
WESTVIEW NEIGHBOR

ISSUE 11

Remembering the Past. Creating the Future.

SPRING/SUMMER 2015

ARE YOU READY TO SAMPLE A TASTE OF SW ATLANTA?

Join the Westview Community Organization to find out who has the **Best of the Beltline BBQ** at the 8th Annual Westview Summer Solstice.

The Westview Community Organization is excited to host a fun day of food, music, art, and entertainment on **Saturday, June 20th, 2015**, from 11:00am to 8:00pm in the Westview Village along Ralph David Abernathy Blvd. (between Inman St. and West Ontario Ave.) as part of the 8th Annual Westview Summer Solstice Celebration!

Grab your lawn chair, blanket and some friends to check out our artist marketplace, grilled food, performances & youth activities. Outside coolers are permitted.

More info about the event, registration details for the grill competition, artist marketplace & volunteer opportunities may be found at www.westviewatlanta.com.



SITTING DOWN WITH BELTLINE VISIONARY RYAN GRAVEL

Chad Carlson

You may have noticed construction activity in the woods to the west of Langhorn Street. This is construction for the southwest side "BeltLine." The BeltLine is being built on a 22 mile freight railroad corridor that once circumvented the city, kind of like the early 20th century version of today's I-285. The corridor was abandoned by the railroads in the 1960s because much of the freight traffic into Atlanta was replaced by trucks on the highways. This former 22 mile railroad corridor is now being re-purposed into a pedestrian pathway and light rail line. The intent of the BeltLine is to 1) offer an alternative form of transportation—walking, biking, and light rail; 2) unify various neighborhoods throughout the city; 3) create green space; and 4) spur commercial and residential development.

The full 22 mile BeltLine corridor is being constructed in stages. The southwest portion will run through Westview, under Lucile Avenue, immediately to the east of KIPP STRIVE Academy. It will be three miles long—running from Washington Park, north of Westview, to Adair Park, to the southeast. The construction of this southwest BeltLine section is expected to take two years.

The idea for the BeltLine came from a young university student named Ryan Gravel. While attending graduate school at Georgia Tech in the 1990s, Ryan was inspired to write his thesis on repurposing this former railroad corridor. Now a landscape architect with the firm Perkins + Will, Ryan recently sat down for an interview with Westview.

How did you get the idea for the BeltLine?

I'm sort of obsessed with infrastructure – railroads in

particular – and I needed a graduate thesis topic that would span both design and planning. Atlanta has this unique loop of old railroads that are mostly underutilized, and it became the perfect space for a new idea that would not only change the physical form of the city, but change the way we think about Atlanta.

How did this idea catch on?

It's a long story, but I got connected with some early believers like Cathy Woolard, who at that time was on City Council. With her staff and a dozen volunteers, we talked to every community in the city – including Westview – and everyone else who wanted to hear about it. We were each doing 3 or 4 meetings a week for two and a half years starting back in 2001. We built an amazing grassroots movement in support of a big idea for our future together. That effort gave the project a life of its own.

Why is it called the "BeltLine"?

A "belt line" is a historic term for a railroad that belts around a city. Atlanta is unique to have four that roughly line up to form a loop. The one that passes Westview was called the Louisville & Nashville Railroad Belt, and it was built around 1900.

How is it being paid for?

All of the funding is not yet identified, but you can find out everything you want to know at www.beltline.org. The primary public funding source today is called a Tax Allocation District (TAD), which leverages property taxes for redeveloped areas to help pay for the project itself. There are a lot of other sources too, both public and private.

A section on the east side of the city, near Midtown, was recently constructed. Has it been successful? How?

The project generally has been enormously successful, generating over \$2.4 billion in private investment since 2005. Right now, the bulk of that development has been along the Eastside Trail, but there is momentum along every stretch of the corridor. More than economic impact, however, the Atlanta BeltLine has transformed the life of those neighborhoods by providing car-free access to shopping and restaurants, and a safe route for pedestrians and cyclists, including kids on their way to school. It is introducing an entirely new, healthy, and sustainable way of life in Atlanta.



The Atlanta BeltLine path crossing with the Lucile Avenue bridge.

What do you envision for the southwest side BeltLine portion? How will it affect the southwest side of the city? What makes the southwest side of the city distinct?

While the Eastside is also benefitting from a generation of investment, the Westside has more economic challenges and the transition to a truly healthy economy will take longer. With that said, the Atlanta BeltLine has already demonstrated success here, and its long-term benefits will be enormous. This is great news, and it is needed. But looking ahead, one of the big challenges for the entire loop that we need to be working on is the protection of affordability as property taxes and rents continue to rise. We have a good start, but there's much more we can do.

In terms of the experience of the corridor, the Westside has more tree cover on adjacent properties and so the character of the corridor is very different. The communities of southwest Atlanta are also leading the city in a new attention to community farming and food systems, which I think will make a unique impression on the southwest corridor. The real distinction for any section of the loop, however, will be its people, and I'm excited to see how residents of the Westside Trail will begin to use it once it is finished. It's up to you!

How long will it be before the whole 22 mile BeltLine loop is completed? What are the challenges to this completion? What about transit construction?

The Westside Trail will be complete in 2017, but all of the details are provided in the Strategic Implementation Plan, which you can find at www.beltline.org. The only real challenge to building it is funding and, personally, I'm holding out hope that voters will grow tired of waiting

and demand it sooner rather than later. I'd love to create a significant new local funding source so we don't have to wait so long.

How will the BeltLine change Atlanta?

However you want it to. Seriously. This project would absolutely not be happening if it weren't for the people of the City of Atlanta falling in love with an idea about their future and then taking the steps necessary to make it come to life. You own this thing. Make it whatever you want.

How has the BeltLine affected you personally?

It's a huge part of my life. Not only have I worked on it professionally in one way or another over the last 15 years, I also go around the world talking about it and learning about similar efforts in other cities. Atlanta is part of a global movement, and it might be surprising for people here to know that we're at the leading edge – look for my book about this, which will be out in 2016. More than that, though, I live on it and I use it just about every day. My kids are growing up with it, and that's pretty amazing to watch.

Learn more about the Atlanta BeltLine at <http://beltline.org>.

NEWSLETTER ASSISTANT

WESTVIEW NEIGHBOR newsletter is looking for an assistant coordinator. Responsibilities to be shared include:

- Securing, editing and submitting articles from interested neighbors for publication;
- Securing ads for the newsletter;
- Sending and picking up completed newsletter from printer;
- Distributing newsletters to those that deliver.

The newsletter is printer quarterly. All responsibilities take a few hours for each issue.

Please contact Rebecca Cater at 678-350-6927 if interested.



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WWW.LIFECYCLEBUILDINGCENTER.ORG

COMMUNITY GARDEN

Abiodun Henderson

Our much loved neighborhood garden was started about five years ago by the former president of the Westview Community Organization, Scott Smith. In the spring of 2013, after completing an urban growers program at Truly Living Well, we began a youth garden program with about ten children from the neighborhood. They learned how to plant, care for, and harvest kale, swiss chard, different lettuces and tomatoes. We even took a trip to Empire State South restaurant where we “sold” our harvest. The head chef cooked the harvest for us. The youth learned about local food systems and how they could make a career out of farming.

In the fall of 2013, the garden became communal to benefit all neighbors. Last spring, with the help of neighbors, we planted the entire garden with tomatoes, cucumbers, peppers, different types of melons, peas, okra, beans, kale, swiss chard and a few other vegetables. Most of those plants were started from seed from the Herman’s Garden grant program at Seed Savers Exchange. The donation helped us grow an extensive variety of crops for the community and start a seed saving program that will provide for future years. Several fruit trees including plum, apple, fig and peach trees surrounded the vegetable beds.

The food from the garden goes directly to the community for free. Local businesses such as Westview Pizza Cafe and the youth will have a booth this summer at the West End Farmers Market. With additional funding, our chicken coop will start operating later in the summer.



Pea planting at the Westview Community Garden, spring 2014.



Pepper planting at the Westview Community Garden, spring 2014.

It’s important for our neighbors that have been disenfranchised to see and learn how to grow their food...it’s **empowering!**

Doesn’t that sound great! Unfortunately, our beloved garden was demolished after we couldn’t reach the owners. Sherry Bailey, a real estate agent from the neighborhood, determined the FDIC owned our garden. They told us we could keep gardening while they appraised the land. Three weeks later they demolished the garden because of “safety reasons.”

We fought back to save our garden!

From the moment we saw the “No Trespassing” sign to today, more than 20 community members came together to give money, moral support, time, energy or resources to make sure we salvaged everything we could from our demolished garden. We put in an offer with the FDIC for \$8,000 to buy back the land. Our next steps are to write a form letter to our political officials so that they are aware of what is going on and blast the on-coming online crowdfunding campaign so that we can raise the money back to continue to grow our garden.

We need fresh natural food. These last few months have certainly been a test of community people power. JOIN US!

To learn more about the community garden visit: <http://www.westviewatlanta.com/community-organization/community-garden/>

SNAP FARMERS MARKETS

What We Do

Wholesome Wave Georgia (WWG) believes that all Georgians should have access to wholesome, locally-grown food. By doubling each Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP, aka Food Stamp) dollar spent at our sustainable, producer-only farmers markets, we increase access to good food while supporting sustainable farmers and contributing to the local food economy.

WWG has grown from three partner markets in 2009 to a network of 37 markets and direct-marketing farms in 2015. We are located in 25 cities throughout the state, stretching from Metro Atlanta to Valdosta, from Pine Mountain to Augusta.

How It Works

Visit the nearest partner market with your EBT card and head to the Information Booth. A market staff member will swipe your EBT card for an amount you choose and then give you

DOUBLE that amount in tokens to spend on SNAP-eligible food items at the market. That means if you take \$10 off your card, the staff will give you \$20 in tokens. You can get up to \$50 in EBT doubled each time you visit a market! If you don't use all of your tokens in one visit, don't worry, just bring them back and spend them at the same market when you visit again!

SNAP Enrollment

Do you qualify for Food Stamps? Need help applying? Wholesome Wave Georgia can assist you! We offer free screening, enrollment, and renewals. Contact us at wholesomewavegeorgia.org or 470.210.6283 to apply.

Local Participating Market

Visit the West End Farmers Market + Artisans Market at 1050 Ralph David Abernathy Blvd SW, Atlanta, GA 30310. Sundays: Apr 26 - Nov 29, 2015, 2:00 - 6:00pm.

Or find a full list of participating markets at:
<http://www.wholesomewavegeorgia.org/metro-atl>

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PUBLIC SAFETY

Business owners, employees, citizens and visitors are encouraged to follow the Clean Car Campaign by keeping a “clean car” and removing all valuables – such as purses, cell phones, GPS navigation systems, laptops and tablet computers – from unattended vehicles.

Keeping your car free of valuables is the best way to prevent car break-ins. If there is nothing tempting they can see from the windows they usually won’t bother.

You may also consider installing motion sensitive floodlights on the front of your house. They turn off during the day, they are dim in the evening and they turn on to full strength when motion is detected at night.

2015 DUES

Pay your 2015 Westview Community Organization (WCO) dues of only **\$20 per household**. Your membership in the WCO helps sponsor ongoing community efforts, such as beautification, special events, newsletters, and more.

Neighbors can pay annual dues in person (cash or check) at meetings or online at: <http://www.westviewatlanta.com/community-organization/membership/>

You can also mail your check payable to “Westview Community Organization” to: Westview Community Organization, P.O. Box 89306, Atlanta, GA 30312

IMPORTANT NUMBERS

Zone 4 Police:
(404) 756-1903

Pothole Posse:
(404) 768-4653

Code Enforcement:
(404) 330-6190

Sanitation/Public Works:
(404) 330-6333

Fulton Tax Assessor:
(404) 612-6440

Watershed Management:
(404) 658-6500

Housing Authority:
(404) 892-4700

In Case of Emergency Dial 911!

UPCOMING EVENTS

Monday, June 1: Westview Community Organization Meeting @ 1471 Ralph D. Abernathy Blvd, 7:00-8:00pm

Saturday, June 6: Westview Brunch @ 1540 Ralph D. Abernathy Blvd, 10:00am

Wednesday, June 10: NPU-T Meeting @ 1444 Lucile Ave, 7:00-9:00pm

Thursday, June 18: Pizza Night @ 1550 Ralph D. Abernathy Blvd, 6:30pm

Saturday, June 20: 8th Annual Westview Summer Solstice Celebration @ Ralph D. Abernathy Blvd & E. Ontario Ave, 11:00am-8:00pm

June 29-July 24: Westview STEAM Empowerment Camp

Monday, July 6: Westview Community Organization Meeting @ 1471 Ralph D. Abernathy Blvd, 7:00-8:00pm

ORGANIZATION INFORMATION

WESTVIEW COMMUNITY ORGANIZATION

Meetings on the first Monday of the month at 7:00pm, Calvary United Methodist Church, 1471 RDA Blvd.

President – Ayana Gabriel
Vice President – Octavia Vogel
Secretary – David Cater
Assistant Secretary – Kiyomi Rollins
Treasurer – Kendal Carey
Assistant Treasurer – Jacinta Williams
Parliamentarian – Elijah Tutt
Chaplain – Sean Wall

Development Committee – Patrick Berry & Steffi Langer-Berry
Special Events Committee – Bruce Williams
Public Safety Committee – Darrick Young

Zoning and Code Enforcement Committee – Sherry Bailey
Beautification Committee – John Davis
Membership Committee – Rebecca Cater
Youth Committee – Catherine Aaron
Garden Committee – Abiodun Henderson

STAY IN TOUCH

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[www.twitter.com/WestviewAtlanta](https://twitter.com/WestviewAtlanta)

<https://groups.yahoo.com/neo/groups/westviewcommunity/>

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