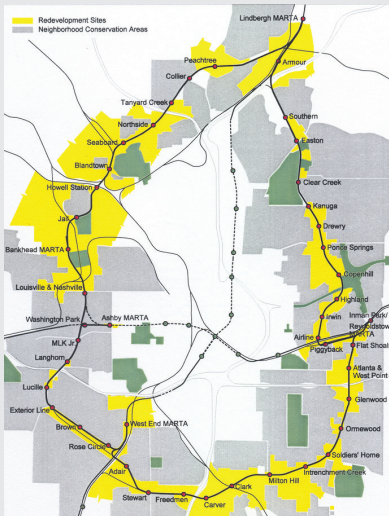




A Brief History of Transit and the Atlanta BeltLine



1960s: Early conceptual plans for the MARTA rail system show rail on the east side of the present-day BeltLine.



1999: Ryan Gravel's thesis proposes transit and trails on the full 22-mile loop of railroad corridors encircling the city.



2007: MARTA Inner Core Alternatives Analysis selects light rail on full BeltLine loop as Locally-Preferred Alternative.



BeltLine Rail 101

Transit has been an integral piece of the Atlanta BeltLine since the project was first proposed. Ryan Gravel's 1999 master's thesis articulated a light rail project to stimulate community revitalization around a 22-mile loop of railway "belt" lines that encircled the built-up area of Atlanta at the turn of the 20th century.

Accessible stations located every 1/4 to 1/2 mile will link 44 neighborhoods to burgeoning activity centers like Glenwood Park, Pittsburgh Yards, The Westside, Howell Mill, Piedmont Hospital, Ansley Mall, and Ponce City Market. From 2001 the BeltLine transit greenway vision sparked widespread grassroots support spearheaded by former City Council President Cathy Woolard.

In 2005 Atlanta adopted the BeltLine Tax Allocation District (TAD) in order to "capture" increasing property values in the area for public infrastructure funding. In 2007, following years of intensive technical study and community outreach, MARTA selected modern light rail transit (LRT) on the full 22-mile loop as the Locally Preferred Alternative (LPA) for the BeltLine.

Why is Transit Needed on the BeltLine?

Transit ensures the benefits of the BeltLine are available to everyone; it is the binding concept that makes the rest of the vision – parks, greenway trail, mixed-income living – work as a whole. For communities that are experiencing growth, it offers a way to maintain quality-of-life in the face of rising traffic congestion. For those still waiting on substantial new investment, transit on the BeltLine promises local revitalization and a ticket to jobs.

Southface and the Transformation Alliance note that Metro Atlanta ranked 91st of 100 largest regions, with a mere 7.4% of jobs accessible by a 60 minute transit trip. BeltLine LRT will connect nearly 100,000 current residents to employment centers at MARTA rail stations including Decatur, Buckhead, Perimeter and the airport – with one transfer.

Affordable housing within reach of transit options that replace vehicle ownership and ride-hail costs leave household budgets with more money. Communities that develop with fewer automobiles leave cities with more room for people and shared spaces. Along with policy upgrades to neutralize displacement and restrain parking supply, a full continuous loop of BeltLine Transit is an essential tool for equitably & sustainably managing Atlanta's inevitable growth.

Why Should BeltLine Transit be Light Rail and not Buses?

Light Rail Transit (LRT) is the community's preference for the BeltLine because it announces a permanent commitment to a quality experience – a clean, quiet and quick mode of travel that is compatible with the existing multi-use trail and interoperable with the Atlanta Streetcar. Grass tracks or other permeable surface (rather than pavement) help the greenway mitigate stormwater runoff and reduce urban heat island effects. Electric power eliminates tailpipe emissions along the route and is potentially renewable in source.

Surface streetcar and BRT proposals will require serious investments in signal priority technology and dedicated lanes to provide true rapid transit with any vehicle mode, but right-of-way for BeltLine LRT – free from the mixed traffic that plagues current bus and streetcar service – comes pre-assembled in an exclusive guideway adjacent to the trail and anticipated by its design.

Rail is ultimately less expensive than buses for the BeltLine precisely because it has been a rail corridor from the start, where historic bridges and tunnels designed for trains would require expensive replacements to accommodate driver error without steel wheels on steel rails.

How Will BeltLine Rail Connect to MARTA and Future Transit?

The BeltLine intersects the existing MARTA rail system at five locations and serves as a circumferential, urban-oriented complement to what is currently a radial, commuter-focused system. At points where the BeltLine loop crosses between two existing MARTA stations, new “infill” stations have been proposed to allow for smooth, seamless connections and extend the reach of MARTA to additional communities such as Boone Blvd. on the Proctor Bankhead Line.

The infill stations at Armour (North Line) and Murphy (South Line) enable linkages for MARTA and the BeltLine with the Amtrak Crescent as well as future intercity and regional lines, like planned rail service to Clayton County via the airport's Maynard H. Jackson, Jr. International Terminal.

How Much Will Rail on the BeltLine Cost?

Cost estimates to complete BeltLine Rail range from \$1.7 billion plus \$100 million per infill station in the More MARTA project list to \$2.3 billion total in Atlanta BeltLine, Inc.'s Strategic Implementation Plan. FTA New Starts provides \$1 federal funding for every \$1 of local match - from TAD revenue and MARTA combined, as well as potential state and private sources.

How Can I Help Make BeltLine Rail a Reality?

Though transit was the driving force behind the movement that lifted the BeltLine to life, nearly two decades later, little visible progress has been made. The 2016 passage of the “More MARTA” funding referendum in the City of Atlanta provides a critical opportunity to finally jump-start the transit component, but supporters must stay engaged in this process to ensure that light rail on the entire BeltLine is prioritized.

Get involved with BeltLine Rail Now! Sign our petition at <https://www.change.org/p/support-atlanta-beltline-rail-now>.



Beltline Rail History (continued)

2008: Regional “Concept 3” transit vision adopted, including full BeltLine.

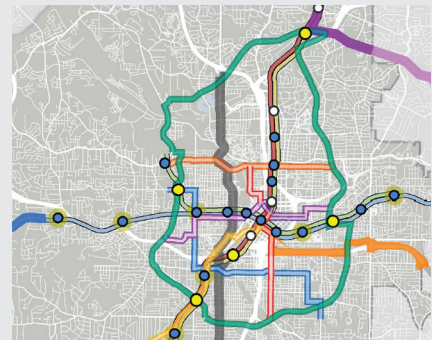


2010: BeltLine Corridor Design kicks off, developing detailed design concepts for rail transit on BeltLine.

2012: BeltLine Eastside Trail opens with right-of-way preserved for transit.

2013: BeltLine Strategic Implementation Plan adopted; proposes initial \$200M investment in transit by 2018.

2015: Atlanta Streetcar enters service; Streetcar System Plan developed which includes full BeltLine loop.



2016: Full BeltLine rail loop included in “More MARTA” expansion proposal; half-penny sales tax approved overwhelmingly by Atlanta voters.



2017: BeltLine Westside Trail opens with right-of-way preserved for transit.