

Environmental Review



Newsletter 1

Spring/Summer 2013

Who Has Been Involved?

A Project Steering Committee (PSC) has been in place since 2009 to guide the study process and to assist MARTA in getting feedback from the public. This committee consists of community representatives, neighborhood associations, elected officials and transportation planning staff from the cities, DeKalb County and regional agencies. The PSC met in June 2013 to review preliminary findings regarding potential impacts, travel time, ridership, and costs of the refined LPA and proposed alignment options. Recommended alignments will advance to the next study phase.

A series of public meetings have been conducted during planning efforts as part of the overall Clifton Corridor Transit Initiative. Your participation is invaluable to the success of this project. Stay tuned for the announcements of public meetings to kick off Phase 2 sometime this summer.



WE ARE ON THE WEB!
www.itsmarta.com/clifton-corr-documents.aspx

Contact Us

We want to hear from you. If you have comments, questions, or ideas regarding this study, please contact:

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Project Overview

The Clifton Corridor Transit Initiative is a program launched by the Metropolitan Atlanta Rapid Transit Authority (MARTA) to identify and develop transit system mobility improvements for the area extending from the City of Atlanta to Emory University, the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and other parts of central DeKalb County. Part of this effort involves partnering with the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) to identify potential high-capacity transit options for the corridor that may be eligible for federal funding through the New Starts program. To that end an Alternatives Analysis (AA) was completed and a locally preferred alternative (LPA) was

adopted in 2012 which included an 8.5-mile light rail line extending from Lindbergh Center Station to Avondale Station. Environmental review is the next step after completing an AA. MARTA has developed a two-phase environmental review approach. Phase 1 is focused on adjusting the LPA to better meet engineering constraints. The Phase 1 analysis also includes the development and evaluation of design options that reduce capital cost and improve ridership. Phase 2 comprises further engineering refinements and completion of environmental documentation prescribed by the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA).

What Is the NEPA Process and Why Is MARTA Following It?

The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969 ensures that adverse natural and community impacts resulting from federally-funded projects are avoided or mitigated to the maximum extent possible. Any project seeking federal funding must follow the NEPA process to retain eligibility.

Why is the LPA being Refined?

The LPA was selected based on strong public support and included tunnel and aerial structures to minimize potential community impacts. This project will be assessed for

competitiveness within the Federal New Starts funding program; and consequently must not only meet local goals, but also compete with other projects nationwide. A key rank-

ing criterion for the federal funding process is cost per rider. MARTA is therefore reviewing the adopted LPA and identifying design options to increase riders and minimize the

higher costs associated with extensive tunnel and aerial structures. The LPA alignment and options are illustrated to the left and described in greater detail on the following pages.

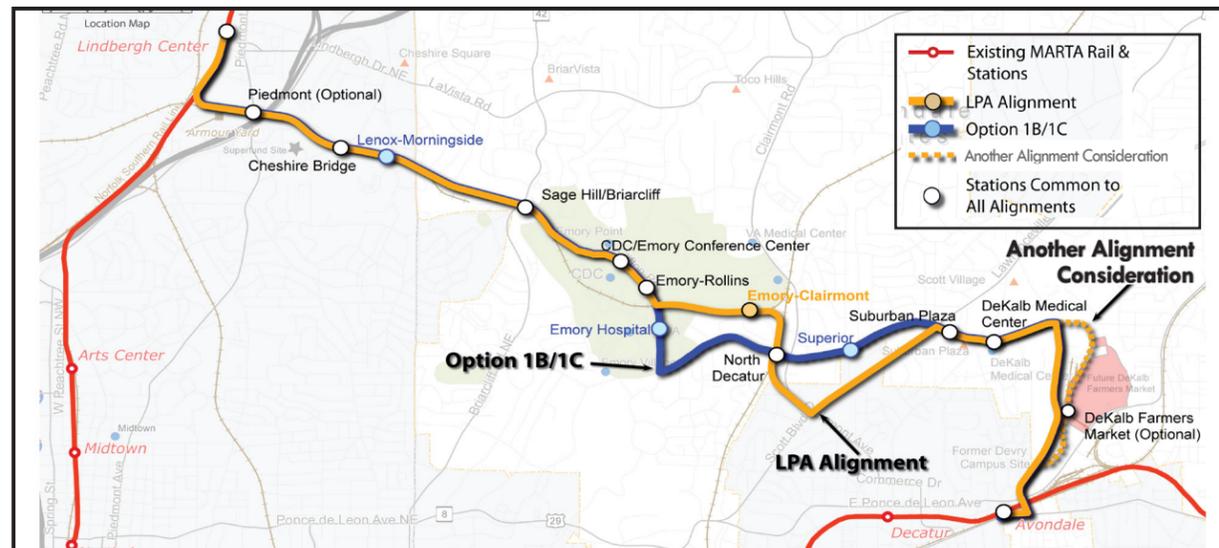
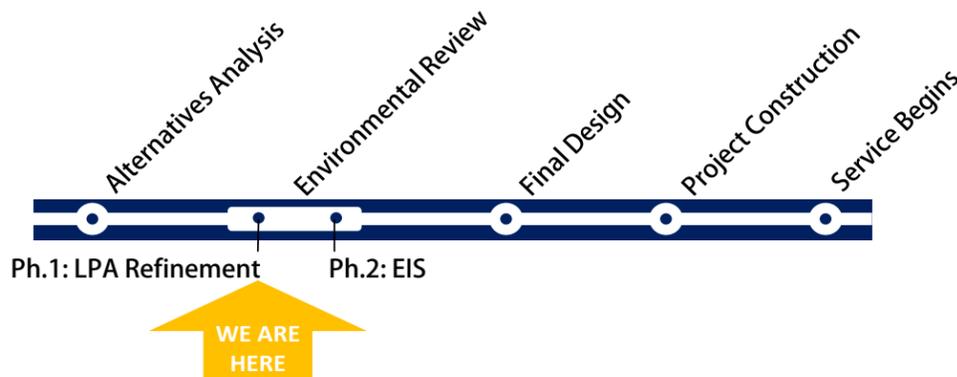
WHAT IS THE FIRST STEP IN THE EIS PROCESS?

The first step is to coordinate with the FTA to determine the class of environmental action needed. Given the complexities of the Clifton Corridor, an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) will be required to document potential impacts to the natural environment and surrounding community. The EIS process will begin with the issuance of a Notice of Intent (NOI). The NOI will begin the 45-day project ‘Scoping,’ process in which the public may review the proposed project and present concerns to MARTA and the FTA. During and after the scoping period, workshops and other activities will be conducted to engage the community in the on-going planning process. Stay tuned by checking in on the MARTA website for a calendar of events and other important information.

What’s Next in Phase 2?

The NEPA process is expected to be initiated in the summer of 2013. An Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) will include information and data from previous studies and Phase 1. The EIS will document environmental impacts of the refined LPA and selected alignment options and, where necessary, recommend mitigation or avoidance measures to address potential adverse impacts to the community and natural environment.

Clifton Corridor FTA Project Development Process

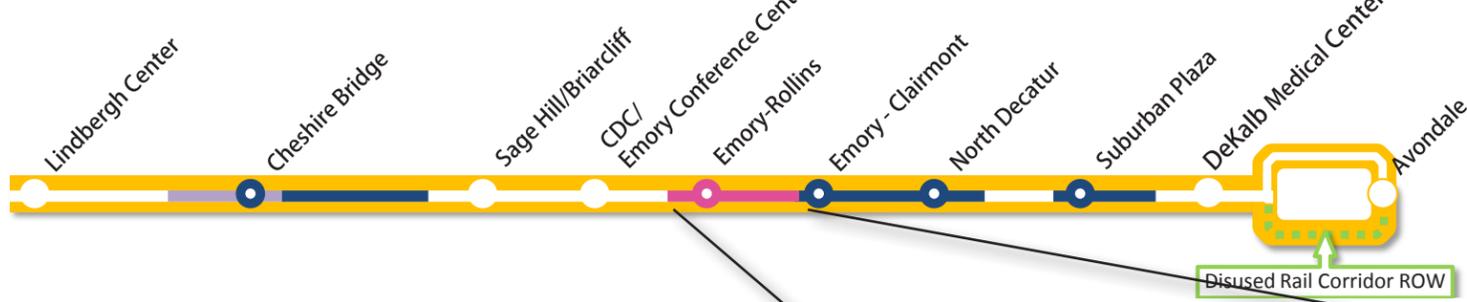


What Changes and Options to the LPA are Proposed?

The **Refined LPA** is along the same general alignment as the adopted LPA, but includes modifications to meet engineering design criteria.

An **At-Grade Option (1B)** represents a cost-competitive option for comparison to the LPA. The alignment is generally the same as the LPA from Lindbergh Center Station to Gatewood Drive. Option 1B however continues along Clifton Road to provide better access to the heart of the Emory University campus. The alignment then follows N. Decatur Road from Clifton Road to Scott Boulevard where it meets the LPA alignment. This option includes new at-grade stations at Lenox-Morningside, Emory Hospital and North Decatur.

Refined LPA



Clifton Corridor Light Rail Factoids

The Clifton Corridor Light Rail will generate more than 25,000 daily boardings by 2040.

By 2040, taking the light rail to the airport from Emory will take 45 minutes, which would be just as fast and convenient as driving there.

The reduction in automobile usage provides users with an annual savings of over \$2 million when considering fuel costs, auto insurance, and vehicle wear and tear.



Example aerial structure of Sound Transit Seattle, Washington



Example tunnel portal of MAX Light Rail, Portland, Oregon

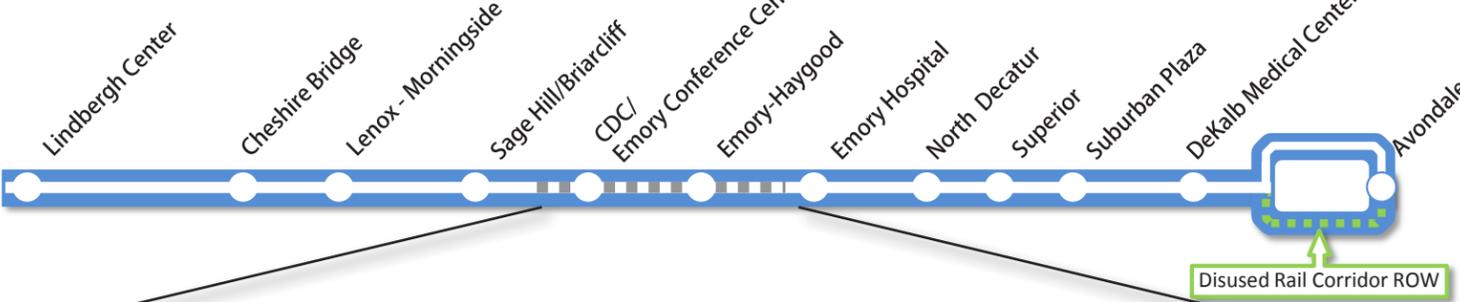
Legend:

- Locally Preferred Alternative (LPA) LRT 1
- Alignment Options 1B & 1C
- Disused Rail Corridor ROW
- Aerial Structure
- Tunnel
- New Tunnel
- Shared Lane
- At-Grade Station
- Elevated Station
- Underground Station

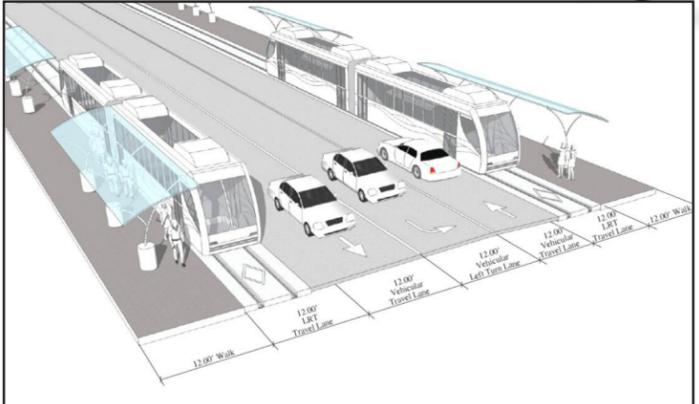
A **Tunnel Option (1C)** along Clifton Road and N. Decatur Road was developed to avoid traffic impacts. The alignment is generally the same as the at-grade option, but is in a tunnel from a point east of Old Briarcliff Road to a point just west of Superior Avenue. Underground stations are proposed at the CDC/Emory Conference Center, Emory Hospital and North Decatur at Clairmont; other stations are at-grade as described for Option 1B.

Another alignment consideration compatible with the LPA or Options 1B and 1C would extend from N. Decatur Road to Arcadia Avenue along a disused rail corridor right-of-way generally parallel to and east of DeKalb Industrial Way. This alignment would provide more direct access to the future DeKalb Farmers Market. Disposition of the railroad right-of-way is being researched.

At-Grade Option (1B)



Example on-street operation from Portland Streetcar, Oregon



Potential shared-lane option on Clifton Road

Tunnel Option (1C)

