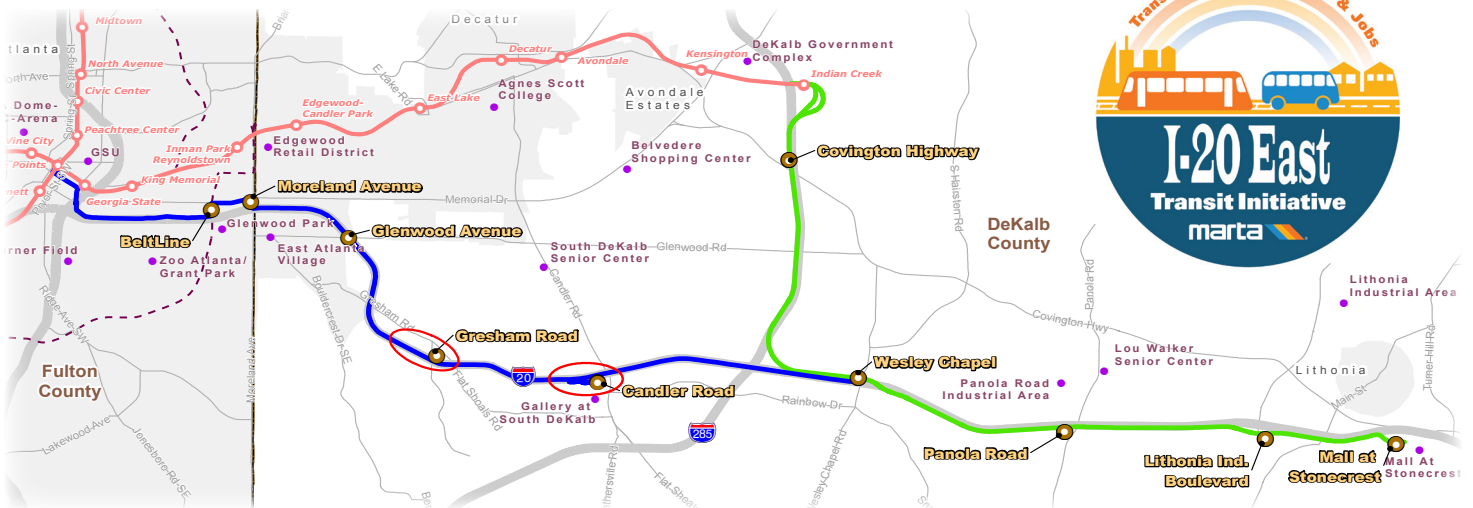




I-20 East Transit Initiative Scoping Information Packet



August 2012
Federal Transit Administration
Metropolitan Atlanta Rapid Transit Authority





List of Acronyms

AA – Alternatives Analysis

BRT – Bus Rapid Transit

CFR – Code of Federal Regulations

DCA – Detailed Corridor Analysis

DEIS – Draft Environmental Impact Statement

DNR – Department of Natural Resources

EA – Environmental Assessment

EIS - Environmental Impact Statement

FEIS – Final Environmental Impact Statement

FONSI - Finding of No Significant Impact

FTA – Federal Transit Administration

GDOT - Georgia Department of Transportation

GRTA - Georgia Regional Transit Authority

HOT - High Occupancy Toll

HOV - High Occupancy Vehicle

HPD - Historic Preservation Division

HRT – Heavy Rail Transit

LOS – Level of Service

LPA - Locally Preferred Alternative

MARTA – Metropolitan Atlanta Rapid Transit Authority

NEPA - National Environmental Policy Act of 1969

NOI – Notice of Intent

PE – Preliminary Engineering

ROD – Record of Decision

TPB – Transit Planning Board

TSM – Transportation System Management

TSP - Transit Signal Priority

USDOT - United States Department of Transportation

USFWS - United States Fish and Wildlife Service

VMT – Vehicle Miles Travelled



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1.0 WHAT IS THE I-20 EAST TRANSIT INITIATIVE?

The Metropolitan Atlanta Rapid Transit Authority (MARTA), in close coordination with DeKalb County, the City of Atlanta, and in cooperation with the Federal Transit Administration (FTA), is undertaking I-20 East Transit Initiative. This project seeks to identify transit investments that would improve east-west mobility and accessibility to jobs and housing within the corridor, provide convenient and efficient transit service to accommodate the increasing transit demands within the corridor, and support corridor economic development and revitalization. The initiative will also identify and summarize the transportation and environmental impacts associated with the implementation of new east-west transit service from downtown Atlanta to the Mall at Stonecrest, in eastern DeKalb County.

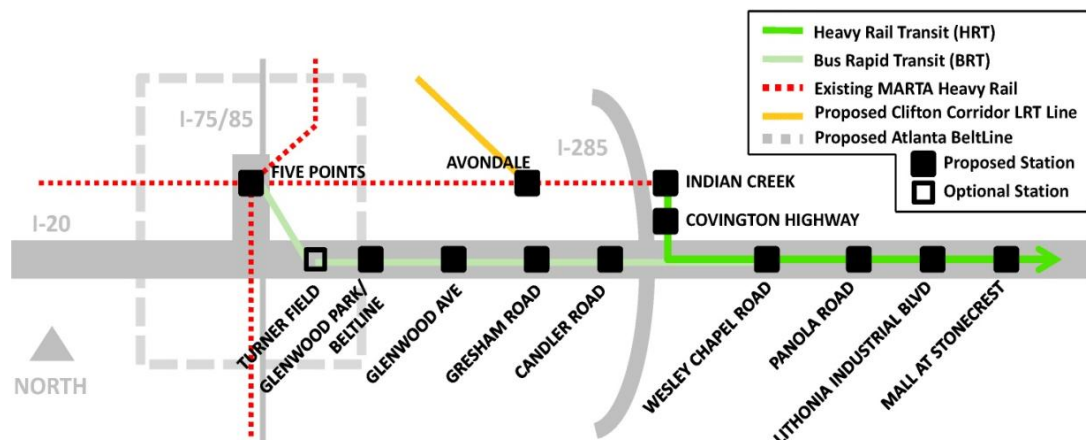
The initiative is organized in two study phases, the first being a Detailed Corridor Analysis (DCA), which was completed in April 2012; and the second, an environmental review to satisfy the requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA). The two-year long DCA process evaluated a variety of transit alignment and technology alternatives and concluded in the adoption of the most appropriate alternative, referred to as the Locally Preferred Alternative (LPA). The second phase will consist of the preparation of environmental documents in accordance with NEPA, which requires the full consideration of environmental effects for any project that receives federal funding.

1.1 What is the Adopted LPA?

The adopted LPA is made up of two transit components to serve the I-20 East Corridor. A heavy rail transit (HRT) component would extend the existing MARTA east-west rail line 12 miles from the Indian Creek Station, south parallel to I-285, then east parallel to I-20 to the Mall at Stonecrest in eastern DeKalb County. Additionally, the LPA would include new bus rapid transit (BRT) service along I-20 between downtown Atlanta and a new station at Wesley Chapel Road, east of I-285 in DeKalb County.

The HRT service would include new stations at Covington Highway, Wesley Chapel Road, Panola Road, Lithonia Industrial Boulevard, and the Mall at Stonecrest. The HRT alignment would generally be located adjacent to the interstate and would utilize Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) right-of-way wherever possible. The adopted LPA is shown in **Figure 1**.

Figure 1: The Adopted LPA



The proposed BRT service would operate between downtown Atlanta and Wesley Chapel Road, operating in HOV lanes on I-20 as much as possible and utilizing surface streets within downtown Atlanta. The BRT service would be a fixed-route, branded, high frequency, all day service utilizing transit stations rather than typical bus stops.

From east to west, the BRT service would start at the proposed Wesley Chapel Road HRT/BRT station and utilize HOV lanes and transit/HOV interchanges to access stations at Candler Road and Gresham Road. It would then serve stations at Glenwood Avenue, Glenwood Park/Atlanta BeltLine, with an optional station at Turner Field, before terminating at the MARTA Five Points Station in downtown Atlanta. The service would utilize arterial BRT enhancements such as Transit Signal Priority (TSP) and queue jumper lanes to maximize the efficiency of surface street operations where necessary.

1.2 What is the Refined LPA?

Based on discussions with local governments, refinements to the BRT component of the LPA have been made since its adoption. The optional station at Turner Field has been retained for potential game-day service. In addition to the Glenwood Park/BeltLine station, the service will include a new BRT station at Moreland Avenue. Since the proposed BRT service would require no alignment change, this station was added to improve transit access. Because it represents the most recent and best-developed understanding of the LPA, the refined LPA will be utilized in the environmental studies phase of the I-20 East Transit Initiative. The refined LPA is presented in **Figures 2 and 3**.

Figure 2: The Refined LPA

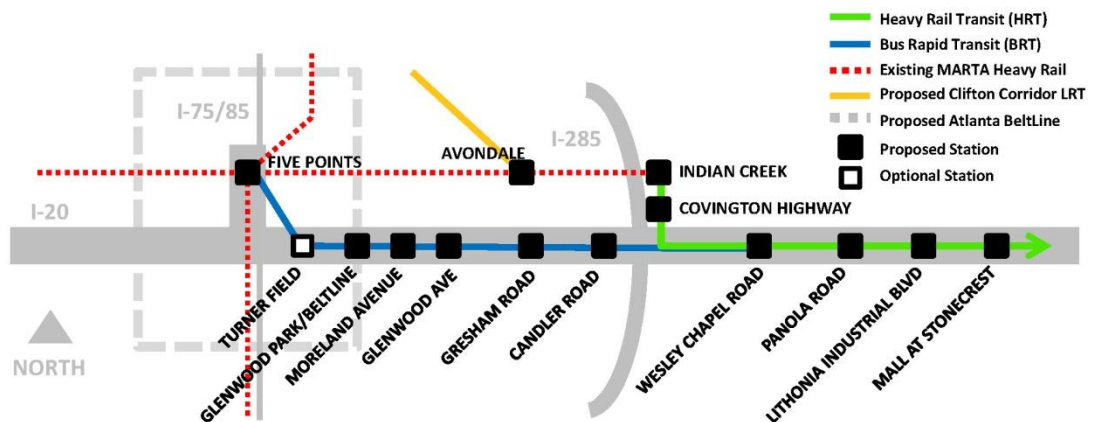
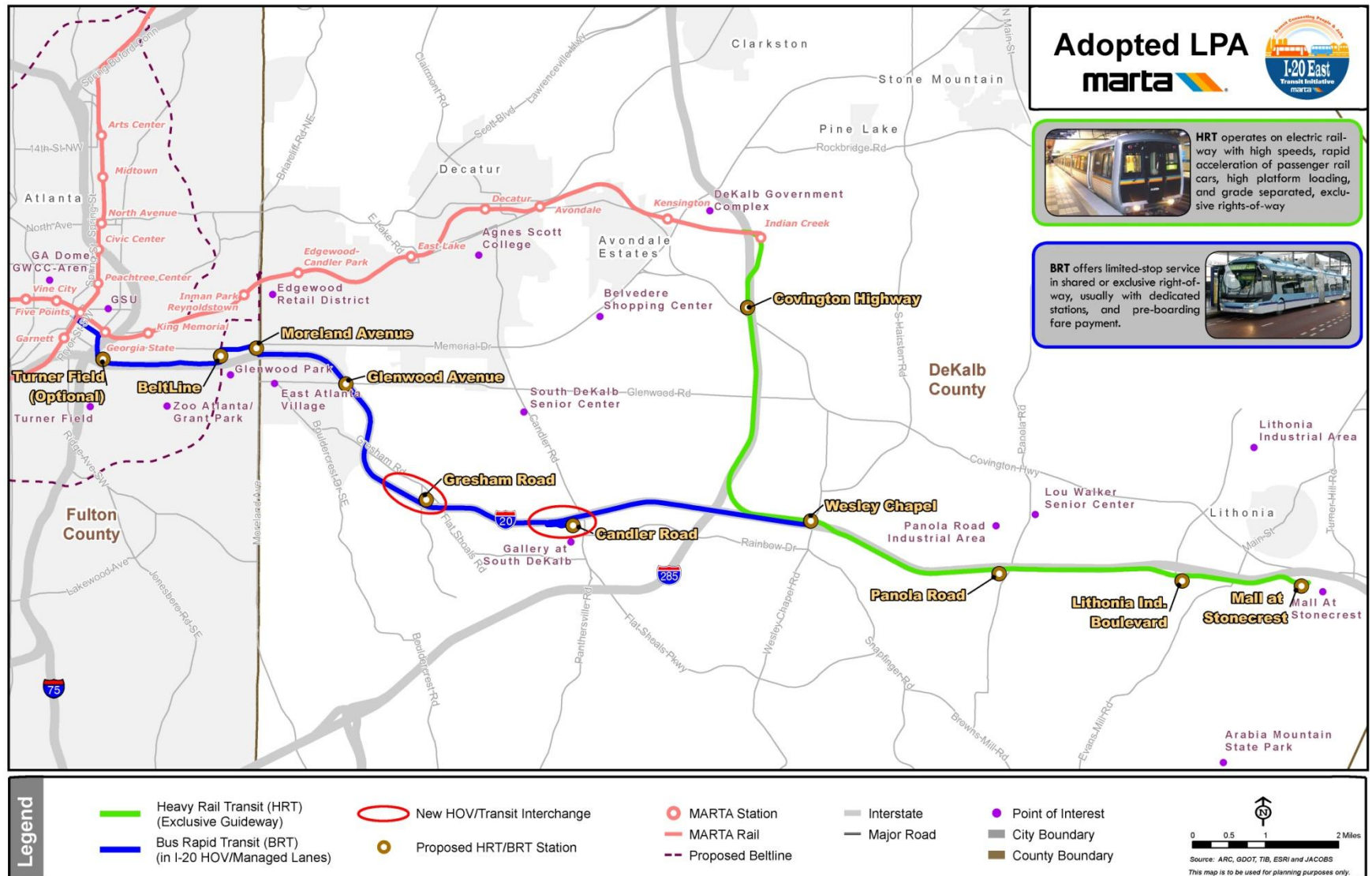


Figure 3: Map of the Refined LPA



What is HRT?

HRT is rapid, fixed-rail transit that operates in its own, grade-separated right-of-way powered by an electric third rail. HRT can serve areas or periods of high ridership, as it operates in trains of approximately six cars, with up to 60-120 people per car. Because HRT operates in its own right-of-way, away from vehicular traffic, it can avoid unnecessary stopping or slowing for fast and reliable travel times between locations. HRT trains operate at 30 to 70 mph. MARTA's existing rail service is HRT, as is that of Washington DC's Metro system. HRT allows for electronic fare collection and seamless entry and egress at planned station areas. HRT offers high capacity, high speed transit service but also has high implementation costs.

Example of HRT Station and Vehicle



Source: MARTA

What is BRT?

BRT utilizes gas or diesel buses to offer transit service at dedicated stops or stations, on fixed routes, to mimic rail service without the high capital cost of rail. BRT buses can have special characteristics, such as on-street fare collection, all-day service, seamless platform-level boarding, and special branding. BRT service can operate in its own dedicated guideway, or in restricted (High Occupancy Vehicle/High Occupancy Toll (HOV, HOT)) lanes, in order to avoid the slowing caused by operating in vehicular traffic. However, where it is necessary, BRT buses can be routed on surface streets. BRT currently operates in Los Angeles, Boston, and Cleveland. While BRT is a lower capacity transit service than HRT, it can be far less expensive to implement. In some cases, BRT can be converted to LRT service at a later date.

Example of BRT Station and Vehicle



Source: Metrojacksonville.com

1.3 What is the Purpose of the I-20 East Project?

The purpose of the I-20 East Transit Initiative is to identify transit investments that enhance east-west mobility and improve accessibility to residential areas and employment centers within the corridor. The existing and future roadway congestion in the I-20 East Corridor will have an increasingly detrimental effect on automobile and bus transit travel in the corridor. The proposed transit investments are intended to improve travel times and travel reliability by providing a rapid transit service for commuters traveling to and from central Atlanta.

1.4 Why are These Improvements Needed?

Based on the evaluation of existing and projected conditions, in conjunction with stakeholder input, the major challenges in the I-20 East Corridor that this project would address are:

- **Traffic congestion causes delay and slow travel times** – Over the past few decades, the I-20 East Corridor has experienced substantial growth, which is projected to continue, with a 26 percent increase in population and a 46 percent growth in employment between 2005 and 2030. This rapid growth has driven a steady increase in traffic volumes and congestion.



This congestion has resulted in a continued degradation of travel within the corridor and is expected to worsen in the future. For example, the projected 64 percent increase in volumes on I-20 by 2030 is anticipated to increase PM peak hour automobile travel times by 16 minutes, from the existing 50 minutes to 66 minutes.

- **Inadequate access to downtown and other employment centers** – Due to increasing congestion of study area roadways, the transportation system within this corridor has been unable to keep pace with the high demands placed on it by the rapid growth. By 2030, the Level of Service (LOS)¹ on most segments of I-20 is projected to be unacceptable (LOS E or F). Analysis reveals that downtown Atlanta represents the largest single destination for all trips within the corridor. By 2030, access to downtown Atlanta for much of the eastern portion of the study area will be constrained, with travel times to and from downtown Atlanta exceeding one hour.

¹LOS is a qualitative measure of traffic flow that describes operating conditions on a roadway using six levels of service defined by Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) in the Highway Capacity Manual (HCM). LOS is described by letter designations from A to F, with LOS A representing free flow traffic conditions and LOS F representing heavily congested stop and go conditions. A facility may operate at a range of LOS depending upon time of day, day of week or period of the year. As such, the LOS is generally regarded as a standard measure for congestion.

- **Limited east-west roadways; I-20 is the only real choice** – Commuters traveling the I-20 East Corridor have few options for efficient east-west travel. I-20 is the only viable choice for travel of any distance. The lack of effective travel options continues to burden the system, particularly those traveling to and from Downtown Atlanta and other major employment centers. Without alternative east-west travel options, increasing congestion on I-20 will serve to further limit mobility in the corridor.

- **Express buses operate in normal traffic** – The existing express bus services in the corridor are subject to the same congestion and delay as automobile commuters. Despite the lack of travel time benefit, Georgia Regional Transportation Authority (GRTA) Xpress service ridership has increased by 300 percent within the I-20 East Corridor from 2006 to 2009, further demonstrating the need for additional transit investment in the corridor.



- **Limited planned transportation projects in corridor to accommodate growth** – The lack of viable east-west travel options in the corridor is exacerbated by a long range transportation plan that contains very few projects to address this need. There are no planned projects to provide additional general use lanes or managed lanes to I-20 by 2030. With no planned improvements to I-20 or parallel facilities, east-west mobility in this growing study area will continue to degrade.
- **Insufficient transit service for a growing demand** – Analysis results revealed that transit trips in the corridor are expected to increase at a much higher rate (77 percent) than that of total trips (36 percent). With most of the study area served only by local and express bus service, the need exists for additional investment in transit for the study area.

- **Areas of the corridor are in need of revitalization** – There are many parcels, neighborhoods and communities along the I-20 East Corridor that are vacant, blighted, and underutilized. These areas provide excellent opportunities for redevelopment.



- **Limited transportation options for traditionally underserved populations** – There are a large number of low-income, minority, elderly, and transit dependent populations along the corridor. These traditionally underserved populations have limited access to premium transit.



2.0 PLANNING BACKGROUND

Over the past decade, multiple planning studies have been undertaken to address the transportation issues facing the I-20 East Corridor. These studies have consistently indicated that a high capacity transit service, operating predominately in an exclusive right-of-way, is needed to accommodate the increasing transit demands of this corridor. The most recent of these studies was the I-20 East Corridor Transit Initiative's DCA, which was completed in spring 2012. **Figure 9** on page 8 presents a timeline of previous studies, which include, but are not limited to the following:

I-20 East Transit Initiative DCA (2012)

The I-20 East Transit Initiative DCA, begun in 2010, sought to identify transit investments that would improve east-west mobility and accessibility to jobs and housing within the I-20 East Corridor, provide convenient and efficient transit service to accommodate the increasing transit demands within the corridor, and support corridor economic development and revitalization. The DCA was conceived as an update of the Alternatives Analysis (AA), which was completed in 2006. It considered the various alignments, or routes, between downtown Atlanta and the Mall at Stonecrest, as well as the transit modes that could be utilized by a major transit improvement in the corridor. The results of this study, the LPA, are the subject of the subsequent environmental review process.

Transit Planning Board Concept 3 (August 2008)

Concept 3, the Regional Vision for Transit in Atlanta, envisions transit in the I-20 East Corridor as high capacity rail service from downtown to South DeKalb. The I-20 Transit Initiative includes an assessment of transit technologies, alignment options, and linkages to the overall regional transit system conceived as part of Concept 3.

GDOT I-20 East Managed Lanes Corridor Study (2006 - Ongoing)

GDOT is completing an EIS for the addition of HOV and/or managed lanes along approximately eight miles of I-20 East from I-285 to Evans Mill Road. As part of the EIS, a Historic Resources Survey Report was approved in 2006, and an Ecology Report was approved in 2007. The need and purpose for the EIS is under development, and will be based on the regional desire for an HOV system, traffic volumes, level of service and travel delays. The overlap between the study areas of the GDOT managed lanes study and this environmental review process creates the opportunity for agency coordination, the creation of a shared vision for transportation improvement, and cost savings.

I-20 East Modified Locally Preferred Alternative Report (December 2006)

This report documented refinements to the initial I-20 East LPA, including a station movement, which were never formally adopted by the MARTA Board. The report also revised capital cost estimates and project phasing recommendations.

I-20 East Corridor Alternatives Analysis (December 2004)

This DCA was initiated by MARTA as a follow-up to its 2002 Transit Feasibility Study. The study identified and compared the costs, benefits, and impacts of a range of transit guideway capital investments for the corridor. This study led to the MARTA Board of Directors approval of BRT as the LPA.



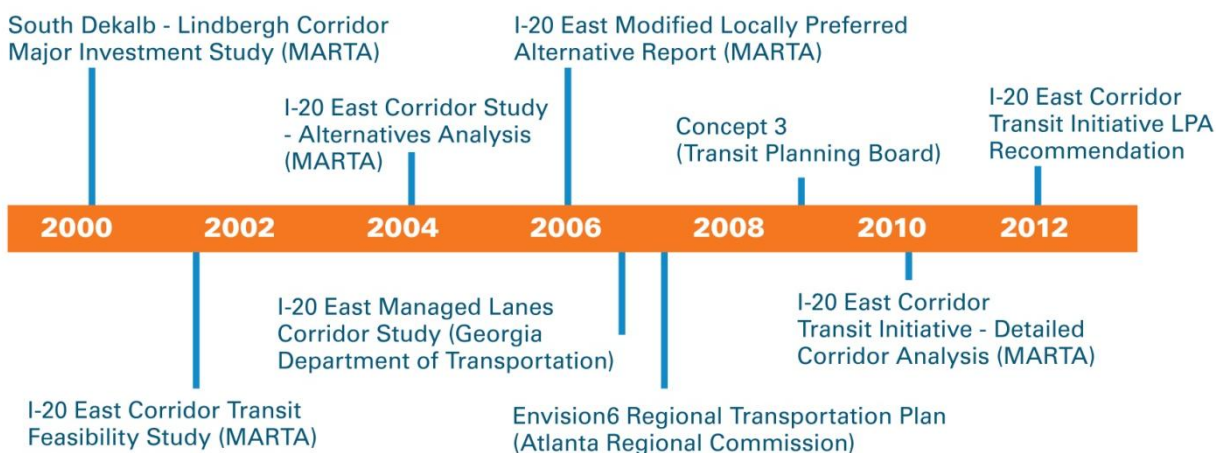
I-20 East Corridor Transit Feasibility Study (November 2002)

The objective of the study was to build consensus toward needed transit investments and identification of supporting transportation and land use strategies for the I-20 East Corridor.

South DeKalb – Lindbergh Corridor Major Investment Study (June 2000)

The study developed information about the benefits, costs, and consequences of alternative transit investment in the South DeKalb-Lindbergh corridor. However, strong community opposition from mature neighborhoods such as Druid Hills and East Lake led to a decision by MARTA to focus on the I-20 East Corridor for transit investment.

Figure 9: Timeline of Previous Studies



3.0 WHAT ENVIRONMENTAL STUDIES WILL BE PREPARED?

NEPA requires investments receiving federal funding to fully consider the natural, cultural, physical, and social impacts of a project or action. While the HRT and BRT components of the LPA both address the need for improved mobility and transit service in the I-20 East Corridor, they represent significantly different transit investments and modes with varying levels of impact. For this reason, the HRT extension will be evaluated as the Build Alternative in an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) and the BRT service will be evaluated as the Build Alternative in an Environmental Assessment (EA). However, since the adopted LPA is a combination of both HRT and BRT, the EIS and EA will be undertaken concurrently with all public outreach presenting information and analysis for both.

3.1 What is an EIS?

An Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) is the FTA required level of NEPA documentation for the new construction or extension of fixed rail transit facilities (e.g. heavy rail, light rail, commuter rail and automated guideway transit) or the new construction or extension of a separate roadway for buses or high-occupancy vehicles not located within an existing highway. An EIS is required for any major federal action that may significantly affect the environment. The purpose of an EIS is to provide full and open evaluation of environmental issues and alternatives, and to inform decision-makers and the public of reasonable alternatives that could avoid or minimize adverse impacts and enhance the quality of the environment.

An EIS follows the multi-step process presented in **Figure 4** below. Since the HRT component of this project is the extension of the existing MARTA heavy rail system, an EIS is the required level of documentation. The EIS study area is presented in **Figure 5**.

Figure 4: NEPA Process for Projects Requiring an EIS

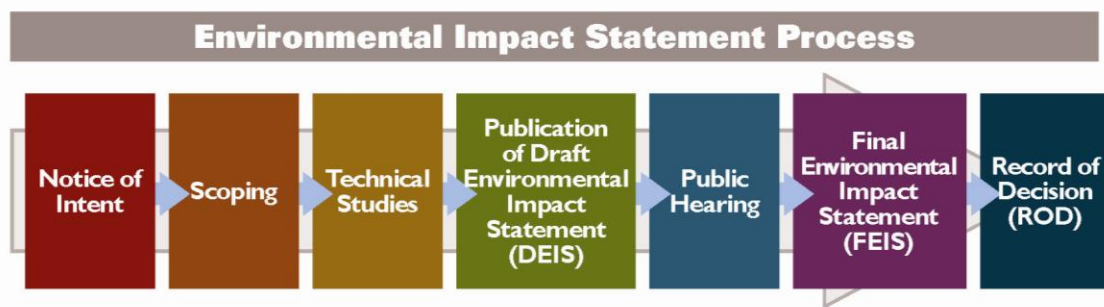
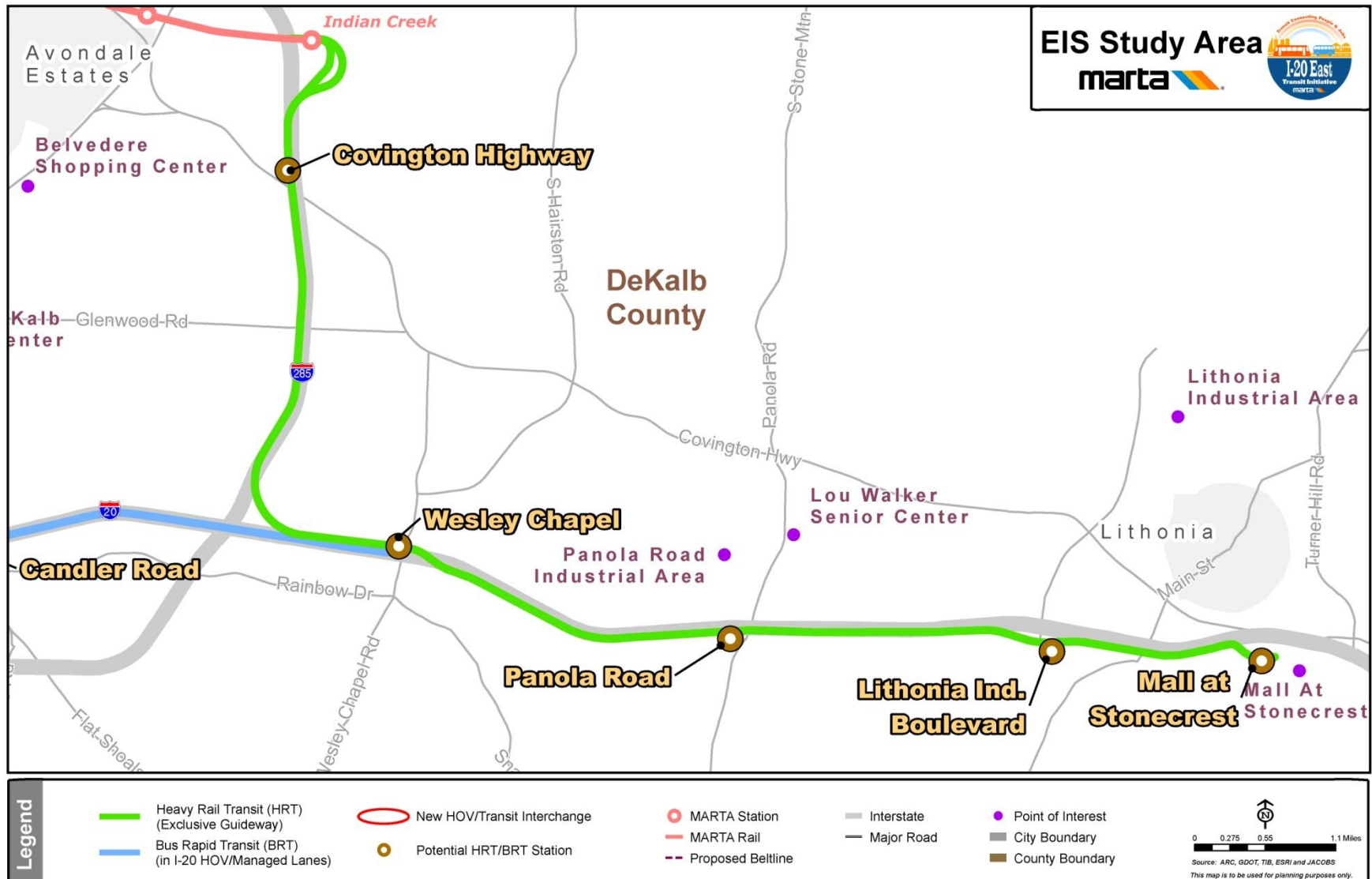


Figure 5: EIS Study Area Map

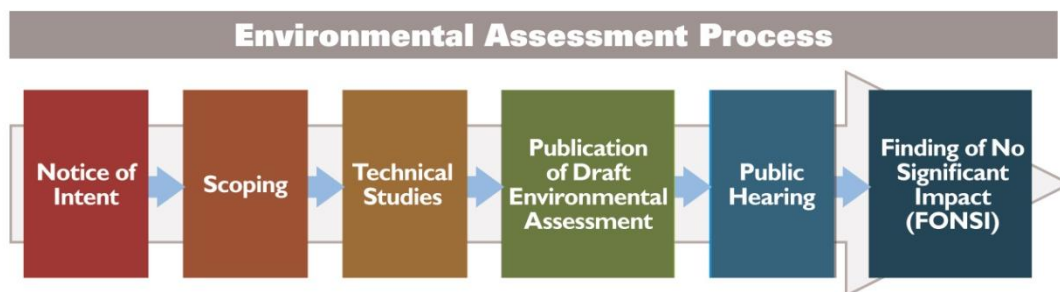


3.2 What is an EA?

An Environmental Assessment (EA) is the required level of NEPA documentation needed to determine whether a federal action would significantly affect the environment and thus require a more detailed EIS. If it is determined that the action would not significantly affect the environment, the EA results in a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI), with documentation of the reasons shown for determining that the project will not negatively impact the environment. Upon the issuance of a FONSI, the project would require no further environmental evaluation.

As a result of discussions with FTA, it was determined that the BRT component of the LPA would be unlikely to significantly affect the environment and an EA would be the appropriate level of environmental analysis at this time. The NEPA process for projects requiring an EA is illustrated in **Figure 6**. The EA study area is presented in **Figure 7**.

Figure 6: NEPA Process for Projects Requiring an EA



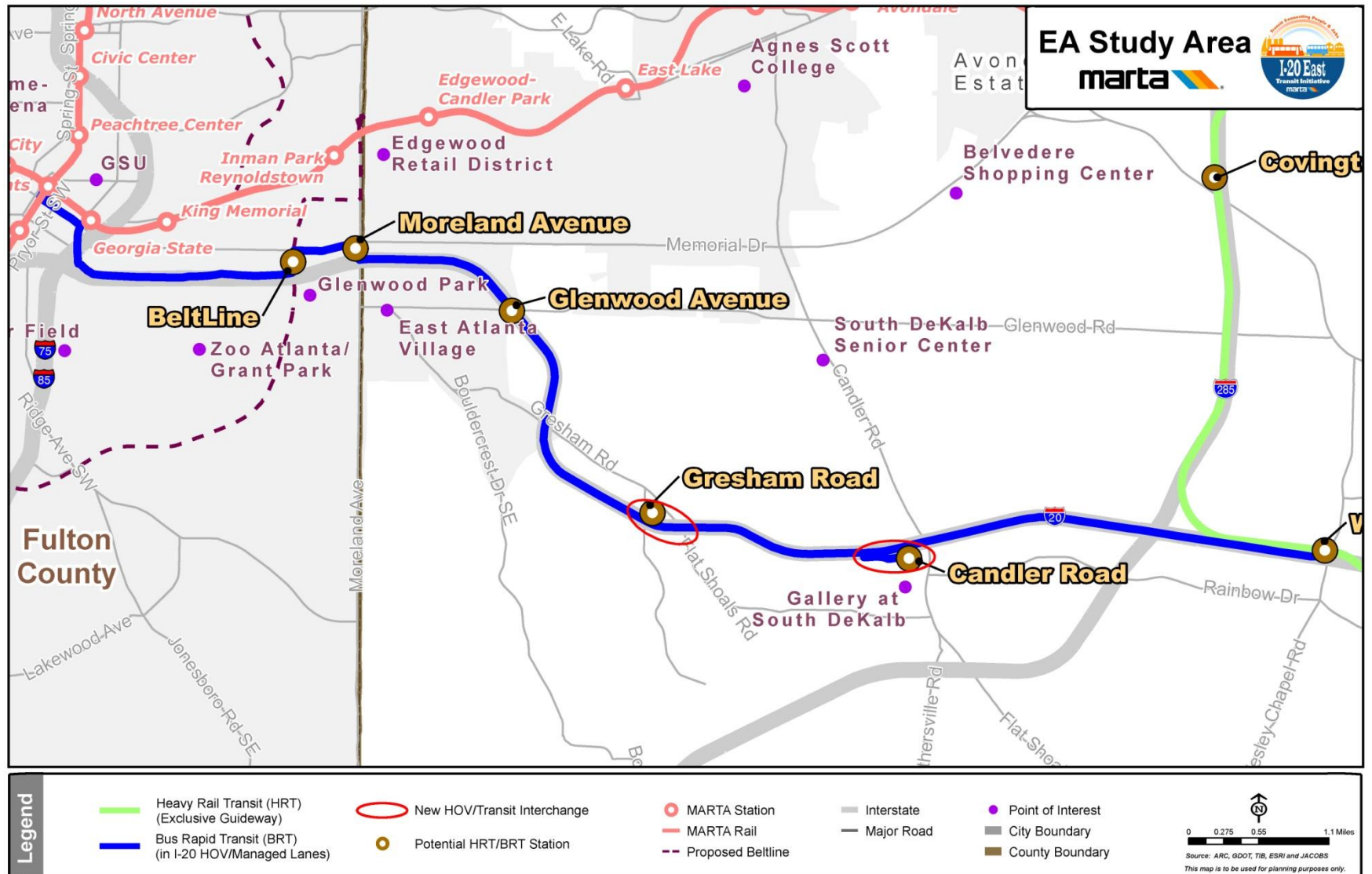
3.3 What is Scoping?

Scoping is the first step in the NEPA process. In this critical component of the study process, agencies, organizations and the public identify key issues, shape the course of technical studies that will assess impacts of the project, and provide input into project alternatives. The primary purpose of scoping is to obtain agency and public input on the project purpose and need, identify appropriate alternatives for study, and help identify the depth and breadth of environmental analysis to be completed in the transit initiative. This Scoping Information Packet serves to provide the public with information about this study and invite them to participate in the scoping process.

FTA and MARTA invite all interested individuals and organizations, public agencies, and Native American Tribes to comment on the scope of the environmental studies for the proposed HRT and BRT components of this project, including the project's purpose and need, the alternatives to be studied, the impacts to be evaluated, and the evaluation methods to be used. Comments should address (1) feasible alternatives that may better achieve the project's purpose and need with fewer adverse impacts, and (2) any significant environmental impacts relating to the alternatives.

“Scoping” as described in the regulations implementing NEPA (Title 40 of the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) 1501.7) has specific and fairly limited objectives, one of which is to identify the significant issues associated with alternatives that will be examined in detail in the environmental document, while simultaneously limiting consideration and development of issues that are not truly significant. It is in the NEPA scoping process that potentially significant environmental impacts (those that give rise to the need to prepare an environmental impact statement) should be identified.

Figure 7: EA Study Area Map





Impacts that are deemed not to be significant need not be developed extensively in the context of the impact statement, thereby keeping the statement focused on impacts of consequence consistent with the ultimate objectives of the NEPA implementing regulations (“to make the environmental impact statement process more useful to decision makers and the public; and to reduce paperwork and the accumulation of extraneous background data, in order to emphasize the need to focus on real environmental issues and alternatives * * * [by requiring] impact statements to be concise, clear, and to the point, and supported by evidence that agencies have made the necessary environmental analyses” (Executive Order 11991, of May 24, 1977). Transit projects may also generate environmental benefits; these should be highlighted as well during the environmental evaluation process to draw attention to positive impacts, not just negative impacts.

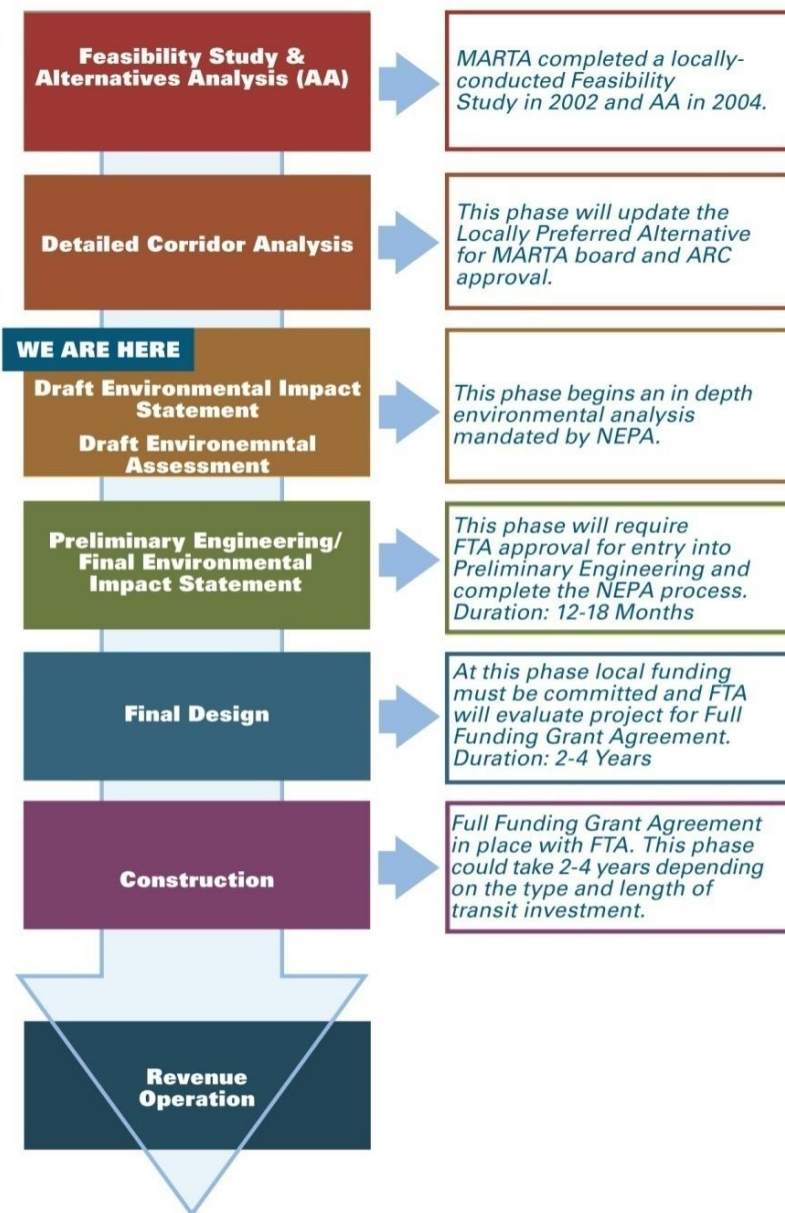
Once the scope of the environmental study, including significant environmental issues to be addressed, is settled, an annotated outline of the document will be prepared and shared with participating agencies and posted on the project Web site. The outline serves at least three worthy purposes, including (1) documenting the results of the scoping process; (2) contributing to the transparency of the process; and (3) providing a clear roadmap for concise development of the environmental document.

3.4 What Agencies are Involved in Scoping?

In addition to MARTA, other state and federal agencies will be involved in scoping, including the FTA. The FTA will be engaged at the completion of specific milestones over the course of the study. Specifically, the transit initiative will look to FTA for general approval of the scope of work, definition of agency roles, and identification of specific issues or concerns regarding the study.

The FTA project development process, as illustrated in **Figure 8** on page 14, emphasizes early coordination with FTA to ensure that the environmental review process satisfies the FTA New Starts project requirements, NEPA, and leads to a successful request to enter into PE. Additionally, public and agency involvement will be paramount to build consensus for the appropriate transit solution. Several diverse outreach strategies and techniques will be undertaken over the course of the environmental review process. Early and continuous involvement with FTA, outreach with major stakeholders and strong public support will be critical to advancing the project into the implementation phase.

Figure 8: FTA Project Development Process





4.0 WHAT ALTERNATIVES WILL BE CONSIDERED DURING THE SCOPING PROCESS?

The recently completed DCA selected the proposed project as the LPA from six Tier 2 Alternatives. The DCA also considered a Transit System Management (TSM) Alternative, per FTA New Starts requirements; however, the TSM Alternative will not be examined further for NEPA purposes because it does not meet the purpose and need of the proposed action. The proposed LPA, or Build Alternative, and a No-Build Alternative are proposed to be evaluated in the environmental review process. These two NEPA alternatives are described as follows:

4.1 No-Build Alternative

A No-Build Alternative assumes no changes to either the roadway network or to transit services beyond that which exists or for which resources are committed. The No-Build Alternative includes only existing or planned MARTA and GRTA local and express transit service in the I-20 East Corridor study area.

4.2 Build Alternative - Locally Preferred Alternative

The Build Alternative to be evaluated in the EIS is the extension of the existing MARTA east-west HRT line from the Indian Creek Station, south parallel to I-285, then east parallel to I-20 to the Mall at Stonecrest in eastern DeKalb County. The HRT service would include new stations at Covington Highway, Wesley Chapel Road, Panola Road, Lithonia Industrial Blvd, and the Mall at Stonecrest. The HRT alignment would generally be located adjacent to the interstate and would utilize Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) right-of-way wherever possible.

The Build Alternative to be evaluated in the EA is a new BRT service between downtown Atlanta and Wesley Chapel Road, operating in HOV lanes on I-20 as much as possible and utilizing surface streets within downtown Atlanta. The BRT service would be a fixed-route, branded, high frequency, all day service utilizing transit stations rather than typical bus stops. From east to west, the BRT service would start at the proposed Wesley Chapel Road HRT/BRT station and utilize the HOV lanes and transit/HOV interchanges to access stations at Candler Road and Gresham Road, then serve stations at Glenwood Avenue, Moreland Avenue, and Bill Kennedy Way/Atlanta BeltLine before terminating at the Five Points Station in downtown Atlanta. The service would utilize arterial BRT enhancements such as Transit Signal Priority (TSP) and queue jumper lanes to maximize the efficiency of surface street operations where necessary.



5.0 WHAT KINDS OF IMPACTS WILL THE ENVIRONMENTAL STUDIES CONSIDER?

The purpose of the EIS and EA are to evaluate the effects, both positive and negative, that the proposed project would have on the natural, cultural, physical, and social environment in the I-20 East Corridor.

5.1 Assessment of Transportation Impacts

The study will evaluate all alternatives regarding their impact on corridor travel patterns, transit ridership and accessibility, connectivity to major employment areas, travel time, and transportation service implications of alternatives. This analysis will also evaluate localized traffic impacts at station areas.

5.2 Assessment of Environmental Impacts

5.2.1 Land Use

Alternatives will be evaluated on the direct and secondary impacts and benefits that they could have on surrounding land uses. Secondary land use impacts and benefits include those caused by changes in travel patterns, and by transit-oriented development near stations.

5.2.2 Socioeconomic, Neighborhoods and Environmental Justice

Economic Impacts

Each alternative will be evaluated on the potential changes to local property values and development opportunities, particularly near potential station areas, that could result from its implementation. The level and value of development change in households, population, employment, and taxes, as well as other factors will be considered. Analysis will be based on urban and suburban development trends within the corridor, as well as redevelopment incentives, particularly those related to transit-oriented development.

Neighborhoods/Communities

Once the station locations, typical sections, and alignments for the alternatives have been established, direct impacts on surrounding neighborhoods and communities will be determined. Changes to alternatives may be made to mitigate these impacts where possible.

Environmental Justice

Any disproportionately high and adverse human health and/or environmental impacts to low-income or minority populations that would result from the implementation of any alternative will be identified. Modifications to alternatives will be explored to avoid or minimize impacts to these populations. Where these impacts are unavoidable, mitigation measures would be identified in order to assure compliance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

Relocations/Displacements

Relocation impacts of alternatives will be determined in order to assure compliance with the Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Properties Acquisition Act of 1970.



5.2.3 Visual and Aesthetics

Visual and aesthetic impacts of all alternatives will be identified. Utilizing FTA guidelines, all rail/bus alignments and stations will be analyzed to determine potential impacts to visually sensitive areas and resources. Potential mitigation measures including alignment changes, landscaping, walls, and barriers will be investigated.

5.2.4 Cultural Resources

Field surveys will be conducted to identify historic and archaeological resources. Each alternative will be evaluated with respect to the effect it would have on historic and archaeological resources which are eligible for inclusion in the National Register of Historic places. Each alternative will be analyzed to identify feasible design and alignment changes to avoid and minimize adverse effects. If an alternative is identified to have adverse effects on an eligible resource, mitigation measures will be identified.

5.2.5 Public Recreational/Parklands/Section 4(f)/6(f) Applicability

Publicly owned parks, recreational areas, wildlife and waterfowl refuges, or public and private historical sites have special protections under Sections 4(f) and 6(f) of the USDOT Act of 1966. For each alternative, impacts to Section 4(f) and 6(f) resources will be identified. Each alternative will be analyzed to identify feasible design and alignment changes to avoid and minimize impacts. If Section 4(f) or 6(f) impacts are unavoidable, a more detailed analysis will be required to determine if there are any feasible and prudent alternatives to that action.

5.2.6 Air Quality

The attained air quality status of the corridor and existing air quality characteristics will be recorded and the potential for beneficial or negative impacts to air quality from each alternative will be considered.

5.2.7 Noise & Vibration

Alternatives will be evaluated on any noise and vibration impacts they may cause, and where impacts occur, mitigation/abatement measures will be evaluated to reduce or eliminate those impacts. If no mitigation/abatement measures are reasonable or feasible, this will be documented.

5.2.8 Water Quality

Impacts to water and groundwater resources that would result from the implementation of alternatives will be determined. Acres of increased impervious surfaces and disturbed soils will be quantified to determine the potential adverse effect on water quality. If any alternative alignment negatively affects sensitive water resources, measures will be identified to minimize and/or mitigate harm to these resources. These measures could include vegetative buffer zones at the stream banks and strict erosion and sedimentation control measures as part of a construction contract.

5.2.9 Floodplains

Alternatives will be evaluated on their impacts to floodplains based on the number, location, and size of impacted areas. An estimate will be prepared on the loss of flood storage potential and any potential flood hazards resulting from various alternatives. Compensatory mitigation measures, where feasible, will be identified and defined.

5.2.10 Soils & Geology

Alternatives will be evaluated on their impacts to study area geology and soils, and mitigation efforts will be made to alternatives where necessary.

5.2.11 Farmland

Alternatives will be evaluated on their potential impacts to farmlands, if any. If necessary, alignment modifications may be considered to reduce impacts.

5.2.12 Energy

The energy requirement associated with each alternative will be estimated, including positive or negative energy impacts of each alternative. Estimates will be based on the regional annual vehicle miles traveled (VMT), by vehicle type, within the study area for the horizon year, multiplied by the emissions rates of each vehicles. Construction energy requirements may also be calculated.

5.2.13 Hazardous Materials/Contamination

Properties will be identified along and adjacent to all alternative alignments where contamination may have been caused by past management, use, storage or disposal of hazardous materials. All contaminated sites with the potential to be encountered during the construction of an alternative will be investigated further. Contaminated sites will be assessed according to their need for remedial actions and potential to delay construction of a proposed alignment.

5.2.14 Wetlands/Streams/Other Waters of the US

The impacts to wetlands, streams, and other waters of each alternative will be identified, in terms of the number, location, and size of impacts to these resources. Feasible design and alignment changes will be evaluated to avoid and minimize impacts. Compensatory wetland and stream mitigation calculations will be prepared for both of the Build Alternatives to identify mitigation costs. Alternatives will be compared based on final impacts and mitigation costs.

5.2.15 Wildlife and Habitat

Alternatives will be evaluated on their potential impacts to wildlife and habitat, particularly threatened and endangered species and their habitats. Feasible design and alignment changes will be evaluated to avoid and minimize impacts. Further coordination with the United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) may be necessary depending on the impact of the proposed project would have on threatened and endangered species.

5.2.16 Safety and Security

Potential impacts to the safety and security of the human environment will be identified for each alternative, including potential areas of concern for residents and transit patrons. Proposed station area personal safety and security measures and pedestrian safety design techniques in and around the stations will be described.

5.2.17 Construction Impacts

Construction impacts are anticipated to be generally limited to the transit alignments, transit stations, and maintenance facility and other transit facilities construction. The impact assessment will provide general information on noise, air quality, water quality and wetland impacts; impacts to businesses and residences; and traffic impacts. Potential mitigation measures and regulatory issues/constraints will be investigated and documented. For each



alternative, specific areas of concern during construction will be identified, such as noise sensitive receptors, to determine if unusual mitigation measures would be warranted.

5.2.18 Secondary and Cumulative Impacts

Alternatives will not only be evaluated on their direct impacts but also those from past, future, and other current projects in the area. Analysis of secondary and cumulative impacts is an iterative process that places a strong focus on early and continual scoping for potential issues and their implications in regard to secondary and cumulative impacts.

Secondary impacts are those which are reasonably foreseeable indirect consequences to the environment caused by the action, but that occur either later in time or not in the same location as the direct impacts. Potential secondary impacts associated with transit oriented development, stations, facilities, and track alignments will be identified based on an analysis of land use, traffic patterns, municipal and regional plans, and economics.

Cumulative impacts are defined as the total impacts to environmental resources resulting from the incremental effects of the action when added to other past, present and reasonably foreseeable future actions, regardless of what agency or person undertakes these actions. Cumulative impacts for each of the alternatives will be determined based on a qualitative review of the impacts to environmental resources, cultural and community resources, and public infrastructure when the effects of each of the alternatives are considered together with other developments (e.g. transit oriented development) and infrastructure improvements.

5.2.19 Environmental Impact Mitigation Measures

As described under appropriate categories above, potential mitigation measures for each alternative will be identified to eliminate or reduce the impacts to an acceptable level. Detailed mitigation measures or mitigation plans will be identified in the Final EIS phase.

6.0 HOW CAN THE PUBLIC PARTICIPATE IN THE SCOPING PROCESS?

The purpose of the scoping process is to inform government agencies, affected stakeholders, and the general public about the project and solicit their input and feedback regarding:

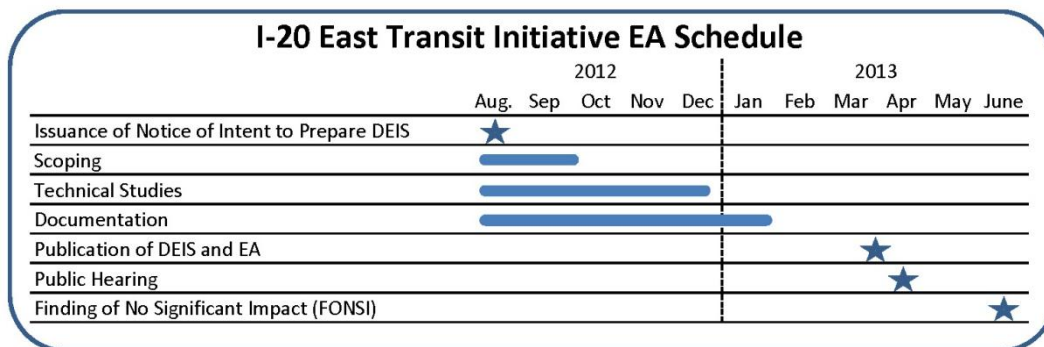
- Project Purpose and Need
- Alternatives to be Studied
- Potentially Significant Environmental Issues

The goal of the I-20 East scoping process is to be early and open in order to determine the scope of issues to be addressed, and to identify significant issues related to this study. As can be seen in the schedule in **Figures 9 and 10**, the I-20 East Transit Initiative opens with scoping process, which will set the course for the remainder of the study.

Figure 9: DEIS Study Schedule



Figure 10: EA Study Schedule



6.1 How Can I Submit Comments?

Written comments on the scope of the EIS, including the project's purpose and need, the impacts to be evaluated, and methodologies to be used in the evaluations, must be sent to Janide Sidifall, Project Manager, MARTA, 2424 Piedmont Road NE, Atlanta, GA 30324-3330. Written comments should be submitted within two weeks of the final scoping meeting or 30 days within the publication of the final Notice of Intent (NOI), whichever is later. Comments may also be offered at the public scoping meetings.



6.2 How Can I Learn More about the I-20 East LPA?

Public Scoping Meetings are an opportunity for the public to learn more about the recommended transit improvements in the I-20 East Corridor as well as to submit their comments on potential environmental impacts of these recommendations.

These meetings will be the fourth round of public outreach meetings held for the I-20 East Transit Initiative, and are an opportunity for MARTA to present the I-20 East LPA to the public. The dates, times, and locations for the public scoping meetings are:

Meeting 1: Monday, September 10, 2012, 6:00 PM – 8:00 PM, Trees Atlanta 225 Chester Avenue Atlanta, GA 30316

Meeting 2: Tuesday, September 11, 2012, 6:00 PM – 8:00 PM, Porter Sanford III Performing Arts Center, 3181 Rainbow Drive, Decatur, Georgia 30034

Meeting 3: Thursday, September 13, 2012, 6:00 PM – 8:00 PM, Lou Walker Senior Center, 2538 Panola Road, Lithonia, GA 30058

The appropriate federal, state, and local agencies will be notified individually about the time and location of the interagency scoping meeting.

The locations of the public scoping meetings are accessible to persons with disabilities. This scoping information packet will be available one week prior to the meetings on the project web site at: <http://www.itsmarta.com/120-east-corr.aspx>. Copies will also be available at the scoping meetings.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Brian C. Smart, Environmental Protection Specialist, Federal Transit Administration, Region IV, 230 Peachtree Street, NW - Suite 800, Atlanta, GA 30303, Phone: 404.865.5607, Fax: 404.865.5490, Email: brian.smart@dot.gov or Janide Sidifall, Office of Transit Systems Planning, MARTA, 2424 Piedmont Road, NE Atlanta, GA 30324-3330, Telephone: (404) 848-5828; Facsimile (404) 848-5132, Email jsidifall@itsmarta.com.

6.3 How Will My Comments Be Used?

Comments received during the Scoping period will be used to identify environmental topic areas to be analyzed in the DEIS, as well as the means by which they will be evaluated. Once the Scoping period is over, the I-20 Transit Initiative DEIS will document the Scoping process, the comments received, and responses to those comments as necessary.

6.4 What Happens After Scoping?

As environmental study of these proposed improvements continues, so will the opportunities for public involvement. Additional public meetings, including a public hearing, will be held over the duration of the study. Also, the project website will provide up-to-date information on the study's progress.