



ATLANTA BELTLINE CORRIDOR ENVIRONMENTAL STUDY

PUBLIC AND COMMITTEE MEETINGS

November / December 2010

Prepared for:

**Metropolitan Atlanta Rapid Transit Authority
and
Atlanta BeltLine, Inc.**

Prepared by:

**AECOM/Jacobs Joint Venture
Atlanta, GA**

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1.0 MEETING SERIES

The purpose of this report is to summarize the feedback received during a series of meetings and presentations held in November and December 2010 as part of the Atlanta BeltLine Corridor Environmental Study. The focus of the Fall 2010 Workshop Series was to review changes to the alternatives previously presented to the public and project committees resulting from input, primarily of the northwest zone, from the FTA during a review of the Tier 1 Administrative Draft EIS. The meetings and presentations provided the project stakeholders, technical advisors, agency staff and the public with an update on the Study's overall progress including an updated set of transit and trail. These meetings provided an opportunity for the participants to provide their input on the Study's progress as part of the Tier 1 Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) being prepared for the project.

1.1 Events

The Fall 2010 Workshop Series of meetings included: Technical Advisory and Agency Committee Meeting, Stakeholder Advisory Committee Meeting and Northside Study Group and Public Meeting. More than seventy-two (72) individuals were involved in the outreach events.

1.1.1 Technical / Agency and Stakeholder Advisory Committee Meetings

The Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) and Agency staff participated in a meeting to review the progress in the Study and to review and comment on the updated set of transit and trail alternatives in a meeting held at the ABI offices on November 30, 2010. The TAC is composed of representatives of organizations and agencies that have a specific interest and/or responsibility in the Atlanta BeltLine Corridor or have shown special interest in the redevelopment of the corridor.

Later that day, the Stakeholder Advisory Committee (SAC) met at the MARTA Headquarters to review the progress in the Study and to review and comment on the updated set of transit and trail alternatives. The SAC was also asked to assist with promoting the upcoming Northside Study Group and Public Meeting using meeting flyers that were on-hand and transmitted to them electronically. The SAC is composed of representatives from a variety of area organizations, including MARTA's network of citizen and business organizations, faith-based organizations, community-based organizations and advocacy groups. The SAC provides input and comments on study findings, and plays a key role in generating participation from the public at large. The attendance included 20 members of the TAC/Agency group and 14 at the SAC meeting.

The first portion of each of the meetings provided an opportunity for the participants to view a series of display boards that described various transit and trail alignments. Following this was a presentation that described the environmental study process and an update on the set of transit and trail alternatives. After the presentation, the participants broke into smaller discussion groups to provide feedback on the alternatives. Each breakout group included a staff facilitator to lead the discussion and another to document the comments and suggestions offered by the group. Following the break-out session, the facilitator of each group presented a short summary regarding the key points raised by their group.

Appendix A provides additional details of these meetings.

1.1.2 Northside Study Group Public Meeting

A public meeting was held in the northwest zone of the Atlanta BeltLine Study Group area on December 6, 2010. The meeting was held in the northwest zone since this area's alternatives were changed because of the FTA review and alignments in other zones remained unchanged since the 2009 Public Workshops where the public commented. The meeting was promoted throughout the study area to involve the public; some of whom were previously involved in various BeltLine planning efforts through MARTA and Atlanta BeltLine Inc.'s (ABI's) 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. The content, format and structure of these meetings resembled the TAC/SAC meetings described in the previous section. Approximately 38 individuals attended this meeting.

Appendix A provides additional details of this meeting.

1.2 Comments and Issues Raised

Below is a consolidated list of comments and issues, by category, from the TAC/Agency, SAC and Northside Study Group and Public meetings. These comments will be used to inform and refine the selection of an alternative.

Implementation – Freight-Related Comments/Issues

1. Is there a timeline to working with CSX? Eventually their cost might become prohibitive.
2. 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.
3. CSX is envisioning an expansion of their operations.
4. NS currently has better supporting land uses; it is close to a potential ridership base at Georgia Tech.
5. How do you propose to mitigate Howell Junction? Freight rail pay-to-play mentality.
6. Is there a lease opportunity with freight until an alternative solution can be reached?
7. Can we use the argument of the desire to keep the transit with the trail to encourage the selection of one alignment (CSX) over the other (NS)?

Environmental Comments/Issues

1. What about noise?
2. What will be done regarding visual clutter with wires? What technology exists to mitigate? Poles and overhead wiring will be as lightweight as possible to minimize visual impacts. Size and design layout of the overhead wires can also be designed to minimize visual clutter.

Property-Related Comments/Issues

1. How much of one's backyard might be taken: 30, 60 or 70 feet?
2. Consider the trade-off of dealing with one property owner (CSX) versus numerous owners?
3. 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.
4. The area behind Houston's and the Colonial Homes complex is prime for development, but the floodplain makes it difficult.
5. 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?
6. Are air rights available for CSX?
7. Concern with costs of project versus the benefits; there needs to be greater land development opportunities.

Operations Comments/Issues

1. LRT versus Modern Streetcar.
2. It would still be possible to serve Piedmont Hospital via the Atlanta Streetcar while using the NS Alternative.
3. Relation to existing MARTA Service.
4. BeltLine stations are much smaller than MARTA stations.

Congestion Comments/Issues

1. Deering Road for on-street does not seem viable; existing heavy congestion.
2. If traffic is pushed from streets with in-street running for NS, it could add to heavy congestion on Collier Road.
3. How can we be sure that the people driving cars that are currently causing the congestion in the community would ever take the BeltLine?
4. Overall, the area needs better roadway connectivity to support transit.
5. The NS Alternative does not run along the current Tax Allocation District (TAD).
6. Piedmont Hospital is large traffic generator.

7. Group stated that proposed alternatives are valid.
8. Expressed need for clear criteria before selecting alternatives.
9. Change title from “Stations” to “Stops”.
10. NS alignments have areas that are not covered by TAD and may be a problem.
11. More information pertaining to LRT would aid in determining the feasibility of each alternative (costs, right-of-way, travel time, etc.).
12. The group expressed the need to connect to other transit services.
13. What level of parking is necessary for the stations?
14. Concerned about on-street operations along Ottley Drive, NE and in Atlantic Station including effects on traffic and parking.
15. Travel time should not be a measure for comparing LRT and SC modes; measures should include point-to-point convenience and frequency of service.
16. Station spacing should eventually be defined by existing land uses and future redevelopment areas.

Transit Alignment Comments/Issues

1. It is important to note that in-street running does not always exacerbate congestion.
2. Is there an option to run in street on a dedicated lane?
3. There is a lack of east/west connectivity.
4. The station near I-75 should be moved to the other side of the highway to reach more density.
5. CSX Alternatives are preferred for servicing Piedmont Hospital without the use of Collier Road.
6. Inside CSX is far preferred over the other Alternatives.
7. This community is unique to the BeltLine because they are accustomed to active freight running behind their homes and through their neighborhoods.
8. There is a distinct challenge in terms of logistics and space for Piedmont Hospital.
9. Access to high-density development nodes is crucial.
10. Is there a way to come up with a compromise of using partial Inside and partial Outside? Maybe even partial NS?
11. Can we get CSX and NS to run along the same lines?

12. Concerns with transit in mixed traffic/in-street operations.
13. Can LRT/SC be elevated?
14. Transit on Deering Road would change the character of the street from local to regional thoroughfare.
15. CSX alignments provide greater flexibility since they can use Howell Junction or Marietta Boulevard.
16. CSX alignments would access Westside Park, a major regional recreational destination; NS would not.
17. 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.
18. CSX alignments provide more ROW flexibility.
19. Preference for CSX alignments: they are faster, a shuttle could be implemented to Atlantic Station or other points south served by the NS alignment, the BeltLine concept was not originally conceived to be “on-street”; it should be in dedicated ROW.
20. The CSX alignments would bring transit further north on Peachtree.
21. Less development along the CSX corridor would seem to enable more design flexibility.
22. Proximity of stations should be relative to activity centers.
23. Concerns regarding the impact to Piedmont Hospital/Peachtree Hills.
24. Look for station locations that are closer to population – Norfolk Southern (NS) may serve more people, especially neighborhoods with more than one-car household's versus two-car households.
25. Best alignment would go from destination to destination.
26. May be more difficult to get affordable housing on NS alignment.
27. If the project is seeking federal funding, there needs to be a good mix of investment types.
28. Alignment choice should consider the role of place-making; the CSX alignment appears to be more of a place-making opportunity given that Atlantic Station is already a TAD-based place along NS.
29. Why have light rail on the NS line if there is the option to run it across the 17th Street Bridge. Prefer light rail alignment to connect Atlantic Station to Arts Center.

30. CSX is better than NS because there is already a potential project to make a transit connection between Atlantic Station area and Midtown.
31. CSX is better than NS because Atlantic Station is more readily accessible (i.e. pedestrian access, ADA) than Piedmont Hospital.
32. Marietta Blvd. has many development opportunities.
33. Costs are similar across the alternatives, but environmental impacts vary. There is more development along NS, but CSX has the potential to affect more single-family homes.
34. Travel times reliability may be better for the CSX alternatives since it relies less on in-street operations, which would tend to slow transit vehicles.
35. The amount of origin and destination trips between Piedmont Hospital and Atlantic Station were considered equitable.
36. The group recognized that there is a very constrained right-of-way.
37. The group agreed the proposed set of alternatives was viable alternatives.
38. Will the alignments interact with existing and proposed bike lanes during on-street operations?
39. Emphasized the benefit of alternatives that would provide a new crossing at Howell Junction.
40. Existing railroad line bisects land uses and access to new transit; negative attribute of being near freight line. This creates a barrier that could affect land use and development; it would be difficult to leverage redevelopment on the far side of the freight railroad. If transit is in street, transit/trails provide opportunity to access land uses on both sides of the alignment.
41. Land development opportunities should be a key factor in choosing an alignment.
42. CSX alternatives have the advantage of having transit and trail alignments together, hospital access and opportunities for future use of unused CSX capacity/space and spreads/disburses land – development more equitably.
43. The CSX alternatives enable expansion of the economic development area geographically to “new” areas, and are much closer to the BeltLine goal than NS. NS does not do this so well because it is closer to the existing development base.
44. The NS alternatives are more geared for streetcar operations and CSX is more geared to LRT.

45. The CSX and NS alignments could attract different types of riders because of the kind of development present; CSX may attract more workers, while NS may attract more people seeking entertainment destinations.
46. Group recognized that the proposed alternatives have advantages and disadvantages, but all are valid.
47. CSX alignment serves Piedmont Hospital and the Shepherd Center, the largest employment center along the BeltLine.
48. Piedmont Hospital station location should allow for ADA access to the hospital; the hospital station location decision should consider the best access for employees, patients and older people.
49. Train speeds along NS alignment may be slower in comparison to CSX alignment.
50. Station locations along NS alignment are closer to destinations in comparison to CSX alignment.
51. NS alignment is more visible from existing activity centers in comparison to CSX alignment.
52. NS alignment is more direct and is located in a business area; thus, it may be used more readily by those who are likely to use transit.
53. CSX alignment will improve east/west mobility for commuters.
54. In comparison to the NS alignment, a streetcar operating along 17th Street would provide better transit service to Atlantic Station.
55. Atlantic Station is already served by transit via the MARTA Arts Center Station and the Atlantic Station Shuttle.
56. CSX alignment is entirely within the BeltLine TAD boundary.
57. NS alignment is partially within the BeltLine TAD boundary.
58. NS alignment seems to have the least private property impacts.
59. CSX alignment is a more proactive “city shaping” approach to providing transit service.
60. NS alignment is a more reactive “city serving” approach to providing transit service.

Trail Alignment Comments/Issues

1. On-street trails are perceived to cause negative impacts.

NOTES from Comments/Issues:

--NS refers to Norfolk Southern Corporation

--CSX refers to CSX Corporation

1.3 Next Steps

Complete meeting summaries of the public and committee meetings (shown in the Appendix of this document) will inform refinement of the Alternative Evaluation technical process, selection of a recommended project alternative, and the completion of the Tier 1 Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS). Following review by the Federal Transit Administration, a Public Hearing will occur in the spring of 2011 to present the DEIS to the public.

APPENDIX

Appendix A – Meeting Notes

MARTA GENERAL PLANNING CONSULTANT SERVICES
ATLANTA BELTLINE CORRIDOR ENVIRONMENTAL STUDY

MEETING GROUP: TAC & Agency

WORK ORDER NO: #2008-07

PROJECT CODE: BEL

TASK NO: 7.9 – Phase 3 Public
Involvement and Agency Coordination

Meeting Group: Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) and Agency

Meeting Location: ABI, 86 Pryor Street SW, Suite 200, Atlanta, GA 30303

Meeting Date & Time: November 30, 2010; 11:30 pm – 1:30 pm

Attendance: Three (3) Breakout Groups – 20

The workshop kicked off with an Open House where staff was available to discuss the project. The following project boards were on display:

- Purpose of Tonight's Meeting
- Transit Alternatives
- Trail Alternatives
- Evaluation by Goal – Transit Alternatives
- Evaluation by Goal – Trail Alternatives
- BeltLine Transit and Trail Elements
- Intermodal Transit Connections – Regional Transit Vision

The display boards highlighted the alternatives evaluated and the findings. A PowerPoint presentation followed the Open House providing an overview and update on the status of the Atlanta BeltLine Corridor Environmental Study, including work accomplished since the last meeting and a review of updated alignments. The agenda included discussion of the following:

- Environmental study process and update
- Overview of the Fall 2009 Public Meeting
- Initial set of transit and trail alternatives considered in the Tier 1 Environmental Impact Statement (EIS)
- Updated set of transit and trail alternatives following FTA review of the Tier 1 Administrative Draft EIS
- Discussion of new alternatives in the northwest zone, and
- Next Steps

Following the PowerPoint presentation was the breakout period. 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. The discussion solicited comments pertaining to the following topics:

- Transit alternatives within the northwest zone
- Trail alternatives within the northwest zone

A summary of the group discussion follows.

Group Discussion Comments

Table 1

1. Proximity of stations should be relative to activity centers.
2. Concerns regarding the impact to Piedmont Hospital/Peachtree Hills.
3. Look for station locations that are closer to population – Norfolk Southern (NS) may serve more people, especially neighborhoods with more than one-car household's versus two-car households.
4. Best alignment would go from destination to destination.
5. May be more difficult to get affordable housing on NS alignment.
6. If the project is seeking federal funding, there needs to be a good mix of investment types.
7. Alignment choice should consider the role of place-making; the CSX alignment appears to be more of a place-making opportunity given that Atlantic Station is already a TAD-based place along NS.
8. Why have light rail on the NS line if there is the option to run it across the 17th Street Bridge? Prefer light rail alignment to connect Atlantic Station to Arts Center.
9. CSX is better than NS because there is already a potential project to make a transit connection between Atlantic Station area and Midtown.
10. CSX is better than NS because Atlantic Station is more readily accessible (i.e. pedestrian access, ADA) than Piedmont Hospital.
11. How to mitigate Howell Junction? Freight rail pay-to-play mentality?
12. Marietta Blvd has many development opportunities.
13. Is there a lease opportunity with freight until an alternative solution can be reached?
14. Costs are similar across the alternatives, but environmental impacts vary. There is more development along NS, but CSX has the potential to affect more single-family homes.
15. Can we use the argument of the desire to keep the transit with the trail to encourage the selection of one alignment (CSX) over the other (NS)?

Table 2

1. Potential impacts to historic resources were of concern. The need was expressed to adequately evaluate and provide strategies to mitigate potential impacts.
2. Travel times reliability may be better for the CSX alternatives since it relies less on in-street operations, which would tend to slow transit vehicles.
3. The amount of origin and destination trips between Piedmont Hospital and Atlantic Station were considered equitable.
4. More information pertaining to LRT would aid in determining the feasibility of each alternative (costs, right-of-way, travel time, etc.).
5. The group expressed the need to connect to other transit services.
6. What level of parking is necessary for the stations?
7. The group recognized that there is a very constrained right-of-way.
8. The group agreed the proposed set of alternatives was viable alternatives.
9. What type of trail user were the trails designed for, point-to-point travelers or casual users?
Response: No single user type was the basis for the trails design.
10. In taking the results of the TAC input to the public, it is important for the public to know that agencies like the SHPO are looking out for property owners' interests via federal, state and local regulations concerning potential impacts such as property acquisition and visual effects.

Table 3

1. Has the team started to coordinate with CSX and Norfolk Southern (NS)?
Response: Yes, there have been multiple meetings and more are planned for in the future.
2. Concerned about on-street operations along Ottley Drive, NE and in Atlantic Station including effects on traffic and parking.
3. What is being done about the potential noise near residential areas?
Response: “Noise” is a performance measure in the EIS. Team will follow all federal guidelines as it relates to mitigation, where necessary.
4. How will the alignments interact with existing and proposed bike lanes during on-street operations?
Response: This is to be determined; the team will look to other peer cities with similar operations.
5. What will be done regarding visual clutter with wires? What technology exists to mitigate?
Response: Poles and overhead wiring will be as lightweight as possible to minimize visual impacts. Size and design layout of the overhead wires can also be designed to minimize visual clutter.
6. What about the utility impact potential for the NS on street?
Response: There is no construction methodology set at this time, however, the project intention is to minimize all utility disruptions during construction and additionally, still be able to access or upgrade as needed when complete.
7. Personal example from Toronto: In-street operations of Toronto streetcars tend to modify auto-driver behavior in a positive manner, in that drivers must be more aware of pedestrians and must drive in a slower more deliberate manner. An in-street running facility also attracts riders by following routes people would otherwise drive.
8. Travel time should not be a measure for comparing LRT and SC modes; measures should include point-to-point convenience and frequency of service.

Following the breakout group discussions, each group reported on their discussions to other workshop attendees. After each group reported, the upcoming “next steps” in the study process were outlined. It was stated that the BeltLine could move forward even if it is outside of the railroad corridor and that both options are very viable. The next steps include preparing the DEIS for re-submittal to FTA and preparing for the upcoming public hearings in mid-February 2011. The public will be notified in advance of the hearing.

The participants were thanked for attending and the meeting was adjourned.

MARTA GENERAL PLANNING CONSULTANT SERVICES
ATLANTA BELTLINE CORRIDOR ENVIRONMENTAL STUDY

MEETING GROUP: SAC

WORK ORDER NO: #2008-07

PROJECT CODE: BEL

TASK NO: 7.9 – Phase 3 Public
Involvement and Agency Coordination

Meeting Group: Stakeholder Advisory Committee (SAC)

Meeting Location: MARTA, 2424 Piedmont Road, Atlanta, GA 30324

Meeting Date & Time: November 30, 2010; 6:00 pm – 8:00 pm

Attendance: Two (2) Breakout Groups – 14

The workshop kicked off with an Open House where staff was available to discuss the project. The following project boards were on display:

- Purpose of Tonight's Meeting
- Transit Alternatives
- Trail Alternatives
- Evaluation by Goal – Transit Alternatives
- Evaluation by Goal – Trail Alternatives
- BeltLine Transit and Trail Elements
- Intermodal Transit Connections – Regional Transit Vision

The display boards highlighted the alternatives evaluated and the findings. A PowerPoint presentation followed the Open House providing an overview and update on the status of the Atlanta BeltLine Corridor Environmental Study, including work accomplished since the last meeting and a review of updated alignments. The agenda included discussion of the following:

- Environmental study process and update
- Overview of the Fall 2009 Public Meeting
- Initial set of transit and trail alternatives considered in the Tier 1 Environmental Impact Statement (EIS)
- Updated set of transit and trail alternatives following FTA review of the Tier 1 Administrative Draft EIS
- Discussion of new alternatives in the northwest zone, and
- Next Steps

During the PowerPoint presentation, the following comments were made:

1. MARTA and ABI should request FTA to allow its initial comments on the Administrative Draft of the EIS to be put on the project website for public review.

Response: N. Conable indicated that the request would be investigated and that the issue will be discussed with J. Schneider.

2. Trails are not running along the Norfolk Southern (NFS) corridor.

Response: That is true and a very good observation.

3. The West End Trails are very pleasing to the physically challenged with regard to lighting, levels of trails for wheelchairs and greenery. The greenery does not obstruct the view. These were observations from the ribbon cutting ceremony for the West End Trails.

4. What assurance do we have that decisions that the Peachtree/Auburn Ave. Streetcar (SC) will not get preferential treatment over the BeltLine since the Downtown Business District pushed and got funding for the SC project although the BeltLine project had been in existence much longer?

Response: The City of Atlanta and MARTA are partners on both projects and want both projects to be successful. The interconnectivity issues will be met without preference to either.

5. Will the BeltLine transit be able to connect to the Peachtree/Auburn Ave. (SC)?

Response: This is a Tier 1 study and interconnectivity issues will not be addressed. However whatever technology is chosen for the Peachtree/Auburn Ave. (SC), it will be compatible with the BeltLine transit.

6. Did the study take into consideration the access for employees and flow of patients for Piedmont Hospital and Shepherd Center as well as elderly accessibility?

Response: Yes, we established eight goals/objectives from a technical perspective that included those factors. Ultimately, it is a trade-off analysis. Access for employees is a goal that has to be balanced against a host of other factors. The final analysis will show a trade-off that lead to the recommendation for the best alternative. That recommendation has to be approved by the Board and FTA before finalization.

Following the Power Point presentation was the breakout period. Attendees were divided into two groups, staffed with a facilitator and scribe, to engage in participatory discussions focusing on the findings of the alternative evaluation. The discussion solicited comments pertaining to the following topics:

- Transit alternatives within the northwest zone
- Trails alternatives within the northwest zone

A summary of the group discussion follows.

Group Discussion Comments

Table 1

1. Emphasized the benefit of alternatives that would provide a new crossing at Howell Junction.
2. Existing railroad line bisects land uses and access to new transit; negative attribute of being near freight line. This creates a barrier that could affect land use and development; it would be difficult to leverage redevelopment on the far side of the freight railroad. If transit is in street, transit/trails provide opportunity to access land uses on both sides of the alignment.
3. Concern with costs of project versus the benefits; there needs to be greater land development opportunities.
4. Land development opportunities should be a key factor in choosing an alignment.
5. On-street trails are perceived to cause impacts that are more negative.
6. CSX alternatives have advantage of:
 - o Having transit and trail alignments together
 - o Hospital access
 - o Opportunities for future use of unused CSX capacity/space
 - o Spreads/disburses land – development more equitably
7. The CSX alternatives enable expansion of the economic development area geographically to “new” areas, and are much closer to the BeltLine goal than NS. NS does not do this so well because it is closer to the existing development base.
8. The NS alternatives are more geared for streetcar operations and CSX is more geared to LRT.
9. The CSX and NS alignments could attract different types of riders because of the kind of development present; CSX may attract more workers, while NS may attract more people seeking entertainment destinations.
10. Group recognized that the proposed alternatives have advantages and disadvantages, but all are valid.

Table 2

1. CSX alignment serves Piedmont Hospital and the Shepherd Center, the largest employment center along the BeltLine.
2. Piedmont Hospital station location should allow for ADA access to the hospital; the hospital station location decision should consider the best access for employees, patients and older people.
3. Station spacing should eventually be defined by existing land uses and future redevelopment areas.
4. Train speeds along NS alignment may be slower in comparison to CSX alignment.
5. Station locations along NS alignment are closer to destinations in comparison to CSX alignment.
6. NS alignment is more visible from existing activity centers in comparison to CSX alignment.
7. NS alignment is more direct and is located in a business area; thus, it may be used more readily by those who are likely to use transit.
8. CSX alignment will improve east/west mobility for commuters.
9. In comparison to the NS alignment, a streetcar operating along 17th Street would provide better transit service to Atlantic Station.
10. Atlantic Station is already served by transit via the MARTA Arts Center Station and the Atlantic Station Shuttle.
11. CSX alignment is entirely within the BeltLine TAD boundary.
12. NS alignment is partially within the BeltLine TAD boundary.
13. NS alignment seems to have the least private property impacts.
14. CSX alignment is a more proactive “city shaping” approach to providing transit service.
15. NS alignment is a more reactive “city serving” approach to providing transit service.

Following the breakout group discussions, each group reported on their discussions to other workshop attendees. After each group reported, J. Dunning continued with the PowerPoint presentation that outlined the upcoming “next steps” in the study process. He further stated as shown the BeltLine could move forward even if it is outside of the railroad corridor and that both options are very viable. The next steps include preparing the DEIS for re-submittal to FTA and preparing for the upcoming public hearings in mid-February 2011. The public will be notified in advance of the hearing of the hearing.

J. Dunning thanked everyone for coming out in the inclement weather and wished everyone a safe and pleasant evening. The meeting was adjourned at 8:00 pm.

**MARTA GENERAL PLANNING CONSULTANT SERVICES
ATLANTA BELTLINE CORRIDOR ENVIRONMENTAL STUDY**

MEETING GROUP: NS Study Group Public Meeting

WORK ORDER NO: #2008-07

PROJECT CODE: BEL

TASK NO: 7.9 – Phase 3 Public
Involvement and Agency Coordination

Meeting Group: Northside Study Group Public Meeting

Meeting Location: Piedmont Hospital McRae Auditorium, 1984 Piedmont Road NW,
Atlanta, GA 30309

Meeting Date & Time: December 6, 2010; 6:00 pm – 8:00 pm

Attendance: Three (3) Breakout Groups – 38

The workshop kicked off with an Open House where staff was available to discuss the project. The following project boards were on display:

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- Transit Alternatives
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- Evaluation by Goal – Transit Alternatives
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- BeltLine Transit and Trail Elements
- Intermodal Transit Connections – Regional Transit Vision

The display boards highlighted the alternatives evaluated and the findings. A PowerPoint presentation followed the Open House providing an overview and update on the status of the Atlanta BeltLine Corridor Environmental Study, including work accomplished since the last meeting and a review of updated alignments. The agenda included discussion of the following:

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- Discussion of new alternatives in the northwest zone, and
- Next Steps

During the PowerPoint presentation, the following comments were made:

1. Are the options presented proposals?

Response: Yes, the options are proposals.

2. Will the transit alternative selected be outside of the railroad corridor?

Response: We do not know at this point. We do know that if the alternative selected is outside of the railroad corridor, property impacts increases. The property impacts apply to Piedmont Hospital, the community and possibly taking structures.

3. Is the railroad corridor alternative cheaper than the on-street alternative?

Response: We do not know at this point.

4. If the on-street transit alternative is selected, will the mode be light rail?

Response: Probably more streetcar since it will operate in mixed traffic; more like downtown trolley. In-street is slower than non in-street

Following the PowerPoint presentation was the breakout period. 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. The discussion solicited comments pertaining to the following topics:

- Transit alternatives within the northwest zone
- Trails alternatives within the northwest zone

A summary of the group discussion follows.

Group Discussion Comments

Table 1

1. The use of Deering Road for on street does not seem viable; existing heavy congestion.
2. If traffic is pushed from streets with in-street running for NS, it could add to heavy congestion on Collier Road.
3. Is there an option to run in street on a dedicated lane?
4. It is important to note that in-street running does not always exacerbate congestion.
5. Is there a timeline to working with CSX? Eventually their cost might become prohibitive.
6. 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.
7. How can we be sure that the people driving cars that are currently causing the congestion in the community would ever take the BeltLine?
8. There is a lack of east/west connectivity.
9. The station near I-75 should be moved to the other side of the highway to reach more density.
10. How much of someone's backyard might be taken? 30', 60', 70'?
11. Consider the trade-off of dealing with one property owner (CSX) versus numerous owners?
12. BeltLine stations are much smaller than MARTA stations.
13. CSX Alternatives are preferred for servicing Piedmont Hospital without the use of Collier Road.
14. Inside CSX is far preferred over the other Alternatives.
15. CSX is envisioning an expansion of their operations.
16. 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.
17. The area behind Houston's and the Colonial Homes complex is prime for development, but the floodplain makes it difficult.
18. The NS Alternative does not run along the current Tax Allocation District (TAD).
19. This community is unique to the BeltLine because they are accustomed to active freight running behind their homes and through their neighborhoods.

20. There is a distinct challenge in terms of logistics and space for Piedmont Hospital.
21. Access to high-density development nodes is crucial.
22. Is there a way to come up with a compromise of using partial Inside and partial Outside?
Maybe even partial NS?
23. Can we get CSX and NS to run along the same lines?
24. 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?
25. Are air rights available for CSX?
26. It would still be possible to serve Piedmont Hospital via the Atlanta Streetcar while using the
NS Alternative.

Table 2

1. Concerns with transit in mixed traffic/in-street operations.
2. Expressed need for clear criteria before selecting alternatives.
3. Can LRT/SC be elevated?
4. Piedmont Hospital is large traffic generator.
5. NS currently has better supporting land uses; it is close to a potential ridership base at Georgia Tech.
6. Transit on Deering Road would change the character of the street from local to regional thoroughfare.
7. Change title from “Stations” to “Stops”.
8. NS alignments have areas that are not covered by TAD and may be a problem.
9. CSX alignments provide greater flexibility since they can use Howell Junction or Marietta Boulevard.
10. CSX alignments would access Westside Park, a major regional recreational destination; NS would not.
11. 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.
12. CSX alignments provide more ROW flexibility.
13. Overall, the area needs better roadway connectivity to support transit.
14. Group stated that proposed alternatives are valid.

Table 3

1. Seems as though the outside alignment “hugs” the CSX ROW – on which side?
Response: The south side was used in the analysis; however, either side could potentially be used depending on the constraints.
2. How are you dealing with station access along CSX?
Response: It is not designed yet. Most stations are at intersections. Possibly use pedestrian bridges or tunnels to get around the freight right-of-way.
3. Preference for CSX alignments discussed:
 - They are faster
 - A shuttle could be implemented to Atlantic Station or other points south served by the NS alignment
 - The BeltLine concept was not originally conceived to be “on-street”; it should be in dedicated ROW
 - The CSX alignments would bring transit further north on Peachtree
 - Less development along the CSX corridor would seem to enable more design flexibility
4. What about noise? Several participants discussed hearing existing freight “screeching” around corners.
Response: A detailed noise study will be conducted at Tier 2; Tier 1 consists of a preliminary analysis. The Streetcar/Light Rail technology now exists to dampen noise, which is not used in freight rail.
5. Why does the alignment have to be at-grade as it crosses Peachtree? Why not under? Was this considered?
Response: There is not enough room to fit two tracks within existing ROW.
6. 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.
7. When will the decision be made regarding CSX or NS?
Response: Most likely next summer when the priorities are set regarding each of the zones or areas. Funding must be in place.
8. What about re-development?
Response: 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).
9. Will you change the TAD boundaries if the NS alignment is selected?
Response: Atlantic Station as it has its own TAD that cannot be changed as part of the BeltLine project. However, it is possible, although difficult, to modify the TAD in other areas. TAD dollars cannot be used on non-TAD portions of the alignments.
10. Which alignment decision would help with the trail development?
Response: Trails are essentially independent of the rail decision.

Following the breakout group discussions, each group reported on their discussions to other workshop attendees. After each group reported, the upcoming “next steps” in the study process were outlined. It was stated that the BeltLine could move forward even if it is outside of the railroad corridor and that both options are very viable. The next steps include preparing the DEIS for re-submittal to FTA and preparing for the upcoming public hearings in mid-February 2011. The public will be notified in advance of the hearing.

The participants were thanked for attending and the meeting was adjourned.