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### The Atlanta BeltLine: How de Facto Segregation Limits Its Success

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# THE ATLANTA BELTLINE: HOW DE FACTO SEGREGATION LIMITS ITS SUCCESS

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*Mentor: Carol Camp Yeakey*

The city of Atlanta, Georgia, has struggled historically with segregation both racially and economically. Since its founding, Atlanta has experienced waves of gentrification, white flight, and racial violence that have created social barriers to success for individuals of particular races and socioeconomic backgrounds. In 1999, Ryan Gravel, a graduate student at Georgia Institute of Technology, wrote a thesis detailing how the city could utilize historic railroad lines that circled the city to increase connectivity of the outlying neighborhoods and provide new modes of transportation in the traffic-congested city. Parts of the thesis emphasized how the project could be carefully designed to benefit and not gentrify low income and minority communities. Now 18 years later, the Atlanta BeltLine project is underway. How has the city of Atlanta changed along with this new development project? Has the project thus far supported the low-income communities as intended? Are low-income and minority communities benefiting as much from the city's growth as affluent and white communities? This thesis seeks to research the goals of the Atlanta Beltline project with regard to low income communities and how those goals have been carried out in the planning and construction phases of the project. Additionally, this thesis looks into how low-income communities and the city of Atlanta have changed while this project is underway. Source data is derived from the City of Atlanta's public reports. Additional research data includes U.S. Census data to analyze how the city of Atlanta has changed physically and demographically since 2000.