Atlanta BeltLine Corridor Environmental Study

Technical Advisory Committee/Agency Coordination

Kick-Off Meeting

July 17, 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**
  - 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
Agency Participation

- NEPA –
  - Lead agency – FTA
  - Project sponsor - MARTA
  - Cooperating and Participating agency invitations to be sent shortly
    - Please respond promptly
Technical Advisory Committee (TAC)

- Comprised of organizations and agencies having specific expertise or interest

- Responsibilities
  - Input on range of alternatives
  - Input on evaluation methodologies
  - Encourage public participation in NEPA and GEPA processes

- Future TAC meetings will be scheduled around key project milestones
NEPA – Opportunities for Participation

- Scoping Process
- Public Hearing on Tier 1 Draft EIS: Fall 2009
- FEIS publication: Spring 2010
- On-going Public Involvement Plan
  - Technical Advisory Committee (TAC)
  - Stakeholder Advisory Committee
  - Target Audience Briefings
  - Progress Presentations
  - Interface via website, hotline, newsletters, Technical Findings Updates, Public Comment Forms and other media
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
  - Agency Scoping Meetings: August 12 and 22, 2008
  - 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
Existing Conditions Report
Socio-economic Conditions

- Population in study area is 21,500
- Employment in study area is 21,200
- Environmental Justice Populations
  - 12% are Low Income
  - 33% are Minorities
  - 14% are from Zero car Households
Existing Conditions Report
Socio-economic Conditions

- 19 Neighborhoods
- 10 Parks
- 11 Community Facilities
  - 4 Churches
  - 1 Government Building
  - 3 Fire Stations
  - 2 Police Stations
  - 1 School
- 8 Archaeological Sites, 7 Historic Resources/Districts, and 5 Historic Buildings
- 8 Proposed Developments
Existing Conditions Report
Natural Environmental Conditions

- 3 Wetland Areas
  - Piedmont Park Area
  - Montgomery Ferry Rd Area
  - South of Peachtree Creek

- 5 Floodplain Areas
  - Peachtree Creek
  - Clear Creek
  - Piedmont Park Area
  - Ansley Mall Area
  - Montgomery Ferry

- Ten Water Bodies
- 79 Hazardous Material Sites

Sources: City of Atlanta-Bureau of Planning
Atlanta Regional Commission
Source: US Environmental Protection Agency
Existing Conditions Report
Transportation Conditions

- Roadway System
  - Functional Class
  - 2010 and 2030 Traffic Volumes
  - 2010 and 2030 Volume to Capacity Ratios

- Transit System
  - Two MARTA Rail Stations
  - 21 MARTA Bus Routes
  - 1 GRTA Express Bus Route
  - Ridership by Route
  - Service Miles and Hours by Route
Existing Conditions Report
Pedestrian and Bicycle Conditions

- On-Street Bicycle Facilities
  - Located Along Many Collector Streets
  - Serve 7 of 12 Station Sites

- Multi Use Trails
  - Existing Trail Along Freedom Parkway
  - Proposed BeltLine Multi-Use Trail
  - Proposed Feeder Trails
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
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

Source: DMJM Harris, Inc.
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
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 – TAC and Agencies

- Agencies
  - Please respond to Cooperating and Participating agency invitations for NEPA

- Agencies and TAC
  - Please provide input/comment to Purpose and Need, and Range of Alternatives

- TAC
  - Encourage public participation in NEPA Scoping meetings
Existing MARTA System
MARTA + Beltline + Clifton Corridor

Legend
- Clifton Corridor
- Beltline
- Existing MARTA
- Existing Stations
- Expressways
- Parks

Potential Transfer Points

MARTA + Ashby Station

MARTA + West End Station

MARTA + Lindbergh Station

MARTA + Inman Park Station
MARTA + Beltline + Clifton Corridor + Streetcar + I-20 East

Legend
- I-20 East
- Streetcar
- Clifton Corridor
- Beltline
- Existing MARTA
- Existing Stations
- Expressways
- Parks

Potential Transfer Points