

The Atlanta Way

Time and again, Atlanta has demonstrated its willingness to remember the past while forging new partnerships and alliances, leaving no one behind or out in the cold.

JOHN F. KENNEDY once said, “History will never accept difficulties as an excuse. . . . After the dust of centuries has passed over our cities, we, too, will be remembered not for victories or defeats in battle or in politics, but for our contribution to the human spirit.”

These words ring particularly true in these tumultuous economic times. In Atlanta, we remember the

may have been to the success of the city at any point in time, it is the team effort that has mattered most.

This principle—bridging gaps and working together across divisions for the betterment of our city—has long been a guiding force in Atlanta’s history, and it will carry us into the future. The “Atlanta Way”—so named by former Atlanta mayor and civil rights icon Andrew

Young—first referred to Atlanta’s progressive willingness to cross racial barriers. As far back as 1895, when Atlanta played host to the Cotton States and International Exposition, the city incorporated pavilions dedicated to showcasing the accomplishments of women and African Americans. In more recent history, Atlanta’s business leadership worked toward the nonviolent desegregation of the city during the civil rights movement.

Today, the Atlanta Way denotes that same spirit of inclusiveness and diversity of leadership. Young describes it now as “public purpose capitalism,” harnessing the energy and creativity of the private sector to solve pressing public policy problems. The Atlanta Way manifests itself through public/private partnerships, like those that enabled holding the 1996 Summer Olympics in Atlanta; acquisition of the More-

house College Martin Luther King, Jr., Collection; and progress on the Center for Civil and Human Rights and the Atlanta BeltLine, among other projects.

The Atlanta BeltLine is one of the most comprehensive economic development efforts ever undertaken in the city and the largest, most wide-ranging urban redevelopment project currently underway in the United States. It will shape the way Atlanta grows over the next 25 years and beyond, through a network of public parks, multiuse trails, and transit along a historic 22-mile (35-km) railroad corridor circling downtown and connecting many neighborhoods directly to each other by streetcar or light rail.

Public/private partnership is at the heart of this project. A \$60 million capital campaign, led by the BeltLine Partnership, is now 50 percent complete, with contributions from many of Atlanta’s business and philanthropic leaders. Partner organizations like the PATH Foundation, the Trust for Public Land, and others have been absolutely critical to the project’s implementation thus far, and their leadership will continue to be important as the project moves forward.

Time and again, Atlanta has demonstrated its willingness to remember the past while forging new partnerships and alliances, leaving no one behind or out in the cold. We welcome you to Atlanta and are privileged to be able to share our experiences with you at the ULI Spring Council Forum 2009 and in this issue of *Urban Land*. **UL**



SHIRLEY FRANKLIN, elected in 2001, is Atlanta’s first female mayor and the first African American woman to serve as mayor of a major southern U.S. city. In 2005, *Time* magazine named her one of the top five mayors in the country.

difficulties we have overcome, all the while knowing that more challenges lie ahead. “Atlanta is on the threshold of greatness,” Mayor Ivan Allen, Jr., declared in the 1960s, “but [it] has a long way to go.” Atlanta’s progress continues today. As important as any one person’s contribution

may have been to the success of the city at any point in time, it is the team effort that has mattered most.