

## **Appendix E - Public Involvement**

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# Appendix E – Public Participation

## 1.1 Public Participation Plan Summary

The objective of the public participation program is to invite and encourage the public to learn about and become involved in the BeltLine Corridor Environmental Study. The development of the Public Involvement and Agency Coordination Plan (PIAC) ensured ongoing public involvement throughout the course of the project using a variety of tools and techniques. The *PIAC Plan* describes how the public, local and state agencies, and decision-makers will take part in the identification, development, and implementation of the proposed transit and multi-use trails system in the BeltLine Corridor.

Key objectives of the public involvement efforts are to facilitate public understanding, to solicit input on the BeltLine Corridor transit and trails alternatives, and to identify potential consequences of alternative courses of action relative to the transportation, social, environmental and economic context. Use of the varying public involvement techniques outlined in the *PIAC Plan* invited and encouraged the public, federal, state, and local agencies the opportunity to review and comment on key project milestone decisions and to provide MARTA and ABI with the benefit of public insight throughout the project planning and development process.

The *PIAC Plan* was developed in accordance with Section 6002 of Public Law 104-59 “Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users” (SAFETEA-LU), which 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.

Public involvement activities are ongoing throughout the Tier 1 EIS process. To date, there were three major decision points in this EIS process where significant involvement from the public and agencies was crucial. Those decision points came during the Fall 2008 Scoping process to develop the Goals and Objectives for the Tier 1 EIS; Spring 2009 public workshops series to determine the conceptual right-of-way for transit and trails and identify possible station locations, transit stops, and trail locations and during the Fall of 2009 to present progress-to-date and solicit feedback from the public on the analysis of potential transit and trails routes.

Sections 1.2 and 1.3 provide a detailed summary of the involvement of the public, concerned agencies, and specially formed committees for the Tier 1 EIS. A full report of comments received during Scoping is included in the *Scoping Summary Report*, a full report of the public workshops is available through the *Public and Committee Workshops April-June 2009* report and a full report of the public meetings is available through the *Public and Committee Meetings November 2009* report.

The public, committees, and agencies are engaged on an ongoing basis during the Tier 1 EIS to provide timely and current feedback, and to ensure that the EIS process is consistent with federal policy, as well as, ABI’s Community Engagement Framework (CEF) and MARTA’s Public Participation Plan regarding public participation. A copy of public involvement outreach activities, including public, committee, and agency meetings is included in the *PIAC Plan* (shown in Section 1.2 Public Involvement: Scoping, Workshops, Meetings and Section 1.2.2.5 Fall 2009 Public Meetings).

Section 3.4 describes the handling of Environmental Justice (EJ) throughout the Tier 1 EIS process. The guidance defines an EJ population as low-income or minority. Focused

outreach to EJ communities allowed equal voice to community members around the BeltLine. An asterisk in the following sections marks designated EJ communities.

This section is organized to describe the key elements of the Public Participation Plan:

- Public Involvement: Scoping, Workshops, Meetings, Hearings and Target Audience Briefings
- Agency Involvement: Coordination, Committee, and Meetings
- Communication Tools

## **1.2 Public Involvement: Scoping, Workshops, Meetings Hearings and Target Audience Briefings**

Public involvement activities consist of organizing and working with the public, using ABI's *Community Engagement Framework* (CEF) created by City of Atlanta Resolution 06-R-1576 and MARTA's public participation plan to promote the Tier 1 EIS and to provide progress updates and presentations to a variety of target audiences.

The CEF includes a 5-part community engagement framework designed to keep the public informed and actively engaged in the BeltLine's creation so that it reflects the aspirations of its many neighborhoods and communities. The CEF consists of:

- Tax Allocation District Advisory Committee (TADAC) – This committee makes recommendations on projects funded from tax allocation proceeds.
- BeltLine Affordable Housing Advisory Board (BAHAB) – The Board receives 15% of TAD monies to ensure that available and affordable housing is planned for the BeltLine corridor.
- Quarterly Updates for the public – ABI provides these two-hour sessions to update the public and respond to inquiries on recent BeltLine developments.
- Community Engagement Advocate Office – This office is responsible for informing the community on current BeltLine issues and to ensure the active and meaningful engagement of the community in matters related to the BeltLine through the Community Engagement Framework (CEF).
- Atlanta BeltLine Study Groups – These monthly groups are open to everyone in each of the five geographic zones in the BeltLine project area. The goal is to engage each community in discussions about how the BeltLine can embody the aspirations of its residents for parks, transportation, trails, green space, and other amenities.

MARTA's public participation plan and resources are also critical to the success of the PIAC plan. This includes its extensive contact database, transit advocacy groups with which it works on a continuous basis, and special advisory committees.

### **1.2.1 Public Scoping Meetings**

MARTA, in partnership with ABI, conducted a number of Public Scoping meetings during the Scoping process, which began on July 25, 2008 and ended on September 22, 2008. The forums included eight formal Public Scoping meetings as well as other briefings with neighborhood and business organizations to inform the public, interest groups, and involved agencies about the BeltLine Corridor Environmental Study, the alternatives

under consideration, and other related issues. The goal was to encourage active participation from the public and agencies early in the decision-making process.

### 1.2.1.1 Formal Public Scoping Meetings

MARTA, in partnership with ABI, conducted eight formal Public Scoping meetings, two in each of the four quadrants of the study area. The Public Scoping meetings were conducted in accordance with NEPA guidelines 40 CFR Parts 1500-1508 and 23 CFR Part 771. All public meetings locations were compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and accessible by public transportation. Table 1 lists the Public Scoping meeting locations, dates, and number of attendees.

**Table 1: Scoping Meetings - Locations, Dates, and Attendance**

Study Area Zone	Location	Date/Time	Number of Attendees
Northeast	The Trolley Barn 963 Edgewood Ave NE Atlanta, GA 30307	August 19, 2008 1:00 - 3:00 pm	17
		August 19, 2008 6:00 - 8:00 pm	17
North/Northwest	Trinity Presbyterian Church 3003 Howell Mill Road NW Atlanta, GA 30327	August 19, 2008 1:00 - 3:00 pm	13
		August 19, 2008 6:00 - 8:00 pm	13
Southeast	Georgia Hill Neighborhood Center 250 Georgia Ave. SE Atlanta, GA 30312	August 21, 2008 1:00 - 3:00 pm	8
		August 21, 2008 6:00 - 8:00 pm	13
Southwest/Westside	Central United Methodist Church 503 Mitchell Street SW Atlanta, GA 30314	August 21, 2008 1:00 - 3:00 pm	9
		August 21, 2008 6:00 - 8:00 pm	12
Total Attendance			102

#### Format and Content

Each of the formal Public Scoping meetings followed the same format. At each meeting location, attendees signed-in upon arrival and each received a Scoping Information Package. Each meeting location included an “open house” area with information boards displayed. MARTA and ABI staff were available to answer questions. The information boards illustrated the BeltLine Corridor; a tiered EIS process overview; the Tier 1 EIS goals and objectives; and the proposed transit and trails alignments.

Each meeting included a formal presentation. The presentation at each session was identical and included an overview of the project background and Purpose and Need; a summary of the environmental process; an overview of the No Build and Build Alternatives; and a summary of the key issues associated with project implementation. Following the presentation, members of the public had the opportunity to voice their opinions on the Tier 1 EIS and the proposed project. Attendees had the option of either completing the comment form, contained in the Scoping Package, at the meeting and dropping it in a comment box or mailing it in prior to the close of the comment period. A record of all attendees and participants occurred, as well as the addition of individuals to the overall Tier 1 EIS mailing list and database.

A court reporter was present to record the public's comments. Reports from the meetings are available from the MARTA Office of Transit System Planning upon request. The *Scoping Summary Report* summarizes the comments and issues raised by the public during the Scoping meetings.

### 1.2.1.2 Other Meetings Held During Scoping

Prior to, during, and after the formal Public Scoping meetings, over 46 supplemental progress presentations and stakeholder briefings occurred at regularly scheduled meetings of ABI, community, neighborhood, and business organizations. Information about the Tier 1 EIS and the proposed project was available at each meeting. Table 2 lists each briefing.

**Table 2: Other Meetings Held During Scoping**

Meeting/Presentation Name	Location	Date/Time	Number of Attendees
TADAC Chair and Transit & Trails Sub-committee Chair	Atlanta BeltLine, Inc. 86 Pryor St. SW Atlanta, GA 30303	June 6, 2008 12:30 – 2:30 pm	2
BeltLine Study Group – Westside	Hands On Atlanta 600 Means St. Atlanta, GA 30318	June 23, 2008 6:30 – 8:30 pm	40
NPU-W Update	Martha Brown United Methodist Church 1205 Metropolitan Parkway SW Atlanta, GA 30310	June 25, 2008 7:30 – 9:30 PM	40
BeltLine Study Group – Southwest	Perkerson Park Pavilion 770 Deckner Ave. SW Atlanta, GA 30310	June 26, 2008 6:30 – 8:30 pm	60
TADAC Executive Committee	IBEW Auditorium 501 Pulliam St. SW Atlanta, GA 30312	July 7, 2008 11:00 am	9
ABI Quarterly Briefing	Atlanta Public School Auditorium 130 Trinity Ave. SW Atlanta, GA 30303	July 10, 2008 6:00 – 8:00 pm	94
NPU-X	Stewart Lakewood Library 2893 Lakewood Ave. Atlanta, GA 30315	July 14, 2008 7:00 – 9:00 pm	90
BeltLine Study Group – Southeast	Zoo Atlanta Atlanta, GA 30315	July 14, 2008 6:30 – 8:30 pm	20
NPU-V	Salvation Army Metropolitan Pkwy. Atlanta, GA	July 14, 2008 6:30 – 8:30 pm	65
TAC/Agency Kick-off Meeting	Atlanta BeltLine, Inc. 86 Pryor St. SW Atlanta, GA 30303	July 17, 2008 7:00 – 9:00 pm	27
BeltLine Study Group – Northeast	Hillside, Inc. 690 Courtenay Dr. NE Atlanta, GA 30306	July 17, 2008 6:30 – 8:30 pm	94
NPU-S	The Vicars 838 Cascade Rd. SW Atlanta, GA	July 17, 2008 7:00 – 8:00 pm	27

<b>Meeting/Presentation Name</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Date/Time</b>	<b>Number of Attendees</b>
Georgia Stand-Up	IBEW Auditorium 501 Pulliam St. SW Atlanta, GA 30312	July 18, 2008 12:00 – 2:30 pm	53
NPU-F	Hillside, Inc. 690 Courtenay Dr. NE Atlanta, GA 30306	July 21, 2008 7:00 – 9:00 pm	45
NPU-D	Agape Community Center 2351 Bolton Rd. Atlanta, GA 30318	July 22, 2008 7:00 – 9:00 pm	17
NPU-J	Atlanta Job Corps 239 W. Lake Dr. NW Atlanta, GA 30314	July 22, 2008 7:00 – 9:00 pm	30
Stakeholder Advisory Committee Kick-off Meeting	MARTA 2424 Piedmont Rd. Atlanta, GA 30324	July 22, 2008 6:00 – 8:00 pm	27
Georgia Stand-up	IBEW Auditorium 501 Pulliam St. SW Atlanta, GA 30312	August 15, 2008 12:00 – 2:30 pm	58
BeltLine Study Group – Westside	Hands On Atlanta 600 Means St. Atlanta, GA 30318	August 25, 2008 6:30 – 8:30 pm	53
BeltLine Study Group – Southwest	Emmaus House Study Hall 1010 Crews St. Atlanta, GA 30315	August 28, 2008 6:30 – 8:30 pm	35
Sustainable Atlanta Roundtable	All Saints Episcopal Church 634 W. Peachtree St. NW Atlanta, GA 30308	September 5, 2008 7:30 – 9:30 am	90
BeltLine Study Group - Northside	Piedmont Hospital McRae Auditorium 1984 Peachtree Rd. NW Atlanta, GA 30309	September 8, 2008 6:30 – 8:30 pm	25
NPU-X	Stewart Lakewood Library 2893 Lakewood Ave. Atlanta, GA 30315	September 8, 2008 7:00 – 9:00 pm	64
NPU-V	Dunbar Center 477 Windsor St. Atlanta, GA 30312	September 8, 2008 7:00 - 9:00 pm	43
Morningside Lenox Park' Monthly Meeting	Morningside Presbyterian Church 1411 N. Morningside Dr. NE Atlanta, GA 30306	September 8, 2008 7:30 – 9:30 pm	22
NPU-T	Shrine of the Black Madonna 950 Ralph David Abernathy Blvd. Atlanta, GA 30310	September 10, 2008 7:30 – 9:30 pm	40
The Focus (Community Television Program)	860 Hank Aaron Dr. Atlanta, GA 30315	September 11, 2008 6:00 pm	N/A
BeltLine Study Group – Northeast	Hillside, Inc. 690 Courtenay Dr. NE Atlanta, GA 30306	September 11, 2008 6:30 – 8:30 pm	64

<b>Meeting/Presentation Name</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Date/Time</b>	<b>Number of Attendees</b>
Buckhead Business Association	Anthony's Restaurant 3109 Piedmont Rd. Atlanta, GA 30305	September 11, 2008 7:30 – 9:30 pm	66
Peoplestown Revitalization Corporation	Rick McDivitts Youth Center 30 Haygood Ave. Atlanta, GA. 30315	September 13, 2008 10:30 am	75
Booker T. Washington Community Assoc.	Booker T. Washington High School 45 Whitehouse Dr. Atlanta, GA 30314	September 15, 2008 6:30 – 8:30 pm	17
Reynoldstown Civic Improvement League	100 Flat Shoals Ave. SE Atlanta, GA 30316	September 15, 2008 7:00 – 9:00 pm	24
NPU-F	Hillside, Inc. 690 Courtenay Dr. NE Atlanta, GA 30306	September 15, 2008 7:00 – 9:00 pm	48
NPU-Y	John Birdine Facility 215 Lakewood Way, SW Atlanta, GA 30315	September 15, 2008 7:00 – 9:00 pm	37
Blandtown Neighborhood Assoc.	Milk & Honey Restaurant 1082 Huff Rd. Atlanta, GA 30318	September 16, 2008 2:30 – 4:30 pm	18
Fourth Ward Neighbors Inc.	Highland Bakery 655 Highland Ave. Atlanta, GA 30312	September 16, 2008 7:00 – 9:00 pm	29
NPU-K	Washington Park Natatorium 102 Ollie St. NW Atlanta, GA 30314	September 16, 2008 7:00 – 9:00 pm	27
Grant Park Neighborhood Assoc.	Georgia Hill Center 250 Georgia Ave. Atlanta, GA 30312	September 16, 2008 7:30 - 9:30 pm	63
Atlanta Housing Association of Neighborhood-based Developers (AHAND)	Chamblee – Senior Residential 3522 Blair Circle Chamblee, GA 30319	September 18, 2008 12:00 – 2:00 pm	23
NPU-G	English Park Recreation Center 1340 Bolton Rd. NW Atlanta, GA 30331	September 18, 2008 7:00 – 9:00 pm	27
Georgia STAND-UP Alliance Meeting	IBEW Auditorium 501 Pulliam St. SW Atlanta, GA 30312	September 19, 2008 12:00 – 2:00 pm,	47
Veranda at Carver Hills	217 Thirkeld Ave. Atlanta, GA 30315	September 22, 2008 3:00 pm	20
NPU-M	Martin Luther King, Jr. Community Ctr. 70 Boulevard Atlanta, GA 30312	September 22, 2008 6:30 – 8:30 pm	48
Underwood Hills Neighborhood Assoc.	Northside Church of God 1736 Harper St. NW Atlanta, GA 30318	September 22, 2008 7:00 - 9:00 pm	22



Meeting/Presentation Name	Location	Date/Time	Number of Attendees
TAC/SAC Meeting	MARTA 2424 Piedmont Rd. Atlanta, GA 30324	December 8, 2008 5:30 – 7:30 pm	33
Target Audience Update NPU-J	Atlanta Job Corps Center 239 West Lake Dr. Atlanta, GA 30314	January 27, 2009 7:00 – 9:00 pm	70
Total			1928+

### Comments Received

The formal comment period for Public and Agency Scoping began July 25, 2008 and ended on September 22, 2008. Throughout the Tier 1 EIS process, comments received during Scoping have been reviewed, considered, and used to shape the alternatives and evaluation process. The conceptual transit and trails alignments included in the Tier 1 Draft EIS reflect the comments received during the formal comment period (summarized in the *Final Scoping Summary Report*).

Several hundred people submitted comments on the BeltLine Corridor Environmental Study and the proposed project. Often, there were multiple comments expressed by individual respondents. Table 3 shows the distribution of the comments received by medium.

There were approximately 947 comments submitted from 341 people. Of the comments, 769 were from comment forms distributed during Public Scoping meetings and briefings and provided on the BeltLine project website at that time, [www.itsmarta.com/newsroom/beltline.html](http://www.itsmarta.com/newsroom/beltline.html) (the current project websites are [www.itsmarta.com/Beltline-Corr.aspx](http://www.itsmarta.com/Beltline-Corr.aspx) and [www.beltline.org/BeltLineBasics/TransitTrailsandTransportation/EnvironmentalImpactStudyEIS/tabid/2936/Default.aspx](http://www.beltline.org/BeltLineBasics/TransitTrailsandTransportation/EnvironmentalImpactStudyEIS/tabid/2936/Default.aspx)).

**Table 3: Comments Received by Medium**

Medium	Number of Comments Received
Scoping Meetings:	173
Oral Comments	(117)
Comment Forms	(56)
Target Audience Briefings / Post-Scoping Meetings:	543
Fax	24
Letter	16
Website/Email:	189
Other:	2
Total:	947

The following sections provide an overall summary of the comments received during Scoping, organized by the following subject areas:

### ***Purpose and Need and Goals and Objectives***

Several comments supported the purpose of and need for the BeltLine and the goals and objectives contained within the Purpose and Need statement. Those commenting felt that the proposed project would be beneficial to Atlanta residents for several reasons, including:

- Enhanced mobility, accessibility and community connectivity
- Improved quality of life and health
- Improved livability within the city
- Preservation of the historical neighborhoods, parks and significant activity centers encircling Atlanta
- Reduced energy dependence and reliance on automobiles
- Improved air quality due to reduced emissions
- Economic development and neighborhood revitalization
- Improved pedestrian and bicycling environment

### ***Alternatives***

Comments received during Scoping that related to the project alternatives are summarized below.

- *Mode* - The majority of those that commented expressed the need to get residents out of their cars and on to transit. Most of those that commented expressed interest in either streetcar or light rail. However, some recommend bus as the preferred mode.
- *Alignment* - Comments relating to the proposed alignment expressed concern for the alignment configuration and positioning of proposed stations. Comments regarding the alignment are summarized below:
  - The proposed loop configuration of the eastern end of the proposed alignment is inefficient. The time on the train to go from Grant Park to City Hall East on Ponce de Leon Avenue would increase by 15 to 20 minutes. The loop seems short-sighted and ill-conceived.
  - The proposed BeltLine alignment and MARTA East-West heavy rail line would intersect with a perfectly designed rail station and rail-oriented development creating a seamless integration of the two lines.
  - The proposed 2.25 miles of new on-street rail would be difficult to design.
  - The proposed rail line would be out of context in terms of both land use and transportation south along Moreland Avenue and along Wylie Street.
  - The entirety of the Mason/Northeast BeltLine right-of-way acquisition should be reserved for public purposes and any excess space in the section between Piedmont Avenue and the I-85 corridor should be reserved for public purposes such as park space, a library branch, or other public use.
  - The BeltLine transit service would do little to augment ridership or the Atlanta regional network in the Edgewood Retail District due the two existing MARTA stations and the myriad of bus connections.

- *Transit Stops* - The following recommendations were provided concerning transit stops for the BeltLine:
  - Provide stops at Piedmont Avenue and Garson Drive and Turner Field.
  - Create a station west of Krog Tunnel to be a transit hub for a new transit-oriented development near Hulsey Yard redevelopment.
  - Connect the BeltLine to a new MARTA station between the King Memorial and Inman Park/Reynoldstown MARTA Stations rather than routing the alignment to the Inman Park/Reynoldstown MARTA Station.
  - Transit stop locations should provide BeltLine access from the north, center, and south sections of the Piedmont Heights neighborhood.
  - A transit station opposite Monroe Place Apartments on Monroe Drive seems appropriate.
  - An additional station should be located in the vicinity of Wimbledon Drive or Rock Springs Road to facilitate access from the core of the neighborhood. This solution would complement the proposed station at Ansley Mall and negate the need for a station at Montgomery Ferry Road.
- *Trails* - Comments regarding the proposed BeltLine trails related to connectivity to existing parks and recreation areas and the health and safety of trail users. The comments are summarized below:
  - Since transit would be implemented in stages, construct trail segments first in areas scheduled for later phases of transit.
  - Public recreation trails absent hazardous traffic are desperately needed.
  - Putting the trail system next to the rail lines is smart as far as land use, but unless the transit mode has low-to-zero emissions, it could have an impact on the health of those using the trail system.
  - Use BeltLine space as opportunities for environmental education (station posters, planted signs, etc.) Use BeltLine to educate folks on the history, landmarks, places of interest in different communities.
  - Prefer the trail not be paved.
  - Promote healthy choices for transportation via transit/trails and the ability to walk with help to decrease obesity.
  - We must streamline rail paths allowing bikes, feet, and buses to be secondary modes to feed people outward.
  - Include Waterworks Park at Huff Road and Howell Mill Road as part of the first phase of implementation.
  - Trail access should be available opposite Monroe Place Apartments on Monroe Drive along with an access point in the vicinity of Wimbledon (Road) or Rock Springs (Road) to facilitate access from the core of the neighborhood. On the south on Piedmont Heights, trail access should be available from the Ansley Mall.
  - The trail should be located on the predominantly residential side of the highway to take advantage of the high number of existing residences, which will not have access to the trail if it is located on the northern/industrial side of the highway. This proposed location would insure highest use from the outset of construction.

- Would like to see the BeltLine trail options remain adjacent as they come south from Lindbergh Center station on Piedmont Road (under I-85) and then turn westerly along Monroe Circle and Monroe Drive to connect with the BeltLine right-of-way at the northern end of the Ansley Golf Course.
- Put the trail system south of I-85 where people live.
- Construction of a bicycle and pedestrian trail system in the proposed BeltLine right-of-way from I-85 through the entire Subarea 6 BeltLine right-of-way will help ensure the most expedient and highest use of the public component of the proposed BeltLine right-of-way and help mitigate access issues due to potential development.

### ***Mobility***

Some of the key issues regarding mobility concerned the potential for impacts to traffic and pedestrian circulation. It was suggested that congestion and pedestrian traffic at major points along the BeltLine be considered because the proposed project may cause additional traffic problems. Further, it was recommended that during design of the proposed project, MARTA must minimize at-grade motor vehicle crossings on the transit route.

### ***Environmental Quality***

Many residents that submitted comments were concerned about the potential effects of the proposed BeltLine Corridor project on environmental resources. It was recommended that consideration of environmental impacts contain a very specific scope of studies that identify and measure current baseline conditions for air quality, noise, vibration, hazardous material location, animal habitat, visual impacts, historic resources, archaeological resources and water resource quality. More detail on the specific topics is presented below:

- *Air Quality* - Many residents see the proposed BeltLine project as a potential improvement to Atlanta's current air quality conditions.
- *Brownfields and Hazardous Materials* - Some comments questioned whether there were sufficient funding mechanisms in place to remediate the volume of old industrial sites on the south side of the BeltLine Corridor.
- *Cultural Resources* - Many comments expressed concern that the proposed alignment could have detrimental effects on historic structures and archaeological resources located along the alignment and requested that an assessment of the potential impacts on historic sites and buildings should be done before project initiation.
- *Cumulative Impacts* - The potential impacts of the proposed BeltLine Corridor project need to be considered in the context of their cumulative impacts over both time and space.
- *Environmental Justice* - Many comments suggested evaluating how the proposed BeltLine Corridor project would affect environmental justice (low-income and minority) communities.
- *Land Use* - Some comments questioned whether the city has sufficient development controls in place through its zoning and subdivision power to assure control of the right-of-way for both development and transit purposes within the BeltLine Corridor. It was recommended that development should occur where a viable and appropriate public/private framework is the basis of design and the public domain is clearly

designed and defined in such a way that reinforces those elements of the city that create a safe, walkable, transit-oriented community. Further, it was recommended that the outcomes of the Tier 1 EIS should be consistent with local plans.

- Other comments suggested that the proposed transit and trail elements of the proposed BeltLine Corridor project are out of context in terms of both land use and transportation. Further, it was felt that certain areas would be allowed to be developed so densely that they would in turn create a traffic problem rather than alleviate it. The Tier 1 EIS should provide a timeline for when and how much development is likely to occur that might be served by the BeltLine and address impacts in the context of development trends.
- *Natural Resources* - Some residents requested that an evaluation of the potential effects of the proposed project on animals, including threatened and endangered species, which live along the proposed alignment; animal habitat; and vegetation be conducted. Some were concerned that the construction of the proposed project could cause the destruction of trees and vegetation along the right-of-way.
- *Noise and Vibration* - Many of the comments received related to the noise and vibration impacts of the proposed project on property located within the BeltLine Corridor. People were interested in noise reduction strategies, as well as how the proposed project would be constructed to minimize noise and vibration during the construction phase, as well as after completion.
- *Parks and Recreation* - Several comments stated that the proposed BeltLine Corridor project would improve existing greenspace. However, some felt that the proposed project would show no regard for Piedmont Park and its expansion and that the proposed project would heighten development at the expense of greenspace.
- *Utilities* - Some citizens expressed concern that planning for a new park and associated high-density mixed-use development in the BeltLine Corridor would only increase the conflicts between the public and nuisances caused by the City's antiquated way of dealing with sewage. Several parks and trail areas along the BeltLine Corridor intersect or could potentially be negatively impacted by combined sewer outflow (CSO) facilities.
- *Visual and Aesthetics* - Several citizens noted the uniquely beautiful characteristics of neighborhoods along the BeltLine Corridor and expressed concern about the general impacts the proposed project would have on the visual and aesthetic appeal of the area. These included landscaping along the alignment and lighting at the proposed transit stations.
- *Water Resources* - There were many comments received regarding area water resources, which includes stormwater, ground water, and surface waters. Some residents requested information on how stormwater runoff will be managed once the proposed project is completed. Others wanted to know how the proposed project would impact the water supply.

### ***Ridership***

In some of the comments received, inquiries were made into whether any ridership forecasts and timeline projections would be developed for the whole of the proposed BeltLine Corridor project so that citizens can gain a clearer understanding about what is likely to happen and when.

### ***Safety and Security***

Several commenters were concerned that the proposed BeltLine Corridor project would attract additional crime and vagrants, especially along the proposed trail system. Many also noted that preventing accidents and injuries at crossing locations and during construction is an important issue.

### ***Construction Impacts***

Citizens submitted comments regarding the construction activities associated with the proposed project and their potential effects on the following:

- Project phasing and duration of construction
- Management of dust and debris
- Stormwater runoff
- Access and parking
- Commute time and traffic congestion
- Public transportation
- Pedestrian circulation and safety
- Contaminated soils
- Noise and vibration
- Visual and aesthetics
- Parklands and recreation areas
- Safety and security, including emergency management

### ***Costs and Financial Plan***

There were general concerns expressed about insufficient funding options for the proposed BeltLine Corridor project that would limit future progress of the project or the ability to operate and maintain the system. Others felt existing funding sources would compete with other needed projects.

The comments below summarize those received regarding funding sources for the proposed transit and trail system being evaluated in the BeltLine Corridor Environmental Study:

- Consider the financing strategy as part of its analysis and findings of the Tier 1 EIS
- Consider DERA (Diesel Emissions Reduction Act) and CMAQ (Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality) funds that are currently held by the Georgia Environmental Protection Division
- Restrict TAD Bonds proceeds to transit, trails, or greenspace not private sector assistance
- Consider local, state, and federal funds
- Consider a sales tax or a gasoline tax
- Consider a minimal or no Atlanta subsidy

- Consider funding from the private sector, through mechanisms such as station sponsorship
- Consider anything except property taxes
- Consider a small tax that will be added to the tax bill and a small fee to ride, such as 50 or 75 cents

### ***General Project Opposition or Support***

There were many comments that expressed support for the proposed project and the effort to ease traffic congestion and improve access throughout the BeltLine Corridor. They expressed support for both the proposed transit and trail elements and the benefits they would provide to those living along the alignment, including:

- Increasing mobility reducing congestion by getting people out of their cars
- Helping to save gas
- Connecting parks and neighborhoods
- Stimulating investment and increasing property values for those who live or work around the stations
- Improving general public health by increasing walkability that comes with public transit and improving air quality
- Providing the city an opportunity to take advantage of all of the unused rail lines that need to be used

There were several comments that expressed opposition to the proposed project. The respondents were skeptical of the benefits of the BeltLine Corridor and questioned whether the proposed project was worth the cost. The comments opposing the proposed project included the following reasons for their lack of support:

- Property impacts for those adjacent to the alignment
- Impacts of development on parks and affordable housing
- Traffic delays and flow
- The project would not be cost-effective

A number of attendees at Public Scoping meetings and others offering comments indicated their awareness of planning and project development activity for only one modal concept (either transit or the trail system), as a result of participation in distinct planning activities by MARTA, ABI and community partners over the past several years.

### ***Project Administration and Process***

Many respondents requested specific information about the Study and the proposed project including:

- Who is serving as the lead agency for the project and who are the cooperating agencies; are the NEPA and GEPA processes being followed?
- Who approves the Tier 1 EIS?
- What are the roles of MARTA and ABI?

- Who will be the operator of the BeltLine?
- Has the existing rail line been formally decommissioned by the Federal Railroad Administration?
- Who will be making the final decisions?

There were several comments regarding insufficient information in the Scoping Document provided and frustration over the planning process for the proposed project. It was suggested that communities should be given the opportunity to review and comment on the design of development projects in their area.

Comments also recommended that planning for infrastructure improvements be implemented concurrently (i.e., at the time of or before) with significant development. Individuals suggested that when considering possible transportation investments, MARTA and ABI should rely on the emerging *Connect Atlanta* plan and the Transit Planning Board (TPB) Concept 3 plan and place the BeltLine Corridor Environmental Study in the context of the city-wide vision. The comments further noted that there should be greater emphasis on transit and parks rather than on auto-oriented developments.

Still others wanted to know how the purchase process of any right-of-way acquisition would comply with federal standards.

### **Scoping Meeting Advertisement and Notice**

Advertisement of the Public Scoping meetings appeared in the following venues:

#### ***Newspapers***

- Atlanta Journal-Constitution (August 9, 2008; August 17, 2008)
- Atlanta Daily World (August 14-20, 2008)

#### ***Project Website***

The BeltLine project website at [www.itsmarta.com/Beltline-Corr.aspx](http://www.itsmarta.com/Beltline-Corr.aspx) advertised the meetings. ABI also provided a link to the project website at: [www.beltline.org/BeltLineBasics/TransitTrailsandTransportation/EnvironmentallImpactStudyEIS/tabid/2936/Default.aspx](http://www.beltline.org/BeltLineBasics/TransitTrailsandTransportation/EnvironmentallImpactStudyEIS/tabid/2936/Default.aspx)

#### ***Other Announcements***

A Study Update/Flyer printed in English and Spanish and distributed through the contact database, hand-distributed at neighborhood meetings, and placed on the BeltLine project websites ([www.itsmarta.com/Beltline-Corr.aspx](http://www.itsmarta.com/Beltline-Corr.aspx); and [www.beltline.org/BeltLineBasics/TransitTrailsandTransportation/EnvironmentallImpactStudyEIS/tabid/2936/Default.aspx](http://www.beltline.org/BeltLineBasics/TransitTrailsandTransportation/EnvironmentallImpactStudyEIS/tabid/2936/Default.aspx)) advertised the meetings.

## **1.2.2 Public Workshops**

### **1.2.2.1 Citywide Conversation on Transit and Trails**

MARTA and ABI conducted a Citywide Conversation on Transit and Trails on April 2, 2009, from 6:00-8:00 PM at the All Saints Episcopal Church (634 West Peachtree Street NW, Atlanta, GA 30308), inviting members of the SAC, and open to the public at large. The purpose of the meetings was to inform the community of the status of the BeltLine Corridor Environmental Study and to prepare them for the upcoming Public Workshops.



## **Format and Content**

The Citywide Conversation on Transit and Trails included a discussion of the overall BeltLine project, the BeltLine Corridor Environmental Study, and the environmental study interface with Subarea Master Planning efforts. However, the presentation and subsequent conversation focused on the Evaluation Criteria and upcoming public workshops.

Following the presentation, the attendees (61 in total) divided into groups to review the Preliminary Evaluation Criteria and associated Performance Measures. The purpose of this exercise was to get a consensus that the right evaluation criteria and performance measures were in use and to insure that there was not an omission of important information. Breakout discussion topics included:

- Study purpose and need
- Goals and objectives of the project
- Existing conditions in the corridor
- Study update
- Evaluation criteria and outcomes

Provided below are the list of questions asked during the meeting, as well as the feedback received from the breakout session.

## **Comments Received**

The following highlights the questions received from participants:

- What is the definition of a stakeholder?
- Are you doing a conceptual design for the entire corridor?
- Whether or not the BeltLine has the population density to support transit in terms of projected population and employment numbers?
- What is the study area width?
- What is the projected timeline of implementation for various segments of the BeltLine?
- The conceptual level of planning raises issues of discontinuity of BeltLine transit with MARTA rail. Will this be addressed in the EIS?
- How are citywide transit projects prioritized in terms of meeting competing transit service needs?
- Will issues of noise be addressed?
- What is the process of public engagement in this study? How are the communities going to address the conceptual matters and how are you going to resolve those issues through this process so that the community and your plan work well together?

## ***Breakout Group Feedback***

The following is a combined list in order of preference voted on by the groups. Each Evaluation Criteria was prioritized by the Performance Measures that ranked highest among the community.

### Accessibility and Connectivity

- Local services and infill stations could be joined for connectivity with pedestrians and bicyclists
- How do you get people to leave their cars at home?
- The trail will help serve the need to ‘meander’ while the transit would help get to destinations more directly
- How do we deal with where the other sub areas join?
- Neighborhood/shorter trips to destinations
- Connection points with existing versus future activity
- Have nodes for regional connectivity -- # of nodes at employment centers
- Have places where system connects to streets
- Connections to destinations for employment, retail, grocery shopping
- Consider multi-modal connectivity
- Ensure accessibility to jobs
- Must be a connection between people living and working along the BeltLine
- Address trips to work and other places, i.e. there is a lack of grocery stores in the Southwest corridor
- As much as we want people to use public transportation, not having large associated parking lots is still very important
- Disabled population – include in considerations
- Comprehensive sidewalk development needed, designed and implemented
- Trail Access Points - how ordinary people will get on the trail
- Pedestrians and bicycles should be incorporated in this criteria, versus having two separate criteria
- Put transit and trails where people live
- ROW Pres.: PATH, TPL, Georgia Conservancy, Zoning
- Extent of future connectivity brought by transit
- What are the recreational aspects of the trail

### Community Fit

- Focus on quality of life – the rest will follow
- Consider compatibility, benefits to community
- Define impacts – displacements versus benefits, attract future businesses/residents
- Ensure community cohesion
- To be compatible with the community, what are the benefits to the people
- Concern with security, lighting, site specificity, fit of stations

- Security in using transit and trails
- Must get public input for community fit
- Neighborhood Connection (performance measure)
- We should be mapping as to where people are going
- Security of adjacent properties
- Accessibility to 1st responders
- Prevention of catastrophic incident/impact to adjacent properties

#### Pedestrian and Bicycle Compatibility

- Experience – get input from people who know about this
- At-grade access for bikes
- Safety and lighting need to be considered
- This category is a duplicate of Connectivity and Mobility
- Bike-friendly
- Combine first 4 measures with Accessibility/Connectivity; move last 2 measures to Community

#### Equity

- Displacement from Right of Way needs or development
- Geographic equity with socio-economic equity
- Prioritize the need of the people versus looking at how they would ‘benefit’
- Look at cost effectiveness in a different way – connecting people to jobs, grocery stores
- Serve seniors and disabled – make sure ADA compliant
- Must be able to accommodate ADA requirements
- Make sure transit and trails are safe enough to use
- See how BRT connection by MARTA would work
- Can Equity be combined with other headings
- Equity – connections covered under other criteria

#### Mobility

- Consider speed of mobility
- Combine mobility with accessibility and connectivity
- Consider frequency of service
- Should be able to be both a local access and express service
- Reduction needed in Vehicle Miles Traveled and Vehicle Trips

### Cost Efficiency and Effectiveness

- Consider funding and where it will come from
- How economically sustainable is the project
- Should economics be the driving factor; or serving a population – what are the priorities?
- Consider cost of maintenance
- Add Preservation of Single Family Neighborhoods and other transit connections

### Environmental Quality

- What is the impact of the certain kinds of transit technology on the environment?
- Consider noise, visual impact, pollution, vibration

### Land Use and Economic Development

- Should have a different feel and quality than the rest of MARTA
- Reminder -- BeltLine was originally about connecting neighborhoods rather than spurring development.

### Public Input

- Let the neighborhoods speak for themselves
- Think of what they need, not how we think they can benefit
- Need to aggressively involve the public.

### Support of Other Planning Initiatives

- Should be coordination with other planning initiatives
- Support planned land use.
- Use previous models for comparison

### ***Additional Comments***

- Evaluation Criteria categories could be reduced or combined; There is duplicate measure in numerous criteria, i.e. collapse criteria
- Add Ridership as category – what is the feasibility for people riding public transit as defined in the redevelopment study. if people don't ride public transit the whole concept disintegrates
- Add Timeframe to criteria – when can we have funding and have the BeltLine accessible to the neighborhoods we are connecting
- Add Options Available for Changing Conditions to criteria
- Focus of study area should take into account the TAD, not just the ½-mile buffer.
- Do not minimize the importance of safety – if people feel intimidated they won't walk, bicycle, or ride public transit
- Consolidate the existing 10 Evaluation Criteria into the 4:

- Connectivity: Mobility, Accessibility and Connectivity, Pedestrian/Bike Compatibility
- Community Support: Equity, Planning Initiatives, Community Fit, and Public Involvement
- Cost Efficiency: Cost effectiveness and Economic Development/Land Use
- Environmental Quality: As is
- Consolidate the Performance Measures – These could also be consolidated and weighted accordingly. Add a measure of the costs to acquire land or easements for competing alternatives. Also, provide separate measures for acres of wetlands impacted and number of stream crossings. These have different environmental effects.

### **1.2.2.2 Spring 2009 Public Workshop Series**

MARTA and ABI conducted five formal public workshops, one in each of the study group areas: southeast, northeast, southwest, and two geographic areas forming the northwest zone (westside and northside). Public workshops were held between April 13, 2009 and May 4, 2009 to engage the public in identifying potential transit and trails alternatives considered for the project. Promotion of the workshops took place throughout the study area to involve the public, some of whom were previously involved in BeltLine planning efforts, through MARTA and ABI outreach methods. Others participated because of a host of outreach strategies designed to reach community, transit and trail users, and stakeholders of the future transit and trails project. These activities resulted in small group hands-on workshops attended by approximately 105 individuals.

The formal Public Workshops were conducted in accordance with NEPA guidelines. All public meetings locations were compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and accessible by public transportation. Table 4 lists the Public Workshops locations, dates, and number of attendees.

#### **Format and Content**

The first portion of each of the public workshops provided an opportunity for the participants to view a series of display boards and a continuous video that described the various transit and trails improvement options identified in previous studies for the BeltLine. A short presentation followed that described the overall Tier 1 EIS process, results of previous studies, and the purpose of the workshop. After the presentation, participants formed smaller discussion groups for an interactive exercise focused on identifying potential modifications or additions to the alternative service types, alignments, and station locations previously identified for the BeltLine project. Each breakout group included a staff facilitator to lead the discussion, access to an interactive video screen that displayed maps of the proposed project alignment and stations, and a staff person to document the comments and suggestions offered by the group.

Following the breakout session, a representative for each group presented a short summary regarding the key points raised by their group.

**Table 4: Public Workshops – Locations, Dates, and Attendance**

Study Area Quadrant	Location	Date/Time	Number of Attendees
Southeast Study Group	Trees Atlanta, Inc. 225 Chester Ave. SE Atlanta, GA 30316	April 13, 2009 6:30 pm – 8:30 pm	22
Northeast Study Group	Morningside Baptist Church 1700 Piedmont Ave. NE Atlanta, GA 30324	April 16, 2009 6:30 pm – 8:30 pm	29
Southwest Study Group	West Hunter Baptist Church 1040 Ralph David Abernathy Boulevard SW Atlanta, GA 30310	April 23, 2009 6:30 pm – 8:30 pm	20
Westside Study Group	Atlanta Humane Society 981 Howell Mill Road NW Atlanta, GA 30318	April 27, 2009 6:30 pm – 8:30 pm	15
Northside Study Group	Piedmont Hospital – McRae Auditorium 1984 Peachtree Rd. NE Atlanta, GA 30309	May 4, 2009 6:30 pm – 8:30 pm	19
Total Attendance			105

### Comments Received

The comments received are recorded and summarized in Section 1.2.2.3 below.

### Public Workshop Advertisement

Advertisement for the Public Workshop meetings appeared in the following venues:

#### ***Project Website***

The ABI website advertised the meetings at [www.beltline.org/BeltLineBasics/TransitTrailsandTransportation/EnvironmentalImpactStudyEIS/tabid/2936/Default.aspx](http://www.beltline.org/BeltLineBasics/TransitTrailsandTransportation/EnvironmentalImpactStudyEIS/tabid/2936/Default.aspx)

#### ***Other Announcements***

A Study Update/Flyer and distributed through the contact database, hand-distributed at neighborhood meetings, churches, community centers, grocery stores, libraries, businesses and other high traffic locations, and placed on the BeltLine project website ([www.itsmarta.com/Beltline-Corr.aspx](http://www.itsmarta.com/Beltline-Corr.aspx); and [www.beltline.org/BeltLineBasics/TransitTrailsandTransportation/EnvironmentalImpactStudyEIS/tabid/2936/Default.aspx](http://www.beltline.org/BeltLineBasics/TransitTrailsandTransportation/EnvironmentalImpactStudyEIS/tabid/2936/Default.aspx)) advertised the meetings.

### 1.2.2.3 Spring 2009 Public Workshop Extension

To gain additional feedback from the public, there was an extension on the public workshop comment period to June 12, 2009. Additional opportunities to engage the public in identifying potential transit and trail alternatives occurred during twelve public and community organization presentations (see Table 5 below). Through intensified efforts to engage the public in identifying opportunities and impacts for the transit and trails design, community forums already in place, such as libraries, and office complex and mall food courts received an abbreviated version of the presentation. These activities resulted in attendance of approximately 502 individuals.

## Format and Content

At the presentations and one-on-one engagements, individuals had an opportunity to view a series of display boards that described the Tier 1 EIS process, the types of service considered, the environmental project goals, the overall BeltLine concept, and the study area map. In this informal context, individuals heard a brief overview of the BeltLine study and gave their comments. Staff documented the comments and suggestions offered. Provided in summary below, as well as the *Public and Committee Workshops April-June 2009* report, is a report of the issues raised during the Public Workshops.

**Table 5: Public Workshop Extension – Locations, Dates, and Attendance**

Public Workshop Extension	Location	Date/Time	Number of Attendees
AHAND (Atlanta Housing Association of Neighborhood-Based Developers)*	The Salvation Army Ray & Joan Kroc Corps Community Center 967 Dewey Street SW Atlanta, GA 30310	May 21, 2009 12:00 – 2:00 pm	28
Martin Luther King, Jr. Library	409 John Wesley Dobbs Ave. Atlanta, GA 30312	May 26, 2009 2:00 – 4:30 pm	27
Colony Square Food Court	1197 Peachtree St. Atlanta, GA 30309	May 26, 2009 11:30 – 2:00 pm	22
West End Library*	525 Peoples St. Atlanta, GA 30314	May 27, 2009 10:00 – 11:30 am	12
Dogwood Branch Library*	1838 Donald Lee Hollowell Pkwy; Atlanta, GA 30318	May 27, 2009 12:00 – 2:00 pm	18
Atlanta Fulton County Central Library	One Margaret Mitchell Square Atlanta, GA 30303	May 29, 2009 12:00 – 3:00 pm	75
Just Us Neighborhood Association*	1125 Morris Brown Drive Atlanta, GA 30314	June 3, 2009 6:15 – 8:15 pm	12
The Mall West End*	850 Oak Street SW Atlanta, GA 30310	June 4, 2009 1:45 – 3:45 pm	40
Wheat Street Baptist Church	18 Wm. Holmes Borders Dr. SE Atlanta, GA 30312	June 7, 2009 7:00 pm	8
Concerned Black Clergy*	Vickers Community Center (Community Church of God) 838 Cascade Road SW Atlanta, GA 30311	June 8, 2009 9:30 – 11:30 am	140
NPU – X*	Stewart-Lakewood Library 2893 Lakewood Ave. Atlanta, GA 30315	June 8, 2009 7:00 – 9:00 pm	75
Villages @ Carver YMCA*	1600 Pryor Road Atlanta, GA 30315	June 9, 2009 4:00 – 6:00 pm	45
Total Attendance			502

\*denotes EJ community

## Comments Received

Recorded and considered in the refinement of alternatives were the comments and suggestions from the five Public Workshops. The sections below summarize the comments made during the workshops regarding transit service type, transit alignments, station locations, and trails alignments.

### Transit Service Type

Participants gave their feedback on what type of service they would like to see for their community, which included:

- Designing for greater connectivity along the BeltLine
- Promoting economic development at stations and maximizing access to service by providing more frequent stations
- Connecting efficiently to MARTA rail and planned new transit services
- Allowing for mixed traffic and exclusive right-of-way operations
- Using a streetcar, light rail, or rubber tire (neighborhood connector service) type vehicles
- Providing more locally oriented service over existing heavy rail (speed, station spacing, transfers, etc.)
- Using intelligent technology, such as "next-bus" signage
- Considering impacts of lighting and noise on adjacent properties

### Transit Alignment

After reviewing a series of maps showing potential transit alignments community members had the following to say:

- Use natural turf along/in between the tracks
- Avoid impacts to existing trees; plant trees along right-of-way
- Connect density centers and recreation opportunities
- Consider redevelopment benefits in selecting alignment
- Provide direct access to major trip destinations (activity centers, employment, density, etc.) and origins
- Provide neighborhood-oriented pedestrian access
- Apply cost-effectiveness criteria, but don't sacrifice quality design due to right-of-way or impact constraints
- Use auto travel times as a means to determine the most important alignments for transit service

### Transit Station

Placement of potential transit stations also elicited the following input:

- Provide better connections to schools
- Locate at major intersections to provide access to MARTA bus
- Design small stations proportionate in scale to neighborhoods
- Assess need for parking at BeltLine stations
- Restrict smoking at stations



- Consider MARTA infill stations at Armour Yard, Miami Circle, south of West End MARTA station, and Joseph E. Boone Boulevard
- Provide connections to all MARTA stations near the BeltLine

### Trails

Potential alignment of trails brought about a selection of comments:

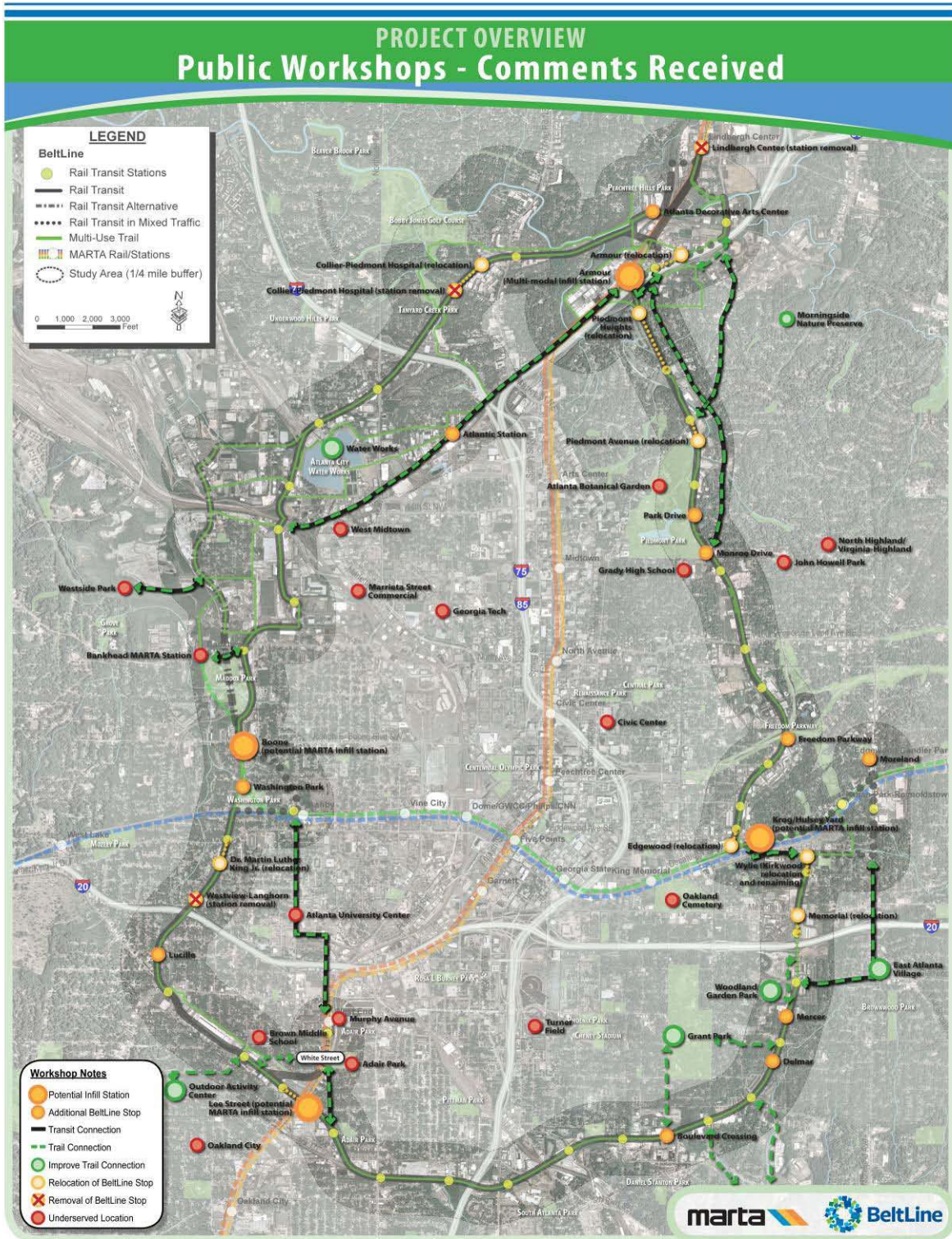
- Locate main transit and trails within the same corridor as much as possible
- Provide more connector trails to adjacent neighborhoods
- Connect schools, universities, and parks
- Ensure a safe environment along trails; alignments should go through active and visible areas
- Provide amenities (restrooms, benches, lockers, etc.), wayfinding, and security features
- Provide some soft surface trail segments
- Separate bicycle and pedestrian traffic
- Consider 24-hour access
- Include opportunities for art display

The *Public and Committee Workshops April-June 2009* presents a fully summary of issues raised by the public during the Public Workshops.

### **Public Workshop Extension Advertisements**

The advertisements are the same as described in Section 1.2.2.2 above.

Figure 1: Public Workshops – Comments Received



#### 1.2.2.4 Spring 2009 Post Public Workshop Meetings

The project sponsors continued to introduce the Tier 1 EIS to new audiences and to update audiences that were formerly briefed. During regularly scheduled meetings of community groups and organizations, the project sponsors provided updates to the community to create awareness of the study and to help promote future public meetings. Public comments and input were included in the project record and considered based on the impact to the project.

Table 6 provides a list of post workshop briefings.

#### Comments Received

Recorded and considered in the refinement of alternatives were the comments and suggestions from post Public Workshop meetings. The sections below highlight a summary of the comments made during the public meetings and presentations regarding transit service type, transit alignments, station locations, and trails alignments.

##### ***Transit Service Type***

- Slower train speed inside communities
- Regional and service on main streets travel at faster speeds
- Service at all stops need not be the same; variations within communities
- Hop on/off trolley at some points
- Efficient cars that are clean and environmentally friendly
- Multiple entry/exits

##### ***Transit Alignment***

- Have easy access to more densely populated neighborhoods

##### ***Transit Station***

- Closely spaced stations in walking distance
- More stations to avoid taking the bus
- Available parking at stations

##### ***Trails***

- Should run parallel to transportation element
- Accommodate foot and bicycle traffic
- Do not spend money on the trails for only a few people
- Attracts crime
- Separate bicycle and pedestrian traffic
- Safety

**Table 6: Post Public Workshop Presentations – Locations, Dates, and Attendance**

<b>Post Workshop Meetings</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Date/Time</b>	<b>Number of Attendees</b>
Wheat Street Baptist Church*	18 Wm. Holmes Borders Dr. SE Atlanta, GA 30312	June 17, 2009 7:00 pm	27
Concerned Black Clergy (Nation of Islam, Women in the Struggle, GA Dept of HR-Office of Healthy Behaviors)*	Vickers Community Center (Community Church of God) 838 Cascade Road SW Atlanta, GA 30311	June 22, 2009 9:30 – 11:30 am	3
Harland Boys & Girls Club*	Harland Boys & Girls Club 434 Peeples St. SW Atlanta, GA 30310	July 15, 2009 4:00 – 6:15 pm	25
The West End Coalition Group, Inc., Westview Lofts*	1530 Ralph David Abernathy Blvd. Atlanta, GA 30319	July 21, 2009 7:30 to 8:30 pm	17
East Atlanta Village Farmers Market*	1231 Glenwood Ave. SE Atlanta, GA 30316	July 23, 2009 4:00 – 6:00 pm	26
Metro Atlanta Boys & Girls Club	1191 Donnelly Ave. Atlanta, GA 30312	July 24, 2009 11:30 – 1:30 pm	25
College Town Community Association*	387 Joseph E. Lowery Blvd. SW Atlanta, GA 30310	July 30, 2009 6:00 – 7:00 pm	19
The West End Merchants Coalition	Citizens' Bank 562 Lee St. Atlanta, GA 30310	July 30, 2009 7:30 – 8:30 am	24
458 Café Edge*	458 Edgewood Ave. Atlanta, GA 30312	July 31, 2009 10:30 – 11:30 am	32
Samaritan House of Atlanta*	302 Decatur St. Atlanta, GA 30312	July 31, 2009 9:00 – 10:30 am	30
Westview Community Organization*	Calvary United Methodist Church 1471 Ralph David Abernathy Blvd. Atlanta, GA 303010	August 3, 2009 7:00 – 8:00 pm	16
Peopletown Revitalization Corporation	Emmaus House 1017 Hank Aaron Drive Atlanta, GA 30315	August 8, 2009 10:00 – 11:15 am	26
Atlanta Planning Advisory Board (APAB)*	Atlanta City Hall 55 Trinity Avenue Atlanta, GA 30303	August 15, 2009 10:00 – 12:00 pm	35
Omega Holiness Church*	621 Memorial Drive Atlanta, GA 30312	August 30, 2009 11:30 – 2:30 PM	19
West End Neighborhood Development Association (WEND)*	West End Library 515 Peeples St. SW Atlanta, GA 30310	September 1, 2009 7:00 – 8:00 PM	35
Sierra Club	Episcopal Church of the Epiphany 2089 Ponce de Leon Avenue NE Atlanta, GA 30307	September 8, 2009 7:00 – 9:00 pm	23
Spelman College*	Spelman College 350 Spelman Lane Atlanta, GA 30314-3773	September 14, 2009 4:00 – 6:00 pm	75
<b>Total Attendance</b>			<b>457</b>

\*denotes Environmental Justice Community

### 1.2.2.5 Fall 2009 Public Meetings

MARTA, in partnership with ABI, conducted five formal Public Meetings, one in each study area. The Public Scoping meetings were conducted in accordance with NEPA guidelines 40 CFR Parts 1500-1508 and 23 CFR Part 771. All public meetings locations were compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and accessible by public transportation. A list of the Public Meeting locations, dates, and number of attendees are listed in Table 7.

In addition, ABI, in conjunction with MARTA, held a Quarterly Briefing on November 23, 2009. The BeltLine Corridor Environmental Study was one of the agenda items. The project boards were on display during the Open House segment of the briefing, with staff available to discuss the project. The display boards highlighted the alternatives evaluated and findings. ABI Staff presented an abbreviated version of the Fall Meeting Series presentation. Approximately 74 individuals attended the meeting.

#### Format and Content

The first portion of each of the public meetings provided an opportunity for the participants to view a series of display boards and videos that described and demonstrated the various transit and trail improvement options. Given below is list of boards that were on display during the open house:

- Purpose of Workshop
- Trails Alternatives
- Transit Alternatives
- Constraints to Transit Alternatives
- Performance Measures – BeltLine Activity Center
- Underutilized Industrial Land
- Development Capacity of Underutilized/Undeveloped Land
- Potential Impacts to Water Resources for Trails
- Potential Impacts to Water Resources for Transit
- Alternative Evaluation by Goal – Trails
- Alternative Evaluation by Goal – Transit
- Performance Measures – Best Performing Alternatives
- BeltLine Transit and Trail Elements – Transit Feature
- Regional Transit Vision

The video presentation highlighted potential transit and trail features and provided a “birds-eye view” of the corridor. Also included was the evaluation of alternatives and the resulting recommended alternatives for the BeltLine. A presentation followed describing the meeting purpose, overall study process and results of the evaluation process. After the presentation, the participants broke into smaller discussion groups for an interactive exercise to obtain feedback on the evaluation results for the BeltLine. Each breakout group included two consultant team members: one to facilitate the discussion and the

other to document group feedback. The following maps were provided for each breakout group to use as resource material in the discussion:

- Transit Alternatives
- Trails Alternatives
- Alternative Evaluation by Goal – Transit
- Alternative Evaluation by Goal – Trails
- Best Performing Alternatives

**Table 7: Fall 2009 Public Meetings - Locations, Dates, and Attendance**

<b>Meeting / Presentation Name</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Date / Time</b>	<b>Number of Attendees</b>	<b>Purpose</b>	<b>Information Presented</b>
Northside Study Group- Public Meeting	Piedmont Hospital McRae Auditorium 1984 Peachtree Rd. NW Atlanta, GA 30309	November 2, 2009 6:30 – 8:30 PM	10	Solicit public input on service types and project alignments and to discuss next steps	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Meeting Agenda</li> <li>• Power point presentation</li> <li>• Study area meeting schedule</li> <li>• Frequently Asked Questions</li> <li>• Comment Form</li> <li>• Project business card</li> <li>• Project boards/maps</li> </ul>
Southeast Study Group- Public Meeting	Trees Atlanta 225 Chester Ave. SE Atlanta, GA 30316	November 9, 2009 6:30 – 8:30 PM	17		
Northeast Study Group- Public Meeting	Hillside, Inc. 690 Courtenay Drive NE/ 1301 Monroe Drive NE Atlanta, GA 30306	November 12, 2009 6:30 – 8:30 PM	15		
Westside Study Group- Public Meeting	Atlanta Community Food Bank 732 Joseph E. Lowery Boulevard NW Atlanta, GA 30318	November 16, 2009 6:30 – 8:30 PM	14		
Southwest Study Group- Public Meeting	West Hunter Street Baptist Church 1040 Ralph David Abernathy Boulevard SW Atlanta, GA 3031	November 17, 2009 6:30 – 8:30 PM	18		

The breakout discussion solicited comments on the following topics:

- Definition of alternatives and evaluation process
- Overall reaction to the scoring of the alternatives
- Input on the evaluation of those performance measures that most distinguish between alternatives
- Consistency of alternatives with project goals

Following the breakout session, each group's facilitator presented a short summary of the key points raised by their group.

## **Comments Received**

The comments received from the public were recorded and are used by the project team to further refine options and to consider each comment during the relative to the goal and performance measures. The sections below summarize the comments made during the public meetings regarding alternatives evaluated, performance measures, and other project related comments.

### ***Implementation***

#### Freight-Related Issues

- Evaluate the ability to implement the project based on challenges relative to CSX and NS
- Consider daily freight activity in the evaluation of the CSX and NS corridors
- Consider what happens if there is no compromise with the freight railroads
- Determine if sharing the tracks will create on-time issues for the BeltLine when the freight operations result in delay problems, as is often the case with SEPTA (commuter rail) in Philadelphia

#### Environmental Issues

- Consider the creation of possible water storage locations along the BeltLine
- Determine if any prehistoric impacts exist within the corridor (including Peachtree Creek)
- Quantify other environmental impacts

#### Property Related Issues

- Determine locations for affordable housing
- Determine property impacts

### ***Operation***

#### LRT versus Modern Streetcar

- Consider a need for flexibility and integration with other systems for both modern streetcar and LRT
- Determine the cost difference between modern streetcar and LRT
- LRT seems to provide the greatest and most efficient connections to other proposed transit systems
- Determine how modern streetcar is affected by street traffic
- Consider using a different vernacular than "stations" when referring to streetcar, as they are a smaller scale than MARTA heavy rail stations

#### Relation to Existing MARTA Service

- Determine if the potential for 24-hour MARTA rail service (including the BeltLine) would affect freight railroad negotiations
- Improve connectivity to MARTA, including MARTA's bus service
- Weigh the financial advantage for ABI constructing BeltLine transit versus expanding MARTA heavy rail services in the corridor, and determine if funding and operations for the BeltLine would be different from MARTA

#### Safety

- Consider involving Atlanta Police Department to monitor crime along the BeltLine
- Identify solutions to rail transit & bicycle street traffic potential conflicts and safety issues

#### ***Alignment Preference***

##### Transit Alignment Preference

- Preference for tunnel alignment alternative under Hulsey Yard
- Consider alternatives and conceptual station locations that support projected population growth, including students
- General satisfaction with Best Performing Alternative
- Consider having both trail alignment options
- Preference for CSX alternative – it connects well with Howell Station and provides greater opportunity for development, and aligns well with the trail alignments
- Preference for a connection to MARTA, which would improve access to employment centers, boost MARTA ridership, and serve transit-dependent riders
- Emphasize manner in which BeltLine connects with MARTA and how it promotes connectivity/mobility in Atlanta (good connections to Lindbergh Center, King Memorial, Inman Park/Reynoldstown, West End, Ashby and Bankhead MARTA stations)
- The current eastern alignment hits closer to existing population; however, the western route would stimulate development where the amphitheater and mixed-use housing is currently planned
- Preference for BeltLine connection to King Memorial – provides better accessibility to landmarks such as the King Center, etc.
- An infill station at West End is less of a priority over the BeltLine serving the West End MARTA station directly
- The Marietta alignment provides better access to Westside Park (consider parking issues) than Howell Junction alignment
- The NS alignment has fewer environmental impacts than the CSX alignment
- Consider a second BeltLine or another transit service in the other corridor (NS or CSX, whichever is not picked)

##### Trail Alignment Preference

- Consider advancing both Trail Alternatives A and B



- Build Trail A first, but follow up with Trail B to provide multiple levels of connectivity
- The alignment on the Westside along Lena Street would improve visibility in the area in comparison to the existing wooded area along the former railroad corridor
- Trails align better with CSX alignment
- Trail A appears to have issues in utilizing the active freight corridor, while Trail B has better neighborhood connectivity
- Consider mixing and matching trail alternatives
- Determine if trails are designed for recreational purposes or work trips

### ***Performance Measures***

#### General Scoring/Methodology

- Consider use of a 10-point scale rather than a 25-point scale

#### Goals/Objectives

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

- Need to link parks (emphasize access to Westside Park)
- Improve connectivity among neighborhoods
- NS alignment's proximity to Atlantic Station should be valued and scored higher under Goal 1
- Consider Infill MARTA stations versus MARTA station connectivity alternatives
- Consider trip purposes as a performance measure (i.e. work/tourist/recreation)"

*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*

- CSX alignment presents more land redevelopment potential than NS alignment

*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*

- No Comments Received

Goal 4: Provide a cost-effective and efficient transportation investment

- Ensure that cost effectiveness takes into consideration existing and planned transit services

*Goal 5: Provide a transit, bicycle and pedestrian friendly environment*

- Separating the trails from auto traffic is not as important as getting people to where they are going

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

- Provide access to schools and libraries

*Goal 7: Minimize adverse impacts to the environment and foster positive environmental impacts*

- Why are there factors minimizing effects to parks when part of the BeltLine concept is to improve access to existing and planned parks?
- Consider the impact of vibration and noise with the addition of BeltLine transit along with CSX

*Goal 8: Ensure consideration of public input throughout project planning and development*

- No Comments Received

### ***Other Project Considerations***

#### Transit Alignment

- Address concerns raised in northwest (Tanyard Creek/Bobby Jones Golf Course area) and southwest zone
- Needs easy connectivity to transfer from one system to another

#### Transit Stations

- Consider MARTA Infill station along East/West Line at Krog Street
- Consider church as possible station site along the Southside overpass at Metropolitan Parkway
- Consider station at the Atlanta University Center (a major trip generator)
- Consider station at Lucille Street and Adena Park
- Consider station at the Bankhead MARTA station

#### Trails

- Avoid trails that are secluded and may present safety and security concerns, specifically trails that diverge from transit
- Connect BeltLine to other trails such as Washington Park trail and Freedom Parkway
- Take into account that trail connections are safer running alongside transit and not crossing over roadways and driveways
- Concern with pedestrian safety at transit crossings
- Consider pedestrian access at multiple points
- Minimize curb cuts when traveling near or on-street
- Consider flattest bicycle trail possible

## Public Meeting Advertisement

Promotion of the workshops took place throughout the study area to involve the public, some of whom were previously involved in BeltLine planning efforts, through MARTA and ABI outreach methods. Others participated because of a host of outreach strategies designed to reach community. Advertisement for the Public Meeting meetings appeared in the on the project website and through a Study Update/ Flyer distributed through the contact database, and hand-distributed at neighborhood meetings, churches, community centers, grocery stores, libraries, businesses and other high traffic locations

### 1.2.2.6 Fall 2010 Public Workshops

MARTA and ABI held a public meeting at the Northside Study Group Meeting location on December 6, 2010, shown in Table 8 to gather feedback from the communities potentially affected by the additional alternatives in the northwest portion of the Atlanta BeltLine.

**Table 8: Fall 2010 Public Workshop - Location, Date, and Attendance**

Meeting Name	Location	Date / Time	Number of Attendees
Northside Study Group- Public Meeting	Piedmont Hospital McRae Auditorium 1984 Peachtree Rd. NW Atlanta, GA 30309	December 6, 2010 6:30 – 8:30 PM	38

#### Format and Content

Participants signed-in upon arrival and were given an opportunity to review the project boards and speak to the project team prior to the start of the meeting. During the formal meeting, the project team discussed the study process, provided updates, and gave an overview of the alternatives.

The attendees participated in a small group exercise to discuss the alternatives and later reconvened in the large group to summarize their discussion.

#### Comments Received

Attendees were divided into three groups, staffed with a facilitator and scribe, to engage in participatory discussions focusing on the findings of the alternative evaluation specific to the transit and trail alternatives in the Northwest Zone. The discussion solicited comments pertaining to the following topics:

##### ***Congestion and Traffic***

- The viability of using Deering Road for in-street due to existing heavy congestion.
- Transit on Deering Road would change the character of the street from local to regional thoroughfare.
- If traffic is pushed from streets with in-street running for NS; it could add to heavy congestion on Collier Road.
- Is there an option to run in-street on a dedicated lane?
- It is important to note that in-street running does not always exacerbate congestion.

- How can we be sure that the people driving cars that are currently causing the congestion in the community would ever take the BeltLine?
- Concerns with transit in mixed traffic/in-street operations.
- Piedmont Hospital is large traffic generator.
- Overall, the area needs better roadway connectivity to support transit.
- There is a lack of east/west connectivity.
- The BeltLine concept was not originally conceived to be “on-street”; it should be in dedicated ROW
- Why is there at-grade crossing at Peachtree Street?

### ***Railroad***

- Is there a timeline to working with CSX? Eventually their cost might become prohibitive.
- Although the costs are fairly even across the Alternatives, there has not been a way to factor in the cost of purchasing the CSX ROW.
- Consider the trade-off of dealing with one property owner (CSX) verses numerous owners?
- CSX is envisioning an expansion of their operations.
- Are air rights available for CSX?
- Which side of CSX would be used?
- Can we get CSX and NS to run along the same lines?
- Can you use the topography around the CSX area to hide the freight? Perhaps through some series of decks with freight below and BeltLine on top?
- Is there a way to come up with a compromise of using partial Inside and partial Outside? Maybe even partial NS?
- This community is unique to the BeltLine because they are accustomed to active freight running behind their homes and through their neighborhoods.

### ***Stations***

- The station near I-75 should be moved to the other side of the highway to reach more density.
- BeltLine stations are much smaller than MARTA stations.
- Change title from “Stations” to “Stops”.
- Station access along rail ROW

### ***Alignment***

- CSX Alternatives are preferred for servicing Piedmont Hospital without the use of Collier Road.
- Inside CSX is far preferred over the other Alternatives.
- The NS Alternative does not run along the current Tax Allocation District (TAD).
- NS currently has better supporting land uses; it is close to a potential ridership base at Georgia Tech.

- Group stated that proposed alternatives are valid.
- CSX alignments provide more ROW flexibility.
- CSX alignments would access Westside Park, a major regional recreational destination; NS would not.
- CSX alignments provide greater flexibility since they can use Howell Junction or Marietta Boulevard.
- It would still be possible to serve Piedmont Hospital via the Atlanta Streetcar while using the NS Alternative.
- Access to high-density development nodes is crucial.
- How much of someone's backyard might be taken? 30', 60', 70'?
- There were concerns expressed regarding the use and taking of property and the amount of space required for the rails for the outside alignments; very much against eminent domain.
- There is a large concern for the impact to private property in a well-established neighborhood... although the community is well aware of the benefits of transit.
- CSX is faster
- A shuttle could be implemented to Atlantic Station or other points south served by the NS alignment
- The CSX alignments would bring transit further north on Peachtree

#### ***Development***

- The area behind Houston's and the Colonial Homes complex is prime for development, but the floodplain makes it difficult.
- There is a distinct challenge in terms of logistics and space for Piedmont Hospital.
- Less development along the CSX corridor would seem to enable more design flexibility
- Redevelopment will be done in TAD areas, more of which are located in the CSX corridor. The Ottley area is not designated for redevelopment by the City (industrial only).

#### ***Selection Criteria***

- Expressed need for clear criteria before selecting alternatives.
- Can LRT/SC be elevated?
- NS alignments have areas that are not covered by TAD and may be a problem.
- Locating transit and trails next to one another is more beneficial because a traveler could use both for one trip; better access, mobility and travel options.
- Concern over noise- freight already screeches.
- Trails are essentially independent of the rail decision.

#### **Fall 2010 Public Workshop Advertisement**

A meeting flyer was prepared to advertise the northside community meeting and distributed through public libraries, email, and to frequently visited retail venues in the study group area. Notice of the meeting was also placed on the project website and

notices emailed to SAC and TAC members to share the meeting notice with their contacts.

### 1.3 2011 Public Hearing and Public Comment Period

The Public Hearings and comment period for the Tier 1 Draft EIS was held from July 29, 2011 to September 17, 2011. The final series of meetings were held to present the recommendations resulting from the input of the public, Agency, Technical Advisory and Stakeholder Advisory Committees, as required by the federal guidelines.

#### Format and Content

The public hearing meeting was designed to review findings and recommendations over the course of the Study. The hearings were presided over by MARTA and ABI. Using a project video, the project team was able to present the public’s selection for the preferred alternatives followed by a question and answer session and a comment period. A neutral third-party facilitator was enlisted to solicit and receive public comments and a court recorder documented the comments. Table 9 shows the meeting locations, date and time, and number of attendees.

**Table 9: Public Hearing Meetings**

Meeting Name	Location	Date/Time	Number of Attendees
Public Hearing (2)	All Saints' Episcopal Church 634 W. Peachtree Street Atlanta, GA 30308	August 16, 2011 1:00 – 3:00 pm 6:00 – 8:00 pm	39
Public Hearing (2)	Hagar CTM 19 Joseph E. Lowery Blvd. NW Atlanta, GA 30314	August 18, 2011 1:00 – 3:00 pm 6:00 – 8:00 pm	22

#### Comments Received

The comments received through the court reporter during the Formal Public Hearings are summarized in *Appendix F: Comments Received During Public Comment Period* along with the other comments received during the Public Comment Period.

#### Additional Outreach Before and During the Public Comment Period

The public comment period to comment on the preferred alternatives was extended through September 17, 2011. A variety of meeting and public involvement strategies were used to update the public on the status of the project and to invite the public to the upcoming Public Hearings. Table 10 outlines the outreach activities leading up to the Public Hearings.

#### Comments Received

In addition to the promoting the public hearings through email notices and posted alerts on the project website, Peak Democracy, an on-line forum was established to solicit feedback from the public. Including comments received through the on-line forum, thirty-three (33) comments were received in writing during the comment period. The thirty-three (comments and responses are included in *Appendix F: Comments Received During Public Comment Period*

**Table 10: Public Hearing Promotion: Locations, Date/Time, and Attendance**

Meeting / Presentation Name	Location	Date / Time	Number of Attendees
MARTA Elderly & Disabled Advisory Committee - Chair	MARTA Annex Piedmont Road, 30324	July 12, 2011 9:30 AM	~25
Atlanta Planning Advisory Board	City Hall, Room 2, Atlanta	July 16, 2011 10:00 AM	40
Neighborhood Planning Unit - F	Emailed NPU	July 18, 2011 7:00 PM	--
Neighborhood Planning Unit - Y	John Burdine Facility 215 Lakewood Way, SW 30315	July 18, 2011 7:00 PM	30
Neighborhood Planning Unit - K	CA Scott Recreational Center 1665 MLK Jr Dr, 30314	July 19, 2011 6:30 PM	13
Neighborhood Planning Unit - G	Emailed NPU	July 21, 2011 7:00 PM	--
Neighborhood Planning Unit - S	The Vicars, 838 Cascade Rd, SW	July 21, 2011 7:00 PM	55 +
Neighborhood Planning Unit - M	Helene S Mills Sr. Facility 515 John Wesley Dobbs Ave. 30312	July 25, 2011 6:30 PM	HB
Neighborhood Planning Unit - D	Agape Community Center 2351 Bolton Road NW 30318	July 26, 2011 7:30 PM	HB
TADAC Committee	ABI Offices, 86 Pryor Street	July 26, 2011 4:00 PM	40
Neighborhood Planning Unit - J	Atlanta Job Corp, 239 W. Lake Dr. NW 30314	July 26, 2011 7:00 PM	35
Neighborhood Planning Unit - W	Emailed NPU	July 27, 2011 7:30 PM	--
Neighborhood Planning Unit - N	Emailed NPU	July 28, 2011 7:00 PM	--
Neighborhood Planning Unit - E	Peachtree Christian Church 1580 Peachtree St, NW 30309	August 2, 2011 6:30 PM	~40
Neighborhood Planning Unit - V	Emailed NPU	August 8, 2011 7:00 PM	--
Neighborhood Planning Unit - B	Emailed NPU	August 8, 2011 7:00 PM	--
Neighborhood Planning Unit - X	Stewart Lakewood Library 2893 Lakewood Ave, 30315	August 8, 2011 7:00 PM	30
Neighborhood Planning Unit - L	English Avenue Neighborhood Association 781 Wheeler Street, Suite 11	August 9, 2011 7:00 PM	~ 45
Neighborhood Planning Unit - T	KIPP Strive Academy 1445 Lucile Ave, Atlanta, GA 30310	August 10, 2011 7:00 PM	48

**Public Hearing Advertisements**

Advertisement of the Public Hearings appeared in the following venues:

- Newspapers: Atlanta Journal-Constitution (August 8, 2011; August 10, 2011), Atlanta Daily World (August 11, 2011) and Mundo Hispanico (Spanish – August 11, 2011)
- Project Websites

Other Announcements: A meeting flyer and Study Fact Sheet (Newsletter #6) were printed to advertise the public hearings and the newsletter was distributed through public

libraries, email, and to frequently visited retail venues in the study group area. Notice of the meeting was also placed on the project websites and notices emailed to SAC and TAC members to share the meeting notice with their contacts, shown in Table 11.

**Table 11: Additional Public Hearing Promotion: Locations, Date/Time, and Attendance**

<b>Additional Public Hearing Promotional Emails Sent / Organizations</b>	<b>Date</b>
SAC/TAC	July 26, 2011
ABI Contact Database	July 13, 2011
Georgia State University	August 8, 2011
Georgia Institute of Technology	August 8, 2011
Emory University	August 8, 2011
Atlanta University Center	August 8, 2011
TAC	August 8, 2011
MARTA Contact Database	August 9, 2011

## **1.4 Agency Involvement: Coordination, Committees, and Meetings**

There was an identification and invitation to participate in the Tier 1 EIS to any Federal, state, and local agencies that may have jurisdiction by law, special expertise, or other interest in the environmental review process and its outcomes. SAFETEA-LU requires the identification of Lead, Cooperating, and Participating agencies in the development of an EIS. The Lead agencies for the BeltLine Tier 1 EIS include FTA, MARTA, and the Atlanta BeltLine Inc. Under SAFETEA-LU, Lead Agencies must perform the functions that they have traditionally performed in preparing an EIS in accord with 23 CFR 771 and 40 CFR parts 1500-1508.

According to CEQ regulations, 40 CFR 1508.5, a Cooperating Agency is any federal agency, other than a Lead Agency, that has jurisdiction by law or special expertise with respect to any environmental impact involved in a proposed project or project alternative. Participating Agencies are those with an interest in the project, invited to comment on the environmental documentation produced as part of the project. Section 1.4.1 shows a list of agencies by category designation of Lead, Cooperating, or Participating.

Formation of three committees supported the development of the Tier 1 EIS: the Stakeholder Advisory Committee, the Technical Advisory Committee, and Agency Coordination. Descriptions of the agency coordination, committees, and meetings are provided below.

### **1.4.1 Agency Coordination**

Federal, state, and local agencies received invitations to provide comments regarding possible concerns or considerations for the resource areas under their authority. Below is a list of the agencies. Resource agencies received letters requesting their participation in the process.



## **Agency Membership**

### ***Co-Lead Agency***

- Atlanta BeltLine, Inc. (ABI)
- Metropolitan Atlanta Rapid Transit Authority (MARTA)
- Federal Highway Administration (FHWA)
- Federal Transit Administration (FTA)

### ***Cooperating Agency***

- U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE)
- U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS)

### ***Participating Agency***

#### Participating Agency – Federal

- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)
- Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) (Regulatory Floodways)
- Federal Railroad Administration (FRA)
- National Park Service (NPS)
- U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD)
- U.S. Department of the Interior (USDO) Office of Environmental Policy & Compliance
- U.S. Geological Survey (USGS), Environmental Affairs Program

#### Participating Agency – Interstate

- National Railroad Passenger Corp. (AMTRAK)

#### Participating Agency – State

- Georgia Department of Natural Resources (DNR) - Non-Game Conservation
- Georgia Department of Natural Resources (DNR) Environmental Protection Division
- Georgia Department of Natural Resources (DNR) Floodplain Management Office
- Georgia Department of Natural Resources (DNR) Historic Preservation Division
- Georgia Department of Natural Resources (DNR) Office of the Commissioner
- Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT)
- Georgia Emergency Management Agency (GEMA)
- Georgia Environmental Facilities Authority (GEFA)
- Georgia Forestry Commission (GFC)

#### Participating Agency – Regional

- Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC)
- Atlanta Regional Transportation Board (ARTIB)
- Georgia Regional Transportation Authority (GRTA)

#### Participating Agency – City of Atlanta

- Atlanta Housing Authority (AHA)
- City of Atlanta Department of Parks, Recreation and Community Affairs (DPRCA)
- City of Atlanta Department of Planning and Community Development (DPCD)

- City of Atlanta Department of Public Works (DPW)

Participating Agency – DeKalb County

- DeKalb County Planning & Development Department (P&DD)

Participating Agency – Fulton County

- Atlanta-Fulton County Emergency Management Agency (AFCEMA)
- Fulton County Department of Environment and Community Development (E&CD)
- Fulton County Department of Parks and Recreation (P&R)
- Fulton County Department of Public Works (DPW)

## 1.4.2 Technical Advisory Committee (TAC)

The TAC is composed of representatives of organizations and agencies that have a specific interest and/or responsibility in the BeltLine Corridor or that have shown special interest in the redevelopment of the corridor. It included individuals with technical environmental skills and background. The role of TAC is to provide advice and input regarding methodology and the scoping process and specific guidance on technical matters. By nature of their technical expertise, in some cases there was an invitation to agencies to serve on both the Agency Coordination Group and the Technical Advisory Committee.

### TAC Member Organizations

Federal

- Federal Highway Administration (FHWA)
- Federal Transit Administration (FTA)
- U. S. Environmental Protection Agency - Brownfields (EPA)
- U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE)
- U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD)

State

- Georgia Department of Natural Resources (DNR) Environmental Protection Division (EPD)
- Georgia Department of Natural Resources (DNR) Floodplain Management Office
- Georgia Department of Natural Resources (DNR) Historic Preservation Division (SHPO)
- Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT)

Local/Regional

- Atlanta BeltLine, Inc. (ABI)
- Atlanta Bicycle Coalition (ABC)
- Atlanta Board of Education
- Atlanta Housing Authority (AHA)
- Atlanta Planning Advisory Board (APAB)
- Atlanta Police Department (APD)

- Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC)
- Atlanta University Center Consortium
- Atlanta Urban Design Commission (AUDC)
- Buckhead Area Transportation Management Association (BATMA)
- Central Atlanta Progress (CAP)
- Citizens for Progressive Transit (CfPT)
- City of Atlanta Department of Parks, Recreation and Community Affairs (DPRCA)
- City of Atlanta Department of Planning and Community Development (DPCD)
- City of Atlanta Department of Public Works (DPW)
- City of Atlanta Office of Sustainability
- CSX Intermodal
- Emory University
- Fulton County Department of Public Works (DPW)
- Georgia Institute of Technology (Georgia Tech)
- Georgia Regional Transportation Authority (GRTA)
- Georgia State University (GSU)
- Metro Atlanta Chamber of Commerce
- Metropolitan Atlanta Rapid Transit Authority (MARTA)
- Midtown Alliance
- Norfolk Southern Corporation (NSC)
- Pedestrians Educating Drivers on Safety (PEDS)
- The PATH Foundation
- Trust for Public Land, Georgia Office (TPL)
- Upper Chattahoochee Riverkeeper (UCR)

### **1.4.3 Stakeholder Advisory Committee (SAC)**

The Stakeholder Advisory Committee (SAC), composed of representatives from a variety of area organizations, serves a key role in encouraging public participation. A Stakeholder Advisory Committee provided ongoing assistance to the project, especially in the outreach component. Representatives from a variety of area organizations, such as the TADAC, MARTA's network of citizen and business organizations, faith-based organizations, community-based organizations, and advocacy groups composed the SAC. The SAC provided input and comments on the project findings, and played a key role in generating participation from the public at large. Below is a list of SAC members:

#### **SAC Member Organizations**

- Atlanta BeltLine Inc. (ABI)
- Atlanta Planning Advisory Board
- Atlanta Transit Riders' Union
- BeltLine Network
- Clean Air Campaign
- Coalition for the Peoples' Agenda
- Environmental Justice Resource Center @ CAU
- Georgia Conservancy
- Georgia Power Company

- Georgia Stand Up
- Georgians for Better Transportation
- Governor's Council on Developmental Disabilities
- MARTA Elderly & Disabled Advisory Committee – Chair
- MARTA Elderly & Disabled Advisory Committee – Vice Chair
- MARTA Elderly & Disabled Advisory Committee – Accessibility
- MARTA Elderly & Disabled Advisory Committee – Customer Focus
- MARTA Elderly & Disabled Advisory Committee-Membership and Resource
- Metropolitan Atlanta Rapid Transit Authority (MARTA)
- Neighborhood Planning Unit – B
- Neighborhood Planning Unit – C
- Neighborhood Planning Unit – D
- Neighborhood Planning Unit – E
- Neighborhood Planning Unit – F & TADAC Committee Environmental Task Force
- Neighborhood Planning Unit – G
- Neighborhood Planning Unit – J
- Neighborhood Planning Unit – K
- Neighborhood Planning Unit – L
- Neighborhood Planning Unit – M
- Neighborhood Planning Unit – N
- Neighborhood Planning Unit – S
- Neighborhood Planning Unit – T
- Neighborhood Planning Unit – V
- Neighborhood Planning Unit – W
- Neighborhood Planning Unit – X
- Neighborhood Planning Unit – Y
- Panache Communications Group
- Piedmont Healthcare
- Piedmont Park Conservancy
- Shepherd Center
- Sierra Club-Georgia Chapter
- Southface Energy Institute
- TADAC Committee
- The King Center
- University Community Development Corp. (UCDC)
- Urban Land Institute (ULI) (Smart Growth Solutions)
- Virginia Highland Civic Association

#### **1.4.4 Agency / TAC Meetings and Outreach**

##### **1.4.4.1 Agency / TAC Scoping Meeting**

MARTA, in partnership with ABI, invited interested agencies and the TAC to participate in three meetings in the early stage of the Tier 1 EIS (listed in Table 12). One meeting

served as the kick-off meeting to introduce the Tier 1 EIS and the proposed project. The other two meetings occurred during the Public Scoping period.

An Agency Scoping meeting, held by MARTA in partnership with ABI, convened on August 12, 2008 to discuss the *BeltLine Corridor Environmental Study Scoping Informational Packet* in preparation for the Tier 1 EIS. An additional Agency Scoping meeting held on August 22, 2008 discussed the results of the Public Scoping meetings.

The August 12, 2008 meeting provided an overview of the Tier 1 EIS and allowed the participants to comment and ask questions on the project alternatives and its potential impacts. Attendees received Scoping materials. Meeting dates, locations, and number of attendees for the Agency Scoping meetings are contained in Table 12.

On August 22, 2008, interested agencies and the TAC reconvened to respond to the Scoping materials provided at the August 12 meeting. There was also a synopsis of comments made during the formal Public Scoping meetings. The *Scoping Summary Report* lists comments of note mentioned during the meeting and responses to the request for comment.

**Table 12: Agency / TAC Scoping Meetings**

<b>Meeting/Presentation Name</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Date/Time</b>	<b>Number of Attendees</b>
Agency / TAC Kick-off Meeting	Atlanta BeltLine, Inc., 86 Pryor Street SW Atlanta, GA 30309	July 17, 2008 11:30 – 1:30 pm	27
Agency / TAC Scoping Meeting	MARTA 2424 Piedmont Road Atlanta, GA 30324	August 12, 2008 9:00 – 11:00 am	19
Agency / TAC Scoping Meeting	Atlanta BeltLine, Inc. 86 Pryor Street SW Atlanta, GA 30303	August 22, 2008 9:00 – 11:00 am	19

**Format and Content**

At the Agency Scoping meetings, attendees reviewed presentation materials provided at the Public Scoping meetings. After a review of the project and Beltline background, participants had the opportunity to comment on the Tier 1 EIS and advise MARTA and ABI of their issues of concern. The *Scoping Summary Report* discusses these comments in detail, as well as the responses to comments received.

**Comments Received**

Below is a summary of the comments solicited from participants during the August 12, 2008 Scoping Meeting.

***Purpose and Need and Goals and Objectives***

Agency representatives provided the following comments on the BeltLine Corridor Environmental Study Purpose and Need statement:

- *Context* - Consider the proposed project in the context of present and future transit need.

- *Consistency with Regional Plans* - Ensure the BeltLine Corridor Environmental Study is consistent with the following plans in the Atlanta region:
  - the Transit Planning Board's (TPB) *Concept 3 Regional Transit Vision*;
  - the ARC Envision6 Regional Transportation Plan; and
  - Connect Atlanta, Atlanta's Comprehensive Transportation Plan (CTP).
- *Need for the Project* - Comments regarding the need for a project in the BeltLine Corridor included:
  - Develop a discrete problem statement that focuses on the problems that the BeltLine Corridor Environmental Study will address.
  - Establish the need for the proposed trail system. Is there a lack of or insufficient supply of recreational facilities to support a need for the trail elements of the proposed BeltLine Corridor project?
  - Air quality in the Atlanta region is a definite purpose and need for the proposed BeltLine Corridor Study.
- *Goals and Objectives* - Add "project connectivity to the rest of the region" under goal number 5. There is a perception that the proposed BeltLine Corridor project is only for the City of Atlanta.

#### **Alternatives**

- *Alignment* - The conceptual MARTA Armour Yard and Simpson Road heavy rail infill stations are located at points of intersection of the proposed BeltLine and could serve as important regional transfer centers in the future. Coordination regarding ongoing MARTA infill station planning activities will be an important consideration as the Study proceeds into more detailed alignment analysis.
- *Station and Maintenance Facilities* - Questions and comments regarding potential transit stations and maintenance facilities included:
  - Will station locations and maintenance facilities be considered in the Tier 1 EIS?
  - The Tier 1 EIS should address access to and from the proposed station to connecting bicycle facilities.
  - It is important to ensure that multi-use facilities are designed to accommodate safe travel by cyclists and pedestrians and that they safely interface with existing and proposed transit and roadway facilities.
- *Mode* - Consider treating bicycle and pedestrian travel as separate modes in order to reflect the different needs of the two groups.
- *Trails* - Provide additional detail regarding the characteristics of the proposed multi-use trail (width, amenities, etc.). Similar detail should be provided for the sections that will not be in the existing ROW (e.g., on-street facilities).

#### **Connectivity**

- It is important to think about both positive and negative impacts of connectivity.

#### **Environmental Quality**

- *Air Quality* - The air quality analysis should compare a build versus no build scenario and show presumable air quality benefits, mitigation of potential releases of air toxins after project completion and compliance with air quality standards.

- *Brownfields and Hazardous Materials* - Provide a methodology of how Brownfields and hazardous materials/wastes located within the Study area will be treated. The methodology should include: the identification and characterization of hazardous/contaminated sites; safety plans and procedures, including use of pesticides/herbicides; worker training; spill prevention; and a containment and countermeasures plan.
- *Community and Neighborhood Impacts* - The Tier 1 EIS should provide special consideration and planning for the following:
  - Pedestrian infrastructure, including sidewalks that are continuous, accessible, safe and aesthetically pleasing; adequate pedestrian crossings that are convenient and easily identified by motorists.
  - Sufficiently marked, continuous lanes and infrastructure needs for bicyclists.
  - Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) accessibility compliance for all project areas.
  - Consideration of beneficial and adverse long-term land use impacts, including the potential influx of people into the area as a result of a proposed project and associated impacts.
  - Special demographic considerations - e.g., hospitals, nursing homes, day care centers, schools.
  - Special consideration and appropriate mitigation for necessary relocation and other potential adverse impacts to residential areas, community cohesion and community services.
- *Environmental Justice* - Describe the potential impacts of the proposed BeltLine Corridor project on minority groups and low-income groups residing within the Study area.
- *Historic and Cultural Resources* - Historic and cultural resources located within the Study area should be considered.
- *Land Use* - The proposed BeltLine Corridor project is depicted on the ARC Urban Growth Policy Map (UGPM). The UGPM and an associated Development Matrix provide guidance for the appropriate design and scale of development that should occur with infrastructure availability to efficiently meet the forecasted population and growth of the Atlanta region. The UGPM envisions that the station areas of the BeltLine will become “transit villages” on a scale with other fixed guideway transit areas, which would be a mixed-use, walkable area with transit-supportive residential density.
- *Noise* - Identify projected elevated noise levels at sensitive receptors - i.e., residential, schools, hospitals - and appropriate mitigation plans during and after construction.
- *Parks and Recreation* - The following comments/questions were made regarding parks and recreation facilities located within the BeltLine Study area:
  - Does a representative from either the National Park Service or the USDOJ need to be consulted as part of the BeltLine Corridor Environmental Study?
  - Outside of the recreational aspects identified, impacts to National Parks that exist in the BeltLine Study area are of concern.
  - There needs to be a distinct definition of greenspace and trail.

- *Utilities* - Solid waste generation, reduction and disposal should be considered in the Tier 1 EIS.
- *Water Resources* - Special consideration should be made to the water quality/quantity, including private and public potable water supply; ground and surface water resources; ground and surface water contamination; compliance with water quality and wastewater treatment standards; potential contamination of underlying aquifers; and contamination of the food chain.
- *Mitigation* - Mitigation plans that protect the environment and promote public health should be described in the Tier 1 EIS wherever warranted.

### ***Construction Impacts***

Some agency representatives recommended that the Study would need to comply with appropriate criteria and guidelines to ensure worker safety and health during construction. It was further recommended that during construction, proper mitigation measures should be implemented to control runoff and dust.

### ***Costs and Financial Plan***

Regarding project costs and potential funding sources for the proposed BeltLine Corridor project, the following agency comments were received:

- If a new regional sales tax or some kind of new funding resource were to be pursued in the Tier 1 phase establishing the BeltLine as a locally funded project, how would the NEPA process be impacted?
- BeltLine planning activities should anticipate a variety of possible funding scenarios, and preserving funding flexibility should be a key objective throughout the EIS process.

### ***Project Administration and Process***

- More certainty will be needed with regard to the transit right-of-way to ensure that private development can move forward and plan effectively for transit service or bike/pedestrian facilities when they become available.
- During the BeltLine Corridor Environmental Study, coordination and collaboration with public health professionals in the Fulton County Department of Health and Wellness and the Georgia Department of Human Resources (Division of Public Health), and with local academic institutions including Emory University (Rollins School of Public Health), Georgia State University (Institute of Public Health), Georgia Institute of Technology (Center for Quality Growth and Regional Development), and Morehouse College (Public Health Sciences Institute) should be made to accomplish adequate health analysis and development of appropriate mitigation measures.
- Recommendations from the Health Impact Assessment (HIA) that was conducted on the proposed BeltLine Corridor project by the Center for Quality Growth and Regional Development at the Georgia Institute of Technology should be considered in the EIS process.

#### **1.4.4.2 Agency / TAC and Client Group Meeting on the EER and the Evaluation Criteria**

MARTA, in partnership with ABI, held a meeting on March 23, 2009 with interested agencies and the TAC to review and discuss the results of the analysis of existing



conditions, recap the *Environmental Effects Report*, review and discuss the proposed Evaluation Criteria, and to prepare for upcoming public workshop.

### **Format and Content**

The Agency / TAC meeting began with a viewing of project display boards. There was a discussion on the purpose of the meeting followed by a presentation on key project milestones, highlights of the *Environmental Effects Report* and Evaluation Criteria, and discussion on the upcoming public workshops, and the next steps in the study process.

Following the presentation, the attendees formed two groups to review the Evaluation Criteria, specifically the Performance Measures. The purpose of this exercise was to get a consensus that the Performance Measures aligned with the Goals and Objectives of the project, and any revisions or additions to the Evaluation Criteria.

### **1.4.4.3 Additional TAC / Agency Meetings on Alternative Alignments**

#### **Atlanta Development Authority (ADA) Workshop**

A project workshop, held on May 28, 2009, provided an opportunity for the Atlanta Development Authority (ADA) staff and Atlanta's Economic Development Sub-Cabinet to review and comment on the alternatives considered for the BeltLine project.

#### **Agency / TAC Workshop**

A TAC workshop took place on June 2, 2009 to review and comment on the alternatives considered.

#### **MARTA Workshop**

MARTA staff participated in a workshop on July 9, 2009 to review and comment on the alternatives considered.

### **Format and Content**

Workshops with ADA, TAC, and MARTA followed a format that was similar to the public workshops including a brief presentation and interactive breakout group exercise focused on soliciting comments and suggestions relative to the project alignments, station locations, and service types considered for the BeltLine project. The *Public and Committee Workshops April-June 2009* report includes the meeting notes for the Agency / TAC and ADA meetings. The MARTA Workshop was documented separately. Table 14 shows the meetings held with the Agency and TAC in Phases 2 and 3.

Section 1.2.2.2 provides a summary of the input received following the Public Workshops.

### **1.4.4.4 Additional Agency / TAC Meetings on Alternatives Evaluation**

#### **Agency / TAC**

An Agency / TAC meeting was held on November 2, 2009 to review the results of the analysis of the transit and trails alternatives, how committee and public comments were incorporated into the analysis and to solicit comments and issues from attendees.

## **ADA Economic Development Sub-Cabinet**

A project meeting held on November 12, 2009 provided an opportunity for the Sub-Cabinet to review and comment on the alternatives considered and the evaluation process for the BeltLine project. The Sub-Cabinet includes representatives from various City of Atlanta departments, including Department of Public Works, Planning and Community Development, Police, Fire, Watershed Management, Parks, among others.

### **Format and Content**

The meetings with Agency / TAC and ADA followed a format that was similar to the public meetings including an open house section with a series of project display boards and video that described and demonstrated the various transit and trails options.

### **Notification and Advertisements for Technical Advisory and Agency Committee Workshops**

Committee members received email notices two weeks prior to the meetings. Within two days of the meetings, committee members were telephoned to confirm attendance.

#### **1.4.4.5 TAC/Agency/SAC Meeting**

A TAC/Agency Meeting was held on August 2, 2011 to review the Atlanta BeltLine DEIS findings, address questions and finalize a strategy for communicating the findings with the public at the DEIS Public Hearings scheduled for August 16th and 18th. In preparation for the meeting, committee members were asked to review key elements of the study and be prepare comments and input. Participants were given a link for the documents to the project website at [www.itsmarta.com/uploadedFiles/About MARTA/Planning/Beltline\\_Corr/Atlanta BeltLine DEIS FTA.pdf](http://www.itsmarta.com/uploadedFiles/About_MARTA/Planning/Beltline_Corr/Atlanta_BeltLine_DEIS_FTA.pdf)

### **Format and Content**

Workshops with ADA, TAC, and MARTA followed a format that was similar to the public workshops including a brief presentation and interactive breakout group exercise focused on soliciting comments and suggestions relative to the project alignments, station locations, and service types considered for the BeltLine project.

#### **1.4.5 SAC Meetings and Outreach**

##### **1.4.5.1 Formal Stakeholder Advisory Committee Kick-off Meeting**

The kick-off meeting for the Stakeholder Advisory Committee, held by ABI in partnership with MARTA on July 22, 2008, introduced the project, the environmental process, and project milestones, and discussed the role of the SAC. There was also encouragement of the SAC to solicit community participation throughout the Tier 1 EIS.

### **Format and Content**

Upon arrival, SAC members had an opportunity to view a series of display boards and ask questions of the project team. A presentation followed that described the overall study process, overview of the project, and a question and answer period. The project team outlined the next steps prior to adjourning.

### 1.4.5.2 Stakeholder Advisory Committee Scoping Meeting

MARTA in partnership with ABI, invited the SAC to participate, along with the public, in a series of Scoping meetings. In preparation for the meetings, the Stakeholder Advisory Committee assisted in promoting the series of meetings by distributing meeting notices both electronically and in hard copy within their community, organizations, and area of influence.

#### Format and Content

At the SAC Scoping meeting, attendees reviewed presentation materials. After a review of the project and BeltLine background, participants had the opportunity to comment on the Tier 1 EIS and advise MARTA and ABI of their issues of concern. The *Scoping Summary Report* discusses these comments. Table 13 presents the scoping related SAC meetings.

**Table 13: SAC Kick-off, Scoping, and Public Workshop Meetings**

Meeting/Presentation Name	Location	Date/Time	Number of Attendees
SAC Kick-off Meeting	MARTA 2424 Piedmont Road Atlanta, GA 30324	July 22, 2008 11:30 – 1:30 pm	27
TAC/SAC Meeting	MARTA 2424 Piedmont Road Atlanta, GA 30324	December 8, 2008 5:30 – 7:30 pm	33

\*The attendance reported includes participants from all committees

### 1.4.5.3 Stakeholder Advisory Committee / Public Workshops

SAC members received email invitations to participate, along with the public, in at least one of five public meetings held April 13 – May 4, 2009.

#### Format and Content

Workshops including a brief presentation and interactive breakout group exercise focused on soliciting comments and suggestions relative to the project alignments, station locations, and service types considered for the BeltLine project. The *Public and Committee Workshops April-June 2009* report includes the meeting notes from each of these meetings. Section 1.2.2 describes the Public Workshops in more detail.

### 1.4.5.4 Additional SAC Meetings on Alternative Alignments

#### SAC Workshop

A SAC workshop, sponsored by ABI in partnership with MARTA, took place on June 2, 2009 to review and comment on the alternatives considered.

#### Format and Content

A workshop with the SAC followed a format that was similar to the public workshops including a brief presentation and interactive breakout group exercise focused on soliciting comments and suggestions relative to the project alignments, station locations, and service types considered for the BeltLine project. The *Public and Committee Workshops April-June 2009* report includes the meeting notes from the meeting. Table

14 shows the workshop held with the SAC in Phases 2 and 3, as well as future meetings scheduled.

#### 1.4.5.5 Additional SAC Meetings on Alternatives Evaluated

A SAC meeting, held by ABI in partnership with MARTA, was held on November 2, 2009 to review the results of the analysis of the transit and trails alternatives, how committee and public comments were incorporated into the analysis and to solicit comments and issues from attendees.

Section 1.4.6 provides a summary of the input received following the Public Workshops.

**Table 14: Agency, TAC, SAC, and Additional Meetings in Phases 2 and 3**

Organization	Location	Date/Time	Number of Attendees
TAC/Agency	ABI Offices 86 Pryor St. SW Atlanta, GA 30303	March 23, 2009 11:30 am – 1:00 pm	26
ADA Workshop	ABI Offices 86 Pryor St. SW Atlanta, GA 30303	May 28, 2009 9:00 am – 11:00 am	29
TAC /Agency/ SAC Workshop	ATT, Midtown 2 Auditorium 725 W. Peachtree St. NE Atlanta, GA 30308	June 2, 2009 11:30 – 1:30 pm 6:00 – 8:00 pm	35
MARTA Workshop	MARTA Annex Building 2424 Piedmont Road NW Atlanta, GA 30324	July 9, 2009 2:00 – 4:00 pm	15
TAC/Agency	MARTA Headquarters 2424 Piedmont Road NW Atlanta, GA 30324	August 18, 2009 11:30 am – 1:30 pm	24
SAC	MARTA Headquarters 2424 Piedmont Road NW Atlanta, GA 30324	August 18, 2009 6:00 – 8:00 pm	10
TAC/Agency	ABI Offices 86 Pryor St. SW Atlanta, GA 30303	November 2, 2009 11:30 am – 1:00 pm	28
SAC	MARTA Headquarters 2424 Piedmont Road NW Atlanta, GA 30324	November 2, 2009 4:30 – 6:00 pm	10
ADA Economic Development Sub Cabinet	ABI Offices 86 Pryor St. SW Atlanta, GA 30303	November 12, 2009 9:00 am – 11:00 am	13
TAC /Agency	ABI Offices 86 Pryor St. SW Atlanta, GA 30303	November 30, 2010 11:30 – 1:30 pm	20
SAC	MARTA Headquarters 2424 Piedmont Road NW Atlanta, GA 30324	November 30, 2010 6:00 – 8:00 pm	14
TADAC	ABI Offices 86 Pryor St. SW Atlanta, GA 30303	July 26, 2011 4:00 – 6:00 pm	17

Organization	Location	Date/Time	Number of Attendees
TAC / Agency/SAC	All Saints Episcopal Church 634 W. Peachtree Street NW Atlanta, GA 30308	August 2, 2011 4:00 – 6:00 pm	30

#### 1.4.5.6 Notification for Stakeholder Advisory Committee Meetings

Stakeholder Advisory Committee members are notified of meetings by way of email notices and telephone notification two weeks prior to the meetings. Within two days of the meetings, phone call reminders encouraged members to attend the meeting.

#### 1.4.6 Spring 2009 Post Public Workshop Agency / TAC and SAC Meetings Comments Received

Described below is a broad summary of comments and input received from TAC, SAC, and Agency meetings and workshops following the Public Workshops.

##### **Service**

Service Type and Characteristics – Participants were asked to provide feedback on the basic types of transit service, local service or regional service desired. The group was also asked about preferences regarding the type of service vehicle, access to the system and travel time once on the vehicle. Following is the list of the comments and questions received:

- Development drives the types of destinations travelers wish to access; local service best drives economic development
- Travelers are time-sensitive, and timeliness and availability are key factors in attracting and retaining ridership:
  - Frequency of service
  - Periods of operation – 24-hour or late-night service
  - Travel time through the corridor
- Regardless of service type, the system should be designed to maximize ridership potential
- Local service type is more in line with the original intent of the project
- Shuttle system would not be convenient for users
- Transit design should provide for a user-friendly system
- Transit design should provide for multiple community connections
- Transit design should maximize opportunities for access
- Transit system should place users closer to destinations and activity areas
- More stations versus fewer stations is preferable
- Do not use the term —regional to describe transit system; Beltline is a local service to complement the existing MARTA system
- Fare collection system should be determined

- Local service type is preferable for the entire corridor; do not mix local service with regional service; a hybrid system should not be considered
- Transit system design analysis should weigh options against time saved when compared to driving a car
- Limit the number of station locations in undeveloped sections of the corridor; instead use stations to encourage redevelopment
- Strong preference for local service; regional is bad term and not desired
- No parking at BeltLine stations
- Some parking at those MARTA stations that connect to BeltLine
- Access to MARTA and other regional transit is important
- Include express transit service with skip stops
- Wants more stops, less like MARTA heavy rail
- Tie service frequency to centers, density, jobs and activities
- Some stations serve major centers while others serve smaller more local
- Wants the ability to bypass stations
- Maximize ridership
- Use feeder services to support faster regional travel
- Consider skip-stop operations during peak periods, or other hybrid local/regional operations
- Apply cost-effectiveness criteria
- One-half (½) mile station spacing seems appropriate for the Beltline
- Consider a mix of service types depending on time of day and peak hours
- Consider bypassing some stations during peak hours to provide faster service
- Consider different types of transit technologies in the corridor (i.e., Portland, Organ provides an example of streetcar and light rail sharing tracks)
- Character of the Beltline transit system should be different from the existing MARTA heavy rail transit system in terms of speed, station spacing, and transfers
- Vehicle speed should respond to the surrounding neighborhood conditions
- Seamless transitions from Beltline to MARTA heavy rail stations
- Minimize impacts to the community
- Provide service for other than work trips
- Concern about frequency of service based on type of vehicles, location of stations
- Create the stations, but activate as needed – not all active right away
- Prefers streetcar; its more adaptable and cost-effective to operate
- Provide neighborhood-oriented access, part of original BeltLine transit concept
- Consider impact to DeKalb Avenue-Moreland Avenue interchange

- Travel time important for travelers going through/across zones in BeltLine Corridor
- Consider —skip-stops and other hybrid local-regional options
- Minimize pedestrian access time

Neighborhoods/Areas of Interest – After describing the general alignment, participants were asked to describe service that would compliment/fit specific neighborhoods/areas.

- Connect to recreation opportunities

Areas of Interest – The group was also asked to identify specific areas of interest/concern.

- Atlanta University Center
- Fort McPherson
- Piedmont Hospital
- Midtown
- Ansley Park/Monroe Drive area
- Little 5 Points
- Miami Circle (north of Lindbergh Center)
- Westside Park
- Retail and medical centers
  - Ansley Mall
  - Piedmont Park area at Virginia/Monroe
  - Amsterdam Walk
  - Howell Mill near I-75
- Northside Drive
- Monroe Drive near I-85/Buford Highway Connector

Corridor-wide

- Right-of-way impacts
- Need for better east-west connectivity
- Accessibility to both major trip destinations (activity centers, employment) and trip origins
- More direct access to major activity centers along BeltLine Corridor (ex. Piedmont Hospital)
- Connections needed to all MARTA heavy rail stations near BeltLine (ex. Bankhead Station)
- Connect to existing and planned transit services
- Integration with surrounding land use

- Quality design (do not sacrifice in the interest of minimizing right-of-way or avoiding impacts)

#### West End Station

- Consider an in-fill MARTA heavy rail station between West End Station and Oakland City Station versus a spur connection to West End Station
- Compare cost of infill station versus cost of spur connection
- A through loop may be better than a spur in and out
- Accessibility for students in the Atlanta University Center
- Consider an alignment option using Metropolitan Avenue and across Ralph David Abernathy Boulevard to West End Station
- Backing in and out of West End MARTA Station creates safety and operational concerns

#### Bankhead Station

- Provide a direct connection or walkable connection Bankhead Station
- Enhance sidewalks along Donald Lee Hollowell Parkway to provide a pedestrian connection from the Beltline corridor to Bankhead Station. This is approximately 1,500 linear feet and would be about a five to six minute walk

#### Westside Park

- Consider an alternate transit alignment to provide closer access to Westside Park
- Consider an alternate transit alignment to provide access into the center of Westside Park
- Consider using the existing Georgia Power right-of-way as a route to provide access to Westside Park

#### Inman Park/Reynoldstown Station

- Consider locating the transit alignment along Edgewood Avenue versus DeKalb Avenue
- Transit alignment should provide better access to the Inman Park neighborhood and Little Five Points commercial district
- Transit alignment should continue south along Moreland Avenue to Memorial Drive versus the alignment using Wylie Street
- BeltLine Corridor Environmental Study A-1.2-31 June 2009
- The transit alignment should not extend to provide service to East Atlanta
- Consider an east bound alignment from Inman Park/Reynoldstown MARTA Station using the northbound Moreland Avenue ramp to turn southbound onto Moreland Avenue with an in-creased turning radii
- Could have a tunnel transit alignment connecting the north and south Inman Park/ Reynolds- town MARTA Station parking lots



- Consider an alignment along Moreland Ave via Euclid Avenue with access to Little 5 Points

#### Ashby Station

- Lena Street has a limited right-of-way width so consider using Martin Luther King, Jr. Drive to connect Beltline to Ashby Station

#### Inman Park/Reynoldstown Station

- The BeltLine alignment and connection to MARTA should consider the possibility of an infill heavy rail station as part of redevelopment at Hulsey Yard
- Consider Edgewood Avenue as a possible BeltLine Alignment

#### Northeast

- Lindbergh area, Emory
- Frequency of Service
- Trail connections, between Lindbergh Center area and nearby neighborhoods (Piedmont Heights, Peachtree Hills)
- Connection along Piedmont Road in Armour area may be the best for operations and development
- Connection along Piedmont Road in Armour area may be the best for operations and development

#### Northwest

- The Marietta Boulevard alignment does not have much residential planned, so it might not be the best for transit
- Direct connections to Atlantic Station are desirable
- Crossing railroad right-of-way between Marietta and Blandtown Huff BeltLine stations Southeast
- Bus connection to Grant Park and Zoo may be needed

### ***Transit***

The facilitator asked about the features of the proposed transit that are of interest to the group. A video clip was used to facilitate the discussion and to highlight key aspects of transit features. Features of transit include areas such as vehicle type, attractiveness, size, exclusive and in-street operations, stations, and station locations. Other features included passenger boarding, pedestrian, and automobile crossing. The following sections list the comments, questions, and suggestions that regarding the proposed transit features, alignment and stations.

#### Transit Features and Alignment

- Could the trail spur west of Westside Park from Donald L. Hollowell Parkway be an alternative transit line
- How to connect with northwest alignment to the north

- Consider redevelopment benefits in choosing among alternative alignments
- How does the transit alignment fit in active freight right-of-way
- How does the transit alignment function in active street right-of-way
- DeKalb Avenue area is a challenge
- Lindbergh/Armour area; why have Armour service? Considered to not have too many trip destinations
- Need connection to Bellwood Quarry and Bankhead MARTA station – recent LCI for area would support, and be supported by BeltLine transit
- Transit could travel on Donald Lee Hollowell between currently proposed BeltLine alignment and Bankhead station
- Corridor widths – ROW preservation important – identify pockets of ROW preservation
- Prioritized
- Use BeltLine as a feeder service to MARTA heavy rail stations, other regional services
- Consider smaller vehicles
- Consider rubber-tired vehicles
- Consider a digital kiosk to inform patrons of wait times at BeltLine station platforms
- Fare collection system should allow a seamless transfer to minimize commute times  
Take advantage of intelligent technology features such as —next-bus advance notification
- Off-board fare collection:
- Can support —skip stop operations
- Consider – honor system
- Level boarding
- Consider turning radii
- Consider more in-street operations as alignment alternatives
- Pocket tracks will be needed for local trains to switch out of the way of express trains

#### Transit Stations

- Consider multiple stops at major destinations (ex. Westside Park – similar number of stops as Piedmont Park)
- If Armour area proceeds as a multimodal, heavy rail infill station, is the BeltLine stop at Lindbergh Center still necessary
- Consider connections with other transit modes (ex. Peachtree Streetcar) in identifying stops

- Consider infill stations at Armour or Miami Circle and south of West End MARTA Station
- Use trail to support community connections to BeltLine stops
- Minimize need for long travel distances from stations
- Near development
- Near activity centers
- Walking access versus park-ride
- BeltLine station location planning should be coordinated with BeltLine sub-area planning and existing MARTA patron data
- Consider infill stations at Armour, Murphy Triangle (south of West End)

### ***Trails***

Participants were asked about plans to use the trail and trail features and its functions. Possible functions and features included walking, running, or biking trail, amenities along the trail, street crossings, ramps, pedestrian bridges, tunnels, and alignment. The following sections list the comments, questions, and suggestions made regarding the proposed trail connections and alignment.

#### Trail Features and Alignment

- Provide proper amenities for bicyclists (ex. lockers, storage) throughout corridor
- Provide stopping areas for pedestrians including benches, restrooms
- How does the trail alignment fit along active street right-of-way
- Width – preserve existing open spaces and not focus solely on developing new
- Separate bicycle and pedestrian traffic
- Establish measures and features for safety and security
- Adequate lighting
- Provide restrooms
- Proper maintenance of trail and amenities
- Provide opportunities for artists; apply revenue from art commissions to support operations
- Consider funding options
- Stream crossings/flood zones
- Appropriate signage and way-finding features
- Identify multiple-trail options, including more visible trails near streets and neighborhoods
- Provide 24-hour access

- Consider existing closing times for transit services and public parks
- Provide dirt-trail options for runners
- Avoid tunnels
- Maintain ADA compliant paths along trail to/from MARTA bus stops
- Trails too close to transit may be undesirable

***General Comments and Questions***

- Transit alignment should connect density centers to capture as many riders as possible
- Name stations after each of 45 neighborhoods
- Transit alignment should connect density centers to capture as many riders as possible
- MARTA infill – greater connectivity between BeltLine and heavy rail
- Concern about expense
- Service is good for Emory, SW of Lindbergh
- MARTA modeled this from previous study—relying on that for this process
- Need input from the users
- Public outreach in the northeast

**1.4.7 Fall 2009 Agency / TAC and SAC Comments Received**

Described below is a summary of comments and input received from Agency / TAC and SAC meetings:

**Alternatives Evaluated**

**Implementation**

***Freight-Related Issues***

- Evaluate the ability to implement the project based on challenges relative to CSX and NS
- Consider that CSX interest will wane between now and 2019 in Howell Junction area
- Consider the use of three tracks

***Property Related Issues***

- Determine property impacts
- Consider the feasibility of requiring residents and businesses in the NW zone that might be selling their properties to provide full disclosure to the buyer so that the buyer would be obligated to allow future easements, etc

**Operation**

***LRT versus Modern Streetcar***

- Decide between dedicated lanes or shared lanes (along Marietta Blvd)

***Relation to Existing MARTA Service***

- Think about the projected customer of the BeltLine
- Think about the client (FTA) and its funding sources

**Performance Measures**

***General Scoring/Methodology***

- Consider weighting performance measures

***Goals/Objectives***

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

- Consider using ¼ mile versus ½ mile buffer when assessing activity center connectivity
- Be mindful not to mask employment or job centers as “economic development”

*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*

- Since the TAD boundaries are somewhat based along the CSX alignment, determine if the measure necessarily favors CSX versus the NS alignment
- Provide actual data for “underutilized areas”

*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*

- No Comments Received

*Goal 4: Provide a cost-effective and efficient transportation investment*

- No Comments Received

*Goal 5: Provide a transit, bicycle and pedestrian friendly environment*

- No Comments Received

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

- No Comments Received

*Goal 7: Minimize adverse impacts to the environment and foster positive environmental impacts*

- Lessen impact to those areas identified on water resources maps

- Revise “minimizing acres of existing park land...” to make it more affirmative, i.e. “maximize use of BeltLine trails or new trails...” or “maximize use of new park land as well as connectivity to existing park land...”

*Goal 8: Ensure consideration of public input throughout project planning and development*

- No Comments Received

### **Other Project Considerations**

#### ***Transit Stations***

- Define decision for station locations

#### ***Trails***

- Take into account that trail connections are safer running alongside transit and not crossing over roadways and driveways
- Concern with pedestrian safety at transit crossings
- Consider how current and recent construction of trails fit into EIS process
- Gain input from PATH and bicycle community

## **1.5 Communication Tools**

Utilization of a variety of collateral materials and communication tools helped to inform and solicit input from the public and agencies. The communication tools complimented and supplemented the outreach effort. These tools include:

- Stakeholder Contact Database
- Project Website and Email
- Newsletter
- Study Update
- Telephone Hotline and Business Card
- Media Relations
- Comment Form

### **1.5.1 Stakeholder Contact Database**

The project team developed a master database, which expanded over the course of the project. The database listed interested individuals and groups who desired to keep informed of the progress of the study. The database aided in promoting participation at public meetings and to notifying the public of key updates to the project website.

The database includes over 700 entries of individuals representing the public, property owners adjacent to the proposed transit and trails alignments, neighborhood planning units, committees, agencies, elected and public officials, civic and community groups, public interest groups, faith-based organizations, and the business community.

Updates to the stakeholder contact database were ongoing throughout the term of the Tier 1 EIS.

### 1.5.2 Project Website and Email

MARTA hosted a website for the BeltLine Corridor Environmental Study at [www.itsmarta.com/Beltline-Corr.aspx](http://www.itsmarta.com/Beltline-Corr.aspx).

The ABI/BeltLine Partnership website also links to the project website at <http://www.beltline.org/BeltLineBasics/TransitTrailsandTransportation/EnvironmentallImpactStudyEIS/tabid/2936/Default.aspx>. ABI also issues blast emails regarding meetings and other events.

The intent of the MARTA website is to provide information and solicit input on the project. It contains a synopsis of the project, frequently asked questions, the Tier 1 EIS schedule, newsletters, and study updates. It also contains Tier 1 EIS reports, links to previous relevant studies, as well as contact information and how citizens can get involved. A comment form is available on the project website. During the project, recording and responding to emailed comments occurred when appropriate. Update of the Comment Summary Database for the project happened as new comments arrived.

The BeltLine Corridor Environmental Study website contained up-to-date information to enable interested parties to electronically access the same information and updates provided in displays at public meetings, in brochures, and through mailers.

### 1.5.3 Newsletter

The team produced and distributed seven newsletters during the project. These publications address major accomplishments in the Tier 1 EIS as well as upcoming events. Distribution both electronically and in hard copy made the publications easily accessible to a greater range of people. The newsletters are available on the BeltLine project website ([www.itsmarta.com/Beltline-Corr.aspx](http://www.itsmarta.com/Beltline-Corr.aspx); and [www.beltline.org/BeltLineBasics/TransitTrailsandTransportation/EnvironmentallImpactStudyEIS/tabid/2936/Default.aspx](http://www.beltline.org/BeltLineBasics/TransitTrailsandTransportation/EnvironmentallImpactStudyEIS/tabid/2936/Default.aspx)). Table 15 provides a summary of the Tier 1 EIS Newsletters.

**Table 15: Tier 1 EIS Newsletters**

Publication	Date	Lead Story
Newsletter	August 2008	Continuing to Lay the Groundwork for Transit & Trails
Newsletter	April 2009	BeltLine Corridor Environmental Study Completes its First Milestone
Newsletter	August 2009	Public Workshops Bring More Options to the Table
Newsletter (web only)	October 2009	Environmental Effects Report Wrap-Up
Newsletter	March 2010	Fall 2009 Public Meetings Wrap-Up & Where We Go From Here
Newsletter	July 2011	Fact Sheet - Wrapping Up the BeltLine EIS Study
Newsletter	TBD	Results from DEIS Public Hearings

### 1.5.4 Study Update

Six study updates are scheduled during the course of the Tier 1 EIS. These are brief summaries of specific developments, primarily of a technical nature, that have been

completed. These updates will be written in easy to understand language and will be suitable for distribution in hard copy and electronically. Table 16 provides a summary of the Tier 1 EIS Study Updates.

### 1.5.5 Telephone Hotline and Business Card

A telephone hotline number allowed interested individuals to contact the Tier 1 EIS team with questions and/or comments regarding the BeltLine Corridor Environmental Study. The number, (404) 524-2070, links to a recorded message in English and Spanish and remained accessible throughout the course of the Tier 1 EIS. The Hotline number appears in all printed information materials and on the project website ([www.itsmarta.com/Beltline-Corr.aspx](http://www.itsmarta.com/Beltline-Corr.aspx); and [www.beltline.org/BeltLineBasics/TransitTrailsandTransportation/EnvironmentalImpactStudyEIS/tabid/2936/Default.aspx](http://www.beltline.org/BeltLineBasics/TransitTrailsandTransportation/EnvironmentalImpactStudyEIS/tabid/2936/Default.aspx)). A business card created specifically for the project contains all the contact information, including the website addresses, and hotline number.

**Table 16: Tier 1 EIS Study Updates**

Publication	Date	Lead Story
Study Update	August 2008	Public Meetings Scheduled
Study Update	October 2008	Initial Public Involvement Phase Nearing Completion
Study Update	June 2009	Spring Activities
Study Update	September 2009	Evaluation Criteria
Study Update (web only)	October 2009	Trails
Executive Summary of Environmental Study	TBD	Tier 1 EIS Wrap-up

The procedure for collecting and responding to messages left on the Hotline is contained in the *PIAC Plan*. The Tier 1 EIS team logs and responds to all telephone inquiries. There was encouragement to make formal comments and send written comments via letters, emails, or by using comment cards. There is a complete copy of the telephone logs.

### 1.5.6 Media Relations

Media coverage aided in advertising the study and as a tool to encourage public participation in the development of the Tier 1 EIS. The *PIAC Plan* contains more than 50 media outlets covered including:

- Printed media
- Radio
- Television
- Colleges and universities
- Community outlets



### **1.5.7 Comment Form**

Comment forms, in English and Spanish, are part of the BeltLine Corridor Environmental Study public outreach program. The comment forms solicit responses that pertain to a variety of specific issues as well as general input on the Tier 1 EIS.

Availability of the comment forms occurred at all meetings and on the project webpage.

Distribution of the first comment forms took place at the Public Scoping meetings, while the second was made available through the BeltLine project website ([www.itsmarta.com/newsroom/beltline.html](http://www.itsmarta.com/newsroom/beltline.html)).

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