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Atlanta BeltLine

Purpose and Need

Prepared for:

Metropolitan Atlanta Rapid Transit Authority

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

The Federal Transit Administration (FTA), in cooperation with the Metropolitan Atlanta Rapid Transit Authority (MARTA), is preparing a Tier 1 Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the Atlanta BeltLine (BeltLine) in the City of Atlanta, Fulton County, Georgia. The Tier 1 EIS is being prepared in accord with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), as amended, and implemented by the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) regulations (40 CFR parts 1500-1508), the FTA regulations (23 CFR part 771), and the FTA Statewide Planning/Metropolitan Planning regulations (23 CFR part 450), as well as the requirements of the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU) (Public Law 109-59), the regulations of Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, the Clean Air Act Amendments of 1990, Executive Order 12898 on Environmental Justice, and other applicable statutes, rules, and regulations.

The focus of this Tier 1 EIS for the BeltLine is to provide decision makers with the information needed to determine preliminary right-of-way needs, identify a preferred alignment, and to decide on a preferred rail technology.

1.1 Project Description

The Atlanta Beltline is a proposed new transit and trails system that would form an approximate 22-mile loop that encircles the City of Atlanta's Central Business District (CBD), specifically the downtown and Midtown areas. The Atlanta BeltLine is intended to improve local and regional mobility, accessibility and connectivity, and support the City of Atlanta's redevelopment plans by converting unused and underused railway corridors around Atlanta's CBD to a multi-use transportation corridor.

The study area is one-half of a mile wide, centered on the existing rail corridor and contains many of Atlanta's residential neighborhoods, employment centers, a majority of the open green space in the City of Atlanta, and a significant number of major attractions and points of interest. Figure 1-1 shows the BeltLine location and study area.

The BeltLine project has a unique opportunity to provide integral linkages between existing and planned development, existing and planned recreational opportunities, and the existing transportation network. The Atlanta BeltLine would feature a fixed-guideway transit system and a network of multi-use bicycle and pedestrian trails in a linear park form generally paralleling the transit system. The BeltLine would connect 45 communities and provide greater access to existing and planned green spaces within the city. The proposed BeltLine passes through a combination of established residential communities, new affordable housing developments, light industrial areas, and derelict industrial areas identified for redevelopment. The BeltLine would also connect to and support the following:

- existing MARTA rail and bus network;
- two future major transit expansion projects along I-75 and I-285;
- proposed Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) services along Memorial Drive and Buford Highway;

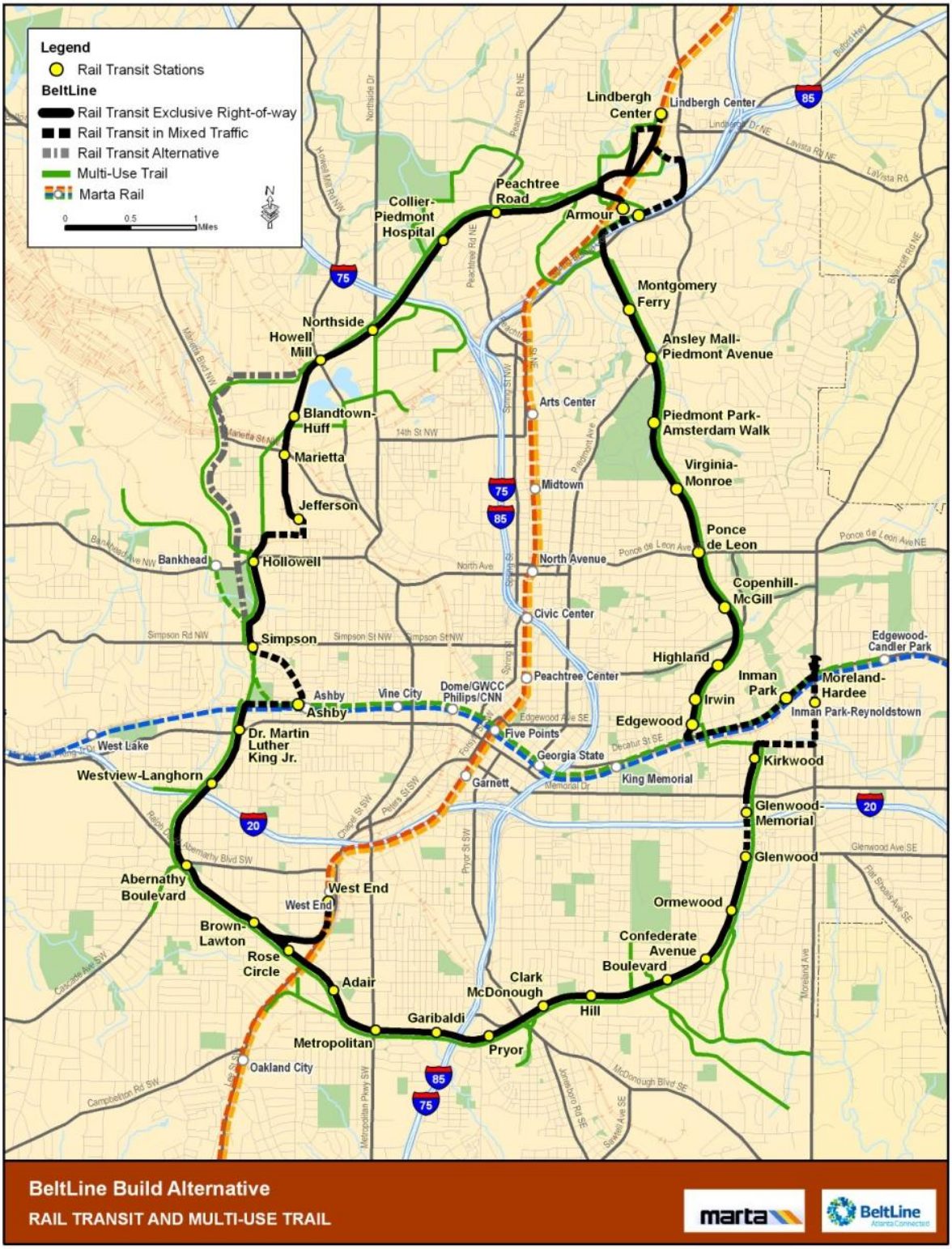
- the proposed commuter rail services between Lovejoy and downtown Atlanta;
- the regional trail system including on-street bike routes and lanes;
- the Freedom Parkway multi-use trail, and
- the Southwest BeltLine Connector Trail.

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

The Atlanta BeltLine would support the sustainable and efficient use of urban land at the center of the metropolitan Atlanta region through transit-oriented, mixed-use development to reduce per capita vehicle miles traveled (VMT) and decrease automobile dependence. It would also serve as a basis for:

- neighborhood preservation and revitalization;
- mixed-use development;
- job creation;
- affordable housing;
- cleaner air;
- an improved tax base;
- an improved quality of life in Atlanta's central core; and
- improved public health by encouraging recreational and commuting activity via the multi-use trail network.

Figure 1-1: Atlanta BeltLine Location and Study Area



1.2 Planning Context

The BeltLine Corridor Environmental Study emerged from various planning efforts that focused on providing alternative means of transportation within the inner core of Atlanta in conjunction with redevelopment of underutilized and derelict areas, greenways and parks. The transit component of the BeltLine emerged from a series of studies undertaken by MARTA. The trails component of the BeltLine emerged primarily from the *Atlanta BeltLine Redevelopment Plan* (2005) and the *BeltLine Emerald Necklace Study* (2004), conducted by the City of Atlanta, which evaluated and identified future locations for parks and multi-use trails.

From these studies, the concept of a "cultural ring loop", which included transit supportive land uses and pedestrian-oriented urban design principles, was presented and became known as the BeltLine Transit Greenway concept. This concept was presented to the Atlanta City Council which then requested that MARTA initiate a formal study of the transit component of the proposal.

In January 2007, MARTA completed an Alternatives Analysis for the Atlanta BeltLine.[1] The Alternatives Analysis examined a full range of alternatives including a Transportation System Management Alternative and 10 Build Alternatives involving variations of alignments, station locations, mode and equipment and operating plans. Each alternative was evaluated according to its potential performance in four categories: mobility and accessibility, land use and redevelopment, environmental effects, and cost effectiveness. Extensive public outreach and input was sought to inform the Alternatives Analysis evaluations. Key themes that shaped the outcome of the Alternatives Analysis included a mode preference for streetcar or light rail, alignment preferences, desire for compatibility with land use, trails and greenspace, and multi-modal connectivity, and overall public support for the project.

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

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

- Provide a continuous transit and trails loop as prescribed in the original Atlanta BeltLine concept;
- Generate the highest ridership;
- Indicate a transit permanence (via rail technology) which is desired by developers of transit-oriented development;

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

- Increase transit accessibility and connectivity to and within 45 neighborhoods;
- Be predominantly contained within the approved Tax Allocation District;
- Be supported by the City of Atlanta and the BeltLine Partners;
- Be strongly supported by the community and businesses

1.3 Project Purpose

The purpose of the BeltLine is to improve local and regional mobility, address transit accessibility and connectivity, particularly with the existing MARTA system, and support the City of Atlanta's redevelopment and recreational and greenspace plans.

1.4 Need for the Project

The BeltLine is needed to address the effects of growth and planned development on transportation in the city and to provide critical linkages between the City's existing and planned recreational opportunities. The following subsections describe this need in greater detail expressed as goals and objectives.

1.4.1 Population Growth

According to the Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC), the area's federally designated Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO); regional forecasts indicate significant growth in population, employment, planned development, and travel in Atlanta's central core over the next 25 years.

The New Century Economic Development Plan for the City of Atlanta proposes a significant amount of new development in Atlanta resulting in ARC projections of 43 percent growth in new residents by 2030 and employment growth of 25 percent in Atlanta and 55 percent in the BeltLine study area.

According to the U.S. Census Bureau's Census 2000, the state of Georgia was the fastest growing state east of the Mississippi River and the Atlanta region was home to three of the top 10 fastest growing counties in the nation. According to population estimates released by the U.S. Census Bureau in April 2008, the Atlanta metropolitan area gained more than 1,000,000 residents from April 2000 to July 2007, the largest numerical gain of the nation's 363 metro areas. The ARC forecasts that the region will continue to grow rapidly into the future. Nearly seven million people are forecast to live in the Atlanta region by 2030.

Table 1.1 shows the trends in population growth in the study area, the City of Atlanta and the 20-county metropolitan region. Population growth is projected to increase by approximately 181,000 in the City of Atlanta and 53,000 in the BeltLine study area. Much of this increased population may include the movement of people from rural and suburban communities to the urban core area, seeking to replace congested and time-consuming commuter trips with shorter commuting times, more convenient transit options and increased walking trips. However, given the congested state of the existing transportation infrastructure in the region, the increase in population will impact personal mobility in the absence of additional transportation services.

Additionally, ARC shows that the Midtown, Old Fourth Ward and the Buckhead areas of Atlanta are all leading the region in terms of population density.

The BeltLine study area includes over 25 percent of the population of the City of Atlanta and is expected to capture a third of the City's new population growth over the next twenty-five years. While the most densely populated areas within the City of Atlanta are in the CBD and along the north/south I-75 and I-85 transportation corridors, the population density within the BeltLine study area is 50 percent greater than population densities in the City of Atlanta as a whole. This trend is projected to remain constant over the next 30 years.

Table 1-1: Population

Area	2000	2030	Percent Change
BeltLine Study Area[1]	67,300	86,402	28.3%
City of Atlanta	421,453	602,783	43.0%
ARC Region[2]	4,228,492	6,972,200	64.9%

Source: DMJM Harris-JJG Joint Venture, June 2008 based on the ARC 2030 Population Forecasts

[1]*Beltline Study Area is defined as 1/4 mile buffer along either side of the proposed transit and trail alignment*

[2]The ARC Region includes Cherokee, Clayton, Cobb, DeKalb, Douglas, Fayette, Fulton, Gwinnett, Henry, Rockdale, Barrow, Bartow, Carroll, Coweta, Forsyth, Hall, Newton, Paulding, Spalding and Walton counties.

The study area also includes significant numbers of transit-dependent populations. According to the 2000 Census, approximately 21 percent of households within the BeltLine study area do not have access to vehicles.

1.4.2 Employment Growth

Within the City of Atlanta, employment has historically been focused around the CBD and along the north and south I-75 and I-85 transportation corridors. In 2000, there were close to 437,000 jobs in the City of Atlanta with employment densities of approximately 5 employees per acre. While employment over the next 30 years is projected to increase by approximately 67 percent within the 20-county ARC region, much of this increase is not expected to be in the CBD. Rather, employment growth is expected to occur in the areas outside of the downtown core. Comparatively the employment growth of 22 percent growth between 2000 and 2030 in the City of Atlanta as a whole is lower than the projected 70 percent increase in the ARC 20-county Atlanta region.

Table 1-2 shows the employment trends in the study area, the City of Atlanta and in the region based on ARC 2030 Population Forecasts by County.

Table 1-2: Employment

Area	2005	2030	Percent Change
Beltline Study Area[1]	48,436	61,343	26.6%
City of Atlanta	403,110	534,073	32.4%
ARC Region[2]	2,307,041	3,849,067	66.8%

Source: DMJM Harris-JJG Joint Venture, June 2008 based on the ARC 2030 Population Forecasts

[1]*Beltline Study Area is defined as 1/4 mile buffer along either side of the proposed transit and trail alignment*

[2]The ARC Region includes Cherokee, Clayton, Cobb, DeKalb, Douglas, Fayette, Fulton, Gwinnett, Henry, Rockdale, Barrow, Bartow, Carroll, Coweta, Forsyth, Hall, Newton, Paulding, Spalding and Walton counties.

1.4.3 Planned Development

Atlanta's Inner Core has seen distinct and pronounced changes in its market role over the past three to four decades. A turning point occurred during the late-1990s as the City of Atlanta made major commitments to improve the downtown and Midtown areas with investments in amenities, infrastructure and hospitality to accommodate the 1996 Centennial Olympic Games. A new awareness by investors and developers of the center city's potential has kindled renewed interest, resulting in a renaissance of the Atlanta Inner Core.

While much of the growth continues to take place in suburban areas, there is a growing demand for in-town living, working and playing as evidenced by the explosive growth in housing construction in the City of Atlanta and the reversal in population decline as evidenced by the increase in population in the downtown portions of the City.

Three economic development plans correlate directly to the BeltLine project and provide descriptions of existing and future economic development projects around the BeltLine study area: the New Century Economic Development Plan, the BeltLine Tax Allocation District Feasibility Study and the BeltLine Redevelopment Plan. Each is described below.

The *New Century Economic Development Plan* for the City of Atlanta, adopted by the Atlanta City Council in December 2004, provides a comprehensive plan for focusing economic development in the City of Atlanta. The plan specifically addresses the need to develop the BeltLine. The plan identifies the Atlanta BeltLine as a unique opportunity for redevelopment, green space, improved transit and livable communities. The plan calls for the establishment of a Tax Allocation District within the BeltLine area that would generate a local funding source to finance improvements within the district. The plan also calls for improved transit and trail facilities within the BeltLine Corridor that would connect communities with the existing MARTA system and the many activity centers within the inner core. As population and employment increase in the study area and development occurs to accommodate these growth trends, the transportation infrastructure also needs to grow to support the growth in development.

The *BeltLine Tax Allocation District* (TAD) *Feasibility Study*, prepared by EDAW in March 2005, was performed to determine whether a tax allocation district was a feasible method of funding a significant portion of the BeltLine project. The study results showed that development associated with the BeltLine TAD would generate significant economic benefits to the City of Atlanta, Fulton County and Atlanta Board of Education in the forms of job creation, new housing (including affordable housing), and new retail, office and light industrial space. Specifically, over a 25-year timeframe, a BeltLine TAD is

projected to create 37,500 permanent jobs as well as 48,000 construction jobs; add 28,000 new residential units (including 5,600 affordable housing units); and add 9 million square feet of new retail, office and light industrial space. According to the Study, the new development was projected to add more than $20 billion to the tax bases of the City, County and School Board. The TAD was approved by the Atlanta City Council, Atlanta School Board and Fulton County in 2005.

The *BeltLine Redevelopment Plan*, November 2005, identifies the existing opportunities and challenges to the City's BeltLine project and make recommendations for additional greenspace, trails, pedestrian and roadway improvements, transit integration, workforce housing and specifically identifies 12 centers of existing and potential development around the BeltLine Corridor. The 12 activity centers include:

- Southeast – Pryor and University
- Southeast – Boulevard Crossing
- Southeast – Memorial/Bill Kennedy Way
- Northeast – Ralph McGill
- Notheast – 10th and Monroe
- Northeast – Ansley Mall
- Northwest – Peachtree Road
- Northwest – Northside Drive
- Northwest – Joseph E. Boone Boulevard
- Southwest – West End/Ralph David Abernathy
- Southwest – Murphy Triangle
- Southwest – Metropolitan/University

According to the Plan, these centers are the critical anchor points of the BeltLine that can stimulate economic activity and structure future growth. As a whole, the 12 principal BeltLine activity centers and the many additional redevelopment areas constitute a total of approximately 2,500 acres of developable land, exclusive of the BeltLine greenspace system. The redevelopment area could absorb 50,000 new housing units. With almost 5 million square feet of new retail, almost 7 million square feet of new office, and more than 1 million square feet of new light industrial, the future development profile of the BeltLine is envisioned to be a balanced and sustainable environment that stresses quality of life.

Currently, significant redevelopment projects are ongoing and planned within the BeltLine study area, including Lindbergh City Center, Atlantic Station, City Hall East and Glenwood Park. These projects are described below.

Lindbergh City Center - The Lindbergh City Center project envisions approximately 4.8 million square feet of mixed-use development in 47 acres. The first phase of the project, completed in late 2003, consists of twin office towers built by Atlanta-based AT&T totaling 980,000 square feet and also included the renovation and expansion of the MARTA rail station and corporate headquarters. The second phase, which is currently

under construction, includes development of the project's Main Street, which features a mix of residential, retail and dining options. A third phase, expected to be complete in 2009, stresses mixed development including retail and would be located next to the main site adjoining the MARTA headquarters.

Atlantic Station - Atlantic Station, which is located in the BeltLine study area, but is outside of the TAD boundaries is a new urban renewal project on the northwestern edge of Midtown Atlanta on the former Brownfield site of the Atlantic Steel mill. The project, which has been in the planning stages since the 1990's includes the conversion of 138 acres of previously contaminated industrial uses to a city within a city of retail, residential, commercial and public space. The project is approximately 35-40 percent complete and envisions a total of 6 million square feet of Class A office space, 5,000 residential units, 2 million square feet of retail and entertainment space, 1,000 hotel rooms and 11 acres of public parklands. The location of this live, shop and play development in relation to the BeltLine study area provides a significant demand for improved transit services.

City Hall East - The redevelopment of City Hall East is perhaps the highest profile development project in the area near Ponce de Leon Avenue and Freedom Park. The 2-million square foot Sears Building office complex, covering 23 acres along Ponce de Leon Avenue, is being converted into 1,300 residences, 250,000 square feet of retail space, 100,000 square feet of office space and 8 acres of green space. About 80 percent of all the space will be developed with high quality residential uses- from high-end market rate units to affordable workforce apartments and condominiums. The remaining 20 percent of the total space will be allocated to retail and office space, taking advantage of the property's prime frontage on Ponce de Leon to create approximately 50,000 square feet of street front retail space.

Glenwood Park - The Glenwood Park development project converted a 28-acre former concrete recycling plant, bisected by the BeltLine Corridor, to a New Urbanist neighborhood approximately 2 miles from the center of downtown Atlanta. The development features a traditional mix of different housing types as well as retail stores, office space, civic buildings, people-friendly streets, parks, and recreational facilities.

1.4.4 Growth Effects on Transportation

1.4.4.1 Travel Patterns

Travel patterns in the BeltLine study area are expected to be predominately shorter trips between the existing neighborhoods and the employment activity centers located near the station areas and nearby MARTA rail stations. Trips will include a combination of home-to-work based trips and non-work trips. The BeltLine study area includes more than 45 residential neighborhoods and many established and new office developments. Employment statistics show that in 2005, there were 48,436 jobs in the BeltLine study area and the 2030 projections show an approximate 26 percent increase over the next 25 years, focused around the redevelopment centers identified in the previous sections.

Non-work trips include tourism, recreational trips and shopping. The BeltLine study area includes many of the major tourist and activity centers in the Atlanta region. The

following activity centers in or near the study area are major destinations for internal and external destination trips:

- Rhodes Center
- Breman Jewish Heritage Museums
- Center for Puppetry Arts
- Piedmont Park
- Atlanta Botanical Gardens
- High Museum of Art
- Woodruff Arts Center
- The Carter Presidential Center
- Martin Luther King Jr. Center
- Georgia State University
- Sweet Auburn Curb Market
- Oakland Cemetery
- Glenwood Park
- Cyclorama
- Grant Park
- Zoo Atlanta
- West End Mall
- Wren's Nest
- Hammonds House Galleries
- Morehouse College
- Washington Park
- Clark Atlanta University
- Herndon Home
- Herndon Stadium
- Morris Brown College
- Maddox Park
- King Plow Arts Center
- Atlantic Station
- Lindbergh Center
- Interdenominational Theological Seminary

1.4.4.2 Roadways

As a result of the projected growth, congestion on major roadways and surface streets will increase substantially even with planned investments in transportation infrastructure. The central Atlanta area can expect a 263 percent increase in hours of delay and a 24 percent decrease on average speed on major roadways and surface streets by 2030. Many of the highways and local roads within the BeltLine study area are currently heavily congested with significant increases in congestion projected for 2030.

The ARC is responsible for the development of the Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) and the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), which represents the programming for funding and implementation of projects in the near term drawn from the adopted RTP. The adopted RTP, Envision 6 was developed based on the significant projections of future population growth in the region and the associated air quality concerns. Major roadway and transit projects included in the 2008 – 2013 TIP include:

- Managed lanes on I-75/I-575 Northwest Corridor North, I-20 East and SR 316
- Peachtree Streetcar Phase 1
- Lindbergh to Emory BRT
- Significantly increased investments in traffic signal upgrades, cameras and other technologies to maximize the efficiency of the freeway and street system

- Full implementation of the state's bond program, which will widen and upgrade many congested roadways in suburban areas and improve safety for motorists, pedestrians and bicyclists in several dense urban centers
- Arterial BRT – Memorial Drive
- Commuter rail service from Lovejoy to downtown Atlanta
- BeltLine Multi-Use Trail

The roadway network in the City of Atlanta includes arterial and surface streets and the convergence of Atlanta's major interstates, including I-20, I-75, and I-85. Highway interchanges in the study area are an important link in the interstate system and contribute to Atlanta's role as a transportation hub for the southeastern United States. The Interstates in the Atlanta area also serve as the primary routes for commuters traveling between Atlanta and more than 10 suburban counties in the metropolitan area. These highways currently function at or near congested conditions during the peak hours with volume to capacity (v/c) ratios of 0.9 or higher. I-75/I-85 (the Downtown Connector) is severely congested during the peak period, operating at a poor level of service (LOS) F from the Brookwood Interchange in the north to the I-20 interchange in the south. During peak hours, I-20 also operates at a Level of Service (LOS) F on many segments. This is partly due to the traffic on the I-75/I-85 Downtown Connector causing a backup of traffic on I-20. By 2030, I-20, I-75 and I-85 will all be heavily congested throughout the study area, which will cause additional impacts to local traffic.

1.4.4.3 Transit

Travel options are limited due to the absence of direct transit connections between neighborhoods and major activity centers. Increased congestion levels will further limit access to freeways and heavy rail stations and reduce the reliability of MARTA bus service, particularly route running times. Unacceptable levels of congestion, resulting in higher levels of air emissions and reduced accessibility and connectivity between neighborhoods and employment destinations will affect economic growth. Thus, there is a need to improve the efficiency of transit service, introduce additional transportation options and fully utilize the capacity of the MARTA rail system as roadway congestion and future travel demand increase.

MARTA is the primary provider of transit service in the study area. The entire MARTA rail system includes 48 miles of double-track rail and 38 stations in the north to south and east to west directions. The BeltLine study area passes at or near the following MARTA rail stations:

- Lindbergh,
- Inman Park / Reynoldstown
- King Memorial
- West End,
- Bankhead, and
- Ashby

MARTA operates approximately 130 bus routes within its service area of the City of Atlanta and DeKalb and Fulton Counties. Thirty-eight of those routes intersect the BeltLine study area, generally leading into the center of the City. MARTA bus routes operate in mixed traffic on the surface streets, which provide access to MARTA heavy rail stations. Bus service frequencies during the peak period range from ten minutes on local arterial Routes 23 and 95, to sixty minutes on local feeder Routes 38, 52 and 99. While the bus transit system is quite comprehensive in size, congested streets and roadways in the BeltLine study area increase bus-running times and reduce the reliability of MARTA bus services.

In addition to MARTA, there are several transit providers operating within the study area. Cobb Community Transit, Gwinnett County Transit and the Georgia Regional Transportation Authority provide inter-county and regional bus service with transfer options at key locations within the study area. Some private businesses, including many major hotels, educational institutions and local government offer shuttle services for their customers and employees.

1.4.5 Planned Recreational Opportunities and Multi-Use Trails

The City of Atlanta recognizes that there is a relatively small amount of public greenspace available to its residents and poor interconnectivity among the City's parks for bicyclists and pedestrians. Atlanta's existing park system accounts for approximately four percent of the City's total land area, or about 3,400 acres. The ratio of park acres per 1,000 residents is a significant quality of life indicator; Atlanta's ratio is well below that of most other major metropolitan areas. In recognition of that condition, the City has proposed to increase the amount of dedicated parks and greenspace throughout the City by 1,900 acres as part of a broader economic development strategy.

Various existing parks within the BeltLine area are planned for expansion. In addition, numerous parks and green spaces, such as trails, are planned for the area. These new facilities include, but are not limited to:

- Development of spur trails and redevelopment of Stanton/Four Corners Park, and the initial development of a park at the Historical Murphy's Triangle,
- Proposed 22-acre park at Boulevard Crossing,
- Creating stronger pedestrian connections to Zoo Atlanta/Grant Park,
- Development of a new park location on North Avenue in the Old Fourth Ward,
- Expansion of Piedmont Park to the northeast and east near Monroe Drive,
- Development of multi-use trails connecting existing greenspace in the Northside-Peachtree-Piedmont area,
- Creation of a 250-acre, reservoir park, at previous Vulcan Mine Bellwood Quarry,
- Development of the BeltLine Trail that would connect to existing parks by providing spurs, such as to Maddox Park and to the Silver Comet Trail to Alabama, and
- Possible expansion of Maddox Park and improvements to the area where the existing, active rail line bisects the park.

The parks and trails mentioned above are just some of the planned improvements within the BeltLine study area. Providing linkages between the communities and these planned recreational opportunities within the BeltLine area would support many of the previous planning studies, such as the *Atlanta BeltLine Redevelopment Plan* and *the BeltLine Emerald Necklace Study.* Providing these connections and linkages would also support the City of Atlanta's Office of Parks mission and vision which are:

> ***Mission:*** *To improve, preserve, protect and maintain the City's parks and public green spaces as a safe and enjoyable enhancement to the quality of life for all residents and visitors to the City of Atlanta*
>
> ***Vision:*** *To be a world class provider of park services by improving the quality of life for all residents and visitors to Atlanta*

2.0 PROJECT GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The goals and objectives presented for this study form the basis for identifying the range and scope of project alternatives. Issues present specific problems that must be addressed by the project alternatives, and the goals and objectives provide benchmarks against which the project alternatives will be evaluated to select a technology, alignment, and to identify right-of-way requirements. The goals and objectives of the project are described as follows.

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

Objectives:

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

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

Objectives:

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

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

Objectives:

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

Goal: Provide a bicycle and pedestrian friendly environment.

Objectives:

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

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

Objectives:

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

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

Objectives:

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