What Will We Be Discussing Today?

- Study Overview
  - How Did We Get Here?
  - What Is the Study About?
  - Who Is Involved?
  - Where Is the Study Area?
  - Why Is the Project Needed?

- Study Process
  - Previous Related Studies
  - What Is NEPA?
  - What Is Scoping?
  - Schedule
  - Issues to be Addressed in the EIS

- Project Goals and Objectives
- Public Involvement
How Did We Get Here?

- 1999: Georgia Tech thesis (Ryan Gravel)
- 2000: Trust for Public Land “Emerald Necklace” study
- 2001: BeltLine Redevelopment Plan
- 2002: City of Atlanta – Tax Allocation District (TAD) feasibility study
- 2003: BeltLine Partnership established by City
- 2004: Atlanta BeltLine, Inc. (ABI) established under Atlanta Development Authority
- 2005: BeltLine Five-Year Work Plan
- 2006: MARTA Inner Core Feasibility Study and BeltLine Alternatives Analysis
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?

- 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!
• 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
• Trails (City of Atlanta):
  - “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

Project Purpose and Need

Alternative Analysis Results (LPA)
- Alignment
- Stations
- 2 Technologies

Refinement of LPA
- Physical Constraints by Technology
- Station Spacing by Technology
- Minimize Potential for Impacts
- Maximize Potential for Benefits

Refinement of Trail Concepts
- Connection Points
- Visual/Aesthetic Considerations
- Accessibility

Define Evaluation Criteria
- Project Goals / Objectives
- Environmental Review Results
- FTA New Starts Criteria
- Public / Agency Comment

No-Build Alternative
(Existing & Committed Projects only)

Build Streetcar/Trails
- Alignment
- General Station Locations
- Facilities
- General Trails Concept
- Connectivity

Build LRT/Trails
- Alignment
- General Station Locations
- Facilities
- General Trails Concept
- Connectivity

Conceptual Engineering of Alternatives
- Right-of-way limits
- Preliminary Costs

Evaluation of Alternatives
- Meets Project Purpose and Need
- Public/Agency Review

Recommended Alternative
- Mode
- Trails Location
- General Alignment

Atlanta BeltLine Corridor Environmental Study – Scoping Meeting, August 2008
• 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

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>SUMMER 2008</th>
<th>Tier 1 NEPA Activities</th>
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<td>SUMMER 2008</td>
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- Notice of Intent
- Scoping
- Technical Studies
- DEIS Publication
- Public Hearing
- FEIS Publication
- Record of Decision

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<th>Anticipated NEPA Results</th>
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<td>Establish general transit and trails alignment along the 22-mile corridor; conceptual location of stations, trail connections and other facilities.</td>
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Issues to be Addressed in the Tier 1 EIS

**Tier 1 Analysis**
Address broad, overall corridor issues to define Right-of-Way needs:
- Transit and Trails Alignment
- Conceptual Design
- Mode Type (LRT, Streetcar)

**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: 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
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