



Atlanta BeltLine Adopter's Guide

About the Adopt-the-Atlanta BeltLine Program

Through a partnership between Park Pride, the Atlanta BeltLine Partnership, and Atlanta Beltline, Inc., the Adopt-the-Atlanta BeltLine program provides an opportunity for community groups to play a direct role in improving and maintaining the Atlanta BeltLine. Spanning 22 miles and connecting 45 Atlanta neighborhoods with multi-use trails and transit, the development of the Atlanta BeltLine will provide a mechanism for communities to engage in new ways while enjoying approximately 1,300 acres of new parks and greenspace. Thank you for being a part of the progress and adopting a segment of the Atlanta BeltLine!

In this Adopter's Guide

Think of this guide as your Atlanta BeltLine adopter group handbook. It will answer many of your questions about responsibilities and the expectations of the Adopt-the-Atlanta BeltLine program. Please read through this guide carefully before your first work day.

Please direct any questions to Park Pride's Program Manager:

Amanda Martin
Office: 404-546-7981
Mobile: 404-723-3114
Email: amanda@parkpride.org

Contents

Section 1 – Expectations of Adopter Groups

Section 2 – On-Site Responsibilities

Section 3 – Safety

Section 4 – Resources

Section 1 – Expectations of Adopter Groups

As an adopter group, you are directly contributing to the success of the Atlanta BeltLine – your volunteer work will help transform this land into an inviting greenspace that brings vibrancy to the community. To ensure success of this adoption program, please adhere to the following guidelines.

Constitution of adopter groups

- Each group should consist of at least 10 volunteers to ensure an adequate workforce to cover monthly site visits as well as larger quarterly projects that will require participation from the entire group.
- Each group shall designate a person to be the group leader and main contact for Park Pride. Please notify Park Pride if your group's main contact person changes at any time.
- Each segment can be adopted by two separate groups. The two adopter groups should coordinate and work together to keep the site well-maintained.

Orientation and Training

- Park Pride will host training and orientation sessions for adopter groups. The group leader from each adopter group is required to attend one of these sessions – additional volunteers from the group are of course welcome and encouraged to attend.
- The training sessions will cover expectations, safety standards, an introduction to invasive plant removal, logistical issues, and any other questions from adopter groups.

Communication

- Please notify Park Pride at least 30 days prior to each work day so we can assist you with planning and obtaining tools.
- Within one week after each work day, the group leader will report on the group's activities by email to amanda@parkpride.org.

Scope of Work

The work of adopter groups is crucial to the development of the Atlanta BeltLine. Park Pride, the Atlanta Beltline Partnership, and Atlanta Beltline, Inc. greatly value your commitment to helping make the long-term vision of the Atlanta BeltLine become a reality.

In order to stay consistent in supporting the overall, long-term vision for the Atlanta BeltLine, it is vital that your group conduct only those activities outlined in this adopter guide unless explicit approval has been granted otherwise from Park Pride and Atlanta Beltline Inc.

In future phases of Atlanta BeltLine construction, it is possible that the scope of your group's volunteer opportunities may expand to include optional projects such as planting native species or wildflowers and erecting picnic areas. However, projects such as these will not be appropriate until Atlanta BeltLine, Inc. has indicated that a given segment has reached a phase of development making it ready for an expanded scope of volunteer efforts. Also, Atlanta BeltLine, Inc. may need to be directly involved in the planning and execution of some projects.

Hiring Contractors

Adopter groups may hire professional contractors to perform the adoption duties. Any contractor hired must be bonded and insured. The adopter group must notify Park Pride of the date, name of contractor, and specific work to be performed at least 30 days in advance.

Section 2 – On-Site Responsibilities

The development of the Atlanta BeltLine is a long-term project – as it develops and changes form over time, the scope of adopter responsibilities will develop as well. In the initial phase of adoption, there are four general categories of work that each adopter group will perform. Each segment of the Atlanta BeltLine is unique, and some segments will require more work in certain categories than others.

Trash and waste removal

The accumulation of trash in the Atlanta BeltLine corridor detracts from the health of the greenspace and diminishes the ability for people to enjoy it. Volunteer help in removing trash and debris is crucial to the development of the Atlanta BeltLine.

Your group will be responsible for keeping your segment free of debris and litter on an on-going basis. On each of your site visits, come prepared to pick up any accumulated trash. Some segments may require larger-scale debris removal as well as regular trash pick-up.

Removing trash and debris from your segment

- The Atlanta BeltLine will not have public trash cans. Your group will be responsible for hauling away any trash you pick up.
- For smaller-scale trash pickups, you can haul away the waste you have collected and dispose of it at your own home or business. You can also seek partnerships from businesses along your Atlanta BeltLine segment and inquire if they are willing to allow your group to drop off collected trash in their dumpster.
- For larger-scale debris removal, Park Pride will help you coordinate the delivery of a dumpster to your Atlanta BeltLine location.
- For tires and other large items that cannot be thrown away in a dumpster, notify Park Pride of the need for a pick-up and consolidate the items into one place along your segment. Park Pride will work with Atlanta BeltLine, Inc. to arrange a pick-up.
- Never touch or move hazardous materials. Notify Park Pride if you find hazardous materials along your segment. Park Pride will work with Atlanta BeltLine, Inc. to coordinate removal.

Weeding and invasive plant removal

Invasive species and unwanted brush are a threat to Georgia's natural habitat – including the land that comprises the Atlanta BeltLine corridor. Removal of these aggressive plants on your adopted segment will help counteract the effects and growth of invasive species and transform the Atlanta BeltLine into a gem of the city.

Invasive plants are not native to Atlanta and tend to reproduce rapidly, choking out native plants and upsetting the natural ecology. Examples include privet, kudzu, elaeagnus, English ivy, and lirioppe. This project should be an ongoing effort, since invasive species are not easy to eradicate. However, with each work day the task should get easier and more successful.

Representatives from each adopter group will be required to have an on-site training session prior to beginning any invasive plant removal. Park Pride will provide further materials about invasive plant removal as well as specific instructions for removing the unwanted plant growth in your segment.

Cleaning of signs and site fixtures

Your adopter group will be responsible for cleaning and maintaining signs, benches, and other elements installed on your segment of the Atlanta BeltLine. Part of each work day should be devoted to beautification of the fixtures that are part of your adopted segment.

In the early stages of your adoption, there will be few fixtures to maintain. Simply wipe down each fixture with a disinfectant and use graffiti remover where necessary. Any building, major repairs or painting will require pre-approval. Please contact Park Pride with any questions or concerns.

Reporting maintenance concerns, vandalism, or other suspicious activities

The Atlanta BeltLine is intended to be a welcoming, vibrant, and safe public greenspace. Please report any maintenance concerns, safety issues, and evidence of vandalism or other crime immediately. Any of these issues should be included in your update to Park Pride after each work day. In the case of an immediate threat, call 911.

Additional Projects

Additional projects will be available as the Atlanta BeltLine progresses. Any project not listed above will need to be approved in advance by Park Pride and Atlanta BeltLine, Inc.

Section 3 – Safety

Keeping safety in mind is critical for all Adopt-the-Atlanta BeltLine groups whenever doing any work on the Atlanta BeltLine. While work on the Atlanta BeltLine shares many safety concerns with other park or outdoor projects, the unique aspects of the corridor present additional concerns. It is important to be prepared for each work day and always use common sense. Carefully plan each work day and ensure you are taking necessary precautions to keep your group safe.

In order to be best prepared, get to know your adopted segment. Learn the terrain, flora and fauna, and possible hazards. Volunteers should never be put into a situation that is unsafe or that makes them feel uncomfortable. A successful project is not only measured by the amount of work accomplished but also by how enjoyable it was for those involved.

Please contact Park Pride prior to your first work day to set up a site visit to your segment to discuss project ideas and site safety.

Here are a few safety guidelines for all volunteers to follow:

- Do not work alone. Even if the whole group is not working together, always bring a buddy with you when working or walking your segment.
- Learn to identify poison ivy and make sure every volunteer can recognize it and avoid it.
- Know the names of streets that connect to your segment so you can direct first responders in the case of an emergency.

What to Bring

The group leader needs to convey to other volunteers what to bring on each work day – this requires a familiarity with the adopted segment and knowledge of the specific plan for each project. Here are some suggestions:

- Attire
 - Wear closed-toe shoes (boots or sneakers are best)
 - Pants and long sleeves are recommended to avoid contact with poison ivy and limit the small scratches from removing invasive plants. They also protect you from sunburn and bug bites
 - Dress appropriately for the seasonal weather. The project leader will determine if a project will proceed in the event of rain. If there is lightning, the project *must* be canceled.

- Supplies
 - Reusable water bottles (group leader should bring a water cooler to refill personal water bottles)
 - Gloves should be worn by all volunteers. Gloves will be provided by request with tools from the Atlanta ToolBank, but volunteers are welcome to bring their own
 - Personal items such as sunscreen, bug spray, or camera can be recommended to volunteers to bring
 - Leaders are expected to bring a First Aid Kit and have it on site during all projects

Before the Work Day

Get to know your segment! It is important to know of the potential hazards your volunteer group will face. Be aware of poison ivy, bee and wasp nests, steep slopes, boggy areas, and other characteristics. Ensure that each volunteer is aware of the hazards, and create a plan for each work day to ensure the safety of your group. Park Pride can help decide on appropriate projects and make sure you are getting the proper tools to get the job done.

- Volunteers should never feel uncomfortable with their project duties. If a volunteer has severe environmental allergies (i.e. bee stings) this may not be the best volunteer opportunity for them.
- Each volunteer will need to sign a Park Pride Liability Waiver before participating on a work day.
- Make sure that each volunteer knows how to properly use work day tools.

Site-Specific Work Day Safety Hazards

Every project needs to be appropriate for volunteers. Due to the dynamic nature of the Atlanta BeltLine, it is important to plan each project carefully in order to ensure a safe and meaningful experience for all participants. Here are a few common situations to watch out for:

- Steep drop-offs can be hidden by brush and over-growth – make sure every volunteer knows where they are.
- Volunteers should be careful with over-hanging branches and vines. It is important not to pull on or reach for anything that may break and put the volunteers in danger. Always know what's above you; the vine could be the only thing holding a large dead branch in place.
- Know how to safely use your tools and how to teach others to do the same. Contact Park Pride if you have any questions. We'd be happy to come show you.
- You may come across used hazardous material such as hypodermic needles and unlabeled pills. Needles should carefully be placed inside an empty plastic container (thick plastic is best). Always wear gloves when handling needles. All pills and needles should be kept in a separate trash bag and taken to a local Fire Station for proper disposal as soon as possible. Do not mix in with other trash!

Urban Camping and Homelessness

Various areas along the Atlanta BeltLine are used as long-term campgrounds and dwelling places. Atlanta BeltLine, Inc. is working with the Atlanta Police Department to address the issue in the best way possible.

While you are working on your adopted segment, be respectful of the fact that you may be working in a space that someone considers their home. Do not violate any encampments that you see and do not move or throw away items that appear to be someone's personal belongings. Please contact Park Pride if you have any questions or concerns regarding this issue.

Section 4 – Resources

Invasive Species

Trees Atlanta

www.TreesAtlanta.org

<http://www.treesatlanta.org/InvasivePlantInfo.aspx>

Invasive Plants of Georgia's Forests (PDF)

<http://www.gatrees.org/ForestManagement/documents/InvasivePlantsofGeorgiasForests0309.pdf>

Invasive Plants to Watch Out for in Georgia (PDF)

<http://www.gainvasives.org/handbook/EDRRplants.pdf>

Invasive Weeds in Georgia (PDF)

<http://www.gacaps.org/pubs/flyerfinal.pdf>

Tools

Atlanta Community ToolBank

<http://atlanta.toolbank.org/>

Additional Resources

Park Pride

www.ParkPride.org

Atlanta BeltLine

www.BeltLine.org

Keep Atlanta Beautiful

<http://www.KeepAtlantaBeautiful.org>