

OVERVIEW

MARTA is advancing transit along the Atlanta BeltLine by initiating a six-month, comprehensive engineering study that will analyze previous work, examine areas that have not yet been studied, and evaluate segments that present a design or technical challenge. The study, which represents a significant step to enter the federal funding process, goes beyond MARTA's current work that focuses on the Streetcar East extension. The completion of this study will progress BeltLine transit plans as a high-capacity solution that connects the region's growing population to jobs, neighborhoods, healthcare facilities, points of interests, and the existing heavy rail system.

MARTA has 50 years of experience building and operating a transit system. With that comes full understanding of Federal Transit Administration (FTA) operational and safety requirements and opportunities for federal funding. While Atlanta BeltLine, Inc. (ABI) has conducted preliminary environmental assessments on some, but not all, segments of the corridor and identified technical challenges, this current study represents an essential step in advancing high-capacity transit along the BeltLine.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS:

What are MARTA's plans for transit along the Atlanta BeltLine?

MARTA is taking a critical step in analyzing high-capacity transit along the Atlanta BeltLine. Portions of the BeltLine, including the Streetcar East extension, are already in the early planning phases for transit expansion projects funded by the City of Atlanta's More MARTA program. However, this current study includes an expanded scope that will evaluate areas from Lindbergh to I-20, update cost estimates, and analyze key areas along the eastside corridor that may pose a design and engineering challenge.

Have there been similar studies that evaluated transit along the BeltLine? Why would another study be needed in 2021?

The six-month study is an important step forward towards requesting federal funding. It will assess the existing ABI alignment data, validate the full program capability beyond the ABI alignment limits, and provide critical transit connections to the existing MARTA system.

The draft environmental study documents released by ABI were primarily trail-based with some rail considerations which did not address several areas of rail transit concerns. The planning review of the documents revealed transit connectivity gaps to the north between Ansley Mall and Lindbergh Center rail station and to the south between the existing Streetcar and I-20. Additionally, alignment options to MARTA heavy rail stations and alongside existing private railroad tracks have not been adequately addressed and require more evaluation.

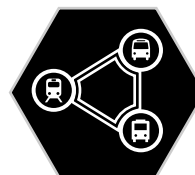
THIS STUDY IS A CRITICAL STEP IN:

1. Meeting the required federal funding guidelines to support the financial cost of high-capacity transit



2. Accessing the existing ABI alignment data - including previous planning and draft National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) studies

3. Validating the full program capability and identifying feasible alignments



4. Providing meaningful transit connections to the existing MARTA system

What are the focus areas of this study?

The study will focus on both ends of the eastside corridor. The northern segment runs from the proposed Ponce City Market LRT Station to Lindbergh Center Station. The southern segment runs from the proposed BeltLine/Irwin St. LRT Station to the BeltLine SE trail connection at Bill Kennedy Parkway, with direct connections to either King Memorial or Inman Park Station.

What portions of the Atlanta BeltLine are included in the Streetcar East extension?

The current Streetcar East extension alignment runs from Jackson Avenue to the BeltLine at Irwin Street and up to Ponce City Market.

How long will the feasibility study take to complete and what are the next steps?

The feasibility study will be conducted by Vanasse Hangen Brustlin, Inc. (VHB) and take six months to complete. Upon completion of the study, MARTA and ABI will review the findings and determine next steps.

What are "choke points" for transit as it relates to the Atlanta BeltLine?

The choke points for transit are specific areas along the Atlanta BeltLine that will require additional analysis to address and confirm that adequate right-of-way exists to construct a dual track light rail system. The study being conducted by VHB will help address these issues.

POTENTIAL TRANSIT CHOKE POINT EXAMPLES



EXAMPLE 1

The northeast BeltLine crosses under I-85 behind Sweetwater Brewing. The active freight rail yard near Armour Drive sits between the BeltLine and Lindbergh Center MARTA Station, requiring the transit alignment to divert sharply to the east of MARTA's Red & Gold Line tracks. This transit alignment criteria needs to be vetted.

EXAMPLE 2

The BeltLine crossing at Monroe Drive and 10th Street is a transition from the tight underpass at Virginia Avenue to a grade crossing at a congested intersection with high pedestrian traffic. More study is necessary to resolve safety concerns with the introduction of transit crossing gates and/or additional signals. Economic impacts to business and development are also NEPA concerns.



EXAMPLE 3

The Atlanta Beltline Eastside Trail diverts to the east into the Krog Street tunnel. The transit alignment criteria must be vetted to create a connected transit alignment.

EXAMPLE 4

The initial study recommends single tracking in this part of the BeltLine corridor due to rocky terrain, which is located south of Westminster Drive in the northeast corner of Piedmont Park. This area would require a review of environmental impacts to widen the corridor for transit service.



EXAMPLE 5

This BeltLine underpass beneath Park Drive is located on the eastern edge of Piedmont Park. The addition of transit in this area would require an environmental impact study.

EXAMPLE 6

The BeltLine crosses a historical wooden bridge and wetlands at Clear Creek and behind Ansley Mall. A review of transit environmental impacts is needed to include possible disruptions to existing businesses, the golf course, and nearby housing.

