

US EPA ARCHIVE DOCUMENT

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

17TH STREET EXTENSION

[GDOT PROJECT NH-7141-00 (900) P.I. NUMBER 7141901

and

ATLANTIC STEEL REDEVELOPMENT PROJECT FULTON COUNTY, GEORGIA

LEAD AGENCY:

UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

COOPERATING AGENCIES:

Federal Highway Administration
Federal Transit Administration
Georgia Department of Transportation
Georgia Regional Transportation Authority
Metropolitan Atlanta Rapid Transit Authority
Atlanta Regional Commission
City of Atlanta

August 2000

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

17TH STREET EXTENSION
[GDOT PROJECT NH-7141-00(900), P.I. NUMBER 7141901
and
ATLANTIC STEEL REDEVELOPMENT PROJECT
FULTON COUNTY, GEORGIA

LEAD AGENCY:

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

FEDERAL COOPERATING AGENCIES:

U.S. Department of Transportation
Federal Highway Administration

and

U.S. Department of Transportation
Federal Transit Administration

APPROVAL FOR ADVANCEMENT TO AVAILABILITY/PUBLIC HEARING PHASE:

8/2/00
DATE

8-2-00
DATE

8-2-00
DATE

Michael Hankinson, Jr.
JOHN H. HANKINSON, JR.

Larry R. Dreihaupt, P.E.
LARRY R. DREIHAUP, P.E.

Jerry Franklin
JERRY FRANKLIN

APPROVAL OF ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

DATE

JOHN H. HANKINSON, JR.
REGIONAL ADMINISTRATOR
ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

DATE

LARRY R DREIHAUP, P.E.
DIVISION ADMINISTRATOR
FEDERAL HIGHWAY ADMINISTRATION

DATE

JERRY FRANKLIN
REGIONAL ADMINISTRATOR
FEDERAL TRANSIT ADMINISTRATION

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), in cooperation with the Federal Highway Administration, the Federal Transit Administration, Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT), Georgia Regional Transportation Authority (GRTA), Metropolitan Atlanta Rapid Transit Authority (MARTA), Atlanta Regional Commission and the City of Atlanta, has prepared an Environmental Assessment (EA) for the 17th Street Extension [GDOT Project NH-7141-00(900)] and Atlantic Steel Redevelopment Project, Fulton County, Georgia. The EA is a summary of the development of concept alternatives, design traffic studies, preliminary engineering analyses, and environmental impact assessments, all of which have been completed with opportunities for public comment and agency coordination.

Jacoby Atlantic Redevelopment, L.L.C. (JAR), a developer in the City of Atlanta has proposed the remediation and redevelopment of approximately 135 acres near Atlanta's central business district. The property to be redeveloped is the site of the former steel mill owned by Atlantic Steel Industries, Inc. The planned redevelopment is expected to include two million square feet of general office space, one and a half million square feet of retail and entertainment uses, two million square feet of high tech offices, 2,400 residential units, and 1,000 hotel rooms. In addition to the site redevelopment, project plans include construction of a multi-modal (cars, pedestrians, bicycles, transit) bridge and interchange at 17th Street that would cross Interstate 75/85 (I-75/85) and provide access to the site as well as a connection to Midtown Atlanta and the nearby MARTA Arts Center Station. Roadway improvements would include extension of the existing 17th Street from West Peachtree Street (U.S. 19/S.R. 9) in Midtown Atlanta, heading west on new alignment over I-75/85, through the development, and connecting with Northside Drive (U.S. 41/S.R. 3) at Bishop Street. The project also would include operation of a transit shuttle system that would circulate between the MARTA Arts Center Station and the Atlantic Steel site.

The proposed 17th Street Extension and Atlantic Steel Redevelopment Project is composed of several components. Specific alternatives, including the no action alternative, were developed to address the different components and included: 1) alternate site locations for the development in the Atlanta metropolitan region; 2) alternate site designs for the Atlantic Steel Redevelopment; 3) alternate locations for the 17th Street Bridge placement; 4) Interstate access alternates; 5) alternate intersection improvements; 6) high occupancy vehicle access alternates; and 7) alternate connections to transit at the MARTA Arts Center Station. The alternatives were developed based upon an in-depth evaluation of comments received throughout the planning and public involvement process. After analysis of the individual alternative project components, an overall preferred alternative was developed. The preferred alternative is reflective of issues raised by public and agency personnel and has been designed to minimize adverse effects on potentially affected resource categories, as well as health and safety concerns.

The following is a summary of the environmental impacts, both beneficial and adverse, of the 17th Street Extension and Atlantic Steel Redevelopment Project:

Groundwater & Hazardous Materials

- The Georgia Department of Natural Resources (DNR) approved a remediation plan for the Atlantic Steel site that requires a groundwater interception system to collect and contain groundwater on-site. The intercepted groundwater would be monitored and treated, if required, prior to discharge to the City of Atlanta sewer system.
- Future occupants and users of the redeveloped site would not be exposed to existing soils or groundwater on-site. Redevelopment and construction would, by design provide permanent engineered barriers to exposure in the form of new structures, pavement, concrete and/or soil cover.
- The City of Atlanta and Georgia DNR approved a conservation easement holding JAR responsible for implementing the approved remediation plan. The easement has been prepared in order to assure that the necessary engineering and institutional controls are maintained in-perpetuity.

Water Quality & Wetlands

- The City of Atlanta has confirmed that the existing City of Atlanta sewer lines and treatment facilities have adequate capacity to convey and treat the estimated wastewater flows from the proposed development.
- The proposed project would comply with all federal, state, and local stormwater design standards. The proposed development would be required to provide detention facilities to reduce the peak runoff from the post-development condition to less than or equal to the pre-development conditions. An additional stormwater detention capacity of approximately 20% would be provided by JAR as part of its stormwater design to assist the City in the management of flows to the Tanyard Creek Combined Sewer Overflow Treatment Facility.
- Remediation of the Atlantic Steel site would impact approximately 3.75 acres of wetlands. Mitigation for these impacts would include off-site stream restoration in the City of Atlanta/Fulton County. Off-site roadway improvements would not impact any wetlands.

Protected Species

- The proposed project would not affect any threatened or endangered species.

Transportation Features

- **Traffic** conditions in the design year for this project (Year 2025) on the majority of surface roadways and intersections in the study area are predicted to stay the same or improve (i.e., traffic volumes are predicted to decrease and traffic is predicted to move more efficiently) with the construction of the 17th Street Bridge and Extension, as compared to not implementing the project. **Traffic** conditions on some roadways and intersections in the study area are predicted to worsen with implementation of the project, as compared to the no action alternative. These increases in traffic volumes and decreases in levels of service

would occur over an approximate twenty-year time **frame** and should not adversely affect the overall traffic patterns in these areas.

- Several communities in the project area expressed concerns about the cumulative traffic increases resulting not only from this project, but **from** other new development in the area that is already occurring, or that would occur in the future. Based on these concerns, a Memorandum of Understanding between EPA, GDOT, GRTA, the City of Atlanta, JAR, and the affected communities is being developed that would establish conditions to be met and procedures to be followed for continued study of traffic impacts to neighborhoods associated with new development in Midtown Atlanta.
- The proposed project would provide new bicycle and pedestrian access throughout the study area, including new sidewalks and bicycle lanes throughout the Atlantic Steel site and on the 17th Street Bridge.

Air Quality

- No significant short-term construction air quality impacts or long-term traffic-related air quality impacts are anticipated. Redevelopment of the Atlantic Steel site will include a monitoring program, consisting of site design criteria and transportation performance targets, to ensure that the redevelopment is designed and built with elements that encourage alternatives to single occupancy vehicle trips, and that the project would perform in ways to lower vehicle miles traveled and associated emissions.

Noise

- No significant short-term construction noise and vibration impacts or long-term traffic noise impacts are anticipated.
- To minimize construction noise impacts, construction equipment would be required to have factory-installed mufflers or their equivalents in good working order during the life of the construction contracts. Construction, where feasible, would take place primarily, during the less noise sensitive daylight hours to avoid impacts during the hours associated with sleep

Cultural Resources

- The proposed project would not impact any known prehistoric or historic archeological resources. The roadbed of **Hemphill** Avenue may contain buried trolley tracks, and the area beneath or alongside **Hemphill** Avenue may contain original water pipes associated with the National Register-listed Atlanta Waterworks **Hemphill** Avenue Station. During project construction, it is recommended that a qualified archaeological consultant monitor any construction and subsurface activities that are to occur along Northside Drive in the vicinity of **Hemphill** Avenue.
- The Atlantic Steel site has been identified as eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Properties. Cleanup and redevelopment of the site would have an adverse effect on this resource. Mitigation for impacts to this resource includes: 1) development of **large-format** black-and-white photographs of the site as it existed prior to redevelopment, and 2) development and implementation of a public education and outreach plan. Components of this education and outreach plan will include compilation of an oral history of Atlantic Steel

Industries, Inc., development of educational materials, and **the** potential creation of a permanent exhibition space celebrating and incorporating the history of Atlantic Steel in **the** redevelopment plan.

- Off-site roadway improvements would not have any adverse effects on any listed or eligible National Register properties.

Section 4(f)

- No Section 4(f) sites would be impacted by **the** transportation project.

Land Use/Community Resources

- The redevelopment would cleanup a large industrial site and replace it with a more homogeneous type mixed-land use that would complement established neighborhoods. Additional positive impacts of the redevelopment project include more **commercial/retail** opportunities to be provided within walking or biking distance to many existing residences.
- The new 17th Street should result in improved response time for emergency vehicles along the project corridor. One additional City of Atlanta police station with emergency medical technicians is anticipated to be added by JAR in conjunction with the project.
- The development of the Atlantic Steel site into mixed-use land proposed under the preferred alternative conforms to the recommendations of the Adopted Atlanta 2001 Comprehensive Development Plan.

Socioeconomics

- **The** project would have significant positive effects to the local economy, including the creation of new jobs, added population, increases in payroll, and new retail spending.
- Eight residences would be displaced by the Atlantic Steel Redevelopment Project and nineteen commercial businesses would be displaced by the proposed 17th Street Extension and associated off-site roadway improvements.

Environmental Justice

- The proposed project would not have any disproportionate adverse impacts to low-income or minority populations.

Aesthetics

- There are a number of specific zoning conditions for the Atlantic Steel site that address aesthetic, architectural, and landscaping requirements. In general, design and placement of specific buildings would be completed in a manner so as to create transitions from, and compatibility with, surrounding uses.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Section	Title	Page
SECTION 1	NEED AND PURPOSE FOR ACTION	1-1
1.1	Project Overview	1-1
1.2	Agency Involvement.....	1-3
1.3	Regulatory Framework	1-3
1.4	Project Need and Purpose	1-4
1.5	Supporting Transportation Features	1-5
1.5.1	Roadway Improvements	1-5
1.5.2	Transit Improvements	1-6
SECTION 2	ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED.....	2-1
2.1	Overview	2-1
2.2	Public and Agency Involvement.....	2-1
2.3	Site Location Alternatives	2-2
2.3.1	Cobb/Fulton County Site	2-2
2.3.2	South Henry County Site	2-2
2.3.3	Perimeter Center / Sandy Springs Site.....	2-4
2.3.4	Comparison of the Site Alternatives.....	2-4
2.4	Site Design Alternatives.....	2-4
2.4.1	Three Design Alternatives Considered	2-6
2.4.2	Evaluation of Site Designs	2-6
2.5	Roadway Alternatives.....	2-9
2.5.1	Bridge Location Alternatives.....	2-11
2.5.1.1	Widening 14 th Street	2-11
2.5.1.2	16th Street Bridge	2-11
2.5.1.3	17th Street Bridge	2-11
2.5.2	17” Street Bridge - Alternatives Addressing Interstate Access.....	2-12
2.5.2.1	No Access Ramps.....	2-12
2.5.2.2	Reconfiguration of Existing 14” Street Southbound Off-Ramps from I-75 and I-85	2-12
2.5.2.3	Addition of Northbound Off-Ramp from I-75/I-85	2-12
2.5.2.4	Reconfiguration of Southbound and Northbound Off-Ramps	2-13
2.5.3	17” Street Bridge - Surface Street and Intersection Alternatives	2-13
2.5.4	High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) Access Alternatives.....	2-14
2.6	Transit Alternatives	2-14
2.6.1	Transit Only Alternative	2-14
2.6.2	Shuttle System Alternatives.....	2-15
2.6.3	Long-Term Transit Options	2-17

**TABLE OF CONTENTS
(CONTINUED)**

	Page	
2.7	No Action (No Build) Alternative	2-18
2.8	Preferred (Build) Alternative	2-20
SECTION 3	AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT	3-1
3.1	Overview	3-1
3.2	Natural Environment	3-1
3.2.1	Earth Resources	3-1
3.2.2	Groundwater	3-2
3.2.3	Surface Water Resources/Hydrology.....	3-2
3.2.4	Terrestrial Habitat.....	3-7
3.2.5	Aquatic Habitat.....	3-7
3.2.6	Wetlands	3-8
3.2.7	Endangered and Threatened Species.....	3-8
3.3	Man Made Environment.....	3-10
3.3.1	Utilities.....	3-10
3.3.1.1	Water Supply	3-10
3.3.1.2	Wastewater Disposal.....	3-10
3.3.1.3	Solid Waste Disposal.....	3-10
3.3.1.4	Electrical Power	3-10
3.3.1.5	Natural Gas.....	3-10
3.3.2	Hazardous Substances.....	3-11
3.3.2.1	Atlantic Steel Property Conditions	3-11
3.3.2.2	Potentially Contaminated Areas.....	3-11
3.3.2.3	Risk Assessment Findings	3-12
3.3.2.4	Asbestos Containing Materials	3-13
3.3.2.5	Off-Site Concerns	3-13
3.3.3	Transportation Features	3-14
3.3.3.1	Existing Street System.....	3-14
3.3.3.2	Modal Interrelationships.....	3-16
3.3.4	Air Quality.....	3-19
3.3.5	Noise	3-20
3.3.6	Archaeological/Historic Resources.....	3-23
3.3.6.1	Regulatory Environment and Terminology	3-23
3.3.6.2	Archaeological Resources.....	3-24
3.3.6.3	Historic Resources.....	3-25
3.3.7	Section 4(f) Applicability	3-28
3.3.8	Land Use.....	3-28
3.3.8.1	Existing Land Use.....	3-28

TABLE OF CONTENTS (CONTINUED)

	Page	
	3.3.8.2 Neighborhoods and Community Facilities	3-29
3.3.9	Socioeconomics/Demography/Economic Conditions.....	3-32
	3.3.9.11 Population..	3-32
	3.3.9.2 Employment..	3-32
	3.3.9.3 Relocations	3-34
3.3.10	Environmental Justice	3-34
	3.3.10.1 Demographic Characterizations.....	3-34
	3.3.10.2 Potential Environmental Justice Areas	3-36
3.3.11	Aesthetic Resources	3-36
SECTION 4	IMPACTS	4-1
4.1	Overview	4-1
4.2	Natural Environment	4-1
	4.2.1 Earth Resources	4-1
	4.2.2 Groundwater	4-1
	4.2.3 Surface Water Resources/Hydrology	4-2
	4.2.4 Terrestrial Habitat	4-3
	4.2.5 Wetlands and Aquatic Habitat.....	4-4
	4.2.6 Wetland Mitigation Plan.....	4-4
	4.2.7 Endangered and Threatened Species..	4-5
4.3	Man Made Environment..	4-5
	4.3.1 Utilities.....	4-5
	4.3.1.1 Water Supply	4-5
	4.3.1.2 Wastewater Disposal.....	4-6
	4.3.1.3 Solid Waste Disposal	4-7
	4.3.1.4 Electrical Power..	4-7
	4.3.1.5 Natural Gas	4-8
	4.3.2 Hazardous Substances	4-8
	4.3.2.1 Atlantic Steel Property.....	4-8
	4.3.2.2 National Lead Smelting Site	4-9
	4.3.2.3 Other Concerns	4-9
	4.3.3 Transportation Features	4-9
	4.3.3.1 Changes to Existing Roadway System.....	4-9
	4.3.3.2 Forecasted Traffic Impacts	4-10
	4.3.3.3 Forecasted Traffic Operations.....	4-17
	4.3.3.4 Transit Impacts	4-25
	4.3.3.5 Non-Motorized Travel Impacts.....	4-25
	4.3.3.6 Roadway Construction Impacts	4-26

**TABLE OF CONTENTS
(CONTINUED)**

	Page	
4.3.3.7 Measures for Addressing Community Traffic Concerns	4-27	
4.3.4 Air Quality.....	4-29	
4.3.4.1 Regional Impacts	4-29	
4.3.4.2 Localized Impacts.....	4-29	
4.3.4.3 Construction Related Impacts.....	4-30	
4.3.4.4 Mitigative Measures.....	4-30	
4.3.5 Noise and Vibration.....	4-33	
4.3.5.1 Short Term Construction Impacts.....	4-33	
4.3.5.2 Long Term Traffic Noise Impacts	4-34	
4.3.5.3 Mitigative Measures.....	4-36	
4.3.6 Cultural Resources	4-37	
4.3.6.1 Historic Resources.....	4-38	
4.3.6.2 Archaeological Resources.....	4-58	
4.3.6.3 Measures Proposed to Address Cultural Resource Concerns.....	4-59	
4.3.7 Section 4(f) Evaluation	4-59	
4.3.8 Land Use.....	4-60	
4.3.8.1 Existing Land Use.....	4-60	
4.3.8.2 Neighborhoods and Community Facilities	4-60	
4.3.8.3 Consistency With Local Comprehensive Plan.....	4-61	
4.3.9 Socioeconomics/Demography/Economic Conditions.....	4-62	
4.3.9.1 Population and Demographics	4-62	
4.3.9.2 Employment and Economic Characteristics	4-62	
4.3.9.3 Relocations.....	4-64	
4.3.9.4 Community Cohesion	4-64	
4.3.10 Environmental Justice.....	4-68	
4.3.11 Aesthetic Resources.....	4-70	
 SECTION 5	 REFERENCES AND LIST OF ACRONYMS.....	 5-1
SECTION 6	LIST OF PREPARERS	6-1
SECTION 7	LIST OF RECIPIENTS.....	7-1

LIST OF FIGURES

No.	Title	Page
Figure 1-1	Study Area and Project Location	1-2
Figure 2-1	Site Location Alternatives	2-3
Figure 2-2	Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) Associated with Each Site	2-5
Figure 2-3	Comparison of Site Design Alternatives	2-7
Figure 2-4	Atlantic Steel Redesign Site Plan	2-10
Figure 2-5	Proposed Transit Shuttle Route	2-16
Figure 2-6	Preferred Alternative	2-21
Figure 2-7	Preferred Roadway Improvements (East End)	2-22
Figure 2-8	Preferred Roadway Improvements (West End)	2-23
Figure 2-9	17th Street Bridge Typical Cross Section	2-26
Figure 3-1	Historical Site Plan Showing Sewer Line and Surface Water Features	3-3
Figure 3-2	Surface Water Features	3-5
Figure 3-3	Pre-Development Surface Water Flow	3-6
Figure 3-4	Existing AADT Traffic	3-15
Figure 3-5	Existing AM Peak Hour LOS	3-17
Figure 3-6	Existing PM Peak Hour LOS	3-18
Figure 3-7	Historic Properties in the Area of Potential Effects	3-27
Figure 3-8	Land Use in the Vicinity of Atlantic Steel	3-30
Figure 3-9	Potential Environmental Justice Block Groups	3-35
Figure 4- 1	2025 AADT No Action	4-12
Figure 4-2	2025 AADT Preferred Alternative	4-13
Figure 4-3	2025 No Action AM Peak LOS	4-18
Figure 4-4	2025 No Action PM Peak LOS	4-19
Figure 4-5	2025 Preferred Alternative AM LOS	4-20
Figure 4-6	2025 Preferred Alternative PM LOS	4-21
Figure 4-7	Eligible National Register Boundary of Atlantic Steel Industries, Norfolk Southern Railroad, Siemens, Kool Korner Grocery, and Atlanta Waterworks Hemphill Avenue Station	4-39
Figure 4-8	Eligible National Register Boundary of Siemens	4-42
Figure 4-9	Eligible National Register Boundary of Kool Korner Grocery	4-44
Figure 4-10	Eligible National Register Boundary of Ewell Jett House, The Granada , The Belvedere , and Winwood Apartments	4-46
Figure 4-11	Eligible National Register Boundary of First Presbyterian Church, Mitchell King House, and Garrison Apartments	4-50
Figure 4-12	Eligible National Register Boundary of Mitchell King House	4-52
Figure 4-13	Eligible National Register Boundary of The Castle (Fort Peace), Rhodes Hall, and Ansley Park Historic District	4-54

LIST OF TABLES

No.	Title	Page
Table 2-1	Travel and Emissions Modeling of Site Location Alternatives	2-5
Table 2-2	Travel and Emissions Modeling of Atlantic Steel Site Designs	2-8
Table 2-3	Atlantic Steel Property Development Likely to Occur Under the No Action (No Build) Alternative	2-18
Table 2-4	Proposed Roadway Improvements for the Preferred Alternative	2-24
Table 3-1	Listed Species Known to Potentially Occur in Fulton County, Georgia.....	3-9
Table 3-2	Level of Service Definitions	3-16
Table 3-3	National Ambient Air Quality Standards.....	3-19
Table 3-4	Maximum Monitored Ambient Concentrations in Atlanta for 1995-1999	3-21
Table 3-5	Historic Properties in the APE.....	3-26
Table 3-6	Existing Land Use in the Vicinity of Atlantic Steel.....	3-29
Table 3-7	Summary of 1990 Population and Employment Characteristics of the Study Area.....	3-33
Table 3-8	Potential Environmental Justice Block Groups.....	3-37
Table 4-1	Roadways in the Eastern Portion of the Study Area Average Annual Daily Traffic	4-14
Table 4-2	Roadways in the Western Portion of the Study Area Average Annual Daily Traffic	4-15
Table 4-3	Interstate roadways in the Study Area Average Annual Daily Traffic	4-16
Table 4-4	Roadways in the Eastern Portion of the Study Area Level of Service.....	4-22
Table 4-5	Roadways in the Western Portion of the Study Area Level of Service	4-23
Table 4-6	Interstate Roadways in the Study Area Level of Service	4-24
Table 4-7	Atlantic Steel TCM Site Design Criteria	4-31
Table 4-8	Atlantic Steel TCM Travel Performance Measures.....	4-32
Table 4-9	Inventory of Business Displacements	4-65
Table 4-10	Inventory of Residential Displacements	4-67

LIST OF APPENDICES

Appendix	Title
Appendix A	Atlantic Steel Zoning Conditions
Appendix B	City of Atlanta Letter - No Action Alternative
Appendix C	Stormwater Modeling Report
Appendix D	Agency Correspondence
Appendix E	Noise Reports
Appendix F	Historic Resources/Programmatic Agreement
Appendix G	Visual Resources and Artistic Renderings
Appendix H	City of Atlanta Water and Sanitary Sewer Capacity Certifications and Storm Sewer Alignment Verification
Appendix I	Draft Memorandum of Understanding
Appendix J	Microscale Carbon Monoxide Impact Assessment for the Atlantic Steel Development Project

SECTION 1

NEED AND PURPOSE FOR ACTION

1.1 PROJECT OVERVIEW

Jacoby Atlantic Redevelopment, L.L.C. (hereafter referred to as JAR), a developer in Atlanta, Georgia, has proposed remediation and redevelopment of approximately 135 acres near Atlanta's central business district (CBD) in Fulton County (Figure 1-1). The property to be redeveloped is the site of the former steel mill owned by Atlantic Steel Industries, Inc. (Atlantic Steel). In 1998, the property was rezoned by the City of Atlanta from Heavy Industrial to Central Area Commercial/Residential-Conditional (mixed use, with conditions). JAR purchased the property from Atlantic Steel in December 1999. The proposed redevelopment would include a mix of residential and business uses. The ultimate size of a development of this nature will depend, in a large measure, upon future market conditions. Because of the unpredictability of these future market conditions, it is difficult to predict the final design of the planned redevelopment. For the purposes of this Environmental Assessment (EA), however, JAR identified the most likely amount of development that would occur at the site. Based on an analysis of current market conditions and a reasonable projection of future market conditions, the planned redevelopment is expected to include two million square feet of general office space, one and a half million square feet of retail and entertainment uses; two million square feet of high tech offices, 2,400 residential units, and 1,000 hotel rooms.

In addition to the site redevelopment, project plans include construction of a multi-modal (cars, pedestrians, bicycles, transit) bridge and interchange at 17th Street that would cross Interstate 75/85 (I-75/85) and provide access to the site as well as a connection to Midtown Atlanta and the nearby Metropolitan Atlanta Rapid Transit Authority (MARTA) Arts Center Station. Roadway improvements would include extension of the existing 17th Street from West Peachtree Street (U.S. 19/S.R. 9) in Midtown Atlanta, heading west on new alignment over I-75/85, through the development, and connecting with Northside Drive (U.S. 41/S.R. 3) at Bishop Street. Additional improvements include modifications to the existing I-75 and I-85 southbound ramps to 14th Street (U.S. 19/S.R. 9) and Techwood Drive to provide access to the new bridge and the site; construction of a new northbound off-ramp from I-75/85 to 17th Street; reconstruction of the 14th Street Bridge and Williams Street to accommodate the new northbound off-ramp; and intersection improvements along 17th Street, 16th Street, 14th Street, and Northside Drive. The entire project study area is approximately bounded by Peachtree Circle and Peachtree Street to the east, 14th Street to the south, Trabert Avenue and the I-75/85 Brookwood Interchange to the north, and Northside Drive to the west (Figure 1-1). The study area includes the residential neighborhoods of Ansley Park, Home Park, and Loring Heights, as well as the predominantly commercial districts east of I-75/85 and along Northside Drive.



The project also would include operation of a transit shuttle system that would circulate between the MARTA Arts Center Station and the Atlantic Steel site via exclusive bus lanes that would cross the proposed 17th Street Bridge and continue along 17th Street through the Atlantic Steel development. Transit stops would be located throughout the Atlantic Steel site, providing service within a quarter mile of the highest employment, retail, and residential concentrations. It is anticipated that a dedicated shuttle bus pull-off would be provided on West Peachtree Street, to allow passengers access to the MARTA Arts Center Station.

1.2 AGENCY INVOLVEMENT

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) became involved with this project through its Project XL Program. Project XL, which stands for “excellence and Leadership,” encourages companies and communities to come forward with new approaches that have the potential to advance environmental goals more effectively and efficiently than have been achieved using traditional regulatory tools. Project XL is required for the Atlantic Steel redevelopment because neither the 17th Street Extension nor the associated I-75/85 access ramps would be able to proceed without the regulatory flexibility being allowed by EPA under its XL Program. The specific regulatory flexibility includes the consideration of the entire redevelopment project, including the 17th Street Extension, as a Transportation Control Measure (TCM) - (see Section 1.3 for more detail).

EPA, in cooperation with the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), the Federal Transit Administration (FTA), Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT), Georgia Regional Transportation Authority (GRTA), MARTA, Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC) and the City of Atlanta has prepared this EA as part of EPA’s regulatory decision on approval of this redevelopment project as a TCM. The EA is also intended to fulfill applicable National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA) requirements associated with other federal actions on the Project, specifically in order that the transportation components of the project may become eligible for federal funding. The EA has been prepared in accordance with NEPA, as amended; EPA’s “Policy and Procedures for Voluntary Preparation of NEPA Documents” (63 FR 58045), generally following the procedures set out at 40 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Part 6, Subparts A through D; and the U.S. Department of Transportation’s (DOT) “Environmental Impact and Related Procedures” (23 CFR 771). In addition, the EA has been prepared in accordance with provisions of the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) regulations, other NEPA requirements and policies, and any applicable state and local laws, regulations, and ordinances.

The EA is a summary and culmination of planning efforts associated with the development of concept alternatives, design traffic study, preliminary engineering analysis, and environmental impacts assessment, all of which have been completed with opportunities for public comment and agency coordination, as part of the NEPA process as well as EPA’s Project XL.

1.3 REGULATORY FRAMEWORK

Thirteen counties surrounding and including the City of Atlanta and Fulton County are currently out of compliance with federal air quality conformity requirements because this region has failed to demonstrate that the transportation activities will not exacerbate existing air quality problems or create new air quality problems in the region. The Clean Air Act (CAA) generally

prohibits construction of new capacity-enhancing transportation projects that use federal funds or require federal approval in areas where compliance with conformity requirements has lapsed. However, the CAA includes provisions for the creation of TCMs in non-attainment areas, such as Atlanta. TCMs are defined as "...measures with the purpose of reducing emissions or concentrations of air pollutants from transportation sources by reducing vehicle use or changing traffic flow or congestion conditions." TCMs are specific strategies that, by their design, have an air quality benefit. Projects which are approved as TCMs can proceed even during a conformity lapse. Examples of typical TCMs include: projects that improve public transit; employer-based transportation management plans; projects that limit certain metropolitan areas to non-motorized and pedestrian use; programs to provide both travel and storage facilities for bicycles; and others.

The proposed 17th Street Extension and Atlantic Steel Redevelopment Project, including the associated transit connection to the MARTA Arts Center station, are being proposed as a TCM. This TCM is experimental in nature and is unlike any other TCM previously proposed. To be considered as a TCM, the site's location, infrastructure and site design in combination with transit and other transportation elements, (e.g. bicycle lanes) must demonstrate an air quality benefit. This benefit must be an enforceable measure proven through specific activities. The enforceability of the specific measures of the TCM must be demonstrated in order to be included as a revision to the Georgia State Implementation Plan (SIP).

1.4 PROJECT NEED AND PURPOSE

The proposed redevelopment of the Atlantic Steel site would reduce overall emissions associated with new development in the Atlanta region by promoting smart growth principles, including site cleanup and redevelopment, certain on-site design elements, and the development of transportation infrastructure that encourages the use of transit and non-motorized modes of travel. The 17th Street Extension and Bridge are a part of the transportation infrastructure that is necessary to support the redevelopment of the Atlantic Steel site and maintain acceptable overall mobility in Midtown Atlanta.

The project as proposed would accomplish the following:

- . Transform a former industrial site, environmentally impacted by its past use, into a mixed use community of retail, residential, and commercial uses that would be more compatible with surrounding land uses;
- Incorporate certain site design elements (e.g., higher residential and employment density, mixed use, on-site transit proximity, and street connectivity) and transportation infrastructure (e.g., sidewalks, bike paths, transit stops) that encourage the use of transit and non-motorized modes of travel that serve to reduce overall emissions;
- . Provide a new multi-modal bridge to reconnect the Atlantic Steel site with Midtown Atlanta and serve as a new "Gateway" into the heart of Downtown Atlanta;
- Reduce congestion and improve traffic flow along 10th and 14th Streets by providing a new east-west connection across the Downtown Connector;
- Provide new mass transit linkage to MARTA Arts Center Station to allow for a high transit ridership; and

- . Provide internal trip capture on-site that would be unattainable in single land use developments of the size of Atlantic Steel.

The proposed redevelopment plan for the Atlantic Steel site incorporates many elements that could be TCMs by themselves, for example, the linkage to transit, the requirement that employers at the site will join or form a Transportation Management Association (TMA), restricted access of certain areas of the site for pedestrian use, and paths for bicyclists and pedestrians. EPA anticipates that the combination of these elements would have a positive effect on reducing emissions. In addition, the site has a regionally central, urban location. EPA supports the planning approach that it is environmentally beneficial for development to occur where infrastructure and transportation alternatives exist to support it (see Section 2.3). It is anticipated that redeveloping this property would result in a shift of growth to Midtown Atlanta from the outer reaches of the metropolitan area. The combination of the site's location in a central urban area, connection to the existing transit system, design that promotes pedestrian access, participation in a TMA, and provision of bicycle and pedestrian conveniences are expected to work together to reduce growth in auto traffic in the Atlanta region. It is for these reasons that EPA is considering this project as a TCM.

1.5 SUPPORTING TRANSPORTATION FEATURES

As described above, the 17th Street Extension and Bridge are a part of the transportation infrastructure that is necessary to support the redevelopment of the Atlantic Steel site and maintain acceptable overall mobility in Midtown Atlanta. The following sections describe the specific needs for the development of roadway and transit solutions that provide the desired mobility options of a multi-modal transportation system in this area. The roadway improvements described are needed to serve the Atlantic Steel site and to meet travel demands resulting from growth in population and employment in the Midtown area. Improvements, current and future, to the highway and surface street system cannot alone accommodate projected demand, nor will these improvements provide the multi-modal system desired for Midtown Atlanta. However, by integrating transit improvements as part of the redevelopment of the Atlantic Steel site, in combination with the planned highway improvements on I-75/85 and other closely coordinated programs, the capacity and mobility options necessary to accommodate future growth can be achieved more effectively.

1.5.1 Roadway Improvements

When this segment of I-75/85 was first built in the early sixties, full diamond interchanges were provided at both 10th and 14th Streets. Some years later when the freeway was widened, the northbound ramps at 10th Street and the southbound ramps at 14th Street were eliminated, leaving a single split diamond interchange to serve the entire Midtown area. With traffic concentrated at only two exits, the ramps have become very congested, especially at 14th Street with traffic often experiencing long queues and backup onto the interstate highway. East-west traffic flow across the freeway is also severely restricted. Grade separations were provided at 10th and 14th Streets, while 16th Street was severed by the initial freeway project. Traffic using 16th Street was redistributed mainly to 14th Street. The reduced freeway access to and from 10th and 14th Streets has greatly increased the volume and turning demand along each roadway.

There are currently a number of Midtown developments proposed or underway along the east side corridor, as well as the expansion of the Turner Broadcasting Systems (TBS) Techwood campus and the Atlantic Steel redevelopment on the west side. Approximately 7,800,000 square

feet of commercial and residential development is proposed or under construction on the east side of I-75/85 and approximately 8,400,000 square feet of new development on the west side, including the Atlantic Steel redevelopment. This new development would increase east-west trip demand over I-75/85. All proposed development in the Midtown area would impact the traffic conditions in the project area and intensify the need for improved access. There is substantial need to restore continuity for east-west traffic across the Interstate and to help alleviate congested conditions at the 10" and 14" Street interchanges and along Techwood Drive and Williams Street.

The proposed 17th Street Extension and Bridge, though certainly needed to ease Midtown traffic congestion, is also proposed to serve the Atlantic Steel redevelopment site. The ability to develop this mixed-use project is enhanced through the connectivity provided by the extension of 17" Street through the site and by providing new access from I-75/85. Accessibility to this site is a critical issue to ensure the proposed mixed development of residential, commercial, and retail land uses on-site.

1.5.2 Transit Improvements

One of the most important aspects of the 17" Street Extension and Bridge is the linkage it would provide for mass transit. An integral part of this project's transit orientation is the linkage from the Atlantic Steel site to nearby mass transit at MARTA's Arts Center Station and the MARTA system. The dedicated transit service throughout the site with a connection across the 17" Street Bridge to the Arts Center Station would allow for a high transit ridership.

In addition to serving the on-site redevelopment, a number of regional mass transit needs are being studied or are proposed for additional study that would be served by this transit link through the Atlantic Steel site. Specifically, the ARC has developed a 2025 Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) that includes a proposed light rail project from Town Center Mall in Cobb County connecting to the Arts Center Station via the Atlantic Steel site and the proposed 17" Street Bridge. In addition, the RTP includes a study to create a transit corridor on the west side of Downtown Atlanta that could connect through the Atlantic Steel site.

Recognizing that the development of both the Town Center to Arts Center project and the west side transit link would take years, the short-term development of a rubber tire transit system proposed for the Atlantic Steel redevelopment project is crucial for establishing a new link to the MARTA Arts Center Station. That system could be modified and adapted as other transit facilities come on line. Regardless, the 17" Street Bridge and the Atlantic Steel site would be designed to accommodate future rail, potentially connecting to the MARTA Arts Center Station.

SECTION 2 ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED

2.1 OVERVIEW

This section provides an overview of the alternatives development process, describes the features of the site, bridge, and roadway alternatives considered, and identifies alternatives considered, including the no build (hereafter referred to as the no action alternative), but eliminated from further analysis in the EA. As described in Section 1, the proposed 17th Street Extension and Atlantic Steel Redevelopment project is composed of several components which qualify the project for consideration as a TCM and as a viable candidate for Project XL. The specific alternatives developed address the different components and include: 1) alternate site locations for the development in the Atlanta metropolitan region; 2) alternate site designs for the Atlantic Steel Redevelopment; 3) alternate locations for the 17th Street Bridge placement; 4) Interstate access alternates; 5) alternate intersection improvements; 6) high occupancy vehicle (HOV) access alternates; and 7) alternate connections to transit at the MARTA Arts Center Station. Analyzing the above mentioned alternative project components resulted in the identification of an overall preferred (build) alternative (detailed in Section 2.8).

2.2 PUBLIC AND AGENCY INVOLVEMENT

The alternatives were developed based upon an in-depth evaluation of comments received throughout the scoping and planning process. Multiple public meetings and discussion groups have been held and individual contacts and public notices have occurred relative to this project, including activities relating to the rezoning of the property, Project XL, Site Remediation and the development of the EA. Over 300 public and agency meetings were held from 1997 through 2000, involving: City of Atlanta Neighborhood Planning Unit E, Arthritis Foundation, Georgia Institute of Technology, TBS, Coca-Cola, Midtown Alliance, Woodruff Arts Center, Loring Heights residents, Home Park Neighborhood Association, Ansley Park residents, the Georgia Conservancy, Georgians for Transportation Alternatives, Atlanta Bicycle Campaign, PATH Foundation, Pedestrians Educating Drivers on Safety, and individual property owners. In addition to EPA, other agencies involved in coordination, scoping and planning included: ARC, City of Atlanta, GDOT, GRTA, Georgia Department of Natural Resources, FHWA, MARTA, FTA, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (COE), U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO), Atlanta History Center, Advisory Council for Historic Preservation, and others. Reflective of the comments received, Georgia Governor Roy Barnes established a Green Light Committee chaired by GRTA to help facilitate public and private sector coordination for this project. Members of the Green Light Committee include: EPA, FHWA, FTA, GDOT, EPD, MARTA, City of Atlanta, ARC, and JAR. Each of the alternatives considered reflect potentially significant issues raised by public and agency personnel and were designed to minimize adverse effects on potentially affected resource categories, as well as health and safety concerns.

2.3 SITE LOCATION ALTERNATIVES

As stated previously, in order for a project to be considered a TCM, it must demonstrate an air quality benefit. The entire Atlantic Steel redevelopment would attract new automobile trips and result in new emissions. Therefore, redevelopment of the site when considered in isolation would not qualify as a TCM in the traditional sense. However, the overall assumption of the air quality benefit for this project is that emissions generated from the Atlantic Steel project compare favorably with emissions generated by an equivalent amount of development at other likely sites in the region. Transportation literature suggests travel emissions resulting from a developed Atlantic Steel site might be lower than emissions resulting from another site because:

- the proposed development would include high densities, a mix of uses, and would be located near transit, and would therefore generate fewer total auto trips than comparable amounts of development placed in locations without these features; and
- the proposed development would be regionally central to more activities, so auto trips to and from the site would on average be shorter (Hagler Bailly 1999).

Based on these considerations, EPA evaluated the performance of the Atlantic Steel site relative to three other likely regional growth locations. This analysis is described in the *Transportation and Environmental Analysis of the Atlantic Steel Development Proposal* (Hagler Bailly 1999) and summarized in this section of the EA.

To reduce the potential number of locations where a mixed-use development of the magnitude of the Atlantic Steel Redevelopment could occur, land with the following characteristics was eliminated: surface water, extensive wetlands, protected groundwater, constrained water supply, constrained highway, municipal boundaries, restrictive county land-use plan and committed lands. The land screening process produced eight contiguous parcels that were large enough to absorb the proposed development at suburban densities. Three of the eight sites were then selected based on recommendations from a panel of regional project stakeholders. These three sites are as follows: 1) Cobb/Fulton County; 2) south Henry County; and 3) Perimeter Center/Sandy Springs (Figure 2-1). These three sites, along with the Atlantic Steel Site, represent a range of possible locations and types of development most likely to occur in the Atlanta region.

2.3.1 Cobb/Fulton County Site

The Cobb/Fulton County site is located in South Fulton County, near the intersection of Interstate 20 (I-20) and Interstate 285 (I-285) (Figure 2-1). The existing land-use is primarily light industrial and warehouse facilities. The area is served by bus service connecting to the downtown Five Points MARTA rail station. The area is economically depressed and has been targeted by the "Empowerment Zone" program as an area in need of economic development assistance as well as increased mobility options for low-income residents.

2.3.2 South Henry County Site

The Henry County site is located in the southern portion of the County (Figure 2-1). Henry County maintains a rural character despite significant development pressures. This site is located at the greatest distance from regional activity centers and transit service in comparison with the other

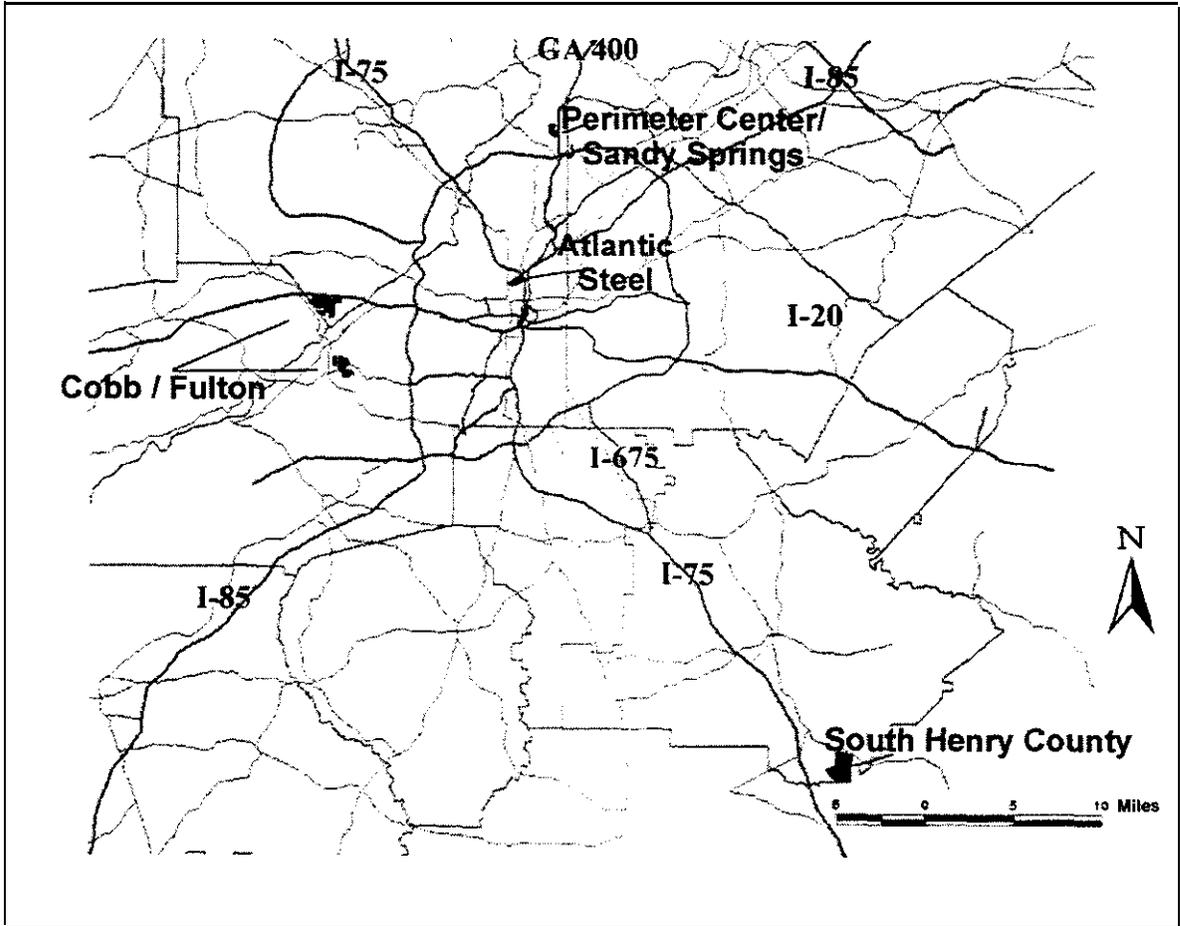


Figure 2-1
Site Location Alternatives

17th Street Extension and Atlantic Steel Redevelopment Project
 Environmental Assessment

SOURCE: Hagler Bailly 1999

J:\1735996\fig2-1.cdr

alternatives. Henry County's proximity to Hartsfield International Airport has raised its attractiveness as a site for freight and warehousing companies.

2.3.3 Perimeter Center / Sandy Springs Site

The Perimeter Center / Sandy Springs site is located in north Atlanta in the Perimeter Center area, which is the location of one of metropolitan Atlanta's largest employment concentrations. Despite its suburban location, the area is considered urban by development density standards. The proposed site is scattered on parcels north and south of I-285 (Figure 2-1). All parcels are located within two miles of existing or proposed MARTA heavy rail stations.

2.3.4 Comparison of the Site Alternatives

The primary site comparison included a quantification of the transportation impacts and air quality benefits of locating development on the Atlantic Steel site relative to the other possible locations. Selecting distinct types of locations for analysis - **infill** in an urban activity center (Atlantic Steel), suburban greenfield with bus transit (Cobb/Fulton County), a relatively isolated greenfield site in a community with rural character (South Henry County), and **infill** in a suburban activity center (Perimeter Center/Sandy Springs) - provided EPA with a better understanding of the sensitivity of any emissions reductions to these different locations.

A regional transportation and air emissions analysis was **performed** for each site. Since Project XL identifies flexibility with the CAA requirements which are triggered by Atlanta's violation of the ground level ozone standard, emissions of the ozone precursors volatile organic compounds (VOCs) and nitrogen oxides (NO_x) were modeled. The analysis of regional VOC and NO_x emissions was conducted using TRANPLAN, Atlanta's regional travel model, and MOBILE 5a, EPA's emissions model. The results of the regional location analysis are depicted in Figure 2-2 and summarized in Table 2-1.

Analysis of regional transportation and air emissions produced by the proposed Atlantic Steel development showed that the project would create less travel and fewer emissions than developing available alternative sites (Hagler Bailly 1999). For this reason, it was agreed that redevelopment of the Atlantic Steel site could be pursued further as a TCM.

2.4 SITE DESIGN ALTERNATIVES

Location affects environmental performance, but site design is also another important factor that could affect travel behavior. Consequently, this EA also considers alternative site designs. EPA was most interested in design differences affecting travel choices and subsequent auto emissions. Many urban land use and transportation planning issues that **affect** transportation behavior and subsequently environmental performance, are captured by what planners refer to as the "three D's": diversity, design, and density (Hagler Bailly 1999). Diversity means mixing land uses. Mixing uses has been observed to reduce auto trips by allowing trips to be made, chained, or combined without the use of an automobile. The different uses, however, must be within easy walking distances from each other. Design includes a range of choices that affect the physical and aesthetic experience of being in an area. Specific design examples include distance most people are located **from** a transit stop and store/office-front continuity along a sidewalk. Density refers to the concentration of housing, shops, and offices. The arrangement of density on the site is

Figure 2-2. Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) Associated with Each Site

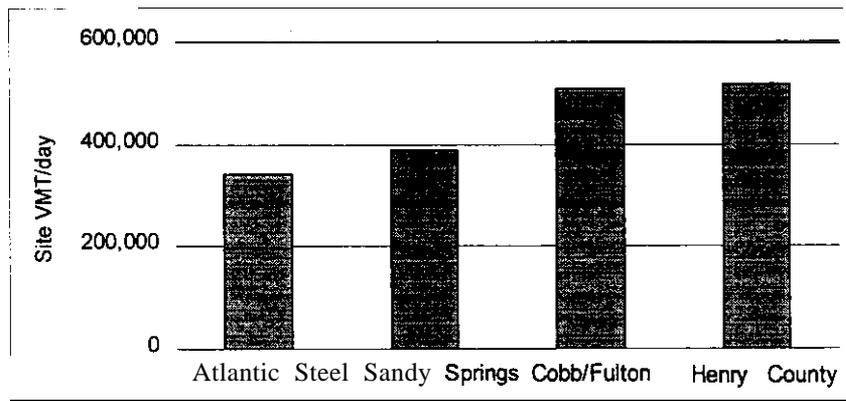


Table 2-1. Travel and Emissions Modeling of Site Location Alternatives

Regional Vehicle Miles Traveled			
Site	Regional Total (VMT*/day)	Associated with site (VMT/day)	Site VMT difference from Atlantic Steel
Atlantic Steel	139,172,200	340,300	
Perimeter Center / Sandy Springs	139,221,572	389,672	14.5%
Cobb/Fulton County	139,339,398	507,498	49.1%
South Henry County	139,350,097	518,197	52.3%

Regional Emissions						
Site	NOx			VOC		
	Regional total (tons/day)	Associated with site (tons/day)	Site NOx difference from Atlantic Steel	Regional total (tons/day)	Associated with site (tons/day)	Site VOC difference from Atlantic Steel
Atlantic Steel	191.95	0.400		153.230	-0.390	
Sandy Springs	192.10	0.548	37.00%	154.374	0.754	293.33%
Cobb/Fulton	192.24	0.690	72.50%	154.312	0.692	277.44%
Henry County	192.27	0.724	81.00%	154.464	0.844	316.41%

Source: Hagler Bailly 1999

* VMT = Vehicle Miles Traveled

important. For example, concentrating density around transit stops can increase ridership. Improvements in each category were considered to reduce auto travel and emissions.

2.4.1 Three Design Alternatives Considered

Three site designs were developed by the project team for purposes of comparison (Figure 2-3). The original Atlantic Steel site design developed by JAR was the first site design considered. It was determined that the original design could be improved to reduce driving and levels of emissions. EPA hired planners Duany Plater-Zyberk (DPZ) to help develop a site design that took advantage of those opportunities. A site design that accomplished these goals while maintaining the project's marketability was then created by DPZ. In addition, a design charrette was held December 7-9, 1998, in which government agencies, prospective developers, the community (including representatives of the adjacent Home Park neighborhood), and other Atlanta stakeholders, voiced concerns about the design of the project. The DPZ site design reflects much of this input. JAR incorporated many of the DPZ design elements and submitted a revised site design to EPA in May 1999.

2.4.2 Evaluation of Site Designs

Each of the three Atlantic Steel site designs differs in important ways that affect travel and therefore emissions. Compared to the original design, the DPZ design and redesign excel in three areas. First, they improve the mix of uses on-site by integrating them more closely. Second, they provide better connectivity within the development as well as to the neighborhoods (primarily Home Park) surrounding the development, an important consideration expressed by Home Park. Third, the pedestrian environment was improved through street design and improved connectivity.

As with the regional location analysis, a quantitative analysis of the differences between all three site designs in terms of travel and emissions was conducted (Hagler Bailly 1999). The analysis required a two-step process. First, site design alternatives were analyzed using INDEX@, a geographical information system (GIS)-based tool that measures land use and site design characteristics. INDEX@ measured spatial characteristics such as residential or employment density. These measures allowed a quantitative comparison of design differences. Measures of site design included, for example, the number of residential dwellings within 1/4 mile of a transit stop.

The second step involved developing predictions of travel choices for each of the three Atlantic Steel site designs. As a starting point, ARC's travel model, TRANPLAN, was used to develop baseline travel patterns to and from the Atlantic Steel site, as if it would be developed like a typical Atlanta area project. Next, using data on travelers' responses to site design, as derived from INDEX@, adjustments were made to TRANPLAN to reflect the site design variables which include the dynamic interaction of employment, commercial use and housing within concentrated mixed-use developments, as well as the effects of urban design characteristics and the degree of pedestrian friendliness.

Together, these design variables affected both the selection of travel mode and total vehicle miles traveled (VMT). The results of the comparison of the three site designs are reported in Table 2-2.

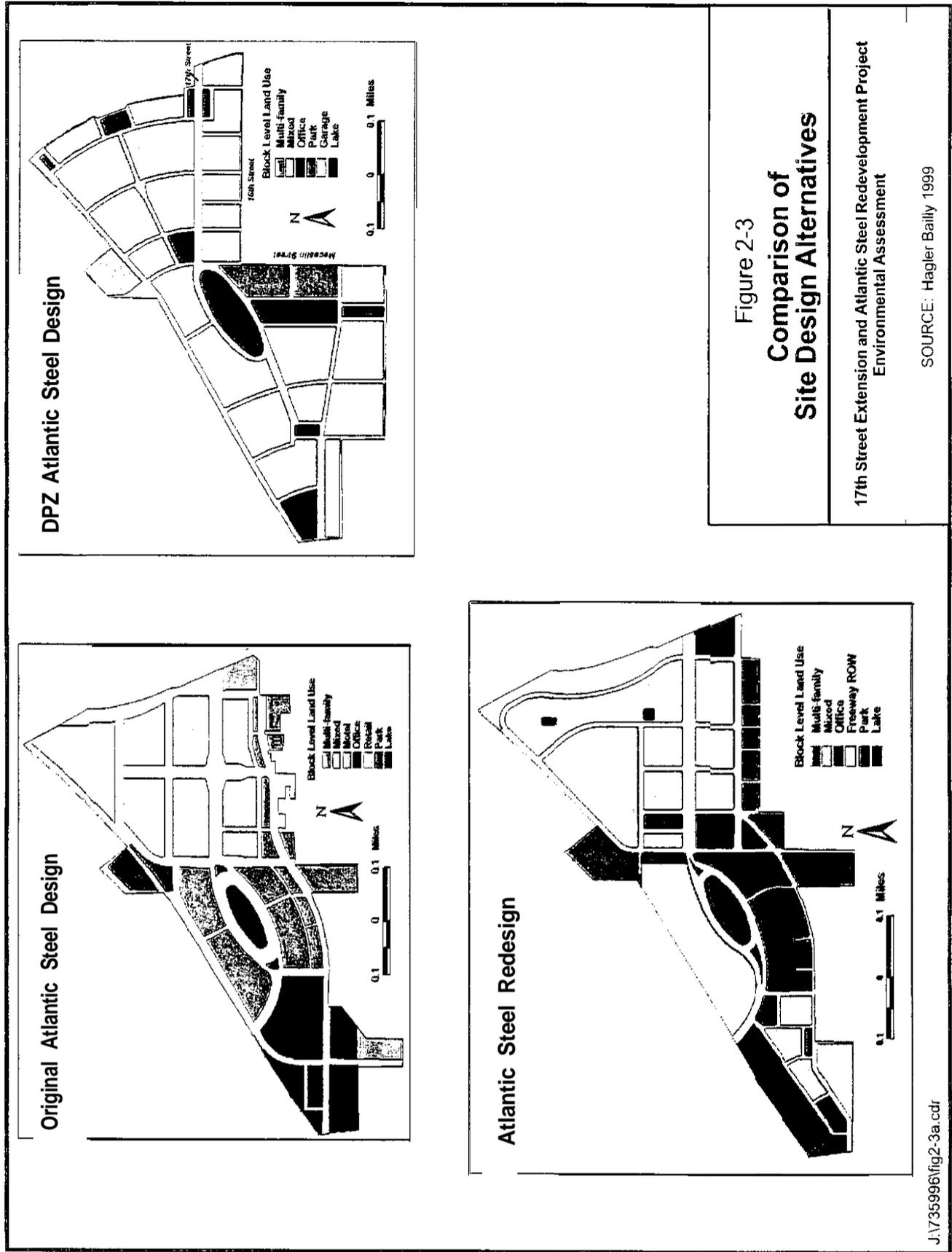


Table 2-2. Travel and Emissions Modeling of Atlantic Steel Site Designs

Regional Vehicle Miles Traveled			
Site, Design	Regional Total (VMT*/day)	Associated with site (VMT/day)	Site VMT difference from generic development
Atlantic Steel, Not Design-adjusted	139,172,200	340,300	
Original Atlantic Steel Design	139,159,289	327,389	-3.8%
DPZ Atlantic Steel Design	139,152,340	320,440	-5.8%
Atlantic Steel Redesign	139,154,690	322,790	-5.1%

Regional Emissions						
	NOx			VOC		
Site	Regional total (tons/day)	Associated with site (tons/day)	Site NOx from generic development	Regional total (tons/day)	Associated with site (tons/day)	Site VOC from generic development
Atlantic Steel, Not Design-adjusted	191.95	0.400		153.230	-0.390	
Original Atlantic Steel Design	191.94	0.386	-3.5%	153.216	-0.404	-3.6%
DPZ Atlantic Steel Design	191.93	0.376	-6.0%	153.206	-0.414	-6.2%
Atlantic Steel Redesign	191.93	0.381	-4.7%	153.208	-0.412	-5.8%

Source: Hagler Bailly 1999

* VMT = Vehicle Miles Traveled

The original Atlantic Steel site design was improved by incorporating key site design elements, such as residential and employment density, mixed use, on-site transit proximity, and street connectivity, that are expected to work together to reduce driving and level of emissions associated with the site. For this reason, it was agreed that redevelopment of the Atlantic Steel site could be pursued further as a TCM. The proposed JAR Atlantic Steel redesign is depicted in greater detail in Figure 2-4. This design constitutes the redevelopment component of the preferred alternative.

2.5 ROADWAY ALTERNATIVES

This section presents the roadway alternatives, including a new bridge across the Downtown Connector and improvements to I-75/85 and surface streets in Midtown Atlanta, that were considered. These alternatives were developed to provide access to the Atlantic Steel site, improve east-west connections across the Downtown Connector, and alleviate operational and safety problems on certain existing surface streets. These alternatives are summarized from the 17" Street Extension and Interchange Concept Report, including revisions, hereafter referred to as the "Concept Report" (MAAI 2000a). An Interchange Modification Report (IMR) is also being completed that addresses more detailed operational analysis and possible impacts to the Interstate system in compliance with State and Federal requirements. The Concept Report and updates are available from GDOT upon request.

In order to assess the effectiveness of the various roadway alternatives developed for this project, a thorough operational analysis was conducted on the roadway network in the project study area. The following tasks were performed for this analysis:

- Existing traffic and turning movement counts were collected;
- Future traffic assignments were estimated;
- Qualitative-type analysis using Highway Capacity Software was conducted; and
- Quantitative-type analysis of critical intersections and freeway/ramp segments using TRAF-CORSIM traffic modeling software was conducted.

Traffic operations of the study area roadway network were analyzed. Existing traffic counts were collected in 1998 and 2000 to represent existing traffic conditions in the study area. Future traffic (Year 2025 Background Traffic) was predicted by increasing the existing traffic volumes by a growth factor. Volumes on the Interstate segments were compounded by 1.5% per year, and volumes on the surface streets were compounded by 2% per year to represent future growth in the project study area. Traffic attributable to the Atlantic Steel redevelopment was determined by using Institute of Transportation Engineers (ITE) trip generation factors for the various proposed on-site future land uses (e.g., commercial, retail, residential), reduced by a 10% internal capture (trips that are captured on-site) and a 15% transit share (ITE 1997). The internal capture rate was based on the results of studies, which analyzed trip making behavior in mixed-use developments similar to Atlantic Steel. The transit share reduction was based on results of studies of the performance of other transit-oriented developments and was also calculated by ARC's travel demand model, which is calibrated to travel behavior in the Atlanta region based on travel surveys, for this project. The final step included distribution and assignment of trips generated by the proposed redevelopment onto the surface streets and Interstate system. Trip distribution was determined using the ARC

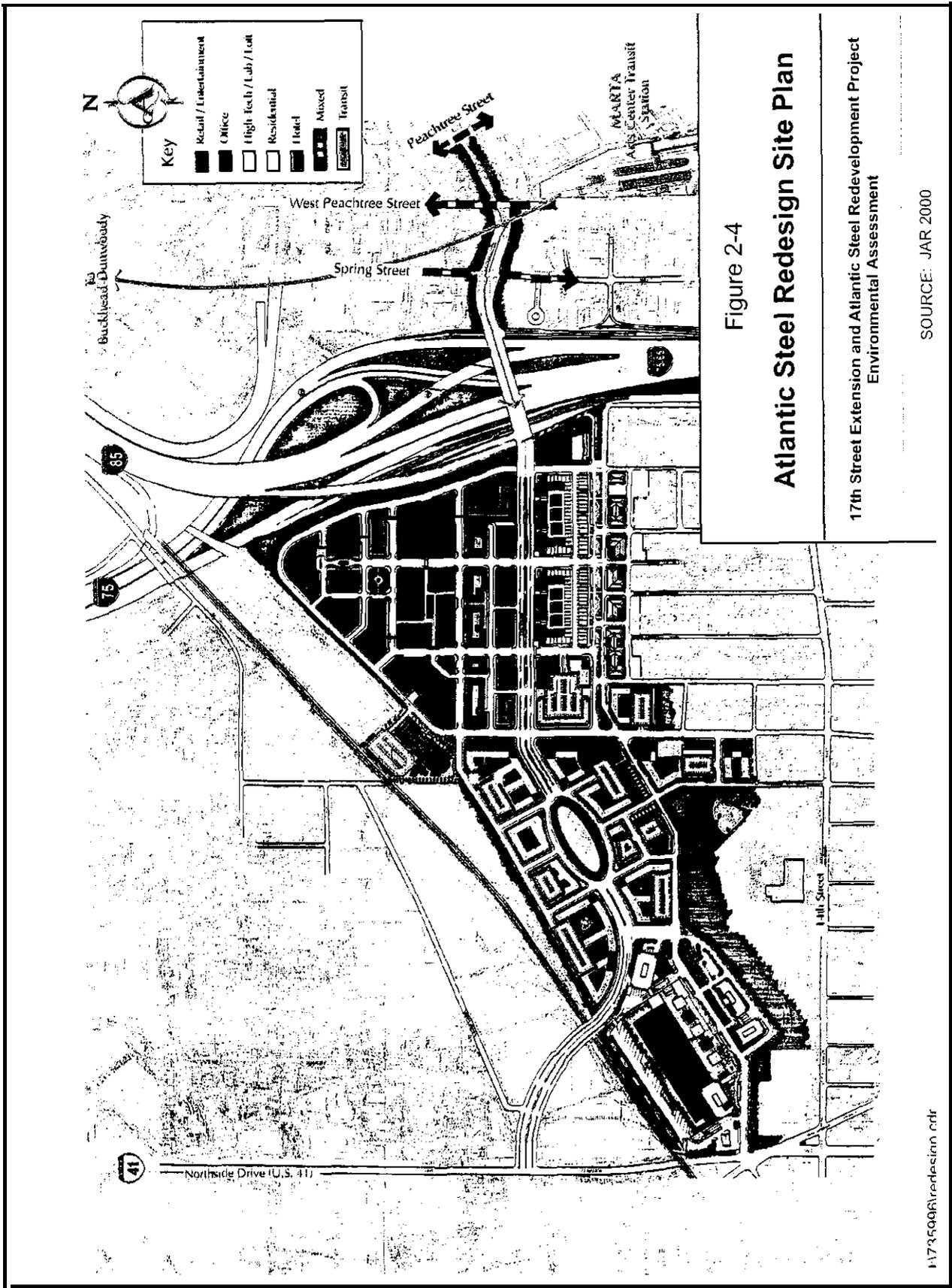


Figure 2-4

Atlantic Steel Redesign Site Plan

17th Street Extension and Atlantic Steel Redevelopment Project
Environmental Assessment

SOURCE: JAR 2000

117350061redesign.mxd

regional model, and individual trips were assigned throughout the network according to this direction distribution.

This section describes the decision making process concerning the development and evaluation of roadway alternatives. Various Interstate and surface street improvements were modeled in order to assess their ability to accommodate traffic flow in the year 2025. Several major roadway alternative conceptual designs were considered. Design elements were modified under each alternative to reflect public, community, and agency concerns. This evaluation process led to the selection of the preferred roadway improvement components of the project. All other alternatives were considered, but are not further evaluated in this EA. A more detailed description of all roadway alternatives considered is provided in the Concept Report. The roadway improvements proposed as part of the preferred alternative are discussed in detail in Section 2.8, and the impacts associated with this alternative are addressed in Section 4.

2.5.1 Bridge Location Alternatives

The first set of alternatives developed identified potential locations and alignments for providing an improved east-west connection across the Downtown Connector. Potential bridge locations were developed from 14th Street north to the I-75/I-85 Brookwood Interchange.

2.5.1.1 Widening 14th Street

This alternative included widening 14th Street and associated intersections between Techwood Drive and West Peachtree Street to the maximum feasible width, but did not include building a new bridge. Results of the Year 2025 traffic modeling did not show appreciable improvements in traffic and ramp operations even with significant widening of 14th Street. In addition, this alternative did not provide direct access to the Atlantic Steel site. Therefore, this alternative was not considered further, and it was determined that a new bridge would be required to provide direct access to the Atlantic Steel site and another east-west connection into Midtown.

2.5.1.2 16th Street Bridge

A possible bridge location at 16th Street was considered. This alternative would have provided direct access to the Atlantic Steel site and the MARTA Arts Center Station. However, this bridge location alternative was not considered further due to the inability to construct an at-grade intersection at Spring Street, which was preferred by the City of Atlanta and the local property owners in Midtown. At-grade intersections are preferred in order to enhance pedestrian and bicycle mobility, and maintain City of Atlanta street continuity and connectivity. In addition, the potential impacts to high rise developments and historic resources along 16th Street, as well as topography constraints, provided additional rationale for identification of another bridge location.

2.5.1.3 17th Street Bridge

Two possible bridge locations along 17th Street were considered. The first 17th Street alignment would have provided direct access to the Atlantic Steel site and the MARTA Arts Center Station at Lombardy Way. However, this bridge location did not provide the opportunity for an at-grade intersection at Spring Street due to grade problems. In addition, the local property owners expressed concerns about the bridge location and suggested a 17th Street alignment to the north to minimize impacts to existing properties.

Based on these concerns, a 17th Street Bridge location/alignment was identified that met the concerns of the local community and provided at-grade intersections at Spring and West Peachtree Streets. The preferred bridge alignment includes the extension of existing 17th Street at West Peachtree Street over the Interstate, through the Atlantic Steel property to Northside Drive. This alternative was determined to be the preferred bridge alignment and is described in Section 2.8. The proposed 17th Street Bridge would be approximately 130 feet wide and would contain two general purpose travel lanes and one dedicated transit/bike lane in each direction with sidewalks on both sides.

2.5.2 17th Street Bridge - Alternatives Addressing Interstate Access

After identification of a preferred bridge location, alternatives for access from I-75/I-85 were considered. These alternatives addressed alterations of existing ramps and provision of new Interstate access to the 17th Street Bridge.

2.5.2.1 No Access Ramps

This alternative included the 17th Street Bridge with no direct Interstate access to and from the bridge. This alternative provided some relief to traffic on 14th Street, because it provided a new east-west connection. However, it did not provide relief to the existing north and southbound exit ramps. Traffic on Techwood Drive and Williams Street would backup when trying to access 10th and 14th Streets. In addition, without additional access to the Atlantic Steel site, traffic would utilize existing surface streets in the Home Park community and have much greater impacts on this community. For these reasons, this alternative was not considered further. It was determined that some additional access from I-75/I-85 should be provided to the 17th Street Bridge.

2.5.2.2 Reconfiguration of Existing 14th Street Southbound Off-Ramps from I-75 and I-85

The purpose of this alternative was to reconfigure the existing southbound 14th Street off-ramps from I-75 and I-85 to provide access to the 17th Street Bridge. This alternative provided direct access from I-75 to the 17th Street Bridge and improved access from I-85 to 16th Street. Traffic accessing Atlantic Steel would utilize these new connections. Techwood Drive would be widened as it approaches 14th Street. The improvements described above would provide traffic relief on the existing southbound ramps, especially on Techwood Drive as it approaches 14th Street. However, with no additional northbound access or improvements, backups and delays on the existing northbound exit at 10th Street would be unacceptable. Therefore, this alternative was not considered further.

2.5.2.3 Addition of Northbound Off-Ramp from I-75/I-85

This alternative included the same improvements as described in Section 2.5.2.2 and also included a new northbound off-ramp from I-75/I-85 to the 17th Street Bridge. The new northbound off-ramp would be located just north of 14th Street and would involve relocation of Williams Street to the east. This alternative would also involve improvements to the existing intersection of 16th Street and Williams Street. However, this alternative was dismissed from further consideration based on safety concerns related to the proximity of the 17th Street northbound off-ramp to the I-75/I-85 diverge.

Due to the safety concerns, another northbound off-ramp alternative was developed that was located south of 14th Street, further from the I-75/I-85 diverge. The off-ramp would exit the Interstate and become elevated, built on a structure to fly-over 14th Street. The ramp would remain elevated over existing Williams Street and connect with the 17th Street Bridge. However, this alternative was dismissed from further consideration based on property owner concerns and aesthetic impacts related to the elevated structure, as well as additional cost involved.

2.5.2.4 Reconfiguration of Southbound and Northbound Off-Ramps

This Interstate access alternative included the same improvements as described in Section 2.5.2.3, but with slight reconfiguration of both the southbound and northbound off-ramps. Due to safety considerations, the northbound off-ramp was lengthened to a diverge point south of 14th Street, further away from the I-75/I-85 diverge. The off-ramp would travel under 14th Street, parallel the Interstate, and rise up to connect with the 17th Street Bridge. Since the northbound off-ramp would pass underneath the 14th Street Bridge, this would require reconstruction of the 14th Street Bridge.

In addition, since a greater portion of traffic accessing the Atlantic Steel site and Midtown are predicted to come from I-85 and GA400, the southbound off-ramps were reversed from the original concept as described in Section 2.5.2.2. The southbound off-ramp from I-85 would have direct access to the 17th Street Bridge, and the I-75 southbound off-ramp would have direct access to 16th Street. Techwood Drive would still be improved at 14th Street. Both of these changes constitute the preferred alternative for Interstate access and are described in greater detail in Section 2.8.

2.5.3 17th Street Bridge - Surface Street and Intersection Alternatives

The 17th Street Bridge would include a transition into Midtown to connect with the existing surface streets in the area. This would require improvements to several surface streets and intersections in the surrounding project area (e.g., Spring Street, West Peachtree Street, Peachtree Street, Williams Street, 14th Street, 16th Street, Techwood Drive). The original design for 17th Street and its connection with existing surface streets and intersections was based primarily on capacity criteria related to accommodating future traffic volumes. However, the City of Atlanta and a number of public, community, and business leaders expressed significant concerns about the scope and extent of the proposed improvements.

As a response to these concerns, several key intersections and surface streets were redesigned. Additional urban design criteria were considered such as pedestrian safety and aesthetics, with less emphasis on accommodating future traffic volumes. The focus of the changes was to reduce: driving speeds, lane widths, the number of through and turning lanes, and turning radii of intersections. The ultimate objective was to balance the needs of cars, buses, bicycles, and pedestrians to better integrate 17th Street with the urban fabric of Midtown Atlanta and coordinate more closely with the vision for Midtown provided by the Midtown Alliance and "Blueprint Midtown." A description of the preferred design for 17th Street and the associated surface streets and intersections, reflective of these changes, is provided in Section 2.8.

2.5.4 High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) Access Alternatives

Several alternatives were considered that would provide HOV access as part of this project. The first alternative considered direct HOV access to and from the 17th Street Bridge. However, due to engineering and site constraints, it was determined that HOV access could be provided to the bridge, but no return access to the Interstate could be provided. In addition, provision of HOV access from the Interstate would significantly impact the future ability to redesign the I-75 southbound to I-85 northbound loop. Therefore, direct HOV access to the 17th Street Bridge was not considered further.

Several additional HOV access alternatives were considered: 1) access at 5th Street and a new 12th Street HOV-only bridge; 2) HOV-only bridge at 15th Street; and 3) reconfiguration of the 14th Street Bridge to accommodate HOV access. However, due to the scope of these alternatives and based on concerns raised by the public and other agencies, it was decided to separate out HOV access from this project. A future regional study examining the optimal location of HOV access into Midtown and potentially Atlantic Steel would be conducted as a separate project. This HOV-only project would be identified through the ARC regional planning process at a future date and would be subject to separate analysis under NEPA. Design of the 17th Street Bridge would not preclude the ability to accommodate any possible HOV access alternative that was identified in this study.

2.6 TRANSIT ALTERNATIVES

A transit system concept was identified that would provide a connection across the 17th Street Bridge, connecting Midtown to the neighborhoods and to the proposed Atlantic Steel redevelopment project on the west side of the Interstate. This concept addresses transit service connections between the site and the existing MARTA Arts Center Station. Alternatives considered for the project included a transit only alternative for 17th Street Bridge (no single occupancy vehicle lanes), as well as a shuttle bus system for the short-term and a potential upgrade of the system to light rail transit (LRT) technology in the future.

2.6.1 Transit Only Alternative

In response to public concerns that the 17th Street Bridge contained too many single-occupancy vehicle (SOV) travel lanes and was not transit-oriented, a specific alternative was developed that included transit-only for the 17th Street Bridge, including bike and pedestrian facilities, with no SOV lanes. This alternative consisted of one dedicated transit lane in each direction on the bridge and along 17th Street from West Peachtree Street to Northside Drive. No new Interstate access would be provided. A shuttle bus system connecting the Atlantic Steel site with the MARTA Arts Center Station would be provided by JAR.

The transit-only alternative was modeled to determine the potential impacts of this alternative. Background traffic volumes were developed for Year 2025 using the same growth factors as described in Section 2.5 (1.5% for the Interstate and 2% for surface streets in the study area), and vehicle trips for the Atlantic Steel site were generated using the ITE trip generation factors. Additionally, since a dedicated transit-only link would be provided, the proposed transit share of trips was increased from 15% to 25%. Thus, the total site generated vehicle trips were reduced by an additional 10%. Internal capture of on-site trips remained constant.

The benefits of the transit-only alternative include no direct impacts associated with construction of the proposed roadway improvements, with the exception of the 17th Street Bridge, which would be more narrow, with less direct impacts to commercial properties in Midtown Atlanta. In addition, there would be lower predicted traffic volumes, as compared to the preferred alternative, in the areas east of I-75/85 adjacent to the proposed 17th Street Bridge. However, even with the additional reduction in vehicle trips associated with increased transit ridership, there are a number of significant traffic impacts of the transit-only alternative, specifically in the southern and western portions of the study area. Without the provision of an east-west general traffic connection, including SOV lanes, across I-75/85 and new Interstate access, traffic volumes would be significantly greater on the existing Interstate exits at 10th and 14th Streets. Certain sections of 10th Street, 14th Street, Techwood Drive, and Williams Street would experience large increases in average daily traffic (ADT) volumes in the project area. Several intersections would have a higher level of congestion in the Year 2025 as compared to the preferred alternative. Furthermore, without the provision of direct access to the Atlantic Steel site, traffic would utilize existing surface streets in the Home Park neighborhood to access the redevelopment and have much greater impacts on this community.

Because of the significant impacts associated with not providing additional SOV lanes on the 17th Street Bridge or direct access to the site, the transit only alternative for the 17th Street Bridge was not considered further.

2.6.2 Shuttle System Alternatives

Several alternative shuttle bus route options were evaluated, including four different circulation patterns throughout the redevelopment. The alternatives were evaluated based on several criteria, summarized below:

- Maximizing coverage of the Atlantic Steel site, providing service within a ¼ mile of the highest employment, retail, and residential concentrations;
- Minimizing travel time to MARTA;
- Ease of route understanding;
- Door-to-door service to office centers;
- Ease of implementation;
- Maximizing benefit of exclusive transit right-of-way; and
- Minimizing capital and operating costs.

Based upon the evaluation conducted, a preferred alternative shuttle route was identified. The proposed shuttle bus route, along with the associated station and stop locations, are illustrated in Figure 2-5, and described in detail in the Technical Memorandum, Transit Connection Atlantic Steel Redevelopment Project to MARTA Arts Center Station (Dames & Moore 1999), referred to throughout as the Transit Study. This alternative included routing the shuttle buses through the MARTA Arts Center Station. However, in subsequent discussions with MARTA, it was determined that private shuttle buses could not be routed through the Arts Center Station. Therefore, a final shuttle route was selected that incorporated a dedicated pull-out lane with a Insert

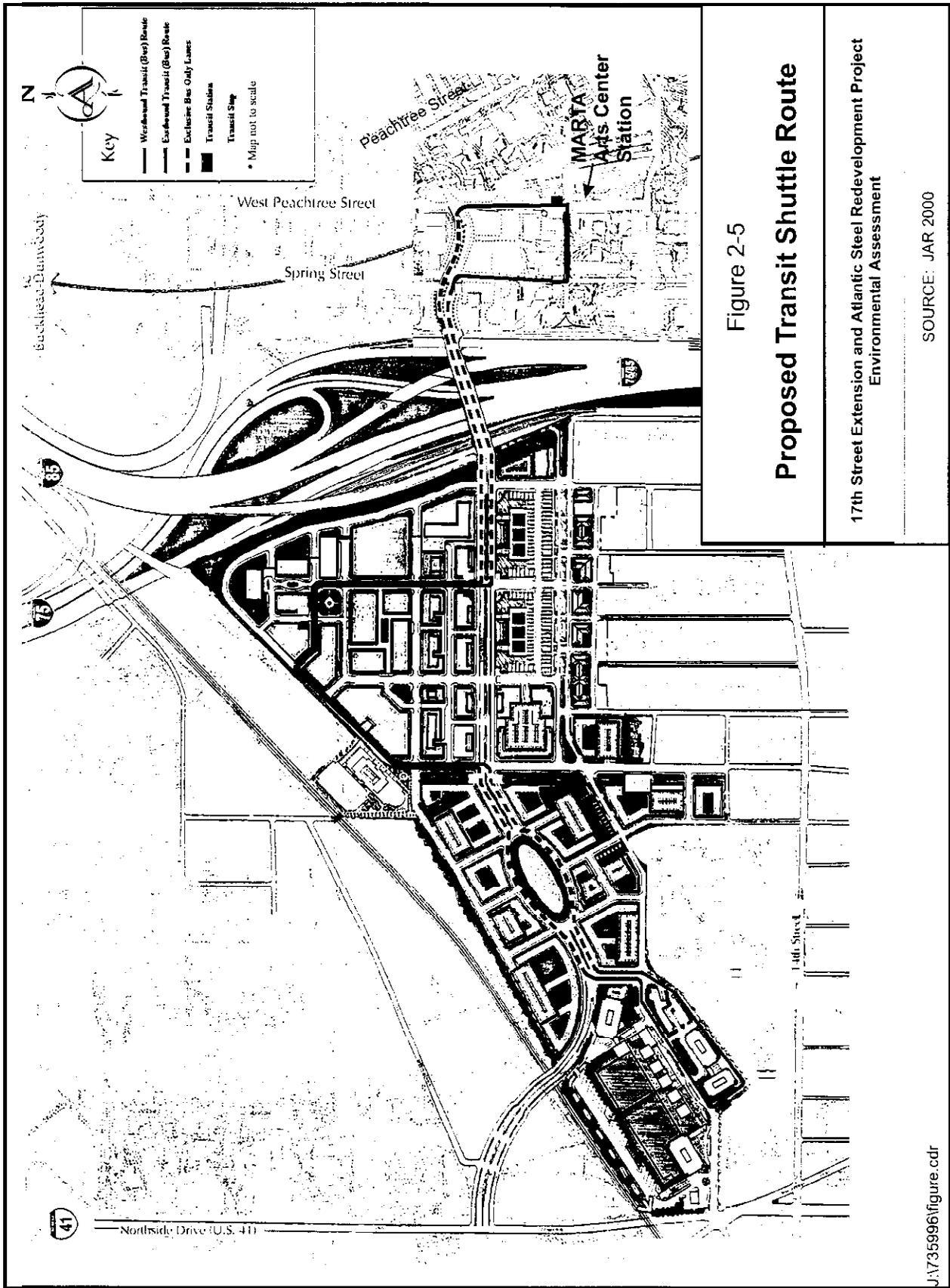


Figure 2-5

Proposed Transit Shuttle Route

17th Street Extension and Atlantic Steel Redevelopment Project
 Environmental Assessment

SOURCE: JAR 2000

J:\735996\figure.cdr

separate covered station located on West Peachtree Street just north of the existing MARTA Arts Center Station, connected by a covered walkway to the main station entrance.

The proposed route would begin along the east side of West Peachtree Street, adjacent to the MARTA Arts Center Bus Transfer facility. From the dedicated pull-out lane at this point, a bus would travel north on West Peachtree Street to 17th Street. The shuttle bus would turn west over the proposed 17th Street Bridge and circulate through the proposed Atlantic Steel development. The shuttle bus would utilize special reserved transit-only lanes along 17th Street from West Peachtree Street through the development. Returning from Atlantic Steel, the shuttle bus would travel east over the 17th Street Bridge and turn south on Spring Street. The shuttle bus would turn east on 16th Street and end up at the dedicated pull-out on West Peachtree Street.

Capital costs for initial start-up and annual operating costs for the shuttle bus system would be borne by JAR. A total of four shuttle stations and six shuttle stops, as well as six buses (five regular buses and one spare bus) have been identified for the preferred shuttle system. JAR anticipates charging no fare to ride the shuttle.

Buses would have a signal priority at certain signalized intersections. During peak hours (6:00 to 9:00 AM and 3:30 to 6:00 PM) the buses would operate on a four minute frequency and an eight minute frequency at off-peak hours, thereby matching the existing MARTA train schedule. Stations and stops would be located along West Peachtree Street adjacent to the MARTA Arts Center Bus Transfer Facility, at the intersection of 17th and Spring Streets, 17th Street between Fowler Street and Lyle Place, 17th Street and State Street, 17th Street and Center Street, and at 16th Street where the route loops around (Figure 2-5). Stations would include the following elements:

- Large shelters to accommodate waiting passengers;
- **Signage**, lighting, and seating;
- Electronic kiosks providing real-time shuttle service information;
- Security including video monitoring and emergency intercom;
- Advertising space as appropriate; and
- Other supporting items (i.e. trash receptacles, newspaper vending machines)

In addition to operation of a shuttle bus system, dedicated transit-only lanes will be provided on 17th Street from West Peachtree Street to Northside Drive.

2.6.3 Long-Term Transit Options

As ridership increases and more development occurs on the west side of I-75/I-85, and as Atlanta's transit system matures, it may become feasible to modify the proposed shuttle bus system and switch to a fixed transit system (e.g. light rail). In order to recognize its maximum benefits, this system should not only serve the Atlantic Steel site, but should connect with a more extensive transit network that could serve much of the area west of I-75/I-85 and possibly provide a connection to Cobb County. The alignment for a fixed system is still conceptual; however, the 17th Street Bridge would be designed such that it can accommodate future rail, potentially connecting to the MARTA Arts Center Station.

2.7 NO ACTION (NO BUILD) ALTERNATIVE

The no action alternative is one in which state and federal agencies would take no action to construct any of the transportation improvements for the proposed project. Under this alternative, the 17th Street Extension and Bridge would not be built and the transit connection to the MARTA Arts Center Station would not be implemented. In addition, the Atlantic Steel site would not be developed in accordance with the JAR redevelopment plan.

The Atlantic Steel property was rezoned from Heavy Industrial District (I-2) to Central Area Commercial Residential-Conditional District (C-4-C) in April 1998 (see Appendix A). One of the conditions on redevelopment of the site is that the City of Atlanta will not issue permits for buildings or structures until a contract is approved for construction of the 17th Street Bridge. The practical effect of this zoning condition is that if there is no bridge, no development can occur on the site without going through the formal rezoning process. Similarly, under the City of Atlanta's zoning policies, Atlantic Steel could not reestablish steel milling industrial operations without having the property rezoned. Since JAR purchased the property from Atlantic Steel Industries, Inc. in December 1999, and they are in the process of demolishing the on-site buildings and cleaning up the site, it is not likely that they would pursue rezoning of the property for industrial use. However, some redevelopment of this property will occur, even without the transportation improvements.

Therefore, EPA, in combination with the City of Atlanta and JAR, developed a reasonable redevelopment scenario for the Atlantic Steel property in the event the 17th Street Bridge is not constructed. This scenario represents the best judgement of the City and JAR for what could likely occur without access improvements and based on current trends of development activity and City land use and zoning policies. Table 2-3 illustrates the categories of development likely to occur, the approximate square footages of each, and estimated required parking.

Table 23. Atlantic Steel Property Development Likely to Occur Under the No Action (No Build) Alternative

No Action Scenario Land Use Type	Estimated Square Feet	Estimated Parking Spaces
High-Tech Office	2,500,000	10,000
High-Tech Lab	1,000,000	3,000
Retail	1,500,000	7,500
Residential	2,400,000	3,120
Hotel	600,000	720
Total:	8,000,000	24,340

The development pattern, in terms of the land use type and allowable square footage, is not significantly different from the current JAR redevelopment plan. However, there would be significant differences in the quality and timing of the development, as well as transportation implications without the additional transit and roadway improvements. The City of Atlanta provided a letter to EPA that describes in greater detail some of the potential impacts of selecting the no action alternative (see Appendix B).

Major land use impacts of the no action alternative include the likelihood that the development would be built as a series of single-use developments, with limited opportunities for intermixing uses and no single vision for the property. Pedestrian continuity or provision of continuous streetscapes and useable green space would be problematic. Bicycle paths would not likely be provided in a continuous pattern. Adjacent land uses would likely be less compatible and not as mutually supportive. Parking would be built on a per-site, as-needed basis with less opportunity for shared or coordinated parking strategies, resulting in an increased number of parking spaces. Lastly, transit linkages, and therefore ridership, would be minimal due to the nature of the development, relying solely on existing bus coverage on Northside Drive and 14th Street. The rezoned property would not contain any of the site design or transportation performance measures that are currently required as part of the TCM.

The no action alternative was modeled to determine the potential traffic impacts of this alternative. Background traffic volumes were developed for Year 2025 using the same growth factors as described in Section 2.5 (1.5% for the Interstate and 2% for surface streets in the study area). Vehicle trips for the Atlantic Steel site were generated using the ITE trip generation factors based on the site build-out assumptions shown in Table 2-3. Additionally, since a dedicated transit service to the MARTA Arts Center Station would not be provided, the proposed transit share of trips was reduced from 15% to 2%. Internal capture of on-site trips was reduced slightly from 10% to 8%, given the likelihood for reduced pedestrian connectivity at site build-out. Thus, the total site generated vehicle trips were increased by 15%. Without the 17th Street Bridge, primary access to the site would be a new access road from Northside Drive, near Bishop Street, from State Street, and other surface streets in Home Park.

The benefits of the no action alternative include no direct impacts associated with construction of the proposed roadway improvements. In addition, lower traffic volumes are predicted for several surface streets, as compared to the preferred alternative, in the areas east of I-75/85 adjacent to where the proposed 17th Street Bridge would have landed. However, similar to the transit-only alternative, there are even greater predicted traffic impacts of the no action alternative, specifically in the southern and western portions of the study area. Without the additional east-west connection across I-75/85 and new Interstate access, traffic volumes would be significantly greater on the existing Interstate exits at 10th and 14th Streets. In addition, certain sections of 10th Street, 14th Street, Techwood Drive, and Williams Street would experience from 14% up to 80% increases in ADT volumes in the project area as compared to the preferred alternative. Sixteen intersections would have a higher level of congestion in the Year 2025 as compared to the preferred alternative. Furthermore, without the provision of direct access to the Atlantic Steel site, traffic would utilize existing surface streets in the Home Park neighborhood to access the redevelopment and have much greater impacts on this community.

Because of the significant land use and traffic impacts associated with not developing the site as currently proposed and not providing the 17th Street Extension or a transit link to the MARTA Arts Center Station, the no action alternative was not considered further.

2.8 PREFERRED (BUILD) ALTERNATIVE

The overall preferred alternative for this project includes the JAR redesign of the Atlantic Steel site, extension of 17th Street from West Peachtree Street to Northside Drive, and operation of a transit shuttle system that would circulate between the MARTA Arts Center Station and the Atlantic Steel site. A graphical representation of the preferred alternative is provided in Figure 2-6. The following paragraphs present a detailed description of the roadway improvements associated with the preferred alternative. Proposed roadway improvements are depicted in greater detail in Figures 2-7 and 2-8 and summarized in Table 2-4.

17th Street Bridge. This multi-modal bridge is proposed to be approximately 130 feet wide and would include automobile, transit, pedestrian, and bicycle elements. The bridge would contain two general-purpose travel lanes and one dedicated transit/bike lane in each direction with sidewalks on both sides. A diagram of a typical section for the proposed 17th Street Bridge is provided in Figure 2-9. The bridge would descend to grade on the west side of I-75/I-85 in the Atlantic Steel redevelopment and on the east side at Spring Street (Figure 2-7). The portion of the road from Spring Street to West Peachtree Street would be on new alignment and would connect with existing 17th Street at West Peachtree Street. 17th Street between West Peachtree Street and Peachtree Street would not be widened; however, on-street parking would likely be removed at the intersection of 17th Street and Peachtree Street to accommodate an additional turning lane. Intersection improvements would be required at Spring Street and West Peachtree Street.

I-85 Southbound Exit Ramp. The existing I-85 southbound ramp would be reconstructed to allow vehicles to access the new 17th Street Bridge, 14th Street, and 10th Street. The existing I-85 southbound ramp to 14th Street would continue to follow its current alignment, but vehicles would no longer have access to 16th Street (Figure 2-7).

I-75 Southbound Exit Ramp. The existing I-75 southbound ramp would be reconstructed to allow vehicles to access 16th Street, 14th Street, and 10th Street. The purpose of this realignment is to locate this ramp to the west of the reconfigured I-85 off-ramp to 17th Street and to provide exiting traffic access to 16th Street. Techwood Drive would be widened up to 14th Street to accommodate the reconstructed I-85 and I-75 southbound exit ramps (Figure 2-7).

I-75/I-85 17th Street Northbound Exit Ramp. This new exit ramp would depart from the freeway just south of the 14th Street Bridge. The ramp would cross under 14th Street and quickly climb on structure until 16th Street. At this point, Williams Street would cross under the exit ramp to reach the I-75 northbound on-ramp. The exit ramp would double-deck the lower level entrance ramp and connect directly with the 17th Street Bridge. Williams Street would be relocated to the east to accommodate this new exit ramp. Improvements would occur at the intersection of 16th Street and Williams Street to improve operations of this intersection (Figure 2-7).

14th Street Bridge. The 14th Street Bridge must be lengthened and reconstructed to accommodate the underpassing northbound exit ramp. It would also be widened so that traffic could continue to use the bridge during reconstruction, while maintaining the same number of through lanes. Dedicated turning lanes would be added on the bridge. 14th Street would return to its original width at Spring Street on the east side, and near Fowler Street on the west side of the Downtown Connector (Figure 2-7).

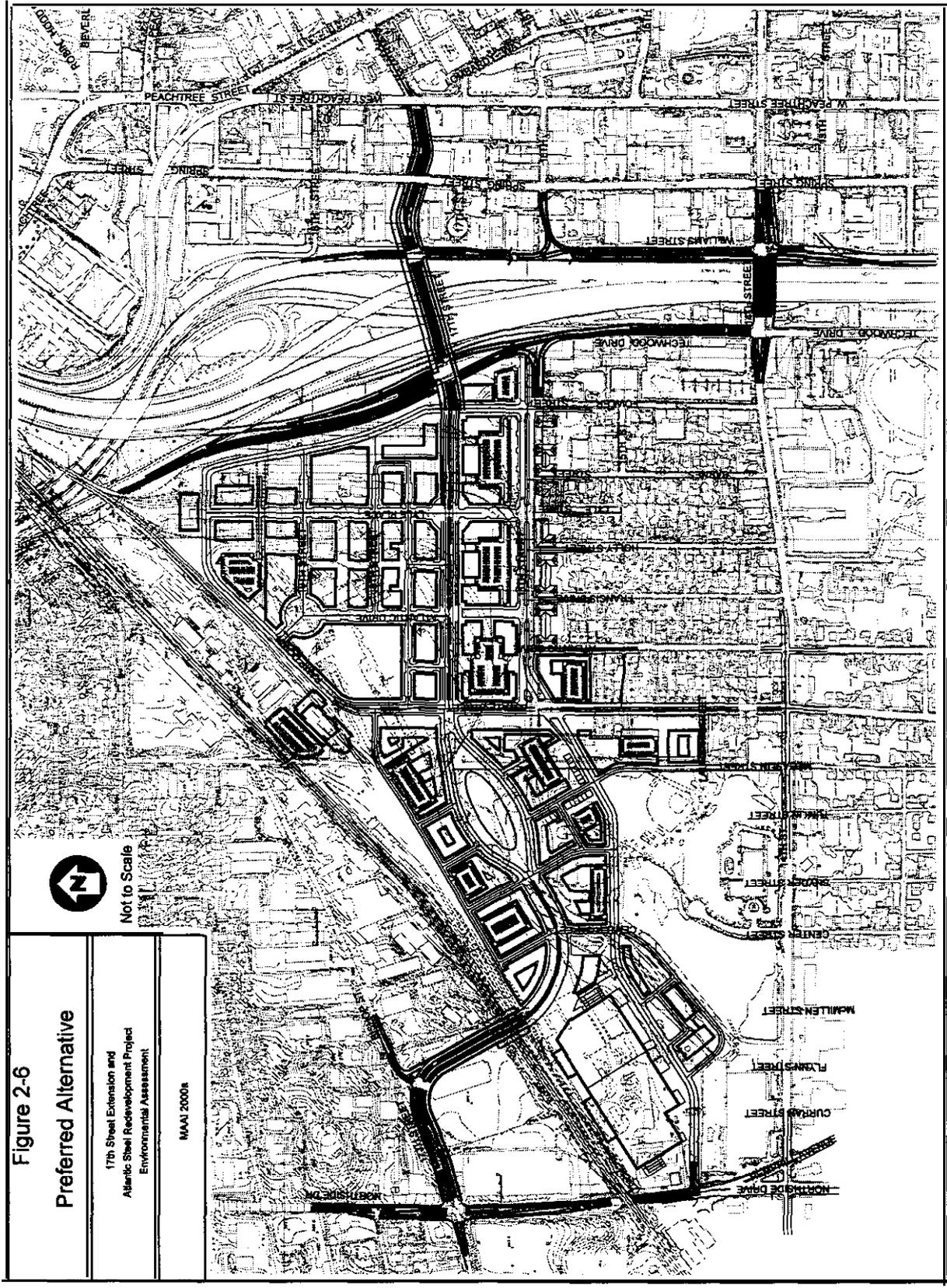


Figure 2-6

Preferred Alternative

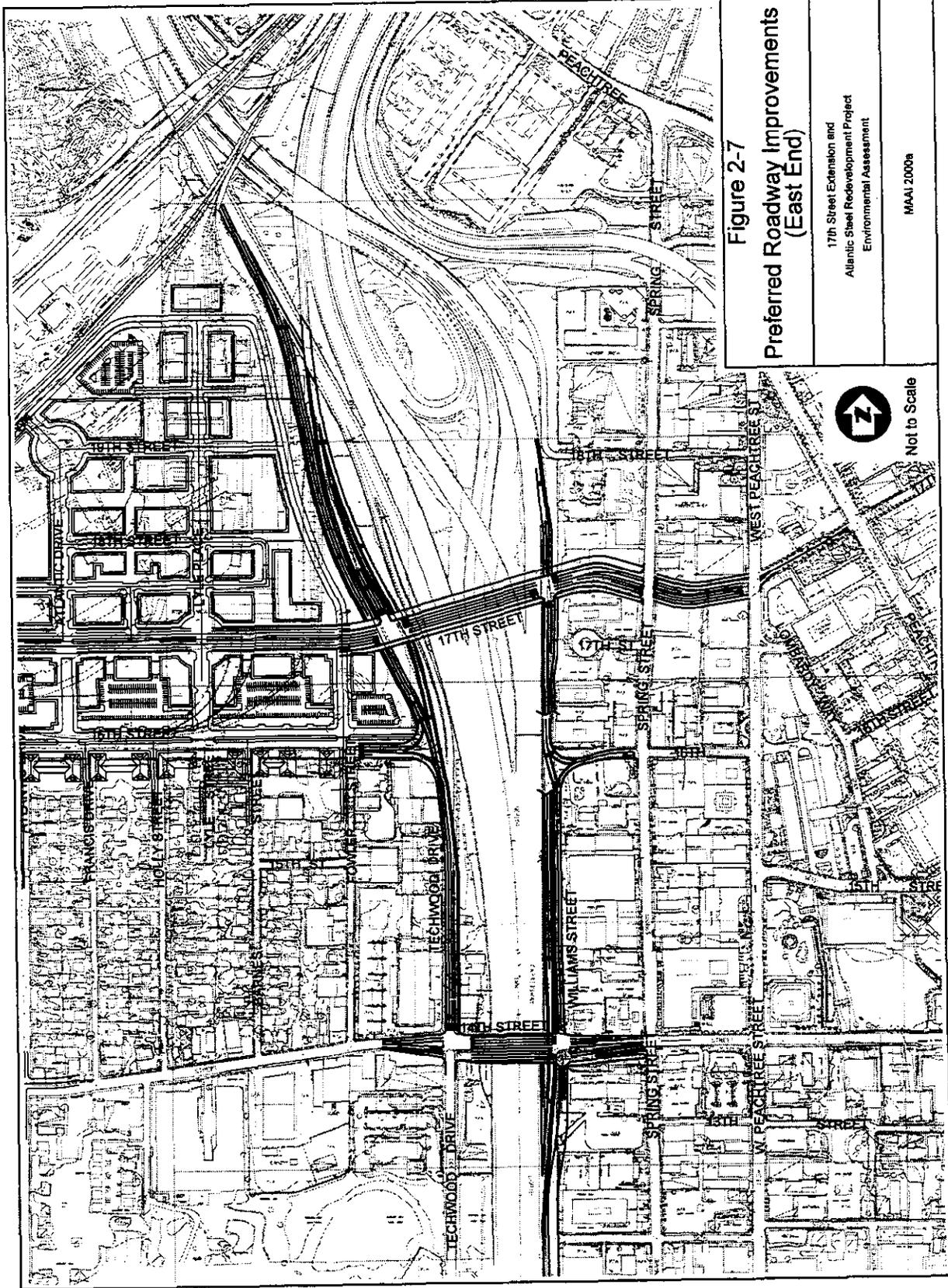
17th Street Extension and
Atlantic Street Redevelopment Project
Environmental Assessment

MAAI 2000a



Not to Scale

J:\735996\7-18-00\fig2-6.dgn 08/01/00 04:10:00 PM



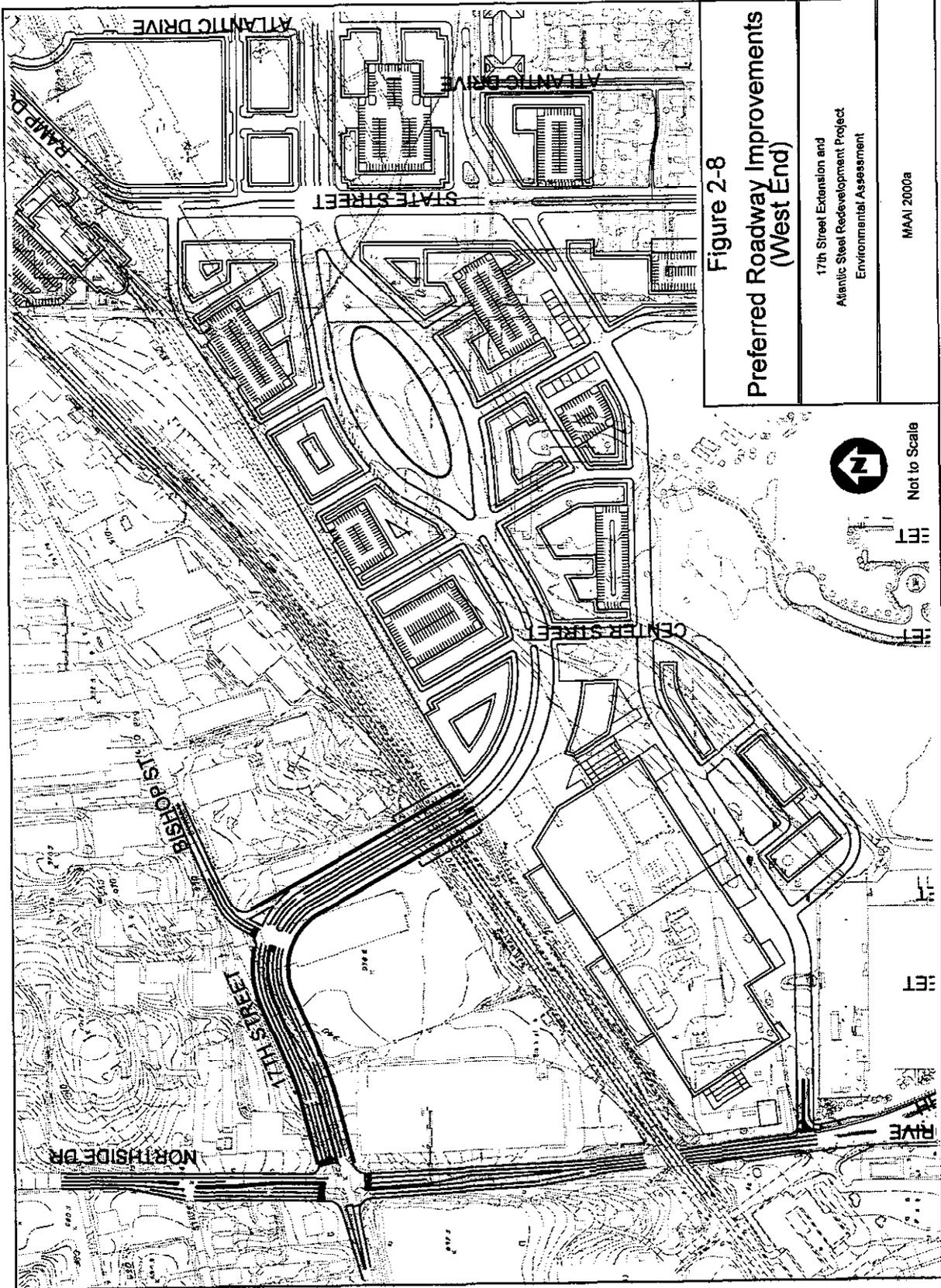


Figure 2-8
Preferred Roadway Improvements
(West End)

17th Street Extension and
 Atlantic Steel Redevelopment Project
 Environmental Assessment

MAAI 2000a



Not to Scale

J:\735996\7-18-00\fig2-8.dgn 08/01/00 02:49:00 PM

Table 2-4. Proposed Roadway Improvements for the Preferred Alternative

Roadway Section	Existing Roadway Width	Proposed Roadway Width
I-75 (S.R. 401) Northside Drive to Brookwood Interchange	Eight 11' interstate lanes; two 12' HOV lanes; 10-16' width shoulders	Unchanged through lanes, revised 14 th Street southbound exit ramp
I-75 (S.R. 403) Peachtree Street to Brookwood Interchange	Eight 11' interstate lanes; two 12' HOV lanes; 10-16' width shoulders	Unchanged through lanes, revised 14 th Street southbound exit ramp
I-75/85 (Downtown Connector) Brookwood Interchange to 10 th Street	Twelve 11' interstate lanes; two 12' HOV lanes; 10-16' shoulders	Unchanged through lanes, new 17 th Street northbound exit ramp
14 th Street (U.S. 19/S.R. 9) Spring Street to Fowler Street	Four 10' urban lanes; 6-14' sidewalks on both sides	Unchanged through lanes. Four 11' turn lanes with adequate storage added on bridge; and wider sidewalks
Northside Drive (U.S. 41/S.R. 3) Deering Road to Norfolk Southern Railroad Bridge	Four 10' urban lanes; 6-10' sidewalks on both sides	11' turn lanes with adequate storage added at 17 th Street Intersection
West Peachtree Street (S.R. 9) 14 th Street to 18 th Street	Five 10' urban lanes; 6-14' sidewalks on both sides	Unchanged
Spring Street (S.R. 9) 14 th Street to 18 th Street	Four 10' urban lanes; 6-14' sidewalks on both sides	Unchanged
16 th Street East of Interstate to Spring Street	Three 10' urban lanes; 6-10' sidewalks on both sides	Unchanged through lanes, redesign of Williams Street Intersection
16 th Street West of Interstate to State Street	Two 11' urban lanes	Widened to four 11' lanes, divided by a median; 10' sidewalks on both sides of roadway
Williams Street 12 th Street to 14 th Street	Three 10' urban lanes; 6-10' sidewalks on both sides	Unchanged, relocated to the east to accommodate new exit ramp
Williams Street 14 th Street to 16 th Street	Two 11' urban lanes; 6-10' sidewalks on east side	Unchanged, relocated to the east to accommodate new exit ramp
Williams Street 16 th Street to I-75 Northbound	One 11' urban lane	Two 11' urban lanes
17 th Street Bridge	Does not exist	Four 11' through lanes with two 1' double raised pavement marking rows; two 16' bus/transit/bicycle lanes with 2' gutter; 22' raised sidewalk (southside) and 30' raised sidewalk (northside).
17 th Street East of Interstate to West Peachtree	Does not exist	Same as bridge with 8' raised median for improved pedestrian safety
17 th Street West Peachtree Street to Peachtree Street	Two 11' urban lanes with on-street parking on both sides	Unchanged through lanes, 11' turn lane added at Peachtree Street Intersection
17 th Street West of Interstate to Northside Drive	Does not exist	Same as bridge with 16' raised median and adequate sidewalks on both sides of roadway
Bishop Street Deering Road to Northside Drive	Two 14' lanes, 6-10' sidewalks on both sides	Unchanged through lanes, 11' turn lane added at 17 th Street Intersection
Techwood Drive 16 th Street to 14 th Street	Three 11' urban lanes; 0-10' broken sidewalks on east side	Widened at 14 th Street intersection to four 11' urban lanes with 8' raised sidewalk on west side

Source: (MAAI 2000a).

17th Street (West End Improvements). 17th Street would be extended through the Atlantic Steel redevelopment and connect with Northside Drive. It is anticipated that 17th Street would bridge over the Norfolk Southern railroad on the western portion of the site. Intersection improvements would be required at Bishop Street and Northside Drive (Figure 2-8).

Pedestrian and Bicycle Improvements. Sidewalks would be provided on all new surface streets in the Atlantic Steel redevelopment and as part of all off-site roadway improvements. It is anticipated that sidewalk widths would be approximately 15 feet on all street improvements except for the 17th Street Bridge where they would be 22 feet on the south side and 30 feet on the north side.

Bicycle lanes would be provided on 17th Street as part of the wide transit-only lane. As part of the zoning conditions for the site, bicycle lanes would also be included on State Street (including the loop north of 17th Street) and Center Street. In addition, JAR would utilize the existing at-grade crossing over the railroad at Mecaslin Street to provide a signalized bike/pedestrian crossing into the **Loring** Heights community. JAR would provide a grade separated (elevated) bike/pedestrian crossing at the location, depending on negotiations with Norfolk Southern Railroad.

