Atlanta BeltLine Corridor Environmental Study

Stakeholder Advisory Committee

Kick-Off Meeting

July 22, 2008
Overview

- Project Overview
  - Objectives
  - Milestones
  - Why GEPA and NEPA?

- Environmental Processes
  - NEPA
  - GEPA

- Northeast Quadrant
  - Existing Conditions
  - Feasibility Assessment
Project Objectives

- Complete environmental review under GEPA for Northeast Quadrant
- Identify right-of-way requirements for the Northeast Quadrant
- Complete Tier 1 EIS under NEPA to serve as the basis for future ROW acquisition in the entire corridor
Project Milestones

- **GEPA Process for Northeast Quadrant**
  - Publication of the GEPA EER and beginning of public comment period is anticipated in January 2009;
  - 45-Day public comment period for the GEPA EER is anticipated to end March 2009;
  - Public Hearing for the GEPA EER is anticipated in March 2009;
  - Publication of the GEPA Notice of Decision is anticipated in April 2009;

- **Tier 1 NEPA Process**
  - NOI and Scoping Meetings are anticipated Summer 2008;
  - Publication of the Tier 1 DEIS and beginning of public comment period is anticipated in Fall 2009;
  - Public Hearing for the Tier 1 DEIS is anticipated in Fall 2009;
  - Publication of the Tier 1 FEIS is anticipated in Spring 2010;
  - Publication of the Record of Decision is anticipated in Spring 2010.
Why GEPA and NEPA?

- Need to identify ROW in Northeast Quadrant by December 31, 2008
- Avoid violation of NEPA by segmenting the project
- Allow consideration of cumulative effects of impacts
- Streamline project management and avoid duplicative costs
- Efficiently manage work order quality and costs
- Avoid inefficiencies in schedule, budget and environmental review costs
Environmental Processes

- **Goal of Environmental Process:** To determine ROW needs, alignment location, and choose rail technology

- **Atlanta BeltLine** is both a federal and state action in terms of potential funding sources
  - NEPA – federal environmental process
  - GEPA – state environmental process
  - By following both the federal and state processes funding options remain open

- **MARTA** is project sponsor, in cooperation with Atlanta BeltLine, Inc (ABI)
NEPA Process, 2-Tiered Approach

- Federal environmental process for 22-mile corridor, transit and trails

**Tier 1 Analysis**
Address broad, overall corridor issues such as:
- General Location
- Alignment
- Mode Type

**Tier 2 Analysis**
Address:
- Site Specific Impacts
- Cost and Mitigation Measures
- Detailed Analysis
NEPA Tier 1 EIS – Tasks and Schedule

**Tier 1 NEPA Activities**
- Notice of Intent
- Scoping
- Technical Studies
- DEIS Publication
- Public Hearing
- FEIS Publication
- Record of Decision

**Anticipated NEPA Results**
- Establish general transit and trails alignment along the 22-mile corridor; conceptual location of stations, trail connections and other facilities.

**NEPA Activities Spring 2010**
NEPA - Notice of Intent (NOI)

- Initiates the Tier 1 NEPA EIS Process
- Invites participation of agencies and public
- Identifies Scoping Meeting dates and locations
- Anticipated publication date by FTA in Federal Register: July 22, 2008
NEPA - Scoping Meetings

- A federally mandated process for identifying issues related to the project
- Opportunity for Cooperating and Participating agency and public comment on:
  - Purpose and need
  - Range of alternatives
- Scoping Booklet intended to:
  - Inform agencies and public about the project
  - Provide Scoping and NEPA process schedules
  - Identify opportunities for agency and public input
- Current schedule
  - Public Scoping Meetings: August 19 and 21, 2008
  - Public and agency involvement continues through NEPA process
GEPA Process in Northeast Quadrant

- GEPA –
  - Lead state agency – EPD
  - Project sponsor - ABI

- Focus on Northeast Quadrant
  - Detailed impact assessment via Environmental Effects Report (EER)
GEPA Process (continued)

Schedule

- Publish EER: January 2009
- Public comment period: January 2009 – March 2009
- Public hearing: March 2009
- Notice of Decision: April 2009
Northeast Quadrant Study Area
Existing Conditions Report

- Preliminary Screening
- Contents
  - Socio-economic Conditions
  - Natural Environmental Conditions
  - Transportation Conditions
  - Bicycle and Pedestrian Trails Conditions
  - Related Plans and Efforts
- Summarizes Information to be Used for:
  - Feasibility Assessment
  - Environmental Impact Analysis
  - Conceptual Design of the Project
Feasibility Assessment

- Fatal Flaw Analysis
- Refine Alignment Options
- Identify Physical and Environmental Constraints
- Initiate Conceptual Design Process
- Focus on Minimum Standards
Feasibility Assessment
Refined Alignments

- Maximize the Efficient Use of Available ROW
- Minimize Potential for Environmental Impacts
- Use Existing Transportation Facilities Where Possible
- Facilitate Intermodal Connections

Source: DMJM Harris, Inc.
Feasibility Assessment
Minimum Typical Cross-sections: Exclusive Right-of-Way

Rail Transit and Multi-Use Trail Between Stations - 50’ Minimum

At Station with Center Platform - 65’ Minimum

At Station with Side Platforms - 75’ Minimum
Feasibility Assessment
Minimum Typical Cross-sections: Transit in Mixed Traffic and Trail along Existing Street

Rail Transit in Four Lane Street- 68’ Minimum

Rail Transit in Two Lane Street- 44’ Minimum

Rail Transit in Three Lane Street- 56’ Minimum

Trail Along Two Lane Street- 47’ Minimum
Feasibility Assessment
Right-of-Way Availability

- Unused Railroad ROW Exceeds 75’ North of Freedom Pkwy

- South of Freedom Pkwy ROW is Only 65’to 75’- may require Center Platform Stations

- Mixed Traffic on DeKalb Avenue, Armour Dr, Mayson St, Peachtree Hills Ave, Garson Dr., and Lindbergh Dr.
Feasibility Assessment
Physical Constraints

- Narrow Bridges and Underpasses
- Narrow ROW
- Potential Property Acquisitions North of I-85
- Creek and Stream Crossings
Feasibility Assessment
Environmental Concerns

- Water Resources and Floodplains
- Hazardous Material Sites
- Cultural Resources
- Environmental Justice
Feasibility Assessment

Conclusions

- None of the constraints rise to the level of fatal flaw

- Mixed Traffic operations likely required for some segments north of I-85 and along DeKalb Ave.

- New maintenance and storage facility will be necessary and may require property acquisitions and business displacements
NEPA/GEPA – Opportunities for Participation

- Scoping Process: Summer 2008
- Public Hearing on EER: Spring 2009
- Public Hearing on Tier 1 Draft EIS: Fall 2009
- FEIS publication: Spring 2010
- On-going Public Involvement Plan
  - Technical Advisory Committee
  - Stakeholder Advisory Committee
  - Target Audience Briefings
  - Progress Presentations
  - Interface via website, hotline, newsletters, Technical Findings Updates, Public Comment Forms and other media
Stakeholder Advisory Committee (SAC)

- Comprised of organizations and individuals having specific expertise or interest
- Responsibilities
  - Review and comment on study findings
  - Generate public participation in NEPA and GEPA processes
- Future SAC meetings will be scheduled around key project milestones
Next Steps - Process

- **NEPA**
  - Publish NOI and Scoping Booklet
  - Invite Cooperating and Participating agencies
  - Hold Scoping meetings
  - Continue data collection and analysis

- **GEPA**
  - Develop EER
Next Steps – SAC

- Visit the website frequently for latest information about the study
- Invite a speaker to brief your organization
- Provide names and contact information of organizations that we need to brief
- Plan to participate in Scoping Meetings
- Encourage public participation in NEPA Scoping Meetings through your newsletters, e-newsletters, email contact lists, etc.