

BeltLine Corridor Environmental Study

Continuing to Lay the Groundwork for Transit & Trails

Study to Help Determine Right-of-Way Needs

Linked together by a common goal, MARTA (Metropolitan Atlanta Rapid Transit Authority) and ABI (Atlanta Beltline, Inc.) have initiated a two-year study of the environmental effects of developing a system of transit and trails in the 22-mile Beltline Corridor with the Federal Transit Administration (FTA). This system will connect Atlanta neighborhoods, businesses and other points of interest, creating a more accessible, affordable, sustainable and walkable city for years to come.

Environmental studies are being undertaken to determine the potential effects of the proposed transit and trails on the natural and human environment. The findings of these environmental studies will help MARTA, ABI, and the City of Atlanta to avoid or minimize impacts to resources identified within the study area and to define, with more precision, the rights-of-way required to build these facilities. The study area is shown in Figure 1. Environmental studies will meet the requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and the Georgia Environmental Protection Act (GEPA). This will be achieved through the preparation of a Tier 1 Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). The Federal Transit Administration (FTA) will be the lead federal agency for this project. At the completion of Tier 1, the right-of-way needs will be defined for the proposed stations, transit facility and the trails.



(Study Area Map—Figure 1)

Areas to be Analyzed in Study

The study will consider impacts in the areas listed below:

- Air Quality
- Noise and Vibration
- Land and Water Resources
- Visual Elements
- Energy
- Geology and Soils
- Hazardous Materials
- Land Use and Zoning
- Environmental Justice
- Displacements and Relocations
- Public Services and Utilities
- Historical and Archaeological Resources
- Parklands
- Transit Service
- Traffic and Transportation
- Construction Impacts

Public Involvement – Why We Need You

As previously stated, the Study will be conducted in accordance with guidelines established by the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and the Georgia Environmental Protection Act (GEPA). These guidelines as well as the policies of MARTA and ABI require full participation by the public and affected agencies during all phases of the study. A comprehensive and collaborative outreach plan will build on the outreach activities of previ-

ous related studies. A variety of techniques will be used to inform the public and to receive ideas and comments. They will include updates on MARTA and ABI web sites, newsletters, and regular updates through the media and through briefings of community organizations. There will be close coordination with the BeltLine Study Groups. Formal Scoping Meetings and Public Hearings will be organized and conducted at critical stages in the study

so that information can be presented and comments received in an organized fashion. The goal is to maximize user-friendly ways for all citizens, regardless of race, ethnicity or socio-economic status, to ask questions and provide comments and suggestions. Scoping Meetings will take place in late summer 2008. For specific meeting locations and times, please consult the study website—www.itsmarta.com/newsroom/beltline.html.

Key Milestones in the Environmental Impact Study Process

Start-up of Environmental Studies
(Spring 2008)

Public Hearing on Tier 1 Draft Environmental
Impact Statement (Spring 2010)

Scoping Meetings for the Public
(Summer 2008)

Publication of Final Tier 1 Environmental
Impact Statement (Spring 2010)

Public Hearing on Environmental Effects
Report on the Northeast Quadrant
(Spring 2009)

Record of Decision on Final Tier 1 Environmental
Impact Statement (Spring 2010)

Frequently Asked Questions

1. What is a Scoping Meeting?

The Scoping process is an early and open process for determining the range of issues to be addressed and for identifying significant issues related to the proposed project. The process involves meeting with interested parties, to include agencies, the public and stakeholders within the study area. The meetings are used to provide background information on the project; to discuss the purpose and need for the

project; to present the alternatives that are being considered; to discuss the evaluation methodology and process; and to hear public comments about the project.

2. What is a Tier 1 EIS?

A Tier 1 EIS is an environmental document that identifies what the existing conditions of the study area are and

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evaluates potential effects of the proposed project on those conditions. A Tier 1 EIS addresses broad, overall corridor issues such as general location, mode choice and land use impacts. This approach allows project sponsors to make corridor-level decisions without incurring the time and expense of design that would be required in a more detailed EIS.

3. When will the EIS be complete?

The Tier 1 Final EIS will be complete in the spring of 2010.

4. Will construction begin after the Tier 1 EIS is complete?

The Tier 1 EIS advances the planning to the point where policy-makers can confirm previous decisions and preserve the right-of-way for transit and trails. When the Tier 1 EIS is complete, right-of-way may be purchased as funds become available. The next step in the project development process is the completion of a Tier 2 analysis. Design and construction can begin following completion of the Tier 2 analysis if funding is available. Efforts to acquire funding for construction of transit and trails are on-going.

5. In the 2006 Alternative Analysis Study, MARTA concluded that a rail technology will best meet the needs in the Beltline Corridor but did not specify what type of rail. When will this be decided?

In the Alternative Analysis Study, MARTA narrowed the transit technology choices to streetcar and light rail. The preferred technology will be determined in the Tier 1 EIS.

6. What is the difference between streetcar and light rail?

Both light rail and streetcars receive their power from an overhead source called a catenary, thus making it possible and safe for both to operate on streets in mixed traffic. Streetcars tend to be low volume systems that typically operate in mixed traffic while light rail tends to be a higher volume system that can operate in mixed traffic or in an exclusive right-of-way. In the United States, streetcars typically operate as a single or two-car train, travel at low speeds (average 5-15 mph) and make frequent stops. Light rail typically operates larger vehicles in two- or more car trains, and travels at higher speeds (average 10-25 mph).

Light Rail



Modern Streetcar



7. Why should I get involved in the Environmental Study?

From the beginning, the Beltline has been a citizen-driven concept... citizens preferring in-town living, alternatives to driving the private automobile and desiring greater connectivity between neighborhoods as well as between residential and other land-uses. Your continued involvement will help to ensure that the project remains true to the original goals.

Please let us know what you think: _____

1. What do you think about the BeltLine Project, in general?
2. If you have been involved in previous Beltline studies, how would you describe your experience?
3. Do you have any concern relative to the environmental effects of building transit and trails in the Beltline Corridor? If so, please specify.
4. What are your preference regarding transit technology or the type of transit that should be implemented in the BeltLine?
5. How do you think transit and trails in the BeltLine corridor should be funded?

Other Comments.

CONTACT INFORMATION *(optional)*

Name:

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Please send completed form to:

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