

Atlanta BeltLine Corridor Environmental Study



BeltLine

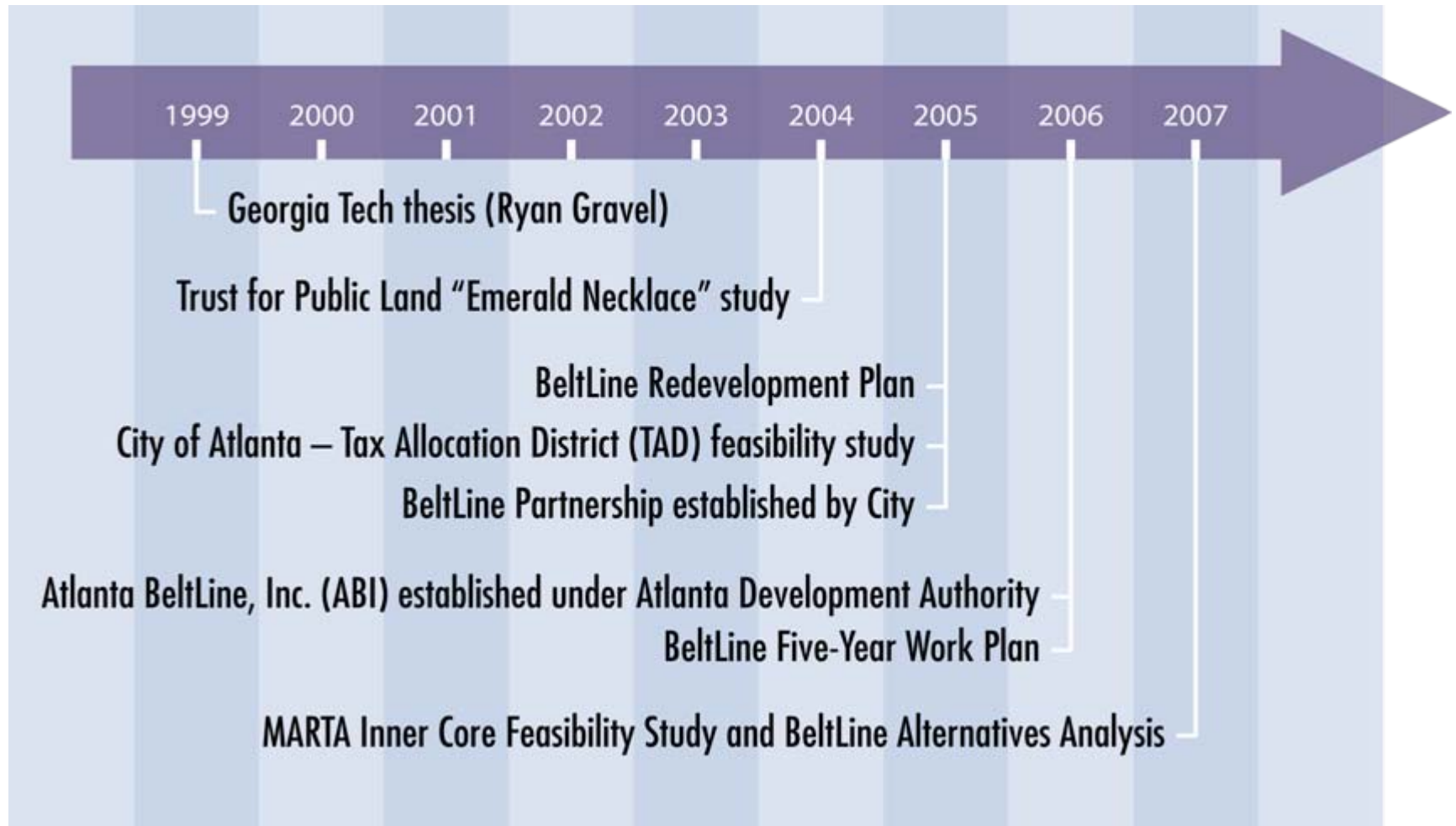
Scoping Meeting
August 2008

What Will We Be Discussing Today?

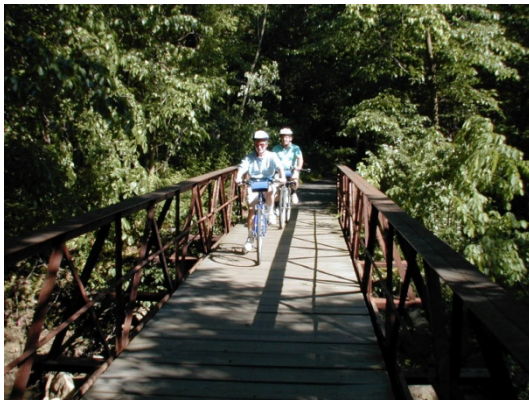


- Study Overview
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How Did We Get Here?



What Is the Study About?



- The Atlanta BeltLine:

- Proposed new rail transit and bicycle/pedestrian trails system
- Multi-use transportation corridor
- 22-mile loop around Downtown/Midtown
- Connect communities and green space
- Provide links between existing and planned development, recreation, and existing transportation
- Convert unused/underused rail ROWs
- Promote sustainable and efficient use of urban land
- Support transit-oriented, mixed-use development and redevelopment

Who Is Involved?



BeltLine



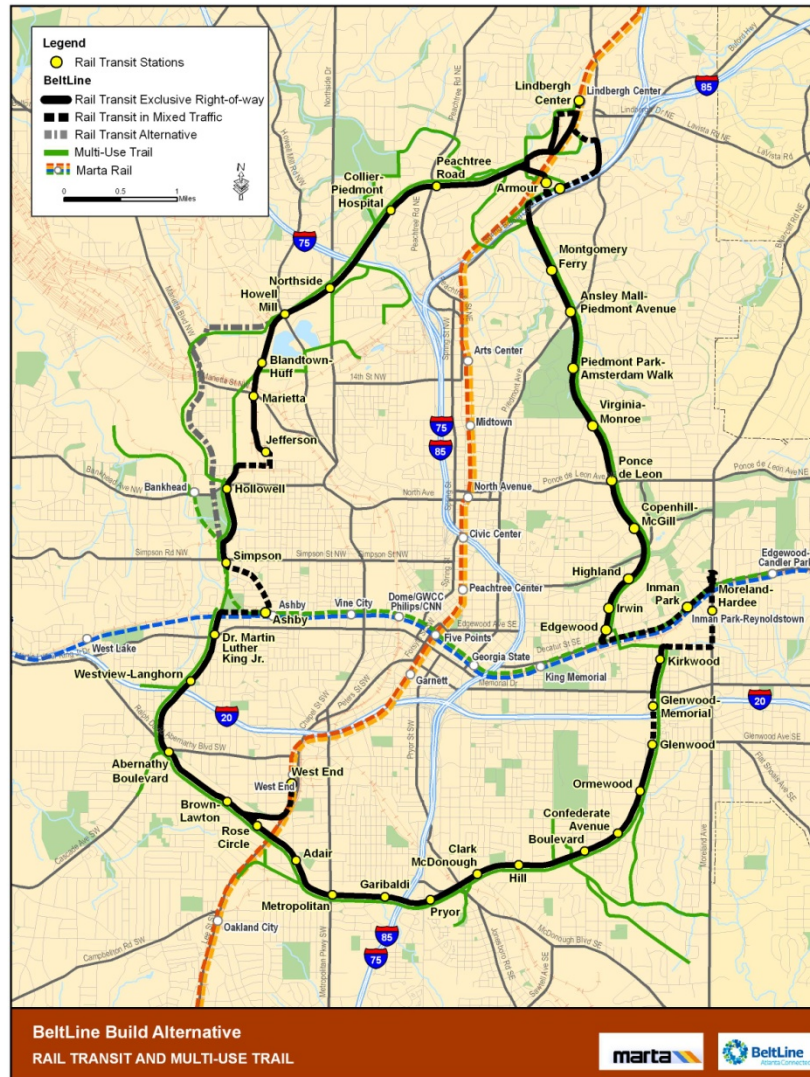
- Federal Transit Administration (lead federal agency)
- Metropolitan Atlanta Rapid Transit Authority (MARTA, project sponsor)
- Atlanta BeltLine, Inc. (project sponsor)
- Local, state, and federal agencies
- You!

Study Outcomes

- Informed Decision Making:
 - Updated purpose and need, goals and objectives, evaluation measures
 - Rail mode (Modern Streetcar, Light Rail Transit)
 - Basic design concept for transit and trails
 - Conceptual facility locations
 - Right-of-way needs for preservation
 - Broad, system-level impacts



Where Is the Study Area?



Why Is the Project Needed?



- Purpose of Atlanta BeltLine:
 - Improve local and regional mobility
 - Address transit and trail accessibility
 - Address transit and trail connectivity (especially with the existing MARTA system)
 - Support the City of Atlanta's redevelopment, recreational, and green space plans
 - Support City of Atlanta's and regional growth management strategies
- Need for Improvements:
 - Address the effects of population and employment growth and planned development on transportation system
 - Provide critical links between Atlanta's existing and planned recreational opportunities

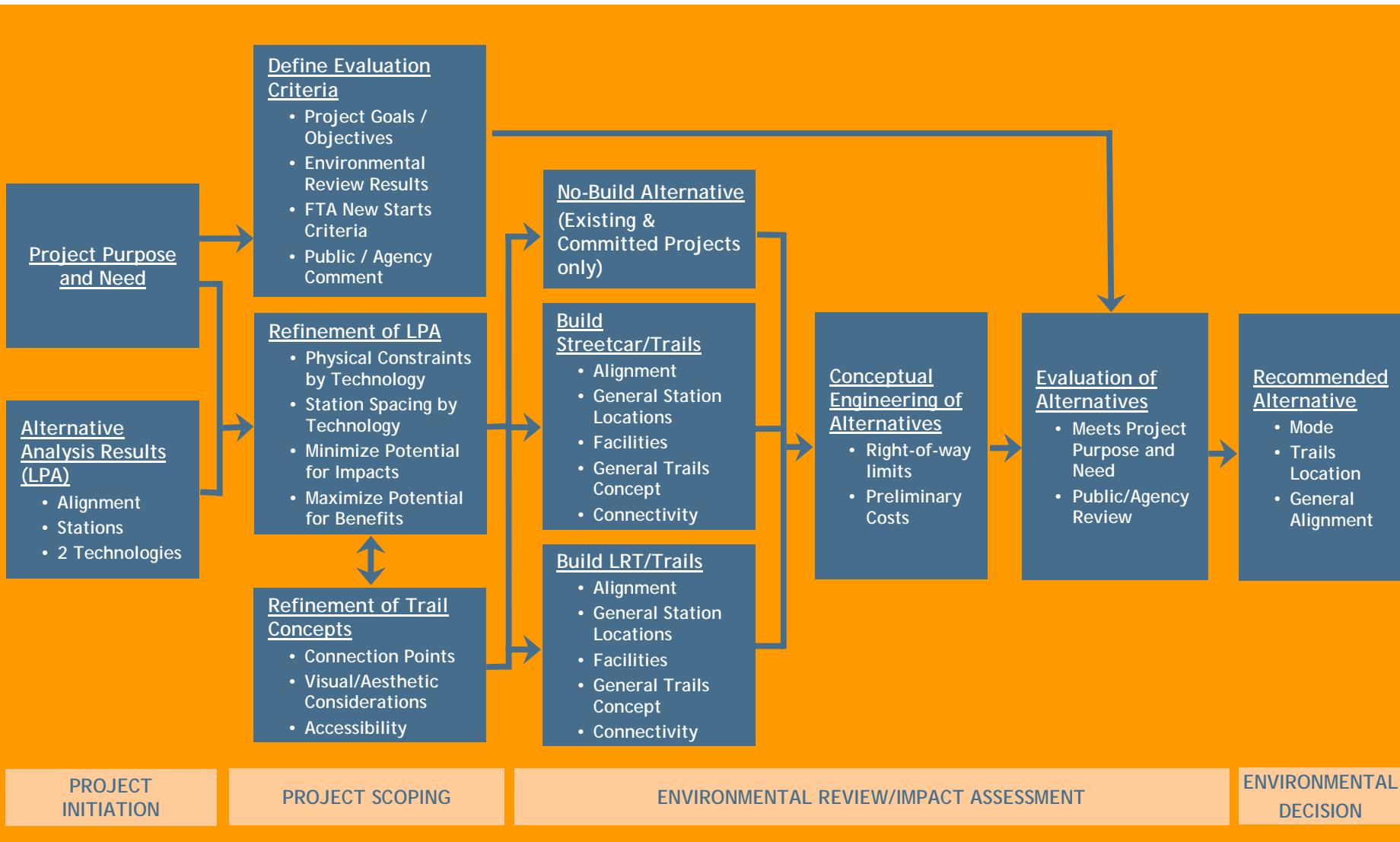
Atlanta BeltLine Corridor Study Process

Previous Related Studies



- Trails (City of Atlanta):
 - Atlanta BeltLine Redevelopment Plan (2005) and BeltLine Emerald Necklace Study (2004) identified future locations for parks and multi-use trails.
 - “Cultural Ring Loop” and “BeltLine Transit Greenway” concepts influenced the transit element of this study
- Transit (MARTA):
 - Atlanta BeltLine Alternatives Analysis (2007) included 10 build alternatives
 - MARTA Board of Directors identified a preferred alternative based on a number of performance criteria

Study Process



Evaluation Framework

- Each of the transit and trails alternatives will be evaluated based on the criteria below, and how well they meet the goals and objectives of the project :



- Mobility
- Accessibility and connectivity
- Equity
- Cost-effectiveness and efficiency
- Travel time
- Pedestrian and bicycle compatibility
- Support of city initiatives
- Land use and economic development
- Community fit
- Environmental quality
- Public and agency comment

What is NEPA?



- The National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA) requires:
 - Consideration of environmental issues during the decision-making process for major federal actions that might have a significant effect on the environment
 - Alternatives analysis
 - Agency coordination
 - Public involvement
 - Mitigation of significant impacts
- Environmental Impact Statement (EIS)
 - Notice of Intent (NOI)
 - Scoping process
 - Draft EIS
 - Public comment
 - Final EIS
 - Record of Decision

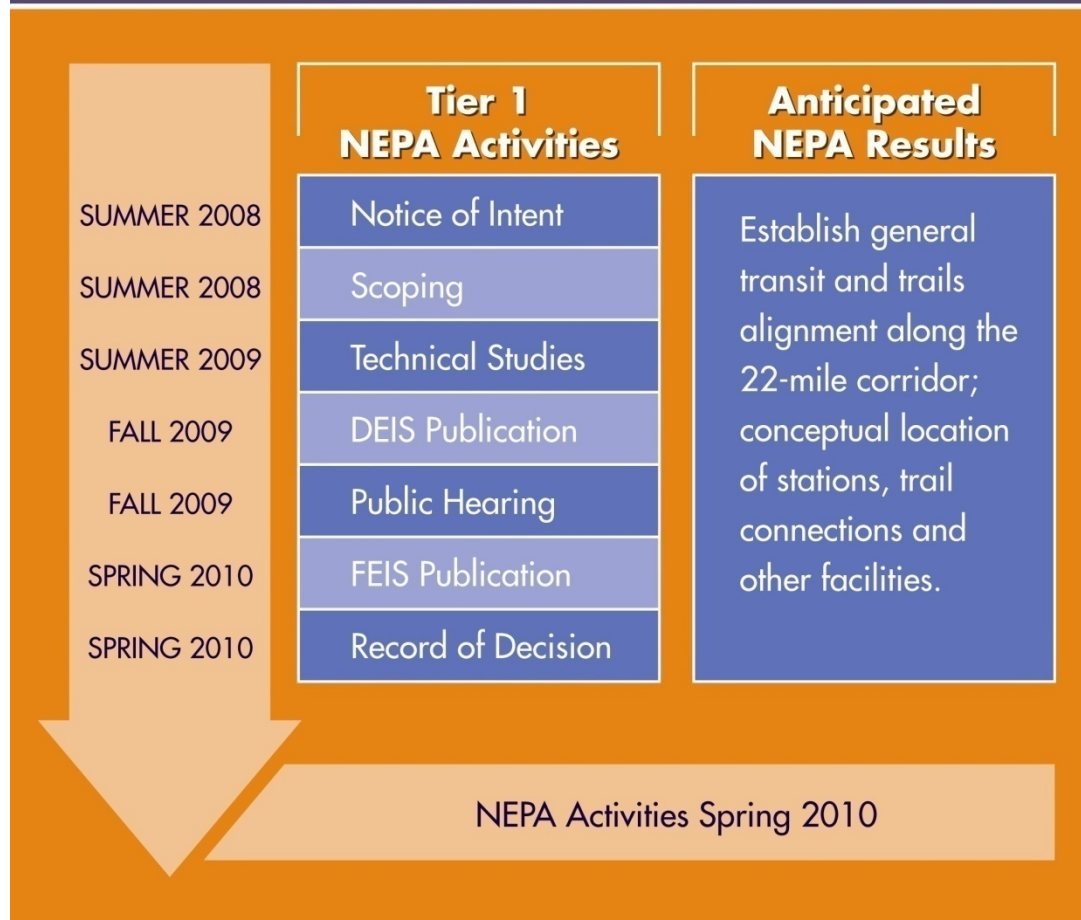
What Is Scoping?



- A federally mandated process for identifying issues related to the project
- An opportunity for the cooperating and participating agencies and the public to comment on the purpose and need and the range of alternatives
- The Scoping Process is intended to:
 - Inform agencies and public about the project
 - Identify opportunities for agency and public input
 - Refine the Purpose and Need statement, goals and objectives, and evaluation measures
 - Provide Scoping and NEPA process schedules

Schedule

NEPA Tier 1 EIS – Tasks and Schedule



Issues to be Addressed in the Tier 1 EIS

PRESENT

TIER 1 ANALYSIS

ADDRESS BROAD, OVERALL CORRIDOR ISSUES
TO DEFINE RIGHT-OF-WAY NEEDS:

- TRANSIT AND TRAILS ALIGNMENT
- CONCEPTUAL DESIGN
- MODE TYPE (LRT, Streetcar)

FUTURE

TIER 2 ANALYSIS

ADDRESS:

- SITE SPECIFIC IMPACTS
- COST AND MITIGATION MEASURES
- DETAILED ANALYSIS

Section 106



- Scoping also provides an opportunity to identify areas of potential concern or other important resources, such as cultural resources
- Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act requires agencies to take into account their actions on significant cultural resources
- Looking for your input to compile a comprehensive picture of history along the BeltLine

Goal 1: Intermodal Connectivity

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



Objectives:

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

Goal 2: Support Development Initiatives

Goal 2: Support local and regional land-use development initiatives and fulfill demands for emerging transit-supportive land uses.



Objectives:

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

Goal 3: Cost-Effective/Efficient Investment

Goal 3: Provide a cost-effective and efficient transportation investment.



Objectives:

- 1) Minimize capital and operating costs
- 2) Provide for the long-term expansion of the future transit and trails system
- 3) Support recent and planned transit infrastructure investments
- 4) Maximize operating efficiency and cost-effectiveness

Goal 4: Bicycle/Pedestrian Environment

Goal 4: Provide a bicycle- and pedestrian-friendly environment.



Objectives:

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

Goal 5: Connectivity

Goal 5: Provide connectivity between communities and existing and planned recreational opportunities through an expansive trails network.

Objectives:

- 1) Provide efficient transit and trail connections between regional and local parks and recreational facilities in the study area
- 2) Provide transit and trail access to parks, green spaces, and community facilities
- 3) Support existing and planned park programming, including event venues, through access to transit and trail facilities
- 4) Integrate green space opportunities into transit and trail facilities
- 5) Provide trail and transit connectivity to schools



Goal 6: Protecting the Environment

Goal 6: Minimize adverse impacts to the natural environment and foster positive environmental impacts.



Objectives:

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

Public Involvement Plan



- Purpose:
 - Engage the public
 - Inform the public
 - Build public support for the BeltLine Project
- Components:
 - Technical Advisory Committee (TAC)
 - Stakeholder Advisory Committee (SAC)
 - BeltLine Study Groups
 - Target audience briefings
 - Progress presentations
 - Website, hotline, newsletters, technical findings updates, public comment forms, and other communications tools
- Contact information:
 - Hotline:* 404-524-2070
 - E-mail:* dwa_beltlinestudy@bellsouth.net
 - Website:* www.itsmarta.com/newsroom/beltline.html

Next Steps



- Complete Scoping process
 - Comments due September 22
- Public hearing on Tier 1 Draft EIS (Fall 2009)
- Final EIS publication (Spring 2010)
- Ongoing public involvement:
 - Technical Advisory Committee (TAC)
 - Stakeholder Advisory Committee (SAC)
 - BeltLine Study Groups
 - Target audience briefings
 - Progress presentations
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