

BeltLine's Master Plan delayed for South Buckhead

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The presentation of the final proposed BeltLine Master Plan for Subarea 7—which includes the bottom area of Buckhead—is being delayed from Jan. 22 to early March in order for Atlanta BeltLine, Inc. to prepare a market study involving all the sub areas along the entire BeltLine route.

In an email sent to members of the Subarea 7 BeltLine Steering Committee, Jonathan Lewis, the senior project manager for the BeltLine in the city of Atlanta's Bureau of Planning., said the scheduled Jan. 22 meeting would now be used as the public forum to discuss the final recommendations for the Tanyard Creek Park trail section.

The Jan. 22 meeting is scheduled for 6:30 p.m. at the Recreation Center on Peachtree Hills Avenue.

In what some considered to be an attempt to limit public input and possibly press coverage of some BeltLine discussions, Lewis also informed members of the Steering Committee that meetings of that group were not designed to be public meetings and encouraged them not to invite non-Steering Committee members to attend those meetings. He said the Study Group meetings are the public forums.

Lewis wrote: "Atlanta BeltLine, Inc has decided to prepare a market study for the BeltLine with findings by subarea, which will improve the quality of the final master plans. In order to incorporate the results, we need to delay our final Study Group meeting by about six weeks." The meeting will now tentatively be scheduled for March 3.

Lewis told the group that at the last Steering Committee meeting on Nov. 27, "I mentioned we were still gathering information related to the Tanyard Creek Park trail section. We are now planning to present the technical findings to the BeltLine Subcabinet for a final decision in mid-January. I would like to convene a special meeting of the Steering Committee beforehand for you to see our findings and recommendations and provide feedback."

Lewis explained that the BeltLine Subcabinet is led by the Mayor's Office and is made up of pertinent commissioners and department heads from the city, and the senior leadership at Atlanta BeltLine, Inc.

Lewis acknowledged that the Nov. 27 meeting of the Steering Committee involved challenges by several neighborhoods of items such as PATH trail routes (both west and east of Peachtree Road in south Buckhead), the route of the proposed Peachtree Creek Parkway, the decision to retain the Armour Drive area as an industrial area for future development and the densities of development along Peachtree Road and stepping back to the adjacent neighborhoods. (See story page 2.)

There also were challenges to a proposed option to have future transit cross Peachtree Road on-grade just north of Piedmont Hospital.

"In light of how many outstanding issues arose at our last Steering Committee meeting," Lewis wrote, "I would like to bring the entire Subarea Master Plan back to the Steering Committee on Feb. 20 and present the final plan at a Study Group meeting (public meeting) on March 3."

Lewis said, "One key issue for the committee was the city's forthcoming change in policy on industrial preservation and its impacts on the future land use for the Armour area. We have completed our field work assessing the vitality of all industrial areas around the BeltLine and are analyzing our findings. We plan to have staff recommendations to discuss with the BeltLine Subcabinet at the same mid-January meeting."

He said he would keep the Steering Committee members posted on the process.

Lewis outlined the schedule changes as following:

Wednesday, Jan. 9. 6:30 to 8:00. Special meeting of the Steering Committee to discuss Tanyard Creek Park trail section. The location of the meeting is still to be announced.

The Study Group (public meeting) meeting previously scheduled for Tuesday, Jan. 22, will be dedicated to discussing the Tanyard Creek Park trail section. This meeting is scheduled for 6:30 p.m. at the Recreation Center on Peachtree Hills Avenue.

Wednesday, Feb. 20, 6:30 to 8:00. Special meeting of the Steering Committee to discuss final recommendations for the Subarea Master Plan (land use, transportation, urban design, public art).

The Final Northside Study Group meeting (public meeting) dedicated to the Subarea 7 Master Plan will be held on Monday, March 3. The location is to be announced.

"Also on the horizon, after all five subarea master plans have held their final public meeting, we are planning to hold office hours where groups can make an appointment to discuss any outstanding concerns with the plan recommendations," Lewis wrote. He said that will likely occur the week of March 10.

Regarding attendance at the Steering Committee meetings, Lewis explained, "They are not public meetings. They are not closed meetings, but participation should be limited to the Steering Committee members.

"We have received numerous words of concern from throughout the BeltLine about non-steering committee membership participation at steering committee meetings," Lewis wrote. "The Steering Committee members were carefully selected to represent a balanced cross section of each study area. I, personally, would appreciate it if you did not invite non-Steering Committee members to the meetings."

