintessential American city of the 21st century. Improvements to the city's public realm, therefore, must be not only grand and ambitious but also intelligent and forward-looking. They must hold the promise of strengthening neighborhoods; they must commit to improving the quality of each citizen's daily life. Atlanta's historic opportunity lies not only in reclaiming over 1,400 acres of parkland—but also in creating the first great park of the 21st century.

Atlanta's opportunity lies in the Beltline. It is an opportunity that rarely occurs in already built-up cities in which the creation of a great park or any substantial addition to the public realm often requires displacing a myriad of property owners. Almost miraculously, a vacancy exists in Atlanta: a belt of railroad rights-of-way that circle through the city's inner neighborhoods, two miles from downtown. By seizing on this once-in-a-lifetime gift, Atlanta can, if it chooses, create an "Emerald Necklace" of 2,544 acres along a 23-mile Beltline Trail (three-quarters devoted to parks)—and recreate itself in the process.

Imagine that Emerald Necklace: a tree-lined Beltline Trail for

Above:
Piedmont Park, already one of Atlanta's most prized open spaces, will become one of the 13 Jewels on the Beltline Emerald Necklace.



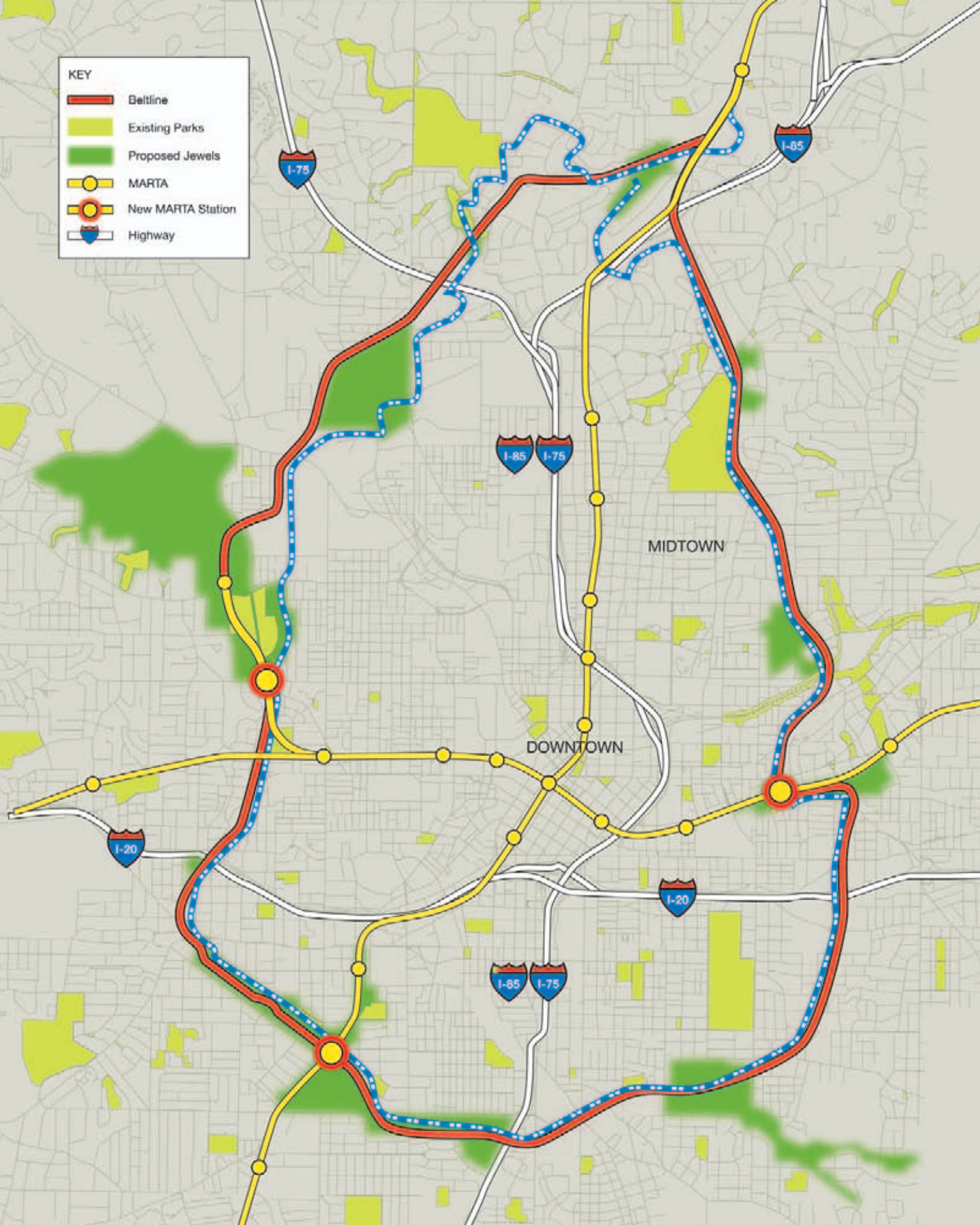
Top, Left: Map of Atlanta's highways, MARTA stations, and public parks

Top, Middle: The proposed Beltline Emerald Necklace

Top, Right and Opposite: Map of Atlanta's highways, MARTA stations, public parks and the proposed Beltline Emerald Necklace

bicycling, roller blading, jogging, or just strolling; a Beltline Transit system connecting neighborhoods with the MARTA system; and the jewels themselves—thirteen new or expanded parks that become regional sub-centers for transportation and leisure. It will not be used only by nearby residents. People living in the 46 neighborhoods within a quarter-mile of the Beltline will bicycle to playing fields in Piedmont Park, take the trolley to the swimming pool in Maddox Park, or stroll from Clear Creek to Peachtree Creek and on to Tanyard Creek. The Beltline will also create entirely new recreation opportunities. Atlantans will go sailing in the new Bellwood Lake Park on the west side of the city or go horseback riding from Intrenchment Creek into DeKalb County in the new linear park along the Georgia Power Company's easement.

The Beltline will be more than a series of destinations. The entire system will connect communities that are currently divided both topographically (with different grades) and geographically (with disparate road grids) on either side of the corridor. People will converge on the Beltline from different places for different purposes, simultaneously engaging in different activities. It will stimulate a sustained and widespread private market reaction by creating a new public realm around which the city can grow. The Beltline will become a catalyst for strengthening neighboring communities and improving the daily life of their residents. Most importantly, this change will occur all along the Beltline—not merely in one particular neighborhood or section of town. In short, the Beltline will reorient Atlanta from a city framed by highways to a city framed by a magnificent public realm.

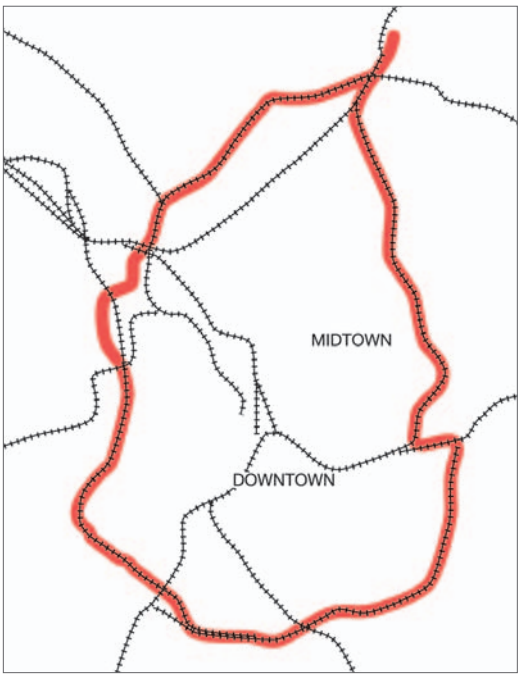

KEY
Beltline
Existing Parks
Proposed Jewels
MARTA
New MARTA Station
Highway
I-75
I-85
I-85
I-75
MIDTOWN
DOWNTOWN
I-20
I-20
I-85
I-75

History

Atlanta was founded by a railroad surveyor and named by a railroad official. The city incorporated in 1843 at the junction of the Georgia Railroad and the Western and Atlantic Railroad. By 1850, numerous rail lines were entering Atlanta, and its population grew rapidly. It quickly became a transportation hub for travelers and goods, and when it was rebuilt after the Civil War Atlanta soon featured a web of rails that spread out to the rest of the country.

The Atlanta Beltline, a system of railroad rights of way, developed over a period of five decades beginning in the 1880s. Competing railroads developed manufacturing and distribution sites in close proximity to the Beltline, and soon industrial districts such as Howell Station, Cabbagetown, and Edgewood arose. These neighborhoods could never offer the high quality of life of more affluent neighborhoods such as Grant Park, Copenhill, Inman Park, and Druid Hills. Instead, the industrial districts in Atlanta were called "sewers of smoke." The Beltline remained at the economic heart of Atlanta, but the city's residential development moved quickly outward.

Below: Map of Atlanta's railroad rights-of-way and the proposed Beltline



After World War II, Atlanta expanded around the automobile. The development of the Interstate Highway System allowed for industrial growth in green field sites at the city's periphery. Railroad companies and industry abandoned many of their sites on the Beltline, and many adjacent neighborhoods fell into decline. Reinvestment in Beltline industrial neighborhoods has typically taken the form of public or private housing. Today, at the turn of the 21st century, Atlanta's Beltline exists as a conspicuous void—a relic of the city's industrial past, and a promise for its post-industrial future.

Atlanta's rail history has presented the city with a generous opportunity: 23 miles of Beltline, to be reborn as the recreational centerpiece of the Atlanta metropolitan region. The key to this opportunity is to create a continuous Beltline, connecting neighborhoods, regional destinations, transportation linkages, and available land for development and open space amenities. This very form constitutes an opportunity to transform what was once an industrial "sewer of smoke" into Atlanta's emerald necklace, studded with urban nodes and open space jewels.

First proposed in 1999 by Ryan Gravel for his Master's thesis at

No American city has yet combined a complete system of bicycle paths, trolleys, and parkland that encompasses and connects nearly every city neighborhood.

Georgia Tech, the Beltline has recently taken Atlanta by storm. Beginning in 2001, Cathy Woolard, then City Council President, spearheaded an effort to build political and community support that she and Gravel continue to lead today. Mayor Shirley Franklin responded in 2004 by having the Atlanta Development Authority commission a Tax Allocation District feasibility study, which the City, County and Board of Education will hopefully adopt. In addition, the Trust for Public Land, working in close coordination with the city, established a Beltline Greenspace Steering Committee and commissioned this report.

How unique is this opportunity? Many cities have bike paths. Some cities have re-introduced trolleys. And some cities have even combined the two for a short distance. But no American city combines a complete system of bicycle paths, trolleys, and parkland that encompasses and connects nearly every city neighborhood.

Frederick Law Olmsted, whose work provides the inspiration for this proposal, attempted early examples of this combination in Atlanta and in Boston at the end of the 19th century. In Atlanta's Druid Hills, his design combined a linear park along Ponce de Leon Avenue with a trolley that ran downtown. Although successful, the project connected only downtown to Druid Hills, and the trolley is no longer in existence today. Olmsted's masterwork, Boston's six-mile-long Emerald Necklace, is a splendid linear park that successfully integrates portions of the cities of Boston and Brookline, along a short stretch. The Emerald Necklace combined open space with the Green Line subway, but even this accomplishment failed to create a system that organizes future development on a citywide level.

Above: When residents first moved to Druid Hills, a trolley ran down Ponce de Leon Avenue. By the end of the 20th century, few traces of the trolley remained in this splendid linear park.

Minneapolis Park System

The Minneapolis Park System is the best-located, best-financed, best-designed, and best-maintained public open space in America. This parkland is easily accessible from anywhere in the city, provides the widest variety of facilities, and affords the user an opportunity to go from facility to facility without leaving the park system. As a result, every section of the city is supplied with beautifully landscaped, well-maintained, public open space that has also increased the desirability of adjacent land.

Minneapolis Park System Statistics
(Source: Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board)

Acres: 6,400
Park Properties: 170
Major Lakes (2 acres – 475 acres): 22
Recreation Centers: 49
Supervised playgrounds: 61
Sports Fields: 396
Tennis Courts: 183
Winter Recreation Area: 1
Miles of Parkways: 55
Miles of Walking Paths: 43.60
Miles of Biking Paths: 43.36
Golf Courses: 6
Year-Round Employees: 600
Part-Time Employees: 1,500
Volunteers: 5,000

Peter Harnik, *Inside City Parks*, Urban Land Institute, 2000.

Portland Transit

An increasing number of cities have introduced light rail service, none more effectively than Portland, Oregon. TriMet began its MAX light rail operations in 1986 with a 15-mile-long track going from downtown Portland to its eastern suburbs. Today, the 44-mile MAX light rail system carries 28 percent of the weekday transit riders connecting downtown with the Portland International Airport (PDX), Expo Center, and the cities of Gresham, Beaverton and Hillsboro. Since it opened, TriMet has reduced air pollution by eliminating 18.2 million car trips each year and triggered $3 billion in new development within walking distance of its 64 stations.

Portland Transit Statistics
(Source: TriMet)

Length: 44 miles
Stations: 64
Light Rail Vehicles: 105
Average daily boardings: 83,800

Boston's Emerald Necklace

Boston's Emerald Necklace is a 2,000-acre system of six park jewels (The Fens, Muddy River, Leverett Park, Jamaica Pond, Arnold Arboretum, and Franklin Park) linked together with tree-lined boulevards. It extends for six miles from the Public Garden and Commonwealth Avenue through a variety of neighborhoods into South Boston, providing a convenient means of communications among adjoining districts, stimulating construction in surrounding neighborhoods, and uniting each section of the system so that it is part of a single, comprehensive design.

Over the past four decades, cities such as San Diego and Portland, Oregon, have created light rail systems. Their transit systems, however, are unrelated to city parks. At the same time, cities across the country have created elaborate bicycle systems without significant connections to mass transit or development opportunities. The blame, however, lies not in the planner, but the existing reality to which he or she must work. The rails-to-trails movement is a perfect example. Begun in 1963, it has transformed more than 1,000 rail lines into recreational trails, but has yet to shape the future of a city. Because these converted rail lines usually extend far outside a city's limits, existing rails-to-trails development neither integrates successfully with public transit nor frames future development on a widespread level. The Atlanta Beltline offers this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity.

Fortunately, Atlanta already has a foundation committed to the rails-to-trails cause that can help take advantage of the Beltline opportunity. Since its inception in 1991, the non-profit PATH Foundation has raised $45 million to create a network of 90 miles of bike paths throughout Metro Atlanta, including the popular 49-mile Silver Comet trail that will soon extend all the way to Alabama. Twenty-five miles of bike paths are still under construction, with an additional $4.5 million of funding already committed to the cause. The Beltline Trail and Transit will extend this network and connect the Silver Comet Trail with nearly every city neighborhood, and the PATH Foundation will play a major role.

What properties should become Jewels—the major parks that dot the Emerald Necklace? What recreation facilities should they contain in order to attract Atlantans, who might otherwise be at a ball game, or a health club, or watching television? In which neighborhoods ought they to be located, and how should they be combined into a system that serves all of Atlanta?

The obvious sites are those that are vacant. Less obvious are those that are no longer in use, such as the blighted apartment projects along Simpson Road. Then, there are the sites that are still occupied but are not the highest and best use of property at that location, especially when there are better alternatives for those land uses elsewhere. Finally, there are the sites needed to create a system that is accessible to everybody in Atlanta: property needed to create a continuous Beltline and property needed for stations that would connect the Beltline to MARTA. Development of these sites depends on their size, topography and the facilities that might be created at those locations.

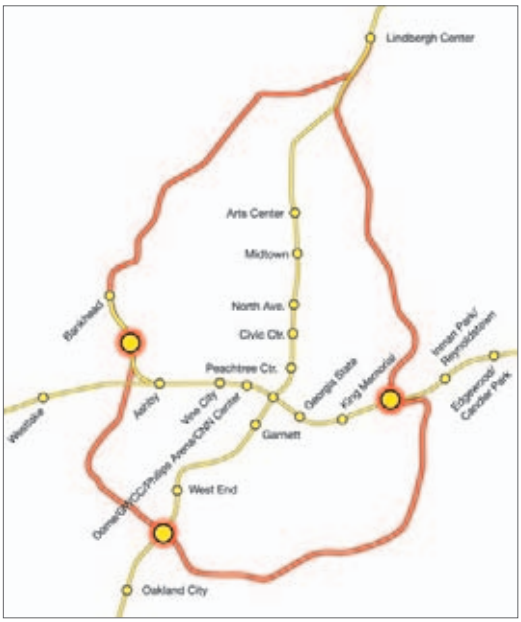
In designing his parks over 100 years ago, Olmsted offered two pieces of advice that ring true to this day. First, he warned against judging each potential site for a park "by itself," rather than as part of a whole system. The development of Atlanta's Beltline must be

Above: Cedar Lake Park Trail in Minneapolis combines an operating railroad right-of-way with trails for bicyclists, skaters, walkers, and joggers.

understood as more than a ring of parks and transit stations; it should be thought of as a string of recreation jewels connected by a greenway. One of these jewels, Piedmont Park, is already there. With relatively little investment, some smaller jewels such as Ardmore Park and Enota Park could be made to sparkle. Although each individual jewel will hold value unto itself, the Beltline's greatest value will be its creation of a single, unified public realm for the City of Atlanta.

Perhaps most important of all, Olmsted reminds us to think far into the future when remaking our public realm. "The people who are to visit the park this year or next," he wrote, "are but a small fraction of those who must be expected to visit hereafter." [2] Make no mistake: a unified Beltline Park System is as grand and far-reaching a task as the development of Olmsted's Central Park in New York City. It will shape the city's growth for decades to come, creating a framework around which a new, 21st century Atlanta will emerge.

An Effective MARTA System



Top: This report proposes three new MARTA stations where the Beltline Transit crosses the existing MARTA rail. Together with substantial new parks at these locations, they will stimulate private investment in new, mixed-use developments.

Imagine the composition of this 21st century Atlanta. For the first time, residents of Cabbagetown will take the trolley to Piedmont Park or Maddox Park, and residents of West End will use the Beltline Transit to visit friends who live in Inman Park or Virginia Highlands. The current population of the neighborhoods along the Beltline cannot generate enough passengers to support trolley service. But the creation of an Emerald Necklace that combines the Beltline Transit with significant amounts of new parkland will surely attract developers who will build new housing. If residents in the growing communities along the Beltline could travel downtown, there would be more than enough riders to justify investment in the trolley.

Getting from the Beltline to Midtown or Downtown requires new MARTA stations where MARTA rail lines cross the Beltline: at Simpson Road, DeKalb Avenue, and Lee Street. The combination of MARTA with the Beltline at these intersections will open opportunities for development not unlike what is already underway at Lindbergh Station. Just as we must think of parks in the long-term, so too must we think of Atlanta's transit needs 50 or 100 years from now. Once these mixed use, regional sub-centers have begun to emerge, Atlantans will be traveling to work, to shop, and to have fun at new destinations along both the Beltline and MARTA.

The Beltline's future users are an attractive market. Early word of the project has already accelerated real estate activity and increased property values in northeast Atlanta. The existence of an entire Emerald Necklace will attract far more activity that will spill over into other areas. Thus, planning the Beltline requires more than an assessment of current land use. It requires an estimate of potential users as well as integration with probable future development.

Top: Bellwood Lake Park will become the largest Beltline Jewel on the Beltline Emerald Necklace.

Middle: The CSX Husley freight yard will become the first new Beltline Jewel on the Beltline Emerald Necklace.

Bottom: Lindbergh Station will grow into an even more important Beltline Jewel on the Beltline Emerald Necklace.

Finance & Management

The City of Atlanta hopes to finance the Beltline through a Tax Allocation District (TAD). A TAD is a financing mechanism that "freezes" property tax revenue within a specified boundary at the current baseline level. All future property tax revenue above the baseline level goes towards capital (not operating) expenditures within the district. The TAD funds must generate sufficient private market activity to pay for those investments. It is not enough just to purchase the rights-of-way for a trolley, bicycle path, or even additional open space along the route. The Beltline must include the acquisition and development of property that will trigger increased property values and new real estate activity in surrounding neighborhoods. Otherwise, there will be insufficient revenues to pay for the Beltline. More important, Atlanta will squander its chance to create a marvelous public realm framework tying together communities that are now separated by increasingly underutilized freight railways.

Currently, the Atlanta Development Authority (ADA), an arm of the city government, has commissioned a team led by the design and planning firm EDAW to determine the feasibility of a TAD to finance the capital costs of the Beltline. Even if a TAD is feasible, however, it is a limited mechanism. The TAD can generally pay only for capital costs such as acquisition and construction—and not the operating costs which are critical to maintaining a clean, safe, and attractive open space environment.

City park agencies are always short of money. Whenever the budget is tight, the inevitable result is a cut-back on repairs and maintenance, followed by decreasing use of increasingly forlorn facilities. There is no point in spending millions of dollars to create a great public realm if it starts to deteriorate from the moment it opens. The best ways to preclude this are to: (1) provide a dependable source of financing for park maintenance that does not have to compete with other government objectives; (2) create an independent board to decide on policy, programs, and spending; (3) establish management procedures that are responsive to local needs and accountable to an independent board; and (4) hire and maintain a well-paid staff whose performance is judged on its ability to achieve results.

Below: The importance of maintenance and management to successful parks has been demonstrated by the ongoing presence of both a security officer and maintenance worker at New York City's Greely Square, a park that covers less than one-third of an acre.

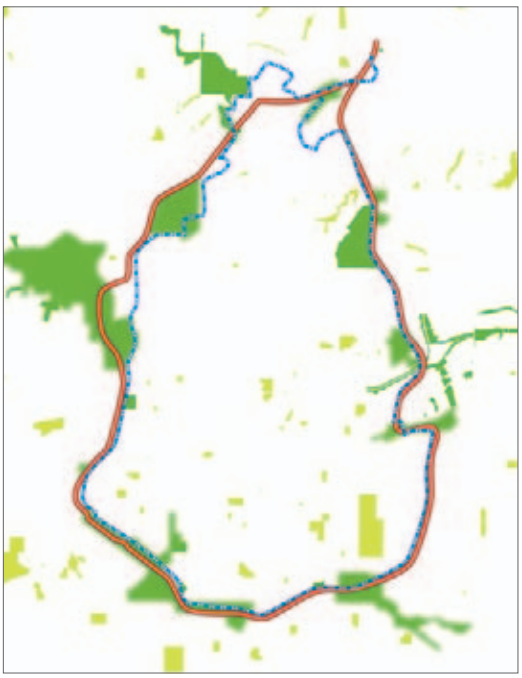
Top: The Minneapolis Board of Park commissioners purchased the land for Loring Park in its first year of operation, 1883. Even in 1891, when this photograph was taken, almost nothing had been built in the surrounding area.

Bottom: By 1995, Loring Park had provided the public realm framework for a substantial and continuing private market reaction.

Conclusion

Private developers have already recognized the opportunities available on the Beltline. Indeed, a private purchaser has placed the northeastern quadrant of the right of way under contract for $26 million, and other sites along the corridor are undergoing redevelopment on a piecemeal basis. While this private market activity is encouraging (it suggests that the private market will easily absorb the development possibilities made available by the Beltline), it is also alarming. An unplanned process will almost certainly yield an unsatisfying result because independent actors in the competitive market do not have the capacity or incentive to achieve the Beltline's aggregate public-interest and economic potential.

This report recommends a single, unified plan to create the Beltline Necklace in two distinct phases—the 23-mile Beltline Trail in Phase 1 and the 20-mile Beltline Transit in Phase 2—and to add the Beltline Jewels as the political and financial conditions allow each one to become a reality. In addition, this report will provide a fundamental road map for creating and implementing the Beltline Emerald Necklace as the organizing principle behind Atlanta development for the next 100 years.



Estimated Beltline Acreage	
Beltline Emerald Necklace	**2,544**
Beltline Park System	2,014
Beltline public/private development	530

Some will be dazzled by this plan; others will say it is excessive, while still others will say it does not reach far enough. The proposal is far from excessive; adding over 1,400 acres of open space, although significant, would only increase the city's park system by 3.4 acres per thousand residents, still placing Atlanta far below the national average (13.8 acres per thousand residents). At the same time, substantially more open space cannot be added along the Beltline because there is a limited amount of vacant, abandoned, or underutilized property, and a portion must be reserved for future development that will finance the acquisition and maintenance of the open space. To a certain extent, however, the total acreage and acreage per resident that the Beltline will create is irrelevant. The Beltline's value is not the quantity of new open space, but the quality of that open space.

Without a doubt, Atlanta has an opportunity which far exceeds that of any major American city: to create stronger, more attractive communities and to actively shape a new and improved public realm framework that will positively affect residents' quality of life for generations to come. Will Rogers, President of the Trust for Public Land, has written: "Great cities are known for their great parks." [3] Atlanta is a great American city, and the Beltline will become the great park Atlanta deserves.

The Beltline provides a 21st Century public realm framework around which Atlanta will grow for the next 100 years.

Above: Fulton County Quarry is just one of the opportunities along the Beltline that could add more than 1,400 new acres of parkland for Atlanta.

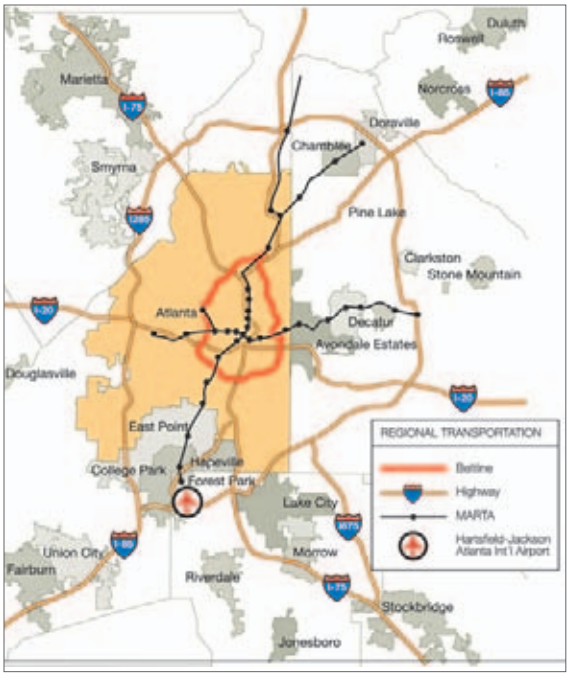
Chapter 2

Analysis

A mile-by-mile, step-by-step analysis of the Atlanta Beltline indicates that every potential obstacle can be overcome by a coordinated, ambitious plan.

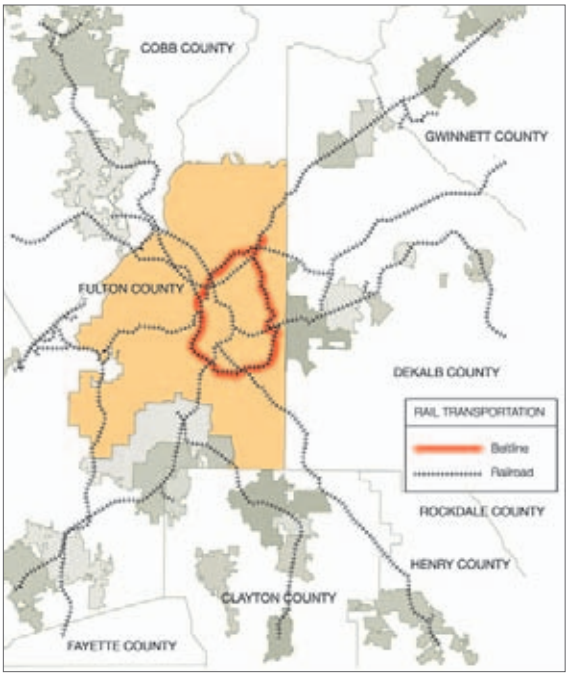
MARTA Statistics	
Year Rail Service Began	1979
2003 Annual Rail Ridership	52 million
Average Daily Rail Ridership	143,000
Length of Rail System	47.6 miles
Number of Rail Stations	38

Sources: MARTA Rail Patronage Analysis (July 2004) and MARTA website.



Regional Transportation

Atlanta is currently a city of highways. 76% of the city's working population commutes to work by car, whereas only 15% utilizes the MARTA system. The regional use of mass transit is even less, and the Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport, the busiest airport in the nation, is not easily accessible via mass transit for the large portion of Atlanta's population that is not within walking distance of a MARTA rail station. The Beltline will change such conditions. As the number of residents within walking distance to mass transit grows, Atlanta will shift from a highway-oriented city to one with a robust mass transportation alternative. Atlantans will take the Beltline Transit to the MARTA rail system, reaching Midtown, Downtown, Buckhead, or the airport via mass transit. The Beltline will help the MARTA rail system achieve financial stability, and more importantly, Atlanta will have an effective system to combat its constant problem of congestion.



Rail Transportation

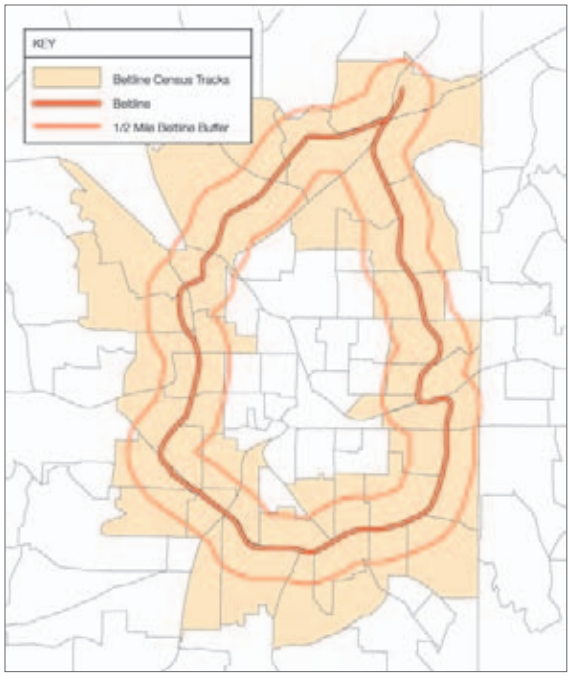
In Atlanta, rail traffic peaked immediately after World War II, when over 1,000 trains per day were scheduled to or through the Atlanta rail hub. In the post-war period, industries sought locations where they could operate single-floor production lines and obtain easy highway access. Consequently, both rail lines and the adjacent facilities they serve have been abandoned. This change has enabled creation of the Beltline and has opened the opportunity to develop some of the abandoned properties along the route.

	1970	1980	1990	2000	2004 (Estimated)
Population					
MSA	2,035,719	2,549,866	3,317,380	4,548,344	4,929,880
City	496,973	425,022	394,017	416,474	423,019
1/2 mi. around Beltline	194,885	147,602	135,566	133,397	137,361

	1970	1980	1990	2000
Housing				
City	170,898	177,897	182,754	186,998
1/2 mi. around Beltline	67,222	64,990	65,043	65,591

Source: U.S. Census*

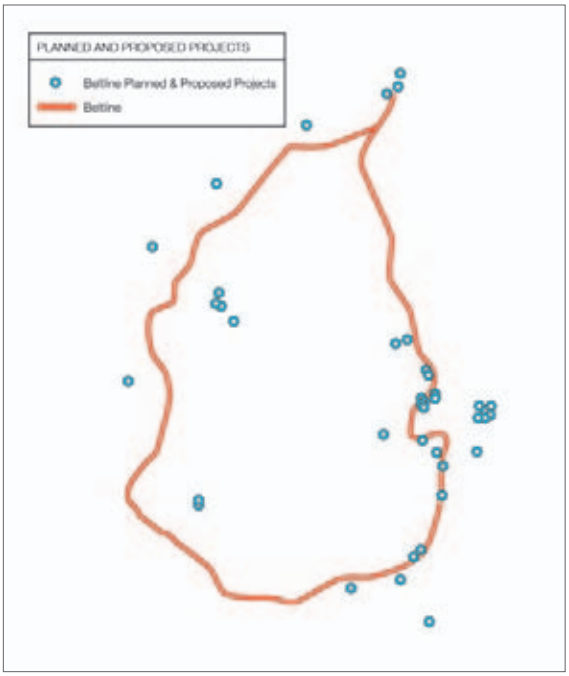
*NOTE: Totals take into account equivalent areas even though several census tracts split between 1980 and 1990, and again between 1990 and 2000. 2004 estimates for the Atlanta Beltline tracts and the City are from Claritas, Inc.



Population

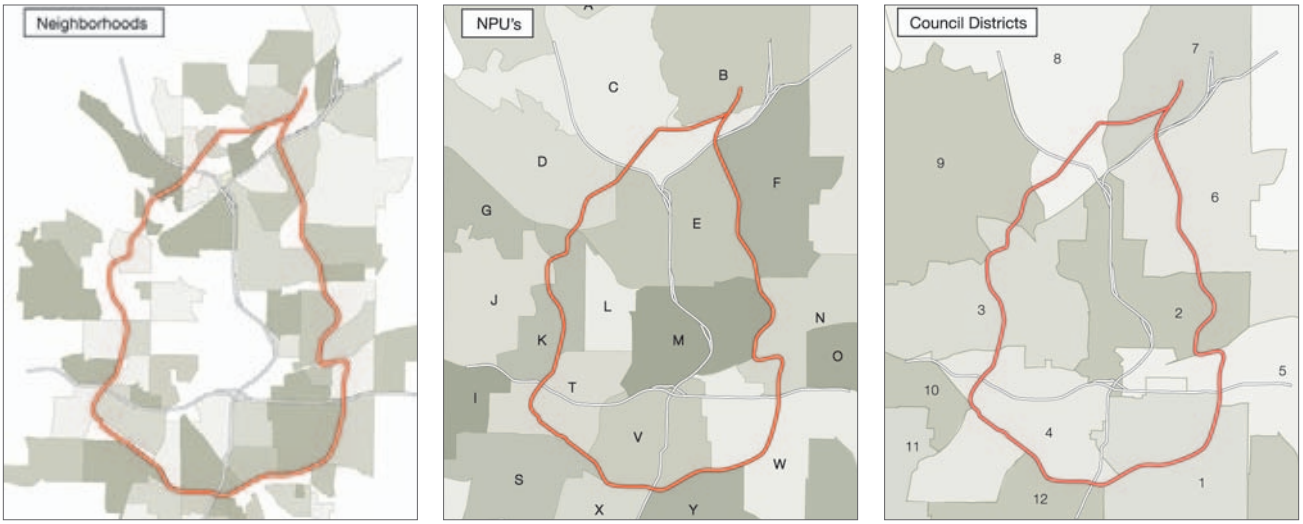
The population of metropolitan Atlanta doubled between 1950 and 1980 and has nearly doubled since. Although the city continues to expand, its suburbs are approaching a saturation point; residents are starting to move back into the city to avoid the long commute and traffic delays en route to jobs in Downtown and Midtown Atlanta, the city's most dense business districts. Now that residents are moving back into the City of Atlanta, a new demographic trend is emerging. The new residents moving into city limits are more likely than previous city residents to be childless and seeking apartments, condos, or other high-density housing.

The Beltline corridor is positioned to meet this market demand. While census tracts that run along the Beltline corridor (roughly a half-mile in each direction) declined in population until 1990, this corridor has since increased in population at a faster rate than the rest of the city. If plans for the Beltline proceed as recommended in this plan, the population of residents living within a five-minute walk from the beltline will increase by as much as 30% in the next 25 years.



Planned and Proposed Development

Currently, approximately 35 development projects have been announced or are under construction in the Beltline corridor. These projects will add over 6,600 units to Atlanta's housing stock—further increasing the city's population—and add more than 1.1 million square feet of retail and 200,000 square feet of office space. Development will continue in these areas regardless of whether the Beltline becomes a reality, but the addition of the Beltline will increase the quality of the development, the quality of life for residents in these developments, and the quality of life for residents in Atlanta as a whole.



Left: Neighborhoods along the Beltline corridor

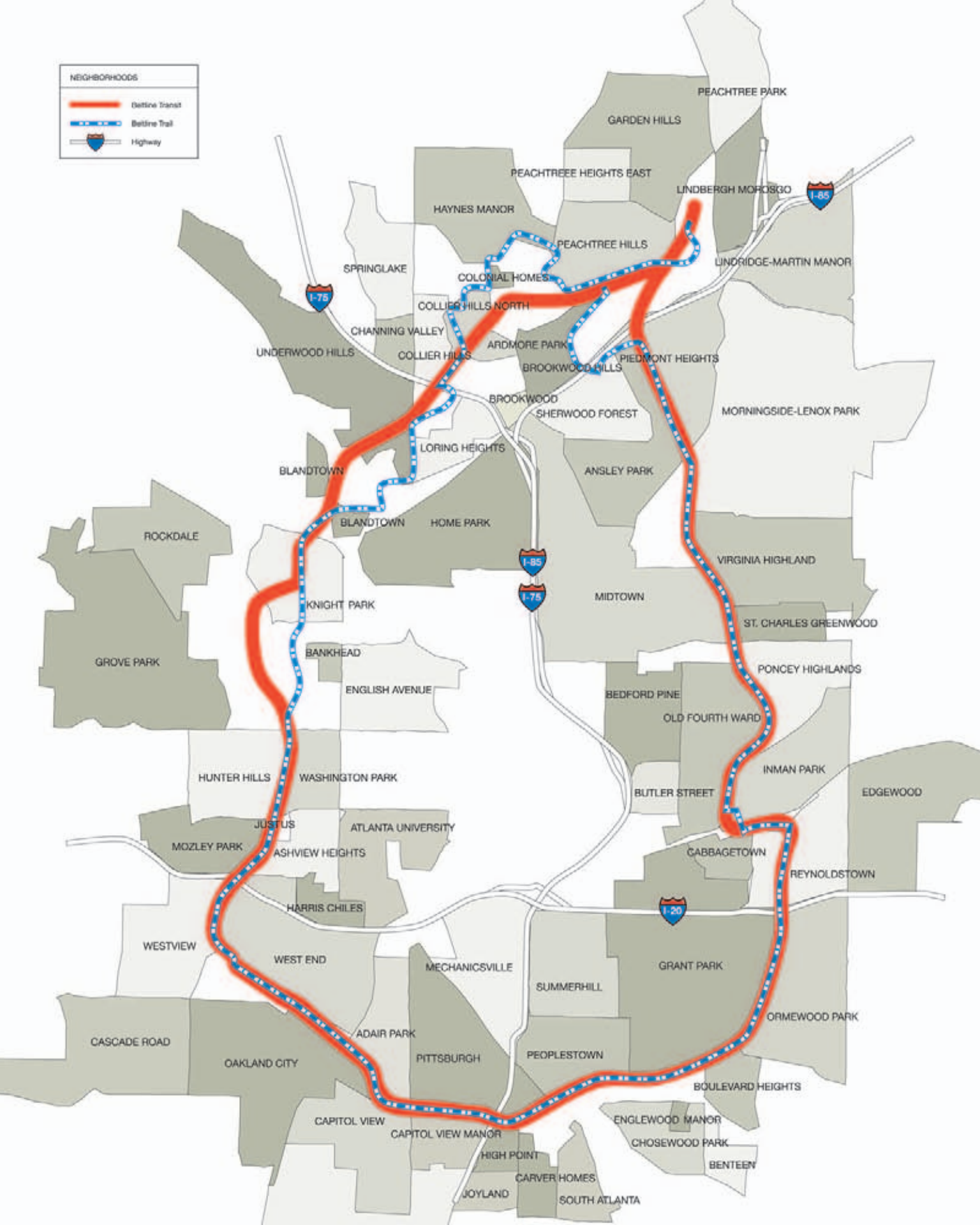
Middle: Neighborhood Planning Units along the Beltline corridor

Right: Council districts along the Beltline corridor

Neighborhoods, NPU's, and council districts

The Beltline engages 46 of Atlanta's historic neighborhoods, 15 of the city's 24 Neighborhood Planning Units (NPU's) and 11 of the 12 city council districts within a quarter mile of either side. The historic freight railroads that make up the Beltline generally predate the adjacent neighborhoods. As the city expanded, the railroads became barriers between communities of different socio-economic backgrounds.

The Beltline provides a unique opportunity to knit these communities together, both across the tracks and down the line. Trading an unsightly and dangerous industrial rail line for a well-maintained park, these neighborhoods will reorient themselves toward a shared common space, greatly strengthening community relationships.


NEIGHBORHOODS
Beltline Transit
Beltline Trail
Highway
PEACHTREE PARK
GARDEN HILLS
PEACHTREEE HEIGHTS EAST
LINDBERGH MORO3O
HAYNES MANOR
PEACHTREE HILLS
LINDRIDGE-MARTIN MANOR
SPRINGLAKE
COLONIAL HOMES
COLLIER HILLS NORTH
CHANNING VALLEY
ARDMORE PARK
UNDERWOOD HILLS
COLLIER HILLS
PIEDMONT HEIGHTS
BROOKWOOD HILLS
BROOKWOOD
SHERWOOD FOREST
MORNINGSIDE-LENOX PARK
LORING HEIGHTS
BLANDTOWN
ANSLEY PARK
ROCKDALE
BLANDTOWN
HOME PARK
VIRGINIA HIGHLAND
KNIGHT PARK
MIDTOWN
ST. CHARLES GREENWOOD
GROVE PARK
BANKHEAD
PONCEY HIGHLANDS
ENGLISH AVENUE
BEDFORD PINE
OLD FOURTH WARD
HUNTER HILLS
WASHINGTON PARK
INMAN PARK
BUTLER STREET
EDGEWOOD
JUSTUS
ATLANTA UNIVERSITY
MOZLEY PARK
ASHVIEW HEIGHTS
CABBAGETOWN
REYNOLDSTOWN
HARRIS CHILES
WESTVIEW
WEST END
MECHANICSVILLE
GRANT PARK
SUMMERHILL
ORMEWOOD PARK
CASCADE ROAD
ADAIR PARK
OAKLAND CITY
PITTSBURGH
PEOPLESTOWN
BOULEVARD HEIGHTS
CAPITOL VIEW
ENGLEWOOD MANOR
CAPITOL VIEW MANOR
CHOSEWOOD PARK
HIGH POINT
BENTEEN
CARVER HOMES
JOYLAND
SOUTH ATLANTA
I-75
I-85
I-20

Schools

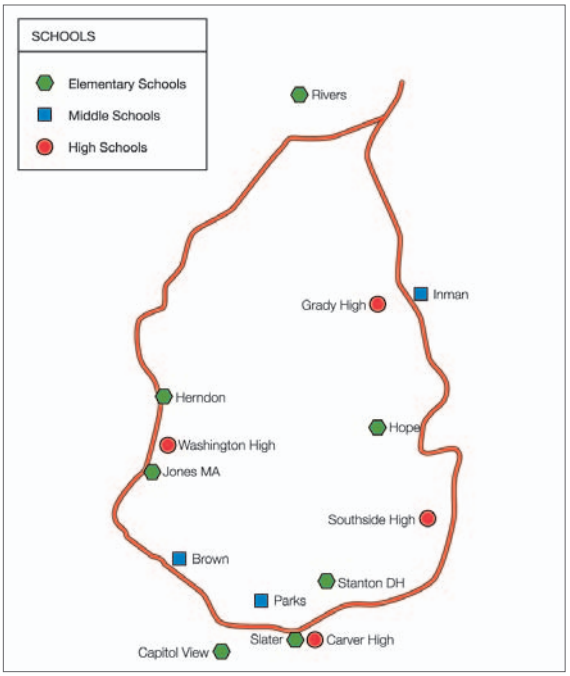
There are 14 schools (7 elementary, 3 middle, and 4 high schools) within a half-mile of the Beltline. The Beltline will create transportation opportunities and additional open space for the 8,537 students, 925 teachers, and scores of community groups who share these facilities on a daily basis.

Attractions

Several of the city's largest tourist attractions sit on or near the Beltline, including the Atlanta region's most popular destination: the Martin Luther King, Jr. National Historic Site, which includes his birth home, church, final resting place, and Center for Nonviolent Social Change. The Jimmy Carter Presidential Library and Museum and the Carter Center are also on the line, along with the city's premiere greenspace, historic Piedmont Park. Just a few steps away is the Atlanta Botanical Garden, and a few blocks off the line down in Grant Park is Zoo Atlanta and the Cyclorama. The Wren's Nest in West End is Atlanta's oldest house museum, home to author and Atlanta Constitution editor Joel Chandler Harris. Other landmarks around the Beltline help tie it into the life of the city. These include civic buildings and schools, employment centers like Piedmont Hospital, or retail centers like Ansley Mall. Some buildings are landmarks simply due to their size, like the old Sears & Roebuck distribution building (now City Hall East) or the Fulton Cotton Mill, which has been converted to loft apartments.

For residents of the city, and some tourists as well, Atlanta's intown neighborhoods have become destinations due to their historic houses and lively shopping districts. The neighborhoods along the Beltline were mostly constructed between 1890 and 1930 and generally predate popular use of the automobile as the primary means of transportation. Many have been included on the National Register of Historic Places, and some have received additional protection as city-designated historic districts. The majority of these districts concentrate on the residential core of the neighborhood, but some, like the Inman Park Historic District, include guidelines for the industrial territory along its edges. The guidelines even anticipate the Beltline by requiring new streets to cut through large parcels, and forbids parking garages from backing up to the railroad corridor.

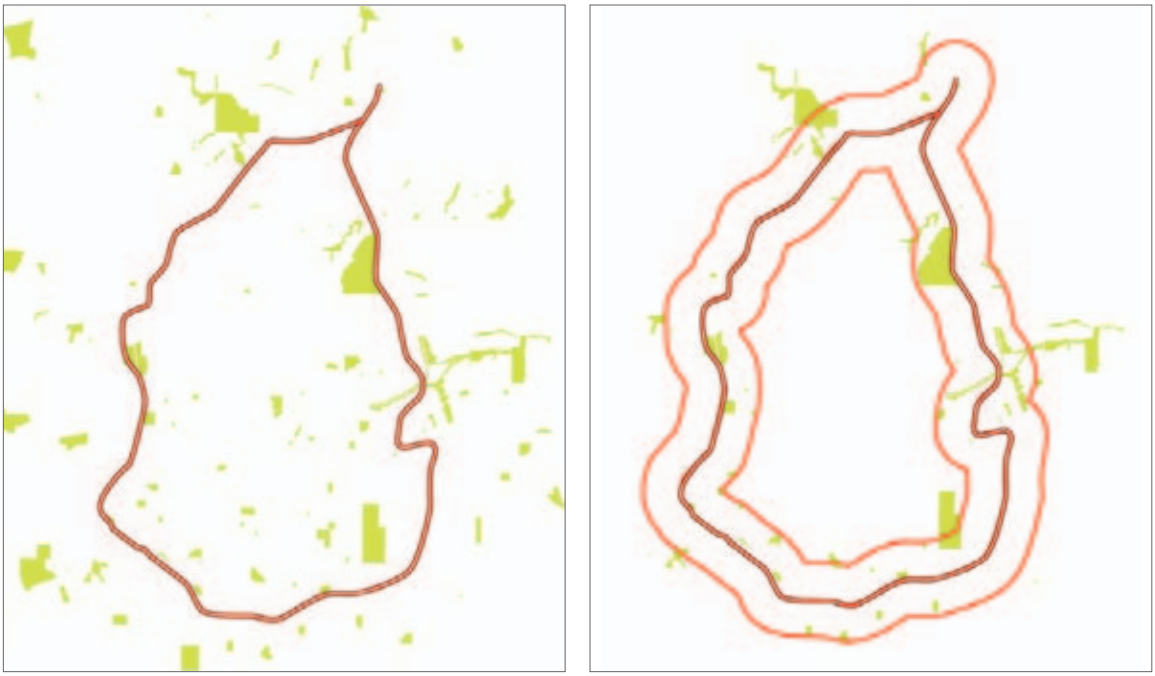
The Beltline will become a thread designed to tie Atlanta's attractions together into a unified network. In one day, visitors to Atlanta could use the Beltline Transit to visit the Wren's Nest in the morning, Zoo Atlanta and Grant Park for a picnic lunch, and the Martin Luther King, Jr. Historic District the afternoon, before ending the day with an evening concert in Piedmont Park. As explored in studies of a "cultural ring" linked via the Beltline, a stronger relationship between each independent tourist attraction in Atlanta will benefit not only the individual institutions but also the city as a whole.



Above, left: Schools along the Beltline

Above, right: Attractions along the Beltline

Left: The birthplace of Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr.



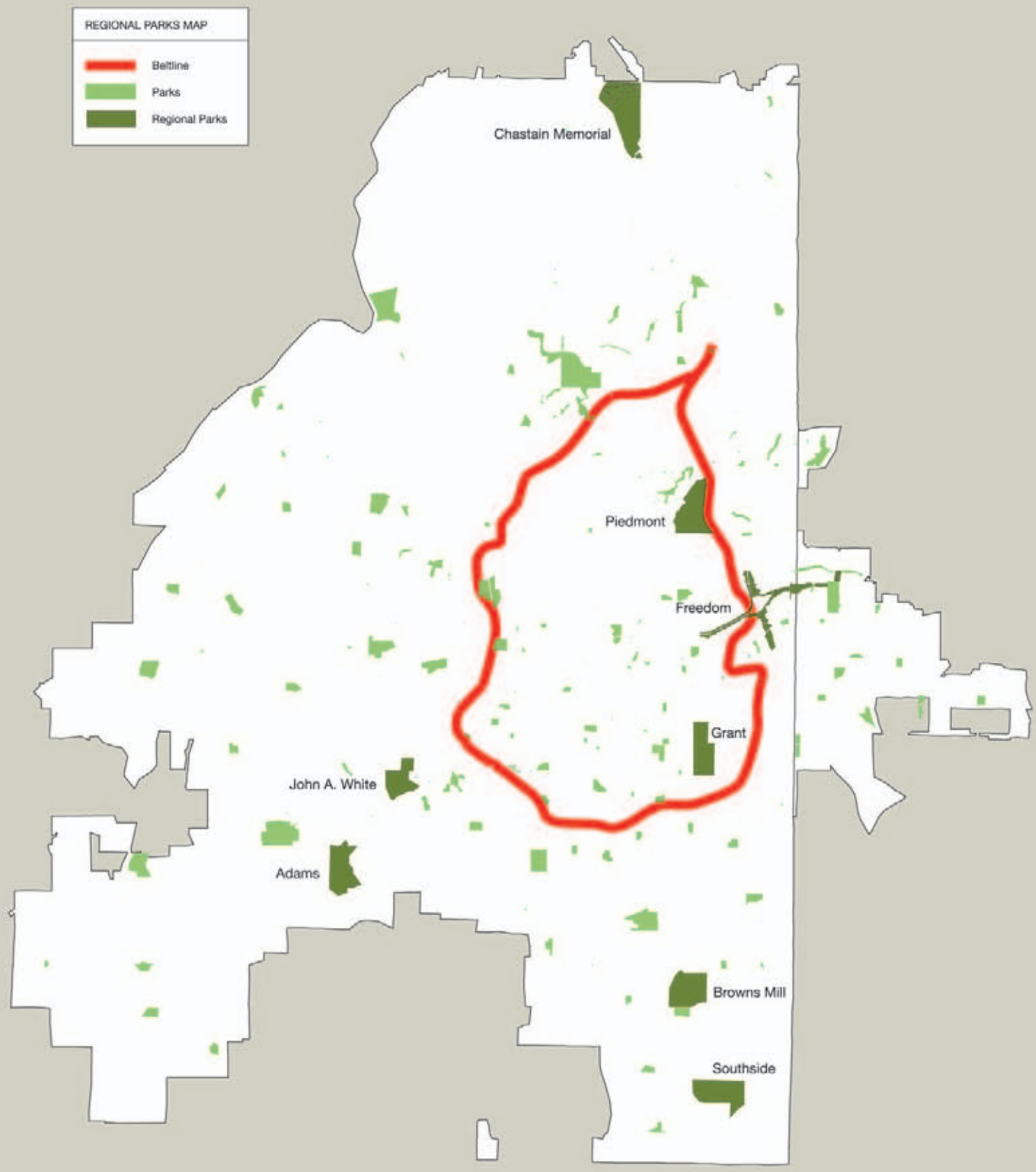
Left: Parks along the Beltline

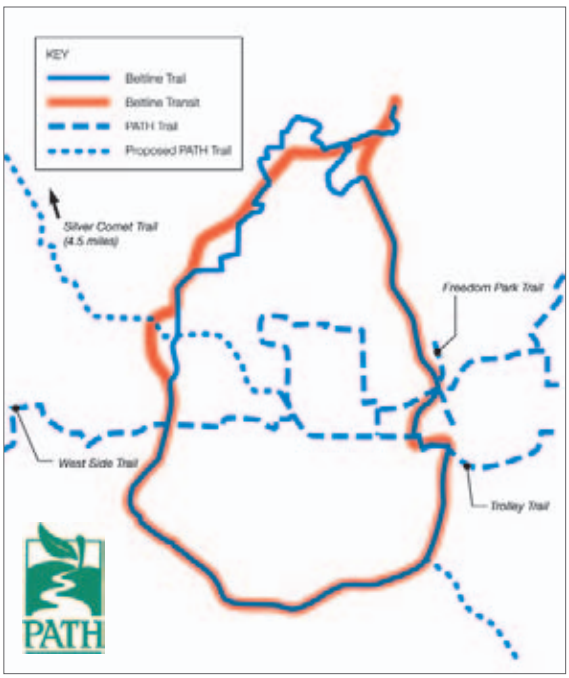
Right: Parks within 1/2 mile of the Beltline

Parks & Recreation Facilities

The City of Atlanta has 345 parks and 180 playgrounds (3,235 acres), of which 82 parks and 32 playgrounds (988 acres) are within a half mile of the Beltline and 11 parks and 6 playgrounds (613 acres) are directly adjacent to the Beltline (see Appendix B for full list).

Amenity	City of Atlanta	1/2 mile from Beltline	Adjacent to Beltline
Parks	345	82	11
Acres	3,182	988	613
Playgrounds	180	32	6
Outdoor Basketball Courts	74 courts at 60 parks	22 at 14 parks	3 at 2 parks
Ball Fields	84 at 56 parks	23 at 14 parks	8 at 4 parks
Tennis Courts	182 courts at 55 parks	53 courts at 14 parks	21 at 3 parks
Golf Courses	Four 18-hole, One 9-hole	One 18-hole	One 18-hole
Swimming Pools	22 Swimming Pools	8	3
Recreation Centers	36	9	2


REGIONAL PARKS MAP
Beltline
Parks
Regional Parks
Chastain Memorial
Piedmont
Freedom
Grant
John A. White
Adams
Browns Mill
Southside



Left: Stone Mountain/Atlanta Greenway Trail

Right: Bike Paths intersecting the Beltline

Bike Paths

The PATH Foundation has been instrumental in building Atlanta's network of bike paths. Today, however, PATH's trails within Atlanta's inner core are limited to on-street bike lanes and the popular Stone Mountain/Atlanta Greenway Trail, which runs from Atlanta's Westside, through Downtown, and out Freedom Parkway into DeKalb County. With the exception of this trail, PATH's major successes have occurred in suburbs outside of Atlanta's core.

These existing trails are fragments of what will soon become, with the addition of the Beltline, an expansive, continuous system. Within several years, Atlantans who live in the urban core will enjoy wide, green bike trails that circle the city for over 20 miles, and connect to each of PATH trails that lead out into the region's periphery.

Left: Creeks intersecting the Beltline

Right: Polluted waterways along the Beltline

Creeks & Waterways

The City of Atlanta faces a major sewage problem stemming from the fact that its storm-water and sewage systems are integrated in the oldest parts of the city. When heavy rains occur, as they did multiple times in the summer of 2004, sewage overflows into the creeks and waterways. Additionally, the city's outdated sewer infrastructure can no longer meet the growing demands of overwhelming development. Large amounts of new construction increases sewage loads. New development also comes with extensive surface paving that tends to concentrate storm water run off into torrents that overwhelm and damage creeks.

As a result of this sewage overflow, in July of 1998, a lawsuit was brought against the City by the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and other parties. In order to settle this lawsuit, the City of Atlanta agreed to develop and implement a multi-faceted plan for ending water quality violations resulting from combined sewer overflows. Under the strong leadership of Mayor Shirley Franklin, the sewer clean-up plan is underway. Among the elements of this plan are a series of sewer and sewage pump station improvements, a grease management program, and a capacity certification program for new development.

An element of the Sanitary Sewer Consent Decree implementation plan of particular interest to the Beltline project is the $25 million Greenway Acquisition Project (GAP) to acquire and protect targeted streamside areas in perpetuity. GAP intends to acquire streamside "buffer" areas to protect from development. These areas will provide a vegetated filter for surface runoff and help control erosion. All procurement is through contribution or voluntary sale at no greater than fair market value, and once acquired, properties are maintained by the City in perpetuity. Beltline Trail acquisition funds could possibly be combined or coordinated with the GAP effort toward mutual benefit. See Chapter 3 for a full discussion of the Greenway Acquisition Project and the potential for coordination with the Beltline.

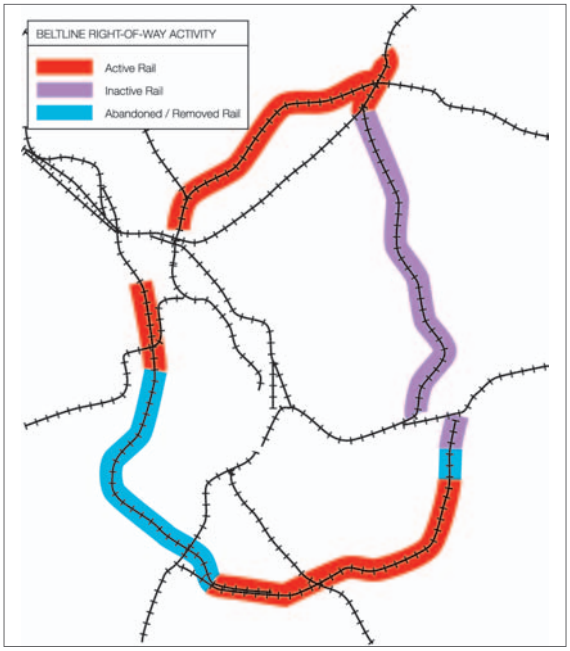
Top: An actively used freight line along the Beltline

Middle: Inactive right-of-way

Bottom: Abandoned right-of-way (tracks removed)

Beltline Conditions

The Beltline itself is a compilation of rail rights-of-way that are owned by different parties who have maintained their property and their tracks to varying degrees, from active freight lines to inactive tracks to abandoned property that serves as an illegal garbage dump. The remainder of this chapter will summarize the conditions of the Beltline's rail corridor and explore how it can be transformed into a transit system and Emerald Necklace.



General Rights-of-Way Ownership and Activity

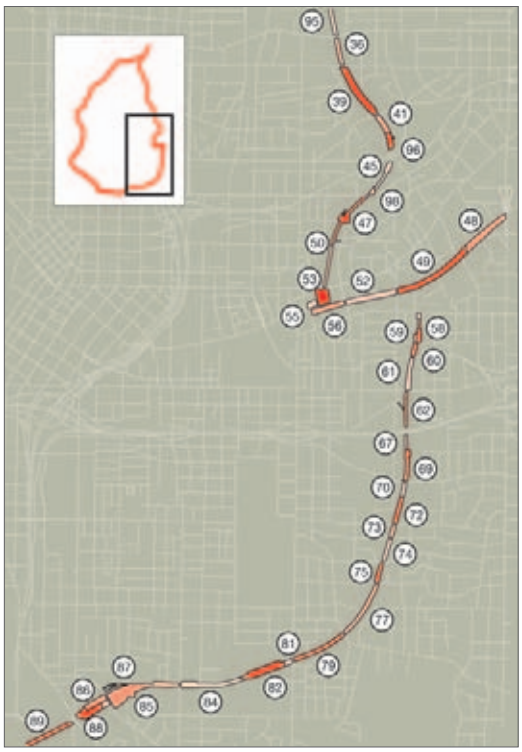
With the exception of the major discontinuity points, the Beltline is owned by three entities: The Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT), CSX Railroad, and Norfolk Southern Railroad. In October of 2004, however, Norfolk Southern entered into a contract with a private developer named Madison Ventures to purchase its portion of the Beltline in the northeast quadrant. This northeast portion of the Beltline consists of a single, unused track that cuts through some of the city's most valuable real estate.

The southeastern portion of the Beltline is a CSX-owned, single track right-of-way, which is used only one or two times a day to bring sand and gravel to a LaFarge concrete facility on Glenwood Avenue. These trains never reach the southwestern quadrant of the Beltline, as the Beltline splits off and veers north just west of Metropolitan Parkway.

GDOT acquired the right-of-way for the southwestern quadrant of the Beltline in 2001 from Norfolk Southern. In this section, which begins where the right-of-way veers northwest off the active tracks and continues past Washington Park, the rail lines have been abandoned and removed. The right-of-way is overgrown with weeds and kudzu, littered with garbage, and in some cases, the right-of-way has been encroached (legally and illegally) due to the lack of maintenance of the property.

The CSX right-of-way in the northwest quadrant of the Beltline experiences moderately heavy freight traffic. Trains move along two tracks for the southern third of this section and on a single track for the northern two-thirds at speeds of up to 45 mph.

ROW Ownership Types	Description	Duration
Fee Simple	Full ownership of parcel	Permanent
Easement	Use of property for a specified purpose for an indefinite period of time	Variable. Easements can expire after a specified period of inactivity, or in the event of an unauthorized use, at which point all rights to the property may revert back to owner.
Leasehold	Use of property for a specified purpose for a set period of time	Ranges anywhere from 10 to 25 to 99 years, depending on the contract.



Above: The Beltline right-or-way is comprised of over 100 parcels, each of which is controlled through a fee simple deed, an easement, or a leasehold.

Detailed Ownership and Entitlement of Rights-of-Way

Understanding the ownership of the Beltline is much more complicated than understanding who controls the rights-of-way. Specifically, there are four issues to consider: method of original acquisition, missing parcel data, squatters, and buried fiber optic cables.

Simply because an entity controls a right-of-way does not mean they own the property. Years ago, when sections of the Beltline right-of-way were being assembled, the rail companies would often negotiate with individual landowners along the route for the right to run rail through their property. This right may have been obtained through a number of arrangements, including outright purchase (fee simple) of the necessary section of property, rail easements for the property, or leaseholds that may or may not have expired. If the Beltline right-of-way was obtained by deed purchase, and this purchase was without restrictions (such as an agreement that the right-of-way revert to the original parcel boundaries when it was no longer used for freight rail), then the acquisition of the right-of-way for use as the Beltline will be straight forward. If, however, the right-of-way was obtained in part or in whole as an easement for the specific purpose of running freight rail across the property, then those arrangements could pose difficulties for the reuse of the right-of-way as the Beltline Trail.

The map at left shows the number of parcels included in only one section of the Beltline. Many of these parcels are not owned by the rail companies. Further complicating matters, the lease agreements are between the railroad company and the property owners and are not placed in the public record. Therefore, these records are not kept on file at Fulton County, but rather are held by the railroad company or the entity legally entitled to the right-of-way.

The GDOT right-of-way in the Beltline's southwest quadrant is owned fee simple. Despite the outright ownership of the property, several adjacent land owners have encroached on the right-of-way. These encroachments can be as insignificant as a chain link fence or as significant as dumping mattresses, tires, and roofing. A more serious encroachment appears to have taken place where property owners have graded the right-of-way and built storage structures for their boats and cars.

Additionally, the recent modernization of information and data technology has required the installation of fiber optic networks across the country. Rail rights-of-way provide the continuous corridors needed to create these interstate networks, and in Atlanta, fiber optic cables have been buried in many sections along the Beltline. While it

Top, left: In some places the Beltline right-of-way is currently too narrow for more than a bike path.

Bottom, left: Other sections of the right-of-way are wide enough to accommodate the Beltline Trail, Transit, and parkland.

Right: Beltline right-of-way widths

might be possible to purchase fiber optic rights-of-way and reroute them, it is not uncommon simply to reserve fiber optic rights next to a transit line or bike path. In general, fiber optic rights-of-way are not likely to have a detrimental influence on the Beltline proposal, but issues of installation, maintenance, and ownership will need to be addressed in a later phase of the study.

Dealing with each of these four issues will require parcel-by-parcel research in the next phase of planning for the Beltline. While the legal issues posed by the Beltline remain a challenge, the extensive analysis confirms that such obstacles can be overcome. The coordinated plan proposed by this study tackles each legal issue and provides a detailed description of how it will be resolved.

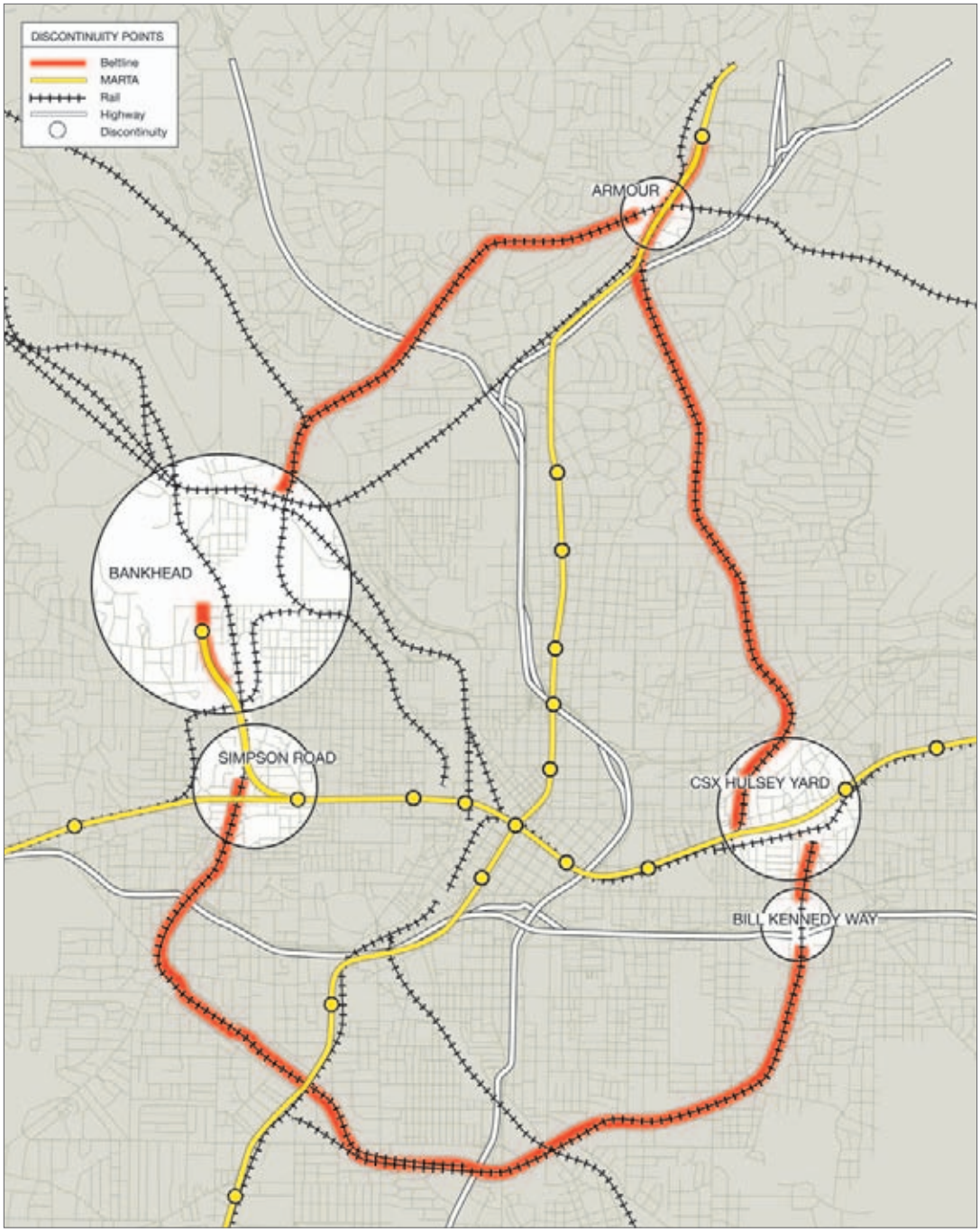
Rights-of-Way Widths & Grading

The width of the Beltline's right-of-way varies considerably over its 20 miles. Mostly, it averages about 100 feet, but at points it expands to as wide as 445 feet and narrows to just 30 feet. In the areas where the right-of-way width is less than 70 feet, as highlighted in the map on page 36, additional acquisition may be required in order to build a transit system with a multi-use trail. These measurements are based on GIS parcel maps from Fulton County, but in order to get more accurate data, field surveys will be required in the next stage of this study to determine the exact widths and legal entitlements for each parcel.

Beyond the legal width of the right-of-way, the width of the ground upon which the track will be built presents additional obstacles. Atlanta has a rolling topography, and the railroads were built to accommodate a variety of circumstances and maintain an even track. Many sections have cut or fill, and often these are significant enough to require extensive re-grading or retaining walls in order to accommodate both a multi-use trail and a transit system. Finally, some sections cross creeks or other low-lying areas and may be affected by floodplains or sewer and storm-sewer infrastructure. Some Beltline segments are more topographically challenged than others, and the map above highlights the areas that will require re-grading due to ridges and trenches that are too narrow.

Left: Beltline ridges and trenches

Right: In some places the Beltline runs over a narrow ridge; in others, it is in a narrow trench.

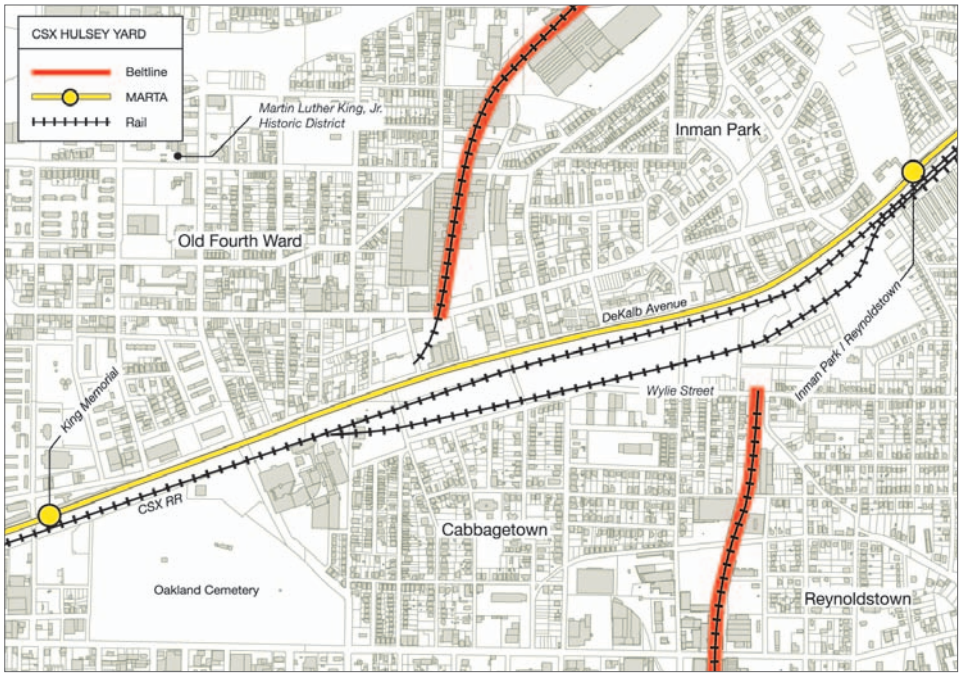


Discontinuity Points

Contrary to what maps may display, the Beltline is not continuous—indeed, at five points the rail lines simply do not connect. Three discontinuities are easily discernable on a map. The remaining two may look continuous, but MARTA now runs a line through one, and the other is separated by a 35-foot, perpendicular bridge.

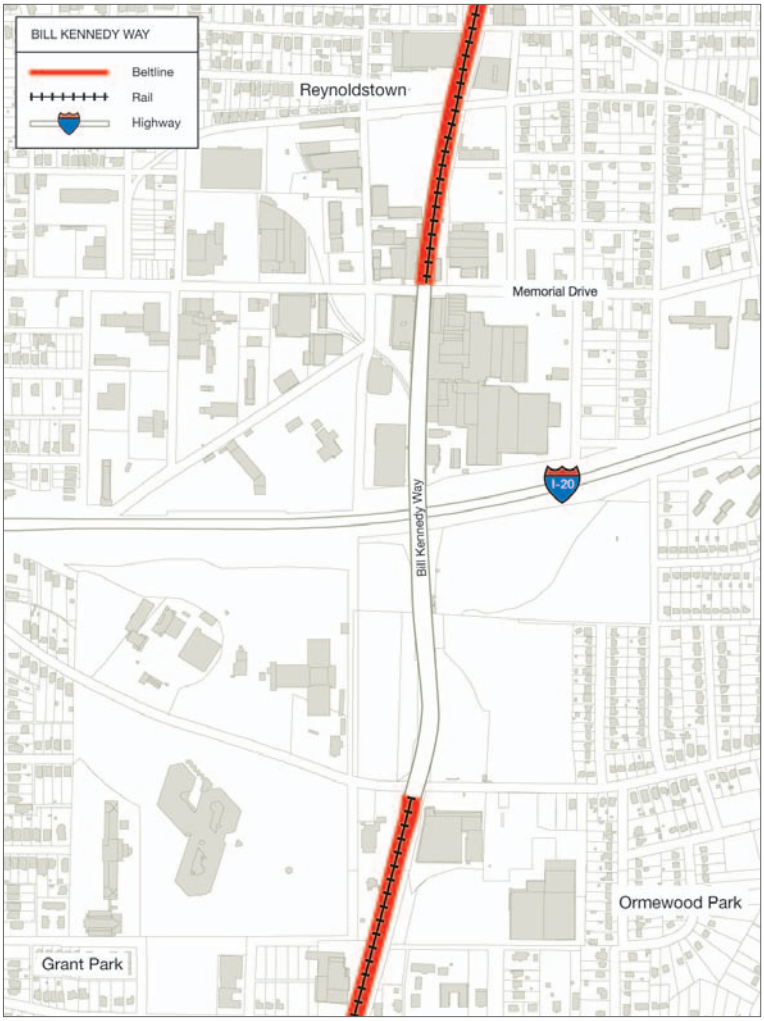
Armour

The Armour industrial area east of Peachtree Street, northwest of I-85, and south of the Lindbergh MARTA station presents a substantial yet manageable challenge to a continuous Beltline. The Beltline must share the right-of-way with two active rail lines and MARTA in order to connect into the Lindbergh MARTA Station. The CSX line runs east-west and the Norfolk Southern line, which Amtrak shares as well, runs north-south. The MARTA line is parallel and elevated above the Norfolk Southern line south of the bridge over Peachtree Creek. In addition, the Norfolk Southern Line is about 35 feet above the CSX line. Peachtree Creek runs parallel to the north of the CSX line and about 20 feet lower in elevation. Finally, I-85 runs parallel to the MARTA line. Although the MARTA and the highway already overpass above the right-of-way, the Armour rail yard must be crossed before going under MARTA and the highway.



CSX Hulsey Yard

The CSX Intermodal freight transfer facility at Hulsey Yard is located on the southern side of the CSX main rail line headed east out of downtown Atlanta, toward Decatur, and it creates a barrier between the Old Fourth Ward and Inman Park neighborhoods to the north and Cabbagetown and Reynoldstown to the south. There are three main components to the barrier: the CSX main line, the elevated east-west MARTA line and the Intermodal facility itself. In addition, the Beltline at this point requires a connection between the lines to the north and the south. Both intersect Hulsey Yard, but at opposite ends. To add further complication, there is no MARTA station here, so in order to connect to the east MARTA line, the project will require either a diversion east to the Inman Park/Reynoldstown station, or a completely new station.



Bill Kennedy Way

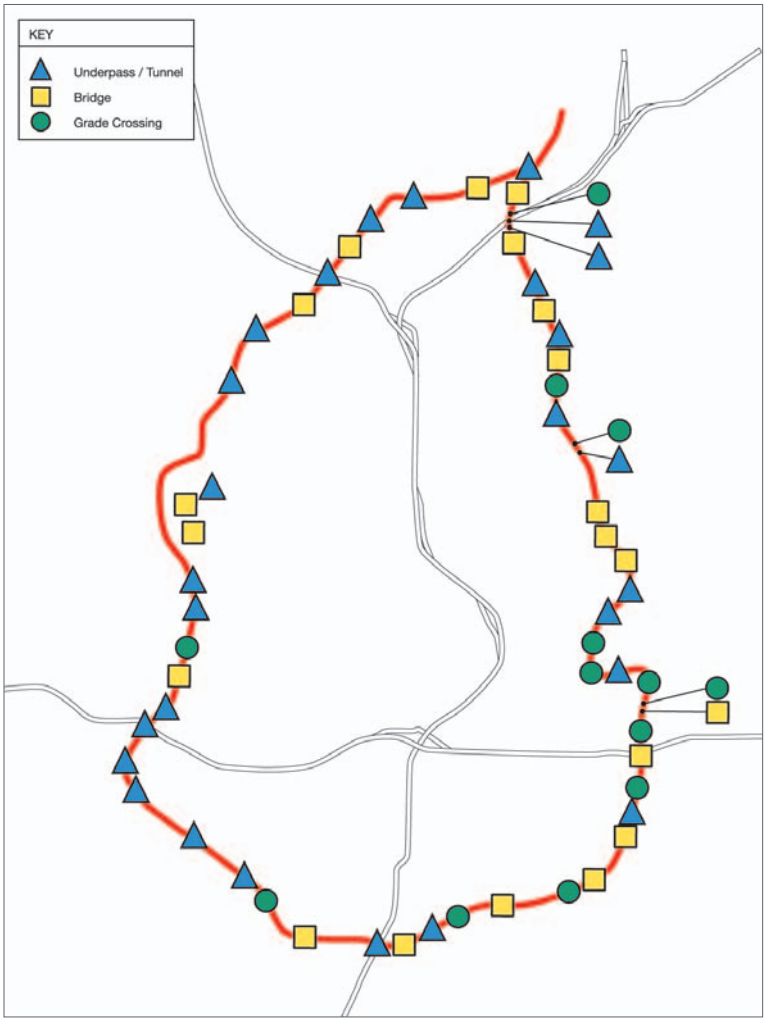
Just south of Hulsey Yard, a portion of the railroad right-of-way was removed to build a new interchange with I-20, the Bill Kennedy Way (formally Glenwood-Memorial Connector). It connects across I-20 from Memorial Drive in Reynoldstown in the north to Glenwood Avenue in Grant Park and Ormewood Park in the south. This roadway, owned by the Georgia Department of Transportation, is now operated by the City of Atlanta.

Washington Park to Simpson Road

On the west side of town, the Proctor Creek MARTA spur line comes out from an underground tunnel below Washington Park and merges into the abandoned Louisville & Nashville (L&N) right-of-way, where it occupies the former right-of-way for approximately half a mile. The need to cross the MARTA spur, or share its right-of-way, creates another discontinuity for the Beltline route.

Bankhead

The largest gap in the Beltline's overall continuity is in the city's northwest quadrant between Simpson Road and Huff Road, including Maddox Park and the Fulton County Jail. Many of Atlanta's railroads cross through this area. In fact, Howell Junction, which sits between Marietta Street and Huff Road, is by many accounts one of the most congested freight corridors in the state. Extending north from this junction is the CSX, an active line, which the Beltline will share as it heads north toward Peachtree Street. CSX and Norfolk Southern (NS) both have main trunk lines following Marietta Street into downtown Atlanta. Another active north-south line comes in from the west, heads north through Maddox Park and at that point actually takes over the right-of-way of the old Louisville & Nashville Railroad (now GDOT), which is the Beltline route heading south. From this former intersection, the old Atlanta Birmingham & Coast Line (AB&C) right-of-way continues north and east, although the tracks have been removed, and a church now owns the property. The AB&C connects to Bellwood Yard, which extends north at Jefferson Street with low-level service that is accessed from the east.



Underpasses, Bridges, Tunnels and Grade Crossings

The Beltline crosses under 23 underpasses, over 20 bridges, through 4 tunnels and across 13 grade crossings. Some of the bridges and overpasses are over 70 feet wide and will easily accommodate a multi-use trail combined with transit. Others are as narrow as 15 feet, and will require either rebuilding the structures or rerouting the Beltline Trail and using a switch so that the Beltline Transit will share the track for the length of the structure. Finally, while some grade crossings are merely service roads that will not require remediation, others are residential streets or four-lane major roads. In the case of the former, a stop sign may be sufficient to resolve crossings. For the latter, however, a grade separation will be required for both the transit and multi-use trail. These decisions require detailed traffic and engineering studies, which cannot occur until a later stage. Nonetheless, the map above provides a summary inventory of these structures. (For the complete listing and widths of these structures, see Appendix C.)

Conclusion

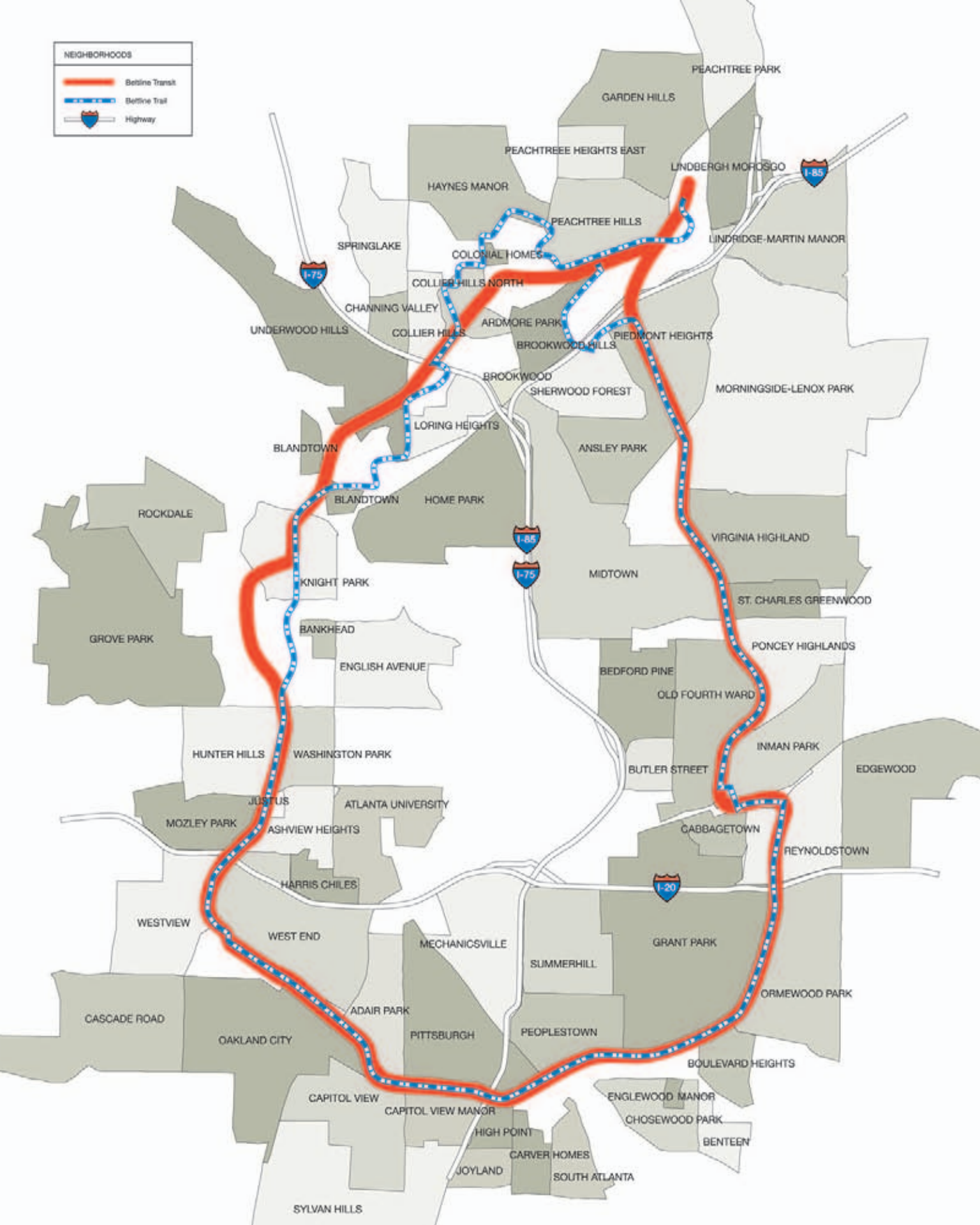
A mile-by-mile, step-by-step analysis of the Atlanta Beltline's future course indicates that every potential obstacle can be overcome by a coordinated, ambitious plan. Indeed, the challenges encountered are overshadowed by the single, grand opportunity. As the following chapters will make clear, the Beltline is poised to dramatically reshape the future of Atlanta. From its industrial legacy, the city will inherit an Emerald Necklace of parks that will become the centerpiece of Atlanta over the next century.

Chapter 3

Creating a Continuous Beltline

Seizing a Unique Opportunity

The Beltline is a momentous opportunity for Atlanta to create a continuous, circular path for mass-transit and recreation, and the city must take advantage of this opportunity by acting now. The rights-of-way must be purchased immediately, before Atlanta's booming real estate market snatches them away. Already, a private developer who supports the Beltline project has placed the northeast quadrant under contract. Future purchasers may not be as sympathetic. Fortunately, the money necessary to start the Beltline can probably be obtained relatively soon from the non-governmental organizations and individuals who have already announced support for early action. For those funds to be most effective, they must be directed by a single, coordinated plan for the Beltline project. This report proposes such a plan: to create a continuous Beltline Necklace in two distinct phases, and to add Beltline Jewels as political and financial conditions allow each to become a reality. This chapter presents the Beltline Necklace.


NEIGHBORHOODS
Beltline Transit
Beltline Trail
Highway
PEACHTREE PARK
GARDEN HILLS
PEACHTREEE HEIGHTS EAST
LINDBERGH MORO/SGO
I-85
HAYNES MANOR
PEACHTREE HILLS
LINDRIDGE-MARTIN MANOR
SPRINGLAKE
COLONIAL HOMES
I-75
COLLIER HILLS NORTH
CHANNING VALLEY
UNDERWOOD HILLS
COLLIER HILLS
ARDMORE PARK
PIEDMONT HEIGHTS
BROOKWOOD HILLS
BROOKWOOD
SHERWOOD FOREST
MORNINGSIDE-LENOX PARK
LORING HEIGHTS
BLANDTOWN
ANSLEY PARK
BLANDTOWN
HOME PARK
ROCKDALE
I-85
VIRGINIA HIGHLAND
I-75
MIDTOWN
KNIGHT PARK
ST. CHARLES GREENWOOD
BANKHEAD
GROVE PARK
PONCEY HIGHLANDS
ENGLISH AVENUE
BEDFORD PINE
OLD FOURTH WARD
INMAN PARK
HUNTER HILLS
WASHINGTON PARK
BUTLER STREET
EDGEWOOD
JUSTUS
ATLANTA UNIVERSITY
MOZLEY PARK
ASHVIEW HEIGHTS
CABBAGETOWN
REYNOLDSTOWN
HARRIS CHILES
I-20
WESTVIEW
WEST END
MECHANICSVILLE
GRANT PARK
SUMMERHILL
ORMEWOOD PARK
CASCADE ROAD
ADAIR PARK
OAKLAND CITY
PITTSBURGH
PEOPLESTOWN
BOULEVARD HEIGHTS
CAPITOL VIEW
ENGLEWOOD MANOR
CAPITOL VIEW MANOR
CHOSEWOOD PARK
HIGH POINT
BENTEEN
CARVER HOMES
JOYLAND
SOUTH ATLANTA
SYLVAN HILLS

A Continuous Beltline is Essential

The importance of creating a continuous Beltline necklace cannot be overstated. The Beltline's strength lies in its ability to connect communities across a corridor that has always been inaccessible. Any fragments or missing sections will sacrifice the Beltline's fundamental promise to unite the City of Atlanta.

An uninterrupted, Beltline Trail and Transit loop will provide an easy orientation for anyone traveling to one of the Beltline jewels, or connecting with the MARTA rail system. It will also change neighborhoods on both sides of the right-of-way. For the first time, people living on one side of the Beltline will be able to arrange a ball game, ride the Beltline, or walk to dinner at friends' homes on the other side. The Beltline will bring together residents of long-separated neighborhoods to share activities that, in many instances, have been prohibitively inaccessible. At the same time, residents of neighborhoods with relatively few recreation opportunities will gain access to parks and facilities throughout the city by using the Beltline.

Runners, walkers, and cyclists will all benefit from a single, continuous multi-use trail. Currently, users of active recreation trails must choose between using a small loop in Piedmont Park or a limited number of in-town trails: the Stone Mountain/Atlanta Greenway Trail is the longest, but it shares the road through downtown and only serves the east side of town; the Chastain Park Trail is highly attractive and PATH's most popular trail, but it is only three miles long in the north side of town; and the WestSide Trail, which also shares the road in various sections throughout, serves only its part of town as well.

For the first time, people living on one side of the Beltline will be able to arrange a ball game, ride the Beltline, or walk to dinner at friends' homes on the other side.

Right: Lindbergh Station will serve both MARTA and the Beltline Transit System, thereby opening up recreation, employment, and shopping destinations for residents of the entire metropolitan area.

These are all great trails, but they fail to connect all quadrants of the city or provide a continuous separation from street traffic.

The Beltline Trail will provide citizens an in-town opportunity for extended exercise that is separated from traffic and connects all communities. Whether it's a couple strolling with their baby, children biking to their baseball game, or college students taking an afternoon run, the Beltline will offer users a chance to forget the noise, traffic, and congestion of Atlanta's streets. Users will enter the Beltline Trail at different points and walk, run, or bike for varying times and distances, and to maximize this user base for the trail, it must make a complete loop of 360 degrees.

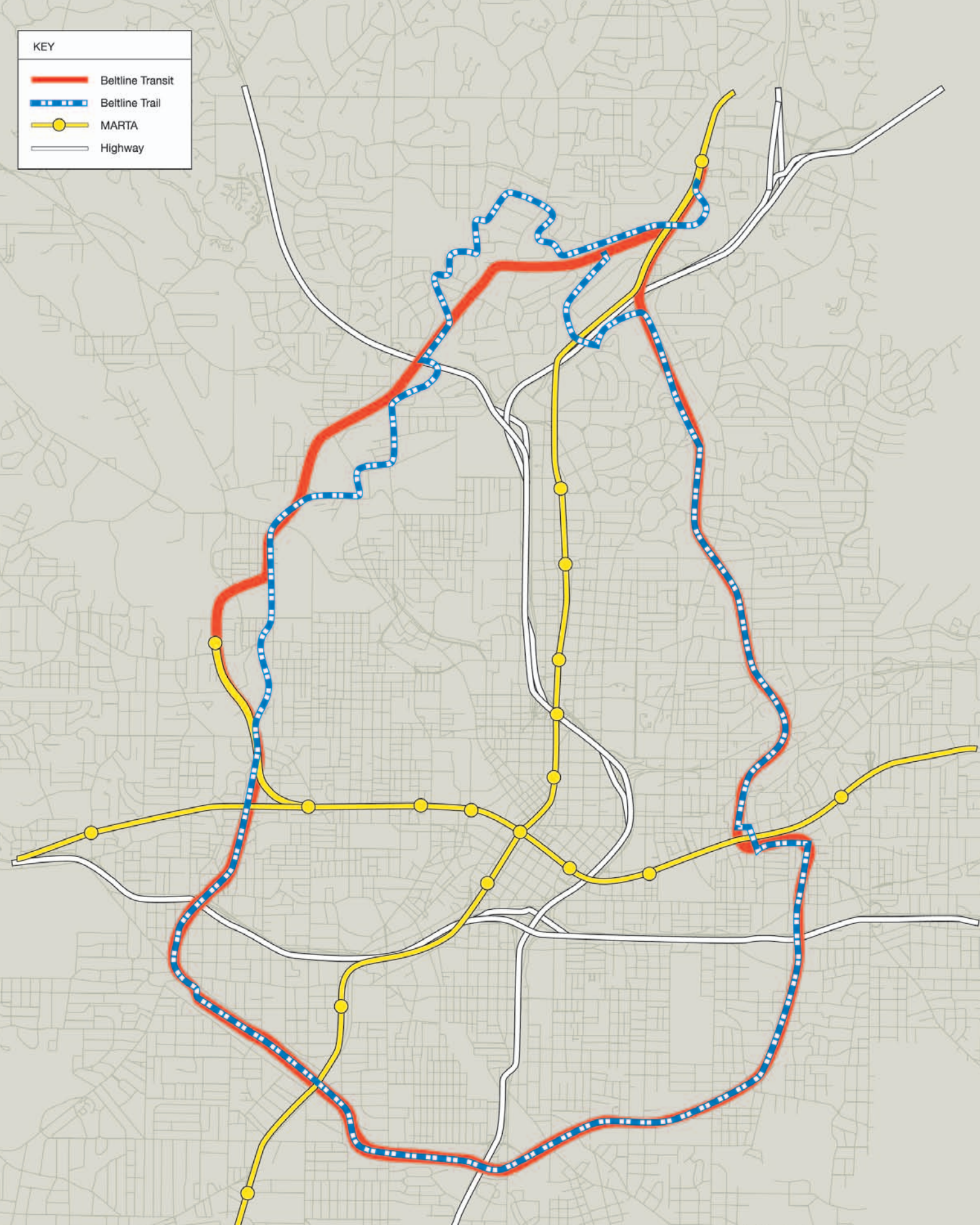
An incomplete Beltline will also undermine efforts to build the necessary public support, whereas a complete loop will reach every possible constituency. An incomplete Beltline would become an unequal asset for communities in different sections of the city. Those near the break would not experience the same benefit as those communities on the opposite side of the loop. Support for the Beltline must grow from various constituencies, and creating a single, continuous loop is the first and most critical element of creating that parity.

This same fundamental concept can be applied to transit. A

A continuous Beltline Park System will connect over 2,000 acres of parks, including 1,400 acres of new open space.

break in a single, continuous loop would not only fail to maximize ridership and connections to MARTA, but it would result in some communities receiving fewer benefits than others. The promise of the Beltline is to improve the daily life of all residents along the corridor, and to enable the rest of the city's residents to reach the new jewels along the Emerald Necklace. Anything less than a single, continuous transit loop is unacceptable, and would ultimately undermine the Beltline vision for the city.

Finally, a continuous Beltline provides the opportunity to unite its mass transit with a completely expanded and connected park system. This park system will connect Piedmont Park to Freedom Park to Rose Circle in the West End to Maddox Park on the West Side, all via the Beltline. A connected park system that unites a city's great parks is something most cities can only dream about. When combined with the transit and development opportunities, the continuous Beltline provides a 21st century public realm framework around which Atlanta will grow for the next 100 years. To realize the goal of a complete Beltline, this report recommends splitting development into two phases: the Beltline Trail and the Beltline Transit.


KEY
Beltline Transit
Beltline Trail
MARTA
Highway

Phase I: The Beltline Trail

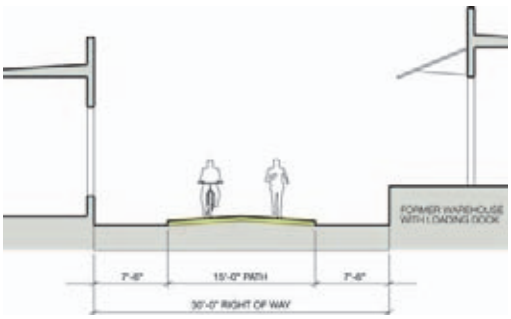
There are three interrelated reasons for creating the multi-use trail first: constituency building, timing, and funding. The momentum and public support currently behind the Beltline will not last if implementation does not begin within the next year. If there is no visible progress, support will evaporate. The Beltline Transit will take at least three years before construction can begin, five years before any section opens, and as many as 10 to 15 years before the transit loop is complete. The Beltline Trail, on the other hand, can begin construction in sections within a year's time and can be completed before the first section of the Beltline Transit is actively running. This action is critical to building a stronger and more widespread constituency for the Beltline.

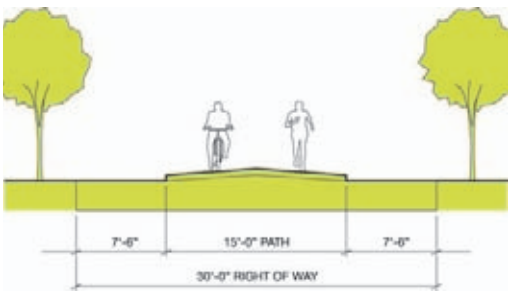
Atlanta is not ready to end its love affair with the automobile, but it may be ready to begin listening to its own Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, which recommends more daily exercise to combat the obesity epidemic. While a constituency exists now for improvements in mass transit, it will become much larger and more widespread when combined with the constituency for open-space and recreation. With the popularity of the Beltline Trail and the improvements it offers to Atlantans' daily lifestyle, support for the Beltline Transit will only increase.

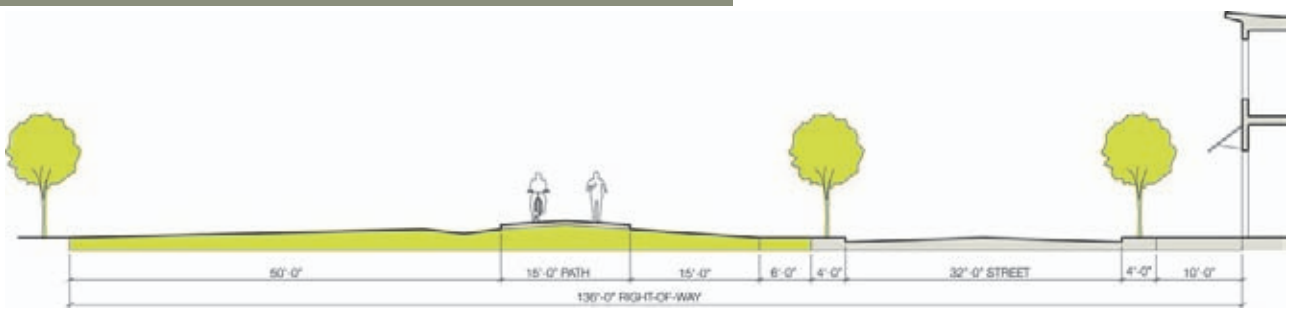
The issue of funding is equally important. The cost to acquire the right-of-way and build the Beltline Transit will range anywhere from $400 million to $1.2 billion. The cost to acquire the right-of-way and build the Beltline Trail will be a fraction of that cost. Due to the high cost of the Beltline Transit, it will require funding from the federal government, which cannot begin until 2006 (assuming the New Starts Application in the summer of 2005 is accepted), and from

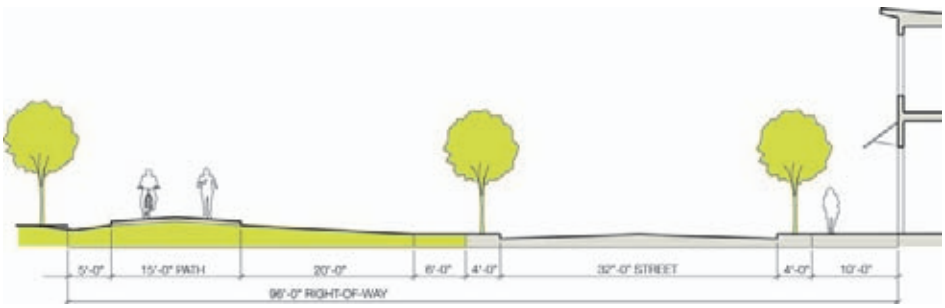
Typical Cross-Sections of Beltline Trail

The Beltline Trail will be built in a variety of conditions. In some cases, the trail will cut through undeveloped overgrowth, and in other cases the trail will ride between vacant factories that have been converted into loft apartments or condos. In still other cases, the trail will ride parallel to a street on one side and a park on the other. The cross-sections at right and below are typical examples of conditions that will exist on the Beltline, but each section of the trail will require its own design based on topography, current conditions, and community desires.









the Tax Allocation District, which will not be able to issue bonds until mid-2006 (assuming the City, County, and Board of Education approve the TAD). The solution is straightforward: Atlanta's major foundations and philanthropic organizations can fund the multi-use trail as the Beltline's first step from vision into reality.

Although the Beltline Trail must come first, its construction must not prevent the subsequent introduction of the Beltline Transit. Most importantly, the land for the transit must be reserved, where feasible, for the future transit, and users must be informed that a transit line is planned for the future. In Minneapolis, the Midtown Greenway has accomplished such a task. Its multi-use trail lies on one side of the right-of-way and the other side is reserved for the future transit, which is currently in the planning and engineering phase of design

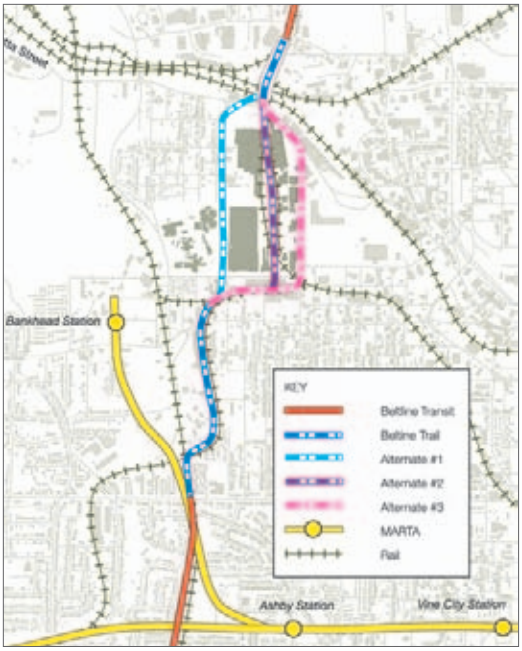
Above: The Midtown Greenway in Minneapolis has reserved enough land along its bicycle path to accommodate a transit line when funding becomes available.

The Route

The Beltline Trail will share the right-of-way with the Beltline Transit for almost three quarters of the loop. In northwestern Atlanta, however, the heavily used CSX freight line is neither likely to be displaced in the foreseeable future, nor conducive to sharing its property with a multi-use trail. Beyond the problems of steep slopes, grade separations, and narrow widths, it would be difficult to ensure users' safety. Therefore, the bike path requires an alternate route in the northwest quadrant that diverges from the transit path. Taking this diversion into account, the Beltline Trail's total distance will be 23 miles, which includes entering and exiting the Lindbergh station.

In the Southeast Section, the infrequently used single track from the Capitol View neighborhood to Glenwood Avenue carries sand to the Lafarge materials distribution facility. The majority of similar facilities now use trucks as the primary means to transport sand. There is no reason the same adjustment cannot be made at this facility. This active use, therefore, should not be considered a major obstacle, although it must be addressed with the operators of the facility.

The route of the Beltline Trail through the northwest quadrant, as outlined below, is based on preliminary study and site investigation. A variety of issues, including the status of Atlanta's Greenway Acquisition Program, the reconfiguration of the Bobby Jones Golf Course, and the ability to negotiate successfully with property owners along the route, will ultimately determine the route.



Bankhead to Waterworks

North of Simpson Road, at the largest of the Beltline's discontinuity, the trail should avoid active freight traffic at all costs. In addition, no matter which alternate is chosen, the Beltline Trail will require a major bridge over Marietta Street and the gulch of active rail tracks to the north. Such a bridge would range in length from 500-700 feet, depending on the location of the crossing, but a relatively simple bridge will accomplish this task. Nonetheless, it is one of the largest and most visible pieces of new construction required for continuity of the Beltline Trail.

Because an active rail line joins the abandoned right-of-way just before entering Maddox Park from the south, the trail should turn east and north in the abandoned right-of-way that is now owned by the Antioch North Baptist Church. Crossing under Hollowell Boulevard (formerly Bankhead) through an existing overpass, the trail should divert north from the right-of-way along the eastern edge of the Fulton County Jail (Alt 1). (Proper barriers and landscaping will ensure the security of trail users.) By building the trail adjacent to Herndon Street, the trail can go between the street and the Mead plant as it rises in elevation to reach the height of the bridge over Marietta.

Although Alternate 1 is preferred, there are two other means of accessing the bridge through this area. Going through Mead (Alt 2) would require the plant's acquisition and redevelopment, which is not likely. Bringing the trail along Joseph Lowery Boulevard (formerly Ashby Street) (Alt 3) is also a possibility, but again, sharing a lane in traffic should be avoided if at all possible.

Waterworks to Interstate-75

The bridge over Marietta Street will land on the western edge of the future site of the Howard School. There, the trail will split from the rail right-of-way and head east and north through the Atlanta Waterworks property. There is sufficient room between the road and the reservoirs to accommodate the trail with spectacular views of downtown, as well as easy connections into the Atlantic Station Redevelopment site.

From the Waterworks, the trail must connect to an existing underpass below I-75. This presents one of the most difficult obstacles in creating a continuous trail in the northwest quadrant. One possibility is to lay the trail parallel to Northside Drive, before crossing it later to join a creek bed along the southern boundary of the Atlanta Technology Center between Northside Drive and I-75. The creek bed would take the trail all the way to the I-75's retaining wall, which leads to the I-75 overpass.

Interstate-75 to Bobby Jones Golf Course (Tanyard Creek)

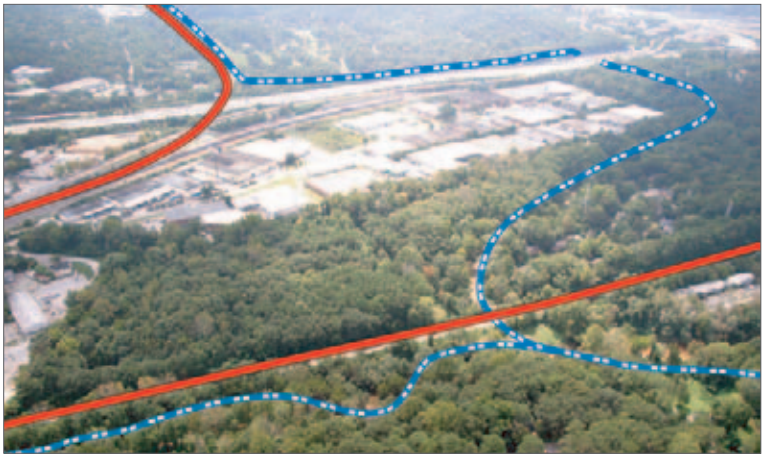
From the I-75 underpass, the multi-use trail will share the right-of-way with the Beltline Transit and active CSX line for a quarter mile. A separation barrier will be required to protect the trail users because it is not feasible to build a new tunnel under the highway.

After sharing the right-of-way with the active rail, the trail will again diverge from the right-of-way by turning east just north of the new Bryson Square housing development. A foot path already exists that connects this development to Tanyard Creek Park to the north. In fact, the PATH Foundation has already begun the conversion of this foot path into a multi-use trail which the Beltline Trail will share until it splits north to connect into Bobby Jones Golf Course.

Bobby Jones Golf Course to Peachtree Creek

From Tanyard Creek, the Beltline Trail will follow the southern and eastern border of the Bobby Jones Golf Course and tie into Peachtree Creek (Alt 1). Building along the creek bed creates highly attractive trails in areas that will not otherwise have buildings because they lie in the flood plain. Cities from Boulder to Minneapolis have taken advantage of such opportunities.

In early October 2004, however, the city announced that it was considering a plan to extend Norfleet Road from Northside Drive to Peachtree Street in order to alleviate the traffic congestion on the parallel Collier Road. This new road would require the reconfiguration of Bobby Jones Golf Course. The plan calls for a parkway that could potentially connect the Beltline Trail into Peachtree Street (Alt 2). Peachtree Street is a major thoroughfare, however, and the trail would require a grade crossing. In addition, there is not a clear path from Peachtree Street at this point back into Peachtree Creek. No matter which route the Beltline Trail takes, if the Bobby Jones reconfiguration occurs, the new parkway should be designed with the appropriate grade separation to enhance the Beltline Trail.

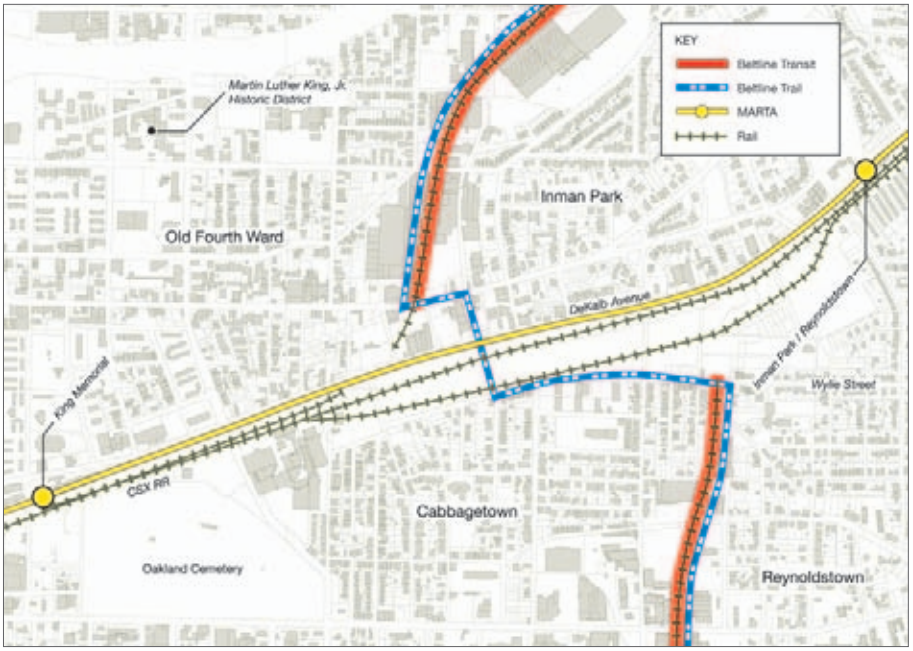


Peachtree Creek to the Lindbergh Station and Armour

East of Peachtree Street, Peachtree Creek features a strip of land that is identified as a bridle path on the Fulton County parcel data. The PATH Foundation was asked to convert this land into a trail several years ago, but declined because the trail would have lacked a destination. Now that the Beltline needs a route through this area, it is the perfect time to convert that bridle path into a multi-use trail.

At the eastern end of the bridle path, the trail must achieve two goals: it must reach the Lindbergh transit-oriented development site, and it must connect back into the abandoned right-of-way south of I-85. To reach Lindbergh Station, the trail will continue along Peachtree Creek before turning north, riding parallel to Garson Drive, and entering the Lindbergh Development.

Connecting back into the Beltline's right-of-way south of I-85 may appear daunting, but a simple solution exists. The active rail right-of-way northeast of the Armour industrial site is off-limits. Freight rail and Amtrak use this line with consistent frequency, and it is unsafe for pedestrians, runners, or cyclists. Instead, the Beltline Trail will split south where Clear Creek joins Peachtree Creek. Following Clear Creek, the trail can follow around the Armour Industrial Site, under the rail lines and I-85, and emerge at the northern end of the Ansley Golf Club. The trail will follow the northern edge of the club's property before joining back into the Beltline right-of-way.

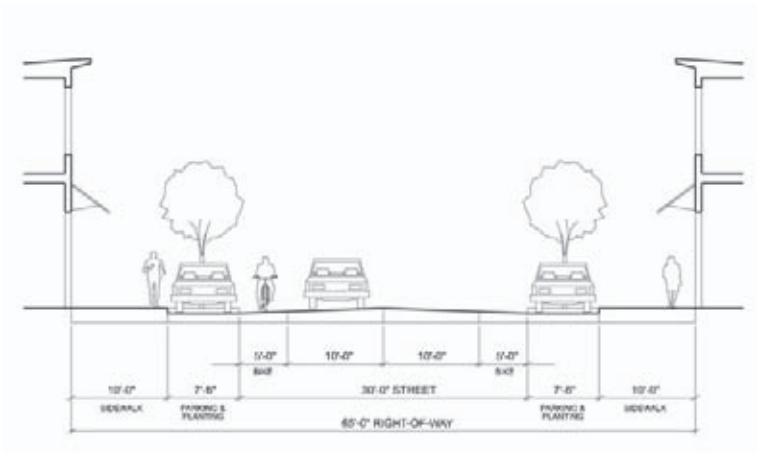


CSX Hulsey Yard (Intermodal)

Although CSX poses a serious obstacle for the Beltline Transit, the Beltline Trail should not be delayed due to the rail yard. A PATH bike route already runs along Krog Street, which runs under the rail yard, and the Beltline Trail could simply share this portion through the tunnel and east on Wylie Street. When the entire site is redeveloped, as outlined in Chapter 4, this portion of the Beltline will feature a dedicated, off-street path that does not share a road with traffic. Until that point, sharing the current bike route will suffice.

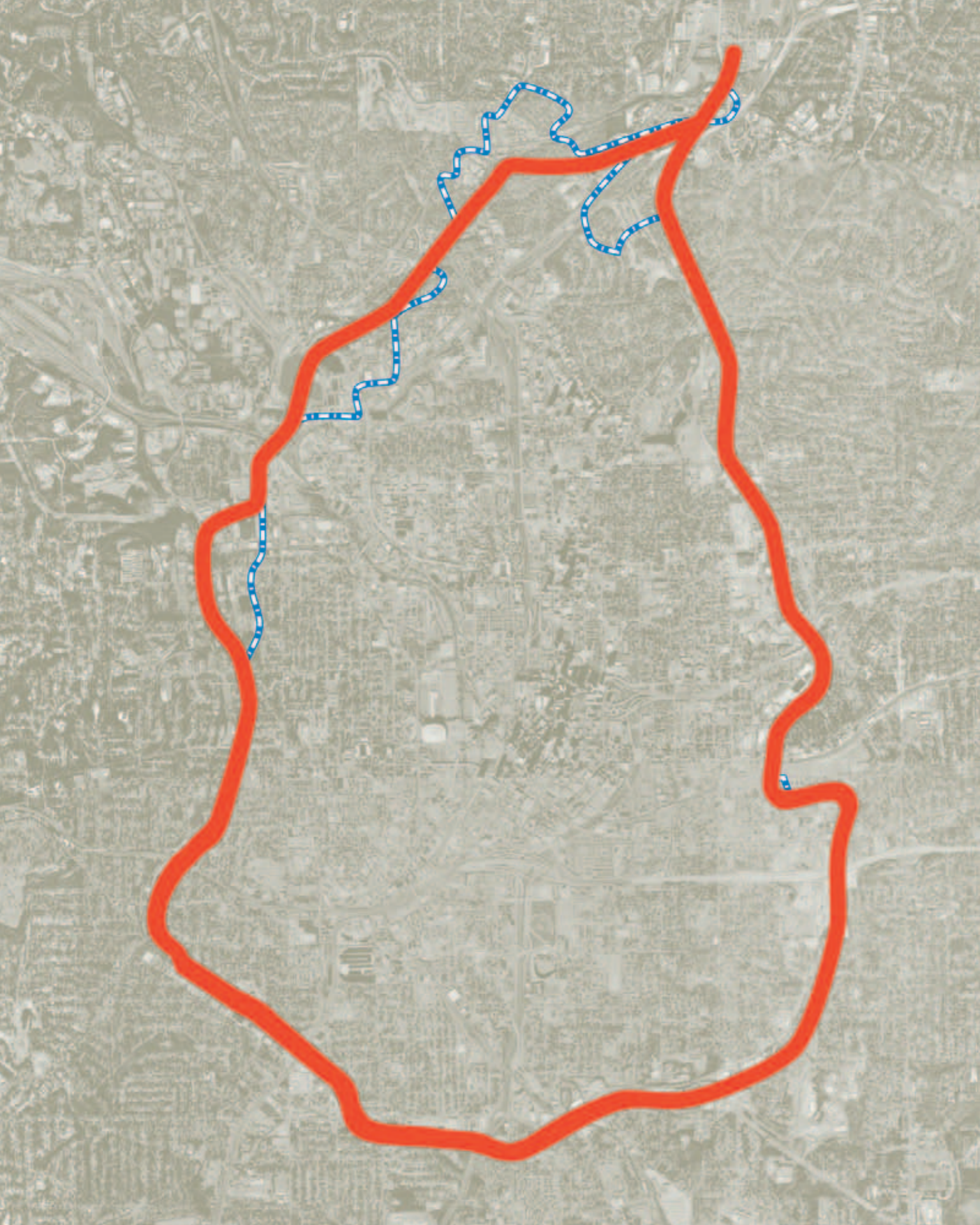
Bill Kennedy Way

The right-of-way between Memorial and Glenwood has undergone several redesigns since it was decommissioned as a rail corridor. Currently, there is room along the existing bridge over I-20 and along the section of the street between Memorial and I-20 to accommodate the Beltline Trail. From I-20 to Glenwood, however, the road is not wide enough to accommodate both the transit and multi-use trail. Recently, this street was redesigned to accommodate street parking and a sidewalk for the new Glenwood Park development. The current design is too narrow to accommodate the Beltline. It needs to be adjusted to include both a protected Beltline Trail and the Beltline Transit in addition to the street, parking, and sidewalk widths.



Simpson Road

South of Simpson Road, the Beltline Trail will cross the existing MARTA line, which is in a trench. In order to do so, the trail will require a steel truss bridge similar to those already in place along the Silver Comet Trail, located west of Atlanta.



Phase II: The Beltline Transit

Atlanta, like virtually every American city, has been transformed by interstate highways. Everybody hoped that MARTA would play a significant role in reversing the trend toward automobile dependency. MARTA did accelerate the growth of high-density subcenters in Midtown and Buckhead, but its impact has yet to be felt in most of the city's residential neighborhoods. The Beltline will change that.

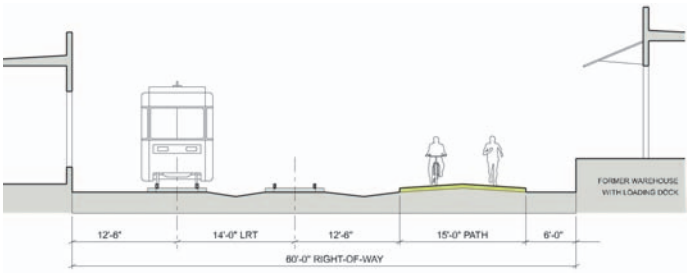
A single, continuous transit loop will connect Atlanta's inner neighborhoods with one another and with MARTA. In doing so, the Beltline will provide a mass transit connection to the airport and with employment and shopping opportunities in Downtown, Midtown, Buckhead, and throughout the city.

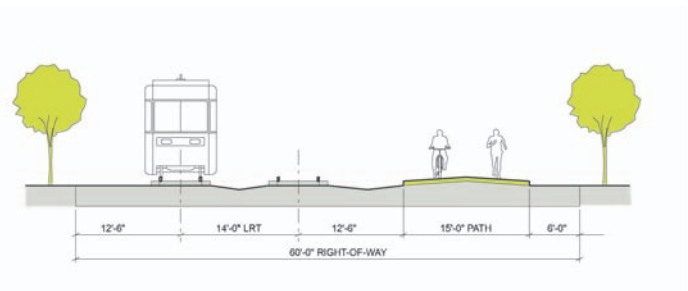
The Route

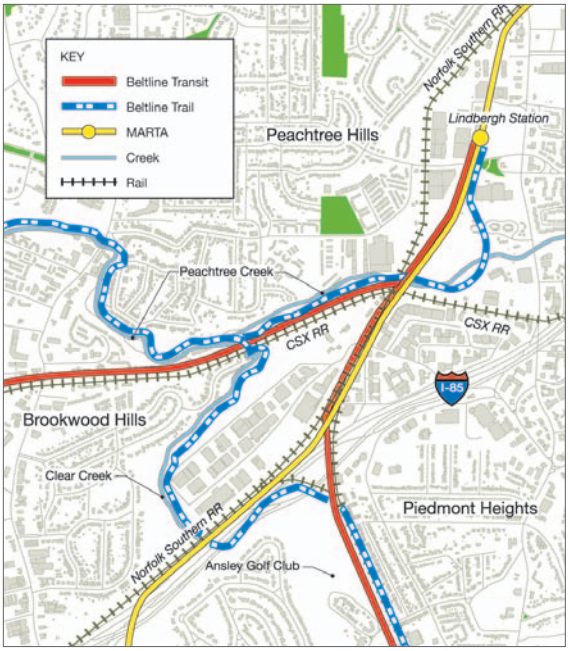
The Beltline Transit will share most of the rights-of-way with the Beltline Trail, with the exception of the active CSX line in the northwest quadrant. In the Northwest Section, the right-of-way is wide enough to accommodate both the existing rail traffic and the Beltline Transit, although extensive re-grading will be necessary. It is critical, however, that heavy freight traffic is sealed off from any pedestrian traffic, and thus special consideration needs to be given to fences and barriers around any stations or crossings where pedestrians might be able to penetrate the right-of-way boundaries. Also, current freight traffic cannot be disrupted. Therefore, close coordination with CSX will be essential during the planning, design, and construction of the Beltline Transit in this corridor.

Typical Cross-Sections of Beltline Transit and Beltline Trail

The Beltline Transit, like the Beltline Trail, will be built in a variety of conditions. These sections show the same conditions as before, only now a two-track transit system has a been added, thus widening the right-of-way necessary.







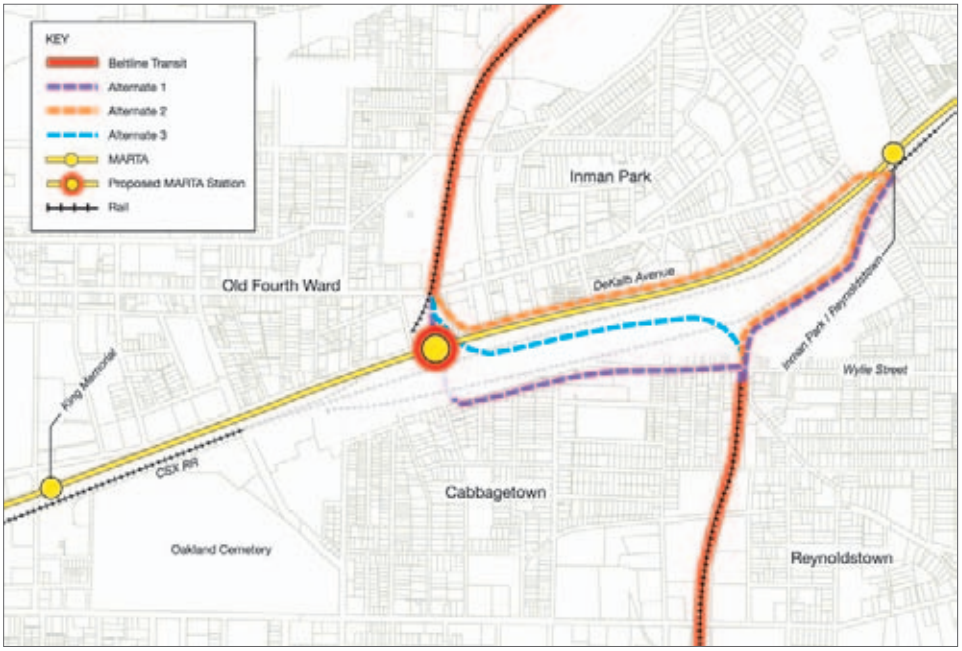
Discontinuity Points

Armour

Armour Yard poses a difficult set of expensive obstacles. After an analysis of several alternatives, including the possibility of a new MARTA station in the Armour area, this report recommends connecting to the Lindbergh Station, due to its concentration of offices, retail and housing.

Although there are several minor alternatives, the Beltline Transit must follow one basic route in order connect into the Lindbergh MARTA station. Heading north from Piedmont Park, the right-of-way passes through a tunnel below I-85. The transit will continue along the existing alignment as it curves under MARTA to run parallel with the north-south railroad. Just before Peachtree Creek, the Beltline Transit veers off parallel with the MARTA tracks into the Lindbergh station. In order to head west upon its departure from the station, the transit will require a steep decline out of Lindbergh, a long bridge across Peachtree Creek, and an intricate turn west below the Norfolk Southern bridge and onto the CSX line. This route requires that Armour yard be shortened in order to fit a double track Beltline along its eastern edge.

Although this report recommends the aforementioned route, a minor variation would run the Beltline tracks into the Lindbergh station on the east side of the MARTA tracks in order to better connect into the MARTA new maintenance facility. This variation, however, would require acquisition of multiple properties, as opposed to shortening Armour yard.



CSX Hulsey Yard

The CSX Hulsey Yard presents both a significant challenge and a significant opportunity for the Beltline. This study has identified three base alternates for this area, and each has several minor variations. The three alternates vary based on one key factor; two treat the Hulsey Yard as a simple barrier that the Beltline Transit will traverse over or under, and the third treats the yard as an opportunity for new open space and development with the Beltline crossing at grade. The former two would connect into the Inman Park/Reynoldstown MARTA station, and the third would require a new MARTA station where it intersects with the Beltline. These options are polar opposites. This report recommends the third alternate due to the significant opportunities it offers to transform the City of Atlanta. At the same time, further study is needed to verify its economic feasibility.

While redevelopment of this facility into a mixed-use community is likely within the next 20 years due simply to its favorable location and increasing land value, it may not happen immediately. Alternates should both anticipate this development and provide the opportunity for both the Beltline and the facility to co-exist if necessary.

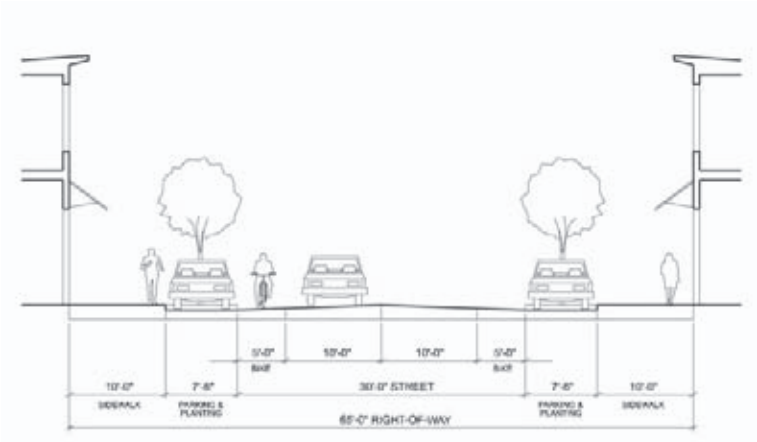
Alternate 1: Heading south, Alternate 1 crosses DeKalb Avenue at grade, and then crosses under the CSX main line in a new tunnel. From there, it makes a long traverse eastward across the site, up into the Inman Park/Reynoldstown station and back south to Wylie Street. This section would operate within a capped trench so that in the future it could be reopened to daylight as part of the larger redevelopment of the site. In the short-term, the area above could be used by CSX for truck storage. This design does not require a new MARTA station, would have minimal impact on the CSX Intermodal facility, and would be well-positioned for future redevelopment. However, its indirect route and long tunnel make it less than ideal.

Alternate 2: Heading south, Alternate 2 turns east along DeKalb Avenue, raises up and over the MARTA and CSX tracks as it approaches and enters the Inman Park/Reynoldstown MARTA station. After departing the station, it remains elevated over the Hulsey Yard until it descends to meet the old Atlanta & West Point line at Wylie Avenue. This alternate has less of an impact on the CSX facility and does not require a new MARTA station, but creates other problems by traveling along DeKalb Avenue, a thoroughfare that carries heavy traffic on three lanes. It also requires a difficult flyover across the MARTA and CSX tracks and yard.

Alternate 3: Alternate 3 provides a more direct route for the Beltline Transit and a redevelopment site that is more connected to the adjacent communities. This alternate requires building a new MARTA station and trenching a tunnel for the main CSX line between Boulevard and the Inman Park/Reynoldstown station. Heading south, Alternate 3 crosses DeKalb Avenue and a buried CSX main line at grade, below the east MARTA line, and through the new MARTA station. The Beltline Transit would then turn east through the site before turning south onto the Beltline's main right-of-way. This alternate eliminates the existing barrier that the railroad and Hulsey Yard create between neighborhoods to the north and south, but requires redevelopment and relocation of the entire CSX facility. The new MARTA station is logically placed, roughly equidistant between the King Memorial and Inman Park/Reynoldstown stations.

Bill Kennedy Way

A simple solution to this challenging area is to widen the roadway to accommodate both the transit and multi-use trail. Further engineering is needed to determine if the existing bridge over I-20 can accommodate this alternative or if a new bridge will be required. In addition, as stated earlier, the new design for the Glenwood Connector through the Glenwood Park development must be adjusted to accommodate both the Beltline Transit and Beltline Trail.



Washington Park/Simpson Road

There are two solutions for dealing with the MARTA line below Simpson Road. One is to ease the Beltline down off the ridge to ride elevated above the MARTA line. It would cross Mayson-Turner Road and Simpson Road at grade, and then continue north as the Proctor Creek spur veers west toward the Bankhead station. This option, however, is not preferred due to these two grade crossings. The preferred solution is to have the Beltline descend from the ridge into a widened trench next to MARTA so that both transit systems are below grade when they cross under Mayson-Turner and Simpson Road. This would allow for a new Beltline Transit-MARTA Station below grade, with the opportunity for new development above (for further discussion of this new development, see Chapter 4).

Bankhead

There are several alternative routes through this vast territory. Because it is such a large area, there are many opportunities and the final route selected will not be able to accommodate all of them. One Alternate utilizes the existing Bankhead station while others miss it in order to better access redevelopment opportunities to the east of Maddox Park. In addition, all of the alternates will require a long and expensive bridge across the CSX/Norfolk Southern main tracks north of Marietta Street, just as it did for the Beltline Trail.

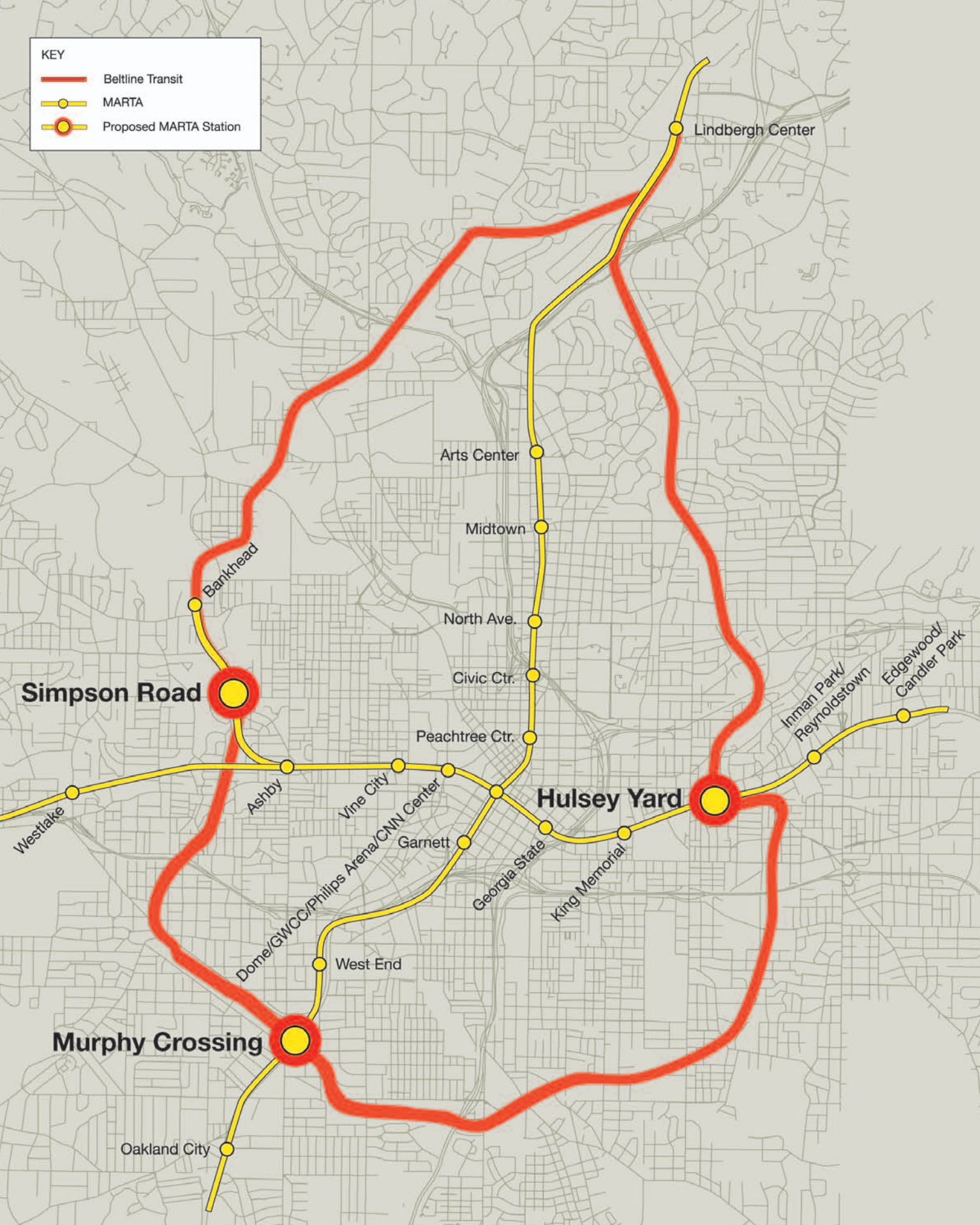
This report recommends Alternate 1 due to its connection with the Bankhead MARTA station and its access to the Bellwood Lake development opportunity, as discussed in Chapter 4. In addition, this report recommends creating a new Beltline Transit/MARTA station at Simpson Road to create new development opportunities which will again be outlined in Chapter 4.

Alternate 1: From Simpson Road heading north, Alternate 1 follows the east side of the Proctor Creek MARTA spur, along Maddox Park into the Bankhead station. From there it takes a cross-country route north through some undeveloped and abandoned property before turning east to cross Marietta Boulevard near the intersection of Rice Street. It follows the undeveloped north side of the Fulton County Jail property before turning north along Herndon Street. Following the east side of Herndon, Alternate 1 crosses Marietta Street and the rail lines on a long bridge.

Alternate 2: From Simpson Road heading north along the Proctor Creek MARTA spur, Alternate 2 turns east onto the abandoned section of the old Atlanta Birmingham & Coast Line Railroad (AB&C). It follows this corridor north to D.L. Hollowell Boulevard and shortly after turns north across a private parcel to cross Jefferson Street at the eastern boundary of the Fulton County Jail. It continues north, utilizing a long existing parking lot that connects to Herndon Street on the north side of the Jail. From there it joins Alternate 1 running north along Herndon, crossing Marietta and the railroad on a long bridge. This alternate would require a new MARTA station at Simpson Road and property acquisition, but it would utilize an abandoned section of railroad that could become a new eastern boundary to Maddox Park. It has good access to the Howell Station neighborhood and the redevelopment sites to the east.

Alternate 3: Like Alternate 2, Alternate 3 heads north from Simpson Road and turns east onto the abandoned AB&C railroad, continuing on to Hollowell. Instead of turning north along the Jail, however, it turns north into Bellwood Yard, an underutilized rail yard that begins north from Jefferson Street. The easternmost track of Bellwood is abandoned and takes a fairly easy grade north behind the existing Mead/Westvaco facility, stopping just short of Marietta Street. Making this short connection would allow the route to cross Marietta Street and the long bridge over the railroad wye to Huff Road. This alternate would have the greatest impact on redevelopment possibilities north of Jefferson Street, but would require an agreement or buy-out with Mead/Westvaco. Similar to Alternate 2, in order to connect to the Proctor Creek MARTA spur, this alternate would require a new MARTA station at Simpson Road.

Alternate 4: Alternative 4, like Alternate 2 and Alternate 3, heads north from Simpson Road and turns east onto the abandoned AB&C railroad, continuing on to Hollowell. Instead of turning north along the Jail or Bellwood Yard, it simply turns north onto Lowery Boulevard, an on-street segment that passes existing redevelopment at Puritan Mill and King Plow before turning northwest on Marietta Street and then north across the railroad wye to Huff Road. While this alternate may create some traffic problems along Lowery or Marietta, it is also possible within the current public right-of-way and would not require purchase of private property. Similar to Alternates 2 and 3, in order to connect to the Proctor Creek MARTA spur, this alternate would require a new MARTA station at Simpson Road.


KEY
Beltline Transit
MARTA
Proposed MARTA Station
Lindbergh Center
Arts Center
Midtown
Bankhead
North Ave.
Civic Ctr.
Simpson Road
Peachtree Ctr.
Inman Park/
Reynoldstown
Edgewood/
Candler Park
Ashby
Vine City
Hulsey Yard
Westlake
Garnett
Georgia State
King Memorial
Dome/GWCC/Philips Arena/CNN Center
West End
Murphy Crossing
Oakland City

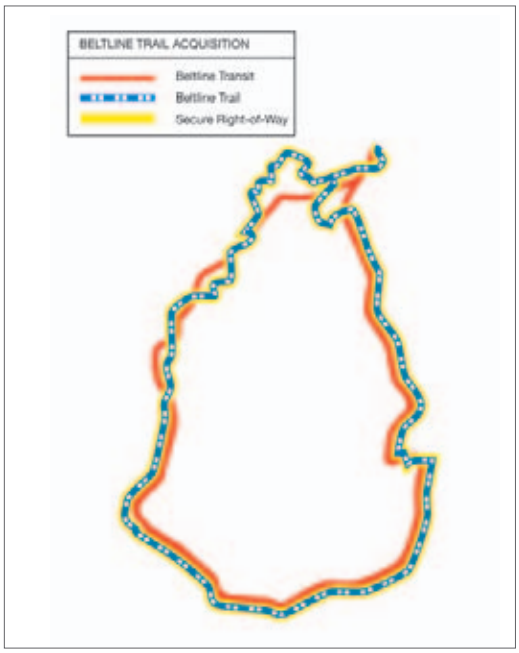
New MARTA Stations

The Necessity for New Stations

In order for the Beltline Transit to successfully transform daily life in Atlanta, it must help MARTA fulfill its potential as an effective transportation alternative for all residents. The existing MARTA stations are not sufficient. This report recommends constructing three new MARTA stations at key points along the Beltline so as to secure the Beltline Transit and MARTA as a viable transportation network. These locations are Simpson Road, Murphy Crossing and Hulsey Yard.

Without the new MARTA stations, the Beltline would only connect to two MARTA stations—Lindbergh and Bankhead. All of the other stations are too far off the Beltline's route and not within walking distance from the points of intersection. Consequently, while the Beltline Transit would provide Atlantans an opportunity to circle the city, it would not provide sufficient access to downtown and neighborhoods off the Beltline. Atlanta would lose a grand opportunity to expand its transportation network.

Instead, this report recommends constructing new stations at the two points of intersection, and a third at Simpson Road to help transform Atlanta's West Side. These stations are essential to increase ridership on MARTA, which has yet to approach its expected capacity. They will also trigger private development of the vacant and underutilized property surrounding these new stations. Each of these stations will become focal points for new, mixed-use transit-oriented developments (TOD). Each TOD will include a large new public park which together with the transit station will become a destination for residents of surrounding communities. These new developments at Hulsey Park, Murphy Crossing, and Simpson Road are discussed in greater detail in Chapter 4.



Cost

Phase I

Rights-of-Way Access

The Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC), in its 2030 Transportation Improvement Plan, has already set aside $29 million ($14 million federal matched by $15 million local) for Beltline right-of-way acquisition between 2006 and 2008, with the assumption it will be purchased outright initially for trail use, followed by transit use.[4] The Beltline Trail, however, cannot wait two to four years before acquisition begins, and it cannot happen incrementally as the ARC's plan outlines. Instead, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) must provide the initial money to secure the right-of-way for the entire Beltline Trail. Then, once the Tax Allocation District and ARC's transit funds become available, the donors who provided the initial money must be reimbursed.

For this initial period, the right-of-way acquisition should be secured for the lowest possible cost. As outline in Chapter 2, there are numerous methods to securing a right-of-way. For a multi-use trail, leaseholds, easements, and outright purchase are the most common, but it can also be acquired through land swaps or other complicated contractual agreements.

Many mitigating factors, however, could help reduce this acquisition cost—particularly in the northwest quadrant. The Sanitary Sewer Consent Decree requirements that Peachtree Creek be remediated include costs to acquire creek beds and set aside open space. In addition, the City has purchased several developed areas within the creek's floodplain. Plans call for demolition and redevelopment of the properties in compliance with stream buffer requirements, which will provide land and funding for the Beltline Trail. Finally, if the city's reconfiguration of Bobby Jones Golf Course proceeds, the project will also provide land and funding for the trail. Whether or not these tangential projects are realized, NGOs must advance the money. Otherwise, these sites will be purchased for private development.

Construction Costs

Track Clearance and Paving

The Beltline Trail will be constructed similar to the PATH Foundation's existing Silver Comet Trail, located west of the city. Based on PATH's prior experience, 15 feet of width would be optimal for the volume of traffic expected along the Beltline corridor. As a rule of thumb, grade crossings are not desirable along the PATH trails. In practice, trails must be grade separated from regional traffic arteries, and when they are crossed, traffic signals are the minimum requirement for non-regional crossings. Finally, simple striped pedestrian crossings with stop signs are the minimum requirements for neighborhood streets.

In order to prepare the route for paving and trail use, several steps are necessary. First, the existing tracks must be removed. Because future Beltline Transit will require a different type of track than the freight track that currently is in place along portions of the Beltline right-of-way, there is no reason for the Beltline Trail to save this track. Then, re-grading and reconfiguration of the right-of-way are necessary in anticipation of the transit system. This step will ensure there is a designated and preserved corridor for the Beltline Transit.

Above: Before and after PATH trail conversion across a rail bridge on the Silver Comet Trail

Above: Before and after PATH trail conversion along a creek

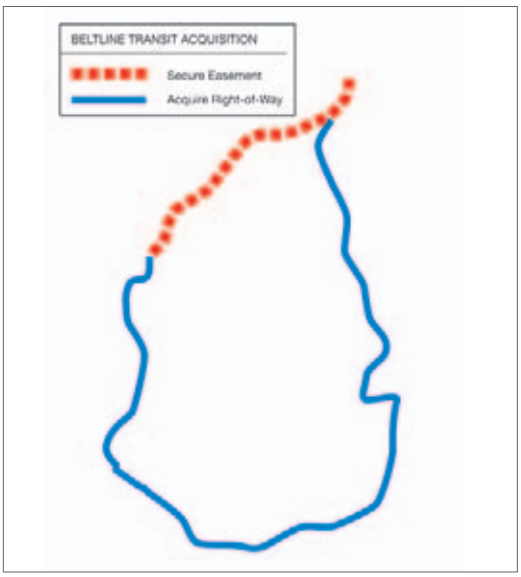
In addition, much of the flood plain along Peachtree Creek and Clear Creek will require substantial shoring since the existing sandbar consistency is not adequate for trail construction. In the next stage of planning, engineers will need to determine specific costs for these improvements.

Next, all bridges must be modified to ensure the user's safety. The PATH Foundation has found through experience that existing rail bridges can usually be converted to trail bridges with relative ease. Rails are removed, decking installed, and safety rails added. Because the Beltline Transit will eventually need to share many of these bridges, these modifications require some consideration—much more than your typical rail-to-trail conversion. In many instances, the existing bridges will not be adequate for combined trail and transit use. However, most can be inexpensively modified for use as a trail now, and then later replaced with combined use bridges in Phase II. In some instances, however, entirely new structures are required for the Beltline Trail. In these cases it may make sense to build combined use bridges from the outset rather than construct new trail bridges that will only be replaced five to ten years later in Phase II. Future studies and the level of funding will determine whether combined bridges should be built at the outset to save money in the long run.

Greenway Acquisition Project

The Greenway Acquisition Project (GAP), as discussed in Chapter 2, will play a significant role in both acquiring the right-of-way and funding the construction of the Beltline Trail. Although the GAP is focused primarily on acquiring and protecting a streamside infrastructure for water quality purposes, up to 10% of any protected parcel may include a public access component, as long as it does not fall within the 75-foot minimum (100-foot preferable) stream buffer. The Beltline Trail will run through properties already acquired along Peachtree Creek and adjacent trails will connect to similar properties along Intrenchment Creek. Additionally, if plans for the Beltline Trail are developed in the early months of 2005 and coordinated with the GAP purchases, the Beltline acquisition cost will decrease. Time is of the essence for such coordination, as the Greenway acquisitions are already occurring. To date, Greenway funds have been used to acquire approximately 113 acres of property.

Trail acquisition funds should be combined or coordinated between these efforts. A coordinated GAP/Beltline effort is worth exploring at a later time. A combined effort holds the potential for addressing the City's streams in a manner that will produce lovely, desirable routes along which people will want to stroll, jog, and bicycle. The Beltline will tie them together into a system that is accessible to residents of every city neighborhood.



Phase II

Transit Right-of-Way Acquisition

Once the funding for the Beltline Transit is secured, the entire right-of-way will be purchased. This acquisition will be governed by federal transit funding regulations and the status of bonds issued by the Tax Allocation District. For parcels secured in fee simple for the Beltline Trail, the acquisition will require nothing more than reimbursement to the non-profit organizations that funded the Beltline Trail. For areas where the Beltline Trail acquired leases or easements, this will require purchasing the right-of-way outright from the current owner.

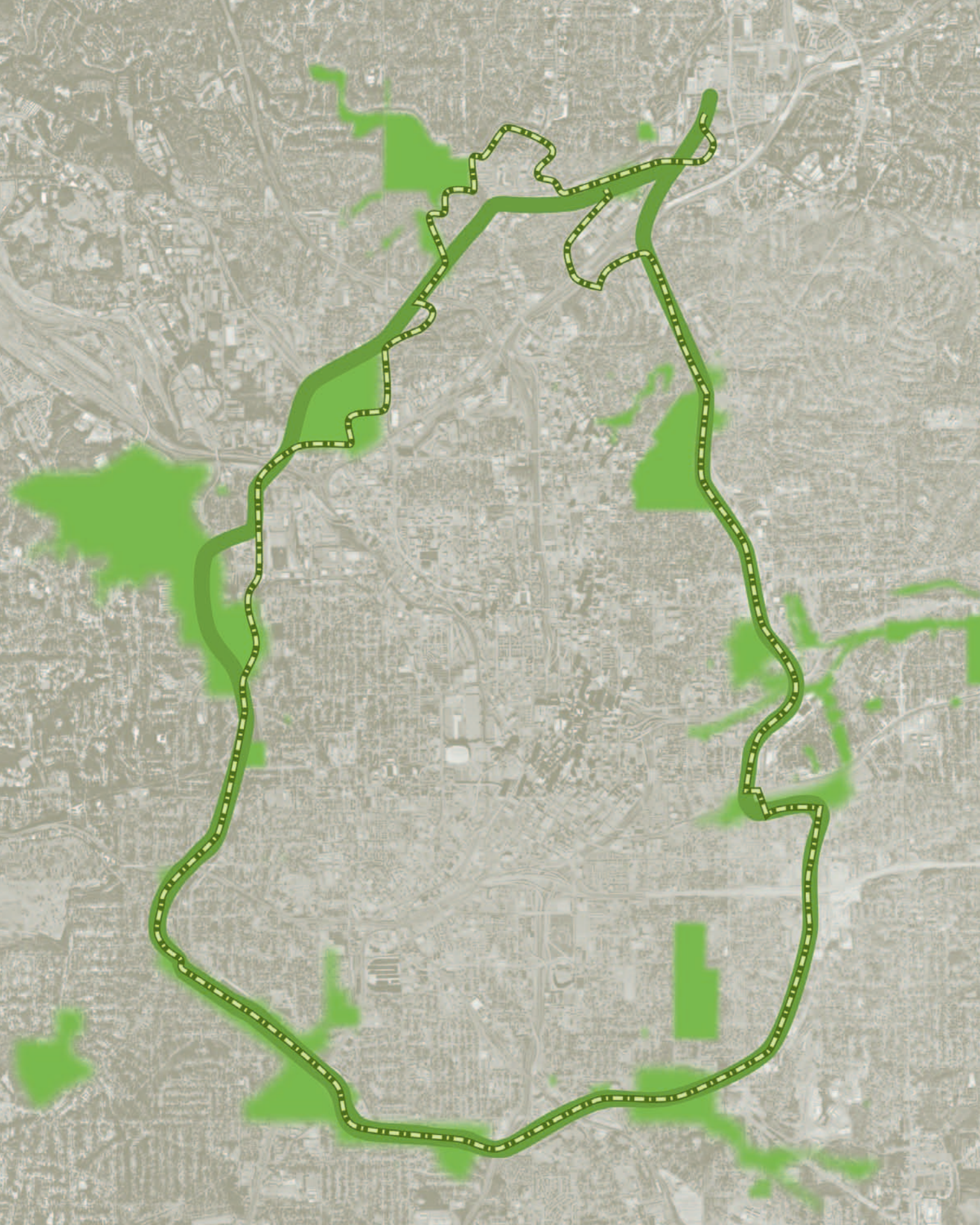
For the heavily active line in the northwest quadrant that the Beltline Trail bypasses, CSX is unlikely to change their traffic patterns or sell the right-of-way. Therefore, for this 3.5 mile section, only an easement—and not a full deed—will be acquired so that CSX can maintain their current traffic.

The MARTA Inner-Core Study is currently studying the feasibility of the Beltline. When released, this study will include preliminary cost estimates for implementing the Beltline Transit. Only after the study is complete and the transit approved will the detailed studies begin that determine the specific engineering, design, and construction costs that will be associated with implementing the Beltline Transit.

Conclusion

By separating the Beltline into two distinct phases, implementation can begin immediately. The relatively low cost of Phase I pales in comparison to the benefits it will provide for nearby residents, their communities, and the City of Atlanta. Equally important, these funds can be raised in the short term. It is a single step that will bring the Beltline halfway to reality, but it is absolutely critical that the momentum not stop there.

The Phase II transportation and its connections into MARTA are essential for building a larger market of park and transit users and for creating transit-oriented developments. The Beltline Transit will connect current and new residents to Downtown, Midtown, Bankhead, and the airport, and it will connect residents throughout the city into the new Beltline Jewels and the new mixed-use communities providing new jobs. The Beltline Trail and the Beltline Transit will each create a new framework around which Atlanta can grow, but combined they will generate the widespread and sustained private market reaction that will forever change the City of Atlanta.



Chapter 4

Creating the Beltline Jewels

Opportunities to Create Jewels

The goal of adding hundreds of acres of new parkland is within the grasp of many American cities, but none so notably as Atlanta. The reason is that cities are continually changing. As one land use disappears, property becomes available for other activities. This is especially true of warehousing and manufacturing, which during the 19th and early 20th centuries depended on shipping by rail. By the 1930s, many companies were beginning to ship by truck. As a result of the creation of the interstate highway system during the second part of the 20th century, most companies shifted freight operations to truck, eliminating the advantage of a location along a railroad.

The vacant buildings that spread across the urban landscape at first appeared to be a major problem. In fact, they were an opportunity. Almost as quickly as factories, lofts, and warehouses were abandoned by their owners, inventive entrepreneurs began to experiment with adaptive reuse of these buildings. During the 1960's Ghirardelli Square in San Francisco demonstrated the possibilities of conversion to retail shopping. At the same time, artists in SoHo in New York City pioneered the conversion of lofts into apartment buildings.

Atlanta is one of the few American cities that developed around railroads, not ports. For this reason, it is uniquely situated to develop its derelict railyards and tracks into pubic parks or recreation destinations. The nation's rail system is now less than half its 1916 size, and decreasing. More than 2,000 miles are abandoned annually.[5] Passenger service is a fraction of what it was prior to the creation of the interstate highway system. Railroad companies everywhere have

King Plow & Fulton Cotton Mill

King Plow

Over a period of five years, the circa 1905-1940 King Plow Factory has been transformed into a 165,000-square-foot development housing an arts community and a center for commercial, performing, and visual arts. Today, the King Plow Arts Center has more than 65 tenants representing fine, commercial, and performing arts. The six fine art areas include photographers, sculptors, writers, painters, metal smiths, and printmakers. The commercial arts are represented by a floral sculptor, architectural firms, a modeling agency, graphic design firms, a film production company advertising agencies, a set designer, multi-media designers, art galleries, and several product and fashion photographers. A theater company, a dance school, and circus arts school represent the performing arts.

Fulton Cotton Mill

The Fulton Cotton Mill is a complex of nine historic industrial buildings located one mile east of the central business district of downtown Atlanta. The buildings were built over a 40-year period beginning in 1881. The Mill operated continuously until 1977, and it was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1976. At its peak, the Mill employed 2,600 workers and housed many of them in an adjacent company-owned village known as Cabbagetown. Today the Fulton Cotton Mill development incorporates a total gross floor area of 550,000 square feet on a 12.5 acre site. It includes over 500 lofts with over 60 floor plans that range in size from 655 to 2,300 square feet.

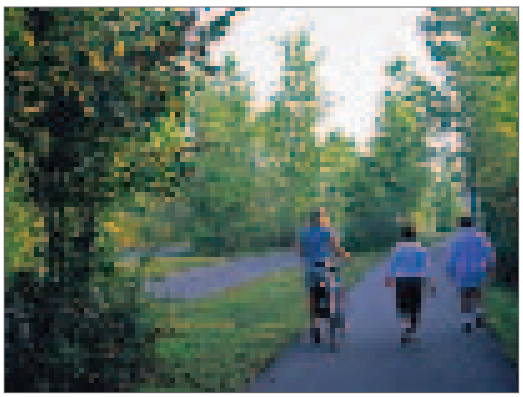
deferred maintenance and concentrated traffic on a few main lines, making available for reuse enormous amounts of land.

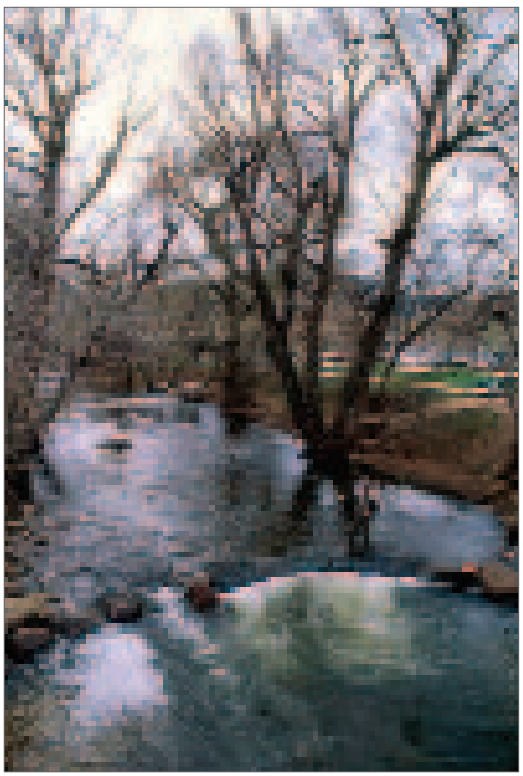
The CSX Hulsey Yard, located less than one and a half miles from the center of downtown Atlanta, is a possible opportunity for changing the land use. This facility grew out of the city's connection to both rail and highways. The containers enter this facility on rail and exit via tractor-trailers that distribute the containers throughout the region. Today, there is no reason for this facility to be centrally located at the intersection of some of the city's finest neighborhoods. Like Pittsburgh's Golden Triangle or the Portland Waterfront, the CSX Hulsey Yard offers immeasurable opportunity to transform the City of Atlanta by creating new parkland and the first new transit-oriented community along the Beltline.

Many cities have dedicated sites to a combination of parks and other functions. Recreation facilities used by nearby schools are an obvious example. Another is a combination of drainage and recreation. For centuries, the land around Boulder Creek in Colorado had served as a container for floods caused by melting snow and heavy rain. During the 1980's, the city invested in the creation of picnic areas, playgrounds, and jogging, rollerblading, and bicycle paths wherever possible along Boulder Creek. Today, despite reoccurring spring floods, the park is the most actively used recreation facility in the city. Along the Beltline, Intrenchment Creek, Tanyard Creek, Peachtree Creek, and Clear Creek can all capitalize on similar opportunities.

The large parcels of land currently owned by single railroads offers Atlanta other advantages as well. Assembling enough small land parcels to create a new park can be difficult, time-consuming, and expensive, especially when a few owners hold out for high prices. Land ownership of the freight yards, by contrast, is relatively simple, which will allow the development of parkland on former rail sites to move quickly beyond the acquisition stage.

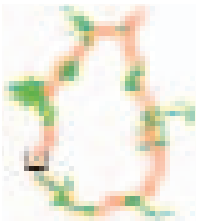
The thirteen park jewels proposed in this report are the result of Atlanta's extraordinary good fortune. Four are expansions of current parks, four are entirely new parks, and another five are mixed-use opportunities that will combine open space with the development of new communities. All together, the Beltline Jewels will combine with the Beltline Trail and right-of-way to create the 2,544-acre Beltline Emerald Necklace.





Open Space Jewels

Expanded Parks



Enota Park Expansion

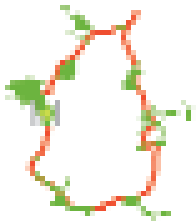
Current: 0.3 acres. Expanded: 10 Acres

Currently, the Enota Playlot is a very small playground on Enota Place in the Westview neighborhood in southwest Atlanta. It consists of a well-maintained lot with playground equipment in good condition. The park lies within what appears to be a street right-of-way, the extension of Sells Avenue that was likely never built due to construction of I-20 and the steep topography just east of Enota Place. The tract of land for the park expansion is triangular in shape, with the Beltline cutting diagonally southwest. I-20 composes the northern edge, Langhorn Street the eastern edge, and the rear lot lines of private houses the western edge. The land is wooded with a large, flat open space before a fairly steep grade leads to a creek at the bottom of a small ravine. Kudzu dominates much of the vegetation.

Expanding the Enota Playlot presents an opportunity to create a sparkling green jewel along the Beltline in the Westview neighborhood. Except for the .3-acre Enota

Playlot, the community has no other park within walking distance. The property is well suited for relatively passive greenspace, and it is likely to be easily purchased. In addition to the current playground, an expanded Enota Park will include walking trails and picnic areas. In addition, this expansion will provide this street and its adjacent neighborhood direct access to the Beltline, which it would not otherwise have.

The intersection of Langhorn Street and Sells Avenue could also be improved by narrowing Langhorn (possibly with a tree-lined median) and installing a traffic light. As Sells Avenue continues east, it becomes an on-ramp to I-20, encouraging high-speed traffic in the area. An improved intersection could slow traffic, and crosswalks would carry residents from the West End (the neighborhood east of Langhorn) across to the Beltline and Enota Park. Finally, the Fulton County Training Center south of the Beltline is a fairly underutilized site and one of the few potential redevelopment sites adjacent to Enota Park.



Maddox Park Expansion

Current: 52 acres. Expanded: 114 Acres

Maddox Park is comprised of 51.5 acres, yet over 10 acres serve as maintenance and storage facilities for the city and only 40 acres are accessible open space. Furthermore, although Maddox Park contains highly attractive facilities such as a swimming pool, pavilion, ball fields, and a picnic area, the park could do more to serve the local community. On a hot August afternoon only three children swam in the very large pool.

The first step to revitalizing Maddox Park is to create better access and visibility. That visibility is not possible from Hollowell Boulevard (formerly Bankhead) due to the grade separation. Instead, a new street and the Beltline Trail will provide that visibility and access. By connecting North Avenue across the park to its extension on the east side of the park, a whole neighborhood will gain direct access to the park. Equally important, by running the Beltline Trail along the eastern edge of the park, users will see the wide range of amenities that the park offers. To create the most visibility for the park, the maintenance and storage facilities should be relocated to another site. The sloping hill on which these facilities currently sit will make an ideal location for open space, and will allow the Beltline Trail to frame the southern and eastern edge of the park.

The relocation of City facilities is only the first step towards a revitalized Maddox Park. Next, the park must expand to the west. The construction of the Proctor Creek MARTA spur and the Bankhead Station, which opened in 1992, displaced over 20 houses where Anthony Street was once located. Today, the land between Maddox Park and Pierce Avenue lies largely vacant, with the exception of the MARTA tracks. The creation of additional ball fields or a recreation center on either side of the MARTA

lines would ideally suit this location. Although the MARTA tracks pose a challenge, the park extension could be designed with grade separations that allow easy connections between both sides of the track. This expansion would also improve access and visibility, as MARTA riders would see the park out their window and access it directly across the street from the Bankhead Station.

Finally, Maddox Park, like any other park, needs vigilant maintenance and management in order to make it a truly attractive destination. Litter must be regularly cleaned, landscaping attended to, and community programs organized around the parks amenities. Such activities require adequate funding.

While it does not currently enjoy the attention and investment of Piedmont Park, Maddox Park can be made to sparkle at relatively modest cost. And, once it is connected to the Beltline, people from other sections of Atlanta will be able to travel there to use its swimming pool, renovated picnic facilities, expanded ball fields, and new recreation center. The Trust for Public Land is currently researching and evaluating its role in helping to create an expanded and improved Maddox Park as one of the first Beltline Jewels.

Private Market Reaction

The successful expansion of Maddox Park will accelerate the recent conversion of former factories and warehouses into desirable work-live lofts and offices, such as the nearby King Plow and Puritan Mill. The area between Maddox Park and these developments is ideal for such conversion (see photo at right). When private developers convert these sites, every effort must be made for the new housing or commercial space to accommodate the Beltline.

Below: The Beltline and the expansion of Maddox Park will generate private market development along Marietta Street and Lowery Boulevard (formerly Ashby Street) that has already begun with King Plow and Puritan Mill.

Ardmore Park Expansion

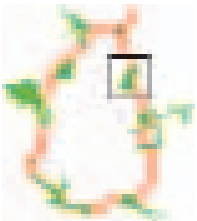
Current: 2 acres. Expanded: 8 Acres

Tanyard Creek Park and Ardmore Park are very popular parks in two different neighborhoods on opposite sides of the northwest section of the Beltline. Tanyard Creek Park, which is larger than Ardmore Park, sits in the Collier Hills neighborhood on the north side of the tracks. The park includes large open fields often used for ballgames and also smaller spaces for picnics and other passive uses. It extends north past busy Collier Road and continues to Bobby Jones Golf Course. Ardmore Park, by contrast, is a small park in a neighborhood by the same name on the southeastern side of the tracks. It includes new playground equipment and quiet space under tall pine trees. Tanyard Creek ties the two parks together as it crosses both parks and under the Beltline Transit right-of-way. The creek touches the southwest corner of Ardmore Park and flows north under a large wooden train trestle into Tanyard Creek Park, following all the way to the golf course.

On the south side of Ardmore Park, where the creek runs behind the houses facing Ardmore Road, sits a wooded tract of land which the neighborhood named the "Tanyard Creek Urban Forest." This tract is further bounded on the west by the railroad and to the south by a large new multi-family development. Tanyard Creek flows through the property, and a footpath already exists along the creek from the apartment complex to Ardmore Park. This path extends through Ardmore Park to Tanyard Creek Park underneath the wooden trestle.

Thankfully, the Trust for Public Land, the Arthur M. Blank Foundation, and the City of Atlanta have already acted on this opportunity. In 2002, following the request of the Ardmore Park Neighborhood Association, TPL purchased the property. Then, the City of Atlanta, with the help of the Blank Foundation, purchased the land from TPL. Currently, the PATH Foundation is finalizing plans to pave a trail which will eventually become a section of the Beltline Trail. Although this Beltline Jewel is in progress, the Ardmore Park Expansion still requires modest work: the expanded park requires a design that specifically addresses landscaping, the addition of benches and picnic tables, and connections to the Beltline Trail.

With a couple of small pedestrian bridges over drainageways leading into the creek, this tract could make a delightful wooded addition to Ardmore Park. It provides a valuable pedestrian connection between Bryson Square, the large new development to the south, and both the expansive open land at Tanyard Creek Park and the intimate playground at Ardmore Park. In addition, this pedestrian connection will provide the route for the Beltline Trail as it diverges from the right-of-way and heads north along Tanyard Creek to Bobby Jones Golf Course and Peachtree Creek. Providing an accessible connection between these parks and the development site will encourage activity. It also will improve the connections of both Ardmore Park and Collier Hills to the Beltline Trail and Transit.

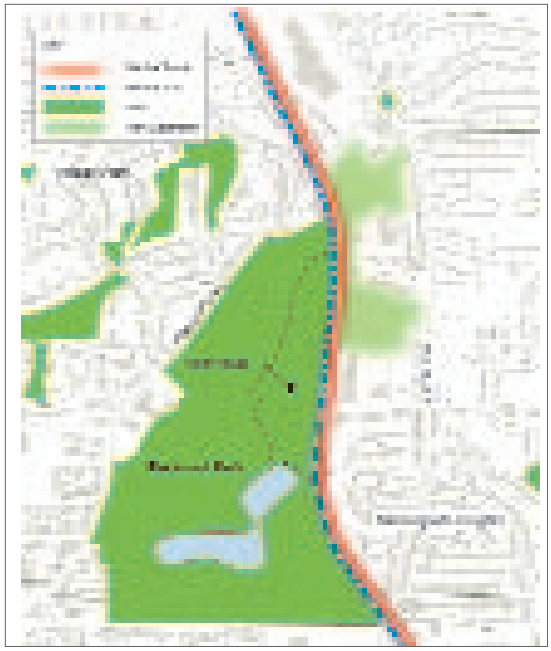


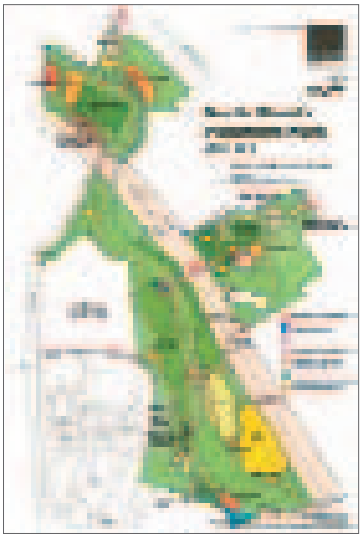
Piedmont Park Expansion

Current: 185 acres. Expanded: 217 Acres

The expansion of Piedmont Park is a wonderful opportunity that is well underway. The Piedmont Park Conservancy, a private, non-profit organization established to run Piedmont Park, has embarked on a $35 million campaign to restore and expand the park. The Conservancy has recently completed the $17 million renovation of the main park and is now focused on expanding. Of the park's 185 acres, only 130 are open to the public. The current expansion project includes opening 25 acres in the park's North Woods, as well as expanding across the Beltline onto 25 acres of city-owned property. With the inclusion of the Beltline right-of-way this expansion will add 32 acres to Piedmont Park.

The North Woods are currently challenged by environmental contamination, garbage dumping, and other inappropriate behaviors that pose security risks. At the same time, this section of the park includes scenic topography and Clear Creek. The first step to improve this section was the addition of a highly successful dog park parallel to the Beltline north of Park Drive. With hundreds of users on a daily basis, this dog park represents the potential for new users in the expanded section of Piedmont Park.

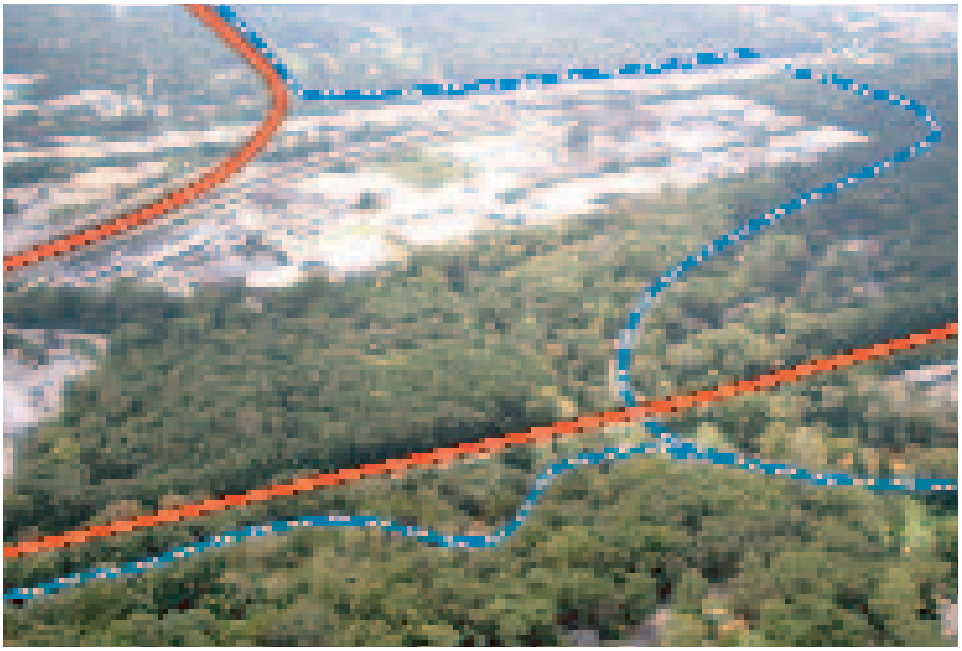


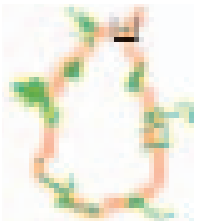


Maps on right courtesy of The Piedmont Park Conservancy

Across the Beltline, the West Property is a large, vacant parcel with large power lines running parallel to the Beltline. Currently fenced off, the property is ideally located with street access to both Piedmont Road and Monroe Drive. To the south, the Halpern Property is situated between Monroe Drive and the Beltline. Currently this property contains a community garden and parking for city vehicles that access the CSO water treatment facility to the south.

The Conservancy is currently engaged in a community planning process that combines the work of professional planners, civic leaders, and community residents. The purpose of this process is to create market-based recreational facilities that meet both users' needs and programmatic requirements. The two plans above show the two alternates being presented for public review. No matter which plan is implemented, the Piedmont Park expansion will improve access to the park and to the Beltline from the neighborhoods of Morningside Heights and Piedmont Heights.



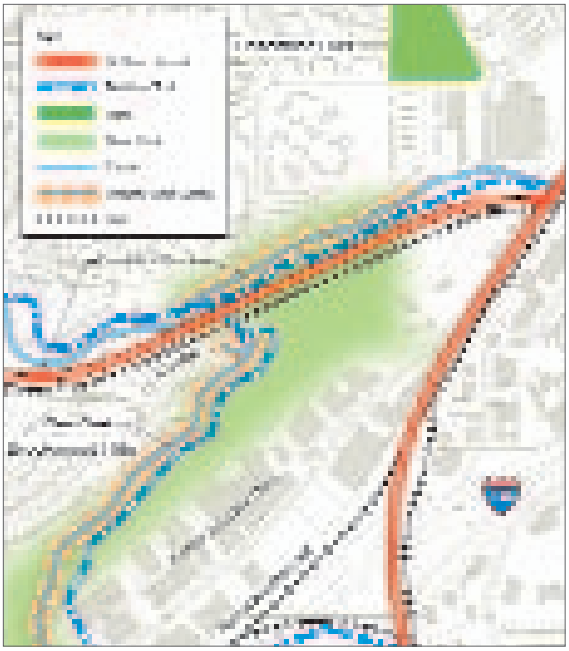


Peachtree Creek Park

65 acres

The land nestled between Brookwood Hills, Peachtree Hills, and the Armour Industrial Drive is an ideal location to preserve open space and to create a passive recreation park. The land is 65 acres, which is focused at the intersection of Peachtree Creek and Clear Creak, but circles around the Armour site as well. Lying in the floodplain, the land is unbuilt and perfectly suited for scenic trails along the creekbed. As discussed in Chapter 3, the Beltline Trail will ride along both creeks, with the trail along Peachtree Creek leading into the Lindbergh development, and along Clear Creek connecting back to the right-of-way in the south. The Beltline Transit right-of-way crosses the site on an east-west access, and it sits slightly elevated above the land on both sides.

The property to the north of the rail right-of-way is owned by the city, the railroad companies, and several individuals. This section of Peachtree Creek is rated a Priority 1 by the Greenway Acquisition Project (GAP) under the Sanitary Sewer Consent Decree (see Chapter 2 for further discussion of the GAP). The GAP negotiations are therefore



already underway to acquire sections of the adjacent land and remedy the sewer overflow. The land to the south of the right-of-way wraps all the way around the Armour industrial site. The Brookwood Hills Community Club owns this property. The northern half of Clear Creek in this section is also a Priority 1 rating.

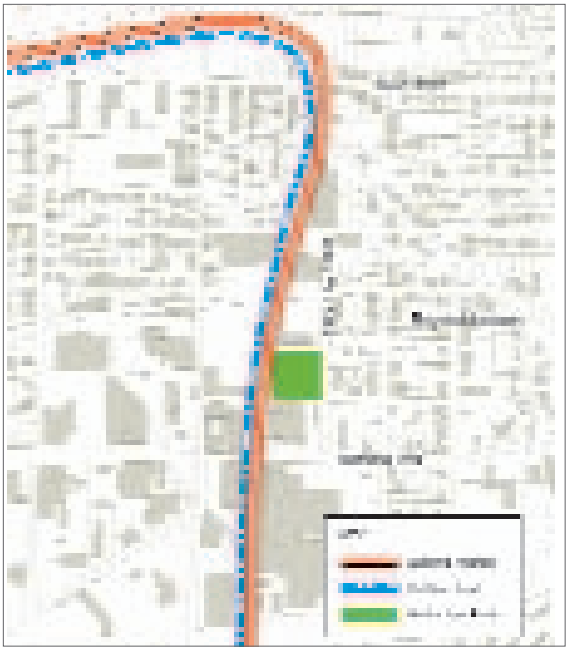
The two drawbacks for the site are access and topography. To overcome difficult access, entrances to the park will be located on two sides: Armour Drive from the east, and Virginia Place from the north. The eastern entrance will allow direct highway access from I-85, and the northern entrance will serve those users coming from Peachtree Street to the west. To prevent drivers from taking a shortcut through the park, these two entrances will not be connected. The varied topography, although scenic, will make these entrances difficult to build, but creative designers hired for the next phase will be able to provide solutions that accommodate the entrance, limited parking, and trail access to the Beltline Trail and the hiking trails in the park.

Holtzclaw Park

2 acres

Holtzclaw Park will be a small, neighborhood park located between Wiley Street and Memorial Drive in the Reynoldstown neighborhood. The city-owned parcel is only 1.7 acres. It sits on the top of a hill with spectacular views of downtown, directly between the Beltline and Holtzclaw Street in the heart of the neighborhood. Currently, the site is vacant, with the exception of a storage shed and city vehicles that are occasionally parked on the parcel.

In a neighborhood with little open space, this location is ideally situated to serve the community. With no acquisition cost, Holtzclaw Park could become a beautiful, neighborhood park at minimal costs. Due to its small size, an organized group of neighborhood residents might even spend a Saturday turning this abandoned lot into a spectacular gem. Although it will be the smallest jewel to sit directly on the Beltline, Holtzclaw Park could very well be the one most cherished by its neighbors.

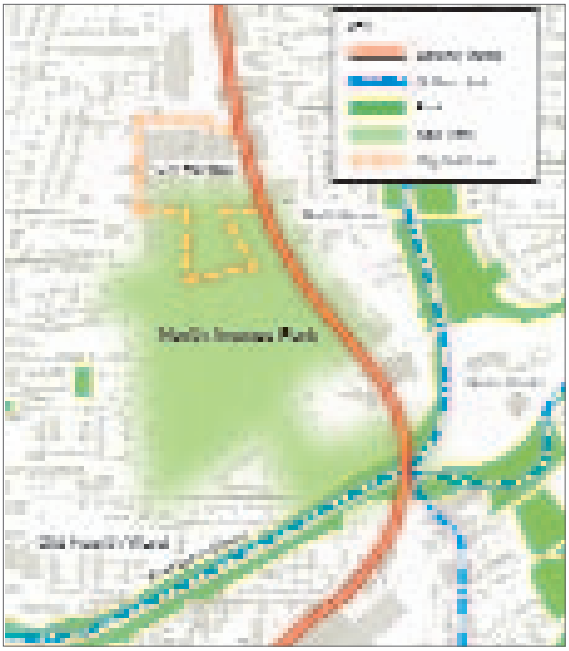


North Avenue Park

Estimated 63 acres

South of City Hall East lies a potential opportunity to create a new Beltline park. Bound by North Avenue to the north and the Beltline to the east, the site sits in a valley largely consisting of surface parking lots, and industrial and commercial establishments. One piece of land, a 6-acre parking lot, was originally slated to be a part of the city's redevelopment of City Hall East, but now city officials and the developers have agreed to include a portion of the parcel as greenspace.

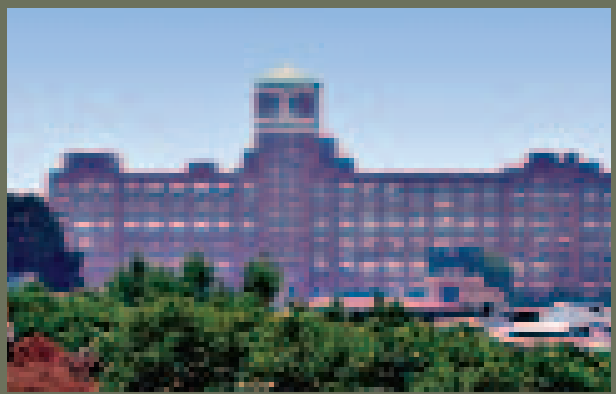
The Trust for Public Land is currently evaluating its role in helping to create a large, unified park around this location. Until the evaluation process unfolds, it is impossible to determine the final size or boundaries of this park. No matter the size or shape, however, it is clear that the park will become a major destination for the adjacent properties.



City Hall East

City Hall East was originally a warehouse before it was purchased by the city in 1991. Today, the building is half-empty. With the increase in new condominium construction and loft conversions in the area, the city has recognized the opportunity to redevelop the attractive and historically significant building. In the spring of 2004, the city issued a Request for Proposals and has since selected a team of developers to convert the building into 1,400 housing units, 115,000 square feet of office space, 248,000 square feet of retail space, and some open space acreage. This new development will have direct access to the Beltline.

Below, left: Rendering of future development at City Hall East *(Courtesy of The Ponce Park Team)*



Waterworks

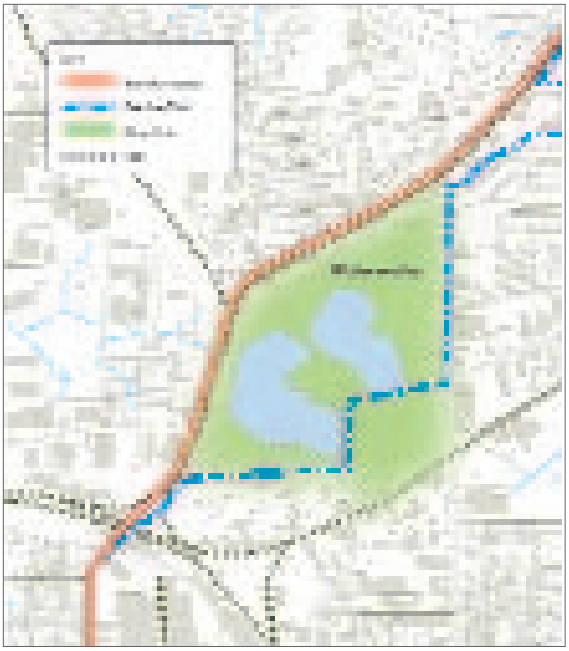
204 acres

Reservoirs have long been used as settings for public parks. At the end of the 19th century, Frederick Law Olmsted created such a park around the Brookline Reservoir in suburban Boston. In the fall of 2004, a running path around the reservoir was opened to the public. One of New Yorkers' favorite places to jog and stroll is the Central Park Reservoir. The Atlanta Waterworks on Howell Mill Road could be used in a similar manner.

Constructed in 1892 on the highest point of land between central Atlanta and the Chattahoochee River, the reservoir was described in a contemporary newspaper account as "designed to have a magnificent summer pavilion on the hill just overlooking the reservoir from the north and the thirty acres of land surrounding it, which is owned by the city, will be used as a park…" The base of the pavilion still exists, but unfortunately, the entire site is restricted from public access. Atlanta must reclaim this magnificent jewel, and add it to the Beltline Emerald Necklace.

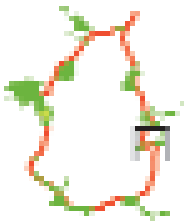
The major challenge of returning the Waterworks reservoir to its historic role as a lakeside park on a hilltop is the security of Atlanta's water supply. When built, the reservoir held over 200 million gallons of water and protected the city's water supply from interruptions due to mechanical failure or temporary impurity of its source at the Chattahoochee. Its capacity has been enlarged over the years, most recently in the 1990s.

Now its main vulnerability is sabotage, and for that reason the entire property is surrounded by high fencing that restricts access. A creative design analysis may determine that an effective and more attractive barrier—like the handsome wrought iron fence around the Central Park Reservoir—will enable user access once again. Thereby, the land surrounding the Waterworks could be reopened to public use as the barrier is moved closer to the edge of the reservoir. The recovered land could then be



made inviting, and if at any time in the future the basins themselves are no longer needed, the fence can be removed and two wonderful lakes opened to public use. Whether or not the lakes become available for public use, reopening of the parkland would trigger rapid redevelopment of adjacent commercial buildings and derelict residential structures.

Left: Completed in 1862, the Central Park Reservoir in New York City provided fresh water to the city's residents. Today, the reservoir is no longer part of the water supply system. The reservoir's track, originally built as an access road for the Department of Environmental Protection, is one the city's favorite attractions for joggers, bird-watchers, and tourists.



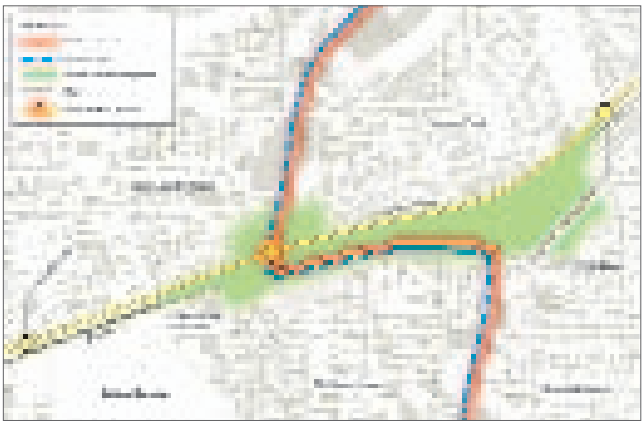
Hulsey Yard

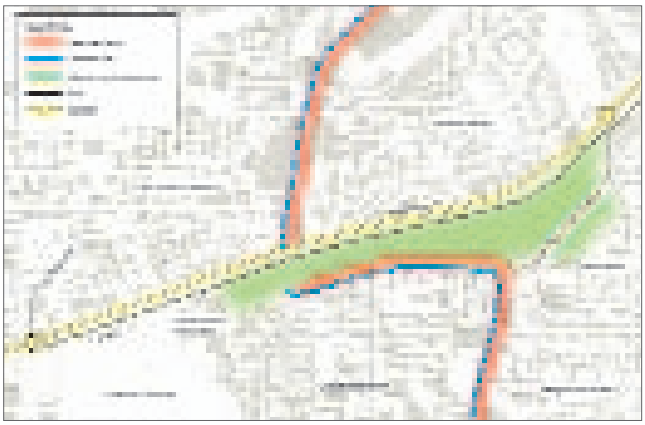
Estimated 87 acres (40 acres of open space)

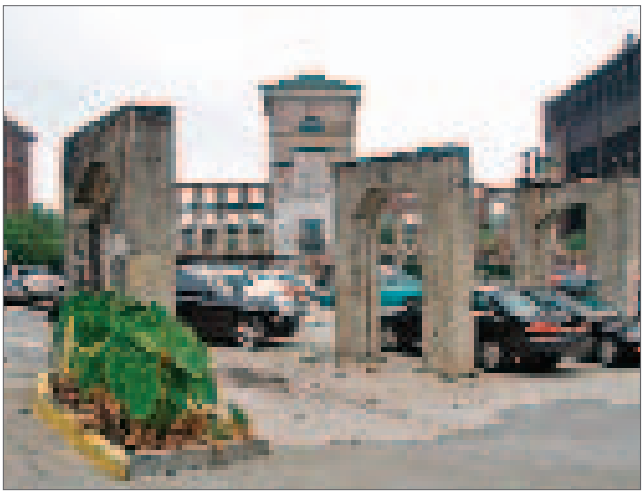
The CSX Hulsey Yard is an extremely attractive location for an 85-acre development site less than a mile and half from downtown, right in the midst of the increasingly popular neighborhoods of the Old Fourth Ward, Inman Park, Reynoldstown, and Cabbagetown. When this site was turned into the CSX Hulsey Intermodal freight yard, no one could have imagined that the Fulton Bag and Cotton Mill would become the residence of 500 families, that Cabbagetown would be a neighborhood of choice for households seeking charm and character among what were once mill worker houses, or that people would be erecting new buildings on Decatur Street and Edgewood Avenue. But at that time, few people could have imagined that urban pioneers would be moving into the lofts north of Chicago's Dearborn Station or the wooden houses of San Francisco's Mission District.

As a result of such changing land uses, employing the CSX Hulsey property to store freight is becoming increasingly problematic. Residents of adjoining neighborhoods object to the 24-hour noise of the container carriers and the trucks that come and go through local streets. The trucks face increasingly heavy automobile traffic generated by the growing residential population. Furthermore, real estate values have increased so rapidly that the site would be far more valuable for residential and commercial purposes.

Any higher and better use of this property, however, requires overcoming a series of limitations. The property is difficult to reach by mass transit because the Inman Park/Reynoldstown and King Memorial MARTA Stations are not within walking distance, and there is currently no Beltline Transit to connect the property to other







neighborhoods. The CSX railroad right-of-way acts as a barrier dividing neighborhoods and impeding traffic. Grade separations, some including retaining walls, further isolate certain sections from the adjoining neighborhoods. Furthermore, the street patterns on either side of the yard do not match up. A series of actions will overcome these problems and create a new transit-oriented, park-centered development in one of the most attractive locations in Atlanta:

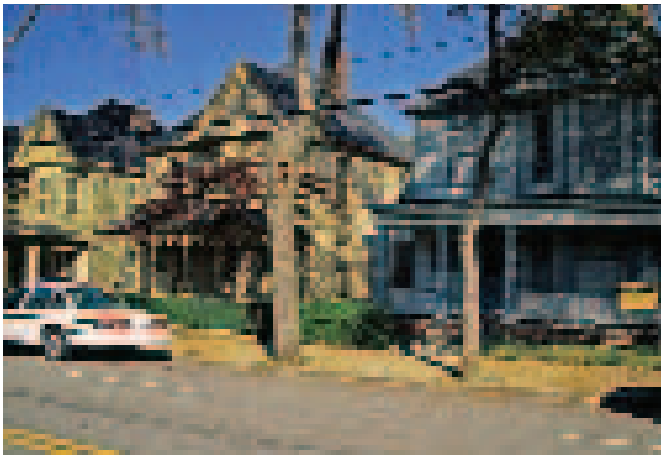
- **Relocate the CSX Intermodal Hulsey Yard facility.**
- **Depress the CSX freight tracks.**
- **Add a Beltline Transit/MARTA station.**
- **Create a 40-acre park around the transit station.**
- **Develop a new community around the park and transit station.**

First, the CSX Intermodal facility at Hulsey Yard would need to be relocated. Such a facility requires nothing more than an over-size parking lot adjacent to a CSX rail line and near the interstate highway system. The cost to purchase Hulsey Yard could come from a combination of Tax Allocation District funds and developers who wish to build the new community.

Next, the east-west CSX main line, against which the Hulsey Yard sits, must be depressed underground so that the entire site connects at grade across DeKalb Avenue with the Old Fourth Ward and Inman Park communities. This action is imperative in order to create a continuous at-grade Beltline, to build a new MARTA station, and to add a new park-centered community that connects fluidly with adjacent neighborhoods on all sides.

A new Beltline Transit/MARTA station where the two intersect will better serve the Martin Luther King, Jr. Historic District than the current station's location. In addition, the new station will directly serve current residents of the Fulton Cotton Mill and the future residents of the Hulsey Park, not to mention the current and new residents in Cabbagetown, Reynoldstown, Inman Park, and Old Fourth Ward. Again, the station could be paid for by funds generated from the proposed Tax Allocation District.

The new Hulsey Park would be created from a combination of properties around the new MARTA station, including several underutilized properties to the north of DeKalb Avenue (see aerial photo on page 105). Similar to Forsythe Park in Savannah, but twice as large, this new 40-acre park will be created around the new transit station, and it will attract users from adjacent communities, recreation users of the Beltline Trail, and riders of the Beltline Transit. They will stroll through the park, spend a few dollars at concession



stands, and continue on to the Martin Luther King, Jr. Historic District or Cabbagetown.

Finally, users of the park will be attracted to the remaining 47 acres of mixed-use, transit-oriented development. It will become the site for neighborhood retail facilities used by new and old residents alike. This development can range from relatively high-density condominiums to medium-density apartment buildings and townhouses. The design must not diminish the character of the neighboring communities, but it must create enough units to justify the cost of acquiring the CSX property and depressing the freight line. In addition, several new, at-grade roads will be introduced to frame the development, especially on either side of the new park. The extent to which additional roads connect through the site will depend on the results of a community planning process.

Alternatives: Although Hulsey Yard could be developed without any properties to the north of DeKalb Avenue, the impact would not be as dramatic. The same applies to depressing the freight line, but the adverse impact would be more severe. Doing so would severely limit the connections between communities, the ability to add a MARTA Station, and the economic value for the land as a development opportunity.

The feasibility of the Hulsey Yard redevelopment depends largely on the ability to relocate CSX. The company operates a newer facility in Fairburn, Georgia, which may be logistically better suited for expanding operations. Equally important, the new development must generate enough capital to justify the acquisition and initial infrastructure improvements.

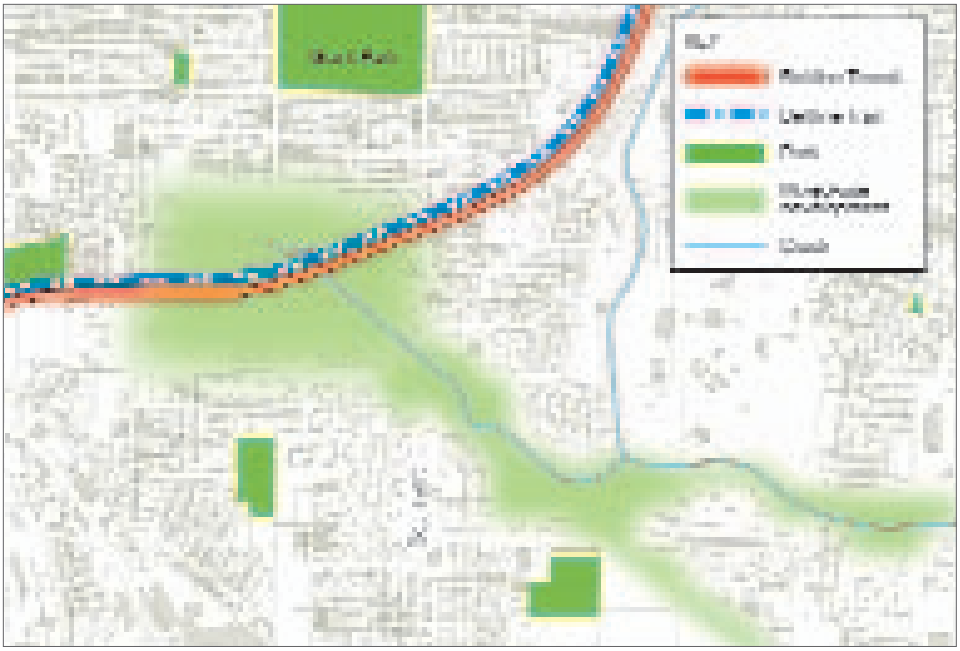
No matter what form the development of Hulsey Yard takes, it will truly transform the City of Atlanta.

Boulevard Crossing

Estimated 215 acres (108 acres of open space)

Boulevard Crossing is an existing gem that needs only to be recognized, polished, and enhanced. It is an industrial and post-industrial landscape that can be reclaimed as park by skilled designers. Across the nation, similar seemingly inhospitable terrains—including obsolete freight yards, steel yards, piers, landfills, and sewage treatment facilities—have been reclaimed as parks. Boulevard Crossing is a nexus of several related public realm improvement efforts that, with minimal expense, can be combined and developed into a tremendous green space and recreation opportunity. Boulevard Crossing will be organized along two axes of open space that converge on a mixed-use development located where Boulevard crosses the Beltline.

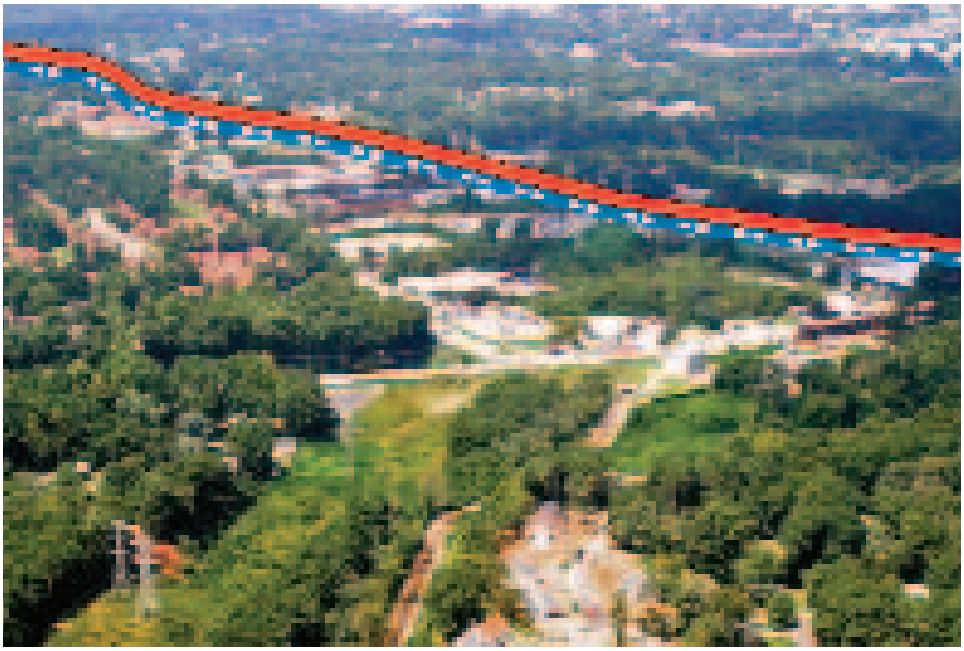
The two primary axial opportunities of Boulevard Crossing are Intrenchment Creek and a Georgia Power right-of-way for which a PATH Foundation trail has been proposed. These two axes serve as an armature that connects and structures a significant collection of publicly held property, and underdeveloped or unimproved private properties. Add to these opportunities the fact that a local non-profit group has purchased a large swath of land adjacent to the power line right-of-way for the purpose of creating a community park, and we have all the ingredients for a Beltline Jewel.



Intrenchment Creek is a Priority 1 area targeted by the Greenway Acquisition Project (GAP). The creek has long suffered from both storm and sewage overflows. Along with their intention to install sewer upgrades, the GAP is purchasing property adjacent to the creek to be protected in perpetuity as a riparian buffer. The possibility of combining Beltline and GAP funds to extend riparian buffer and recreational opportunities must be explored in the near future.

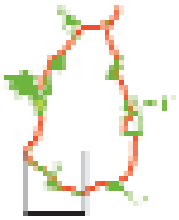
A Georgia Power right-of-way runs from the southern end of the Grant Park neighborhood out through DeKalb County. The 100-foot right-of-way is kept clear of trees and heavy vegetation. PATH has proposed that a trail run along this right of way from Grant Park out to the old Atlanta Prison Farm, and on to Arabia Mountain Park.

This trail has become feasible due to the Recreational Property Act that dramatically reduces liability when property owners provide access to their land for recreational purposes. Georgia Power is currently working with the PATH Foundation to draft a set of guidelines that addresses the construction of a multi-use trail within the right-of-way of power lines. The right-of-way itself is regularly cut and maintained by Georgia Power.



The two open spaces axes will converge on a mixed-use development, which will be focused around a central open space along the Beltline. The new development at Boulevard Crossing will be framed by Boulevard to the east and Englewood Avenue to the south. The land includes a Georgia Power substation, junk yards, and public operations facilities. The topography poses a challenge, as the Beltline crosses the area along an east-west axis on a ridge high above the adjacent land. An innovative design and community planning process will result in creative solutions that introduce grade-separated crossings and additional streets through the site.

The two open space axes of Boulevard Crossing will require little investment and may happen with or without the Beltline. The mixed-use development of Boulevard Crossing will be a greater challenge due to the relocation of city-owned facilities and several privately-owned underutilized properties. Future studies will determine whether alternative relocation sites are viable. When relocation is politically and financially possible, Boulevard Crossing will create a community along the Beltline with optimal views of downtown. The Trust for Public Land is researching this particular opportunity in order to determine its role in transforming Boulevard Crossing into a Beltline Jewel. Like Maddox Park and North Avenue, it offers an opportunity for early action.



Murphy Crossing

Estimated 378 acres (189 acres of open space)

Murphy Crossing comprises a large area that requires significant transformation to meet its potential. Vacant warehouses in the area are being demolished because of their hazard to public safety. The majority of the salvage and auto body businesses that remain have a scrappiness to them. It is an area where small plans or incremental approaches will not be effective.

Murphy Crossing requires significant initial investment and a critical mass of new development that will redefine the area. An opportunity exists to secure the open space that will later structure the redevelopment of this area. Equally important, Murphy Crossing requires more regional connections and better access to the interstate highway system.

UPS is exploring plans to develop a major package delivery center along University Avenue, between I-75/85 and the Murphy Crossing district. If these plans come to fruition, they could provide the impetus for area redevelopment. University Avenue, which ends at the Beltline, must be widened and improved into a full boulevard capable

Opposite: L&N Crossing looking north

Left: L&N Crossing looking southeast

of accommodating large volumes of UPS traffic without disrupting the Pittsburgh neighborhood. During this roadway improvement, the opportunity may arise to establish continuity all the way to the intersection of Lee and White Streets. This westward extension of University Avenue would greatly improve cross radial access between the University Avenue interchange and the Langhorn interchange on I-20 West, thus significantly reducing the isolation of Murphy Crossing.

Finally, Murphy Crossing requires a new Beltline Transit/MARTA station. The station is needed both to connect Beltline riders to the airport and to create the transit-oriented development around which a new community can grow. After University Avenue is extended and a new transit station is added, this area will be capable of attracting a critical mass market to the regional sub-center it can become. When this happens the area will be poised to become a successful community focused around a new transit station and abundant open space opportunities.

Left: Murphy Crossing looking northwest

Simpson Road

Estimated 49 acres (7 acres of open space)

The opportunity to redevelop Simpson Road is extraordinary. Much of the housing stock is substandard, if not already abandoned and boarded up. As mentioned briefly in Chapter 3, the addition of an underground Beltline Transit and MARTA rail station below Simpson Road will create immeasurable opportunity to create a desirable community once again and to reorient this new community around a new transit station. In addition, the expanded Maddox Park, as outlined earlier, will provide the seed to reestablish a community along Simpson Road. The following four steps will provide the necessary public action to generate a widespread and sustained private market reaction along Simpson Road:

- **Develop vacant parcels as a relocation resource**
- **Build a new Beltline Transit/MARTA rail station**
- **Create a new open space square above the station**
- **Develop a new community around the station and park**

The first step is to build relocation housing for any residents who would be displaced by the construction of the new transit station. Many of these residents use Section 8 vouchers. Offering nearby relocation would provide highly improved housing within a half-mile. The obvious opportunities for this relocation resource lie to the east of the Beltline Trail, where vacant warehouses currently exist. Next, the construction of the below-ground station would occur. The station would open onto centrally located open space, creating continuous open space from Simpson Road to Hollowell Boulevard, as it extends through Maddox Park. Finally, new housing and neighborhood retail facilities would frame this open space, would reestablish a street front along Simpson Road, and would create a new community. Once these stops are taken, property on the west side of Atlanta will become more attractive and developers will seek additional sites in the area.

Holcomb Boulevard
English Avenue
Maddox Park
Maddox Park Expansion
Simpson Road Station
Park
Mixed-use development

Right: Bellwood Lake facing southeast

Bellwood Lake

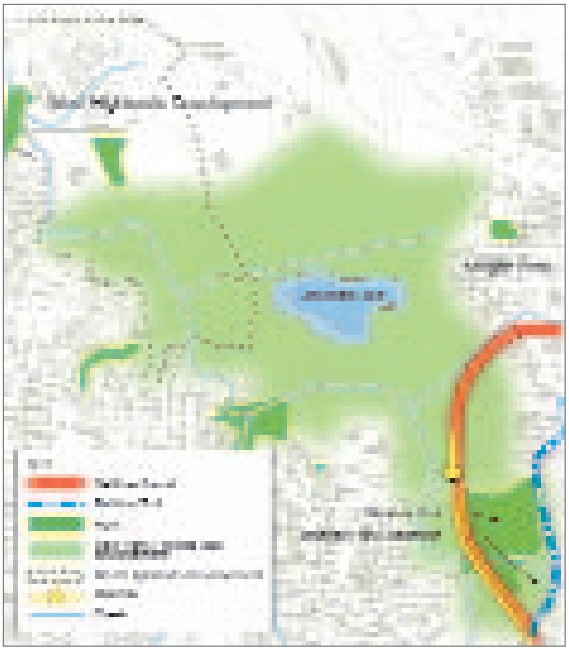
Estimated 579 acres (434 acres of open space)

Piedmont Park (185 acres) and Grant Park (127 acres) are precious jewels among Atlanta's parks. While both are exceeded in size by Freedom Park (197 acres), they provide better recreation opportunities than any other facility in the city. Wonderful as Piedmont Park and Grant Park may be, Atlanta should have more than two great parks, both of which happen to be on the east side of town. Fortunately, the west side of Atlanta features a series of properties that can be assembled into another great park.

A great park such as Piedmont Park or Grant Park has three characteristics: it is a regional destination that draws users from beyond the adjacent area, thus becoming an icon for the city; it increases the strength of the adjacent communities, thus increasing the quality of life for residents; and it increases the long-term quality and value of the adjacent residential areas, thereby increasing the city's tax base. The new Bellwood Park—the largest and most ambitious Beltline Jewel—will succeed in joining Piedmont Park and Grant Park on Atlanta's short list of great parks. In order to do so, the following actions must occur:

- **Convert the Bellwood Quarry into a lake and new park**
- **Develop a new community around the Bellwood Lake Park**

The Bellwood Quarry and its adjacent properties consist of 579 acres just north and west of the Bankhead MARTA station. Perry Boulevard and Johnson Road bounds the properties to the north, and Marietta Boulevard bounds the properties to the east. The



Perry-Bolton Tax Allocation District, which has generated the Perry Homes development directly to the west of the site, slightly overlaps the western boundary of this future park. The West Highlands Development, which has dedicated a significant amount of open space, is located in the northwest section. Otherwise, the land is largely undeveloped with the exception of the quarry and the Georgia Power lines that run northwest through the site. The PATH Foundation is finalizing plans to run a trail along these power lines. This trail would provide a key connections from the Beltline Trail to both downtown Atlanta and the Silver Comet Trail which will eventually extend all the way to Alabama. Finally, the Beltline Transit will share the MARTA Bankhead Station in the southeast corner of the site.

The properties within the new park's boundaries will be far more valuable after the Maddox Park expansion and Simpson Road development to the south and the Perry-Bolton development to the west. At that time, the quarry's continued use as a source of stone and gravel will no longer be cost-effective. The deep excavations in the site are not easy to develop for residential use, but they are ideal for transformation into a splendid lake that would provide the residents of the city with wonderful opportunities to sail, kayak, canoe, and fish. In addition, the property is large enough to provide peripheral sites for housing development that will subsidize the cost of converting the land into park use and maintaining it after completion.

Currently, the Vulcan Materials Company holds a lease on the property which is owned by Fulton County. The lease expires in 2034. Even if Atlanta must wait 30 years before this park can be realized, the wait would be worthwhile. The quarry's conversion to an expansive public park focused around a new lake is too great an opportunity to miss. The pace of development in the west side, however, will greatly increase the value of the quarry's lease. Consequently, an arrangement to buy out the remaining term of the existing lease will become realistic long before 2034.

A key design feature to Bellwood Lake Park will include a linear park that extends all the way from the new transit station at Simpson Road through Maddox Park and the Bankhead MARTA station into Bellwood Lake Park. From Bankhead Boulevard, the linear open space will include a parallel parkway that extends around Bellwood Lake and through Perry Boulevard on the northern boundary.

The new lake and surrounding park will make the territory particularly attractive for new residential development. However, real estate developers too often build directly on the edge of an attractive waterfront. These houses usually hide the lake from public view and often preclude public access.

Such conditions will not occur in Bellwood Lake Park. Instead, pedestrian paths, jogging trails, bicycle paths, and vehicular roadways will frame the lake, and residential development will occur on the outside of the network of roads framing the park. Thus, Atlantans visiting the new park will have the pleasure of seeing the lake and the large expanses of open space as they stroll, jog, or ride near by.

This approach to development also has a financial rationale. A wider and longer perimeter of roadways encircling the new park creates more lakefront sites and thus greater revenues from sales than would have been available from the smaller number of sites that would have direct views of the lake.

Above: Bellwood Lake facing north

Conclusion

When viewed collectively, the Beltline Jewels represent a wide range of opportunities. They involve reuse of abandoned property at Simpson Road and Murphy Crossing; acquisition of railroad rights-of-way owned by CSX, Norfolk & Southern, and the Georgia Department of Transportation; adaptive reuse of the CSX Hulsey freight yard and Fulton County quarry; joint use of properties that will continue to be part of the City of Atlanta's Waterworks, state-owned creek beds, Georgia Power Company electric lines, and golf courses; and enhanced use of government-owned property at Ardmore Park, Murphy Crossing, Intrenchment Creek, North Avenue, and adjacent to Piedmont Park.

Altogether the Beltline Jewels will create a 2,544-acre Beltline Emerald Necklace which includes 613 acres of existing open space directly connected to over 1,400 acres of new open space and over 500 acres of new mixed-use development. Nearly half of Atlanta's parkland will be directly connected along the Beltline, a continuous public realm framework around which the city will grow for the next 100 years.

Estimated Beltline Acreage

		Acres
[illegible]		[illegible]
[illegible]		[illegible]
	Total	2,544
[illegible]		
[illegible]		[illegible]
Right-of-way		[illegible]
[illegible]		[illegible]
New Open Space		[illegible]
[illegible]		[illegible]
	Total	[illegible]
	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]		
[illegible]		[illegible]
Open Space		[illegible]
	Total	[illegible]

[illegible] (including the adjacent NCHP)	Total Acres	Open Space Acres	Current Open Space Acres	Added Open Space Acres
Expanded Parks				
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
Ardmore Park	8	8	7	8
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
New Parks				
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
Historic Park	2	2	0	2
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]				
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
Boulevard Crossing	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
Simpson Road	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
Total Beltline Jewels	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]				
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]
Beltline Emerald Necklace	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]

“Make no little plans; they have no magic to stir men’s blood and will not be realized. Make big plans; aim high in hope and work, remembering that a noble, logical diagram once recorded will never die.”

-Daniel Burnham

Chapter 5

Action Plan

This report recommends the creation of the Beltline Emerald Necklace: 1,401 acres of new parkland, which, when combined with 613 acres of existing parkland, will create a 2,014-acre Beltline Park System. All together, with the addition of roughly 530 acres of mixed-use, transit-oriented development, the Emerald Necklace will consist of 2,544 acres. It requires assembling 1,900 acres of land, creating a continuous Beltline from over 80 separate properties, establishing a Beltline Trail and Transit System, erecting three new MARTA stations surrounded by new regional sub-centers, and adding 13 new or expanded Beltline Jewels. Together, these actions will transform the city of Atlanta and secure its place as one of the nation's most livable and attractive cities. As ambitious as the plan may be, every single element proposed is well within reach.

Most of the land slated for acquisition is currently vacant, underutilized, or can be made available for reuse. The acquisition of the rights-of-way necessary for the Beltline Trail can be reimbursed by funding for the Beltline Transit. In addition, the extraordinary private market potential surrounding the Beltline suggests that the future is bright for Atlanta's new 21st century public realm.

The Next Steps

The first and most critical step for the Beltline is to promote the vision of a new public realm for Atlanta. This vision benefits the entire city, not just the neighborhoods along its path. The Beltline, therefore, must always be considered as a single project—an entire transit system and an entire open space system—that positively impacts the City of Atlanta for the next 100 years.

Transforming the City of Atlanta as outlined above will require the following steps:

- **Initiate the necessary negotiations with major property owners and political constituents**
- **Raise private funds for early site acquisition, planning, engineering, design, cost estimating, legal worl, and public participation**
- **Begin public planning and design process to create initial jewels**
- **Establish a Beltline Tax Allocation District**
- **Establish a Beltline Park governance**
- **Establish a Beltline Community Improvement District**

The Trust for Public Land (TPL) has taken the lead in initial planning for the Beltline Emerald Necklace. It should continue to play this role until the Tax Allocation District (TAD) is in operation, thereby jump-starting the implementation process. In addition, TPL should continue to promote initial Beltline Jewels in all sections of the city. Full implementation, however, necessitates an independent entity that is specifically charged with creating and managing the Beltline Emerald Necklace. Later in this chapter, this report recommends creating such an agency and a Community Improvement District to raise operating revenues.

Early Action

The earliest property acquisitions should be spearheaded by TPL and the PATH Foundation in close coordination with the city. This public-private partnership should begin the initial planning, design, and engineering for the following initial steps:

- **Creation of the Beltline Trail**
- **Expansion and enhancement of Enota, Maddox, and Ardmore Parks**
- **Creation of Holtzclaw Park**
- **Planning for mixed-use open space and development at Hulsey Yard and Boulevard Crossing**

The acquisitions should focus on the Beltline Trail and the three open space jewels that can be completed for public use in the shortest possible time: Enota, Ardmore, and Holtzclaw Parks. Meanwhile, the expansion of Piedmont Park and the creation of North Avenue Park at City Hall East will already be underway. Finally, planning should begin on Maddox Park expansion, Hulsey Yard, and Boulevard Crossing. This would initiate the early action necessary to allow the TAD to hit the ground running.

The Beltline Park Governance

Without grounding itself to a legal entity, the Beltline will remain nothing more than a visionary idea. Therefore, Atlanta should consider creating an independent, non-profit institution for the sole purpose of creating, maintaining, and operating the Beltline Emerald Necklace. This organization should include the key stake-holders, including representatives of park and open space advocates, the real estate industry, the non-profit sector, the design community, and the neighborhoods adjoining the Beltline. The specific details of the governing structure must be determined in the next phase.

The Beltline Jewels

Peachtree Creek

Piedmont Park Expansion

North Avenue Park

Murphy Crossing

Boulevard Crossing

Holzclaw Park

Enota Park

Simpson Road

Maddox Park

Ardmore Park Expansion

Waterworks

Bellwood Lake

Hulsey Yard

Capital Costs

The acquisition of the Beltline Trail must occur immediately, before prices escalate and property is snatched away for development. Following the creation of the Beltline Trail, the capital cost of developing the Beltline Transit is estimated at $400 million to $1.2 billion, based on MARTA's Inner-Core Transit Study. While these costs are substantial, thorough staging over two decades and thoughtful planning that coordinates community interest, political feasibility, and developer interest will ensure that the necessary money will be made available at the necessary time.

A similar phasing approach can be taken for acquisition, planning, engineering, landscaping, and design of the Beltline Jewels needed for the Beltline Emerald Necklace. All will not happen at once, but several must begin in order to build momentum and public support.

Raising the necessary funds for initial planning and acquisition cannot be postponed until mid-2006, when TAD bond proceeds will become available. Fortunately, the money needed can be raised from non-governmental organizations and other private donors. Moreover, once the TAD is in place, the money can be reimbursed from TAD bond proceeds. Once the land is transferred to governmental ownership, the funds for landscaping and construction costs can be covered by TAD bond proceeds, just as the $45 to $105 million to create three new MARTA stations can be covered by TAD bond proceeds and federal transportation funding.

The design of the Beltline Jewels is largely a matter of engineering, programming, and landscaping. This work must be done quickly in order to demonstrate progress on the Beltline Emerald Necklace and to build public support and momentum. While the planning for the Beltline Jewels must come from a variety of firms, a single firm should coordinate the planning for the Beltline. At the same time, the necessary technical documents should be prepared by local firms that are familiar with local topography and local procedures. As with the cost of acquisition, this cost should be initially covered by private donation.

Each of the Beltline Jewels requires a different approach to both funding and planning. In most instances, there is no urgent reason to purchase all these properties prior to the creation of the Tax Allocation District. There is, however, an immediate need for planning, engineering, and initial design for the first two of these sites: the CSX Hulsey Yard, and the Maddox Park expansion. Once the TAD has been created, additional funds will be needed for planning, engineering, and initial design of the mixed-use Jewels at Simpson Road, Bellwood Lake, Boulevard Crossing, and Murphy Crossing.

Each of these mixed-use Beltline Jewels will grow around a new public realm framework. At each location, that public realm has to be unique to the site and impressive enough to generate a widespread and sustained private market reaction. All five mixed-use Jewels will need ingenious designs that integrate with the disparate street grids in surrounding neighborhoods. Hulsey Yard, Murphy Crossing and Simpson Road require integration with new MARTA stations and elevated or below-grade MARTA rights-of-way. Boulevard Crossing requires an inspired design approach that addresses the presence of the Georgia Power lines.

The planning and design of the mixed-use Jewels also must also engage the public, an ingredient often missing in such ambitious projects. Worthy talent must be hired to design what will become Atlanta's central public realm. A decision must be made as to the proportion of each site that will be allocated to streets, parkland, and real estate development, and detailed engineering and planning studies must establish the program, budget, and staged development schedule for that particular Jewel. Beyond these universal steps, each Jewel will require a customized approach to planning and development.

Design and planning for Atlanta's west side would involve three different design strategies: one for the expansion of Maddox Park; another for the area around the new MARTA station and the residential redevelopment sites around Simpson Road; and finally, an approach to the transformation of the Bellwood Quarry into a lake with surrounding parkland and development sites.

The design of the Hulsey Yard and Maddox Park will require a process with adequate public participation and a commitment to design excellence. The best way to achieve this result may be to host a competition that engages world-class designers, provides nearby communities with the opportunity to examine alternatives, and involves a technical assessment of the proposed alternative designs. A competition of this sort should be managed by a carefully selected Design Review Panel that would include individuals with a deep understanding of architectural design and that would enjoy the public's confidence. This process, which includes the engineering, planning, and design, would take 12 months each for Hulsey Yard and Maddox Park.

Experience with these two initial design processes would provide the basis for the approach taken to designing Boulevard Crossing, Murphy Crossing, Simpson Road, and Bellwood Lake. Planning for the development at Simpson Road should occur as soon as the TAD is approved and a new MARTA station becomes a reality.

Operating Costs

The cost to create the Beltline Transit System would be met by the Tax Allocation District and federal transportation programs. The remainder of the funds necessary to create the Beltline Emerald Necklace would come from donations and developers who wish to build the mixed-use jewels. Government spending to pay for maintaining and operating the Beltline, however, is simply unreliable. Therefore, the operating and maintenance costs would require a separate and dependable source of money.

Open space has to compete with so many other government objectives that it is often the first item to be cut from the municipal budget. Alternative financing mechanisms for park operations that have proven most effective include community improvement districts (CIDs), dedicated lease payments, fees, real estate taxes, and sales taxes.[6] Because new city-wide taxes are not an option, the most appropriate possibilities for meeting the Beltline's operating and maintenance costs are CID charges, dedicated lease payments, and fees.

Atlanta already has nine CIDs, which are created by agreement of the majority of commercial property owners within the district. Once the CID is established, these commercial property owners agree to assess themselves a surcharge to the real estate tax. That money is collected by the city and returned to the district for uses determined by a board of directors representing the property owners. The appropriate boundary for a Beltline CID would approximate that of the TAD.

For the public-private development in the mixed-use non-park property, Beltline Jewels could be leased, not sold, to developers for 99 years. The advantage to developers would be that they would not have to raise the money to buy the sites. Consequently, they would require proportionately smaller development loans and permanent mortgages. Revenues from these leases would be allocated to Beltline operating and maintenance costs.

The third source of operating funds would be fees. Those fees could come from the right to operate concessions such as newsstands, snack bars, cafés, or even tennis courts. Other fees could come from the right to use Beltline property for non-reoccurring events such as parties, concerts, or festivals.

The Bryant Park Restoration Corporation

The Bryant Park Restoration Corporation, the model for park-centered community improvement districts, was established in 1984 in response to the increasingly bedraggled condition of crime-ridden Bryant Park. At that time the NYC Parks Department spent $250,000 annually maintaining the park. After spending nearly $18 million renovating this 6-acre park, the Bryant Park Restoration Corp. assumed responsibility for maintenance. By 2000, more than $3 million was being spent annually on operations, all of it from private sources: concession and other rents, business improvement district fees, and contributions. Today, thousands of people use this beautifully maintained and landscaped park on a daily basis.

Conclusion

Atlanta's leaders face major decisions: Should Atlanta become a model city of the 21st Century? Should Atlanta create a new public realm around which the city grows, or should it continue its current arrangement of unorganized development? Should Atlanta choose to embrace an effective mass-transit system, or should the city continue to increase its traffic and congestion? Should Atlanta maintain its substandard quantity of open space, or should it embrace a new network of parks that will connect over 2,000 acres of open space. As this report makes clear, a better future is within reach. Atlanta's leaders hold the power to make the Beltline a reality. This is their moment.

End Notes

Ch 1

p. 1: [1] Peter Harnik: *The Excellent City Park System*, The Trust for Public Land, Washington DC, 2003

p. 12: [2] Frederick Law Olmsted: "To Gardeners," a fragment written in 1872, quoted in *The Papers of Frederick Law Olmsted*, Volume VI, Johns Hopkins University Press, Baltimore, 1992, p. 539

p. 16: [3] Peter Harnik: *The Excellent City Park System*, The Trust for Public Land, Washington DC, 2003

Ch 3

p. 76: [4] Draft 2030 Regional Transportation Plan and FY 2005-2010 Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP), Atlanta Regional Commission, 2004, p. 244 (The sum does not include the southwest section, which is already publicly owned, or the northwest section, which may be leased and not acquired.)

Ch 4

p. 83: [5] *Rails to Trails Conservancy: 1000 Great Rail-Trails*, The Globe Pequot Press, Guilford, Connecticut, 2004

Ch 5

p. 130: [6] See Alexander Garvin: *Parks and Recreation: A 21st Century Agenda*, American Planning Association, 2000

Illustration Credits

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- James Langford, The Trust for Public Land
- The PATH Foundation
- Tunnell-Spangler-Walsh, on behalf of the Piedmont Park Conservancy
- The Ponce Park Team
- Peter Harnik: *Inside City Parks*, Urban Land Institute and The Trust of Public Land, 2000
- Midtown Greenway Coalition, Minneapolis

Appendix A: Acres of Parkland in the City, Per 1000 Residents

City	Population	All Parkland* (Acres)	Acres Per 1000 Persons
Jacksonville	736,000	49,785	67.6
El Paso	564,000	26,372	46.8
Albuquerque	449,000	17,746	39.5
San Diego	1,223,000	38,993	31.9
Kansas City, Mo.	442,000	14,684	31.2
Oklahoma City	506,000	13,782	29.0
Colorado Springs	361,000	10,150	28.1
Phoenix	1,321,000	36,944	28.0
Virginia Beach	425,000	11,258	26.5
Portland, Ore.	529,000	12,959	24.5
Charlotte/Mecklenburg County	695,000	16,472	23.7
Cincinnati	331,000	7,000	21.1
Louisville/Jefferson County	694,000	14,209	20.5
Honolulu/Honolulu County	876,000	17,538	20.0
Fort Worth	535,000	10,554	19.7
Dallas	1,189,000	21,670	18.2
Tulsa	393,000	7,110	18.1
Nashville/Davidson County	570,000	10,272	18.0
Memphis	650,000	10,490	16.1
Milwaukee/Milwaukee County	940,000	15,115	16.1
Indianapolis	792,000	11,868	15.0
Minneapolis	383,000	5,694	14.9
San Antonio	1,145,000	16,503	14.4
Washington, D.C.	572,000	7,576	13.2
Arlington, Tex.	333,000	4,151	12.5
Columbus	711,000	8,494	11.9
Las Vegas	478,000	5,416	11.3
Denver	555,000	6,251	11.3
Tampa	303,000	3,408	11.2
Houston	1,954,000	21,252	10.9
New Orleans	485,000	5,228	10.8
Seattle	563,000	6,024	10.7
St. Louis	348,000	3,385	9.7
Oakland	399,000	3,822	9.6
Boston	589,000	5,451	9.3
Sacramento	407,000	3,694	9.1
Baltimore	651,000	5,749	8.8
Los Angeles	3,695,000	30,134	8.2
Pittsburgh	335,000	2,735	8.2
Atlanta	416,000	3,235	7.8
San Francisco	777,000	5,916	7.6
Mesa	396,000	2,862	7.2
Philadelphia	1,518,000	10,621	7.0
Toledo	314,000	2,206	7.0
Tuscon	487,000	3,175	6.5
Detroit	951,000	5,890	6.2
Long Beach	462,000	2,792	6.0
Cleveland	478,000	2,884	6.0
New York	8,008,000	36,646	4.6
San Jose	895,000	3,858	4.3
Chicago	2,896,000	11,676	4.0
Miami	362,000	1,138	3.1
Fresno	428,000	1,323	3.1

*Note: "All Parkland" includes all parks and preserves owned by municipal, county, metropolitan, state and federal agencies within the boundary of the city.

Appendix B: Beltline Parks

Parks Adjacent to Beltline

Park	Playgrnd	Basketball	Ballfields	Tennis	Swimming	Golf	Rec Center	Acres	Description
Ardmore	1							1.7	Park
Bobby Jones								149.0	Golf Course
Daniel Stanton		1	1				1	7.9	Park
Freedom	1							187.0	Park
Lindbergh II								0.1	Triangle
Maddox	1	2	1	1	1			51.5	Park
Napoleon Circle								0.5	Circle
Piedmont	1		4	12	1			180.0	Park
Stratford Street Park								0.3	Circle
Tanyard Creek	1							14.5	Park
Washington	1		2	8	1		1	20.4	Park
TOTALS	6	3	8	21	3	0	2	613	

Parks within a half mile of the Beltline

NAME	Playgrnd	Basketball	Ballfields	Tennis	Swimming	Golf	Rec Center	Acres	Description
Adair I	1	1	1					6.3	Park I
Adair II	1	1	1	2				10.0	Park II
Alexander								11.6	Park
Ansley								8.0	Playground
Ardmore	1							1.7	Park
Arthur Langford, Jr./Joyland	1	4	1	4	1		1	9.9	Park
Ashby Circle	1							0.9	Playlot
Ashview								0.3	Triangle
Atwood								0.4	Terminus
Avery-E. Park Lane								0.2	Triangle
Bass							1	1.0	Recreation Center
Beverly-Avery								0.4	Circle
Beverly-Avery								0.3	Triangle
Beverly-Montgomery Ferry								0.3	Triangle
Beverly-Polo								0.4	Triangle
Birchwood-Arlene								0.1	Triangle
Bobby Jones								149.0	Golf Course
Channing Valley	1							1.5	Park
Chosewood	1	2	1	1				5.8	Park
Daniel Stanton		1	1				1	7.9	Park
Dean Rusk	1		1					6.7	Park
Delta								0.3	Park
Dill Avenue								0.3	Fountain
East Pelham								0.3	Triangle
Elinor Place								0.5	Median
Emma Millican	1							6.0	Park
Enota Place	1							0.5	Playlot
Esther Peachey Lefever/Cabbage	1							1.0	Block Park
Eubanks								2.0	Park
Frank Street								0.1	
Gibson-Kirkwood/Dodson								1.0	Playlot
Gordon-White								1.7	Triangle

*Source for park statistics: Buereau of Parks, City of Atlanta

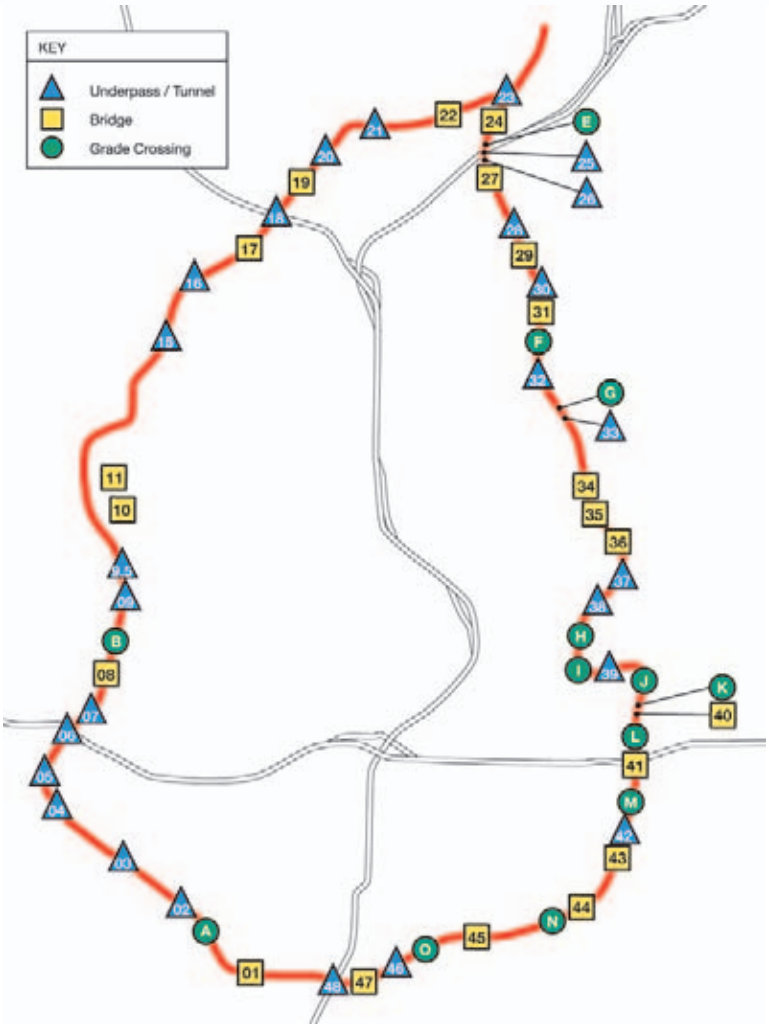
Parks within a half mile of the Beltline (continued)

NAME	Playgrnd	Basketball	Ballfields	Tennis	Swimming	Golf	Rec Center	Acres	Description
Grant	1	1	2	4	1		1	127.0	Park
Greenwood-Charles Allen								0.5	Triangle
Greenwood-Monroe/Ray Kluka Memorial								0.3	Triangle
Howell	1	1						2.1	Park
Inman Park								0.3	Park
J.D. Sims	1	1					1	1.0	Recreational Center
John Howell	1							2.8	Park
Knight	1	1		1				4.0	Park
Lafayette-15th								0.3	Triangle
Lindbergh I								0.6	Triangle
Lindbergh II								0.1	Triangle
Loring Heights	1							1.9	Park
M.L.K.					1			2.2	Recreational Center
Maddox	1	2	1	1	1			51.5	Park
Maddox-Avery								0.3	Triangle
Manigault Street								0.1	Park
McClatchey	1			3				5.0	Park
Montgomery Ferry-Golf Circle								0.1	Triangle
Napoleon								0.5	Circle
Orme Park	1							6.6	Park
Orme Triangle								0.1	Triangle
Ormond-Grant	1							1.3	Playlot
Outdoor								26.0	Activity Center
Peachtree Hills	1		1	3			1	8.0	Park
Peoplestown/Four Corners								3.0	Block Park
Perkerson	1	2	3	6			1	49.9	Park
Piedmont	1		4	12	1			180.0	Park
Piedmont-Avery								0.3	Triangle
Pittman	1	2	2	3	1		1	14.1	Park
Prado-17th								0.5	Triangle
Prado-Maddox								0.3	Triangle
Prado-Piedmont								0.3	Beauty Spot
Prado-South Prodo								0.2	Circle
Prado-Westminster								0.3	Triangle
Queen Street								0.5	Terminus
Rose Circle		1			1			2.7	Park
Rose-Lee								0.5	Beauty Spot
Smith								0.5	Park
South Atlanta	1	1	1	3				10.0	Park
Spring Valley								3.0	Park
Springvale	1							4.6	Park
Stafford Street								0.3	Circle
Tanyard Creek	1							14.5	Park
Tift-Bonnie Brae								0.5	Playlot
Vedado-Greenwood								0.2	Triangle
Washington	1		2	8	1		1	20.4	Park
West End	1	1	1	2				6.4	Park
Westminster Park Lane								0.1	Circle
Winn	1							10.3	Park
TOTALS	**32**	**22**	**23**	**53**	**8**	**0**	**9**	**988**	

Appendix C: Beltline Structural Analysis

*Based on survey conducted on 9/14/04

ID	Structure	Location	Length (feet)	Width (feet)	Clearance (feet)
01	Bridge	Metropolitan Pkwy.	58	15 x's 2	-
02	Tunnel	Lee St. & MARTA	200	16 x's 3	20+
03	Underpass	Lawton St.	60	34	25+
04	Tunnel	RD Abernathy Blvd.	100	15 x's 2	20+
05	Underpass	Lucile Ave.	54	15	12-20 (arch)
06	Underpass	I-20 (west)	120	50+	25+
07	Underpass	Westview Dr.	70	25+ x's 2	35
08	Bridge	MLK, Jr. Dr.	65	12	-
09	Underpass	Mason-Turner Rd.	70	6, 30	18
9.5	Underpass (MARTA)	Simpson Rd.	70	55	18
10	Bridge	North Ave. (west)	380	10	-
11	Bridge	DL Hollowell Dr.	60	10	-
15	Underpass	Huff Rd.	35	25+	20+
16	Underpass	Howell Mill Rd.	70	35-40	25+
17	Bridge	Northside Dr.	150	25	-
18	Underpass	I-75 (north)	225	35 x's 2	25+
19	Bridge	Tanyard Creek	220	9	-
20	Underpass	Collier Rd.	45	25	25
21	Underpass	Peachtree Rd.	80	25	20+
22	Bridge	Clear Creek (1)	150	10	-
23	Underpass	NS Railroad (Amtrak)	35	20 x's 2	30
24	Bridge	Armour Dr.	50	40	-
25	Underpass (angled)	MARTA north line	35	120	
26	Underpass	I-85 (north)	270	30	25
27	Bridge	Buford Hwy.	160	30	-
28	Underpass	Montgomery Ferry Rd.	45	30	20+
29	Bridge	Clear Creek (2)	130	10	-
30	Underpass	Piedmont Ave.	70	24	20
31	Bridge	Clear Creek (3)	45	8	-
32	Underpass	Park Dr.	40	30 x's 3	20
33	Underpass	Virginia Ave.	65	25-30	20+
34	Bridge	Ponce de Leon Ave.	90	8	-
35	Bridge	North Ave. (east)	85	45	-
36	Bridge	Ralph McGill Blvd.	85	35	-
37	Underpass	Freedom Pkwy.	150	100	30
38	Underpass	N. Highland Ave.	90	60	25+
39	Underpass	Edgewood Ave.	60	50	20+
40	Bridge	Mauldin St.	35	10 x's 2	-
41	Bridge (shared w/ Bill Kennedy Way)	I-20 (east)	285	60	-
42	Underpass	Berne St.	45	50	25
43	Bridge	Ormewood Ave.	100	25	-
44	Bridge	Confederate Ave.	55	30	-
45	Bridge	Hill St.	110	25	-
46	Tunnel	Hank Aaron Dr. (7 pts)	270	20-25 (arch)	20
47	Bridge	Pryor Rd.	80	10	-
48	Underpass	I-75/85 (south)	250	25	25

Grade Crossings

	Road	Type
A	Allene Ave.	Residential/Industrial two-lane, light traffic
B	Lena St. (path)	Path
E	Mayson St.	Service Rd
F	Service Road (at Piedmont Park)	Service Rd
G	Monroe Dr.	Major arterial four-lane
H	Irwin St.	Residential two-lane, moderate traffic
I	DeKalb Ave.	Major arterial three-lane with alternating center lane
J	Wylie St.	Residential two-lane, light traffic
K	Kirkwood Ave.	Residential two-lane, light traffic
L	Memorial Dr.	Major arterial three-lane with alternating center lane
41	*Bill Kennedy Way (share road)*	*Arterial two-lane*
M	Glenwood Ave.	Residential/Industrial two-lane, moderate traffic
N	Boulevard	Major arterial four-lane
O	Milton Ave.	Industrial two-lane, light traffic