



JULY 2026 | ATLANTA BELTLINE, INC.

Historic and Cultural Resources Study: Challenges and Opportunities



Atlanta
Beltline

Table of Contents

Acknowledgements.....	5
Executive Summary	6
1.0 Introduction	8
1.1. Corridor Overview and Atlanta Beltline, Inc. Assets	9
1.2. Methodology and Source Materials	19
2.0 Corridor Context and Preservation Framework	20
2.1. Historic and Cultural Context	20
2.2. Preservation in Beltline Planning and Regulations	22
3.0 Factors Shaping Preservation Outcomes	26
3.1. Documentation and Information Access	26
3.2. Market Pressures and Feasibility.....	27
3.3 Design and Infrastructure Integration.....	27
3.4. Environmental Conditions and Industrial Sites	28
3.5. Interagency Stewardship	28
3.6. Cultural Representation and Visibility.....	29
3.7. Community Engagement Findings.....	29
3.8. Near-Term Preservation Coordination Priorities.....	31
4.0 Preservation Priorities	35
4.1. Reinforcing the Beltline as a Unified Cultural Landscape	35
4.2. Adaptive Reuse as a Preservation Tool	35
4.3. Interpretation and Storytelling.....	36
4.4. Equitable Preservation and Community Visibility	37
4.5. Policy Alignment and Interagency Coordination	38
4.6. Leveraging Environmental Remediation as Preservation.....	38
4.7. Embedding Preservation Principles in Design	39
5.0 Implementation.....	40
5.1. Corridor Heritage Registry and Data Tools.....	40
5.2 Adaptive Reuse Support	41



5.3 Interpretation and Cultural Programming.....	42
5.4 Community Partnerships and Equitable Engagement.....	42
5.5 Internal Policy, Stewardship, and Interagency Coordination.....	43
5.6 Environmental Coordination and Site Documentation	45
5.7 Design Integration and Infrastructure Stewardship	45
5.8 Monitoring and Recommendations Summary	46
6.0 Case Studies and Precedents	49
6.1. The 606: Chicago, Illinois	49
6.2. Indianapolis Cultural Trail: Indianapolis, Indiana	50
6.3. Pittsburgh Yards®: Atlanta, Georgia.....	51
6.4. American Tobacco Trail and Campus: Durham, North Carolina	52
6.5. Comparative Insights	52
7.0 Conclusion.....	53
8.0 Annotated Bibliography.....	54
Appendix A: Atlanta Beltline Historic and Cultural Resource Mission Statement	60

List of Figures:

Figure 1: Atlanta Beltline Subareas and ABI Assets.....	9
---	---

List of Photographs:

Photograph 1: Make Friends mural by George F. Baker III, painted on the Northeast Trail where it passes under I-85. Photo credit: Futography.....	7
Photograph 2: A view of the Beltline Westside trail passing beneath the Ralph David Abernathy bridge, featuring the We Are All Thriving with HIV! mural curated by Living Walls in 2019. May 2024. Photo credit: The Sintoses.. ..	8
Photograph 3: Industrial buildings at Murphy Crossing, the former Georgia State Farmers Market. August 2025. Photo credit: The Sintoses.....	11
Photograph 4: A view of Murphy Crossing from the Southwest Trail. August 2025. Photo credit: EP.	12
Photograph 5: A representative view of a building in the Murphy Avenue industrial area. The former Bailey Burruss Company foundry, constructed circa 1914 and currently occupied by Lifecycle Building Center, illustrates the character of rail-adjacent industrial development in the area. This property is not owned by the Beltline. August 2025. Photo credit: EP.	13
Photograph 6: 95 Milton Avenue. August 2025. Photo credit: EP.	14
Photograph 7: A representative view of the Avon Site. Photo credit: The Sintoses.	15



Photograph 8: Triumph Lofts building at 890 Memorial Drive in the Reynoldstown neighborhood. Photo credit: Office of Design Decatur 15

Photograph 9: An aerial view of the 3.2-acre assemblage at Bennett Street in the Buckhead neighborhood. Photo credit: LoKnows Drones..... 16

Photograph 10: The Ormewood Avenue Bridge, featuring “The Fates” by Drew Borders. Photo credit: Atlanta Beltline, Inc.. 17

Photograph 11: A view of the Eastside Trail passing beneath the Edgewood Avenue Bridge, featuring “Somos Boricanos” by ARRRTADICT. August 2025. Photo credit: Erin Sintos..... 26

Photograph 12: A representative view of the Southeast Trail. Photo by Erin Sintos 31

Photograph 13: Above ground fuel storage tanks, a remnant of historic railroad infrastructure remaining along the Beltline. August 2025. Photo credit: EP 39

Photograph 14: The 606 in Chicago consists of the 2.7-mile Bloomingdale Trail as its centerpiece and a series of six planned ground-level parks. Photo credit: The 606 (Chicago). 49

Photograph 15: Indianapolis Cultural Trail. Photo credit: Indianapolis Cultural Trail, Inc. 50

Photograph 16: Led by the Annie E. Casey Foundation, Pittsburgh Yards transformed a mid-20th-century warehouse into a hub for small businesses, workforce development, and community programming along the Southside Trail. August 2025. Photo credit: EP. 51

Photograph 17: American Tobacco Trail. Photo credit: Warren LeMay; American Tobacco Campus. 52

Photograph 18: Interpretive signage along the Beltline corridor describing the history of the Blandtown neighborhood. August 2025. Photo credit: EP. 53

List of Tables:

Table 1. Atlanta Beltline, Inc. Property Assets Key..... 10

Table 2. Beltline-Owned Historic-Age Bridges as of August 2025. 18

Table 3. Summary of Historic and Cultural Resources by Beltline Subarea. 24

Table 4. Agency Review Responsibilities for Beltline Projects..... 44

Table 5. Recommendations Summary Matrix..... 47

Acknowledgements

This report was prepared by Johnson, Mirmiran & Thompson (JMT) for Atlanta Beltline, Inc. (ABI) as part of ongoing efforts to integrate historic preservation and cultural resource management into Beltline planning, design, and implementation. The document reflects the collaboration of JMT's cultural resources team, Beltline staff, and partner firm Edwards-Pitman Environmental, Inc. (EP). We thank the Technical Stakeholder Advisory Committee (TSAC), community stakeholders, neighborhood associations, and local historians whose perspectives continue to shape how the Beltline honors and interprets its history.

Technical Stakeholder Advisory Committee (TSAC)

- Adriane Jefferson, Executive Director, City of Atlanta
Mayor's Office of Cultural Affairs
- Amina Cooper, Director of Arts and Culture, Atlanta Beltline, Inc.
- Anthony Knight, Project Manager II for Historic Preservation Studio, City of Atlanta
- Ben Sutton, Senior Director of Preservation and Legislative
Advocacy, Georgia Trust for Historic Preservation
- Chad Keller, Senior Lecturer and Director, Master of Heritage
Preservation Program, Georgia State University
- Collette Haywood, Director of Equitable Development,
Partnership for Southern Equity
- David Mitchell, Executive Director, Atlanta Preservation Center
- Douglas Young, Director, Office of Design, City of
Atlanta Department of City Planning
- Karcheik Sims-Alvarado, Assistant Professor of
Africana Studies, Morehouse College
- Leslie Sharp, Dean of Libraries, Georgia Tech
- Mary Wilson Joseph, Community Outreach Coordinator, Historic
Preservation Division, Georgia Department of Community Affairs
- Paul Crater, Vice President of Collections and
Research Science, Atlanta History Center
- Shaun Green, Principal Engineer, Atlanta Beltline, Inc.
- Stacy Rieke, Environmental Review Program Manager, Historic
Preservation Division, Georgia Department of Community Affairs
- Tamika Strong, Reference Archivist, Auburn Avenue Research Library



Executive Summary

This Challenges and Opportunities Report presents a practical framework for integrating historic and cultural resource considerations into the Beltline's daily operations and long-term planning. Since its inception, the Beltline has recognized the corridor's rail infrastructure, industrial architecture, and surrounding neighborhoods as foundational to Atlanta's identity. Although early planning did not establish a standalone historic preservation program, preservation has been advanced through adaptive reuse, design decisions, public art, and coordinated project delivery. Examples include rehabilitation of rail-era bridges, tunnels, and retaining walls; reuse of former industrial buildings; preservation of artifacts and material remnants uncovered during construction; retention of historic markers, gate arms, and track remnants preserved in place along completed segments; public art and interpretation that highlight neighborhood history; and Section 106 documentation that informs project development.

The Beltline's preservation role centers on alignment and early integration rather than direct regulatory control. The mainline trail system is largely built, and the Beltline's remaining delivery role centers on transit implementation, a small number of remaining trail segments, long-term stewardship, land disposition, and corridor-based design and programming carried out in partnership with the City of Atlanta and other agencies. Because the Beltline directly controls relatively few standing historic structures, the recommendations in this report focus on the areas where the organization has the greatest influence: project sponsorship, corridor stewardship, design guidance, arts and culture programming, data integration, and interagency coordination.

This report does not propose a new regulatory program. Instead, it explains how historic and cultural resource considerations can be integrated into existing workflows, partnerships, and capital planning processes. Recommendations focus on actions within the Beltline's authority, including consolidating documentation, strengthening cross-agency workflows, supporting adaptive reuse, and embedding interpretation and cultural programming into project delivery. Together, these actions position preservation as a core part of Beltline implementation, not a separate program. By aligning infrastructure investment, community engagement, and cultural resource management, the organization can reinforce the Beltline's role as both a mobility network and a reflection of Atlanta's historic and cultural character. Table 4 summarizes recommended actions, implementation leads, partners, and timing so staff can quickly identify what can begin now and what depends on longer-term coordination.





Using This Report

This document is designed as an internal guide for applying historic and cultural resource management in the Beltline’s ongoing work. It provides a usable playbook for project scoping, design coordination, real estate decisions, infrastructure maintenance, arts and culture programming, and land disposition. The primary audience includes planning, arts and culture, design and construction, real estate, community engagement, and asset management staff, as well as project managers working with city, state, and federal partners.

Recommended tools and outputs include a Corridor Heritage Registry, an Adaptive Reuse Toolkit, an Early Screening Checklist for use at project kickoff, and Preservation Indicators tracked through existing dashboards and annual reporting. Each tool is described in detail in [Section 5](#).

This report is the second of three related deliverables. The first established a baseline inventory of historic and cultural resources along the corridor. This report identifies the challenges and opportunities shaping preservation outcomes and recommends actions within existing authority. The forthcoming Deliverable 3 will translate those recommendations into resource-specific treatment guidelines, including practical standards for how project teams handle specific resource types when they are encountered during project delivery. The Historic and Cultural Resource Mission Statement in Appendix A ties the three deliverables together as an organizational commitment. The Mission Statement is the north star; this report is the strategy; the forthcoming guidelines are the handbook.

This report documents current conditions, defines key preservation priorities, and sets the framework for that next phase. Anticipated guideline topics include rail bridges, tunnels, retaining walls, and culverts; industrial buildings and sites; demolition documentation and recordation; treatment of exposed features or industrial remnants encountered during remediation; interpretation and storytelling elements within trail and public realm projects; and approaches for recognizing places of community importance whose significance is not captured fully through formal designation alone. The intent is to give Beltline staff and project partners practical direction that can be applied consistently during scoping, design, construction, and coordination.

Photograph 1: Make Friends mural by George F. Baker III, painted on the Northeast Trail where it passes under I-85. Photo credit: Futography.



1.0 Introduction



The Atlanta Beltline is among the most ambitious urban redevelopment initiatives in the United States, transforming approximately 22 miles of former rail rights-of-way into a connected network of trails, parks, transit corridors, housing, and economic development projects linking more than 45 neighborhoods across Atlanta. The Beltline's program goals include 33 miles of multi-use urban trails, 22 miles of pedestrian-friendly rail transit, 1,300 acres of new greenspace, 1,100 acres of environmental cleanup, \$10 billion in private investment, 5,600 affordable workforce housing units, and 50,000 permanent jobs alongside 48,000 construction jobs.

The concept originated in Ryan Gravel's 1999 Georgia Tech master's thesis and has advanced through two decades of sustained public, private, and community partnership. The organization has delivered trails and parks, advanced transit planning, supported affordable housing, secured over 90 acres for future redevelopment, completed environmental remediation, expanded arts programming, and built economic development partnerships and invested in small businesses across the city. This work is guided by a foundational commitment to making the Beltline the People's Project, ensuring that every community connected by the corridor is represented in, and benefits from its continued growth.

As the program has advanced, the Beltline's rail-era infrastructure, industrial fabric, and surrounding neighborhoods have continued to define its identity. Bridges, tunnels, warehouses, industrial remnants, and adjacent communities anchor both physical form and cultural character. The Beltline functions not only as a mobility network, but as a system connecting multiple chapters of Atlanta's development, including industrial expansion, neighborhood growth, and civic change. This report provides planning-level guidance to coordinate historic and cultural resource management across projects and programs.

Photograph 2:

A view of the Beltline Westside trail passing beneath the Ralph David Abernathy bridge, featuring the We Are All Thriving with HIV! mural curated by Living Walls in 2019. May 2024. Photo credit: The Sintoses.



1.1. Corridor Overview and Atlanta Beltline, Inc. Assets

The Beltline follows former rail rights of way that encircle Atlanta’s urban core, passing through industrial districts, early residential neighborhoods, and communities central to Atlanta’s civic and civil rights history. For planning purposes, the Beltline organizes the project area into ten subareas totaling roughly 15,000 acres (Figure 1). As of January 2025, when this study began, Beltline holdings included 21 parcels totaling approximately 112 acres (Table 1), distributed across the subareas. This summary focuses on Beltline-owned parcels; trail corridor infrastructure such as bridges, tunnels, and retaining walls is addressed throughout the report but is not reflected in the parcel inventory below. Fifteen parcels were vacant at the time of inventory. Several have since been incorporated into completed or active trail construction. One asset (890 Memorial Drive) is office space within a residential building not owned by the Beltline. The remaining five parcels include standing buildings or structural remnants, most dating to the mid-20th century and not currently designated as historic resources.

This ownership profile shapes the Beltline’s preservation role. Rather than managing a concentrated portfolio of historic buildings, the organization manages a historic landscape: rail infrastructure, bridges, industrial remnants, and public spaces embedded within an active redevelopment area. Preservation work therefore spans infrastructure systems, adjacent properties, and public space instead of a single site or building portfolio, connecting multiple chapters of Atlanta’s story across a 22-mile corridor.

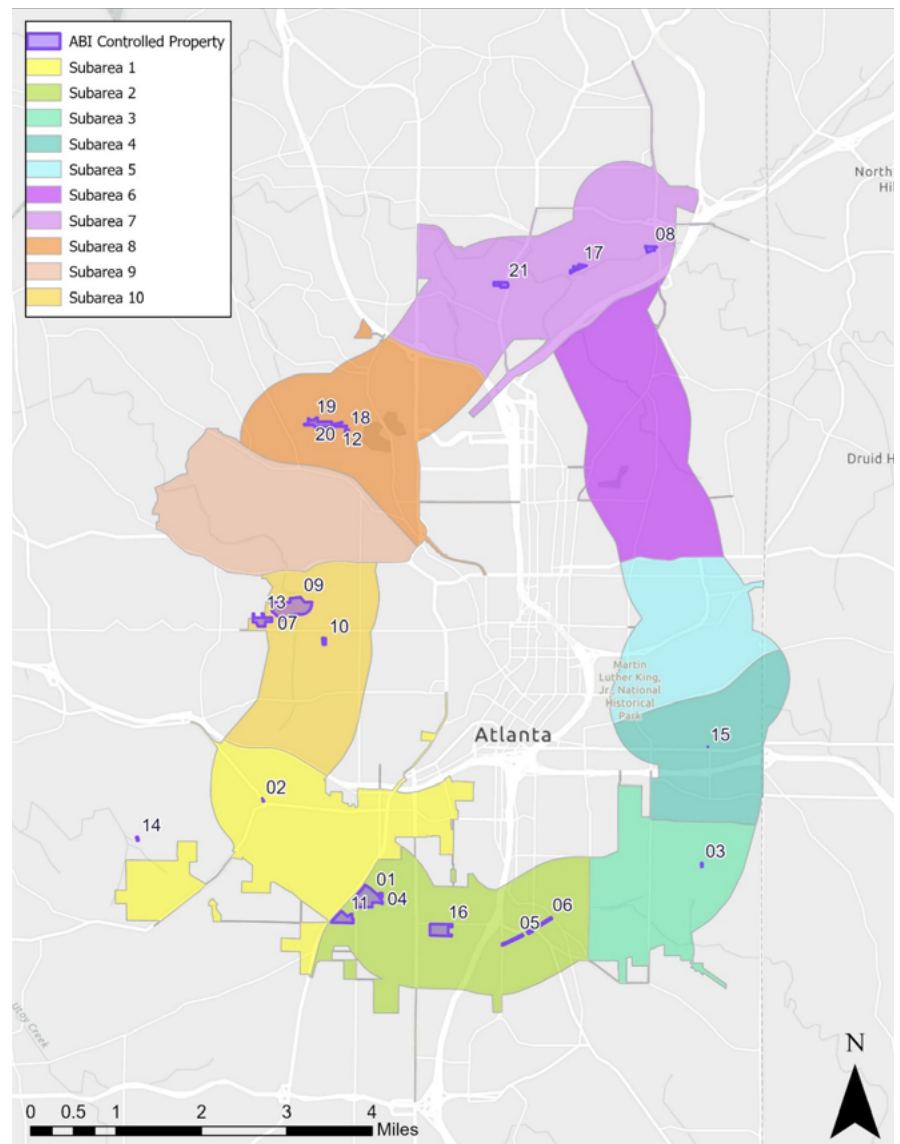


Figure 1: Atlanta Beltline Subareas and ABI Assets.

Table 1. Atlanta Beltline, Inc. Property Assets Key.

This inventory reflects the Beltline’s holdings as of January 2025. Several parcels have since been incorporated into completed or active trail construction and are no longer available for redevelopment; these rows are shaded blue. Descriptions reflect status at the time of inventory. Vacant assets are not described further.

Map No.	Asset Name	Address	Description
01	Murphy Crossing	1050 Murphy Avenue	Commercial property
02	RDA	1385 Ralph D Abernathy Boulevard	Trail access point
03	Eden Ave	872 Eden Avenue	Vacant
04	Allene Ave	1055 Allene Avenue	Vacant
05	Capitol Ave	1255 Capitol Avenue	Trail access point
06	Milton Ave	95 Milton Avenue	Industrial warehouse
07	350 Chappell Rd	350 Chappell Road	Vacant
08	Garson	579 Garson Drive	Vacant
09	425 Chappell Rd	425 Chappell Road	Industrial site remains
10	Washington Manor	Washington Manor	Vacant
11	Avon Site	1150 Murphy Avenue	Industrial site
12	English Ave	1388 English Avenue	Trail access point
13	Conway	1400 Conway Place	Vacant
14	Beecher Rd	2039 Beecher Road	Vacant
15	Memorial Dr	890 Memorial Drive, Unit A	Office space within Triumph Lofts Residential Building
16	University Ave	356 University Ave	Vacant
17	Virginia Place	2193 Virginia Place	Trail access point
18	Boyd Ave	1352 Boyd Avenue	Trail access point
19	Brock Properties	0 Fairmount Avenue	Trail access point
20	Culpepper St	0 English Street	NW Trail – Segment 5
21	Bennett St	Southwest of the intersection of Peachtree Road NW and Bennett Street NW	Warehouse district

The six Beltline-controlled assets with standing structures or documented historic significance are described below and vary considerably in character, eligibility status, and redevelopment trajectory.





Murphy Crossing, 1050 Murphy Avenue (Map No. 01)

Murphy Crossing is a 21.5-acre site located directly along the Southwest Trail in Subarea 2. The complex includes a collection of mid-20th-century industrial buildings historically tied to the Georgia State Farmers Market (GSFM). Historical research has identified potential uses of the site predating the farmers market era; however, further investigation is recommended to confirm those earlier associations. The GSFM period remains the basis for the site's historic eligibility: construction began in 1941, and the facility served as a major agricultural distribution and industrial commerce hub at a key rail and road junction for the Atlanta region.

Through Section 106 consultation in 2016, the Georgia State Historic Preservation Office (GA SHPO) found the GSFM complex eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) as a locally significant historic district under Criterion A (Agriculture and Commerce), with a period of significance of 1941–1959. Criterion A is one of four standards used to evaluate whether a property is historically significant and merits listing in the NRHP. It recognizes properties associated with events or patterns of history that have made a meaningful contribution to the broader story of a community, region, or nation. In this case, the GSFM complex qualifies under the themes of Agriculture and Commerce, reflecting its role as a key hub for food distribution and regional trade during the mid-20th century. At the time of evaluation, the complex retained integrity of location, materials, workmanship, setting, and feeling sufficient to convey its historic function as a regional agricultural distribution facility.

Photograph 3: Industrial buildings at Murphy Crossing, the former Georgia State Farmers Market. April 2024.
Photo credit: The Sintoses.



GA SHPO also identified two specific buildings on the Murphy Crossing/former GSFM site (Building 1 and Building 11) that they deemed noncontributing to the NRHP-eligible district because they post-date the period of significance or were substantially altered after that period. Per the Property Information Form (PIF), Building 1 is a large triple barrel utility shed built in 1960 to house surplus war property. Building 11 was built in 1950 as an open-air steel frame shed with a gabled roof (formerly the “watermelon shed”); it was enclosed with concrete block circa 1960 and later used as storage for the Department of Revenue Alcohol Division. The remaining buildings on the site are considered contributing resources per the GA SHPO.

Photograph 4: A view of Murphy Crossing from the Southwest Trail. August 2025. Photo credit: EP.

Murphy Crossing remains one of the few Beltline-owned assets previously determined eligible for NRHP listing. The site’s concentration of industrial buildings and spatial relationships illustrates its historic function and presents a key opportunity for redevelopment that retains and interprets its industrial character. The Subarea 2 Master Plan reflects strong community interest in adaptive reuse of the site’s industrial fabric, and the current redevelopment process is evaluating which contributing structures may be retained as part of that vision. During the evaluation effort in 2016 discussed above, the site was reviewed within the broader Murphy Avenue industrial area (often referred to as the “Murphy Triangle”). The Murphy Triangle Industrial District was recommended not eligible for NRHP listing as a historic district due to insufficient integrity of setting, design, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association across the corridor, although many individual properties retained integrity of location. GA SHPO concurred with the district determination while noting that individual industrial properties such as the representative example in Photo 5 below could remain potentially eligible if they retain sufficient integrity and meet National Register criteria.

GA SHPO also identified two specific buildings on the Murphy Crossing/former GSFM site (Building 1 and Building 11) that they deemed noncontributing to the NRHP-eligible district because they post-date the period of significance or were substantially altered after that period. Per the Property Information Form (PIF), Building 1 is a large triple barrel utility shed built in 1960 to house surplus war property. Building 11 was built in 1950 as an open-air steel frame shed with a gabled roof (formerly the “watermelon shed”); it was enclosed with concrete block circa 1960 and later used as storage for the Department of Revenue Alcohol Division. The remaining buildings on the site are considered contributing resources per the GA SHPO.

Murphy Crossing remains one of the few Beltline-owned assets previously determined eligible for NRHP listing. The site’s concentration of industrial buildings and spatial relationships illustrates its historic function and presents a key opportunity for redevelopment that retains and interprets its industrial character. The Subarea 2 Master Plan reflects strong community interest in adaptive reuse of the site’s industrial fabric, and the current redevelopment process is evaluating which contributing structures may be retained as part of that vision. During the evaluation effort in 2016 discussed above, the site was reviewed within the broader Murphy Avenue industrial area (often referred to as the “Murphy Triangle”). The Murphy Triangle Industrial District was recommended not eligible for NRHP listing as a historic district due to insufficient integrity of setting, design, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association across the corridor, although many individual properties retained integrity of location. GA SHPO concurred with the district determination while noting that individual industrial properties such as the representative example in Photo 5 below could remain potentially eligible if they retain sufficient integrity and meet National Register criteria.



The Beltline is actively evaluating redevelopment options for Murphy Crossing, including preliminary design studies assessing which buildings could be retained and adaptively reused. Preservation outcomes will depend on feasibility findings from that process. Where full retention of contributing elements is not practicable, the goal is to ensure that the site’s history remains legible through design, interpretation, and the retention of character-defining features where viable.

Photograph 5: A representative view of a building in the Murphy Avenue industrial area. The former Bailey Burruss Company foundry, constructed circa 1914 and currently occupied by Lifecycle Building Center, illustrates the character of rail-adjacent industrial development in the area. This property is not owned by the Beltline. August 2025. Photo credit: EP.



Milton Avenue, 95 Milton Avenue (Map No. 06)

The Milton Avenue asset is a small, one-story, mid-20th-century industrial building in Subarea 2 adjacent to the Southside Trail. Historic records show commercial use of the site since at least the 1930s, including use as a warehouse for farm equipment and supplies in the 1950s and later for ink and insulation storage in the 1970s. Previous cultural resource evaluations found the building not eligible for the NRHP due to integrity considerations and limited historical significance. While not eligible individually or as part of a district, the building reflects the broader pattern of rail-adjacent industrial and warehouse development. As of early 2026, the Beltline has initiated plans to demolish the building.

Photograph 6: 95 Milton Avenue.
August 2025. Photo credit: EP.

425 Chappell Road (Map No. 09)

Located approximately 0.5-mile west of the Westside Trail, the 425 Chappell Road property in Subarea 10 consists of multiple Beltline-owned parcels that total approximately 31 acres. It is roughly bounded by Chappell Road NW, Mayson Turner Road NW, North Avenue NW, the CSX Rail, and the Metropolitan Atlanta Rapid Transit Authority (MARTA) Green Line in Atlanta's Bankhead neighborhood. Largely vacant since being officially acquired in 2021, a small number of industrial structures remain on the property. The structures have not been the subject of formal NRHP eligibility determination. However, as part of the field survey conducted in August 2025, architectural historians inspected the site and based on professional judgment, recommend the remaining structures not eligible for NRHP listing due to a loss of integrity.



Photograph 7: A representative view of the Avon Site. Photo credit: The Sintoses.

Avon Site, 1150 Murphy Avenue (Map No. 11)

The Avon Site is an owned industrial asset near Murphy Crossing in Subarea 2. The main warehouse was built for Chrysler Motor Parts Corporation circa 1950, with additional mid-century expansions that supported warehousing and distribution. Through Section 106 compliance efforts in 2016, GA SHPO noted the site as potentially individually eligible for NRHP listing, though a formal determination has not been made. Resolving that determination is a near-term priority given the Beltline's direct ownership and the site's adjacency to Murphy Crossing, where formal eligibility finding already exists.

The Avon Site's redevelopment timeline and program are still being evaluated. The priority as planning advances is to ensure that the site's documented potential historic significance informs redevelopment decisions rather than being treated as an afterthought.



Photograph 8: Triumph Lofts building at 890 Memorial Drive in the Reynoldstown neighborhood. Photo credit: Office of Design Decatur.

Memorial Drive, 890 Memorial Drive SE, Unit A (Map No. 15)

The Beltline holds office space (Unit A) within the Triumph Lofts building at 890 Memorial Drive SE in Subarea 4. GA SHPO evaluated the building in 2018 and found it not eligible for listing in the NRHP.



Bennett Street, Southwest of the intersection of Peachtree Road NW and Bennett Street NW (Map No. 21)

The Bennett Street area in Subarea 7 includes a cluster of mid-20th-century industrial buildings tied to the Peachtree neighborhood's industrial and commercial history. Over time, many buildings in the broader district were adapted for galleries, design studios, showrooms, and creative businesses, reflecting layered reuse patterns that characterize this portion of the Beltline corridor. The Beltline has assembled approximately 3.2 acres near Peachtree Road NW and Bennett Street NW in support of the future Northwest Trail. The structures within the assemblage have been evaluated and determined not eligible for the NRHP, and the Beltline is proceeding with demolition as part of trail construction.

The cultural significance of the Bennett Street district is carried primarily by surrounding privately owned properties, including 75 Bennett Street NW, a former warehouse recognized in the City of Atlanta's LGBTQ+ historic context research as a place associated with the city's LGBTQ cultural and social life in the late 20th century. The Southeastern Arts, Media, and Education Center (SAME), led by Rebecca Ranson, maintained offices at 75 Bennett Street through 1996. The district also supported African American-owned businesses and creative enterprises, reflecting the area's layered cultural significance. These properties are not part of the Beltline's holdings but contribute to a broader cultural landscape that interpretation and programming along the Northwest Trail can continue to acknowledge.

The descriptions above reflect conditions and eligibility status as documented through the field survey and prior studies described in [Section 1.2](#).

Photograph 9: An aerial view of the 3.2-acre assemblage at Bennett Street in the Buckhead neighborhood. Photo credit: LoKnows Drones.



Historic-Age Beltline Bridges

Although the subject of this study focused on Beltline-controlled parcel assets located adjacent to the corridor, historic-age structures such as bridges, tunnels, culverts, and retaining walls were documented and assessed during the August 2025 field survey described in [Section 1.2](#) of this report regardless of their ownership. Many bridges on the Beltline continue to be owned by the Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) or other entities. As of the August 2025 survey, the Beltline owns ten historic-age bridges along the corridor (Table 2). All present Beltline-owned bridges have been previously evaluated for the NRHP via GDOT's Georgia Historic Bridge Survey (GHBS) and were determined to be contributing elements to the NRHP-eligible Historic Railroad Resources (Beltline Railway), which is functionally a linear historic district consisting of the entire historic railroad corridor. The Beltline owns one bridge that is both individually eligible and was recently (2024) locally landmarked by the City of Atlanta – the Ormewood Avenue Bridge. This also makes the Ormewood Avenue Bridge the only Local Landmark that the Beltline owns.

Photograph 10: The Ormewood Avenue Bridge, featuring “The Fates” by Drew Borders. Photo credit: Atlanta Beltline, Inc.

Table 2. Beltline-Owned Historic-Age Bridges as of August 2025.

Asset Name	Address	Description
Bridge 121-5190-0	Over Fulton Terrace SE	Contributing to Eligible Historic Railroad Resources (Beltline Railway) via GHBS
Bridge 121-0515-0	Ralph McGill Blvd NE	Contributing to Eligible Historic Railroad Resources (Beltline Railway) via GHBS
Bridge 121-0491-0	Ponce de Leon Ave NE	Contributing to Eligible Historic Railroad Resources (Beltline Railway) via GHBS
Clear Creek Trestle	Rear of Ansley Mall	Contributing to Eligible Historic Railroad Resources (Beltline Railway) via GHBS
Bridge 121-0599-0	Over Metropolitan Parkway SW/US 41	Contributing to Eligible Historic Railroad Resources (Beltline Railway) via GHBS
Bridge 121-0525-0	Over Pryor Rd SW	Contributing to Eligible Historic Railroad Resources (Beltline Railway) via GHBS
Bridge 121-0522-0	Over Hill St SE	Contributing to Eligible Historic Railroad Resources (Beltline Railway) via GHBS
Ormewood Avenue Bridge Bridge 121-0528-0	Ormewood Ave SE	Local Landmark Individually Eligible for the NRHP and Contributing to Eligible Historic Railroad Resources (Beltline Railway) via GHBS
Bridge 121-5136-0	Jones Ave NW	Contributing to Eligible Historic Railroad Resources (Beltline Railway) via GHBS
Bridge 121-5139-0	Jett St NW	Contributing to Eligible Historic Railroad Resources (Beltline Railway) via GHBS

1.2. Methodology and Source Materials

This report draws on more than two decades of planning, environmental review, and cultural resource work to provide a consolidated understanding of historic and cultural resources along the Beltline. Central to this effort was a reconnaissance-level field survey conducted in August 2025, in which the project team walked the full 22-mile alignment and documented visible above-ground features across Beltline-owned parcels. Those findings are integrated here with earlier planning studies, Section 106 documentation, and related cultural resource research completed for individual segments.

Key sources reviewed include:

- Section 106 Assessment of Effects reports and Property Information Forms documenting rail infrastructure and related features.
- The ten subarea master plans and the 2018 Arts and Culture Strategic Implementation Plan.
- The 2023 Atlanta LGBTQ+ Historic Context Statement and related thematic studies.
- The Atlanta Preservation Center's 2023 Preservation Opportunities Report.
- Archival records and GIS data from the City of Atlanta Urban Design Commission (UDC), GDOT, and the GA SHPO.

The study also incorporated structured engagement with the TSAC and public outreach activities, including review of draft recommendations. The analysis is planning level in scope and synthesizes existing documentation to support project coordination and delivery.

Findings are organized around three goals:

- Identify preservation-related conditions and priorities along the Beltline.
- Highlight opportunities to embed historic and cultural resource management in planning, programming, design, and partnerships
- Provide actionable recommendations and performance measures to guide implementation.



2.0 Corridor Context and Preservation Framework

The Beltline is rooted in a rail belt that shaped Atlanta's transportation network, industrial landscape, and neighborhood growth for more than a century.

This context helps explain why historic and cultural resources remain relevant as redevelopment advances. The sections below summarize the corridor's historic evolution and the planning and regulatory frameworks that influence current conditions.

2.1. Historic and Cultural Context

Atlanta's emergence as a transportation hub began with the completion of the Western & Atlantic Railroad in the mid-1840s. By the 1870s, additional lines radiating from downtown established Atlanta as a principal rail crossroads in the Southeast. As rail traffic increased, freight bypass routes were built to encircle the industrial core. Between approximately 1871 and 1908, interconnected rights-of-way operated by Atlanta & Richmond Air Line Railway, Georgia Pacific Railway Belt Line, Seaboard Air-Line Belt Railway, Atlanta & West Point Railway, Atlanta, Knoxville & Northern, and Atlanta, Birmingham & Atlantic eventually formed a continuous belt around the urban center.

These freight lines supported a ring of industrial development at the city's edge, including foundries, cotton compresses, furniture and brick plants, warehouses, and distribution facilities serving regional markets. Neighborhoods such as Inman Park, Cabbagetown, Adair Park, Capitol View, West End, Washington Park, and Reynoldstown grew adjacent to industrial districts and rail infrastructure. The people who built and sustained these communities, including industrial workers, Black families navigating segregation, and immigrant households, shaped the social fabric of the corridor as much as the infrastructure itself. While the extent of formal historic district designation varies, these areas illustrate consistent patterns of rail-adjacent growth that shaped Atlanta's late 19th and early-20th-century urban form.

By the early 20th century, the rail belt functioned as a key component of Atlanta's infrastructure, linking factories, warehouses, and residential enclaves. Streetcar lines overlapped with freight spurs, expanding mobility between home and work. Land use practices and planning decisions during this period also reinforced racial and economic segregation: industrial uses and freight yards were often sited near Black neighborhoods, while restrictive covenants and later highway construction intensified physical and social divisions. Following World War II, shifts in manufacturing, trucking, and suburbanization reduced demand for large tracts of urban industrial land. Many facilities closed and rail activity declined. By the 1980s, rail activity along the belt had diminished substantially, leaving much of the alignment idle.

Interest in the rail corridors as potential public infrastructure predates the Beltline program itself. The City of Atlanta's 1993 Parks, Open Space, and Greenways Plan identified segments of the old rail loop as candidate trail corridors, establishing an early planning precedent for the reuse of underutilized rail rights-of-way. This earlier recognition underscores that the Beltline's rail infrastructure history was understood as a community asset well before the formal program launched in 2005. The project concept emerged from a 1999 Georgia Institute of Technology graduate thesis proposing transformation of the underutilized loop into a network of transit, trails, parks, and redevelopment. Building on the grassroots public support and feasibility work in the early 2000s, the Atlanta City Council, Atlanta Public Schools, and the Fulton County Commission approved the Beltline Redevelopment Plan in December 2005, launching the program and establishing the Atlanta Beltline Tax Allocation District (TAD) as a primary funding mechanism. The TAD dedicates future increases in property tax revenue within the redevelopment area to support infrastructure, parks, affordable housing, and economic development. In 2006, ABI was created to oversee planning, development, and implementation.

Today, physical remnants of the rail belt such as bridges, tunnels, retaining walls, culverts, and visible rail alignments are still prominent in the landscape. Adjacent neighborhoods retain architectural forms and community layouts that reflect late 19th and early 20th century development patterns. Together, infrastructure, land use history, and community development document how transportation, industry, planning, and neighborhood change shaped the Beltline system over time.

2.2. Preservation in Beltline Planning and Regulations

Preservation themes have been present in Beltline planning since the program's early stages, even though early planning did not establish a standalone historic preservation program. The 2005 Redevelopment Plan and early cultural resource surveys recognized the corridor's industrial and social history as foundational to its identity. Over the past two decades, historic preservation goals have been directed through infrastructure decisions, adaptive reuse projects, public art, and redevelopment policies. Updated Subarea Master Plans (2020–ongoing) continue this emphasis, reflecting distinct architectural character and preservation values in each subarea. While implementation approaches vary, historic and cultural resources are addressed throughout Beltline planning documents and redevelopment strategies.

Federal and State Frameworks

When projects receive federal funding or require federal permits, compliance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) is required. Section 106 review evaluates effects on properties listed in or eligible for listing in the NRHP and involves consultation with the GA SHPO. Within the Beltline system, Section 106 compliance has most often occurred through GDOT and Federal Highway Administration (FHWA)–funded transportation work or U.S. Army Corps of Engineers permitting tied to bridge and stormwater improvements. Each undertaking defines an Area of Potential Effects (APE) and evaluates historic resources within that boundary.

Earlier reviews have identified and evaluated significant rail features such as the McDonough Boulevard Tunnel and Park Drive Bridge, reinforcing recognition of rail infrastructure as part of a continuous historic system. Section 106 findings may conclude No Historic Properties Affected, No Adverse Effect, or Adverse Effect. Where an Adverse Effect is found, consultation with GA SHPO and other parties results in agreed mitigation measures that guide how effects are addressed. Because Beltline implementation draws on varied funding sources, the applicable regulatory pathway depends on project scope and funding structure.

At the state level, the Georgia Environmental Policy Act (GEPA) applies when state funding or permits are involved and has supported discrete actions such as brownfield cleanup, park improvements, and transportation upgrades. For the mainline trail system, Section 106 review and related design coordination is largely complete. The most immediate federal compliance needs going forward relate to future transit implementation phases and any remaining trail segments where federal funding or permits are involved.

Local Governance

At the local level, the City of Atlanta UDC regulates designated historic districts and landmarks under the Georgia Historic Preservation Act and the City's Historic Preservation Ordinance. Historic district designation along the Beltline is uneven: several adjacent neighborhoods are locally designated, while significant portions of the alignment lie outside any formal protection. Redevelopment is also shaped by the Beltline Zoning Overlay District, which is not a preservation ordinance but establishes design standards for building scale, massing, and frontage that influences how new development relates to historic neighborhoods and rail infrastructure. In practice, protecting historic character depends as much on good urban design as it does on formal designation. The City's Department of City Planning, Office of Design, and Office of Zoning and Development coordinate with the Beltline during project review, and the Beltline Design Review Committee provides advisory review of projects within the Overlay District.

The Beltline's Planning Framework

The Beltline's preservation priorities are most clearly expressed in the ten subarea master plans, which guide redevelopment, design, and cultural resource integration across the Beltline. Developed through extensive community engagement, these plans reflect neighborhood-specific histories, values, and planning goals. Preservation is a shared principle, but emphasis and implementation strategies are tailored to local context:

- Subareas 1 and 5 emphasize protection of neighborhood character and civic and industrial landmarks.
- Subareas 2, 6, 7, and 9 highlight adaptive reuse of industrial fabric and rail-related resources.
- Subareas 3, 4, and 8 integrate stewardship within park, trail, and public art strategies.
- Subarea 10 emphasizes equitable preservation and partnership in historically Black neighborhoods.

Together, the subarea master plans demonstrate a commitment to preservation that stays responsive to local context rather than applied through a single uniform model. Table 2 summarizes how historic and cultural resources are addressed across the ten subareas and is not intended to be exhaustive; additional detail is available in the individual subarea master plans.

Table 3. Summary of Historic and Cultural Resources by Beltline Subarea.

Subarea	Geographic Focus	Key Historic / Cultural Resources	Preservation Or Cultural Emphasis in Plan
1	Oakland City; Pittsburgh; West End; Westview; Adair Park; Bush Mountain; Cascade Avenue/Road; Mechanicsville.	West End, Oakland City, Adair Park, and Pittsburgh Historic Districts; extensive public murals and community cultural spaces; Hammonds House, The Wren's Nest, Shrine of the Black Madonna, and MET Atlanta adaptive reuse project	Emphasizes protection of neighborhood character, preservation of historic residential land uses and buildings, and incorporation of cultural expression in revitalization
2	Adair Park, Capitol View, Capitol View Manor, Chosewood Park, High Point, Joyland, Oakland City, Peopletown, Pittsburgh, South Atlanta, Sylvan Hills, Villages at Carver	Murphy Crossing industrial complex (Georgia State Farmers Market); Murphy Avenue warehouses; Masonic Hall; Muscogee Park in the Historic Adair Park Neighborhood	Calls for adaptive reuse of remaining industrial buildings and protection of historic fabric
3	Benteen, Boulevard Heights, Chosewood Park, Custer/ McDonough/Guice, Grant Park and Ormewood Park	Grant Park Historic District (HD); remaining historic resource clusters along Hamilton Avenue, United Avenue, and Grant Street; Southside Trail rail infrastructure; Boulevard Crossing Park	Update and maintain the inventory of historic buildings and structures as redevelopment advances, and integrate preservation with trail and park upgrades
4	Cabbagetown; Edgewood; Glenwood Park; Grant Park; Ormewood Park; Reynoldstown	Grant Park HD; Cabbagetown Local District (LD); Oakland Cemetery LD; Memorial Drive structures	Reuse of older buildings and embedding history in design and public art
5	Inman Park; Martin Luther King, Jr. District; Old Fourth Ward; Poncey-Highland	MLK Jr. National Historical Park; Sweet Auburn HD; Ponce City Market	Protect civil rights and industrial landmarks, model adaptive reuse
6	Sherwood Forest; Piedmont Heights; Lindridge Martin Manor; Morningside; Ansley Park; Midtown; Virginia-Highland; St. Charles	Historic resources concentrated near Ponce de Leon Avenue, Dutch Valley Road, and along Monroe Drive, including Piedmont Park Apartments, Habersham Memorial Hall, Rock Springs Presbyterian Church, Midtown High School, Ansley Mall, and Ansley Square	Protect historic structures and cultural resources, support adaptive reuse, and preserve as much of Ansley Mall as practical in future redevelopment

Subarea	Geographic Focus	Key Historic / Cultural Resources	Preservation Or Cultural Emphasis in Plan
7	Peachtree Hills; Brookwood; Brookwood Hills; Collier Hills; Lindbergh (Lindbergh City Center); Lindridge Martin Manor; Colonial Homes; Bennett Street area	Bennett Street warehouse district; warehouse-based arts uses; Museum of Contemporary Art of Georgia (MOCA GA) at the Tula Arts Center; properties identified in the LGBTQ+ Historic Context Statement	Preserve creative spaces; reuse industrial buildings for arts and culture
8	West Midtown; Berkeley Park; Blandtown; Hills Park; Loring Heights; Underwood Hills; Marietta Street artery; Home Park; Atlantic Station; Channing Valley	Early 20th-century Westside warehouses; Westside arts district; Goat Farm Arts Center; Atlanta Waterworks; Lower Westside Park	Integrate public art, historic interpretation, and heritage into redevelopment
9	Bankhead; English Avenue; Grove Park; Knight Park/ Howell Station; Rockdale; West Highlands (portion); residential properties along Johnson Road	Industrial heritage near Hollowell Parkway and Maddox Park; community anchors in English Avenue and Knight Park/Howell Station; rail-adjacent residential neighborhoods shaped by segregation-era planning patterns	Document and support adaptive reuse of older industrial buildings and warehouses
10	Historic Westin Heights/ Bankhead Neighborhood Association (portion); English Avenue; Vine City; Grove Park; Washington Park; Hunter Hills; Mozley Park; Just Us; Ashview Heights; West End; Harris Chiles	Historically Black neighborhoods with deep civic and cultural roots; Atlanta University Center (AUC) institutions including Clark Atlanta University, Morehouse College, and Spelman College; Washington Park; Vine City and English Avenue community anchors	Promote equitable preservation, adaptive reuse where appropriate, cultural partnerships, and interpretation of historically Black communities

3.0 Factors Shaping Preservation Outcomes

Historic and cultural resources along the Beltline are shaped by corridor-wide conditions, from documentation gaps and market pressure to shared ownership and cultural visibility. These conditions influence feasibility, timing, and what options remain available as projects advance. The sections below describe each factor and where it has the most influence on outcomes.



3.1. Documentation and Information Access

The Beltline has been the subject of cultural resource documentation spanning more than two decades, but that record was built incrementally, through studies completed at different times and under different regulatory triggers. Some segments include detailed Section 106 survey products and formal eligibility findings; others rely on earlier surveys or consultant reports prepared for prior planning initiatives. For completed trail segments, this work is largely in place. The most immediate documentation and coordination needs apply to segments still in design and planning, particularly future transit implementation phases. Key materials are distributed across GDOT files, City archives, SHPO records, planning documents, and consultant deliverables.

Each source is valuable in its original context. The challenge is that the combined record can be difficult to navigate during active project scoping and design, especially for projects with regulatory review or coordination across agencies. The near-term opportunity is not more documentation but better access to what already exists: organizing existing records in a searchable format, aligning them to a shared GIS layer, and establishing a clear internal location for survey products, findings, and mitigation materials. Improved access supports more consistent decisions and reduces the risk that prior findings are overlooked throughout project planning and implementation.

Photograph 11: A view of the Eastside Trail passing beneath the Edgewood Avenue Bridge, featuring “Somos Boricanos” by ARRTADICT. August 2025. Photo credit: Erin Sintos.

3.2. Market Pressures and Feasibility

The Beltline's success has accelerated redevelopment and increased land values throughout the project area. For property owners and developers weighing rehabilitation against new construction, that market context matters. Code upgrades, accessibility improvements, and environmental cleanup can make reuse of older industrial structures more expensive upfront, and without clear expectations or well-understood financial tools, historic character can be perceived as a constraint rather than an asset. Treating feasibility and resource management as parallel considerations from the start improves the likelihood that historic structures are seen as opportunities that support reinvestment rather than complications that delay it.

Financial incentives exist to help close that gap. The Federal Historic Tax Credit provides a 20% credit against qualified rehabilitation expenditures for income-producing properties, and Georgia's state Historic Rehabilitation Tax Credit (HRTC) offers additional offset for preservation-sensitive work. However, awareness and application rates remain low among smaller property owners along the corridor. The state HRTC program has recently experienced high demand, with available credits largely allocated under current program limits, which can constrain access for new projects. As of April 2026, HB 376, legislation to expand Georgia's historic rehabilitation tax credit program, had passed the General Assembly and was awaiting the Governor's consideration, so the program's future capacity and implementation requirements should continue to be monitored.

3.3 Design and Infrastructure Integration

Rehabilitating historic infrastructure typically requires collaboration across engineering, design, and preservation perspectives. Bridges, tunnels, retaining walls, and industrial buildings were built for freight operations and may not meet current accessibility or performance standards without modification. Along completed Beltline segments, recent infrastructure improvements, including work on the McDonough Boulevard tunnel, demonstrate that safety upgrades and stewardship of historic character can be achieved together when engineering and preservation coordination begin early. For the mainline trail system, design and construction are largely complete, and stewardship of completed infrastructure transfers to the City of Atlanta when trail segments open. The more immediate application of this factor is transit implementation, where design work remains in early stages and preservation considerations can be embedded in project scoping before engineering decisions are made. Incorporating preservation expectations into procurement documents, design briefs, and project typologies ensures that historic character is considered at project kickoff rather than raised as a concern after designs have advanced.

3.4. Environmental Conditions and Industrial Sites

Former rail rights-of-way and industrial sites often include complex environmental conditions that affect redevelopment schedules and budgets. Contaminated soils, legacy infrastructure, and subsurface constraints can limit options, especially where historic structures remain in place. Ground disturbing activities during development also have the potential to impact archaeological resources. While the Beltline does not control remediation on private properties, it can play an important role in shaping how these considerations are addressed through early coordination, guidance, and partnership. When remediation planning proceeds independently, preservation goals can be sidelined. When aligned early, environmental repair and historic preservation can reinforce one another.

Phased cleanup, selective stabilization, and targeted documentation where archaeological remains are encountered can help keep significant industrial features while meeting environmental compliance requirements. Coordinating remediation with documentation and design that responds to site history allows industrial resources to remain legible as reinvestment continues. This challenge also has equity dimensions that warrant attention. Many environmentally burdened sites along the Beltline are located adjacent to historically disinvested communities, places that have borne the costs of industrial activity for decades without proportionate benefit. Aligning environmental cleanup with preservation, affordable housing, and community stabilization goals can help guide reinvestment so that it reflects the needs and histories of the communities it connects, not only the demands of the market.

3.5. Interagency Stewardship

Bridges, tunnels, culverts, and rail remnants within the Beltline system are owned or maintained by partner agencies, including the City of Atlanta, GDOT, MARTA, and freight rail companies. After construction, when the Beltline completes capital investment in trail projects, the infrastructure management and maintenance is turned over to the City of Atlanta. Preservation outcomes therefore depend on shared stewardship across multiple jurisdictions, not ownership alone. The Beltline's role here is less about regulatory control and more about alignment: setting expectations, improving access to key records, and establishing predictable communication pathways.

Because infrastructure improvements occur incrementally, small decisions made over time can cumulatively affect character-defining features. A routine repair or material substitution that seems minor in isolation can, repeated across dozens of structures, meaningfully alter the corridor's historic character. Maintaining that character over time requires that treatment guidance and survey documentation be accessible to the agencies making day-to-day decisions. Building those habits into interagency coordination now reduces the risk that character-defining features are altered or lost without consideration.

3.6. Cultural Representation and Visibility

The Beltline's history extends beyond its physical infrastructure. Neighborhoods along the alignment include places significant to Black Atlantans, immigrant communities, LGBTQ+ residents, and working-class families whose contributions have shaped Atlanta's development across generations. These histories are not uniformly documented. Some have been captured through recent thematic research; others remain held primarily in community memory, oral tradition, and daily life.

Along the Beltline, these histories are tied not only to formally designated resources but also to specific neighborhoods, institutions, and cultural landscapes that remain central to community identity. Examples include historically Black neighborhoods such as Washington Park, Vine City, English Avenue, and West End, where community history is not always fully legible through individual buildings alone, as well as places associated with LGBTQ+ cultural life such as the Bennett Street area. Cultural visibility also extends to institutions and community anchors identified in subarea planning and corridor research, including the Atlanta University Center, Hammonds House, the Wren's Nest, the Shrine of the Black Madonna, and community cultural spaces and murals that help define how Beltline-adjacent neighborhoods are experienced today. Treating these places as active planning inputs strengthens the ability to reflect the full range of histories that shape the corridor.

Recent documentation efforts have expanded the foundation for recognizing underrepresented histories along the corridor. The 2023 Atlanta LGBTQ+ Historic Context Statement, ongoing community oral history initiatives, and the Atlanta Preservation Center's 2023 Preservation Opportunities Report each contribute to a growing record. The near-term opportunity is to treat these not as reference documents but as active planning inputs, incorporating them into ABI's interpretive framework, design standards, and partnership programming so that the histories they capture remain visible as the corridor evolves. In this context, preservation is not limited to protecting physical resources. It includes making cultural history legible through interpretation, public art, and programming, particularly in segments where buildings no longer stand but community identity remains strong.

3.7. Community Engagement Findings

Community and stakeholder engagement for this study reinforced several preservation considerations identified earlier in this report. Through three TSAC meetings, two Citywide Conversations, targeted interviews, and written feedback, participants consistently emphasized early coordination, clarity of responsibility, and protection of the Beltline's industrial character. Engagement also highlighted how documentation access, feasibility constraints, shared management responsibilities, and cultural visibility shape preservation outcomes along the Beltline corridor. This section reflects input from both public engagement activities and stakeholder discussions.

Recurring priorities included:

Early coordination: Preservation outcomes improve when historic infrastructure, industrial buildings, and culturally significant places are identified at project inception, while options for retention and adaptation remain open.



Clear roles and responsibilities: Distributed ownership creates uncertainty about who maintains records, who makes treatment decisions, and who oversees interpretation and long-term care. Participants identified a need for clearer understanding about which entity is responsible at each stage, particularly where infrastructure stewardship and cultural programming involve different agencies and timelines.

Industrial character and material integrity: Participants consistently described bridges, retaining walls, tunnels, and industrial structures as defining features of the Beltline. Support for new development was strong, but concern centered on the gradual loss of historic materials and forms through incremental upgrades made without clear preservation guidance.

Cultural visibility and community-identified themes: Community members and stakeholders emphasized that visibility must include cultural narratives tied to Black Atlantans, immigrant communities, LGBTQ+ residents, and working-class families, especially in segments where historic buildings no longer remain. Survey responses consistently identified Beltline neighborhood history and culture as the highest-priority interpretive theme, with Black history and culture and music and arts programming close behind. Participants emphasized interpretation approaches grounded in everyday community history, local identity, and the people and places that define the corridor.

Transparency and public awareness: Many participants recognize that preservation work is occurring, but there is limited public clarity about how decisions are made, what resources are being tracked, and what standards apply. Clear communication about goals, inventories, and management practices was seen as essential to maintaining trust as the corridor continues to grow.

The recurring themes identified through TSAC discussions, public engagement, and stakeholder feedback also provide the organizing logic for the sections that follow. Early coordination corresponds most directly to the priority places and resource types identified in [Section 3.8](#) and to the screening, registry, and design integration actions in [Section 5](#). Clear roles and responsibilities correspond to the interagency coordination, mission statement, and Preservation Lead recommendations in [Sections 4.5](#) and [5.5](#). Industrial character and material integrity correspond to the priorities for Murphy Crossing, legacy rail infrastructure, and design guidance in [Sections 3.8](#), [4.7](#), and [5.7](#). Cultural visibility and community-identified themes correspond to the interpretation, equitable engagement, and partnership actions in [Sections 4.3](#), [4.4](#), [5.3](#), and [5.4](#). Transparency and public awareness correspond to the recommendations for better documentation access, the Corridor Heritage Registry, and clearer internal and public-facing communication tools in [Sections 3.1](#) and [5.1](#). Together, these linkages are intended to show how the concerns identified through engagement have been carried forward into the report's strategic priorities and implementation framework.



3.8. Near-Term Preservation Coordination Priorities

The following focus areas identify where early coordination will have the most influence on preservation outcomes along the Beltline. They are not new designations or regulatory triggers, but places and resource types where decisions made in the near term will shape what remains legible as redevelopment advances.

Photograph 12: A representative view of the Southeast Trail. Photo by Erin Sintos.

Murphy Crossing and the Murphy Triangle Industrial Area (Subarea 2)

Murphy Crossing is one of the few Beltline-owned assets with a prior NRHP eligibility determination, having been found eligible in 2016 as a locally significant historic district under Criterion A for its role in agricultural distribution and regional commerce. The complex of mid-20th-century buildings associated with the Georgia State Farmer's Market retains the spatial relationships and industrial character that defined its function as a major distribution hub. Its redevelopment presents a meaningful opportunity to demonstrate how reuse feasibility, historic retention, and community interpretation can advance together.

Near-term emphasis:

- Incorporate the 2016 NRHP eligibility findings and contributing element documentation into ongoing architectural design work, so that historic character informs design decisions as test fits and building evaluations advance.
- Integrate adaptive reuse expectations into the RFP process and development agreements so that preservation objectives are established early in partner selection.
- Integrate the site's history as a center of food distribution, agricultural commerce, and rail-era industry into interpretation, so that the stories embedded in the buildings remain accessible as the site evolves.

Avon Site and Adjacent Murphy Avenue Warehouses (Subarea 2)

The Avon Site and surrounding industrial properties along Murphy Avenue reflect a cluster of rail-oriented development that shaped the character of the Southwest segment. The main Avon Site warehouse dates to circa 1950 and the site was identified by GA SHPO in 2016 as potentially individually eligible for NRHP listing, though a formal determination has not been made. Redevelopment pressure in this corridor creates both urgency and opportunity: decisions made now about documentation, eligibility, and design guidance will shape what remains legible as reinvestment advances.

Near-term emphasis:

- As next steps for the Avon Site are determined, compile existing documentation across the Murphy Avenue properties and clarify how they relate historically to one another and to Murphy Crossing, so that eligibility questions can be addressed before redevelopment planning advances.
- Integrate corridor-wide interpretation so the broader industrial landscape reads as a connected whole rather than a series of isolated sites.
- Encourage consideration of original materials in redevelopment planning, particularly for features that convey the scale and character of mid-century warehousing and distribution.

Legacy Rail Infrastructure

Rail-era bridges, masonry abutments, culverts, and retaining walls are among the most defining visual elements of the Beltline corridor. Decisions related to maintenance, repair, and rehabilitation will shape how that character endures over time, particularly as multiple agencies and partners manage infrastructure across the corridor.

Near-term emphasis:

- Identify character-defining features for common infrastructure types and document them before substantial alteration or repair work begins.
- Develop material-specific repair guidance to help engineering and maintenance teams make decisions consistent with historic character.
- Establish clear expectations for when preservation expertise should be engaged during maintenance, repair, and rehabilitation.



Bennett Street Warehouse Area (Subarea 7)

The Bennett Street area reflects layered industrial and cultural histories, including mid-20th-century warehouse development that evolved over time into a hub for galleries, design studios, and creative businesses. Associations documented in the 2023 Atlanta LGBTQ+ Historic Context Statement add another dimension to this cultural landscape, capturing the district's role in Atlanta's LGBTQ+ arts and cultural history.

As redevelopment proceeds and existing structures are removed or substantially altered, the primary preservation opportunity shifts from retaining individual buildings to carrying forward the character, scale, and cultural associations that defined the district. Maintaining visibility of these layered histories will depend on intentional coordination across planning, design, and interpretation.

Near-term emphasis:

- Strengthen interpretive connections to the area's creative and LGBTQ+ histories, drawing on the 2023 Context Statement as a foundation.
- Document existing conditions and defining features prior to demolition or major alteration to capture the character of the warehouse district.

Historically Black Neighborhood Segments (Subareas 1, 2, 9, and 10)

Several of the Beltline's most historically significant communities are neighborhoods whose development was shaped by racial segregation, deliberate disinvestment, and decades of resilience. West End, Oakland City, Adair Park, English Avenue, Vine City, Washington Park, Reynoldstown, and others along the corridor include both designated historic districts and communities with equally significant but less formally recognized histories, many of which are not fully legible in surviving buildings alone. In these areas, preservation means more than retaining physical fabric. It means ensuring that the communities who built and sustained these neighborhoods are visible in how the Beltline is interpreted, programmed, and invested.

Near-term emphasis:

- Support locally driven documentation and oral history projects that capture neighborhood histories not reflected in formal surveys or designation records.
- Align reinvestment strategies with stabilization goals so that Beltline improvements strengthen rather than displace the communities they connect.
- Embed civil rights histories, neighborhood narratives, and cultural landmarks into trail infrastructure, public art, and programming in a way that reflects the depth and continuity of community life along this corridor.

Industrial Sites Undergoing Environmental Remediation

Brownfield cleanup is often treated as a precondition for redevelopment rather than a moment of opportunity. However, excavation and stabilization work can expose rail beds, foundations, structural remnants, and landscape features that would otherwise go undocumented. When environmental consultants, preservation specialists, and design teams coordinate from the start, remediation becomes an opportunity to document and retain industrial character rather than simply clear the way for what comes next.

Near-term emphasis:

- Encourage early coordination between environmental, preservation, and design teams so that remediation sequencing considers documentation and opportunities to retain visible features where feasible.
- Document exposed features during cleanup before they are removed or obscured, creating a record that can inform interpretation and future design.
- Explore opportunities for material reuse and interpretive integration so that industrial remnants contribute to the character and narrative of completed projects where feasible.

These focus areas show where the corridor-wide factors described in [Section 3](#) surface in specific places. Concentrating coordination here gives the organization the best opportunity to act while options remain open.



4.0 Preservation Priorities

The approaches below build on work already underway and focus on clear guidance, team alignment, and practical integration into existing workflows without adding new procedural burdens. The intent is not to turn the Beltline into a traditional preservation agency, but to deliver infrastructure and public realm projects that remain unmistakably rooted in Atlanta's history and culture. Each focus area in this section has a corresponding implementation subsection in [Section 5](#), where specific actions, responsible parties, and timing are identified.

4.1. Reinforcing the Beltline as a Unified Cultural Landscape

The Beltline's strength lies in its connected form and shared character. Bridges, rail remnants, industrial structures, and adjacent neighborhoods are experienced as parts of a single system rather than isolated elements. Maintaining that cohesion requires deliberate decisions as infrastructure evolves and redevelopment continues. Peer examples such as the Indianapolis Cultural Trail show how long, complex linear projects can sustain identity through a consistent use of materials, interpretive themes, and shared design vocabulary without rigid design rules. For the Beltline, this means ensuring that project teams can identify defining features early and carry them into design decisions. The inventory developed through this study provides a foundation for that work, functioning as a Corridor Heritage Registry that can be updated as projects advance and referenced consistently across departments. As the Beltline grows and changes, the goal is for it to read as one connected place with a recognizable history.

4.2. Adaptive Reuse as a Preservation Tool

Adaptive reuse remains one of the most visible preservation tools along the Beltline. Projects such as Ponce City Market, Krog Street Market, and Lee + White illustrate how industrial rehabilitation can anchor identity while leveraging financial tools such as historic tax credits and brownfield incentives. At the same time, reuse is not universally viable. Structural condition, remediation needs, accessibility upgrades, and market realities can make full rehabilitation impractical, particularly for smaller industrial and commercial properties along Murphy Avenue and Memorial Drive and in portions of the Westside.

The Beltline's role is not to mandate reuse, but to improve clarity and feasibility where it makes sense. This includes connecting partners to available incentives, clarifying regulatory pathways early, providing concise technical guidance informed by the Secretary of the Interior's Standards, and demonstrating reuse within controlled assets when viable. Where full rehabilitation is not feasible, partial retention, selective incorporation of industrial materials, or interpretive treatments can still preserve visual continuity and reinforce character. Where properties are already recognized or where partners choose to pursue formal listing, those tools can support access to incentives and funding. Adaptive reuse, interpretation, and design integration can also advance preservation outcomes independent of formal designation.

4.3. Interpretation and Storytelling

Rail infrastructure and industrial landscapes along the Beltline hold stories that define the system's identity. Interpretation delivered through art, design, and programming can make those stories legible in daily trail use. The Atlanta Beltline Art program already provides a strong platform; building on that platform with more clearly defined interpretive themes can deepen public understanding of the Beltline's layered history.

Themes such as transportation networks, industrial labor, migration patterns, civil rights activism, LGBTQ+ cultural spaces, and neighborhood transformation can guide where and how stories appear. Engagement results also consistently identified Beltline neighborhood history and culture, Black history and culture, and music and arts programming as high-priority themes that communities want to see reflected in how the corridor is interpreted. Interpretation is most effective when it is built into the public realm rather than added late. Etched railings, inlaid paving, murals, wayfinding elements, guided tours, and digital storytelling tools can connect stories tied to specific places. One example already in practice: the use of repurposed shipping containers at Beltline Marketplace locations offers a deliberate, if understated, nod to the corridor's freight history. This approach, embedding historical references into everyday infrastructure and programming, points toward what more intentional storytelling could achieve.

This work is strengthened through partnerships with cultural institutions, archives, and community organizations that steward historical knowledge, as well as through efforts to document and share stories from legacy residents and community members. Organizations including the Atlanta History Center, Hammonds House, the Auburn Avenue Research Library, and the Atlanta University Center are among the partners that can help keep storytelling grounded in community voices and documented research. The 2023 Atlanta LGBTQ+ Historic Context Statement and related cultural resource studies provide a foundation for elevating underrepresented places and histories.

4.4. Equitable Preservation and Community Visibility

The Beltline connects neighborhoods with different histories, levels of investment, and preservation recognition. Equitable preservation means ensuring that documentation, interpretation, and preservation benefits reflect the full range of communities along the corridor, not only areas where historic buildings remain concentrated. Along the Beltline, significance often lies in everyday places such as churches, schools, clubs, and small commercial buildings that anchor neighborhood identity. Recognizing these places requires applying criteria that go beyond age and architectural integrity. Community gathering spaces, cultural traditions, oral histories, and everyday meaningful locations may not meet formal preservation thresholds but are central to how neighborhoods experience and identify with the corridor. The Corridor Heritage Registry and screening processes could be designed to capture these resources alongside formally designated ones. This includes histories tied to Black Atlantans, neighborhood-based cultural life, and other communities whose contributions are not always reflected in the built environment.

This is particularly important in Beltline segments where community identity is carried through neighborhood history, institutions, and lived cultural memory as much as through formally recognized historic fabric. In Subarea 10, for example, Washington Park, Vine City, and the Atlanta University Center area contain historically Black institutions, civic spaces, and community landmarks that remain underrepresented in formal preservation documentation despite their continuing importance. In other locations, including Bennett Street and adjacent creative districts, cultural significance is tied to artistic, social, and community use patterns that extend beyond the boundaries of owned parcels. Naming these places more directly within organization planning tools helps shift equitable preservation from a general principle to a place-based practice.

The Beltline can support equitable preservation by elevating community-based research and documentation through partnerships with neighborhood associations, historically Black colleges and universities (HBCUs), and cultural organizations, and by ensuring those narratives are visible in interpretation and programming. Sweet Auburn Works demonstrates how preservation-oriented reinvestment can reinforce local identity while supporting entrepreneurship. Aligning preservation objectives with existing economic development initiatives can help reinforce neighborhood stability rather than intensify displacement pressure.

Equity can also be advanced through better connection to existing tools such as facade improvement programs, low-interest loan opportunities, and rehabilitation incentives administered through Invest Atlanta and City housing and community development partners, tying stewardship directly to stabilization and affordable housing goals. Along the Beltline, comparable opportunities exist in Subarea 10 (Washington Park, Vine City, and the Atlanta University Center area), where historically Black institutions, commercial buildings, and civic spaces remain underrepresented in formal preservation documentation despite strong community identity.

4.5. Policy Alignment and Interagency Coordination

Effective coordination begins with clarity about how historic and cultural context is considered during project planning and design. Preservation along the Beltline involves multiple public agencies and funding pathways, including ABI, the City of Atlanta, GDOT, GA SHPO, MARTA, and private development partners. Each operates under distinct timelines and review processes, so historic and cultural considerations may enter projects at different stages depending on funding source, permits, and scope. Navigating that complexity does not require new regulatory mechanisms, but rather greater predictability in how these considerations are introduced and addressed.

Many of these practices are already in place across individual projects and partner agencies. Improving consistency can build on that existing work by maintaining a consolidated archive of Section 106 findings and survey products, integrating historic and cultural resource GIS layers into routine project screening, and clarifying internal guidance for when preservation expertise is engaged during scoping and design. Periodic coordination and standardized checklists can further support alignment without adding procedural burden.

4.6. Leveraging Environmental Remediation as Preservation

Brownfield remediation is often approached as a compliance requirement or cost obligation, but it can also create opportunities to document, interpret, and retain elements of the Beltline's industrial legacy. Excavation and stabilization can reveal rail beds, foundations, structural remnants, and landscape features tied to Atlanta's manufacturing and transportation history. Pittsburgh Yards® paired brownfield cleanup with adaptive reuse of an industrial warehouse, aligning environmental work with small business development and workforce training. More recently, the former D.H. Stanton Park landfill site, remediated in 2009 and later upgraded by the Beltline as a photovoltaic solar canopy, demonstrates how environmental repair and new infrastructure can coexist.

This type of coordination is already occurring across projects. Continued collaboration with the City of Atlanta's Department of City Planning Brownfields Program and Invest Atlanta can help connect funding tools to outcomes that address site conditions while retaining legible elements of the corridor's industrial history. Where remediation work is ongoing, the Beltline can also encourage private developers along the corridor to consider how visible industrial remnants such as loading docks, rail spurs, and structural foundations can be incorporated into site design rather than removed.



4.7. Embedding Preservation Principles in Design

Design decisions accumulate to shape the Beltline’s identity. Trail alignments, bridge treatments, retaining walls, lighting, and materials influence how historic context is experienced. Historic features such as truss forms, masonry abutments, and rail-era detail are most effectively addressed during the scoping of rehabilitation, widening, or replacement projects, when options for retention remain open. This supports safety and performance standards while maintaining character-defining forms and materials.

The Beltline already maintains design typologies, trail interface requirements, and design review processes that shape how new development and infrastructure connect to the corridor. The actions in this report strengthen those tools by making historic and cultural context easier to identify early and carry through design and delivery. These are ultimately informed by and consistent with standards established by the Secretary of the Interior. Where full retention is not feasible, documentation, selective material incorporation, or design references can maintain a recognizable relationship with historic conditions. Where a structure cannot be retained in place, relocation to a nearby park or public space keeps it visible and connected to the corridor’s history. Where relocation is not feasible, a replacement structure designed to reflect the scale and character of the original can maintain visual continuity. Implementation actions supporting this focus area are described in [Section 5.7](#).

Photograph 13: Above ground fuel storage tanks, a remnant of historic railroad infrastructure remaining along the Beltline. August 2025. Photo credit: EP.

5.0 Implementation

This section translates the strategic focus areas outlined in [Section 4](#) into practical actions that can be integrated into existing planning, design, real estate, and asset management workflows. Because the Beltline directly controls relatively few standing historic structures, preservation is not primarily about property-level control. It is about how projects are planned, designed, programmed, and delivered across the corridor. The Beltline's influence is greatest through project sponsorship, design standards, arts and culture programming, data integration, and coordination with public agencies, private partners, and communities.

The recommendations below build on work already underway and focus on predictable, repeatable practices within the organization's sphere of influence. Near-term actions center on internal process clarity and coordination; longer-term efforts depend on partnerships across agencies and community organizations. Some actions could begin immediately within existing workflows, while others would advance over time based on staffing capacity, partner participation, project timing, and available funding. Each subsection below corresponds directly to a focus area in [Section 4](#).

5.1. Corridor Heritage Registry and Data Tools

A Corridor Heritage Registry would allow project teams to identify documented historic and cultural resources during early scoping by integrating that information directly into the organization's GIS platform. Each record would include resource name, location, resource type, known status, source document references, date of most recent finding, and responsible agency or contact, linked directly to the supporting file in a shared repository organized by segment and document type. The registry would function as a living internal tool, updated as projects advance and referenced consistently across departments. It is not a regulatory instrument, but an internal planning and screening resource intended to be searchable, used at project kickoff, and updated on a defined schedule.

The Beltline is also well positioned to explore a public-facing history and culture online portal that complements the internal registry as capacity, partner coordination, and communications priorities allow. Where the registry supports project teams, the portal could serve residents, visitors, and community partners by making corridor history visible and accessible through maps, stories, photographs, and updates on how historic and cultural resources are being recognized and interpreted as the Beltline grows. A brief check-in during scoping or design kickoff to confirm whether a project intersects known resources or requires agency coordination would make early screening routine and reduce redesign risk for project teams and agency partners alike.



5.2 Adaptive Reuse Support

Feasibility is often the deciding factor in whether historic resources are rehabilitated or replaced. Adaptive reuse frequently requires higher upfront investment than new construction, particularly where remediation, structural upgrades, or accessibility improvements are needed. While the organization is not structured to create new financing programs, it could increase use of existing tools by improving awareness and making pathways easier to navigate.

A concise Adaptive Reuse Toolkit would summarize available federal and state incentives, brownfield programs, and relevant local resources administered by Invest Atlanta and other partners. It should also include the National Trust for Historic Preservation's African American Cultural Heritage Action Fund, which provides grants specifically supporting preservation of African American historic places, and NPS Historic Preservation Fund grants available through the GA SHPO for underrepresented communities, both of which are directly applicable to the corridor's equitable preservation goals. Published as a PDF and referenced in RFPs where applicable, the toolkit's purpose would be usability: helping property owners, nonprofits, and small businesses understand eligibility and next steps without needing to navigate multiple agencies on their own. As capacity and partner interest allow, periodic incentives workshops with preservation finance specialists could reinforce the toolkit and help teams understand how to structure and combine multiple funding sources for rehabilitation projects. Demonstration projects on controlled sites, including Murphy Crossing where viable, could show what feasible reuse looks like in practice.

Preservation easements offer an additional layer of protection for historic properties along the corridor. A preservation easement is a permanent legal agreement that binds to the property deed and protects character-defining exterior features regardless of future ownership changes. Preservation easements are initiated by property owners and administered by qualified easement-holding organizations rather than by public agencies or project sponsors such as the Beltline. Easements Atlanta, established in part by the City of Atlanta, the Atlanta Preservation Center, and the Atlanta History Center, has administered preservation easements in the city for over 40 years and holds easements on multiple properties immediately adjacent to the Beltline right-of-way, including Studioplex, Telephone Factory Lofts, and the Trust Company of Georgia Northeast Freeway Branch. Easements Atlanta has also partnered on affordable housing projects involving historic buildings, including the Winnwood Apartments and the Odd Fellows Building in Sweet Auburn. Donation of a qualifying preservation easement may also provide federal tax benefits. For property owners considering long-term protection of historic character alongside rehabilitation, a preservation easement can complement other incentives and designation tools referenced in this section. The Beltline's role in this area is to ensure that property owners along the corridor are aware that the tool exists and can connect with Easements Atlanta directly.

5.3 Interpretation and Cultural Programming

The Beltline already has strong engagement platforms including Atlanta Beltline Art, tours, public meetings, and digital communications. The interpretive themes and approaches described in [Section 4.3](#) could be carried through these existing channels rather than through a separate preservation program.

The installation of digital kiosks along the Beltline ahead of the 2026 FIFA World Cup™ presents a near-term opportunity to embed interpretive content at high-visibility locations across the corridor. A more deliberate partnership through Atlanta Beltline Art could elevate the social and cultural heritage of Beltline communities through creative expression. Atlanta Beltline Art has traditionally emphasized temporary and rotating programming, which remains valuable, and the organization could work through that platform to explore longer-term heritage commissions in locations where community identity is strongly tied to place. The intent is not to constrain artistic experimentation but to ensure community histories remain visible and legible as the corridor evolves.

Digital tools and storytelling apps tied to specific locations could complement physical installations, allowing narratives to grow over time without requiring permanent signage or infrastructure at every site. The organization's economic development team already administers a community grant program, and, as capacity and funding allow, there may be an opportunity to expand that work to support modest community heritage projects such as oral histories, cultural mapping, artist-led interpretation, and signage content development.

5.4 Community Partnerships and Equitable Engagement

Realizing the equitable preservation goals described in [Section 4.4](#) depends on active, sustained relationships with the communities along the corridor. The Beltline could strengthen those relationships by working with NPUs, historically Black colleges and universities, neighborhood historians, and cultural organizations to ensure that underrepresented histories are documented, visible, and integrated into how the corridor is experienced. Coordination with community partners would be most effective when structured and recurring rather than limited to individual project moments.

One concrete way to build those relationships is through structured learning opportunities for internal staff: tours, conversations with community historians, and visits to culturally significant places along the corridor. Familiarity with neighborhood history strengthens how staff engage with community partners and informs how preservation considerations are raised during project planning and design.

Connecting preservation incentives to community stabilization goals is equally important. The organization's community engagement team is well positioned to work alongside economic development and City housing partners to ensure that awareness of facade programs, rehabilitation incentives, and related tools reaches property owners and community organizations in areas most at risk of displacement.

A related priority is expanding how resources are identified and recognized in the first place. Formal preservation criteria emphasizes age, architectural integrity, and documented historical significance, standards that can overlook the community gathering spaces, cultural traditions, and everyday meaningful places that anchor neighborhood identity along the Beltline. The organization's screening and programming could apply broader criteria that capture these resources alongside formally designated ones, ensuring that churches, schools, social clubs, and other places of community importance are visible in how the corridor is planned and interpreted, not only those that meet traditional eligibility thresholds.

5.5 Internal Policy, Stewardship, and Interagency Coordination

Establishing internal clarity is the most immediate step toward making the policy alignment described in [Section 4.5](#). Identifying a Preservation Lead function within existing staff responsibilities is the logical starting point. This function would provide a consistent point of contact for project teams and partner agencies, coordinate communication with City and state partners, and reduce reliance on ad hoc interpretation of past studies and review outcomes. The intent is coordination, not creation of a new stand-alone department or regulatory office.

A written Historic and Cultural Resource Mission Statement would formalize the Beltline's approach and clarify how historic and cultural resources are addressed in projects the organization manages, funds, or directly coordinates. It would document how stewardship fits into existing decision points from scoping through design and construction, without creating new regulatory authority or adding permitting layers. Appendix A provides that mission statement as an organizational commitment and a reference point for implementation across departments.

A one-page early screening checklist used at every project kickoff would prompt staff to confirm whether a project overlaps known resources, whether federal or state review triggers apply, whether local design review is likely, and whether coordination or documentation is needed before design advances. The checklist would apply at kickoff for transit implementation, remaining trail segments, bridge and tunnel rehabilitation, environmental remediation on owned sites, land disposition, and capital projects that the organization funds or directly coordinates. Regular staff training on compliance frameworks, adaptive reuse, and culturally relevant preservation approaches could further strengthen internal capacity across project teams.

Table 3 summarizes the agencies involved in reviewing Beltline projects, the aspects of project development they review, and the conditions under which those reviews occur. This overview illustrates that Beltline projects already pass through multiple regulatory and coordination processes; the goal is to ensure that historic and cultural resource considerations are consistently integrated into those existing processes.

Table 4. Agency Review Responsibilities for Beltline Projects.

Agency	What They Review / Role	When It Applies to ABI Projects	Timing
Georgia State Historic Preservation Office (GA SHPO)	Section 106 review (federal undertakings); NRHP eligibility determinations; implementation of agreed mitigation measures for Beltline segments using federal funds or permits	When federal funding (GDOT, FTA, FRA) or federal permits are involved in a project segment	Project-specific
Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT)	Project Development Process (PDP) review; Section 106 coordination as lead agency for federally funded trail segments; oversight of GDOT-owned structures (e.g., McDonough Tunnel)	When ABI uses federal transportation funds flowing through GDOT; not applicable to locally funded segments	Project-specific
City of Atlanta Urban Design Commission (UDC)	Historic district design review; Certificate of Appropriateness for exterior alterations, new construction, and demolition within City-designated historic districts; review of capital projects by public agencies affecting designated properties or districts.	When ABI projects involve work on properties within City-designated local historic districts or on individually designated landmarks.	Project-specific
City of Atlanta Dept. of City Planning	Zoning review and permitting; Brownfields Program coordination; Zoning 2.0 rewrite (in progress) may incorporate preservation standards	All ABI development projects; Brownfields coordination for remediation activities	Ongoing / Project-specific
Atlanta Beltline Design Review Committee (DRC)	Advisory design review for private development within the Beltline Zoning Overlay District (half-mile corridor); recommendations forwarded to the City of Atlanta's Office of Zoning and Development for Special Administrative Permit decisions	Private development projects within the Beltline Zoning Overlay District requiring a Special Administrative Permit; advisory only - final approval authority rests with the City, not ABI	Project-specific
Metropolitan Atlanta Rapid Transit Authority (MARTA)	Coordination on transit facility planning and future transit corridor development; Section 106 for MARTA-funded or permitted work	Future transit implementation phases involving MARTA funding or right-of-way	Future / Phase-dependent
EPA / Georgia EPD	Environmental review for brownfield remediation; No Further Action (NFA) letters for contaminated sites	ABI properties with environmental contamination requiring remediation prior to redevelopment	Site-specific

While the organization comments on private development through the Beltline Design Review Committee, its role is advisory. Final zoning, permit, and historic review decisions remain with the City of Atlanta or other agencies with statutory authority, and Section 106 review remains tied to the applicable federal undertaking. Where a proposed project would result in the removal of a resource identified in the Corridor Heritage Registry, Beltline staff would document the resource, consider alternatives, and consult with the Preservation Lead and relevant agency partners before the decision is finalized. This step would apply regardless of whether federal or state review is formally triggered.



5.6 Environmental Coordination and Site Documentation

The opportunities described in Section 4.6 depend on early coordination among environmental consultants, preservation specialists, and design teams before remediation sequencing is set. Once site work begins, exposure of rail beds, foundations, structural remnants, and artifacts may be brief, and decisions about what to document, retain, or remove are often made quickly. For that reason, construction and remediation scopes could include a simple stop-and-assess protocol for unexpected discoveries, ensuring rapid communication among design, environmental, and preservation staff before removal decisions are made. Establishing that expectation at project kickoff would give these materials the visibility they need without creating a separate review program.

Collaboration with the City of Atlanta's Department of City Planning Brownfields Program and Invest Atlanta could further connect funding tools to outcomes that address site conditions while retaining legible elements of industrial history. Where the Beltline is working with private developers on adjacent properties, early conversations about how visible industrial remnants such as loading docks, rail spurs, and structural foundations might be incorporated into site design could extend preservation outcomes beyond Beltline-controlled assets.

5.7 Design Integration and Infrastructure Stewardship

Translating the design principles in Section 4.7 into consistent practice requires that historic and cultural context be accessible to engineering and design teams at the moment decisions are made, not after. Developing material-specific repair guidance for common infrastructure types such as masonry abutments, steel truss bridges, culverts, and retaining walls that is grounded in existing guidance from the Secretary of the Interior's Standards would give project teams and engineering partners a clear reference point when maintenance and rehabilitation work is scoped.

As the organization's capital program advances, preservation expectations could be incorporated into project briefs, procurement documents, and design typologies so that character-defining features are identified before alternatives are evaluated. Where full retention is not feasible, documentation expectations could be established in advance so that the record is captured before alteration or removal occurs. Staff training that brings engineering, design, and preservation perspectives together could build the shared vocabulary needed to make these decisions consistently across the corridor.

5.8 Monitoring and Recommendations Summary

Preservation progress should be measurable, but tracking should remain proportionate to the organization's authority and focused on projects the group delivers, funds, or directly coordinates. A practical indicator set could remain small and still be meaningful: the number of projects screened using the early checklist, projects where registry resources were flagged during scoping, projects that retained or incorporated a historic feature, interpretation elements delivered as part of capital projects, and staff learning or partner coordination touchpoints completed. These indicators could be incorporated into existing internal dashboards and annual reporting materials rather than a separate reporting structure.

By the time the Tax Allocation District concludes, the goal is for historic and cultural resource considerations to be a routine part of project delivery, for the Corridor Heritage Registry to be a functioning internal tool referenced consistently across departments, and for the Beltline's interpretive programming to reflect the full range of communities that shaped the corridor.

The recommendations below are organized with the understanding that not all actions fall within the same level of Beltline control. Some are internal actions that can begin through existing workflows, such as project kickoff screening, staff learning, improved documentation access, and clarification of internal roles. Others are coordination-dependent actions that rely on partner participation, project timing, funding availability, or community collaboration, including public-facing interpretation tools, incentive workshops, and community heritage grant support. The matrix is therefore intended to guide both immediate Beltline-led actions and longer-term partnership-based efforts, not to imply that all actions must be launched at once.



Table 5. Recommendations Summary Matrix

#	Implementation Action	Purpose / Outcome	Implementation Lead (ABI Dept.)	Key Partners	Timing	Priority
1	Establish a Historic and Cultural Resource Mission Statement and identify the Preservation Lead function	Establish internal clarity for historic and cultural resource stewardship within projects; lay foundation for all other actions	Planning/Design + Executive Leadership	City of Atlanta (DCP); GA SHPO	0–6 months	High
2	Integrate Historic and Cultural Resource Checkpoints into Project Planning	Ensure consistent early review of historic and cultural resource considerations at project kickoff	Project Management + Planning	City of Atlanta; GDOT; GA SHPO	0–12 months	High
3	Offer Learning Opportunities About Neighborhood History	Connect staff with neighborhood stories through tours, conversations, and visits to culturally significant places	Community Engagement + Arts and Culture	NPU; neighborhood historians; cultural organizations	0–12 months	High
4	Strengthen Partnerships with NPUs and Cultural Organizations	Build collaborations with neighborhood groups, cultural leaders, and storytellers to elevate underrepresented histories	Community Engagement	NPU; HBCU; cultural organizations; neighborhood historians	0–12 months	High
5	Offer Workshops on Tax Credits and Incentives	Improve awareness of financial tools supporting feasible rehabilitation projects along the corridor	Planning + Economic Development + Communications	Invest Atlanta; tax credit specialists; brownfield partners	0–18 months	High
6	Create a History and Culture Online Portal	Provide a public-facing webpage with maps, stories, photos, and updates on Beltline history and culture	Arts and Culture + Communications	Atlanta History Center; Auburn Avenue Research Library; AUC	0–18 months	High
7	Apply Inclusive Criteria for Places of Community Importance	Recognize community gathering spaces, traditions, and everyday meaningful places in preservation screening and programming	Planning + Community Engagement	NPU; cultural organizations; legacy community partners	0–18 months	Medium
8	Develop and Publish an Adaptive Reuse Toolkit	Improve awareness of incentives, funding tools, and reuse options; reduce barriers to feasible rehabilitation	Planning + Economic Development	Invest Atlanta; tax credit specialists; brownfield partners	0–18 months	Emerging

#	Implementation Action	Purpose / Outcome	Implementation Lead (ABI Dept.)	Key Partners	Timing	Priority
9	Expand Storytelling Through Atlanta Beltline Art	Increase visibility of neighborhood histories through existing arts programming; explore longer-term heritage-based commissions	Arts and Culture	Artists; historians; neighborhood partners	0–24 months	Emerging
10	Pilot a Community Storytelling Mini Grant Program	Support community-led oral histories, cultural mapping, and storytelling projects	Economic Development + Arts and Culture	Community organizations; artists; schools; NPU's	0–24 months	Emerging
11	Coordinate Regularly with City and State Partners	Maintain shared awareness of upcoming initiatives and preservation considerations across agencies	Planning + Engagement	City of Atlanta; GA SHPO; GDOT; community representatives	Annual	Emerging
12	Incorporate Preservation Indicators into Annual Reporting	Track and communicate preservation outcomes within Beltline-led projects	Performance / Reporting	Internal departments; partner agencies	Annual	Emerging

Priority levels reflect stakeholder feedback from TSAC voting. The TSAC reviewed 15 draft recommendations and was asked to select up to 10; scores reflect the number of voting TSAC members who selected each recommendation out of 11 total votes cast.

High	8–11 TSAC votes
Medium	6–7 TSAC votes
Emerging	5 or less TSAC votes



6.0 Case Studies and Precedents

Across the United States, large-scale infrastructure conversions show how preservation can inform both design and governance. Rail systems and industrial landscapes have been repurposed as public amenities that retain visible traces of their past while supporting economic development, equity priorities, and long-term care. These precedents are not presented as models to replicate. Instead, they illustrate how corridor-scale projects have addressed many of the same factors identified in [Section 3](#) using the approaches outlined in [Section 4](#). Each example highlights governance, design, and coordination practices that are directly applicable to the Beltline context.

6.1. The 606: Chicago, Illinois

The 606 converted a 2.7-mile former rail line into an elevated park and trail connecting several Chicago neighborhoods. The project retained rail-era infrastructure and incorporated interpretation and public art that reflect neighborhood identity, creating a cohesive experience along the trail. The 606 also illustrates a common challenge for high-profile trail investments: major public improvements can accelerate redevelopment pressure near trail segments. After completion, rising property values and displacement concerns contributed to broader conversations about affordability and neighborhood stabilization.

For the Beltline, the 606 is most relevant to two recurring factors discussed earlier: market pressure and cultural visibility. The project shows that retention of rail character can coexist with high design standards, even as development pressure grows. It also underscores the importance of pairing heritage-driven design and interpretation with stabilization strategies and clear public communication in areas likely to experience rapid change. For the Beltline, the takeaway is to embed interpretation early in design and align cultural visibility work with broader stabilization partnerships where redevelopment pressure is strongest.

Photograph 14: The 606 in Chicago consists of the 2.7-mile Bloomingdale Trail as its centerpiece and a series of six planned ground-level parks. Photo credit: The 606 (Chicago).





6.2. Indianapolis Cultural Trail: Indianapolis, Indiana

The Indianapolis Cultural Trail links downtown districts through a greenway that integrates arts destinations, heritage sites, and economic development areas. Rather than centering interpretation on a single historic resource, the project embeds heritage narratives directly into paving patterns, materials, signage, and public art that respond to adjacent historic districts. Interpretation functions as part of the everyday user experience rather than a separate educational layer.

A dedicated nonprofit entity, Indianapolis Cultural Trail, Inc., oversees maintenance, branding, and programming. This governance model provides continuity beyond initial capital construction and supports a consistent identity across diverse districts. The trail demonstrates that linear cohesion can be achieved through shared design vocabulary and clearly defined responsibilities rather than rigid architectural mandates. For the Beltline, the takeaway is to incorporate interpretation into infrastructure standards, reinforce identity through materials and wayfinding, and clarify long-term management for art, signage, and interpretive elements.

Photograph 15: Indianapolis Cultural Trail. Photo credit: Indianapolis Cultural Trail, Inc.



6.3. Pittsburgh Yards®: Atlanta, Georgia

Pittsburgh Yards® provides a local example of adaptive reuse aligned with economic inclusion. Located along the Southside Trail, the project transformed a mid-20th-century warehouse into a center for small businesses, workforce development, and community programming. Led by the Annie E. Casey Foundation in partnership with local entrepreneurs, the redevelopment retained industrial character while introducing new building systems and flexible tenant space. The Beltline partnered directly on the project, coordinating trail alignment with the site design and acquiring adjacent land to support seamless integration with the corridor.

Pittsburgh Yards® illustrates how environmental remediation and adaptive reuse can reinforce one another when aligned early. This reflects the feasibility and remediation factors discussed in [Sections 3.2](#) and [3.4](#), where cleanup sequencing and financial viability shape preservation outcomes. The project also shows how partnerships can position reuse as part of economic inclusion, not only a design decision. For the Beltline, the takeaway is to pair infrastructure investment with mission-driven development partners and to align remediation planning and reuse feasibility early in project development.

Photograph 16: Led by the Annie E. Casey Foundation, Pittsburgh Yards transformed a mid-20th-century warehouse into a hub for small businesses, workforce development, and community programming along the Southside Trail. August 2025.
Photo credit: EP.



6.4. American Tobacco Trail and Campus: Durham, North Carolina

The American Tobacco Trail converted a former railway into a regional greenway spanning multiple jurisdictions. At its northern terminus, the former American Tobacco industrial complex was adaptively reused as a mixed-use district supported in part by federal historic tax credits. The trail and the rehabilitated campus operate together, reinforcing regional connectivity while retaining visible industrial identity.

Sustaining both the greenway and the reused campus required coordination across multiple jurisdictions and durable governance structures. Federal historic tax credits and related financial tools helped make large-scale industrial rehabilitation viable within a competitive redevelopment market. This example underscores the value of coordinated standards and strategic use of incentives. For the Beltline, the takeaway is to support shared preservation expectations across agencies and to promote incentive literacy that can make industrial rehabilitation viable where conditions allow.

6.5. Comparative Insights

Across these precedents, preservation outcomes improve when historic and cultural resource considerations are built into governance, design practice, and economic strategy. Early attention reduces late-stage redesign risk, and clearly defined roles support long-term maintenance and consistency. When financial tools and adaptive reuse align with investment, heritage supports reinvestment rather than competing with it. These examples also show that trail and infrastructure investments can accelerate redevelopment pressure in surrounding neighborhoods. Where heritage goals are paired with small business support, workforce development, and stabilization strategies, preservation can contribute to neighborhood stability rather than displacement. For the Beltline, the takeaway is that none of these outcomes happen by default. They result from deliberate decisions made early, sustained through clear roles and consistent practice, and anchored in the communities the corridor connects.

Photograph 17: American Tobacco Trail. Photo credit: Warren LeMay; American Tobacco Campus.

7.0 Conclusion



This report clarifies how historic and cultural resource management can be incorporated into the Beltline's existing planning, infrastructure, programming, and partnership responsibilities. The recommendations focus on practical actions within the organization's sphere of influence, sequenced to build capacity over time while remaining aligned with the project's mission. Formalizing internal guidance, strengthening data tools, and embedding cultural storytelling into existing programs positions preservation as part of routine project delivery rather than a separate initiative.

The preservation challenges described in this report reflect conditions specific to the Beltline. The mainline trail is largely complete, and stewardship of corridor infrastructure transfers to the City of Atlanta as segments open. The Tax Allocation District concludes in 2030. The Beltline's property holdings consist primarily of vacant parcels positioned for redevelopment, not a concentrated portfolio of historic buildings. And yet the corridor traverses one of the most historically significant urban landscapes in the Southeast, connecting neighborhoods shaped by industrial development, racial segregation, civic investment, and decades of community resilience. In this context, preservation is not about freezing the corridor in place. It is about ensuring that as the Beltline continues to evolve through transit, programming, and the communities it connects, the history embedded in its infrastructure, neighborhoods, and cultural life remains legible and accessible. The organization's position as convener, project sponsor, and steward of a corridor-wide vision makes that possible.

Photograph 18: Interpretive signage along the Beltline corridor describing the history of the Blandtown neighborhood. August 2025. Photo credit: EP.

8.0 Annotated Bibliography

Primary Beltline Planning and Policy Documents

Atlanta Beltline, Inc.

2005. *Atlanta Beltline Redevelopment Plan*. City of Atlanta, Department of Planning. Policy document establishing the 22-mile Beltline corridor, tax allocation district (TAD), and early redevelopment vision.

Atlanta Beltline, Inc.

2018. *Arts and Culture Strategic Implementation Plan (ACSIP)*. Atlanta, GA. Describes the Beltline's arts and culture approach and identifies strategies for equity, storytelling, and design integration used in this report.

Atlanta Beltline, Inc.

2019–2024. *Subarea Master Plans 1–10*. Atlanta, GA. Subarea plans that summarize land use goals, neighborhood priorities, and identified historic and cultural resources used to support subarea summaries in this report.

Atlanta Beltline, Inc.

2023. *Strategic Implementation Plan (SIP)*. Atlanta, GA. Performance document with goals for equity, sustainability, housing, and design, referenced for consistency with planning priorities.

Atlanta Beltline, Inc.

2023. *One Beltline Framework*. Atlanta, GA. Strategic document describing project priorities used as a reference point for how preservation considerations fit within existing programs.

Historic and Cultural Preservation Sources

Atlanta Preservation Center (APC).

2023. *Preservation Opportunities Report*. Atlanta, GA. Identifies Beltline-adjacent sites and infrastructure discussed as potential preservation or reuse opportunities.

City of Atlanta, Department of City Planning.

2023. *LGBTQ+ Historic Context Statement*. Atlanta, GA. Identifies LGBTQ+ sites and themes in Atlanta, referenced here for Bennett Street context and interpretation recommendations.

Edwards-Pitman Environmental, Inc.

Various years. *Section 106 Documentation and Memoranda of Agreement for Beltline Segments*. Prepared for the Georgia Department of Transportation. Section 106 documentation used to summarize prior findings and support coordination recommendations.



Georgia State University, Heritage Preservation Program.

2006. *A History of the Atlanta Beltline and Its Associated Neighborhoods*. Atlanta, GA.

Background history on the Beltline rail alignment and neighborhood development referenced for historic context.

Historic Atlanta, Inc.

2022. *Community-Led Preservation Toolkit*. Atlanta, GA.

Community-based documentation methods referenced for outreach and heritage mini-grant concepts.

City of Atlanta Urban Design Commission.

2021. *Design Review Guidelines for Historic Districts and Landmarks*. Atlanta, GA.

City design guidance referenced for compatibility and treatment language.

Georgia Department of Community Affairs, Historic Preservation Division.

1980. *Georgia Historic Preservation Act*. Atlanta, GA.

Establishes enabling legislation for local preservation commissions and historic designation procedures. Defines the state's role within the federal-local preservation hierarchy.

Georgia Department of Community Affairs, Historic Preservation Division.

2023. *Historic Preservation Tax Incentives in Georgia*. Atlanta, GA.

Summary of Georgia incentives referenced for the Adaptive Reuse Toolkit.

Federal Preservation Policy and Guidance**National Park Service (NPS).**

1966. *National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA)*. Washington, DC.

Federal legislation creating the National Register of Historic Places and Section 106 review process.

National Park Service (NPS).

1979 (rev. 2017). *Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties*. Washington, DC.

Defines national best practices for rehabilitation, restoration, and preservation. Used throughout this report as the baseline for design compatibility and adaptive reuse.

National Park Service (NPS).

2024. *Historic Preservation Fund Grant Programs*. Washington, DC.

Outlines available federal grant programs for preservation, administered through state historic preservation offices.

National Park Service (NPS).

1997. *National Register Bulletin: How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation*. Washington, DC.

Explains how the National Register of Historic Places eligibility of a property is determined in detail.

National Park Service (NPS).

2024. *Understanding the Secretary's Standards*. Washington, DC.

Plain language guide to applying the Secretary's Standards.

Local and Regional Context Studies

City of Atlanta, Department of City Planning.

2020. *Comprehensive Development Plan*. Atlanta, GA.

Establishes policy direction for land use, transportation, and cultural heritage.

Atlanta Preservation Center.

2023. *Beltline Schools: Atlanta Beltline - Atlanta Public in Affected Neighborhoods*.

Internal project reference provided by David Mitchell to Atlanta Beltline, Inc.,

October 2025. Atlanta, GA.

Compilation of Atlanta Public Schools within or near Beltline planning subareas, including school locations, associated neighborhoods, and available historical and architectural context, supporting educational and interpretive programming ideas.

Atlanta History Center.

2018. *Atlanta in 50 Objects*. Atlanta, GA.

Public history publication referenced as an example of object-based interpretation.

Georgia Department of Transportation.

2015. *Georgia's Historic Railroads, 1833-2015: Historic Context and Statewide Survey*. Atlanta, GA.

Comprehensive history of Georgia's railroad development crafted to establish guidance for GDOT to evaluate railroad resources for Section 106 compliance.

Comparative Case Studies and Precedents

The Underline, Inc.

2022. *Underline Master Plan and Phase 1 Report*. Miami-Dade County, FL.

Demonstrates how a linear park beneath active transit infrastructure can combine ecology, public art, and heritage interpretation.

Center City District.

2018. *Philadelphia Rail Park Heritage Integration Framework*. Philadelphia, PA.

Example of heritage data integration, public-private coordination, and interpretive programming within an industrial reuse project.

Freedom Trail Foundation.

2024. *The Freedom Trail: Economic Impact and Heritage Management*. Boston, MA.

Details governance, branding, and funding structures supporting long-term maintenance and tourism benefits of a historic trail system.

Virginia Creeper Trail Foundation.

2004. *Economic Impact Study of the Virginia Creeper Trail*. Abingdon, VA.

Analyzes how conversion of abandoned railways into multi-use trails supports small business development and regional tourism.

Charlotte Center City Partners.

2019. *Charlotte Rail Trail Framework Plan*. Charlotte, NC.

Documents interagency collaboration, funding strategies, and design standards for adaptive reuse infrastructure.

PlaceEconomics.

2022. *Twenty Years of Economic Impact: Preservation and the Built Environment*.

Washington DC. Economic summary used as background for preservation and reinvestment discussion.



Scholarly and Community References

Gravel, Ryan.

1999. *Belt Line: Atlanta's New Infrastructure*. Master's Thesis, Georgia Institute of Technology.

Original conceptual document proposing the reuse of the rail system for transit and recreation.

Mitchell, David Yoakley, and Benjamin Schmidt.

2023. *Letter to Atlanta Beltline, Inc.: Preservation of Historic Rail Resources*. Atlanta Preservation Center.

Advocacy correspondence emphasizing the significance of remaining Beltline-era infrastructure and urging formal preservation commitments.

Historic Preservation Review Board (Multiple States).

Various Dates. *Case Studies in Adaptive Reuse*.

Used to compare how other urban agencies applied the Secretary's Standards in mixed use redevelopment settings.

National Trust for Historic Preservation.

2020. *ReUrbanism: The Case for Inclusive Urban Heritage*. Washington, DC.

Framework linking preservation with economic inclusion and housing affordability.

Environmental and Cultural Context

Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT).

2019. *Cultural Resources Environmental Procedures Manual*. Atlanta, GA.

Defines procedural expectations for Section 106 compliance.

Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC).

2021. *Regional Arts and Heritage Framework*. Atlanta, GA.

Provides regional context for cultural infrastructure planning.

National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA).

2020. *Cultural Heritage and Parks Toolkit*. Washington, DC.

Highlights best practices for combining recreation and heritage interpretation along multi-use trails.

Additional Supporting References

Atlanta Convention and Visitors Bureau.

2023. *Cultural Tourism Strategy*. Atlanta, GA.

Provides metrics and insights into heritage-based tourism opportunities.

Atlanta Urban Design Commission and Department of City Planning.

2023. *Historic Resources Inventory Update*. Atlanta, GA.

Catalog of existing and potential historic landmarks citywide.

Georgia Department of Community Affairs.

2020. *Community Development Block Grant Program Guidelines*. Atlanta, GA.

Framework for potential funding partnerships supporting rehabilitation of historic structures for community use.



Digital and Public Outreach Resources

Beltline.org.

2024. *Interactive Beltline Map*. Accessed October 2025.

Primary online resource for corridor routes, property boundaries, and adjacent development.

Atlanta Beltline Partnership.

2024. *Community Engagement Reports and Surveys*. Accessed 2025.

Summaries of public feedback on trail access, preservation priorities, and community identity.

Georgia Trust for Historic Preservation.

2023. *Places in Peril Program*. Atlanta, GA.

Annual list of threatened historic resources in Georgia, several of which overlap with Beltline-adjacent neighborhoods.

Academic and Economic Research

Rypkema, Donovan D. (PlaceEconomics).

2002. *The Economics of Historic Preservation*. Washington, DC: National Trust for Historic Preservation.

Core text articulating the economic rationale for preservation and its community benefits.

Evans-Cowley, Jennifer, and Barry N. Levine.

2011. "Rail-to-Trail Redevelopment: Lessons from U.S. Cities." *Journal of Urban Design* 16(3): 357–376.

Peer-reviewed study of urban rail-to-trail conversions informing comparative analysis for Beltline strategy.

Zukin, Sharon.

2010. *Naked City: The Death and Life of Authentic Urban Places*. Oxford University Press.

Background reading on redevelopment and neighborhood change.

Civic and Nonprofit Partners

Historic West End Neighborhood Development (HWENDCo).

2022. *Community Heritage Assessment*. Atlanta, GA.

Grassroots inventory identifying local cultural assets for inclusion in citywide preservation planning.

Atlanta Preservation Partnership.

2023. *Bridging Atlanta's History: Industrial Heritage Initiative*.

Collaborative proposal for preservation-based economic development, cited as precedent for partnership models.



Media and Public Discourse

Atlanta Journal-Constitution (AJC).

Various Years.

Selected media coverage on Beltline redevelopment, adaptive reuse projects, and public debate about growth and preservation.

Curbed Atlanta.

2022–2025. *Urban Development Coverage.*

Features on Beltline neighborhood change, industrial reuse, and equity discussions.

Saporta Report.

2024. *Opinion Series on Beltline Preservation and Growth.*

Commentary providing civic context and stakeholder sentiment.



Appendix A: Atlanta Beltline Historic and Cultural Resource Mission Statement

1. Purpose

This Mission Statement establishes Atlanta Beltline, Inc.'s (ABI) commitment to the recognition, documentation, and stewardship of historic and cultural resources along the 22-mile Atlanta Beltline corridor. It provides a shared framework for integrating historic and cultural resource considerations into project planning, design, asset management, and community engagement activities.

The Beltline does not function as a historic preservation authority. Formal designation, regulatory enforcement, and National Register determinations remain the responsibility of the Georgia State Historic Preservation Office (GA SHPO), the City of Atlanta Urban Design Commission (UDC), and other agencies with statutory authority. This Mission Statement defines how ABI exercises its role as a corridor steward and infrastructure delivery organization to advance preservation outcomes consistent with its mission of equitable, inclusive, and sustainable city life.

2. Scope

This Mission Statement applies to:

- All Beltline-owned or -controlled properties, including the 21 parcels totaling 111.8 acres identified in ABI's current asset inventory.
- Trail corridor infrastructure under the Beltline's design and construction authority, including bridges, tunnels, retaining walls, culverts, and related rail infrastructure remnants.
- Beltline-funded or -initiated planning, design, community engagement, and programming activities that may affect historic or cultural resources within or adjacent to the corridor.
- Private development projects within the Beltline Overlay District, to the extent that the advisory Design Review Committee (DRC) role provides an opportunity to encourage design that respects historic character.

This Mission Statement does not extend to properties outside Beltline ownership or control except through the organization's coordination, advocacy, and partnership roles described herein.



3. Definitions

Term	Definition
Historic Resource	A building, structure, site, object, or district that is listed in or eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP), locally designated by the City of Atlanta, or identified through ABI's Corridor Heritage Registry as significant to the history or culture of the Beltline corridor.
Cultural Resource	A place, practice, tradition, or landscape that holds cultural, social, or community significance to the neighborhoods along the Beltline, whether or not the resource is formally designated. This includes sites associated with underrepresented communities, oral histories, and living cultural practices.
Corridor Heritage Registry	ABI's internal GIS-based inventory of known and potential historic and cultural resources along the Beltline, maintained as a planning and coordination tool.
Preservation Lead	A designated staff function responsible for coordinating historic and cultural resource considerations across projects, serving as the primary internal point of contact for agency partners, and maintaining the Corridor Heritage Registry.

4. Guiding Principles

The Beltline is committed to recognizing the corridor's historic and cultural resources as integral to its identity and to the communities it connects.

Documentation and awareness: The Beltline will maintain a Corridor Heritage Registry as a living internal tool, ensuring that project teams have access to documented resources during planning and design. Existing Section 106 findings, NRHP evaluations, and subarea planning records will be incorporated into early project scoping.

Integration into project delivery: The Beltline will embed historic and cultural resource considerations into project planning, design review, and asset management workflows. Where projects may affect documented resources, relevant expertise will be engaged early so that options for retention, interpretation, and design that respects historic character remain available.

Adaptive reuse and feasibility: Where rehabilitation of historic structures on Beltline-controlled properties is financially viable, the organization will pursue reuse and connect partners to available incentives, including federal and state historic tax credits and brownfield programs. Preservation objectives will be included as criteria in RFPs for properties with documented historic significance.

Interpretation and equitable visibility: The Beltline will integrate the histories of the communities along the corridor, including African American, LGBTQ+, immigrant, and working-class communities, into trail design, public art, programming, and digital platforms. Storytelling will be grounded in partnerships with community organizations, cultural institutions, and legacy residents.

Interagency coordination: The Beltline will maintain working relationships with GA SHPO, the City of Atlanta UDC, GDOT, MARTA, and the City of Atlanta Department of City Planning to ensure that historic and cultural resource considerations are consistently integrated into the regulatory and planning processes that shape the corridor.



5. Roles

Role	Responsibilities
Preservation Lead (designated staff function)	Maintains the Corridor Heritage Registry; serves as primary point of contact with GA SHPO and UDC; supports project teams in identifying resources and engaging appropriate expertise; tracks progress against this Mission Statement.
Project Managers	Incorporate historic and cultural resource considerations at project kickoff; use the Corridor Heritage Registry and early screening checklist during scoping; document outcomes.
Department Leading the Project	Identifies financial tools (tax credits, grants, TAD resources) to support preservation objectives on Beltline-controlled properties; evaluates preservation criteria in RFP processes.
Community Engagement / Impact Team	Leads community-based documentation and interpretation programming; coordinates with legacy community partners; supports equitable representation of underrepresented histories in corridor programming.
Legal / External Affairs	Advises on regulatory requirements; coordinates with agency partners on interagency agreements; ensures compliance with applicable federal and state preservation law.

6. Relationship to Other Plans and Documents

This Mission Statement is intended to complement and reinforce the Beltline's existing commitments to equity, community engagement, environmental stewardship, and design excellence. It should be read in conjunction with the Beltline's:

- Design Typologies and Design Review Committee Standards.
- Subarea Master Plans.
- Community Engagement Framework.
- The Historic and Cultural Resources Study: Challenges and Opportunities Report (2026), which provides the technical foundation and strategic context for this Mission Statement.
- The forthcoming Historic and Cultural Resource Guidelines (Deliverable 3), which will provide resource-specific treatment standards to support implementation.
- Applicable federal requirements under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act, the Georgia Environmental Policy Act (GEPA), and related statutes.

