

**ATLANTA BELTLINE  
CITY OF ATLANTA, FULTON  
COUNTY, GA**

**TIER 1 FINAL ENVIRONMENTAL  
IMPACT STATEMENT/  
SECTION 4(F) EVALUATION**

**U.S. Department of Transportation  
Federal Transit Administration  
and  
Metropolitan Atlanta Rapid Transit Authority**



**Submitted Pursuant to 42 U.S.C. 4332(2)(c),  
16 U.S.C. 470(f), and 49 U.S.C. 303**

**April 2012**

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**ATLANTA BELTLINE  
CITY OF ATLANTA, GEORGIA**

**TIER 1 FINAL ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT**

PREPARED PURSUANT TO:

National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, §102 (42 U.S.C. §4332); Federal Transit Laws (49 U.S.C. §5301(e), §5323(b) and §5324(b)); 49 U.S.C. §303 (formerly Department of Transportation Act of 1966, §4(f)); Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Act: A Legacy for Users (23 USC 139); National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, §106 (16 U.S.C. §470f); Executive Order 11990 (Protection of Wetlands); Executive Order 11988 (Floodplain Management); and Executive Order 12898 (Environmental Justice)

*by the*

FEDERAL TRANSIT ADMINISTRATION  
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

*and the*

METROPOLITAN ATLANTA RAPID TRANSIT AUTHORITY

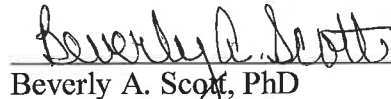
*with the cooperation of*

FEDERAL HIGHWAY ADMINISTRATION  
U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS  
U.S. ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY  
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4/26/2012  
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## ABSTRACT

The Federal Transit Administration (FTA) has prepared this Tier 1 Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) for the Atlanta BeltLine in the City of Atlanta, Fulton County, Georgia, in cooperation with the Metropolitan Atlanta Rapid Transit Authority (MARTA). The Atlanta BeltLine is a proposed fixed guideway transit and multi-use trails system within a corridor of approximately 22 miles encircling central Atlanta. Tiering of the EIS allowed the FTA and MARTA to focus on those decisions that are ready for this level of National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) analysis to support future right-of-way (ROW) preservation. Those decisions included the selection of either Modern Streetcar or Light Rail Transit technology; selection of a general alignment of new transit and trails; and establishment of the ROW needs.

This FEIS provides an assessment of the Preferred Transit and Trail Alternative alignments and Modern Streetcar mode that was selected by the FTA and MARTA as the Preferred Alternative at the conclusion of the Tier I Draft EIS (DEIS). Ten transit and trail Build Alternatives and a No-Build Alternative were evaluated in the Tier 1 DEIS. The No-Build Alternative was also considered in this FEIS; it is a baseline alternative that provides a basis of comparison with the Preferred Alternative. The Tier 1 FEIS also identifies strategies for avoiding or minimizing environmental impacts as the Atlanta BeltLine project design advances.

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A 30-day period has been established for comments on this document. Written comments should be submitted to Janide Sidifall at the address provided above.



# **ATLANTA BELTLINE CORRIDOR ENVIRONMENTAL STUDY**

## **TIER 1 FINAL ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT**

**Prepared for:  
Atlanta BeltLine, Inc.  
and  
Metropolitan Atlanta Rapid Transit Authority**

**Prepared by:  
AECOM/JJG Joint Venture  
Atlanta, GA**

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**General Planning Consultant Services RFP P5413**

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## 0.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Federal Transit Administration (FTA), an administration of the U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT), has prepared this Tier 1 Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) for the Atlanta BeltLine in the City of Atlanta, Fulton County, Georgia. It was prepared in cooperation with the Metropolitan Atlanta Rapid Transit Authority (MARTA), which operates and maintains bus and rail transit service in the Atlanta region. MARTA is working in partnership with Atlanta BeltLine, Inc. (ABI), the City of Atlanta's implementation agent for the overall Atlanta BeltLine project, to advance transit and trail components through the EIS.

### 0.1 Document Purpose

This Tier 1 FEIS examines the Preferred Transit and Trail Alternatives selected by the project sponsors after considering the analyses in the Tier 1 DEIS and the comments on the DEIS that were received during the Tier 1 DEIS public comment period. The Preferred Transit and Trail Alternatives were evaluated along with the other alternatives in the Tier 1 DEIS.

Tiering of the EIS allowed the FTA and MARTA to focus on those decisions that are ready for this level of National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) analysis to support future right-of-way (ROW) preservation. These decisions included the following:

- Selection of either Modern Streetcar (SC) or Light Rail Transit (LRT) technology as the transit mode;
- Selection of a general alignment of new transit and trails; and
- Establishment of the ROW needs.

Subsequent analysis will occur in a Tier 2 NEPA process, which will refine the preferred transit and trail alignments to achieve the most cost-effective investment while avoiding or minimizing potential adverse environmental effects; identify and assess trail design elements, transit station locations, vehicle types, storage facilities, site-specific impacts, and mitigation measures for impacts that cannot be avoided. Future Tier 2 NEPA activities will take place under a separate action.

This Tier 1 FEIS consists of two documents: the main body of the FEIS with an Executive Summary, and the Appendices A through J. Appendix A is a Technical Memorandum that supports this main document with technical data and methodologies. Appendix F contains the comments on the DEIS received during the public comment period and the project sponsors' responses. The remaining Appendices contain supporting information.

### 0.2 Proposed Action

The Atlanta BeltLine is a proposed fixed guideway transit and multi-use trails system within a corridor of approximately 22 miles. The proposed transit and trails elements of the Atlanta BeltLine are part of a comprehensive economic development effort combining greenspace, trails, transit, and new development along historic rail segments that encircle central Atlanta. The combination of the following elements is intended to attract and organize some of the region's future growth around the corridor: transportation, affordable housing, Brownfield redevelopment, land use, historic preservation, parks and

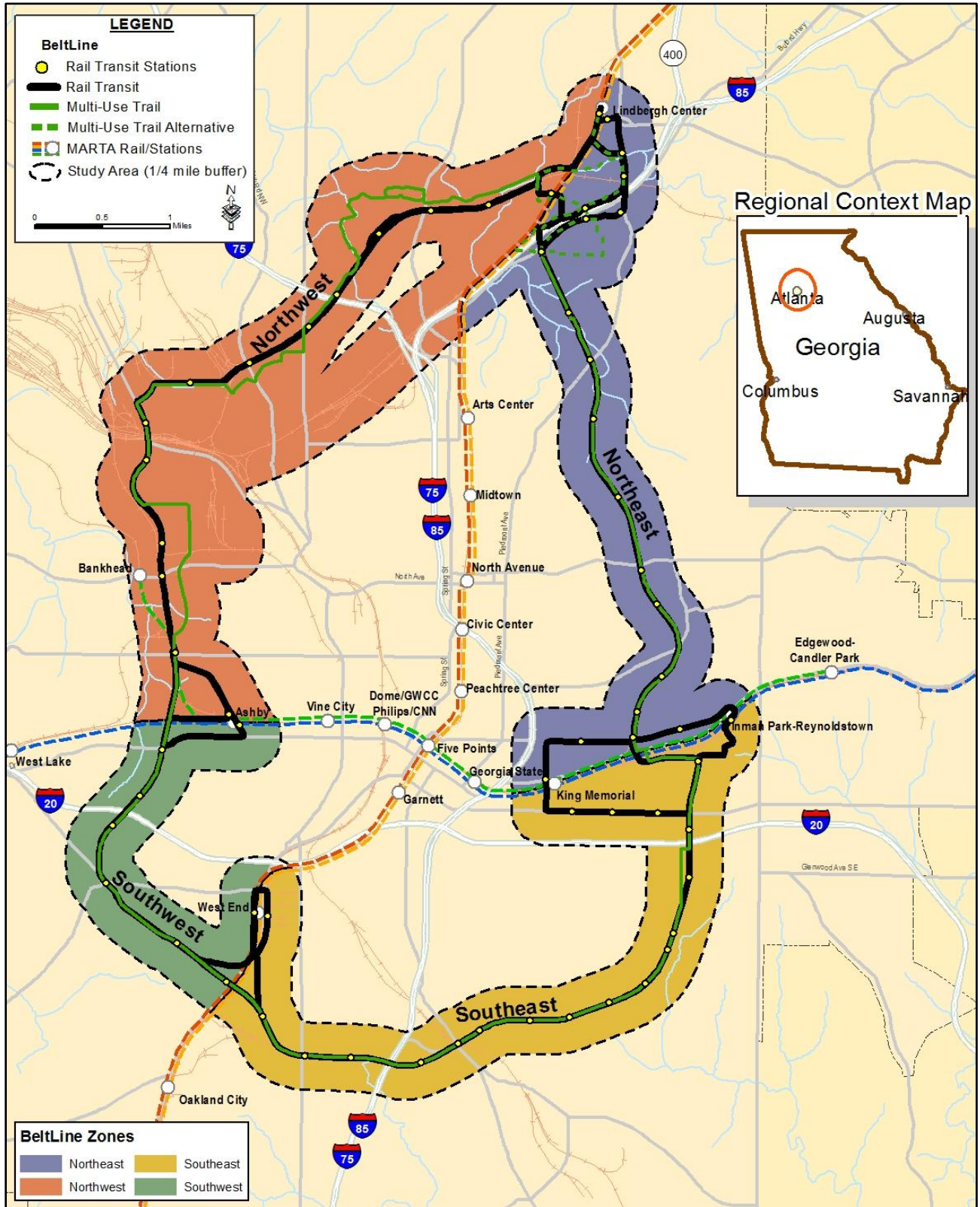
recreation, and economic development. It is anticipated that the Atlanta BeltLine will help reduce regional sprawl in the coming decades and lead to a livable Atlanta with an enhanced quality of life and sustained economic growth.

## **0.2.1 Study Area Description**

The Atlanta BeltLine study area is defined as ¼-mile on each side of the five existing or former railroad corridors that, together, encircle central Atlanta. Collectively, these railroad corridors form a circuit that intersects existing MARTA rail corridors near six stations: Lindbergh Center, Inman Park/Reynoldstown, King Memorial, West End, Bankhead, and Ashby. The study area is made up of four geographic zones: northeast, southeast, southwest, and northwest. Figure 0-1 illustrates the Atlanta BeltLine study area; the zones are distinguished by color shading.



Figure 0-1: Atlanta BeltLine Study Area Map



Source: AECOM/JJG Joint Venture

## **0.3 Purpose and Need**

### **0.3.1 Problem Statement**

The City of Atlanta is challenged to meet its mobility, housing, and economic development needs by its uneven and low-density growth patterns, a lack of affordable housing, deficiencies of transportation connectivity across all modes, underutilization of existing transportation resources, and limited transit, bicycle, and pedestrian options to address travel needs. Individually, each of these issues contributes to reduced quality of life, mobility, and economic competitiveness. Together, they are a severe impediment to creating sustainable growth and a vibrant livable community in the years to come. If the City is to address these problems proactively, a comprehensive and progressive solution is required to integrate land use, economic development, social, and transportation needs holistically.

Mobility and access in the study area are challenged by a fragmented and discontinuous transportation network and a lack of transit, bicycle, and pedestrian options. These transit and non-motorized conditions are particularly evident when travel between communities and neighborhoods within the City is attempted. These local trips are the dominant type of travel in the City, and are most often accomplished by personal automobile. Transportation-related problems caused by these deficiencies include limited access and mobility, increased travel times, and roadway congestion. These problems also contribute to a lack of economic opportunity at the individual, communitywide, and citywide levels.

### **0.3.2 Project Purpose**

The purpose of the transportation elements of the Atlanta BeltLine project is to improve access and mobility for existing and future residents and workers by increasing in-city transit and bicycle/pedestrian options, and providing links in and between those networks. In addition to its transportation purpose, the Atlanta BeltLine has a land use and economic development component that is intended to stimulate economic activity and structure growth.

### **0.3.3 Project Needs**

#### ***Population and Employment Growth***

Population in the City of Atlanta is projected to increase to 602,700, a 26 percent increase, by 2030. The study area population is projected to increase by 26 percent to a population of 97,900 during the same period. In the City, employment is projected to increase by about 136,000 jobs, or 34 percent by 2030. These data point to a need to provide public transit improvements to accommodate growing population and employment in the study area.

#### ***Environmental Justice and Transit-Dependent Populations***

Compared to Fulton County, the study area contains relatively high percentages of minority and low-income populations that qualify as environmental justice populations, as well as populations without access to automobiles. Public transportation options are often critical to the mobility of these population groups. This indicates a need to provide public transit and bicycle/pedestrian options in those areas where environmental justice populations have been identified in the study area.

### ***Land Use and Economic Development***

Over the past 30 years, Atlanta's real estate development pattern has been skewed to the northern and eastern zones of the City. Much of this activity has been dominated by low-density, auto-centric development, such as single-family and townhouse residential development. Meanwhile, in the southeast and southwest zones, little to no development occurred during the same period. Market and demographic analyses show that without intervention these trends are set to continue into the future.

If the existing low-density land use patterns and skewed development trends continue, this may lead to increased roadway congestion, decreased mobility, and a reduced quality of life in the northwest and northeast zones, while doing nothing to address the lack of economic opportunities and quality of life issues, or make use of infrastructure capacity and redevelopment opportunities in the southeast and southwest zones. Thus, there is a need to increase transportation options in parallel with making changes in land use and development patterns in the study area to improve economic opportunities and quality of life.

### ***Effects of Growth on Transportation System***

The Transit Planning Board (TPB) *Concept 3 Creating and Realizing the Regional Transit Vision Final Technical Report* (2008) states, "Congestion is the greatest threat to Atlanta's continued economic growth." Planned improvement of transportation facilities could contribute to the reduction of congestion when implemented in conjunction with greater density of development within central Atlanta.

*Connect Atlanta* (Atlanta, 2008) found the average car trip originating in the City is only 5.5 miles and that 35 percent of these trips have destinations in the City. Travel patterns within the study area are expected to remain primarily short trips between neighborhoods, commercial, employment, activity centers, and MARTA rail stations. These trips include a combination of home-to-work based trips and non-work trips. These growth forecasts and travel patterns present a need to expand public transit and bicycle/pedestrian options in the study area.

## **0.4 Alternatives Considered in this FEIS**

As a continuation of the planning process for the Atlanta BeltLine Corridor, the FEIS considers and compares the potential effects of the Preferred Alternatives with a No-Build Alternative. Each of these is described below.

### **No-Build Alternative**

The No-Build Alternative is a baseline alternative retained in the Tier 1 FEIS in order to provide a basis of comparison with the Preferred Alternatives. The No-Build Alternative includes the following components:

- The existing transportation system including roadways, transit service, and trails;
- All programmed transportation projects in the Atlanta Regional Commission's (ARC's) constrained *Envision6* Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) and the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) covering fiscal years 2008 through 2013, except for the Atlanta BeltLine transit and trails; and

- The trail improvements that the City of Atlanta and ABI have already constructed or committed to be constructed, although some are elements of the Atlanta BeltLine.

### **Preferred Alternatives**

Based on the analysis presented in the Tier 1 DEIS and the input received as part of the public involvement process, including the comments received during the DEIS public comment period, FTA and MARTA have determined that the D-Marietta Boulevard SC Transit Build Alternative [adjacent to, but outside of the CSX ROW] is the best performing and was selected as the Preferred Transit Alternative. FTA and MARTA have determined that the best performing and Preferred Trail Alternative is a hybrid of the Marietta Boulevard Trail Alternative and the On-Street Trail Alternative, using the best features of each. It is important to note that this is not a new trail, but a combination of alignments that were each studied in the Tier 1 DEIS. Figure 0-2 shows the location of the Preferred Alternatives.

The project sponsors considered the input heard from the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) and Stakeholder Advisory Committee (SAC) and the public during the DEIS as well as the results of the DEIS analysis of the Build and No-Build Alternatives prior to selecting the Preferred Alternatives. The committee and public input played a particularly strong role in the decision-making process as it emphasized some of the differences observed among the alternatives in the DEIS analysis and highlighted the importance of those differences to the community. The factors weighting the decision to select the Preferred Transit and Trails Alternatives included the fact that the use of Railroad ROW in the northwest zone is uncertain in the Tier 1 phase and that the Preferred Alternatives would:

- Provide connectivity to the most parks, neighborhoods, other transit and trails, BeltLine Tax Allocation District (TAD) acreage, and key destinations in the northwest zone such as Bankhead MARTA Rail Station, Westside Park, Atlantic Station, and Piedmont Hospital;
- Provide the most northerly access to Peachtree Street;
- Minimize private property impacts by placing alignments in existing transportation rights-of-way; and
- Reach the largest area underserved by rail transit.

### ***Preferred Mode Choice***

The initial screening analysis completed by MARTA in 2007 identified Light Rail Transit (LRT) and Modern Streetcar (SC) as viable technologies. The project sponsors performed conceptual engineering analyses to support the DEIS that took into consideration alignments within all four zones as well as MARTA Station Connectivity and Infill Station Alternative Area design considerations. The outcome of these analyses is that either mode can be accommodated throughout the corridor.

However, further examination of mode performance in terms of system, vehicle and infrastructure characteristics, as well as community desires determined that SC would be the most appropriate mode for the Atlanta BeltLine project. SC can be implemented at a generally lower capital cost while its shorter vehicle lengths provide greater flexibility than LRT in navigating the constrained geometry of the alignments. SC may also result in fewer noise, vibration, and land use impacts. In addition, SC is better adapted to the

Atlanta BeltLine operating plan that calls for frequent stops. For these reasons, SC is FTA and MARTA's preferred mode technology for the Atlanta BeltLine project.

***Preferred Alternatives Preliminary Cost Estimate***

The cost estimates for the Preferred Alternatives is broken into two categories: capital cost, which is the initial construction costs; and operation and maintenance (O&M) costs, which is the annual cost for running the proposed system. The preliminary cost estimates will be further refined in subsequent stages of project planning and engineering design as project elements are rendered in greater detail.

The preliminary capital cost estimate (in 2009 dollars) for the Preferred Transit Alternative is approximately \$1,611 million, or about \$66 million per mile constructed. The preliminary capital cost estimate for constructing the Preferred Trail Alternative is \$100.4 million, or approximately \$4.6 million per mile.

The preliminary O&M costs for the Preferred Transit Alternative is \$14.49 million.





## 0.5 Potential Effects

The Preferred Alternatives will provide more benefits to the community and region as a whole than the No-Build Alternative. A full summary of the potential effects of both the Preferred Alternatives and the No-Build Alternative are available in Section 3.0 of this FEIS; however, a brief summary of highlights is provided below:

- When compared to the No-Build, the Preferred Alternatives will make the following improvements:
  - Improve travel time savings
  - Connect to more existing and planned transit projects
  - Connect areas currently separated by natural and man-made boundaries
  - Provide connections between activity centers
  - Increase public greenspace and access to existing public greenspace
  - Improve pedestrian and bicycle access between activity centers and near potential station locations
  - Provide access to more acres of underutilized land
  - Serve more economic development focus areas
  - Support long-term economic sustainability of the region
  - Improve connections to neighborhoods and community facilities
  - Save more energy and vehicle miles
- When compared to the No-Build, the Preferred Alternatives will address the following concerns during the Tier 2 analysis:
  - Possible disruption to freight service in the southeast corridor
  - Possible delays to buses and the general traffic where in-street alignments are used
  - Potential market effects on low-income housing and industrial properties
  - Potential noise and vibration impacts on all residents in the southeast and southwest, including Environmental Justice populations
  - Potential effects to historic resources and resources protected by Section 4(f) of the USDOT Act
  - Potential effects to known hazardous material sites
  - Potential effects of stream-crossings, wetland impacts and stormwater run-off

## 0.6 Public Involvement and Agency Coordination

Key public involvement activities are reported in Appendix A: FEIS/ 4(f) Technical Memorandum, Chapter 7.0. They included a NEPA-compliant Scoping process, public workshops, community group and organization meetings, and agency coordination in the forms of a Technical Advisory Committee (TAC), Stakeholder Advisory Committee (SAC), and other agency meetings. In addition, the project sponsors have provided a website for the exchange of project-related information.

Public comments received during the Public Comment period can be grouped into several general categories described in Table 0-1 below. Each comment is addressed by the Project Sponsors in Appendix F: Comments Received During the Public Comment Period. FTA and MARTA considered input received during the public involvement process prior to selecting the Preferred Transit and Trail Alternatives.

**Table 0-1: Summary of Comments Received During Public Comment Period**

<b>Comment Category</b>	<b>Content</b>
Documentation Request	Request for information or draft document
Planning Process	Comments that relate to the EIS planning process and previous or ongoing planning efforts around the Atlanta BeltLine project
Environmental Justice/ Public Involvement Process	Requests for further outreach, or comments related to types of outreach included in the planning process
Agency Coordination	Requests for ongoing and additional agency coordination
Opposed to the Project	Comments in opposition to the Atlanta BeltLine project as a whole
General Support for the Project	Comments in support for the Atlanta BeltLine and the planning efforts surrounding the project
Support for a Specific Technology or Alignment	Comments in support of LRT or SC; comments in support of specific trail and transit alignments reviewed in the Tier 1 EIS process
Alternate Technology or Alignment Suggestions	Suggestions of alternative technologies to LRT or SC, alternative alignments for transit or trail, or additional trail connections and MARTA station connections
Community Impacts	Comments from neighborhood associations, or comments about general community impacts
Environmental Impacts	Comments about the quality of the existing environment or comments concerning potential impacts of the project
Cost Estimates/ Funding	Request for cost estimates and comments regarding funding sources
Agency Comments	Official comments from affected agencies are covered by the other categories in this table
No Comment	Agency or association decided to not make an official comment



## 0.7 Issues to Be Resolved

The Tier 1 EIS process enabled the project sponsors to select a transit mode as well as transit and trail alignments. As described in this FEIS, the Tier 2 analysis will evaluate the Preferred Alternatives in greater detail, focusing on decisions regarding:

- Transit and trail alignments in Station Connectivity Areas;
- Connections to existing or potential infill MARTA stations;
- Stop locations and ROW designs;
- The operating plan using refined ridership and travel forecasts;
- In-street operating conditions;
- The location of maintenance and storage facility site(s);
- The detailed environmental analyses, with ongoing efforts to avoid or minimize impacts and developing mitigation where appropriate;
- The refined engineering design for transit and trails, right-of-way needs, cost estimates and a financing plan; and
- Continued public and agency involvement as required by NEPA.

## 0.8 Next Steps

The Tier 1 FEIS process includes a 30-day period for review and comment on the FEIS document. The FTA will consider comments received as it prepares a Record of Decision (ROD). The ROD will either approve or deny the Atlanta BeltLine Preferred Alternatives. It will also state that the NEPA process for the Atlanta BeltLine is not complete until the project sponsors undertake and complete Tier 2 analysis.

The Tier 2 analysis will refine the preferred transit and trail alignments to achieve the most cost-effective investment while avoiding or minimizing potential adverse environmental effects; identify and assess trail design elements, transit station locations, vehicle types, storage facilities, site-specific impacts, and mitigation measures for impacts that cannot be avoided.

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## 1.0 PURPOSE AND NEED

The Federal Transit Administration (FTA), an administration of the U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT), has prepared this Tier 1 Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) for the Atlanta BeltLine in the City of Atlanta, Fulton County, Georgia. It was prepared in cooperation with the Metropolitan Atlanta Rapid Transit Authority (MARTA), which operates and maintains bus and rail transit service in the City of Atlanta as well as Fulton and DeKalb Counties. MARTA is working in partnership with Atlanta BeltLine, Inc. (ABI), the City of Atlanta's implementation agent for the overall Atlanta BeltLine project, to advance transit and trail components through the EIS.

### 1.1.1 Document Purpose

This Tier 1 FEIS examines the Preferred Transit and Trail Alternatives selected by the project sponsors after considering the analyses in the Tier 1 DEIS and the comments on the DEIS that were received during the Tier 1 DEIS public comment period. The Preferred Alternatives were evaluated along with other alternatives in the Tier 1 DEIS.

Tiering of the EIS is allowing the FTA and MARTA to focus on those decisions that are ready for this level of National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) analysis to support future right-of-way (ROW) preservation. These decisions included the following:

- Selection of either Modern Streetcar (SC) or Light Rail Transit (LRT) technology as the transit mode;
- Selection of a general alignment of new transit and trails; and
- Establishment of the ROW needs.

Subsequent analysis will occur in a Tier 2 NEPA process, which will refine the preferred transit and trail alignments to achieve the most cost-effective investment while avoiding or minimizing potential adverse environmental effects; identify and assess trail design elements, transit station locations, vehicle types, storage facilities, site-specific impacts, and mitigation measures for impacts that cannot be avoided. Future Tier 2 NEPA activities will take place under a separate action.

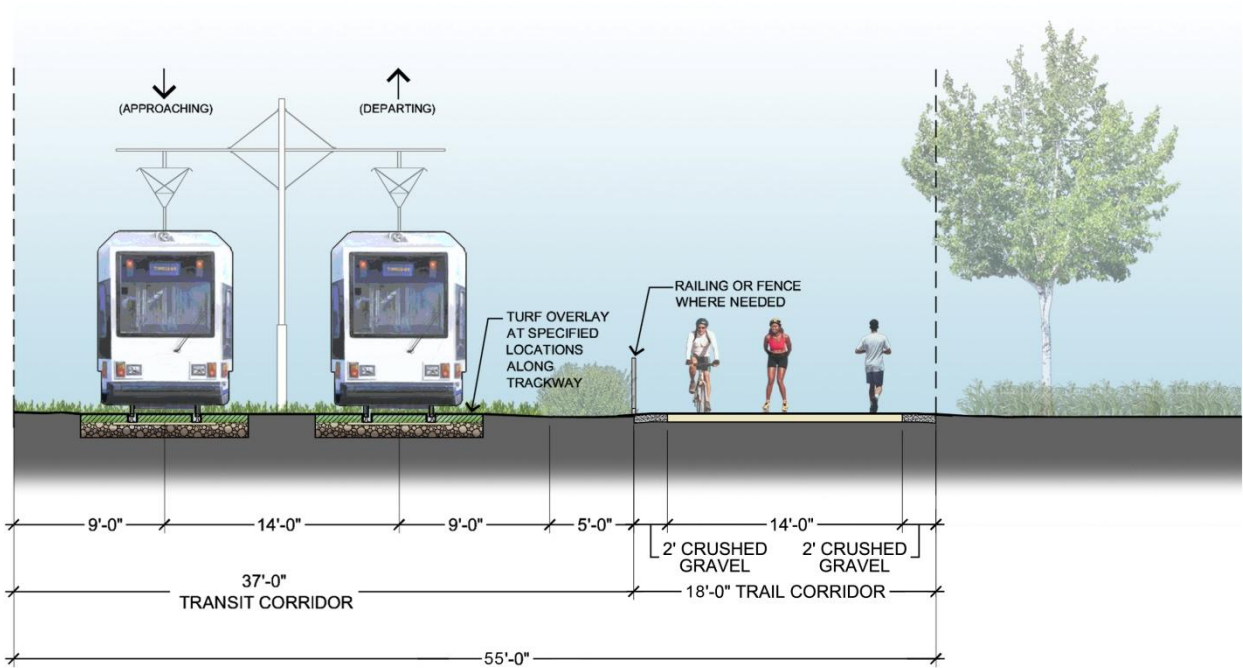
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## 1.2 Proposed Action

The Atlanta BeltLine is a proposed fixed guideway transit and multi-use trails system within a corridor of approximately 22 miles. Figure 1-1 illustrates the typical cross-section of the Preferred Alternative. The proposed transit and trails elements of the Atlanta BeltLine are part of a comprehensive economic development effort combining greenspace, trails, transit, and new development along historic rail segments that encircle central Atlanta. The combination of the following elements is intended to attract and organize some of the region's future growth around the corridor: transportation,

affordable housing, Brownfield redevelopment, land use, historic preservation, parks and recreation, and economic development. It is anticipated that the Atlanta BeltLine will help reduce regional sprawl in the coming decades and lead to a livable Atlanta with an enhanced quality of life and sustained economic growth.

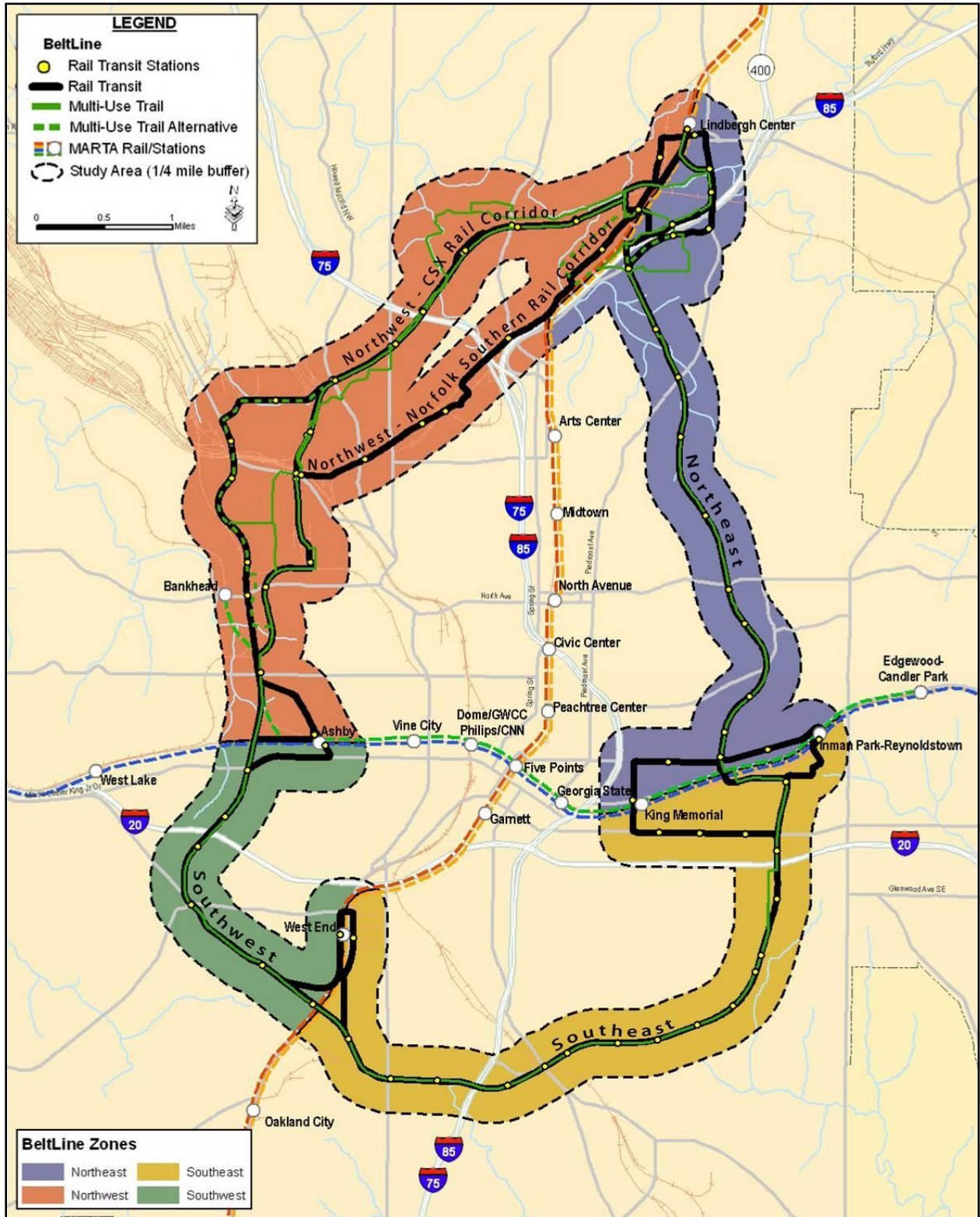
**Figure 1-1: Typical Section of the BeltLine Trail and Transit**



### 1.2.1 Study Area Description

The Atlanta BeltLine study area is defined as ¼-mile on each side of the five existing or former railroad corridors that, together, encircle central Atlanta: the Decatur Belt, the Atlanta and West Point Railroad (A&WP) Beltline, the Louisville and Nashville Railroad (L&N) Beltline, the CSX Corridor, and the Norfolk Southern Corridor. Collectively, these railroad corridors form a circuit that intersects existing MARTA rail corridors near six stations: Lindbergh Center, Inman Park/Reynoldstown, King Memorial, West End, Bankhead, and Ashby. The study area is made up of four geographic zones: northeast, southeast, southwest, and northwest. Figure 1-2 illustrates the Atlanta BeltLine study area; the zones are distinguished by color shading.

Figure 1-2: Atlanta BeltLine Study Area Map



Source: AECOM/JJG Joint Venture

## 1.3 Purpose and Need

### 1.3.1 Problem Statement

The City of Atlanta is challenged to meet its mobility, housing, and economic development needs by its uneven and low-density growth patterns, a lack of affordable housing, deficiencies of transportation connectivity across all modes, underutilization of existing transportation resources, and limited transit, bicycle, and pedestrian options to address travel needs. Individually, each of these issues contributes to reduced quality of life, mobility, and economic competitiveness. Together, they are a severe impediment to creating sustainable growth and a vibrant, livable community in the years to come. If the City is to address these problems proactively, a comprehensive and progressive solution is required to integrate land use, economic development, social, and transportation needs holistically.

Mobility and access in the study area are challenged by a fragmented and discontinuous transportation network and a lack of transit, bicycle, and pedestrian options as follows:

- The existing transportation network is frequently fragmented by major physical barriers including active and abandoned railroad lines and yards and interstate highways. It is also characterized by discontinuous local roadway, bicycle, and pedestrian networks, and superblock development patterns. These deficiencies are particularly acute adjacent to the proposed Atlanta BeltLine corridors where the continuity of the transportation network is broken by: 1) the numerous large tracts of underutilized industrial land that lack an urban transportation grid; and 2) the high density of railroad ROW and related facilities that have few existing crossings.
- There is a lack of connections between these limited transit options in the study area. The existing rail and bus transit network provides limited coverage and connectivity in the study area and is focused primarily on providing service to the Central Business District (CBD) rather than circulation within the study area or to other activity centers in the City.
- Stops on the existing rail service are infrequent within the study area forcing most study area residents to access rail via a bus transfer, driving or walking.
- Non-motorized access options are also limited as a result of discontinuous or absent links in the City's pedestrian and bicycle network, making walk access to activity centers and the rail and bus system challenging.

These transit and non-motorized conditions are particularly evident when travel between communities and neighborhoods within the City is attempted. These local trips are the dominant type of travel in the City, and are most often accomplished by personal automobile. Transportation-related problems caused by these deficiencies include limited access and mobility, increased travel times, and roadway congestion. These problems also contribute to a lack of economic opportunity at the individual, communitywide, and citywide levels.

### 1.3.2 Project Purpose

The purpose of the transportation elements of the Atlanta BeltLine project is to improve access and mobility for existing and future residents and workers by increasing in-city transit and bicycle/pedestrian options, and providing links in and between those networks. In addition to its transportation purpose, the Atlanta BeltLine has a land use and economic development component that is intended to stimulate economic activity and structure growth.

### 1.3.3 Project Needs

#### ***Population and Employment Growth***

Population in the City of Atlanta is projected to increase to 602,700, a 26 percent increase, by 2030. The study area population is projected to increase by 26 percent to a population of 97,900 during the same period. In the City, employment is projected to increase by about 136,000 jobs, or 34 percent by 2030. The study area employment is projected to increase by 66 percent to over 82,000. These data point to a need to provide public transit improvements to accommodate growing population and employment in the study area.

#### ***Environmental Justice and Transit-Dependent Populations***

Compared to Fulton County, the study area contains relatively high percentages of minority and low-income populations that qualify as environmental justice populations, as well as populations without access to automobiles. Public transportation options are often critical to the mobility of these population groups. This indicates a need to provide public transit and bicycle/pedestrian options in those areas where environmental justice populations have been identified in the study area.

#### ***Land Use and Economic Development***

Over the past 30 years, Atlanta's real estate development pattern has been skewed to the northern and eastern zones of the City. Much of this activity has been dominated by low-density, auto-centric development, such as single-family and townhouse residential development. Meanwhile, in the southeast and southwest zones, little to no development occurred during the same period. Market and demographic analyses show that without intervention these trends are set to continue into the future (see Section 3.5.2 of the FEIS Technical Memorandum in Appendix A for a description of the demographic trends in the study area).

The effect of this development pattern has been to generate a large number of both work and non-work vehicle trips to and within the northeast and northwest zones, creating congestion and impaired mobility that reduces quality of life and limits the potential of the available development sites to be re-purposed to a higher intensity use. In the southeast and southwest zones, development patterns have generated relatively stable or declining travel demands. This has resulted in low congestion levels, reduced job opportunities and economic vitality, and a large number of prime redevelopment sites that are impaired by the low level of market demand and surrounding blight.

If the existing low-density land use patterns and skewed development trends continue, this may lead to increased roadway congestion, decreased mobility, and a reduced quality of life in the northwest and northeast zones, while doing nothing to address the lack of economic opportunities and quality of life issues, or make use of infrastructure



capacity and redevelopment opportunities in the southeast and southwest zones. Thus, there is a need to increase transportation options in parallel with making changes in land use and development patterns in the study area to improve economic opportunities and quality of life.

***Effects of Growth on Transportation System***

The Transit Planning Board (TPB) *Concept 3 Creating and Realizing the Regional Transit Vision Final Technical Report* (2008) states, “Congestion is the greatest threat to Atlanta’s continued economic growth.” Planned improvement of transportation facilities could contribute to the reduction of congestion when implemented in conjunction with greater density of development within central Atlanta.

*Connect Atlanta* (Atlanta, 2008) found the average car trip originating in the City is only 5.5 miles and that 35 percent of these trips have destinations in the City. Travel patterns within the study area are expected to remain primarily short trips between neighborhoods, commercial, employment, activity centers, and MARTA rail stations. These trips include a combination of home-to-work based trips and non-work trips. These growth forecasts and travel patterns present a need to expand public transit and bicycle/pedestrian options in the study area.

## **2.0 EVALUATION OF ALTERNATIVES**

### **2.1 Alternatives Considered**

The Atlanta BeltLine transit and trails project has its origins in the City's greenway plans from the early 1990's and a "Cultural Ring" concept that was refined by architect Ryan Gravel in his 1999 Master's thesis at the Georgia Institute of Technology titled, "Belt Line Atlanta, Design of Infrastructure as a Reflection of Public Policy," with transit supportive land use and pedestrian-oriented urban design principles. In March 2005, MARTA completed the *Inner Core Transit Feasibility Study*. The study results indicated that a transit investment in the Inner Core area, inclusive of the Atlanta BeltLine study area, is feasible and could improve neighborhood connectivity, complement the existing MARTA rail system, support the redevelopment efforts within the study area, and capture new riders over the entire system.

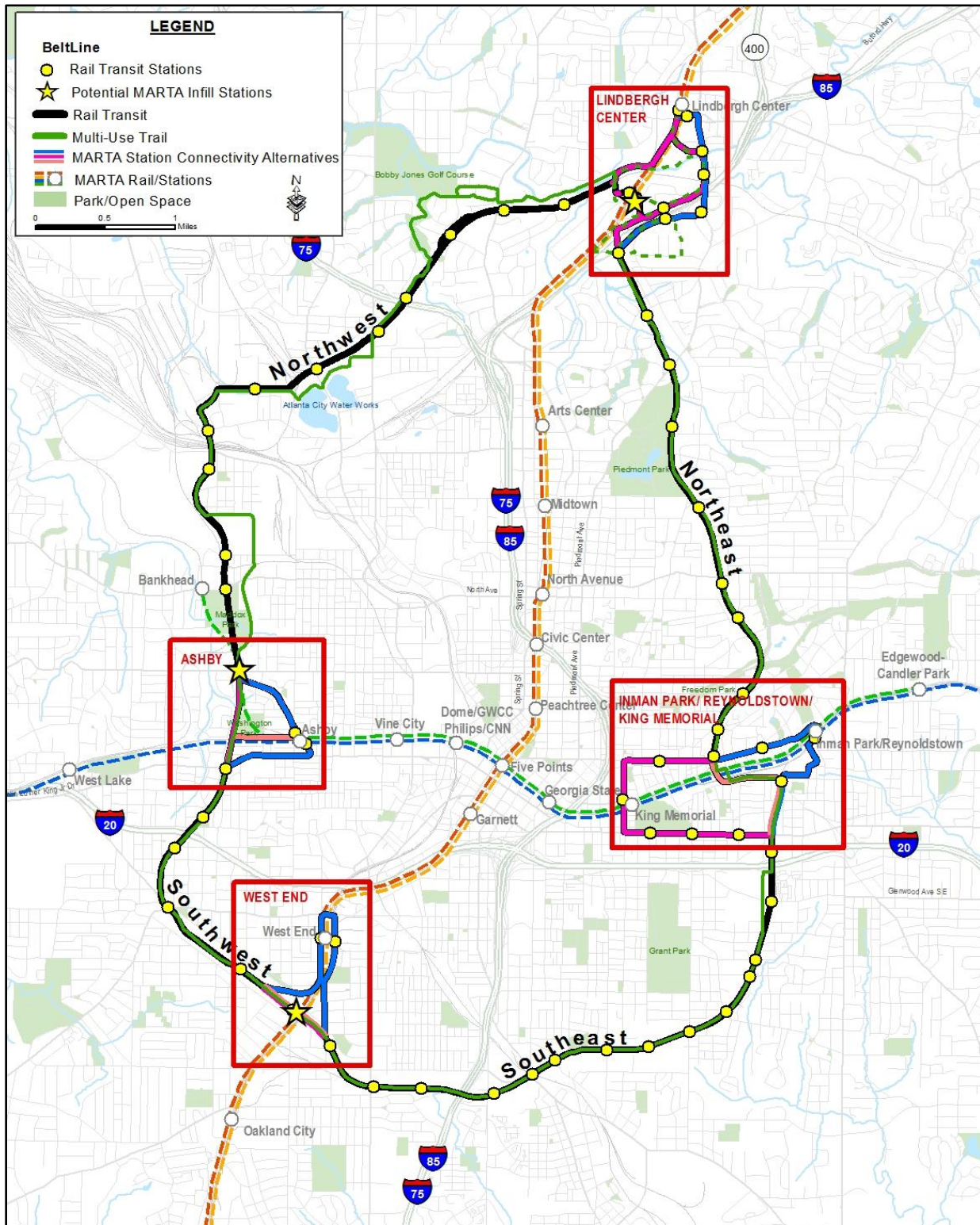
In January 2007, MARTA completed the *Inner Core BeltLine Alternatives Analysis Detailed Screening Results* for the Atlanta BeltLine. At the conclusion of the analysis, the MARTA Board of Directors selected the B3 Alternative (Lindbergh-to-Lindbergh Loop via Inman Park/Reynoldstown) to advance to the Tier 1 DEIS.

Subsequent to completion of the initial screening phase, FTA and MARTA advanced the alternatives development and evaluation for the Atlanta BeltLine by initiating the NEPA process. The full range of alternatives that emerged from the Scoping phase of the NEPA process was subject to the subsequent feasibility screening to identify viable options for consideration in the Tier 1 DEIS and more detailed evaluations. The feasibility screening considered criteria such as potential physical constraints and constructability, operational constraints, ROW availability, potential for substantial negative environmental effects, and order of magnitude costs. Additionally, ABI has been completing a series of Atlanta BeltLine Subarea Master Plans for the areas around the Atlanta BeltLine to provide a framework for transit supportive land use, connectivity, and greenspace expansion.

#### **2.1.1 Alternatives Assessed in the Tier 1 DEIS**

The Transit Build Alternatives reviewed in the Tier 1 DEIS are shown in Figure 2-1. (A description of these is available in Section 2.2.2 of Appendix A: FEIS/ 4(f) Technical Memorandum.) Some or all transit alternatives share certain characteristics, such as the need for coordination with the freight railroads; however, other characteristics or constraints, such as connections to key destinations or the amount of in-street running alignment, set the alternatives apart from one another.

Figure 2-1: Transit and Trail Build Alternatives



Source: AECOM 2011

The Tier 1 DEIS evaluated each of the Build Alternatives to compare its responsiveness to project goals and objectives set forth in the purpose and need described in Section 1-4 and Table 2-1 below.

**Table 2-1: Atlanta BeltLine Goals, Objectives, and Performance Measures**

Goals/Objectives	Performance Measures
<b>Goal 1: Contribute to an integrated regional multi-modal transportation network that promotes seamless intermodal connectivity, increases community access to existing transit and trails networks, and improves reliability of personal travel.</b>	
Increase access to the existing regional transit system.	Maximize number of connections to peak period express buses per hour
Improve transit and trail connections to the existing rail and bus network.	Maximize number of direct connections to MARTA rail stations
	Maximize number of direct connections to peak hour local buses
	Maximize number of direct connections to other trails
Minimize travel times to points accessible from the rail and bus network.	Maximize improvement in travel times for typical trips between various major trip generators, economic development focus areas, and communities
Improve accessibility and connectivity among existing neighborhoods and to major destinations and employment centers.	Maximize population within ½-mile of proposed transit station locations
	Maximize employment within ½-mile of proposed transit station locations
	Maximize number of Atlanta BeltLine activity centers within ½-mile of proposed transit station locations
Minimize transfers and mode changes per trip.	Minimize number of transfers required for a typical trip between major trip origin and destination points
Increase transit options for transit-dependent, low-income, and minority populations.	Maximize service to low-income population within ½-mile of proposed transit station locations
	Maximize service to minority population within ½-mile of proposed transit station locations
	Maximize service to zero-car households within ½-mile of proposed transit station locations
	Maximize service to population over 65 within ½-mile of proposed transit station locations
	Maximize service to disabled population within ½-mile of proposed transit station locations
	Minimize potential for disproportionate adverse impacts to low-income, minority, and zero-car populations
<b>Goal 2: Manage and encourage the growth and economic development of the City, region, and state by providing transit and transportation improvements to areas designated for growth.</b>	
Support redevelopment and revitalization efforts in the Atlanta BeltLine Tax Allocation District (TAD).	Maximize areas of TAD land within ½-mile of proposed transit station locations
	Maximize service to <i>Atlanta BeltLine Five-Year Work Plan's</i> 20 economic development focus areas
	Maximize compatibility with the Atlanta BeltLine Subarea Master Plans and <i>Atlanta BeltLine Redevelopment Plan</i> based on urban design character, station locations, alignments, and connection points
Support the City of Atlanta's and other regional economic development initiatives as well as growth management policies.	Maximize consistency with future land use plans
Support the redevelopment of Brownfields sites for transit-oriented development.	Maximize connections with <i>Connect Atlanta</i> Comprehensive Transportation Plan (all modes) and TPB <i>Concept 3</i> regional transit vision
<b>Goal 3: Preserve and revitalize neighborhoods and business districts with context sensitive design of transit and trails, increased accessibility to mobility options, provision of affordable housing and transportation, and other community benefits.</b>	Maximize service to areas of underutilized industrial land within ½-mile of proposed transit station locations (potential Brownfields)
Minimize impact of existing residents and businesses.	Minimize potential right-of-way needed (acres potentially affected)
Encourage high quality, dense, and sustainable residential mixed-use and mixed-income urban development.	Maximize service to TAD areas with higher development capacity of underutilized or undeveloped land as defined by the Atlanta BeltLine Subarea Master Plans and/or the <i>Atlanta BeltLine Redevelopment Plan</i> within ½-mile of proposed transit station locations

Goals/Objectives	Performance Measures
Enhance the human and natural environment through context sensitive design of transit and trails.	Optimize appropriateness of the scale of transit mode and stop requirements for existing neighborhoods and communities Maximize positive human health impacts
Maintain or enhance the character and cohesion of neighborhoods and historic districts.	Minimize potential for adverse impacts to significant cultural resources
<b>Goal 4: Provide a cost-effective and efficient transportation investment.</b>	
Minimize project costs, but not at the expense of quality design and materials.	Minimize capital cost Minimize annual operating and maintenance costs
Support existing and planned transit infrastructure investments.	Maximize number of connections to planned streetcar, light rail, bus rapid transit, and commuter rail projects
Maximize operating and cost-efficiency.	Minimize capital costs per alignment mile
<b>Goal 5: Provide a transit, bicycle, and pedestrian friendly environment.</b>	
Provide transit and trails in the Atlanta BeltLine Corridor that fully accommodate bicycle and pedestrian transportation modes with direct links to activity centers, recreational facilities, and residential locations within the study area.	Maximize number of economic development focus areas and activity centers within ½-mile of proposed trail access points
	Maximize number of recreational facilities within ½-mile of proposed trail access points
	Maximize housing units within ½-mile of proposed trail access points
	Maximize employment within ½-mile of proposed trail access points
Develop transit and trails that are safe and attractive.	Maximize miles of exclusive trails separated from automobile traffic
	Maximize number of proposed trail access points
Provide bicycle amenities, such as parking and storage, at transit stations in the project corridor.	Maximize number of locations where full and partial trail amenities can be provided
<b>Goal 6: Provide transit, bicycle, and pedestrian connectivity among communities, and between communities and existing and planned recreational opportunities.</b>	
Provide transit and trails that enhances connectivity between communities separated by the historic railroad corridor and other constraints.	Maximize number of proposed trail access points
Supports existing and planned park programming through access to transit and trail facilities.	Maximize compatibility with the Atlanta BeltLine Subarea Master Plans, <i>Atlanta BeltLine Redevelopment Plan</i> , and <i>2009 Project Greenspace Technical Report</i>
Provide trail and transit connectivity to schools, community facilities, and cultural and historic destinations along the project corridor.	Maximize number of community facilities and significant cultural/historic sites within ½-mile of proposed transit station locations and trail access points
<b>Goal 7: Minimize adverse impacts to the environment and foster positive environmental impacts.</b>	
Avoid or minimize impacts to cultural and historic resources.	Minimize number of significant cultural resources potentially affected
Avoid or minimize impacts to water resources, protected species, critical habitats, and other sensitive natural resources.	Minimize number of stream crossings potentially affected Minimize presence of critical habitats along the alignment
Provide opportunities to improve the quality of the natural environment, such as air and water quality.	Maximize the potential for air quality benefits Minimize number of acres potentially impacted by increased stormwater runoff Minimize number of noise sensitive receptor sites potentially impacted
Develop viable transportation alternatives to the use of single-occupant motorized vehicles.	Maximize improvement in travel times for typical trips between various major trip generators, economic development focus areas, and communities
Avoid or minimize impacts to existing parklands.	Minimize number of parks with potential right-of-way effects
<b>Goal 8: Ensure consideration of public input throughout project planning and development.</b>	
Consider amount and content of comments pertaining to the various proposed Alternatives.	Number of public and SAC comments favoring a particular Alternative

As the Build Alternatives differed from one another only in the northwest zone, the evaluation examined the alternatives only within the northwest zone. Table 2-2 summarizes the final scores for each alternative, including the highest performer, D-Marietta Boulevard SC Transit Build Alternative. The first number is the total 'high performing' scores, while the second number is the total 'moderately performing' score.

**Table 2-2: Summary of Performance Measure Results By Alignments for All Goals**

Goal		Transit Alternative					Trail Alternative	
		A- CSX Howell Jct.	B- Howell Jct.	C- CSX Marietta Blvd.	D- Marietta Blvd.	F- Atlantic Station	Marietta Blvd./ Howell Jct.	On-Street
1	Contribute to an integrated regional multi-modal transportation network that promotes seamless intermodal connectivity, increases community access to the existing transit and trails networks, and improves reliability of personal travel.	10/2	10/2	10/2	10/2	6/3	1/0	1/0
2	Manage and encourage the growth and economic development of the City, region, and state by providing transit and transportation improvements to areas designated for growth.	3/1	3/2	3/1	3/2	1/2	1/0	1/0
3	Preserve and revitalize neighborhoods and business districts through context sensitive design of transit and trails, increased accessibility to mobility options, and provision of affordable housing and transportation, and other community benefits.	2/1	4/1	2/2	5/1	5/0	5/0	3/0
4	Provide a cost-effective and efficient transportation investment.	6/2	6/2	6/2	6/2	6/2	2/0	2/0
5	Provide a transit-, bicycle-, and pedestrian-friendly environment.	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	0/0	5/1	5/0
6	Provide transit, bicycle, and pedestrian connectivity among communities and between communities and existing and planned recreational opportunities.	1/0	1/0	0/0	0/0	0/1	1/0	2/0
7	Minimize adverse impacts to the environment and foster positive environmental impacts.	4/1	5/0	5/0	5/1	7/1	8/0	4/0
8	Ensure consideration of public input throughout project planning and development.	2/0	2/0	2/0	2/0	0/2	2/0	0/0
Total Number of High/Moderate Ratings		28/7	31/7	28/7	31/8	25/11	25/1	18/0

Note: The gray table cells indicate the best performing Build Alternative(s) for each measure and goal. The first number is the total 'high performing' score and the second number is the total 'moderately performing' score

Source: FTA and MARTA, June 2011. *Atlanta BeltLine Corridor Environmental Study, Tier 1 Draft Environmental Impact Statement/Draft Section 4(f) Evaluation*

## 2.1.2 Preliminary Cost Estimates for Alternatives Assessed in the Tier 1 DEIS

Preliminary cost estimates in 2009 dollars were calculated during the Tier 1 DEIS in order to evaluate the ability of each Build Alternative to meet the goals of the project. Two estimates were created for each Build Alternative, the capital costs and the operations and maintenance (O&M) costs. Capital cost estimates include all elements of construction including rights-of-way, grading, excavation, and similar needs. O&M cost estimates include those elements associated with running the proposed system on an annual basis.

Table 2-3 below provides a summary of preliminary capital cost estimates for each of the Transit Build Alternatives reviewed during the DEIS. Table 2-4 summarizes the preliminary capital costs for the Trail Build Alternatives reviewed during the DEIS.

**Table 2-3: Summary of Preliminary Transit Capital Cost Estimates**

Zone	Zone	Low Cost Transit (millions, \$2009)	Length (route miles)	Cost (per Mile)	High Cost Transit (millions, \$2009)	Length (route miles)	Cost (per mile)
<b>Light Rail Transit (LRT) Capital Cost Estimates</b>							
Northeast	All Build Alternatives	\$424	6.51	\$65	\$482	6.50	\$74
Southeast	All Build Alternatives	\$363	6.02	\$60	\$542	6.50	\$83
Southwest	All Build Alternatives	\$180	3.13	\$58	\$250	3.87	\$65
Northwest	A or B- CSX Howell Jct. Alternatives	\$481	6.56	\$73	\$490	6.80	\$72
	C or D- CSX Marietta Blvd. Alternatives	\$483	6.86	\$70	\$496	7.17	\$69
	(E- Norfolk Southern Alternatives)*	\$445	6.22	\$72	\$481	6.55	\$73
<b>Totals (assuming C or D- CSX Marietta Blvd.)**</b>		<b>\$1,450</b>	<b>22.52</b>		<b>\$1,770</b>	<b>24.04</b>	
Per mile		\$65			\$74		
<b>Modern Streetcar (SC) Capital Cost Estimates</b>							
Northeast	All Build Alternatives	\$372	6.51	\$57	\$428	6.50	\$66
Southeast	All Build Alternatives	\$321	6.02	\$53	\$487	6.50	\$75
Southwest	All Build Alternatives	\$164	3.13	\$52	\$225	3.87	\$58
Northwest	A or B- CSX Howell Jct. Alternatives	\$418	6.56	\$64	\$431	6.80	\$63
	C or D- CSX Marietta Blvd. Alternatives	\$421	6.86	\$61	\$439	7.17	\$61
	(E- Norfolk Southern Alternatives)*	\$392	6.22	\$63	\$427	6.55	\$65
<b>Totals (assuming C or D- CSX Marietta Blvd.)**</b>		<b>\$1,278</b>	<b>22.52</b>		<b>\$1,611</b>	<b>24.04</b>	
Per mile		\$57			\$66		

Source: AECOM 2010

\* The E- Norfolk Southern Alternatives are compared in this table for informational purposes only. These Transit Alternatives have since been removed from consideration.

\*\* Total cost for the complete Atlanta BeltLine corridor using the C or D- CSX Marietta Blvd. Alternatives are reported for simplicity. Total cost using the other northwest zone alignment may be obtained by summing the northeast, southeast, and southwest zones with the desired northwest zone alternative.

**Table 2-4: Summary of Preliminary Capital Cost Estimates for Trails**

Trail Alternative	Preliminary Capital Cost Estimates (millions of 2009 dollars)				
	Construction Cost	Potential Right-of-Way (ROW) Cost	Total Cost	Length (miles)	Total Cost per Mile
Howell Jct.	\$98.5	\$30.1	\$128.6	20.9	\$6.15
Marietta Blvd.	\$99.1	\$29.3	\$128.4	21.4	\$6.00
On-Street	\$106.0	\$28.7	\$134.7	21.8	\$6.18

Source: AECOM 2010

The current preliminary transit and trail capital cost estimates will be further refined in subsequent stages of project planning and engineering design as project elements are rendered in greater detail. The format of the estimates, as it makes use of FTA Standard Cost Categories with clearly documented assumptions, lends itself to updates throughout the project development process.

During the DEIS process, the O&M costs for each of the alternatives were calculated and compared. The differences in O&M costs between alternatives result from the differences in the estimated run time of each alternative and the number of vehicles needed in service to meet the required headway. However, it was found that among all the alternatives, the main difference that affected the O&M costs was the mode technology. Although each alternative varies in length, this did not significantly affect the overall O&M estimates.

The low O&M estimate for all SC alternatives is \$14,082,054 and the high estimate is \$14,865,235. Similarly, the low O&M cost estimate for the LRT is \$10,953,331 and the high estimate is \$11,735,712. The difference between O&M costs for SC and LRT are driven by the fact that a LRT vehicle typically has a larger passenger capacity; therefore, fewer cars and operators are required to meet the projected demand and headways for the Atlanta BeltLine.

### **2.1.3 Alternatives Carried Forward in this FEIS**

#### **No-Build Alternative**

The No-Build Alternative is a baseline alternative retained in the Tier 1 FEIS in order to provide a basis of comparison with the Preferred Alternatives. The No-Build Alternative includes the following components:

- The existing transportation system including roadways, transit service, and trails;
- All programmed transportation projects in the Atlanta Regional Commission's (ARC's) constrained *Envision6* Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) and the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) covering fiscal years 2008 through 2013, except for the Atlanta BeltLine transit and trails; and
- The trail improvements that the City of Atlanta and ABI have already constructed or committed to be constructed, although some are elements of the Atlanta BeltLine.

#### **Preferred Alternatives**

Based on the analysis presented in the Tier 1 DEIS and from the comments received during the DEIS public comment period, FTA and MARTA have determined that the D-Marietta Boulevard SC Transit Build Alternative [adjacent to, but outside of the CSX ROW] is the best performing and was selected as the Preferred Transit Alternative. FTA and MARTA have determined that the best performing and Preferred Trail Alternative is a hybrid of the Marietta Boulevard Trail Alternative and the On-Street Trail Alternative, using the best features of each. It is important to note that this is not a new trail, but a combination of alignments that were each studied in the Tier 1 DEIS. Figure 2-2 shows the location of the Preferred Alternatives.



The project sponsors considered the input heard from the TAC and SAC committees and the public during the DEIS as well as the results of the DEIS analysis of the Build and No-Build Alternatives prior to selecting the Preferred Alternatives. The committee and public input played a particularly strong role in the decision-making process as it emphasized some of the differences observed among the alternatives in the DEIS analysis and highlighted the importance of those differences to the community. The factors weighting the decision to select the Preferred Transit and Trails Alternatives included the fact that the use of Railroad ROW in the northwest zone is uncertain in the Tier 1 phase and that the Preferred Alternatives would:

- Provide connectivity to the most parks, neighborhoods, other transit and trails, BeltLine Tax Allocation District (TAD) acreage, and key destinations in the northwest zone such as Bankhead MARTA Rail Station, Westside Park, Atlantic Station, and Piedmont Hospital;
- Provide the most northerly access to Peachtree Street;
- Minimize private property impacts by placing alignments in existing transportation rights-of-way; and
- Reach the largest area underserved by rail transit.

***Preferred Mode Choice***

The initial screening analysis completed by MARTA in 2007 identified LRT and SC as viable technologies. The project sponsors performed conceptual engineering analyses to support the DEIS that took into consideration alignments within all four zones as well as MARTA Station Connectivity and Infill Station Alternative Area design considerations. The analysis examined transit geometry (curve radii, grades, and clearances), track configuration, and safety needs. The outcome of these analyses is that either mode can be accommodated throughout the corridor.

Further examination of mode performance in terms of system, vehicle and infrastructure characteristics, as well as community desires determined that SC would be the most appropriate mode for the Atlanta BeltLine project. As shown in Table 2-5, LRT and SC are equally adaptable in terms of conceptual design and ability to connect to other planned transit projects. Although the LRT has a lower O&M annual cost, SC can be implemented at a generally lower capital cost while its shorter vehicle lengths provide greater flexibility than LRT in navigating the constrained geometry of the alignments. SC may also result in fewer noise, vibration, and land use impacts. In addition, SC is better adapted to the Atlanta BeltLine operating plan that calls for frequent stops. For these reasons, SC is FTA and MARTA's preferred mode technology for the Atlanta BeltLine project.

**Table 2-5: Mode Characteristics and Constraints as Applied to the Atlanta BeltLine Project**

Mode Characteristics	Light Rail Transit (LRT)	Modern Streetcar (SC)
<b>System</b>		
Conceptual design for entire Atlanta BeltLine project (main line and connectivity areas) can accommodate mode	✓	✓
Potentially higher operating speed	✓	
Ability to connect with other planned transit projects	✓	✓
Generally lower capital costs for systems		✓
<b>Vehicle and Infrastructure</b>		
Higher single vehicle capacity	✓	
Potentially smaller fleet (total number of vehicles)	✓	
Greater flexibility in constrained track geometry		✓
Generally lower capital costs per vehicle		✓
<b>Community Desires</b>		
Ability to make frequent stops (adaptable to operating plan and Atlanta BeltLine economic development objectives)	✓	✓+
Lower potential for noise, vibration and visual impacts		✓
Small vehicle and infrastructure (potentially fewer land use impacts, appropriate scale and community fit)		✓

***Preferred Alternative Preliminary Cost Estimate***

The preliminary cost estimates in 2009 dollars for the Preferred Alternatives is broken into two categories: capital cost, which is the initial construction costs; and operation and maintenance (O&M) costs, which is the annual cost for running the proposed system. The preliminary cost estimates will be further refined in subsequent stages of project planning and engineering design as project elements are rendered in greater detail.

The preliminary capital cost in 2009 dollars for the Preferred Transit Alternative is \$1,611 million, or about \$66 million per mile constructed. The preliminary capital cost for constructing the Preferred Trail Alternative is \$100.4 million or \$4.6 million per mile.

The estimated O&M costs for the Preferred Transit Alternative is \$14.49 million.



## 2.2 Evaluation of Alternatives

The No-Build and Preferred Alternatives were evaluated using performance measures associated with the project goals and objectives. The purpose of the evaluation process was to bring together the salient facts, both qualitative and quantitative, for each alternative so that its benefits, costs, and preliminary environmental consequences could be evaluated against the stated goals and objectives for the project.

Selection of a preferred alternative alignment and mode prior to completing the Tier 1 FEIS involved a balancing of the advantages and disadvantages of each of the alternatives under consideration. Each member of the public and stakeholders participating in this Tier 1 EIS process had an opportunity through public involvement and agency coordination, culminating in the comment period and hearing, to provide input, value judgments, and a sense of priorities in light of the findings in the Tier 1 DEIS. The findings in the Tier 1 DEIS were intended to aid in that process by highlighting the factors of particular importance in making a broadly based comparative assessment of the alternatives. Public and stakeholder input was considered in determining the Preferred Alternatives.

### **No-Build Alternative**

The No-Build Alternative does not support the purpose and need or the goals and objectives of the Atlanta BeltLine project. Compared to the Preferred Alternatives, it does not adequately respond to the qualitative and quantitative performance measures structured around each goal.

### **Preferred Alternatives**

#### ***Preferred Transit Alternative***

The Tier 1 DEIS analysis indicates that the Preferred Transit Alternative (D-Marietta Boulevard SC Transit Build Alternative) is the most effective in improving access and mobility for existing and future residents and workers, increasing in-city transit options, and providing links in and between the transit network. In tandem with the land use and economic development component of the Atlanta BeltLine, the Preferred Transit Alternative will stimulate economic activity, structure growth, and address livability and economic opportunity.

The Preferred Transit Alternative distinguishes itself by responding to the Atlanta BeltLine goals and objectives as follows:

Goal 1 – Contribute to an integrated regional multi-modal transportation network that promotes seamless intermodal connectivity, increases community access to the existing transit and trails networks, and improves reliability of personal travel.

- The most desired connections to major employment centers and activity areas, such as Piedmont Hospital and a northern portion of Peachtree Street, can be made from the Preferred Transit Alternative (also applies to Goal 5).
- The Preferred Transit Alternative more effectively contributes to a multi-modal transportation network and provides an additional access point to existing transit, both heavy rail and bus service, by connecting to a fifth MARTA rail station (the Bankhead MARTA rail station) (also applies to Goal 5).

- The Preferred Transit Alternative does not rely on freight rail ROW in the northwest zone; it also avoids the contentious crossing of Howell Junction.

Goal 2 – Manage and encourage the growth and economic development of the city, region, and state by providing transit and transportation improvements to areas designated for growth.

- The adjacency of the Preferred Transit Alternative to underutilized industrial land, much of which is within the Atlanta BeltLine Tax Allocation District (TAD), creates the greatest opportunity for redevelopment benefits (also applies to Goal 3).
- The Preferred Transit Alternative provides a connection to a major recreation asset and adjacent redevelopment opportunity with the redevelopment of Westside Reservoir Park.

Goal 3 – Preserve and revitalize neighborhoods and business districts through context sensitive design of transit and trails, increased accessibility to mobility options and provision of affordable housing and transportation, and other community benefits.

- The adjacency of the Preferred Transit Alternative to underutilized industrial land, much of which is within the Atlanta BeltLine TAD, creates the greatest opportunity for redevelopment benefits (also applies to Goal 2).
- Due to its high use of on-street ROW, the Preferred Transit Alternative adds the least amount of runoff during a storm (also applies to Goal 7).

Goal 4 – Provide a cost-effective and efficient transportation investment.

- There was no distinguishing rationale among all transit alignment alternatives considered.

Goal 5 – Provide a transit, bicycle, and pedestrian friendly environment.

- Goal 1 rationale bullets apply equally to Goal 5.

Goal 6 – Provide transit, bicycle, and pedestrian connectivity among communities, and between communities and existing and planned recreational opportunities.

- Goal 1 and 2 rationales apply equally to Goal 6 for the Preferred Transit Alternative.

Goal 7 – Minimize adverse impacts to the environment and foster positive environmental impacts.

- Due to its high use of on-street ROW, the Preferred Transit Alternative adds the least amount of runoff during a storm (also applies to Goal 3).

Goal 8 – Ensure consideration of public input throughout project planning and development.

- Public comment cited concerns regarding congestion around Atlantic Station, Deering Road, and the proximity of activities to Brookwood Hills, which the Preferred Transit Alternative avoids.

### ***Preferred Trail Alternative***

In general, the Preferred Trail Alternative follows alongside the Preferred Transit Alternative in the northeast, southeast, and southwest zones as illustrated in Figure 2-2. The parallel alignment of the Preferred Transit and Trails Alternatives will reduce the potential for community and environmental disruption and will be the least costly. In the northwest zone, the Preferred Trail Alternative follows the Preferred Transit Alternative alignment except in three key areas: around Maddox Park, around the Atlanta Water Works, and along Tanyard Creek near Bobby Jones Golf Course. In these areas, the Preferred Trail Alternative would use other parallel streets and ROW for much of its length. The on-street portions of the Preferred Trails Alternative enable access to neighborhoods and parks that are not adjacent to the Preferred Transit Alternative alignment.

The Preferred Trail Alternative distinguishes itself by responding to the Atlanta BeltLine goals and objectives as follows:

Goal 1 – Contribute to an integrated regional multi-modal transportation network that promotes seamless intermodal connectivity, increases community access to the existing transit and trails networks, and improves reliability of personal travel.

- The most desired connections to major employment centers and activity areas, such as Piedmont Hospital and a northern portion of Peachtree Street, can be made from the Preferred Trail Alternative (also applies to Goal 5).
- The Preferred Trail Alternative provides the most opportunity for connecting to the existing trails network.
- The Preferred Trail Alternative does not rely on freight rail ROW in the northwest zone; it also avoids the contentious crossing of Howell Junction.

Goal 2 – Manage and encourage the growth and economic development of the city, region, and state by providing transit and transportation improvements to areas designated for growth.

- The Preferred Trail Alternative provides a connection to a major recreation asset and adjacent redevelopment opportunity with the redevelopment of Westside Reservoir Park.

Goal 3 – Preserve and revitalize neighborhoods and business districts through context sensitive design of transit and trails, increased accessibility to mobility options and provision of affordable housing and transportation, and other community benefits.

- The adjacency of the Preferred Trail Alternative to underutilized industrial land, much of which is within the Atlanta BeltLine TAD, creates the greatest opportunity for redevelopment benefits (also applies to Goal 2).

Goal 4 – Provide a cost-effective and efficient transportation investment.

- There is no distinguishing rationale among the trail alignment alternatives.

Goal 5 – Provide a transit, bicycle, and pedestrian friendly environment.

- Goal 1 rationale bullets apply equally to Goal 5.

Goal 6 – Provide transit, bicycle, and pedestrian connectivity among communities, and between communities and existing and planned recreational opportunities.

- The Preferred Trail Alternative provides close access to major recreational facilities, such as the Westside Reservoir Park, Tanyard Creek Park, and Bobby Jones Golf Course.
- Goal 1 and 2 rationales apply equally to Goal 6 for the Preferred Trail Alternative.

Goal 7 – Minimize adverse impacts to the environment and foster positive environmental impacts.

- No distinguishing rationale among the trail alignment alternatives.

Goal 8 – Ensure consideration of public input throughout project planning and development.

- Public comment cited concerns regarding congestion around Atlantic Station, Deering Road, and the proximity of activities to Brookwood Hills, which the Preferred Trail Alternative would avoid.

## **3.0 POTENTIAL EFFECTS**

Table 3-1 provides a summary of the potential effects of the Preferred Transit and Trails Alternatives and the No Build Alternative as described in this Tier 1 FEIS. In addition to performing at the highest level with respect to the project purpose and need, the Preferred Transit and Trails Alternatives would provide many transportation, community, and environmental benefits. These benefits are achieved through planning and design efforts to date that have optimized the alignments and operations in response to the purpose and need and public input, while avoiding or minimizing adverse community and environmental impacts. FTA and MARTA intend to continue applying these avoidance and minimization strategies during the Tier 2 NEPA analysis and to develop effective mitigation commitments to overcome unavoidable impacts that may remain.



**Table 3-1: Summary of Potential Effects for the No-Build and Preferred Alternatives**

	No-Build Alternative	Preferred Transit and Trail Alternatives
<b>Transportation Systems and Facilities*</b>		
<b>Travel Patterns</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Would not facilitate trips among activity centers, major travel generators, or MARTA rail stations in study area</li> <li>• Would not increase transportation options or improve travel efficiency in study area</li> <li>• Substantial gaps in bicycle and pedestrian networks between activity centers will remain</li> <li>• Serve nearly 80,000 people and 80,000 jobs in 2030 within ½-mile of proposed station</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Serves regional Home-Based Work (HBW) trips destined for study area</li> <li>• Redirects over 6,000 daily trips from radial routes</li> <li>• Improves average travel time savings in study area</li> <li>• Reduces number of study area transit trips transfers</li> <li>• Serves nearly 138,000 people and 117,000 jobs in 2030 within ½-mile of proposed stations</li> <li>• Serves twice the population of underserved groups compared to the No-Build</li> </ul>
<b>Transit Services</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No affects to existing MARTA rail or local bus services or GRTA commuter bus service</li> <li>• Connects to 14 planned transit and passenger rail projects</li> <li>• In-street alignments of planned transit projects could impact existing bus service</li> <li>• Does not improve bicycle and pedestrian access to and from MARTA stations and bus stops</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reduces transit transfers and rail congestion at MARTA Five Points Station</li> <li>• Does not duplicate existing transit services</li> <li>• Connects to 21 local bus routes, 6 express routes, and 24 planned transit and passenger rail projects</li> <li>• In-street alignments could affect existing bus service. Shared use of lane/facilities could improve bus service, whereas exclusive lane for Preferred Transit Alternative could negatively affect bus service</li> <li>• Improves bicycle and pedestrian access to and from MARTA stations, bus stops, and passenger rail</li> <li>• Subsequent analysis in the Tier 2 NEPA phase will determine potential effects on transit services, especially schedule adjustments, to facilitate transfers between services</li> </ul>
<b>Roadway System</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Most travelers with origins and destinations in the study area would not be provided with a transport alternative</li> <li>• Provide maintenance and operational upgrades, capacity improvements</li> <li>• The Atlanta Streetcar, SR 13 bus rapid transit (BRT), and Memorial Drive BRT will operate in-street and could increase congestion</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Diversion of home based work (HBW) and non-work trips may slow growth of congestion on study area roadways</li> <li>• At-grade crossings and in-street sections will have a minor effect on roadway operations</li> <li>• Bill Kennedy Way in-street section may affect congestion, parking, and existing bike facilities</li> <li>• Forecasted congestion and nearby intersections will require design to minimize operation effects. Further analysis and design refinement will occur in Tier 2 analysis</li> </ul>
<b>Freight Rail</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lindbergh/Emory High Speed Transit and the Atlanta to Lovejoy Commuter Rail would potentially use or cross freight rail corridors</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Could affect existing and future freight operations in the southeast zone</li> <li>• Mitigation of effects to be determined and minimized through on-going consultation with freight rail operators.</li> </ul>
<b>Passenger Rail</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No affects to existing passenger rail operations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No affects to existing / planned passenger rail</li> <li>• Passenger rail connections support the project need to increase transportation connections, travel efficiency, and reduce travel by personal vehicle</li> </ul>
<b>Pedestrian and Bicycle</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ralph David Abernathy Boulevard and Marietta Boulevard facilities would supplement existing facilities</li> <li>• Significant gaps in network would remain throughout the study area</li> <li>• Minimally responsive to project needs</li> <li>• Would not increase amount of public greenspace in the study area or provide connections between parks</li> <li>• New bike/pedestrian facilities have no exclusive ROW</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provides connectivity between areas separated by natural and manmade obstacles, and between activity centers, MARTA rail stations, and recreational and cultural facilities</li> <li>• Provides bicycle/pedestrian options in those areas in which environmental justice populations have been identified in the study area</li> <li>• Increases public greenspace and serves two trails</li> <li>• Trail has 15.9 miles of exclusive ROW</li> </ul>

	No-Build Alternative	Preferred Transit and Trail Alternatives
<b>Plan Consistency</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Not consistent with a majority of the local and regional transportation plans that include the Atlanta BeltLine transit and/or multi-use trails elements in their recommendations</li> <li>Consistent with the Atlanta Regional Freight Mobility Plan</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consistent with Envision6 RTP/TIP, Connect Atlanta Plan, Concept 3, Atlanta Region Bicycle Transportation and Pedestrian Walkways Plan, Plan for a Walkable Atlanta, and the 2004-2019 Comprehensive Development Plan (CDP)</li> <li>Consistent with BeltLine Redevelopment Plan and Subarea Master Plans.</li> <li>Potentially conflict with the Atlanta Regional Freight Mobility Plan</li> <li>Mitigation of effects to be determined and minimized through on-going consultation with freight rail operators</li> </ul>
<b>Land Use and Zoning*</b>		
<b>Land Use</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Direct effects on land use in the study area by the additional ROW would be examined in the environmental analyses for each project</li> <li>Inconsistent with FLUM</li> <li>213 acres underutilized land within ½-mile of potential stations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>91.8 acres of converted land for Transit</li> <li>76.9 acres of converted land for Trails</li> <li>Consistent with Future Land Use Map (FLUM)</li> <li>765 acres of underutilized land within ½-mile of potential stations</li> <li>Could create pressures to convert low-density or industrial uses into higher-density uses that may be inconsistent with neighborhood character</li> <li>Further analysis at the Tier 2 phase will evaluate potential effects</li> </ul>
<b>Zoning</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Inconsistent with zoning because the base zoning districts were adopted to support the CDP and FLUM</li> <li>The purpose of the existing Atlanta BeltLine Overlay District would not be met</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consistent with the Atlanta BeltLine Overlay District</li> <li>Transit infrastructure is permitted except in Multi-Family (MR) zones</li> <li>Trails are permitted in public ROW, but outside of ROW, must meet zoning setback and buffer requirements if not designated as parks</li> <li>If designated as parks: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Special Use Permit required in Residential and Office zoning districts</li> <li>Application process available under existing regulations in MR, Mixed Residential Commercial, and Planned Development districts</li> </ul> </li> <li>Some districts require amendments to permit parks</li> <li>Further analysis at Tier 2 phase to evaluate potential mitigation steps</li> </ul>
<b>Local Plans</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Not fully consistent with the CDP</li> <li>Not consistent with the other plans</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Consistent with the CDP</li> <li>Consistent with the local Atlanta BeltLine Subarea Master Plans</li> </ul>
<b>Economic Development Strategies</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Direct short term positive effect associated with construction employment</li> <li>Supports the long-term economic conditions</li> <li>Serves seven economic development focus areas</li> <li>101 acres of potential residential and commercial development capacity within ½-mile of proposed stations</li> <li>Inconsistent with the economic development strategies in the CDP relative to the Atlanta BeltLine</li> <li>Would not support the estimates of the economic growth in the study area</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Direct short-term positive effect associated with construction employment</li> <li>Supports the long-term local and regional economies</li> <li>Serves 20 economic development focus areas</li> <li>499 acres of potential residential and commercial development capacity within ½-mile of proposed stations</li> <li>Will serve approximately 4,915 acres of Atlanta BeltLine TAD land</li> <li>Could conflict with the City's policy of retaining as much industrial land within the City as possible</li> <li>Strategies to avoid or minimize these effects will be considered during the Atlanta BeltLine Subarea Master Planning process and Tier 2 analysis</li> </ul>

	No-Build Alternative	Preferred Transit and Trail Alternatives
<b>Neighborhoods and Community Facilities*</b>		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Limited accessibility impact on neighborhoods and community facilities in study area</li> <li>Would serve only the study area neighborhoods that are crossed, leaving large geographic areas that would not be served</li> <li>Would not provide recreational space</li> <li>Would not remove the barrier created by the existing rail corridors in the study area</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increases regional access for neighborhood residents</li> <li>Up to 61 neighborhoods served and up to 71 community facilities accessed</li> <li>Trail will provide recreational space</li> <li>Trail will remove existing barrier between neighborhoods currently divided by the railroad ROW</li> </ul>
<b>Socioeconomics and Environmental Justice*</b>		
<b>Socioeconomics</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Incremental growth and development both within and outside the study area</li> <li>½ - mile service area of proposed transit station locations will contain an estimated 79,874 people in 2030</li> <li>½ - mile service area of proposed transit station locations will contain an estimated 80,474 jobs in 2030</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Will complement and support the projected population, employment, and household growth</li> <li>½ - mile service area of proposed transit station locations will contain an estimated 137,940 people in 2030</li> <li>½ - mile service area of proposed transit station locations will contain an estimated 116,799 jobs in 2030</li> <li>Creates 30,000 new full-time jobs; 48,000 year-long construction jobs; and 28,000 new housing units including 5,600 affordable units over its 25-year project span</li> </ul>
<b>Environmental Justice</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Improved transit service for some environmental justice (EJ) populations relative to the existing conditions</li> <li>In 2000, ½ - mile service area of proposed transit station locations contained 5,850 zero-car households; 3,777 older adults; 9,368 disabled people; 11,700 low-income; and 28,272 minority people</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Improved transit service for some EJ populations, improving mobility and access to employment</li> <li>In 2000, ½ - mile service area of proposed transit station locations contained 10,079 zero-car households; 8,005 older adults; 18,724 disabled people; 21,784 low-income households; and 59,864 minority people</li> <li>Market pressures on low-income housing may be offset by existing affordable housing programs and City policy to protect single-family homes</li> <li>Noise and vibration impacts will affect all residents in the southeast and southwest, including EJ populations.</li> <li>Further analysis during Tier 2 to determine severity of impacts and mitigation measures</li> </ul>
<b>Visual and Aesthetic Resources*</b>		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No affect to existing viewshed</li> <li>Infrequent maintenance of ROW vegetation has created an unsightly overgrown condition</li> <li>Where vegetation or other screening is absent, views of railroad materials such as piles of ties or occasional dumped trash can also be observed</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>New visual elements including new track and ballast, bridges, underpasses, power stations, poles and overhead wires, stations, storage yards, and trail signage, lighting, and furniture</li> <li>Improves visual aesthetics of deteriorated elements</li> <li>Currently obscured Railroad may be visible</li> <li>Signage and warning indicators will be visible at at-grade crossings</li> <li>The Trail will create new views, such as parks and historic structures</li> <li>Detailed analysis as part of Tier 2 will evaluate impacts and suggest best management practices</li> </ul>

	No-Build Alternative	Preferred Transit and Trail Alternatives
<b>Cultural, Historic, and Archaeological Resources+</b>		
Section 106 and Preliminary Section 4(f) Statement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Potential for cultural resource impacts would be highly localized and determined during required review process</li> <li>Potential use of Section 4(f) properties possible by planned transportation improvements, such as the I-20 East BRT, Memorial Drive BRT, and the Commuter Rail-Lovejoy/Griffin/Macon project, which cross the Historic Rail Resources of the Atlanta BeltLine.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>105 total resources have the potential to be impacted by the Preferred Transit Alternative, and 103 by the Preferred Trail</li> <li>Direct impacts to the Historic Resources located within the Atlanta BeltLine study area</li> <li>39 archaeologically sensitive sites in study area</li> <li>Tier 2 analysis will report unavoidable impacts. Continued consultations with Georgia State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) to identify mitigations and prepare a Programmatic Agreement</li> </ul>
<b>Parks and Recreational Resources+</b>		
Preliminary Section 4(f) Statement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provides no new acres of park access in study area</li> <li>Lovejoy Commuter Rail has the potential to affect Adair II Park, and the I-20 East BRT has the potential to affect Rawson-Washington Park</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No direct use of public parks, recreational areas or wildlife refuge areas per Section 4(f)</li> <li>Provides over 50 acres of park access</li> <li>Provides connectivity between park activity centers, and between residences and park resources</li> <li>Provides a transit option to access 22 existing parks and recreational facilities</li> <li>Positive effect on future park and recreation facilities</li> </ul>
<b>Safety and Security*</b>		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Requires existing safety and security protocols, such as compliance with American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) and Americans with Disabilities Act, or the control of roadway-track interactions for at-grade crossings, and measures in operation for existing transportation services</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Potential for pedestrian conflicts with transit, roadways, and pedestrian security along the trails</li> <li>Shared ROW with existing freight rail will require appropriate horizontal and vertical clearances between freight rail, streetcar, and trail modes</li> <li>Tier 2 analysis will identify needs and strategies for safe trail, station, roadway-track interactions, and freight rail-track interactions</li> </ul>
<b>Contaminated and Hazardous Materials*</b>		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Subject to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) and Georgia Environmental Protection Division (GEPD) requirements for identifying and managing any contaminated or hazardous material sites</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>187 Recognized Environmental Condition REC sites are within the 300-foot study area for the Preferred Transit Alternative; of these 13 sites have the potential of being directly impacted</li> <li>166 REC sites within the 300-foot study area for the Preferred Trail; of these 13 sites have the potential of being directly impacted</li> <li>10 Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act (CERCLA)-related sites are within the 300-foot study area for the Preferred Transit and Trail Alternatives; only 2 of these have the potential for direct impact</li> <li>A survey of hazardous material will be completed prior to demolition or renovation of an identified structure, and will include abatement measures</li> <li>Required subsequent activities include Phase I and Phase II Environmental Site Assessments, removal of underground storage tanks where necessary, development of remedial strategies, and coordination with GEPD</li> </ul>

	No-Build Alternative	Preferred Transit and Trail Alternatives
<b>Utilities*</b>		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The sponsors of the No-Build projects will be responsible for identifying utilities and addressing potential conflicts</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Low potential for utility relocations along rail ROW</li> <li>High potential for utility relocations along street</li> <li>Moderate potential for utility relocations south of CSX rail ROW</li> <li>High potential for utility relocations along the west of Peachtree Street</li> <li>Potential impacts to water/sewer lines under CSX ROW connecting to the Atlanta City Water Works</li> <li>Unavoidable relocations will be coordinated with the utility owners to minimize disruptions</li> </ul>
<b>Air Quality*</b>		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Improves local and regional air quality through improvements to the existing bus, rail, and roadway networks</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reduction in vehicular emissions; reduction should offset incremental emissions increase from off-site electricity generation</li> <li>The Preferred Trail will contribute no new emissions</li> <li>Does not require a formal conformity determination on a regional level and, therefore, will not have air quality impacts for the nonattainment pollutants</li> </ul>
<b>Noise and Vibration*</b>		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Noise and vibration levels in the portions of the study area will be similar to those under the existing conditions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>155 residences within noise screening distance and 113 residences within vibration screening distance in the northwest zone</li> <li>A detailed noise and vibration analysis will take place during the Tier 2 analysis</li> </ul>
<b>Energy*</b>		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Travel time-savings of 79.8 million vehicle miles. Energy savings of approximately 497 billion British Thermal Units (BTUs) annually</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Travel time-savings of 145.2 million vehicle miles. Energy savings of approximately 905 billion BTUs annually</li> </ul>
<b>Water Resources*</b>		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Potential to directly affect study area water resources</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No effects on wetlands, open water bodies, or sole source aquifers</li> <li>11 potential stream impacts from transit, 4 from trail</li> <li>1.17 acres of potential stream impact from transit, 0.52 acres from trail</li> <li>Affects to floodplains associated with stream crossings</li> <li>16 acres of new impervious surface from transit, 7.2 acres from trails increasing stormwater runoff</li> <li>Adjustments to alignment and amenity location to be determined during Tier 2 analysis</li> </ul>
<b>Biological Resources*</b>		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Potential to affect study area biological resources</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Potential impact associated with stream impacts, new street trees, and landscaped areas</li> <li>Cleared vegetation could remove invasive plants, which could increase the diversity of native vegetation</li> <li>Could change or eliminate the species composition currently using the habitat</li> <li>No affects to protected species or species or habitat protected by the Migratory Bird Treaty</li> <li>During Tier 2 analysis, design to be refined to avoid or minimize impacts as prescribed by resource protection regulations, including NEPA</li> </ul>

	No-Build Alternative	Preferred Transit and Trail Alternatives
<b>Geologic Resources*</b>		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Would be the subject of an environmental assessment for each project</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Minimal potential effects on geology, topography, and soils</li> <li>• Extension of existing tunnel near Inman Park MARTA rail station, and the cut near Piedmont Park will require geotechnical survey</li> <li>• Geotechnical analysis to occur during Tier 2 analysis to identify minimization and mitigation strategies</li> </ul>
<b>Potential for Secondary Effects*</b>		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• May include development of underdeveloped land near proposed transit station locations. This development, should it occur, may also result in changes to population, employment, and community facilities and services</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Secondary effects will be focused around proposed station areas, taking the form of development that will likely result in changes in population, employment and community facilities and services</li> <li>• Tier 2 analysis will identify specific secondary effects</li> </ul>
<b>Potential for Cumulative Effects*</b>		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Potential for cumulative effects on ROW, historic resources, parks, hazardous materials, noise, streams, and water quality (due to increases in impervious surfaces)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Potential impacts on ROW, historic resources, parks, hazardous materials, noise, streams, and water quality (due to increases in impervious surfaces)</li> <li>• Tier 2 analysis will identify likelihood of, and appropriate mitigation for potential cumulative effects</li> </ul>

\*: Resources marked with a star (\*) indicate those evaluations meeting the federal regulations set forth by the National Environmental Policy Act, Federal Transit Laws, SAFETEA-LU, and Executive Orders indicated in the "Pursuant To" section on the signature page of this document.

+: Resources marked with a plus (+) indicate those evaluations meeting Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act and Section 4(f) of the USDOT Act. Formal Section 106 consultation and Section 4(f) evaluation will continue during Tier 2 analysis.

## 4.0 PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT AND AGENCY COORDINATION

A *Public Involvement and Agency Coordination Plan* (PIAC) (MARTA and ABI 2008) was developed and implemented in accordance with Section 6002 of Public Law 104-59 “Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users” (SAFETEA-LU) that mandates the development of a coordination plan for all projects for which an EIS is prepared under NEPA. It stipulates opportunity be provided for involvement by the public and agencies. The PIAC Plan is based on ABI’s Community Engagement Framework (CEF) created by City of Atlanta Resolution 06-R-1576 and MARTA’s Public Participation Plan.

Key public involvement activities are reported in Chapter 7.0 of the FEIS/ 4(f) Technical Memorandum. They included a NEPA-compliant Scoping process, public workshops, community group and organization meetings, and agency coordination in the forms of a Technical Advisory Committee (TAC), and Stakeholder Advisory Committee (SAC), and other agency meetings. In addition, the project sponsors have provided a website for the exchange of project-related information.

Key objectives of the public involvement efforts are to facilitate public understanding, to solicit input on the Atlanta BeltLine Corridor Transit and Multi-Use Trail Alternatives, and to identify potential consequences of alternative courses of action relative to the transportation, social, environmental, and economic context.

Public comments received during the Public Comment period can be grouped into several general categories described in Table 4-1 below. Each comment is addressed by the Project Sponsors in Appendix F: Comments Received During the Public Comment Period. FTA and MARTA considered input received during the public involvement process prior to selecting the Preferred Transit and Trail Alternatives.

**Table 4-1: Summary of Comments Received During Public Comment Period**

<b>Comment Category</b>	<b>Content</b>
Documentation Request	Request for information or draft document
Planning Process	Comments that relate to the EIS planning process and previous or ongoing planning efforts around the Atlanta BeltLine project
Environmental Justice/ Public Involvement Process	Requests for further outreach, or comments related to types of outreach included in the planning process
Agency Coordination	Requests for ongoing and additional agency coordination
Opposed to the Project	Comments in opposition to the BeltLine project as a whole
General Support for the Project	Comments in support for the BeltLine and the planning efforts of the project
Support for a Specific Technology or Alignment	Comments in support of LRT or Modern SC; comments in support of specific trail and transit alignments reviewed in the Tier 1 EIS process
Alternate Technology or Alignment Suggestions	Suggestions of alternative technologies to LRT or Modern SC, suggestions for alternative alignments for transit or trail, or suggestions for additional trail connections and MARTA station connections
Community Impacts	Comments from neighborhood associations, or comments about general community impacts
Environmental Impacts	Comments about the quality of the existing environment or comments concerning potential impacts of the project
Cost Estimates/ Funding	Request for cost estimates and comments regarding funding sources
Agency Comments	Official comments from affected agencies are covered by the other categories in this table
No Comment	Agency or association decided to not make an official comment

## 5.0 ISSUES TO BE RESOLVED

The Tier 1 EIS process enabled the project sponsors to select a transit mode as well as transit and trail alignments. As described in this FEIS, the Tier 2 analysis will evaluate the Preferred Alternatives in greater detail, focusing on decisions regarding:

- Transit and trail alignments in Station Connectivity Areas;
- Connections to existing or potential infill MARTA stations;
- Stop locations and ROW designs;
- The operating plan using refined ridership and travel forecasts;
- In-street operating conditions;
- The location of maintenance and storage facility site(s);
- The detailed environmental analyses, with ongoing efforts to avoid or minimize impacts and developing mitigation where appropriate;
- The refined engineering design for transit and trails, right-of-way needs, cost estimates and a financing plan; and
- Continued public and agency involvement as required by NEPA in the Tier 2 analysis. Public and agency engagement during the Tier 1 EIS identified the continuing need for outreach, and in particular, outreach to minority and low-income communities as well as youth organizations during Tier 2. On-going coordination with CSX during Tier 2 will be undertaken to refine the engineering design where crossings or proximate alignments are contemplated by the Preferred Alternatives. Greater involvement with the City of Atlanta, the State Historic Preservation Office and the Georgia Environmental Protection Division will be important to completing the Tier 2 analysis.



## **6.0 NEXT STEPS**

The Tier 1 FEIS process includes a 30-day period for review and comment on the FEIS document. The FTA will consider comments received as it prepares a Record of Decision (ROD). The ROD will either approve or deny the Atlanta BeltLine Preferred Alternatives. It will also state that the NEPA process for the Atlanta BeltLine is not complete until the project sponsors undertake and complete Tier 2 analysis.

The Tier 2 analysis will refine the preferred transit and trail alignments to achieve the most cost-effective investment while avoiding or minimizing potential adverse environmental effects; identify and assess trail design elements, transit station locations, vehicle types, storage facilities, site-specific impacts, and mitigation measures for impacts that cannot be avoided.

The project sponsors will continue public and agency outreach during the Tier 2 as a means of developing and evaluating these elements of the Atlanta BeltLine. The Tier 2 analysis will culminate in an environmental document that is consistent with NEPA requirements under the USDOT Act.