

3.0 ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING

3.1 Environmental Setting without the Project

The BeltLine Corridor Northeast Zone is an approximate 6.5-mile corridor within the City limits of Atlanta, Fulton County, Georgia. The proposed action occurs in a highly developed urban area within the Piedmont Physiographic Province of Georgia. The following land use/land cover types are along the project corridor:

- abandoned railroad ROW;
- maintained transportation and utility ROW;
- mixed pine/hardwood forestland;
- commercial property;
- industrial property;
- hardwood forestland;
- residential property; and
- surface waters.

The proposed BeltLine alignment within the Northeast Zone connects several communities and passes through a combination of established residential communities, new lower income housing developments, light industrial areas, and derelict industrial areas targeted for redevelopment. The EER study area identified in Figure 2-2 encompasses a railway corridor approximately 2 to 4 miles east of the center of downtown Atlanta.

The approximate latitude and longitude for the center-point of the proposed project corridor is +33.78194° (33° 46' 55" N) and -84.368611° (84° 22' 07" W). The approximate latitude and longitude for the north end of the proposed project corridor is +33.82305° (33° 49' 23" N) and -84.369722° (84° 22' 11" W). The approximate latitude and longitude for the south end of the proposed project corridor is +33.7575° (33° 45' 27" N) and -84.352777° (84° 21' 10" W). The project is in the Upper Chattahoochee River basin (Hydrologic Unit Code 03130001), a priority watershed listed by the United States Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA).

The development phase of the project concept included the gathering and studying of basic data on the proposed project corridor. Data for this project included, at a minimum, U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) topographic maps, aerial photography, previous studies, National Wetlands Inventory (NWI) maps, soil survey maps, floodplain maps, and Georgia Department of Natural Resources (DNR) historic resource survey maps.

Using these data and information gathered on field surveys of the project corridor, any existing wetland areas, floodplains, parks and recreational facilities, known or suspected historical and archaeological sites, rights-of-way, possible underground storage tank (UST)/landfill/hazardous waste sites, and areas of possible endangered species habitat were identified. Also noted were other constraints such as homes, churches, cemeteries, schools, hospitals, and other sensitive sites.

The data collection and field survey for wetlands and waters of the U.S. and State resulted in the observation of eight jurisdictional perennial streams, three jurisdictional intermittent streams, two jurisdictional wetlands, and one non-jurisdictional ephemeral stream in the study area. The field survey included an observation of migratory bird nests beneath two bridges in the study area.

In addition, floodplains associated with Peachtree Creek and Clear Creek exist within the study area.

The Northeast Zone of the BeltLine contains a number of long standing and often historic neighborhoods, including Peachtree Hills, Piedmont Heights, Brookwood Hills, Ansley Park, Virginia Highland, Morningside, Midtown, Poncey Highland, Old Fourth Ward, and Inman Park.

A review of the historical architectural resources within the EER study area resulted in the identification of 39 properties listed in, previously determined eligible for listing in, or recommended eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. These properties consist of:

- ten (10) historic districts listed in the National Register of Historic Places;
- two (2) multiple-property evaluations (including bridge structures);
- eleven (11) historic districts recommended eligible for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP); and
- sixteen (16) individual properties recommended eligible for inclusion in the NRHP.

Eight archaeological sites are also within a one-kilometer (0.62-mile) radius of the corridor.

Fourteen parks/recreational areas are within the study area, including ten existing public parks/recreation areas, two planned public parks, and two privately owned recreation areas.

There are 214 hazardous materials sites within the study area. There were no solid waste landfills in the study area.

Section 4.0 of this EER (Environmental Consequences) discusses effects to the above resources.

There are no known energy reserves, such as crude oil or natural gas in the project corridor. The field survey revealed no federal- or state-protected flora, fauna, or appropriate habitats. No protected mountains, critical habitats, beaches, dunes, shorelines, estuaries, forested areas (as defined under GEPA), barrier islands, trout streams, or farmlands exist within the EER study area.