

# BeltLine Corridor Environmental Study



**BeltLine**

Citywide Conversation on Transit and Trails

April 2, 2009

# Agenda & Introductions

- Introductions
- Environmental Study Process
- Overview of the BeltLine Project
- BeltLine Corridor Environmental Study
- Environmental Study Interface with Subarea Master Planning
- Evaluation Criteria
- Public Outreach Activities

# Environmental Study Process

# Environmental Study Process

- Project Objectives:
  - Environmental review of Northeast (NE) Zone under Georgia Environmental Policy Act (GEPA)
  - Right-of-way requirements identified for NE Zone
  - Tier 1 Environmental Impact Study (EIS) completed under National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) for entire corridor



# Environmental Study Process

## NEPA Tiering

PRESENT

### TIER 1 ANALYSIS

ADDRESS BROAD, OVERALL CORRIDOR ISSUES  
TO DEFINE RIGHT-OF-WAY NEEDS:

- TRANSIT AND TRAILS ALIGNMENT
- CONCEPTUAL DESIGN
- MODE TYPE (LRT, Streetcar)

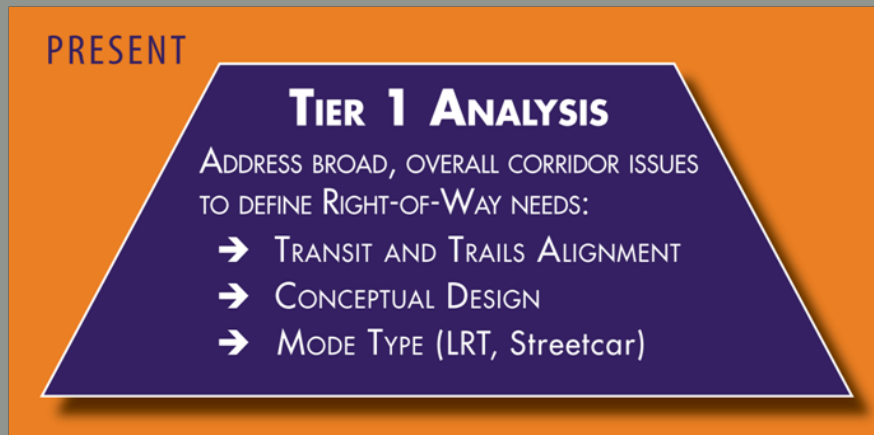
FUTURE

### TIER 2 ANALYSIS

ADDRESS:

- SITE SPECIFIC IMPACTS
- COST AND MITIGATION MEASURES
- DETAILED ANALYSIS

# Environmental Study Process



## Broad Overall Corridor Issues

- Develop evaluation measures
- Identify system-level impacts

## Transit and Trail Alignment

- Refine alignments and station areas
- Identity facility locations

## Conceptual Design

- Design transit and trails concepts
- Determine right-of-way preservation needs

## Mode Type

- Identify service characteristics
- Analyze travel time impacts

# Environmental Study Process

## Project Phasing

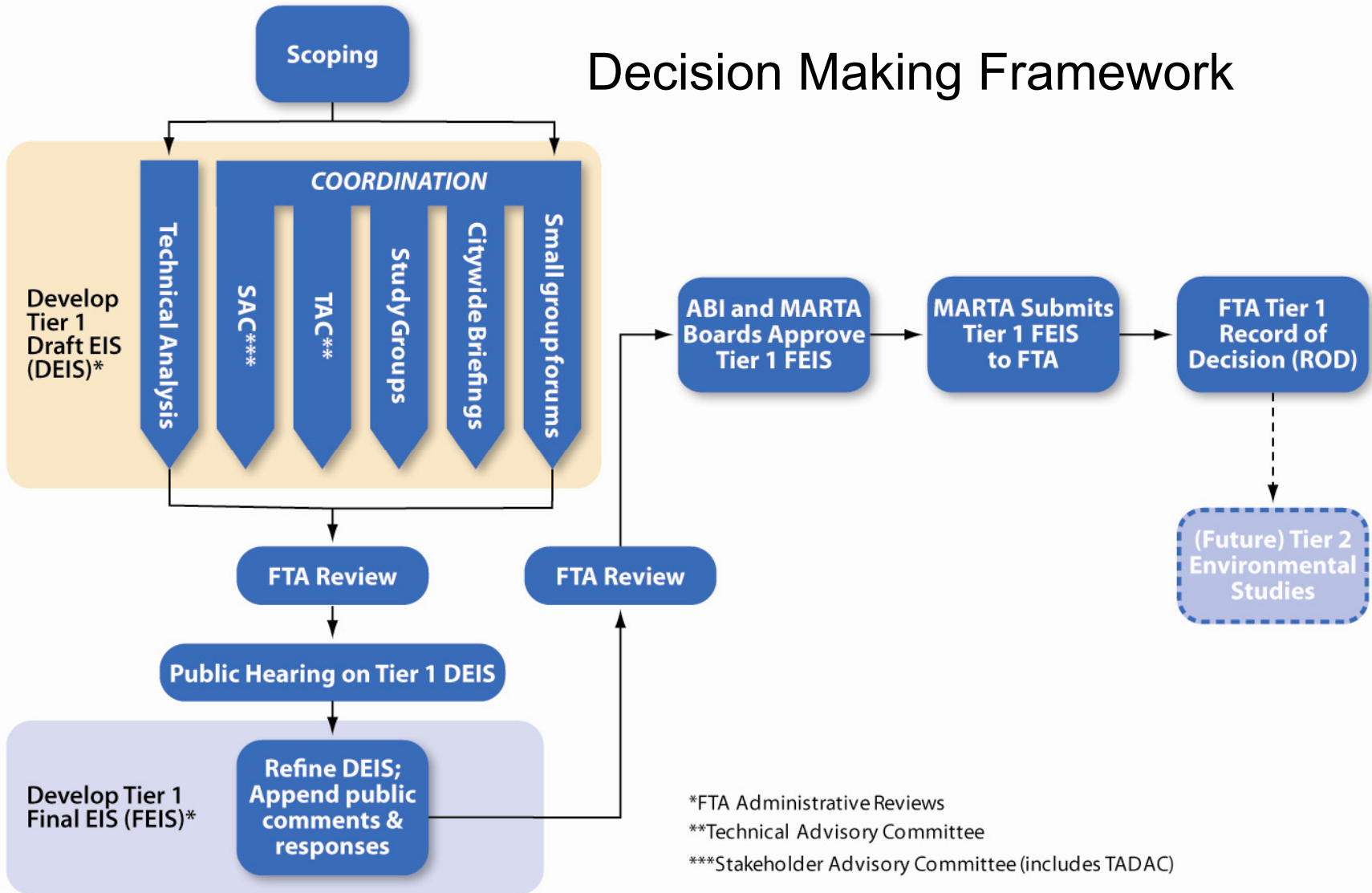
**Phase 1**  
Project scoping  
and initiation of  
environmental  
review processes

**Phase 2**  
Complete  
GEPA for  
NE Zone

**Phase 3**  
Complete Tier 1  
EIS for entire  
22-mile corridor

# Environmental Study Process

## Decision Making Framework





# Environmental Study Process

## Accomplishments

- Scoping Meetings and Scoping Summary Report
- Refined Purpose and Need and Goals and Objectives
- Northeast Zone Screening Assessment
- Existing Conditions Assessment
- Evaluation Methodology and Criteria Assessment



# Environmental Study Process

## Right-of-Way Preservation:

- Map existing conditions
- Develop typical sections for transit and trail components
- Align routes along existing railroad corridor and streets
- Identify additional right-of-way needs



# Environmental Study Process

## Conceptual Design

- Provide design sufficient to identify potential environmental effects of project
- Develop conceptual “footprint” of project to determine right-of-way preservation



# Environmental Study Process

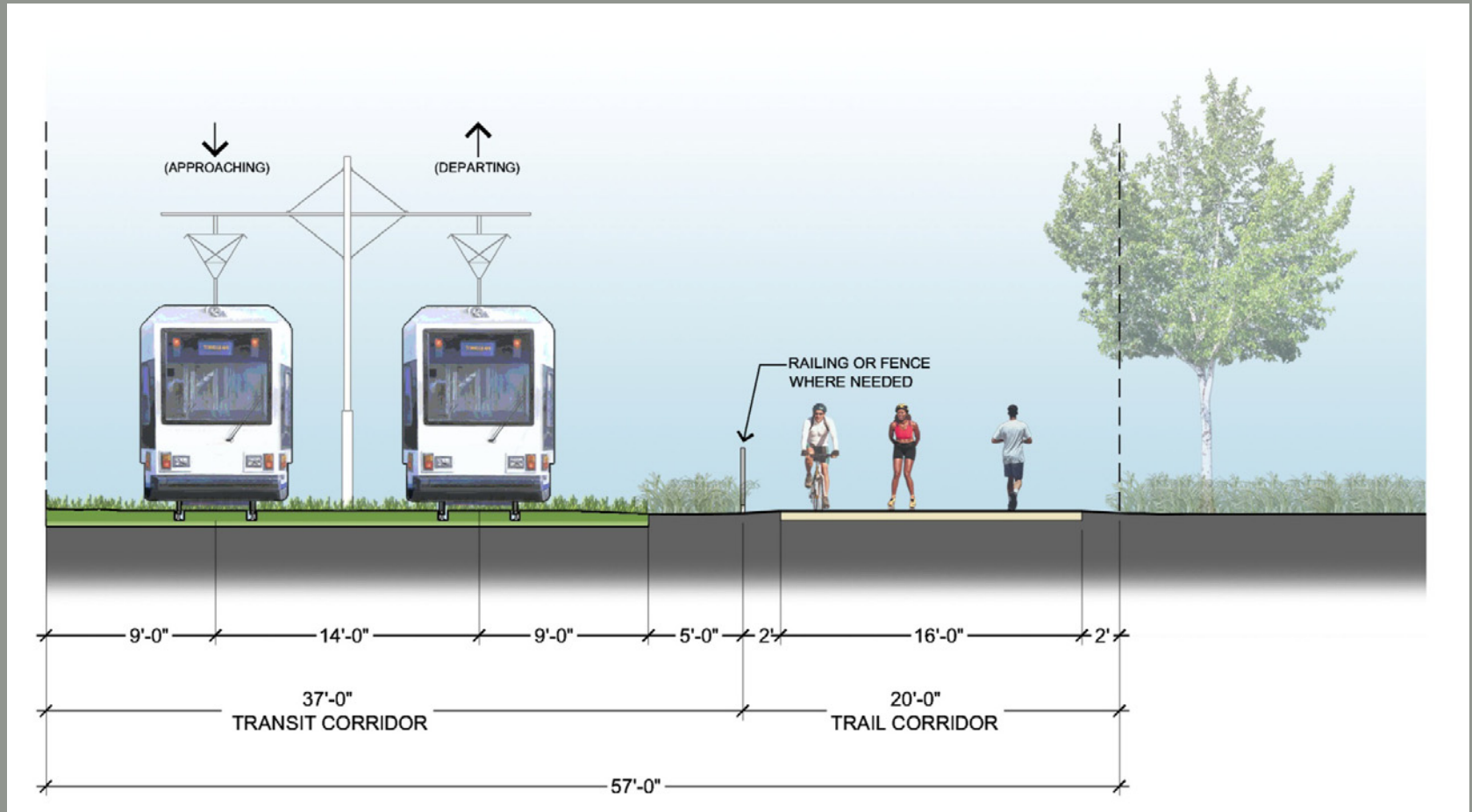
## Basic System Components:

- Multi-Use trail
  - 16-foot typical width
  - Connections to major streets, proposed transit stops, and other trails
  - Linear greenways and pocket parks parallel and adjacent to the trail
- Double-track transit alignment
  - Initial operating plan assumes LRT/Streetcar vehicles (8-10 minute headways)
  - Passenger stations:  $\frac{1}{4}$  to  $\frac{1}{2}$  mile spacing
  - Storage and maintenance facility for vehicles



# Environmental Study Process

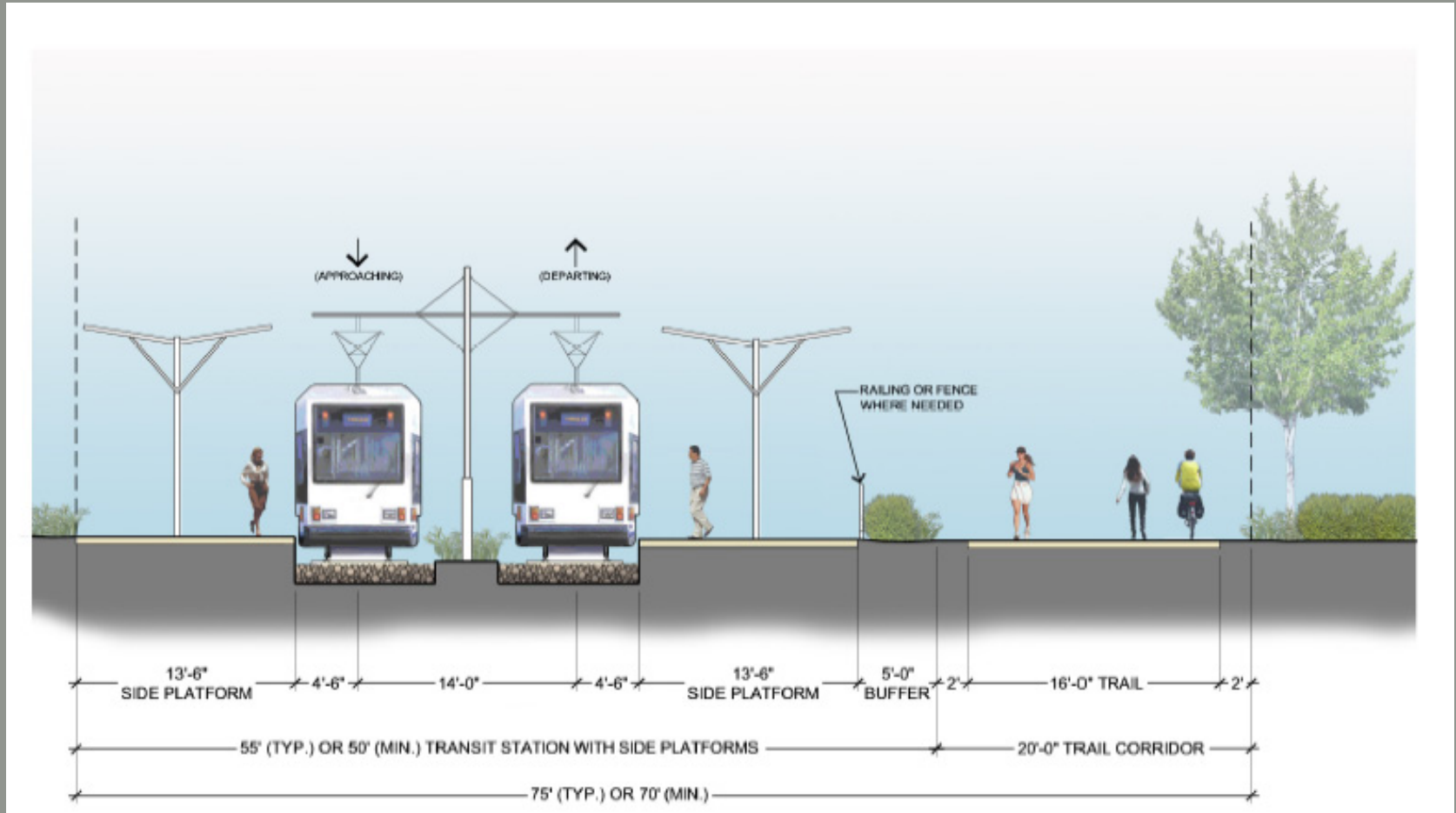
## Typical Minimum Section for Transit and Trail\*



\*Minimum dimensions apply only in locations of flat cross-slope and straight alignment

# Environmental Study Process

## Typical Minimum Section for Transit and Trail at Side Platform Station\*

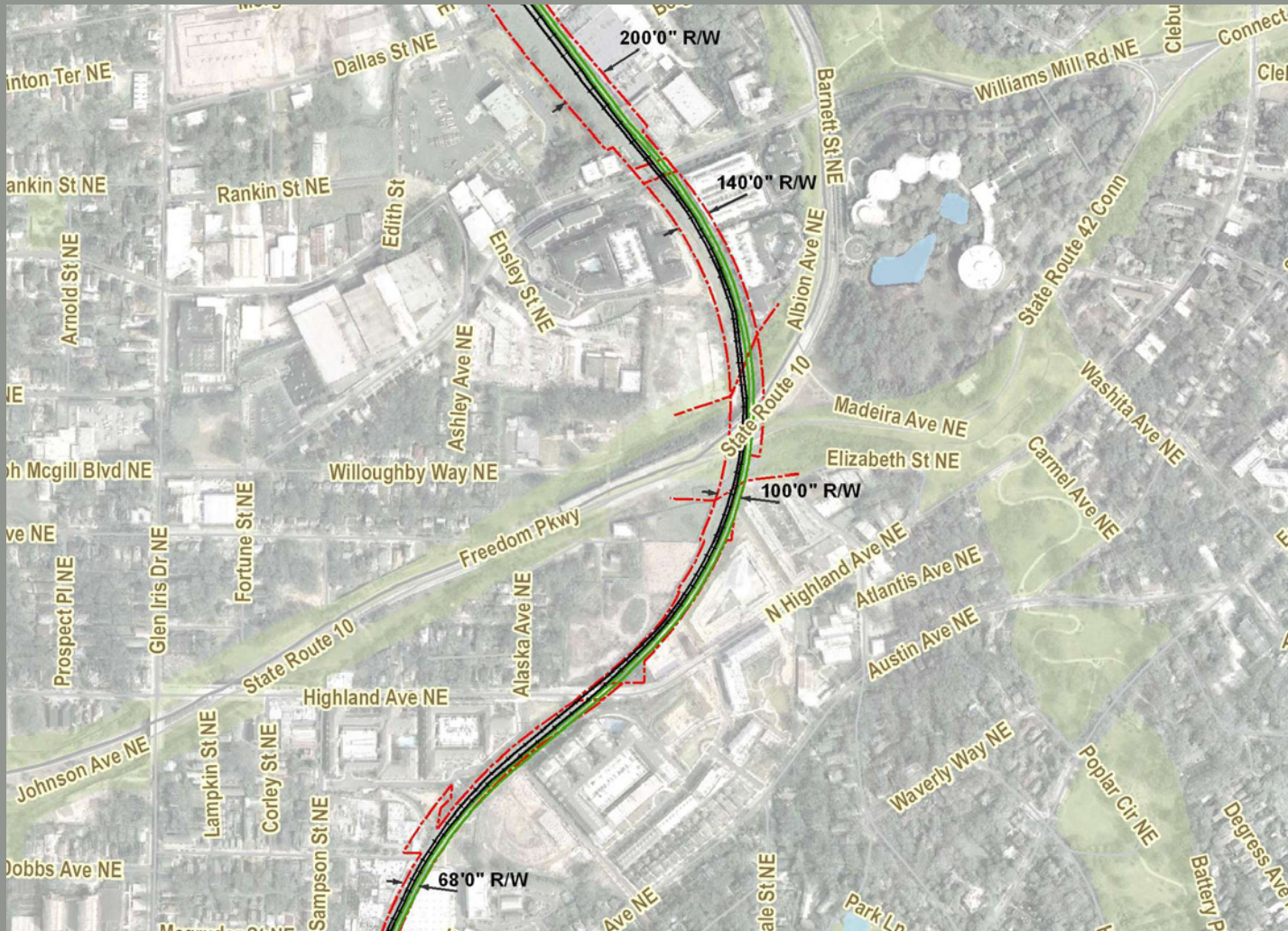


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# Environmental Study Process

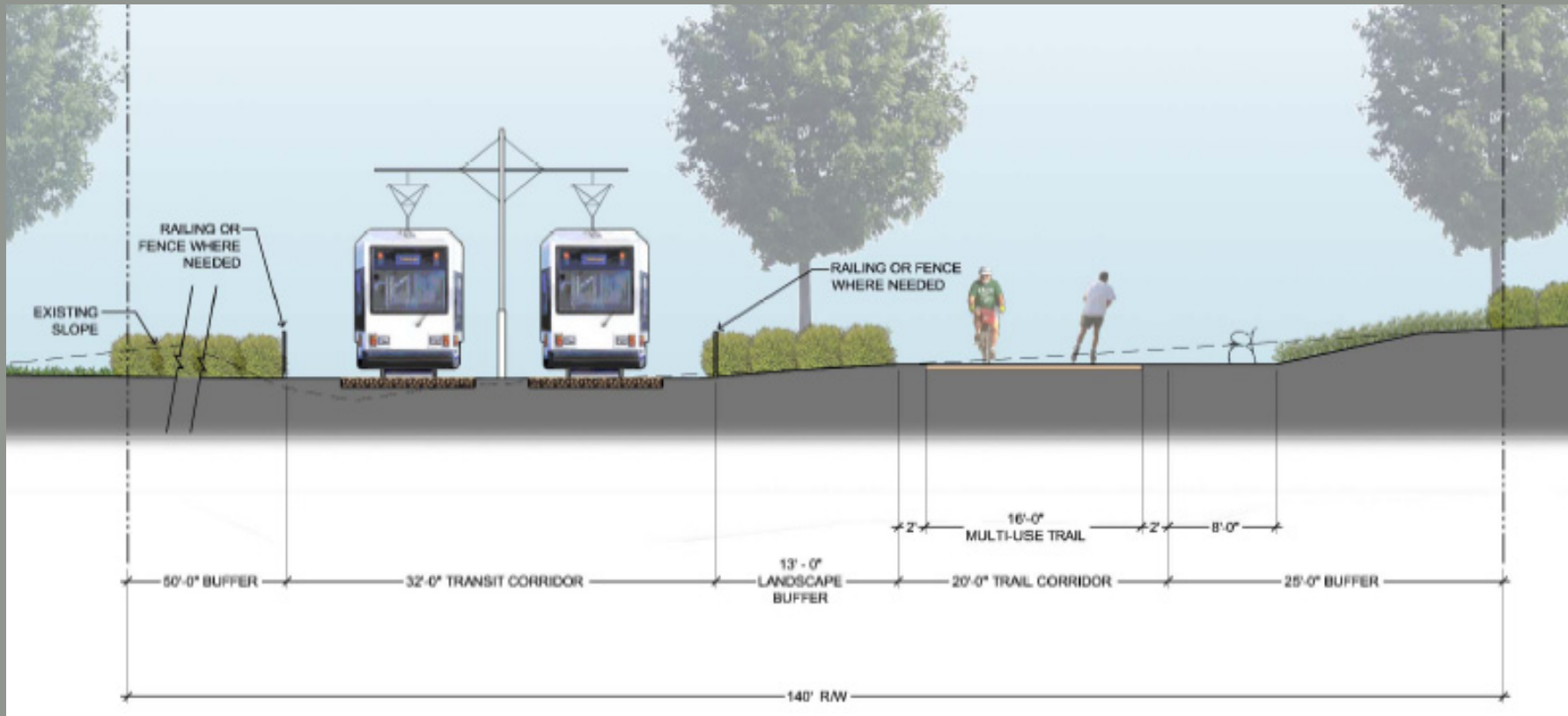
## Varied Right-of-Way Dimensions

Example: between Highland Avenue and Ralph McGill Boulevard



# Environmental Study Process

## Transit and Trail within Existing Right-of-Way Example Cross-Section for Transit and Trail: Near Ralph McGill \*

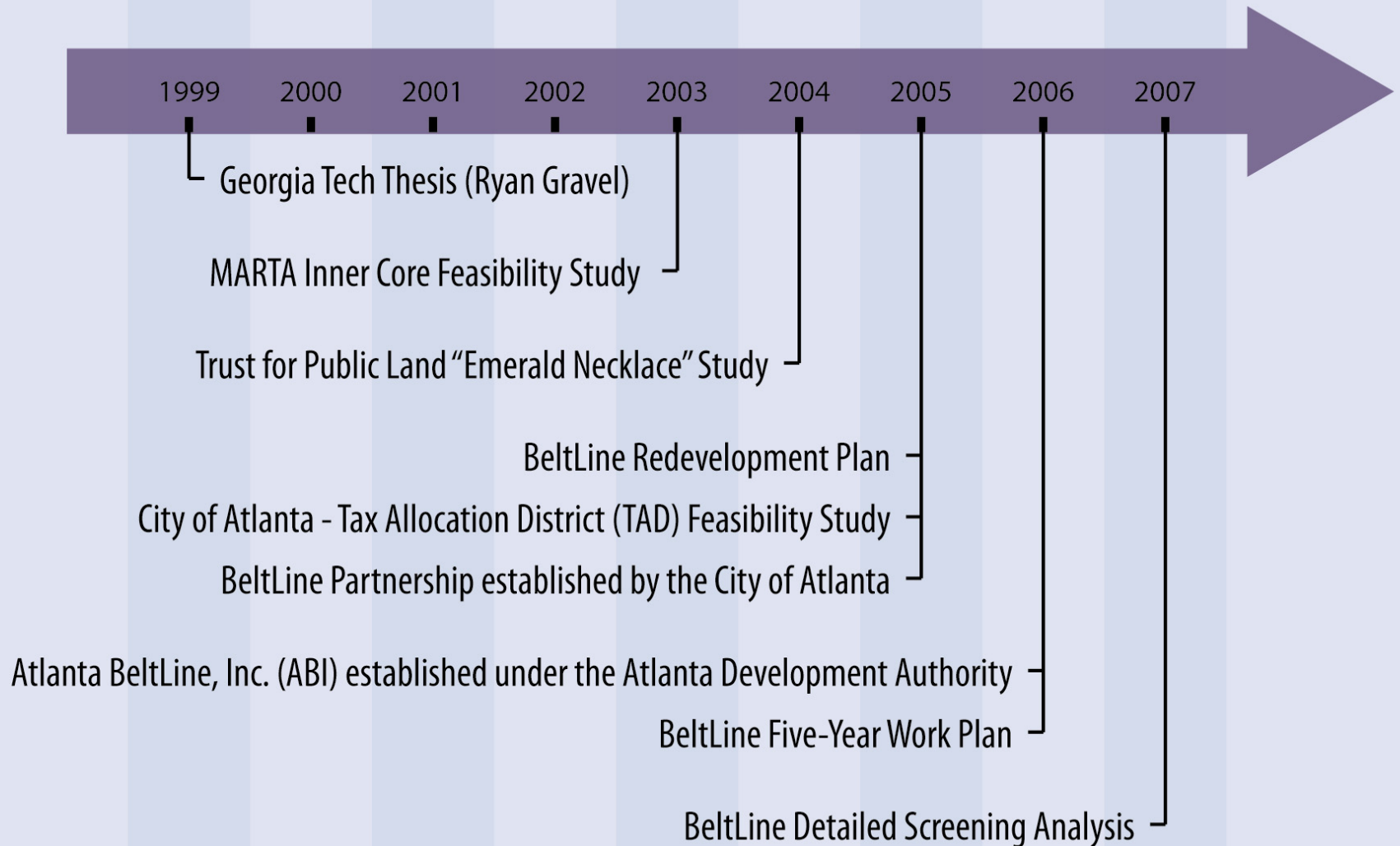


\*Minimum dimensions apply only in locations of flat cross-slope and straight alignment



# Overview of the BeltLine Project

# BeltLine Project History



# BeltLine Project Purpose and Need



## Community Needs

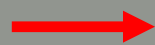
Mobility



## BeltLine Outcomes

Transit, Trails & Transportation

Recreation



Parks and Greenspace

Economic Development



Transit Supportive Land Use

Workforce Housing



Affordable Housing Trust Fund

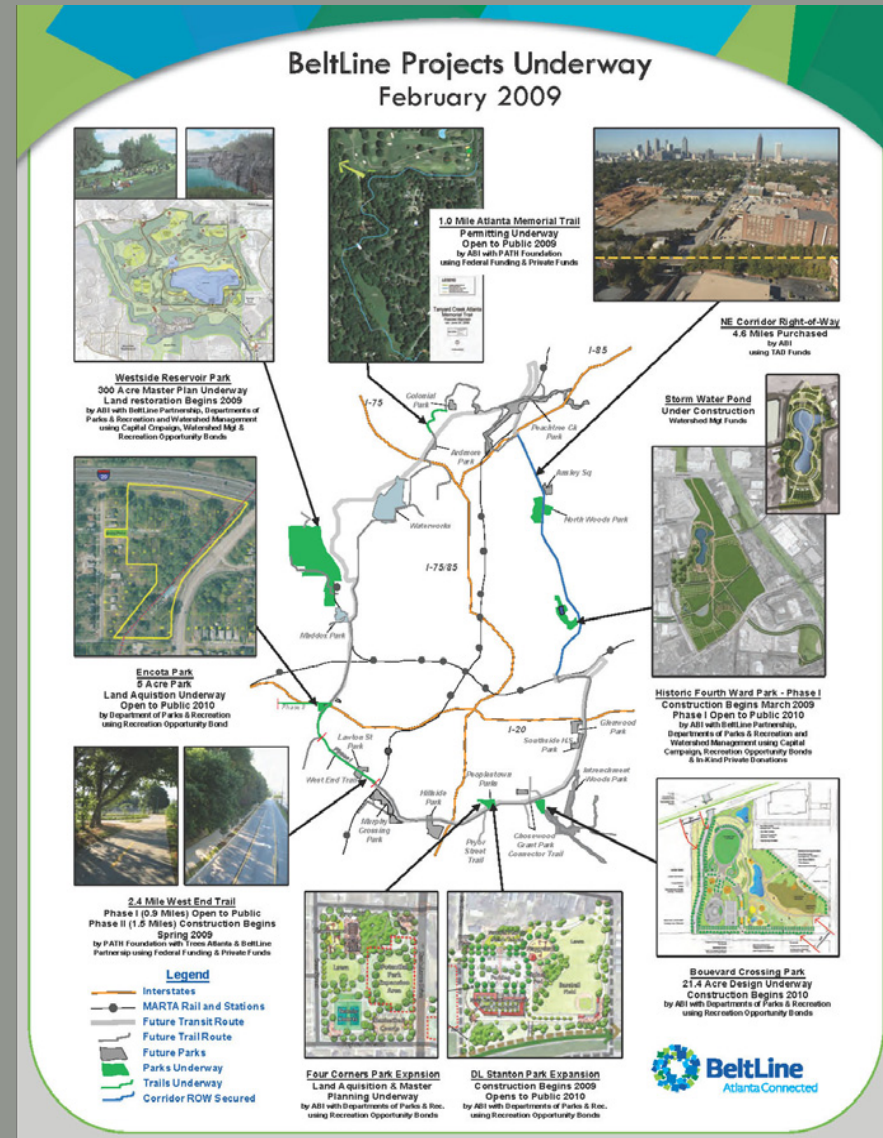
Cultural Resources



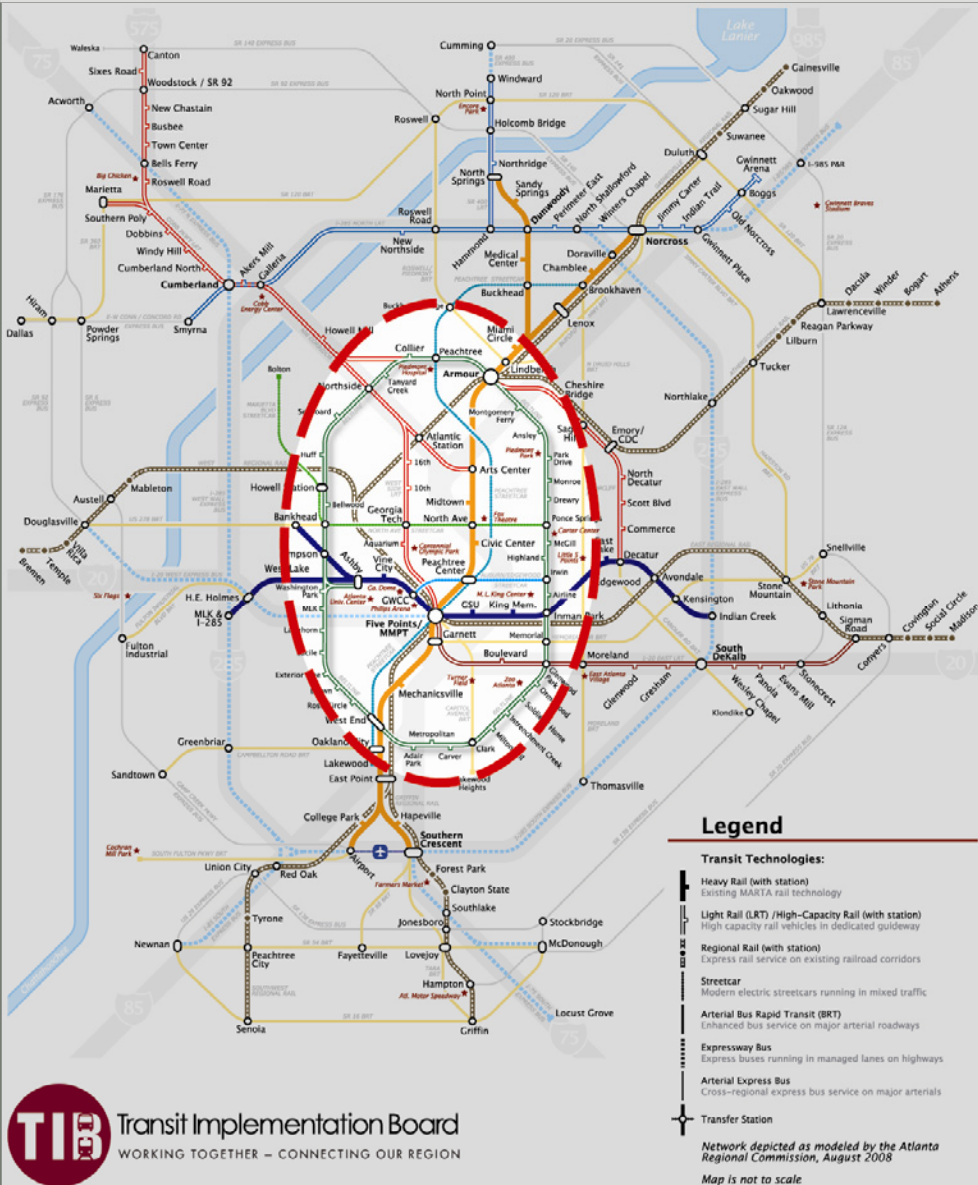
Historic Preservation

# Major BeltLine Accomplishments

- ✓ Initial Tax Allocation District (TAD) funding
- ✓ Master Plan preparation
- ✓ Key land parcel acquisition
- ✓ Parks and trails construction



# Regional Transit Vision



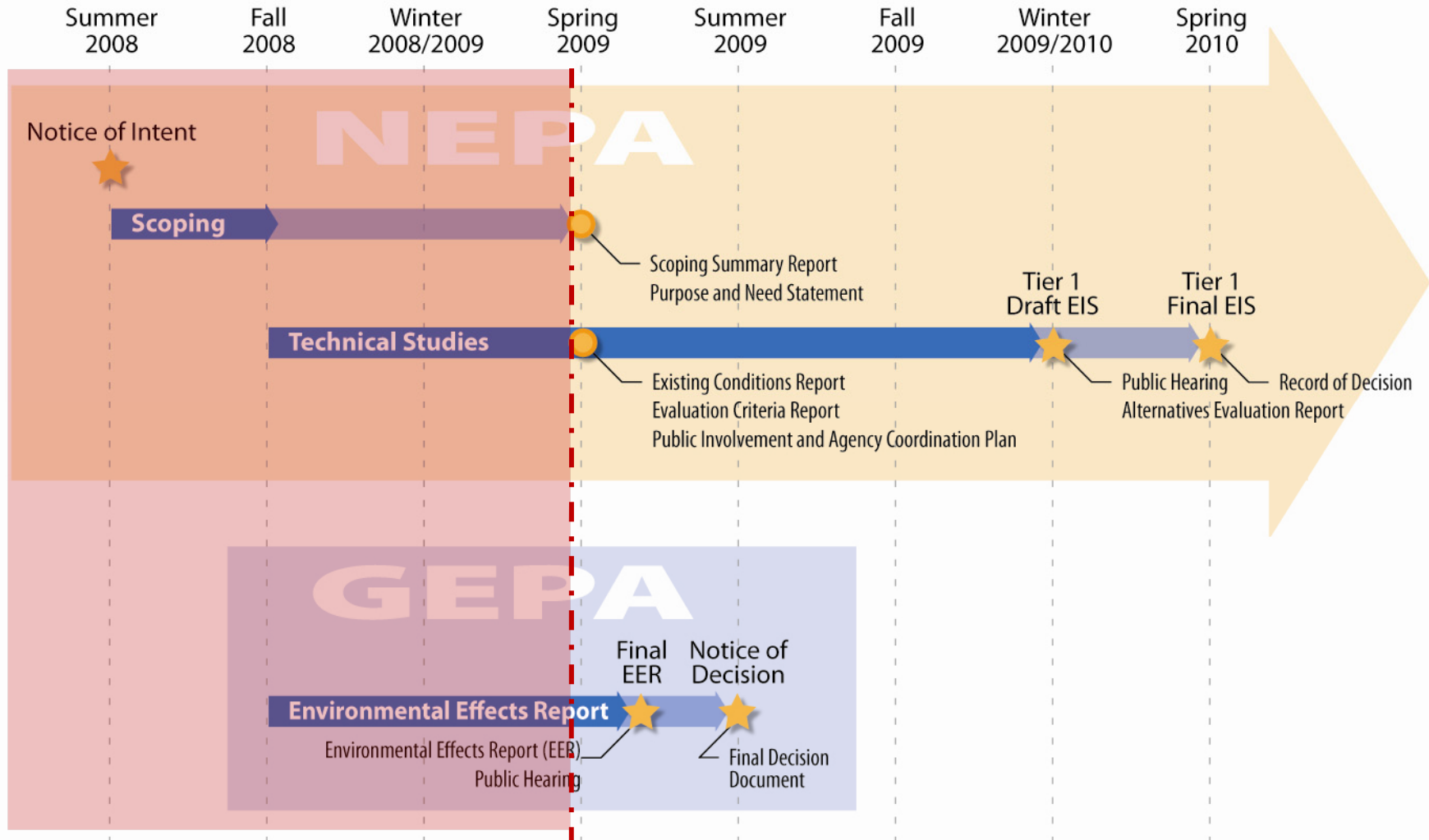
The BeltLine is just one piece of a much larger regional transit plan, which includes:

- Heavy Rail
- Commuter Rail
- Light Rail / Street Car
- Express Bus
- Regional Bus

BeltLine Corridor Environmental Study

# BeltLine Corridor Environmental Study

# Environmental Study Update



# Environmental Study Goals



- 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 of personal travel.
- Support **local neighborhood preservation and** regional land use initiatives, and fulfill emerging demand for transit-adjacent land development.



# Environmental Study Goals

- Provide a cost-effective and efficient transportation investment.
- Provide a bicycle and pedestrian friendly environment.
- Provide transit, bicycle and pedestrian connectivity between communities and existing and planned recreational opportunities.



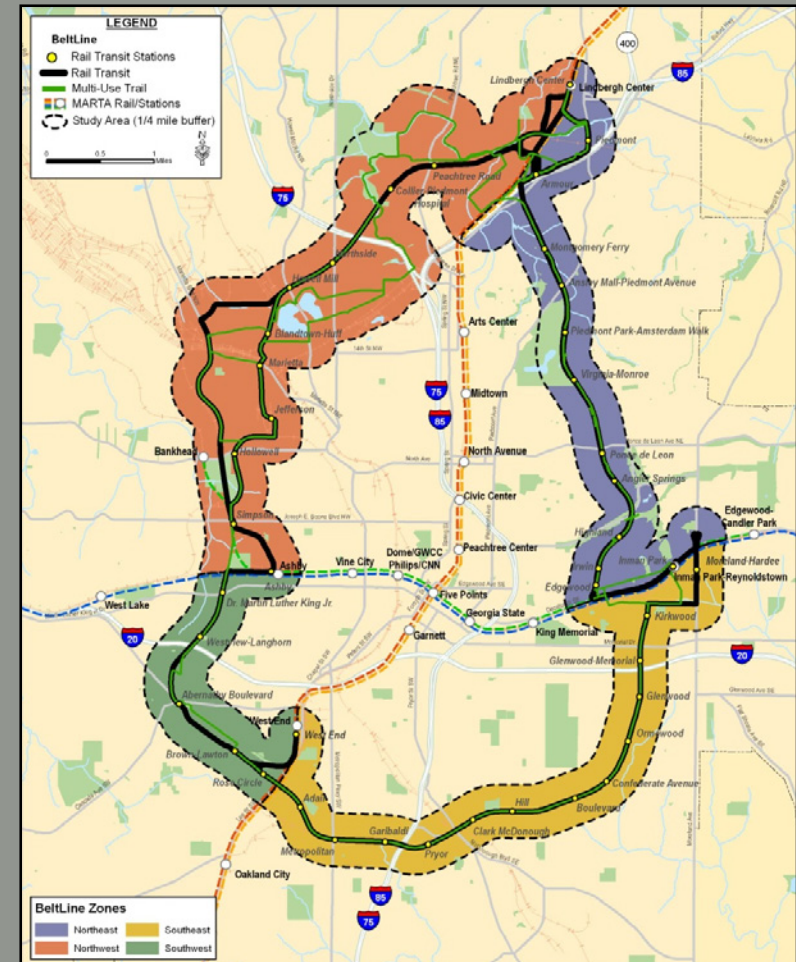
# Environmental Study Goals



- Minimize adverse impacts to the environment **and foster positive environmental impacts.**
- **Ensure consideration of public input throughout project planning and development.**

# Environmental Study Area

- Four distinct zones defined by MARTA rail lines
  - Northeast
  - Southeast
  - Southwest
  - Northwest



The Four Zones of the BeltLine Study Area

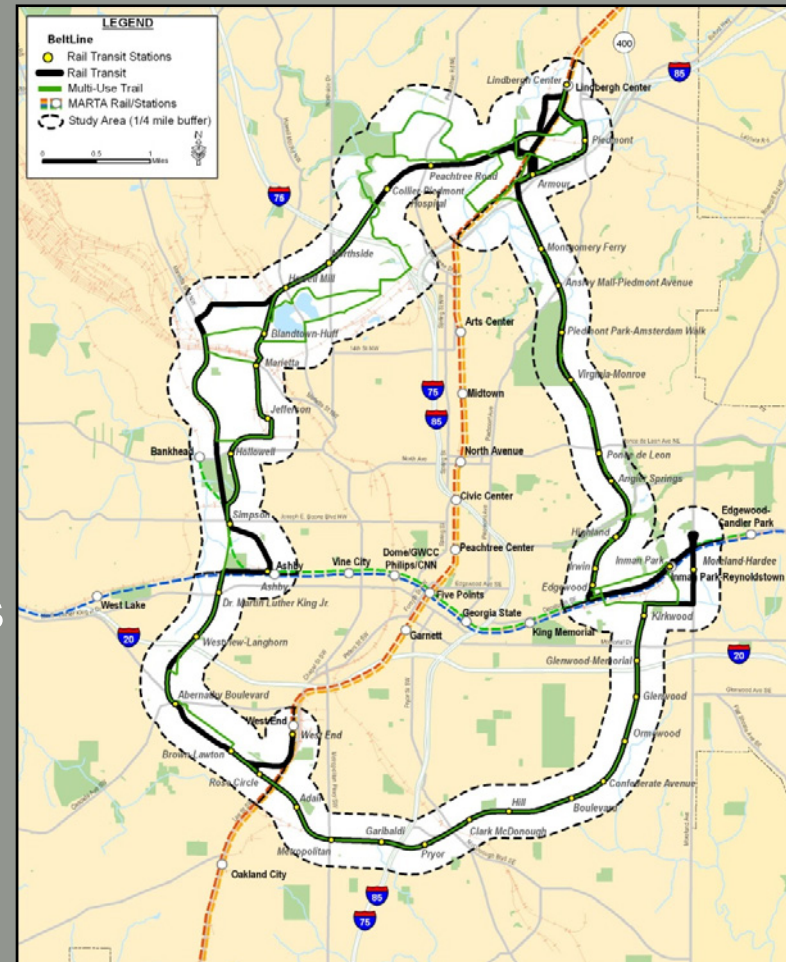
# Environmental Study Outcomes

- Develop transit and trail alignment and connections
- Identify and preserve station location areas
- Document environmental impacts
- Refine capital and operating costs
- Determine transit service features



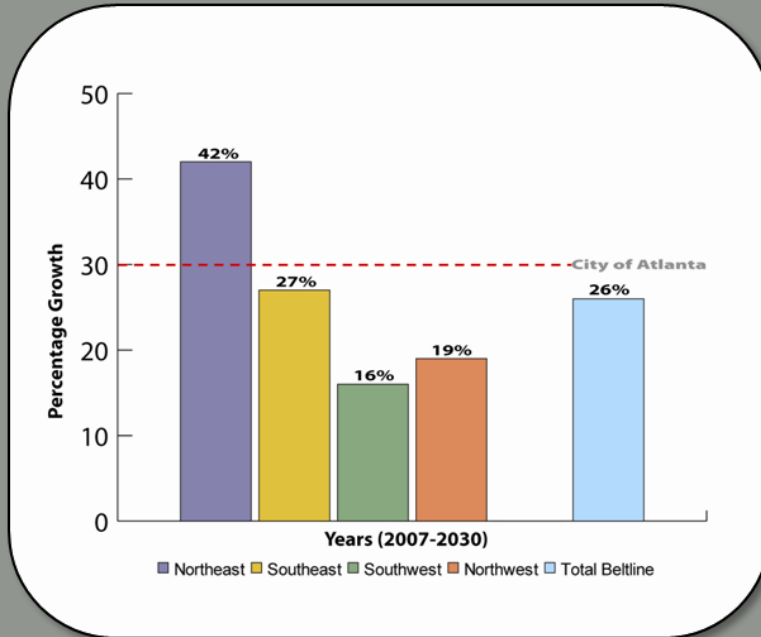
# BeltLine Corridor Existing Conditions

- Socioeconomics
- Natural Environment
- Transportation
- Bicycle and Pedestrian
- Study of Related Plans and Efforts



The BeltLine and Proposed Alternatives

# BeltLine Corridor Existing Conditions

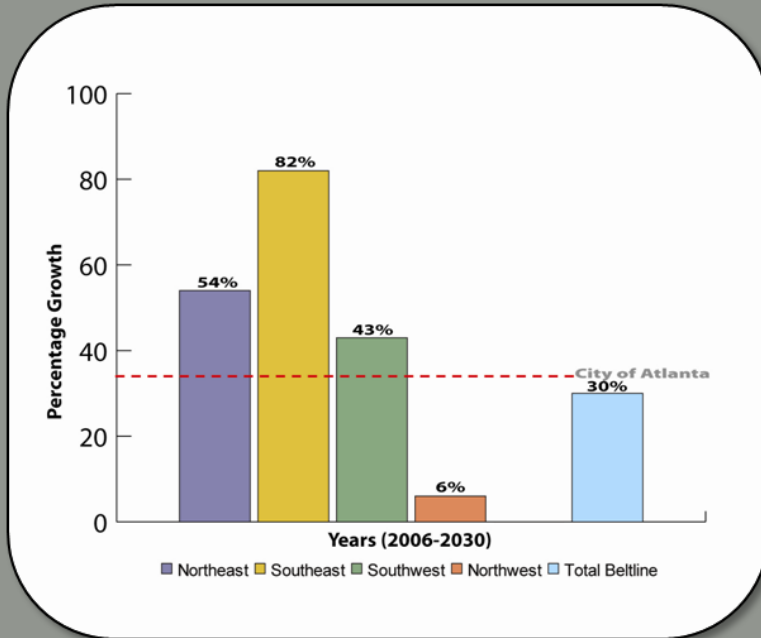


Population Growth 2007-2030

## Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC) forecasts:

- Population
  - 68,700 (2007)
  - 86,700 (2030 forecast)
  - Growth of 20%
- Demographic
  - 58% Minority
  - 21% Low income
  - 14% Transit-dependant

# BeltLine Corridor Existing Conditions

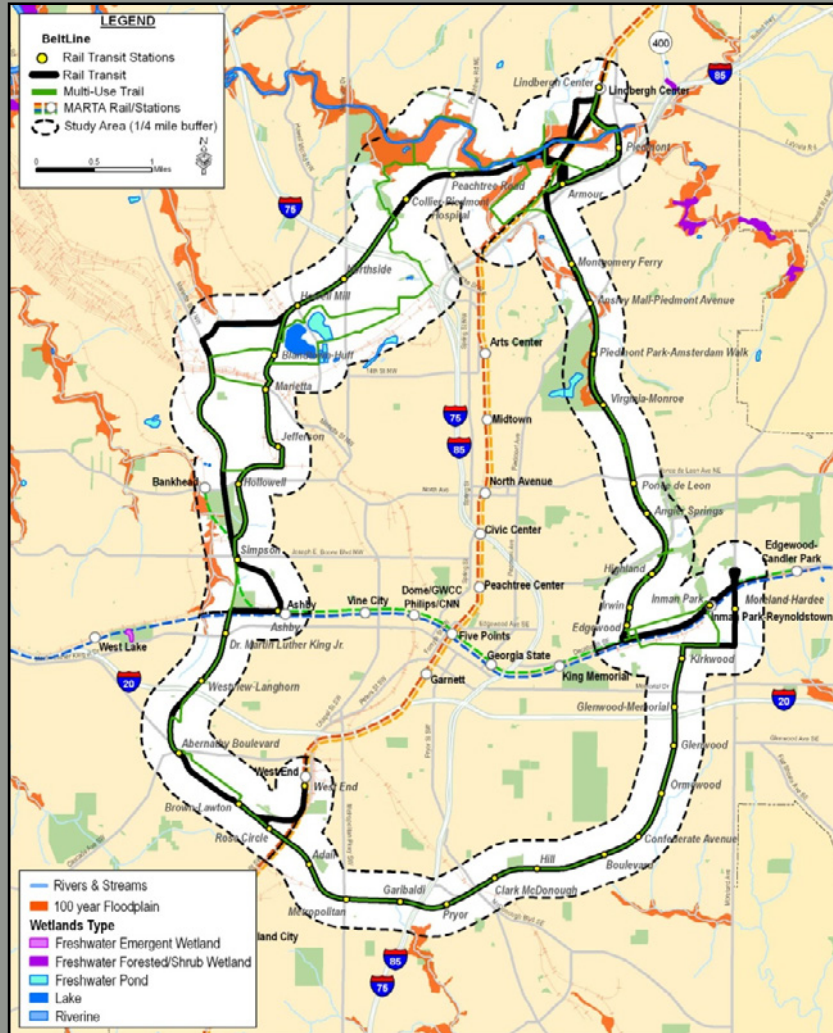


Employment Growth 2006-2030

## Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC) forecast:

- Employment
  - 51,000 (2006)
  - 66,600 (2030 forecast)
  - Growth of 30%
- Serves 59 neighborhoods and over 60 community facilities

# BeltLine Corridor Existing Conditions

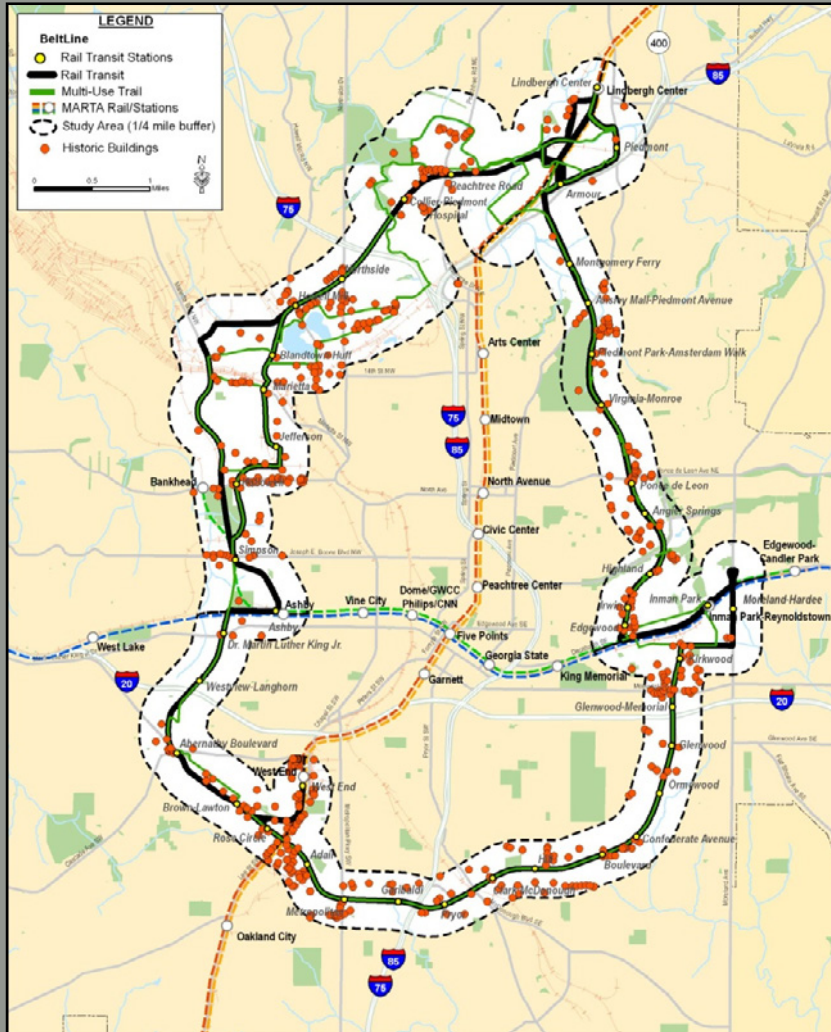


Wetland Areas and 100-Year Floodplains

- Floodplains of Peachtree, Proctor, Clear and Tanyard Creeks
- 21 streams and 8 bodies of water
- Over 230 contaminated and hazardous materials sites
- Connects more than 50 parks (400+ acres)



# BeltLine Corridor Existing Conditions



Historic Buildings/Structures

- Over 300 historic buildings/structures and 20 historic districts\*

	Districts	Buildings/Structures
<i>Listed</i>	8	32
<i>Eligible</i>	12	271
<b>Total</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>303</b>

\*Georgia Department of Natural Resources, Historic Preservation Division, Atlanta Urban Design Commission

# BeltLine Corridor Existing Conditions



Public Transportation

- Within the BeltLine Study Area there are:
  - 5 MARTA rail stations
  - 56 MARTA bus routes
  - 1 GRTA express bus route
  - Several local shuttle buses
- Active and inactive freight rail
- About 14% use transit for work trips
- Approximately 50 bicycle routes planned

# Environmental Study Interface with Subarea Master Planning

# Environmental Study and Subarea Master Planning

## Master Plans

- Parks / Greenspace
- Trail Alignment Alternatives
- Access Points / Transit and Trails
- Street Framework
- Historic Resources
- Development Patterns

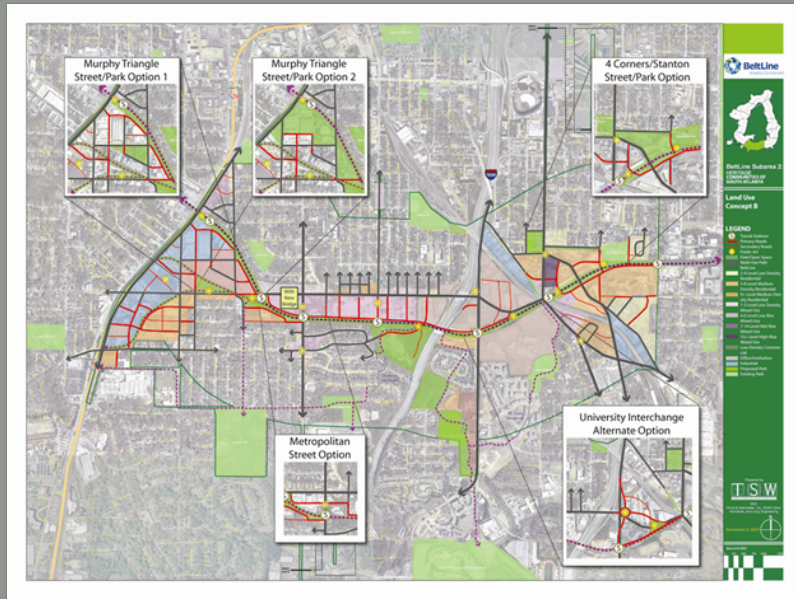
## EIS Process

- Conceptual Engineering
- Environmental Impact
- Transit and Trail Service Features
- Ridership
- Capital and Operating Cost

## Outcome of EIS

- Corridor Design Alignment
- Station Location Areas
- Transit Alignment
- Trail Alignment
- Transit Characteristics

# Environmental Study and Subarea Master Planning



## Master Planning Provides:

- Basis for refining transit and trail alternatives and station areas
- Land use, open space, and transportation/circulation plans used in the impact analysis
- Information used to evaluate land use and transit-friendly design for project alternatives

# Environmental Study and Subarea Master Planning

## Tier 1 Environmental Study Provides:

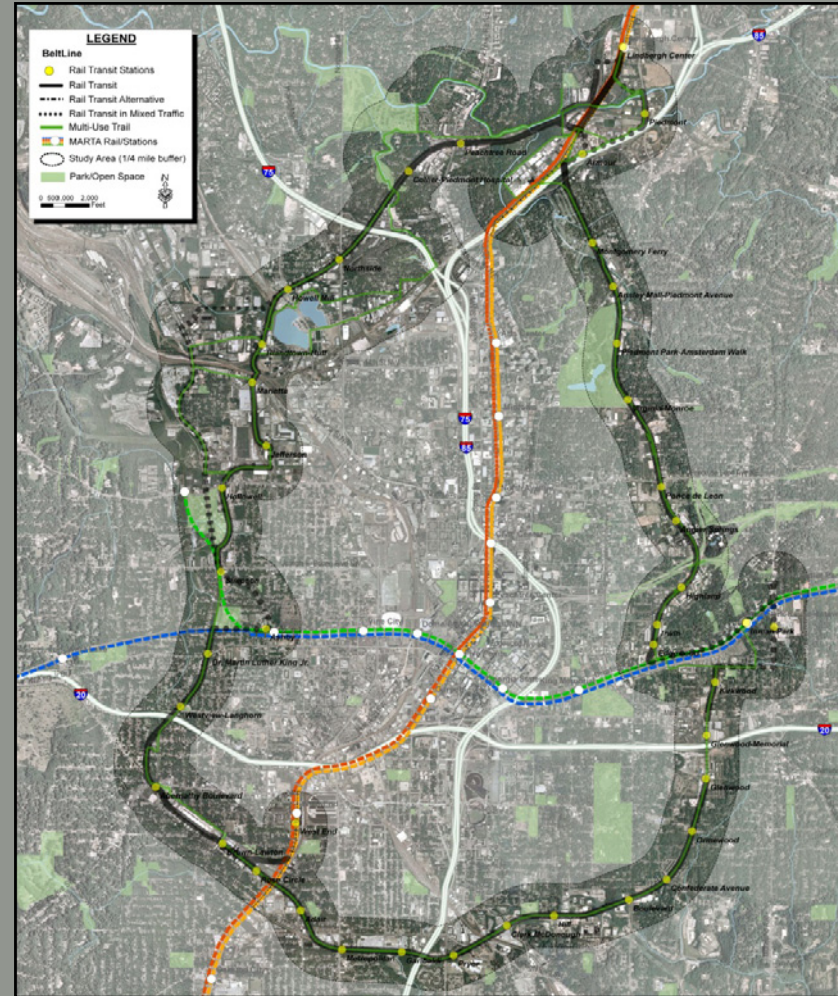
- Location of project alignment and station areas
- Project right-of-way needs
- A forum for consensus building regarding transit and trails investments that supports community plans



# Evaluation Criteria

# Evaluation Criteria

- Basis for comparing alternative alignments and technologies
- Performance measures for each evaluation criteria
- Assessment of the range of alternative alignments and technologies through the listed criteria:





# Evaluation Criteria

- Breakout discussions of evaluation criteria and performance measures:
  - Mobility
  - Accessibility and Connectivity
  - Equity
  - Cost Effectiveness and Efficiency
  - Travel Time
  - Pedestrian and Bicycle Compatibility
  - Support of Other Planning Initiatives
- Land Use and Economic Development
- Community Fit
- Environmental Quality
- Public Input



# Public Outreach Activities

# Upcoming Public Workshops

- Review the transit and trails concept and features
- Refine alternatives considered in Tier 1 EIS
- Identify key concerns to address in the impact analysis



# Upcoming Public Workshop

- Open house with video display
- Presentation on purpose
- Breakout groups to review and refine alternatives
- Summary of key results from groups
- Next steps



# Upcoming Public Workshop

Five meetings (one for each of the BeltLine Study Groups)

- April 13<sup>th</sup> Southeast
- April 16<sup>th</sup> Northeast
- April 23<sup>rd</sup> Southwest
- April 27<sup>th</sup> Westside
- May 4<sup>th</sup> Northside



# Upcoming Meeting

- May 14<sup>th</sup> Public Hearing on the Environmental Effects Report

