

March 13, 2006

Dear Community Stakeholder:

In 2005, the City of Atlanta, Fulton County and the Atlanta Public School System approved the creation of the BeltLine Tax Allocation District. The BeltLine TAD is projected to raise \$1.7 billion over the next 25 years towards development of the project. Not all of these funds will be available at once. Bonds will be issued every three to four years and the amount of funds available will depend on a variety of factors, including the responsibility to obtain the necessary parcels of land and transit rights-of-way, to build the best foundation for future acquisitions and to maintain a balance in where the projects are located around the City as the BeltLine takes shape.

When completed, the BeltLine TAD will fund a substantial improvement in city infrastructure, including:

- a 22-mile transit system with regional links to MARTA;
- 33 miles of trails connecting 40 parks;
- almost 1,300 acres of new greenspace;
- improvements to almost 700 acres of existing parks;
- approximately 30,000 permanent new jobs (a 50% increase that would not happen without the BeltLine) and 48,000 year-long construction jobs; and
- 5,600 workforce housing units.

As part of this tremendous undertaking, the City wants residents and interested groups to be aware of progress with the BeltLine project, and to provide critical input into the project's direction. We recognize that development of the BeltLine depends on community support and involvement. To that end, the **Community Engagement Framework (CEF)** has been created. The CEF process will allow all city residents and interested groups to have an equal opportunity to participate and to be engaged in how the BeltLine takes shape. Our first step is to develop a "workplan." This workplan will lay out the initial projects to come on line in the first years of the BeltLine, and the workplan must be approved by City Council prior to the issuance of bonds. Also, in addition to this process, other opportunities for participation include public input for amending the CDP and public involvement in the master planning process for individual parks.

Community input through the CEF is a key benchmark by which we will measure success for the BeltLine. By understanding from the start of this 25 year project what the community expects, we can manage expectations and keep an open dialogue with the community.

How did we design the CEF? The CEF is based on "best practices" from

Austin, Texas, Boston, Mass., Portland, Ore. and Denver, Colo. Although there are other models for community participation, we have developed a unique hybrid that draws on the most relevant and successful aspects of other processes tailored to best meet the goals of Atlanta and the BeltLine, a project unlike any other in the country. Community input will be used in creating the workplans - not only for the first workplan that will be considered by City Council later this year, but also for future BeltLine funding and for future development of the BeltLine over the course of the 25-year project.

Why is the CEF important? The CEF has two goals: (1) providing the tools to help residents, neighborhoods and groups offer their input and (2) creating strong community awareness so that all input is robust and measurable. It is critical that community engagement be readily accessible, transparent and open to all participants. All city residents and interested groups will have an equal opportunity to participate and provide input. Now, every resident, neighborhood or group that wants to provide input has a meaningful way to do so. For this first phase of the BeltLine workplan development, the CEF will work in three ways:

- Stage 1: Solicit input to the workplan before it is developed (from March 25 through May 3).
- Stage 2: Solicit feedback on the workplan after it has been drafted, using the information from community input (from May through June).
- Stage 3: Incorporate community input into the workplan in conjunction with logistical and funding considerations (June and July).

What exactly is the CEF? The City tasked ADA to create a "citizen participation framework" that encouraged and empowered all interested stakeholders to learn more about the BeltLine, to give input on the development of the workplans and to understand how the BeltLine will be built over the next two and a half decades. As designed, the CEF has multiple layers and means of participating, communicating and engaging:

- Town hall meetings and issue forums to facilitate discussion and idea sharing across interest groups and within the general population;
- A "toolkit" that has a package of materials to educate the community about the issues, encourage constructive and meaningful citizen engagement with a sample agenda to facilitate meetings and it will even include information on setting up new community groups as individuals or groups may desire;
- On-line collaboration among community groups, including blogs and chat functions, utilizing the latest in web-based technology; and
- Flyer handouts, community surveys, and other direct outreach techniques for communities that are not on-line.

We will unveil the full CEF on **Saturday, March 25, 2006** at a community stakeholder event to be held at City Hall from 2 P.M. until 4 P.M. At that time, representatives from the Atlanta Development Authority will hand out the CEF toolkit that is the central item in this first stage of gathering community input for the workplan. These representatives will be available to

answer questions and to gather suggestions. The toolkit will also be available on-line and at locations across the City, including libraries, community organizations and at City Hall. A list of these additional locations will be published in the coming weeks.

As the BeltLine progresses, the CEF will evolve, as will the needs of the neighborhoods and its residents. We look forward to working in partnership with every stakeholder to establish a process that meets all community members where they are and that helps gather input and provide information in the best manner for everyone.

Sincerely,

Greg Giornelli
Atlanta Development Authority

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