



BeltLine

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**ATLANTA BELTLINE
Scoping Booklet**

Prepared for:

Metropolitan Atlanta Rapid Transit Authority

Prepared by:

**DMJM Harris/JJG Joint Venture
Atlanta, GA**

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Project Description

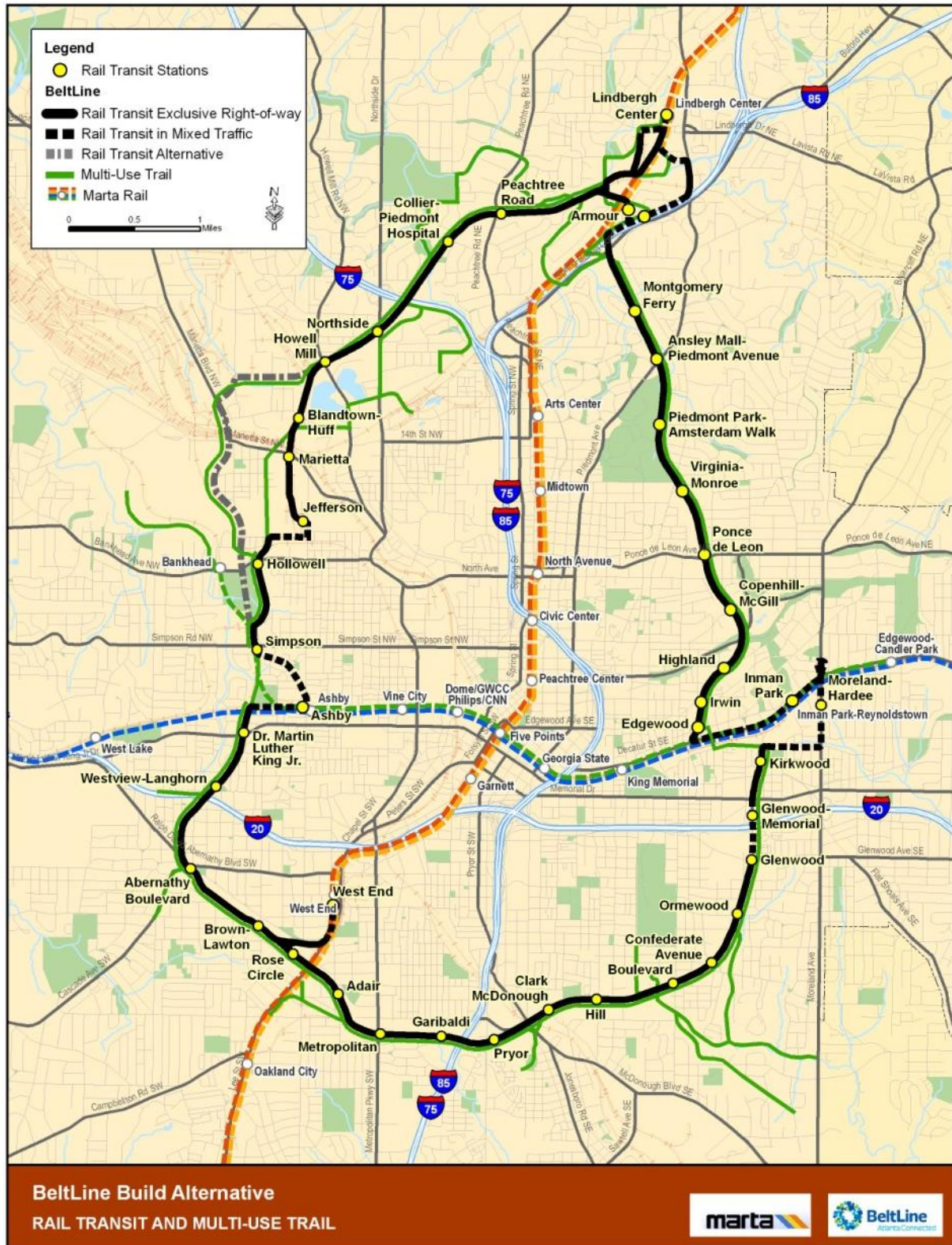
The Federal Transit Administration (FTA), in cooperation with the Metropolitan Atlanta Rapid Transit Authority (MARTA) and Atlanta BeltLine, Inc. (ABI), is preparing environmental documents for the Atlanta BeltLine in the City of Atlanta, Fulton County, Georgia. A Tier 1 Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) is being prepared in accordance with the following regulations:

- National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), as amended, and implemented by the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) regulations (40 CFR parts 1500-1508);
- U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) 23 CFR part 771 Environmental Impact and Related Procedures;
- USDOT 23 CFR part 450 Statewide Transportation Planning;
- Public Law 109-59 Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU);
- Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966,
- Clean Air Act Amendments of 1990,
- Executive Order 12898 on Environmental Justice; and
- Other applicable statutes, rules, and regulations.

The Tier 1 EIS will examine a proposal to provide a new transit and trails system that would form an approximate 22-mile loop encircling the Atlanta Central Business District. Figure 1-1 shows the location of the BeltLine Corridor. The purpose of the Tier 1 EIS is to evaluate alternatives that will address the purpose and need of the project. Tiering will allow the FTA and MARTA to conduct planning and NEPA activities for this large project and focus on those decisions that are ready to be made at this level of analysis. The Tier 1 analysis will serve as a basis for establishing the right-of-way (ROW) needs and general alignment of the transit and trail corridor along the entire 22-mile loop. Conceptual locations of stations, trail connections, and other facilities will be determined, as will the choice of transit technology. The scope of analysis in the Tier 1 EIS will be appropriate to the level of detail necessary to make informed decisions and will receive input from the public and the reviewing agencies. The intent of the Tier 1 EIS and these decisions is to support future ROW preservation along the entire 22-mile loop.

The transit and trails elements are intricately tied to one another and require iterative and concurrent development, analysis and consideration up to the Tier 1 decisions on alignment, conceptual design and technology. Once these decisions are made and the Tier 1 EIS is completed, future Tier 2 EIS can focus on design refinements. It is anticipated that subsequent Tier 2 EIS analysis would identify and assess trail design elements, station locations, vehicle types, storage facilities, site-specific impacts and mitigation measures for the 22-mile corridor. Future Tier 2 NEPA analysis activities would take place under a separate action.

Figure 1-1: BeltLine Location Map



Concurrent with the Tier 1 EIS, an Environmental Effects Report (EER) will be prepared for the Northeast Quadrant of the Atlanta BeltLine in accordance with Georgia Environmental Policy Act (GEPA). Figure 1-2 shows the location of the Northeast Quadrant. GEPA requires the assessment of any state-level action to determine whether or not the action may significantly adversely affect the quality of the environment. The GEPA EER will evaluate and define the transit and trail elements of the project within the Northeast Quadrant, and establish the ROW requirements for those elements.

1.2 Project Background

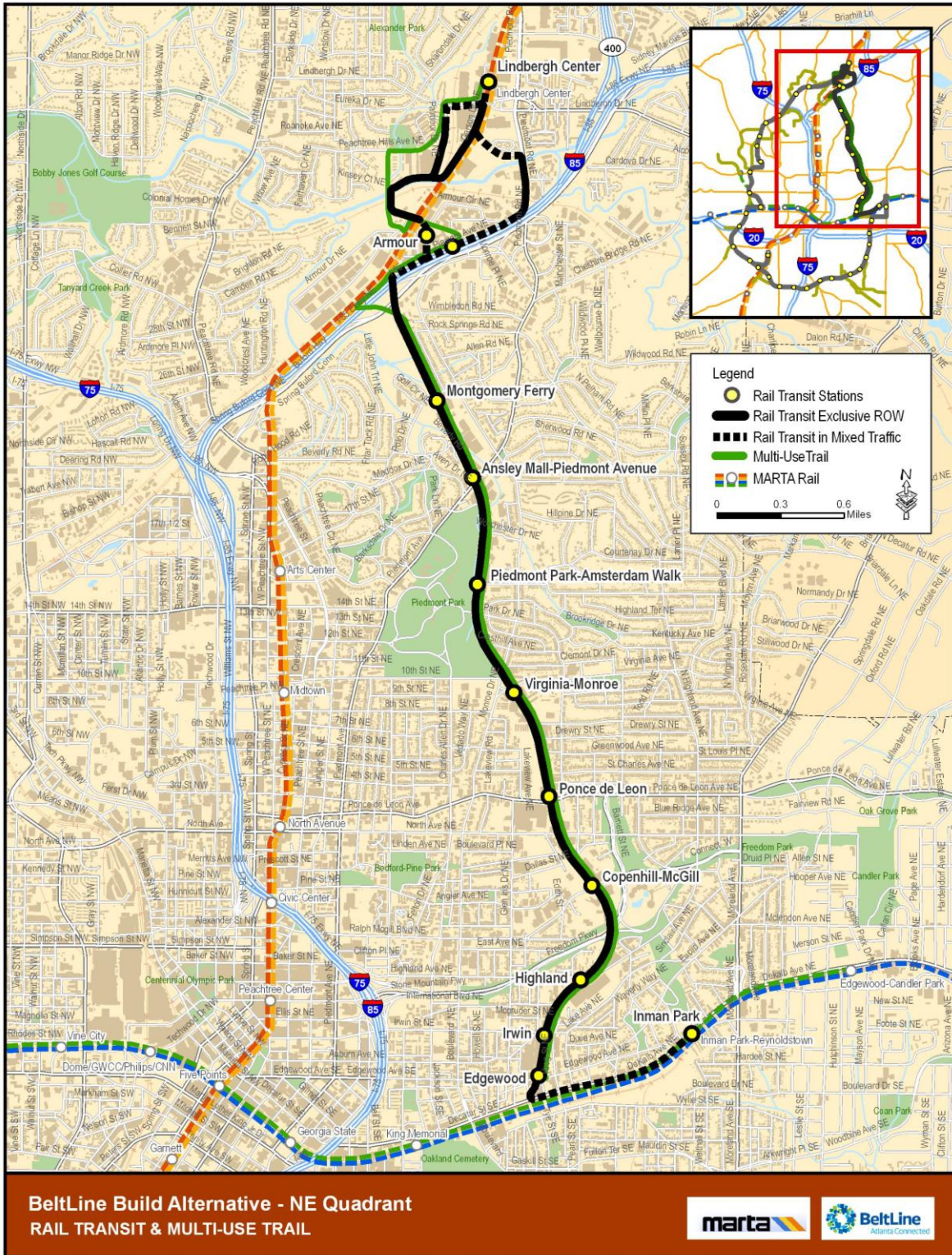
In January 2007, MARTA completed an Alternatives Analysis for the Atlanta BeltLine.¹ The purpose of and need for the Atlanta BeltLine is to improve local and regional mobility, address accessibility and connectivity, and support the City of Atlanta's redevelopment plans.

The Alternatives Analysis examined a full range of alternatives including a Transportation System Management Alternative and ten Build Alternatives involving variations of alignments, station locations, mode and equipment and operating plans. Each alternative was evaluated according to its potential performance in four categories: mobility and accessibility, land use and redevelopment, environmental effects, and cost effectiveness. Extensive public outreach and input was sought to inform the Alternatives Analysis evaluations. Key themes that shaped the outcome of the Alternatives Analysis included a mode preference for streetcar or light rail, alignment preferences, desire for compatibility with land use and multi-modal connectivity, and overall public support for the project.

Alternatives were examined using a wide range of criteria including potential ridership, effect on existing transit facilities, travel time savings, transit dependent service, transit supportive land use, development incentives, noise and air quality, community impacts and disruptions, effects on cultural and natural resources, traffic congestion effects, capital costs, operating and maintenance costs, cost effectiveness, and other factors.

¹ Metropolitan Atlanta Rapid Transit Authority, January 2007. *Inner Core BeltLine Alternatives Analysis: Detailed Screening Results and Selection of Locally Preferred Alternative*. Prepared for MARTA by URS Corporation.

Figure 1-2: BeltLine Northeast Quadrant Map



At the conclusion of the Alternatives Analysis, the MARTA Board of Directors selected the B3 Alternative (Lindbergh-to-Lindbergh Loop via Inman Park/Reynoldstown) as its Preferred Alternative (PA). This decision was based on B3 being the best performing alternative and preferred by the public and major stakeholders. The advantages of the PA compared to the other alternatives are that it would:

- Provide a continuous transit and trails loop as prescribed in the original Atlanta BeltLine concept;
- Generate the highest ridership;
- Indicate a transit permanence (via rail technology) which is desired by developers of transit-oriented development;
- Increase transit accessibility and connectivity to and within 45 neighborhoods;
- Be predominantly contained within the approved Tax Allocation District;
- Be supported by the City of Atlanta and the BeltLine Partners; and
- Be strongly supported by the community and businesses.

The general alignment for trails resulted from a series of studies, most notably “The BeltLine Emerald Necklace: Atlanta’s New Public Realm” (2004), commissioned by the Trust for Public Land in coordination with the City of Atlanta and prepared by Alex Garvin & Associates, Inc.

1.3 Scoping

A Notice of Intent (NOI) to prepare a Tier 1 EIS for the Atlanta BeltLine has been published in the Federal Register (Volume 73, No. 143), thereby initiating the Scoping process. The CEQ has provided regulations and guidance for implementing NEPA. It identifies the Scoping Process as an early and open process for determining the range of issues to be addressed and for identifying significant issues related to the proposed action. One of the functions of Scoping is to identify the public involvement/public hearing process for the federal and state agencies that will ultimately act upon the proposed action. Whenever possible, these procedures have been and will continue to be integrated into the Tier 1 EIS process so that joint public meetings and hearings can be conducted, eliminating duplication, and significantly reducing the time and cost of processing a Tier 1 EIS and subsequent approvals.

In general, the initiation of an EIS and the Scoping Process begins with the publication of an NOI to prepare an EIS in the Federal Register. The next step is a Scoping process wherein the range of alternatives will be identified along with potential issues to be evaluated in the EIS. Agency and public comments will be solicited in response to the Scoping information and used to identify reasonable alternatives and issues to be considered in the preparation of the EIS. SAFETEA-LU Section 6002 specifies that the lead agencies must provide participating and coordinating agencies and the public the opportunity for involvement during the development of the purpose and need statement and the identification of the range of alternatives to be considered. As part of this process and the SAFETEA-LU requirements, the project is providing the opportunity for comment on the following specific items:

- The Scoping Booklet;
- Purpose and Need: Section 2.0, Appendix A;
- Range of Alternatives: Section 3.0; and
- Coordination Plan: Section 4.0, Appendix B.

In addition, these documents and items are being provided to federal, state and local agencies with jurisdiction or the potential to be impacted by the project for their review and comment. The Scoping Booklet is intended to inform participants of the project and of the potential features planned for consideration in the Tier 1 EIS.

Eight public Scoping meetings will be conducted, in the four quadrants of the Atlanta BeltLine: Northeast, Southeast, Southwest and Northwest, to solicit public comments on the scope of the EIS. Two meetings will be held in each area. The first meeting will run from 1 PM to 3 PM and consist of an informal open house setting and a formal presentation; the second meeting will run from 6 PM to 8 PM using the same format. After each presentation, the public will be provided the opportunity to comment. Those wishing to speak must sign up by either 12:45 or 5:45, respectively. A court reporter will be available to record the formal meeting and public comments. The public meetings will be held at the following locations:

- Trinity Presbyterian Church: August 19, 2008, 3003 Howell Mill Road, Room B, Atlanta GA 30327
- The Trolley Barn: August 19, 2008, 963 Edgewood Avenue NE, Atlanta GA 30307
- Georgia Hill Neighborhood Center: August 21, 2008, 250 Georgia Avenue SE, Atlanta GA 30312
- Central United Methodist Church: August 21, 2008, 503 Mitchell SW, Atlanta GA 30314

Oral and written comments will be accepted during the public Scoping meetings. Written comments will also be accepted until September 22, 2008 and can be submitted to:

Don Williams, Manager Regional Planning and Analysis
Metropolitan Atlanta Rapid Transit Authority
2424 Piedmont Road NE
Atlanta, Georgia 30324-3311

or

Nate Conable, Senior Project Manager
Atlanta BeltLine, Inc.
86 Pryor Street SW, Suite 200
Atlanta, Georgia 30303

In addition two agency Scoping meetings will be held, one before and one after the public Scoping meetings.

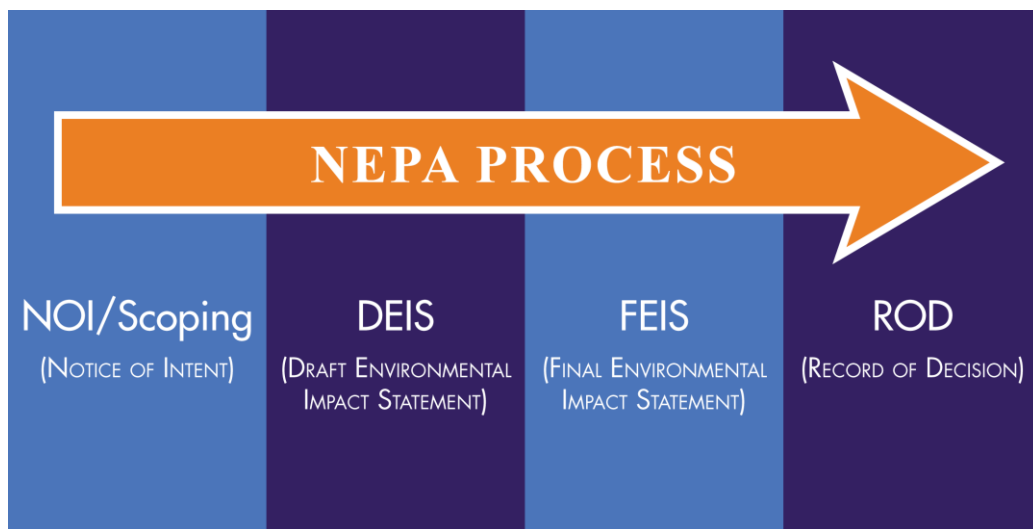
After September 22, 2008, the formal comment period on the Scoping process will be closed, although public involvement will continue throughout the duration of the Tier 1 EIS process. At the conclusion of the Scoping process, a Scoping Summary Report will be prepared that will outline the alternatives that will undergo analysis in the Tier 1 EIS. See Section 6.0 for additional ways that the public is involved on the Atlanta BeltLine project or Sections 1.4 and 1.5 for further explanation of the NEPA process.

1.4 NEPA Requirements and Procedures

A Tier 1 EIS will be prepared in accordance with the most recent NEPA regulations and guidelines. Figure 1-3 illustrates the key elements of the NEPA process. The commencement of the project through to the Final Tier 1 EIS requires the following procedures, which will be incorporated into the Tier 1 EIS schedule and process:

1. Commencement of the Tier 1 EIS begins when the publication of the NOI to prepare a Tier 1 EIS in the Federal Register. The local project agencies will also publish notices in the local newspapers.
2. At the completion of the alternatives and environmental analysis, the Tier 1 Draft EIS will be filed. A Notice of Availability will then be published in the Federal Register. The local project agencies will also publish notices in the local newspapers.
3. The Tier 1 Draft EIS will be available to the public. As per NEPA and SAFETEA-LU guidelines, a public hearing will be held at least 15 days after the Tier 1 Draft EIS is made available to the public. The Tier 1 Draft EIS, including the details of the preferred alternative, will be circulated to all parties interested or having jurisdiction by law over the proposed action.
4. At the conclusion of the Tier 1 Draft EIS circulation and comment period, MARTA, ABI and the FTA will review the comments and produce a Tier 1 Final EIS. The Tier 1 FEIS will provide additional detail on transit and trail alignment, transit technology, and conceptual station locations where applicable. The Tier 1 Final EIS will serve as the basis for federal environmental findings and determinations needed to conclude the environmental review process through issuance of a Record of Decision (ROD).

Figure 1-3: NEPA Process



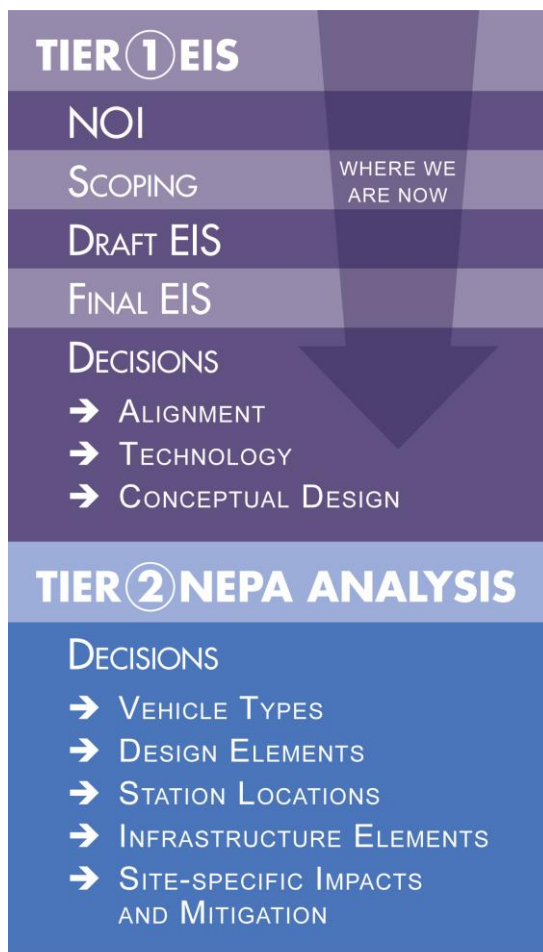
1.5 NEPA Document and Tiered Analysis

Traditionally, one NEPA analysis is undertaken for transportation projects; the analysis includes the disclosure of the impacts and mitigation measures for the proposed alternatives. However, in accordance with NEPA regulations, MARTA and the FTA have decided to prepare the NEPA EIS with two tiers of analysis. According to FTA, tiering is defined as follows:

Tiering allows project sponsors to conduct the planning and NEPA activities for large transportation projects in two phases: a Tier 1 analysis addresses broad, overall corridor issues, such as general location, mode choice and land use impacts, and a Tier 2 analysis focuses on site-specific impacts, costs and mitigation measures. The first tier usually results in a NEPA document with the appropriate level of detail for corridor-level decisions. Second tier analysis results in traditional project-level environmental documents.

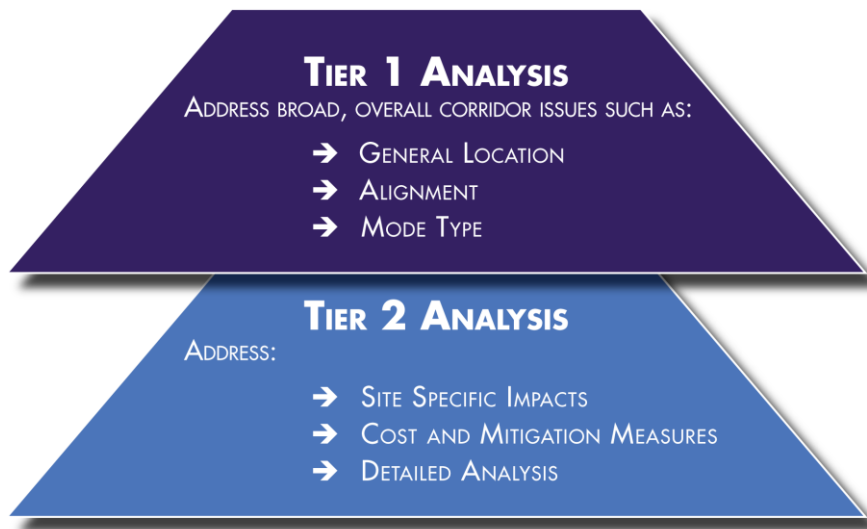
Figure 1-4 illustrates the elements of the NEPA tiering process. The proposed tiering approach for Atlanta BeltLine transit and trail elements will allow the lead agencies to focus on broad overall corridor issues in the Tier 1 analysis, including right-of-way needs, alignment location, and technology choice along the 22-mile loop. The Tier 1 analysis will serve as a basis for establishing the general right-of-way and alignment of the transit and trail corridor. Conceptual locations of stations, trail connections, and other facilities will be determined, as will the choice of transit technology. The scope of analysis in the Tier 1 EIS will be appropriate to the level of detail necessary to make informed decisions and will receive input from the public and the reviewing agencies. The intent of the Tier 1 EIS and these decisions is to support future right-of-way acquisition for preservation along the entire 22-mile loop.

Figure 1-4: Tier 1 and Tier 2 NEPA Process Elements



The transit and trails elements are intricately tied to one another and require iterative and concurrent development, analysis and consideration up to the Tier 1 EIS decisions on alignment, conceptual design and technology. Once these decisions are made and the Tier 1 EIS analysis is completed, future Tier 2 EIS analysis can focus on design refinements. It is anticipated that subsequent Tier 2 EIS analysis would identify and assess trail design elements, station locations, vehicle types, storage facilities, site-specific impacts and mitigation measures for the 22-mile corridor. Figure 1-5 illustrates the goals of the Tier 1 and Tier 2 levels of analysis.

Figure 1-5: Tier 1 and Tier 2 Analysis Goals



1.6 GEPA Requirements and Procedures

An Environmental Evaluation Report (EER) is being prepared for the Northeast Quadrant of the Atlanta BeltLine in accordance with the Georgia Environmental Policy Act (GEPA). GEPA requires the assessment of any state-level action to determine whether or not the action may significantly adversely affect the quality of the environment. The GEPA process begins with MARTA and ABI, as sponsors, making an initial determination whether a proposed action may significantly adversely affect the quality of the environment or whether the proposed action would have no significant adverse effect. In the case of the Northeast Quadrant of the Atlanta BeltLine, a Determination of Significance was made because the size and scope of the project has the potential for a significant adverse effect. As a result of this decision, an EER will be prepared.

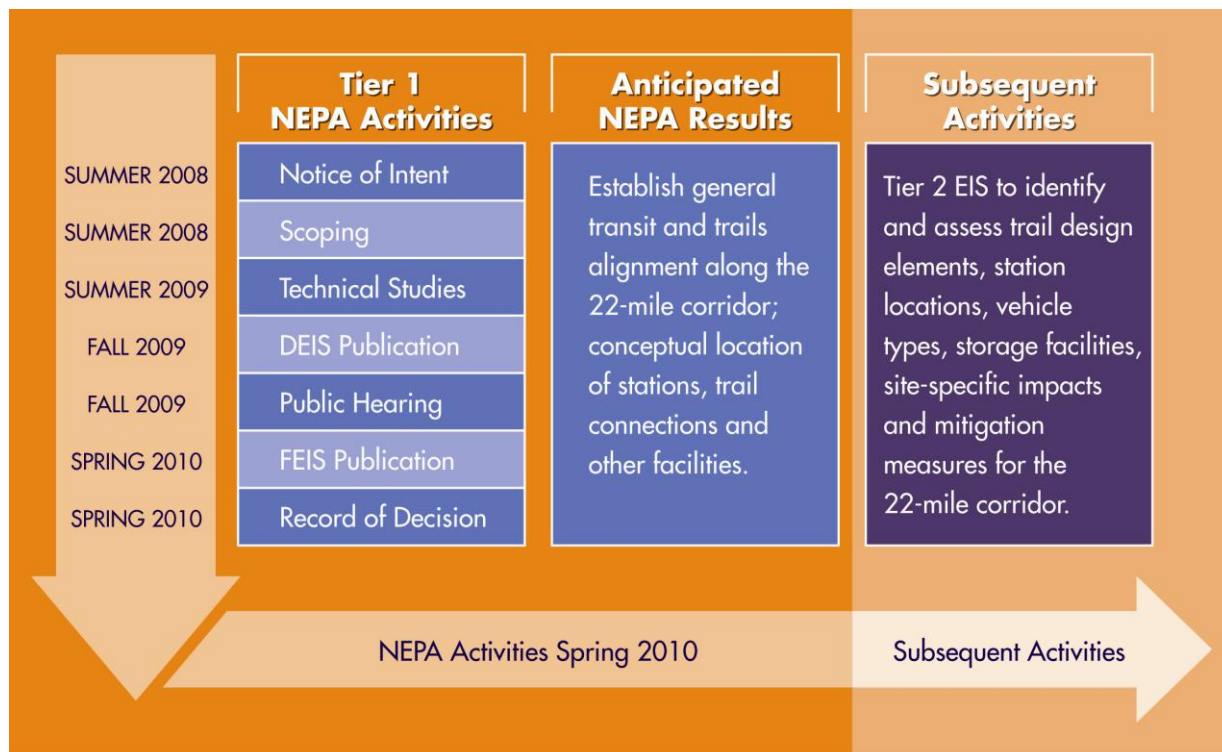
During preparation of the EER and as required by GEPA, consultation with relevant agencies is being undertaken to identify issues and strive to avoid or minimize adverse impacts in the defining of alignment and right-of-way needs. Upon completion of the EER, a notice of publication will be made by MARTA/ABI in the main public library and in the newspaper, allowing a minimum of 45 days for public and agency review of the EER and comment. If MARTA/ABI receives 100 or more written comments on the EER, a public hearing will be held. The public hearing would be an opportunity for the public to provide written or oral comments on the EER. After the public hearing and the close of the comment period, MARTA/ABI would consider all written and oral comments received before publishing its decision whether the project may proceed. A Notice of Decision will be published in the main public library as well as in the newspaper.

1.7 Schedule

The study will take approximately 18 to 24 months to complete. Figure 1-6 identifies the Tier 1 NEPA EIS activities currently being undertaken and the future Tier 2 NEPA analysis activities that would take place under a separate action. Key Tier 1 EIS and GEPA EER schedule milestones include:

- GEPA Process for Northeast Quadrant
 - Publication of the GEPA EER and beginning of public comment period is anticipated in January 2009;
 - 45-Day public comment period for the GEPA EER is anticipated to end March 2009;
 - Public Hearing for the GEPA EER is anticipated in March 2009;
 - Publication of the GEPA Notice of Decision is anticipated in April 2009;
- Tier 1 NEPA Process
 - Publication of the Tier 1 DEIS and beginning of public comment period is anticipated in Fall 2009;
 - Public Hearing for the Tier 1 DEIS is anticipated in Fall 2009;
 - Publication of the Tier 1 FEIS is anticipated in Spring 2010;
 - Publication of the Record of Decision is anticipated in Spring 2010.

Figure 1-6: Atlanta BeltLine Tier 1 NEPA EIS Schedule



2.0 PURPOSE AND NEED, GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

2.1 Purpose and Need

The Purpose and Need of a project tells the story of the mobility problem and provides the basis for developing and evaluating appropriate actions to address the problem. The Purpose and Need statement is an evolving document during the NEPA Tier 1 EIS process, subject to refinement as a result of project development and public and agency input. As such, the Purpose and Need is provided in Appendix A of this Scoping Booklet for public and agency review and comment. Note that under SAFETEA-LU 6002, the Purpose and Need is an element for which opportunity must be provided to the public to comment. Comments will be accepted on the Purpose and Need through the conclusion of the formal comment period established as part of the Scoping process. The updated Purpose and Need will be published in the Tier 1 DEIS. During the public hearing for the DEIS, the public and agencies will also have an opportunity to comment on the content.

2.2 Goals and Objectives

The following Goals and Objectives have been identified for the project:

Goal: Contribute to an integrated, regional multi-modal transportation network that promotes seamless intermodal connectivity; increases community access to the existing transit and trails network; and improves reliability for personal travel.

Objectives:

- Increase access to the existing regional transit and trails system.
- Increase transit ridership and transit-mode split.
- Improve transit and trail connections to the existing MARTA rail and bus network.
- Minimize travel times to points accessible from the MARTA rail and bus network.
- Improve accessibility and connectivity among existing neighborhoods and to major destinations and employment centers.
- Increase transit options for the transit-dependent and low income populations.

Goal: Support local and regional land use development initiatives and fulfill the demands for emerging transit-supportive land uses.

Objectives:

- Support redevelopment and revitalization efforts in the BeltLine Tax Allocation District.
- Support City of Atlanta's and other regional and local economic development initiatives.
- Support the redevelopment of brownfield sites for transit-oriented development.
- Encourage dense, mixed-use, urban development.

Goal: Provide a cost-effective and efficient transportation investment.Objectives:

- Minimize capital and operating costs.
- Provide for the long-term expansion of the future transit and trails system.
- Support other recent and planned transit infrastructure investments.
- Maximize operating efficiency and cost-effectiveness.

Goal: Provide a bicycle and pedestrian friendly environment.Objectives:

- Provide transit and trail facilities that fully accommodate bicycle and pedestrian transit modes with direct links to employment and retail centers, recreational facilities, and residential areas.
- Develop transit and trail facilities that encourage a safe and efficient bicycle and pedestrian collector system.
- Provide pedestrian and bicycle accessibility to transit and trails.

Goal: Provide connectivity between communities and existing and planned recreational opportunities through an expansive trails network.Objectives:

- Provide efficient transit and trail connections between regional and local parks and recreational facilities in the study area.
- Provide transit and trail access to parks, greenspace, and community facilities.
- Support existing and planned park programming, including event venues through access to transit and trail facilities.
- Integrate greenspace opportunities into transit and trail facilities.
- Provide trail and transit connectivity to schools.

Goal: Minimize adverse impacts to the natural environment, and foster positive environmental impacts.Objectives:

- Provide a transit and trails network that offers a balance between transportation needs and environmental quality.
- Develop viable transportation alternatives to the use of single-occupant vehicles to maintain or improve air quality in the region.
- Minimize adverse impacts to the natural environment.
- Minimize adverse impacts to the build environment, including historic and cultural resources.
- Minimize adverse aesthetic impacts

3.0 RANGE OF ALTERNATIVES

The alternatives described within this section represent the reasonable alternatives that will be evaluated in the Tier 1 EIS. Each of the alternatives will be evaluated for transportation, environmental, social and economic impacts. Under SAFETEA-LU 6002, an opportunity for public and agency comment regarding the range of alternatives is being provided during the Scoping process. Comments will be accepted on the range of alternatives through the conclusion of the formal comment period established as part of the Scoping process. The revised range of alternatives will be published as part of the Draft Tier 1 EIS, at which time the public and agencies will also have the opportunity to comment on the content.

3.1 No Build Alternative

Consistent with NEPA and GEPA requirements, a No Build Alternative will be analyzed in the Tier 1 EIS and GEPA EER. The No Build Alternative includes the existing transportation system throughout the corridor study area and the region. The No Build Alternative also includes all of the proposed projects listed in the Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC) *Transportation Improvement Program* (FY 2008-2013) as well as the projects included in the cost constrained *Envision6 Regional Transportation Plan* (FY 2008-2030) with the exception of the Atlanta BeltLine. The No Build Alternative assumes that the Atlanta BeltLine rail transit and linear park and trail components are not constructed with the exception of the trail improvements currently committed to by the City of Atlanta and Atlanta BeltLine, Inc.

3.2 Build Alternative

A Build Alternative has also been identified that consists of the preferred alternative (B3) that emerged from the *Alternatives Analysis* that was previously completed for the Atlanta BeltLine. The Build Alternative includes all of the projects included in the No Build Alternative plus the construction and operation of a rail transit line supported by a linear park and multi-use trails in the BeltLine Corridor.

The BeltLine Corridor would consist of a continuous loop encircling the downtown and midtown areas of Atlanta. The Build Alternative would include the construction of a fixed rail transit guideway, electrically powered vehicles, overhead wires to deliver the power to the vehicles, stations with platforms to accommodate waiting passengers, and access from the stations to adjacent streets, sidewalks and pedestrian facilities. As shown in Figure 3.1 the alignment would be approximately 22 miles long, with 41 stations, for an average station spacing of slightly more than a half-mile. The line would connect area neighborhoods and four existing MARTA rail stations, (i.e., Lindbergh, Inman Park / Reynoldstown, West End and Ashby). The Build Alternative assumes frequencies of 8 minutes in the peak hours, 10 minutes in the off-peak hours, 15 minutes in the evening, and 30 minutes in the early morning and late nighttime periods.

The rail transit alignment and stations would be constructed to accommodate both light rail and streetcar type vehicles. Light Rail is a passenger rail system operating along either a grade separated fixed rail right-of-way or in a street right-of-way adjacent to or shared with traffic. Systems are generally single or multiple car trains with station level

or street level boarding capabilities. Streetcars are a form of light rail that typically includes smaller vehicles that usually operate as single car trains.

The rail transit component of the project would mostly be built on existing railroad rights-of-way with some segments operating along existing streets in mixed traffic operations. The street segments identified to accommodate possible mixed traffic operations include the following:

- Lindbergh Drive between BeltLine railroad ROW and Lindbergh MARTA Station
- Peachtree Hills Drive between Lindbergh Drive and Palmour Drive
- Mayson Street north of Plasters Avenue
- Decatur Street between BeltLine railroad ROW and DeKalb Avenue
- DeKalb Avenue between Decatur Street and Moreland Avenue
- Moreland Avenue between DeKalb Avenue and Wylie Street
- Wylie Street between Moreland Avenue and BeltLine railroad ROW
- Bill Kennedy Way between Glenwood Avenue and Memorial Drive
- Lena Street between BeltLine railroad ROW and Joseph E Lowery Boulevard
- Joseph E. Lowery Boulevard between Lena Street and Mayson Turner Road
- Mayson Turner Road between Joseph E. Lowery Boulevard and Joseph E. Boone Boulevard
- Joseph E. Lowery Boulevard between BeltLine railroad ROW and Jefferson Street
- Jefferson Street between BeltLine railroad ROW (@ Jefferson Station) and Joseph E. Lowery Boulevard
- Marietta Boulevard between Elaine Avenue and Donald L. Hollowell Parkway
- Elaine Avenue between Marietta Boulevard and BeltLine railroad ROW

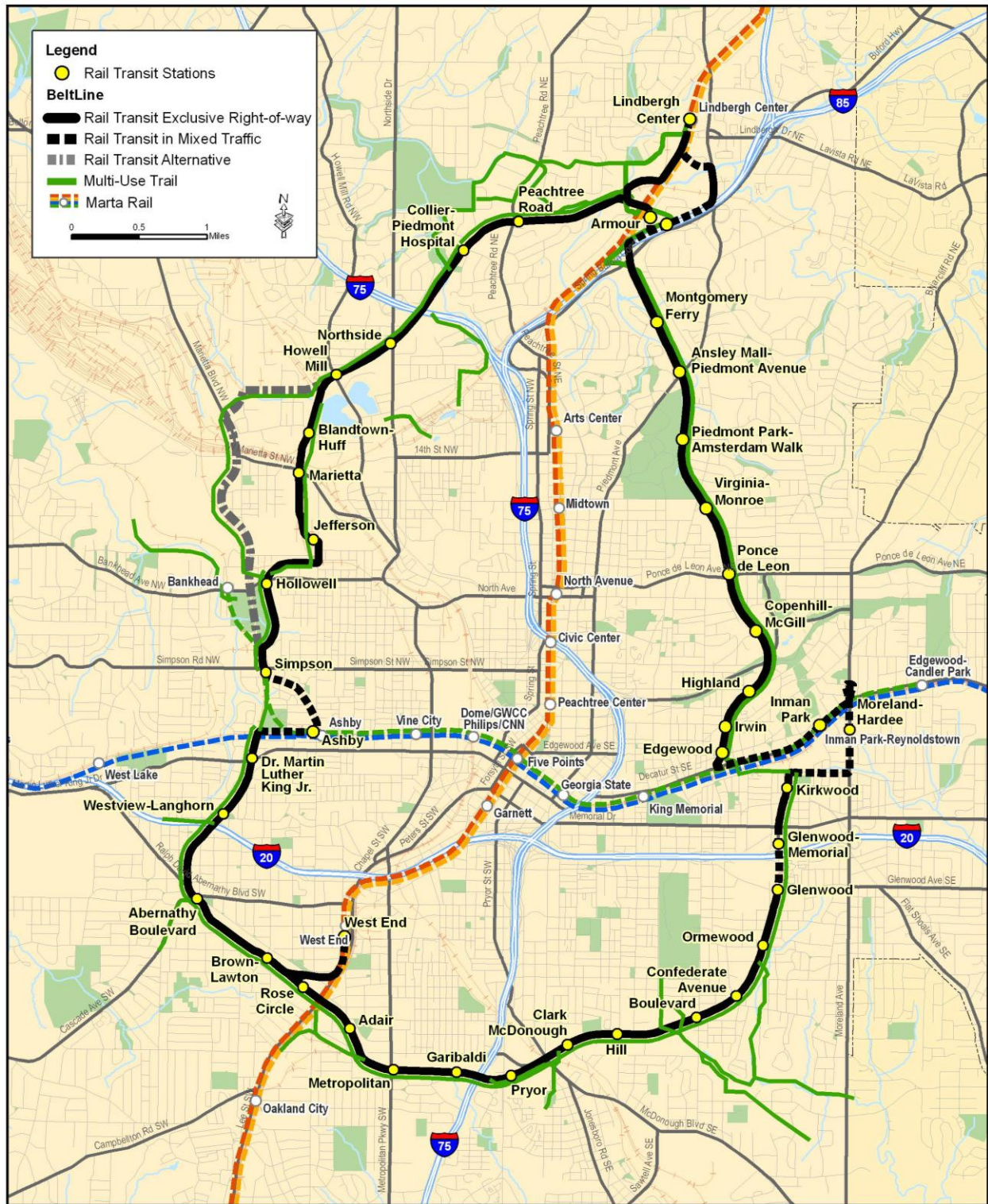
The Build Alternative would include modifications to the supporting feeder bus system. Bus routes that intersect the BeltLine transit alignment near station sites would be re-routed to connect to the proposed stations. Other existing bus routes that essentially duplicate segments of the BeltLine would also be modified to minimize the duplication of services where possible.

The BeltLine project would also connect to the planned Peachtree Streetcar in the northern and southern sections of the alignment, as well as an additional connection to the east. The Peachtree Streetcar is planned to generally run parallel to the existing MARTA system with numerous connections to MARTA. The Peachtree Streetcar is intended not to duplicate MARTA, but to provide more localized access to destinations between MARTA stops.

The Build Alternative would also include the development of a linear park and multi-use trail that generally forms a loop that parallels the BeltLine transit alignment, as shown in Figure 3.1. The linear park and trail would be mostly located in existing railroad ROW

alongside the proposed transit alignment in the northeast, southeast, and southwest quadrants of the loop. For the portion of the northwest quadrant between the Bankhead MARTA Station and the Lindbergh MARTA station and the portion of the northeast quadrant between the Lindbergh MARTA station and Interstate 85, the multi-use trail would be mostly located in ROW that is separate from the proposed rail transit alignment.

Figure 3-1: Build Alternative - Rail Transit and Multi-Use Trail Alignments



4.0 COORDINATION PLAN

A Coordination Plan identifies opportunities for public and agency interaction with federal, state and local agencies, focusing on opportunities for public and agency review and comment. A Coordination Plan has been developed for the Atlanta BeltLine Tier 1 EIS; in accordance with SAFETEA-LU, an opportunity must be provided for the public and agencies to review and comment on the Plan. It is anticipated that public and agency comments may lead to refinement of the Coordination Plan. As such, the Coordination Plan is provided in Appendix B of this Scoping Booklet; agencies and the public are invited to review and comment on the Coordination Plan. Comments on the Coordination Plan will be accepted through the conclusion of the Scoping period.

5.0 ASSESSMENT METHODOLOGIES

The NEPA Tier 1 EIS will assess the potential impacts of the Atlanta BeltLine alternatives. This assessment will:

- Summarize of results of coordination with federal, state and local agencies;
- Present the appropriate federal regulations and policies;
- Inventory and compile previous studies;
- Describe the methodology used to assess impacts;
- Identify the affected environment;
- Predict and assess the construction-related (short-term) and operational (long-term) impacts;
- Assess potential indirect (secondary) and cumulative impacts of reasonable alternatives; and
- Identify opportunities for minimizing and mitigating significant impacts.

Required reviews under various federal statutes including the Endangered Species Act, National Historic Preservation Act, Clean Air Act and Clean Water Act, among others, will be conducted within the NEPA process.

The Tier 1 EIS analysis will cover relevant aspects of the natural and built environment within the project study area that may be affected by each alternative, and will include the those resources listed below. The study area is defined as ¼-mile on either side of the centerline of the proposed alignment.

- Transportation;
- Land and Water Resources;
- Socioeconomics and Land Use;
- Construction Impacts; and
- Indirect (secondary) and cumulative impacts.

5.1 Transportation

5.1.1 Public Transportation

Existing public transit facilities (e.g., bus and rail) services will be identified and described based on available data from MARTA and other sources. Potential effects on public transportation facilities by the alternatives will be identified.

5.1.2 Roadway and Traffic

The existing roadway network and general traffic conditions in the study area will be described. Potential effects on traffic patterns and the roadway network as a result of the alternatives will be described.

5.1.3 Bicycle and Pedestrian

The existing bicycle and pedestrian network and general conditions in the study area will be described. Potential effects on bicycle and pedestrian patterns and the network as a result of the alternatives will be described.

5.2 Natural Environment

Unless otherwise noted below, the study area for the natural environment assessment will be a one-half mile wide band centered on the Atlanta BeltLine Corridor. Each natural environment parameter will be examined at a study area-wide level in the Tier 1 EIS to enable major project elements, particularly the alignment location, to be established in a manner that avoids or minimizes impacts. Analysis of localized impacts would be undertaken in the Tier 2 analysis, at which time the details of the design features, such as station amenities, signage and infrastructure components will be developed and can be refined to avoid or minimize impacts.

5.2.1 Air Quality

The attainment status of the study area and existing air quality characteristics will be reported. The potential for localized air quality impacts due to each alternative will be assessed.

5.2.2 Noise and Vibration

The assessment of noise and vibration will be assessed using the FTA methodologies contained in their *Noise and Vibration Impact Assessment Guidelines*. The existing noise environment within the study area will be reported based on land use characteristics and existing transit operations. Estimates of potential noise and vibration impacts from each alternative will be developed at a study area-wide level. Detailed noise and vibration analysis would be undertaken as warranted during a Tier 2 analysis.

5.2.3 Land and Water Resources

Existing, available information on water resources in the project area will be compiled, evaluated and reported in the Tier 1 EIS. Included will be inquiries to the United States Fish and Wildlife Service and Georgia Environmental Protection Division for natural resources data. Resources of interest include waterbodies, wetlands, floodplains, vegetation, wildlife, threatened and endangered species and water quality. Potential impacts of the alternatives on land and water resources will be assessed and reported; mitigation strategies will be identified to address potentially unavoidable impacts.

5.2.4 Visual Resources

Existing viewsheds in the corridor will be identified and evaluated for visual quality. Potential project impacts on viewsheds will be assessed qualitatively; mitigation strategies will be identified to address unavoidable impacts.

5.2.5 Energy

The potential energy consumption of each alternative will be assessed using one or more appropriate factors, such as change in vehicle miles traveled and/or fuel consumption of the vehicle fleet.

5.2.6 Geology and Soils

Existing, available information on geology and soils in the project area will be compiled, evaluated and reported in the Tier 1 EIS. Potential impacts of the alternatives on geology and soils will be assessed and reported; mitigation strategies will be identified to address unavoidable impacts.

5.2.7 Hazardous Materials

Existing, available information from federal, state and local databases on hazardous materials in the project area will be compiled, evaluated and reported in the Tier 1 EIS. Potential impacts of the alternatives on hazardous materials will be assessed and reported; mitigation strategies will be identified to address unavoidable impacts.

5.3 Socioeconomics and Land Use

5.3.1 Land Use and Zoning

Existing, available information on land use and zoning in the study area from the City of Atlanta and Fulton County will be compiled, evaluated and reported in the Tier 1 EIS. Potential impacts of the alternatives on land use and zoning will be assessed and reported; mitigation strategies will be identified to address unavoidable impacts.

5.3.2 Environmental Justice

Executive Order No. 12898, issued February 1994, requires all federal agencies to consider the issue of environmental justice in their decision-making and to develop environmental justice outreach. The order focuses attention on the environmental and human health conditions of minority and low-income communities. Key components to an environmental justice strategy are to enhance public participation in the planning and development process, and to ensure that transportation projects do not disproportionately affect minority and low-income populations.

Qualifying minority populations and low-income populations within the study area will be identified by examining data collected from the U.S. Census Bureau and other available sources as appropriate. The alternatives will be assessed to determine whether adverse effects may occur and whether a disproportionate effect on those populations may occur.

Fair and meaningful involvement of all potentially affected persons is a key element of the NEPA process and public participation program for the Atlanta BeltLine. Sections 4.0 and 6.0 of this Scoping Booklet describe the public outreach elements of these undertakings.

5.3.3 Displacements and Relocations

The number and type of potential displacements and relocations (residential and business) will be quantified and reported for each alternative.

5.3.4 Public Services and Utilities

Major utilities and public services within the study area will be identified. The alternatives will be evaluated for potential to disrupt or require relocation of public services and utilities.

5.3.5 Historical and Archaeological Resources

Properties known to be listed on or eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places within the study area will be identified using the resources of the Georgia State Historic Preservation Office. The alternatives will be assessed for the potential to adversely impact known historical resources. Known archaeological sites within the study area will be also identified. A broad-based assessment of the study area will be undertaken to identify areas of probability for archaeological sites.

5.3.6 Parklands and Section 4(f)/6(f) Evaluations

Existing City data will be used to identify public parks, recreation areas and wildlife refuges in the study area. The potential for the alternatives to impact parklands and Section 4(f)/6(f) properties will be assessed. These resources, combined with the historical and archaeological resources, are protected under Section 4(f) of the USDOT Transportation Act. The potential for the alternatives to impact Section 4(f) properties will be assessed. An inquiry will be made to the City as to the presence and location of properties protected under Section 6(f) of the Land and Water Conservation Fund Act.

5.3.7 Construction Impacts

Potential temporary impacts of construction will be identified, including broad-based assessments of impacts on access and mobility, noise, air quality, and temporary construction easement needs. Measures to mitigate temporary impacts will be identified and qualitatively discussed.

5.4 Indirect (Secondary) and Cumulative Impacts

Indirect impacts are those that result from the project but occur later in time or are farther removed in distance but are still reasonably foreseeable. Cumulative impacts are those that result from the incremental impact of an action when added to other past, present and reasonably foreseeable future actions. Guidelines established in *Considering Cumulative Effects under the National Environmental Policy Act* (CEQ, January 1997) will be used. The assessment will qualitatively assess at a corridor-wide level the potential indirect and cumulative impacts of the alternatives.

6.0 OUTREACH AND PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

6.1 Overview

The public has been involved as a primary collaborator in all previous studies related to the redevelopment of the 22-mile BeltLine Corridor, from the 1992 City-sponsored Greenway Trail Corridor Study to the 2006 MARTA-sponsored Alternatives Analysis. MARTA and ABI are fully committed to ensuring that the public will continue as an active partner in the Atlanta BeltLine Tier 1 EIS. This involvement will be consistent with the guidelines set forth in NEPA and GEPA, as well as the citizen participation policies of both MARTA and ABI. The public will be engaged from the beginning of the study and will continue to be involved throughout all phases of the study.

6.2 Purpose of the Public Involvement Plan

The Public Involvement Plan is designed to inform and facilitate the technical work. Input from the public will be carefully documented, summarized by MARTA/ABI, and considered in the analysis of impacts and development of measures to avoid or mitigate impacts. The primary purpose of the Plan is to ensure the broadest possible dissemination of information about the Tier 1 EIS and GEPA EER process and to maximize user-friendly ways for all citizens, regardless of race, ethnicity or socio-economic status, to ask questions and provide comments and suggestions. Diverse opinions are expected and can be divisive. However, experience teaches that when people join together in a common purpose, there is the opportunity to create a cohesive, vibrant and manageable project that will better serve the needs of everyone. A key goal of the Public Involvement Plan is to strengthen existing relationships and build new ones in order to garner as much public support and consensus about the Tier 1 EIS and GEPA EER as possible.

6.3 Summary of Public Involvement Plan Elements

The Public Involvement Plan is multi-faceted, taking into consideration the diversity of communities in the study area. One size will not fit all. The major components of the Plan are a Stakeholder Advisory Committee, a Technical Advisory Committee, target audience briefings and progress presentations, Scoping meetings and public hearings. Each component is described below.

The Stakeholder Advisory Committee (SAC) will consist of members recruited from ABI's and MARTA's network of agencies and civic, business, faith-based organizations, advocacy groups (neighborhood and environmental), and individuals. Members of the SAC will review and comment on technical findings as well as encourage and assist with constituent involvement. A minimum of three and a maximum of four SAC meetings will be held during the course of the Tier 1 EIS and GEPA EER. Meetings of the SAC will be scheduled based on key study milestones.

The Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) will include representatives from organizations and agencies that have specific environmental expertise or interest. These members will provide invaluable guidance to MARTA and ABI on such matters as the alternatives to be considered and evaluation methodologies. The TAC will also assist in

encouraging citizen participation. The public involvement team plans to convene at least four TAC meetings during the course of the Tier 1 EIS and GEPA EER.

Target Audience Briefings and Progress Presentations will provide updates to organized groups that are located within the study area, many of which have been active participants in previous BeltLine studies. These groups will be engaged on a systematic basis, providing them with current information about the project, the Tier 1 EIS and GEPA EER and receiving input from them that may be useful as the Tier 1 EIS and GEPA EER progress. In addition, individual briefings will be provided to key stakeholders in the study area. An estimated 50 target audience briefings are planned during the course of the Tier 1 EIS and GEPA EER.

Eight public scoping meetings will be held, two in each of the four quadrants of the study area. These meetings will formally launch the Tier 1 EIS process and will present the alternatives under consideration, the evaluation methodologies, and will provide a forum for citizens to raise questions and make comments.

Two public hearings will be held, one on the GEPA EER and one on the Tier 1 Draft EIS. As will be the case with the Scoping Meetings, the hearings will be organized and conducted according to NEPA and GEPA guidelines.

6.4 Tools and Techniques

Materials and tools will be developed to foster public education and participation. A contact database will be compiled for quick dissemination of information to key stakeholders. A project web page will be set up on the MARTA website, with links from ABI. A Telephone Hotline will be made available in English and Spanish for the convenience of the public. Thirteen newsletters will be published and distributed to educate the public, solicit involvement and review progress during the Tier 1 EIS and GEPA EER. Eighteen Technical Findings Updates will be written in user-friendly language for dissemination in hard copy and electronically. Easy-to-return Public Comment Forms will be available at briefings, meetings and on the project web page. Business Cards will be handed out to ensure easy access to Beltline study personnel contact information and other information resources. A media strategy will be implemented in collaboration with the media relations staffs of MARTA and ABI (radio, TV, print, community newsletters and web sites, etc). This will be a critical tool for general public education about the Tier 1 EIS and GEPA EER as well as informing the public about key events that will be scheduled during the course of the Tier 1 EIS and GEPA EER.

APPENDIX A

Purpose and Need

Under Separate Cover

APPENDIX B

Agency Coordination Plan

Under Separate Cover

APPENDIX C

MARTA BeltLine Transit Alternatives Analysis -- Detailed Screening Results and Selection of Locally Preferred Alternative (Executive Summary, January 2007)

Under Separate Cover