

Georgia on the Move

Atlanta to Chattanooga High Speed Ground Transportation Project



Tier 1 Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS)

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What is the Atlanta to Chattanooga High Speed Ground Transportation (HSGT) Project?

- Proposed high-speed passenger rail service that would connect Atlanta, Georgia and Chattanooga, Tennessee;
- Includes preparation of a Tier 1 Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) in compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA); and
- Identifies a Preferred Corridor in which to implement high-speed passenger service.

What is the purpose of the Atlanta to Chattanooga HSGT Project?

The Project would enhance intercity travel by:

- Expanding transportation capacity;
- Increasing mobility options; and
- Providing an alternative to highway and air travel.

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Why is the Atlanta to Chattanooga HSGT Project Needed?

- Provide enhancement for regional transportation mobility and accessibility in response to the following transportation problems:
 - Population and employment growth and increased transportation demand;
 - Congested transportation corridor in the Project study area; and
 - Limited transportation options.
- Spur economic growth and regional vitality
- Provide safe, efficient, reliable transportation options
- Improve air quality nonattainment areas and minimize environmental impacts from transportation projects

Who is involved in the Project?

- Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) – Federal Lead Agency;
- Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT);
- Tennessee Department of Transportation (TDOT); and
- Other Key Partners:
 - Environmental resource and regulatory agencies
 - Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPO)
 - Other public agencies and transportation providers
 - Interested organizations
 - Public

What is the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)?

- Requires Federal agencies to:
 - Consider the potential impacts of their actions on the human and natural environment;
 - Provide an opportunity for public participation in the decision-making process before project decisions are made;
 - Publicly disclose the decision-making process and all decisions made; and
 - To avoid, minimize, or mitigate adverse effects where feasible.
- Often “tiered” for a project with a large scope
 - Tier 1 NEPA – agencies prepare a Tier 1 EIS
 - Tier 2 NEPA – may be any level of NEPA documentation that addresses site-specific environmental factors necessary to move forward with a project

What is a Tier 1 Environmental Impact Statement (EIS)?

- A planning document
- Defines a preliminary project purpose and need
- Defines a broad project study area for further analysis
- Identifies all reasonable corridor alternatives
- Identifies and describes environmental resources and factors within the project study area
- Interdisciplinary approach to decision-making
 - Consultation and coordination among agencies
 - Public participation
- Publicly discloses decision-making and planning process

What are the key objectives of this Tier 1 EIS process?

- A broad, high-level environmental review of a defined project study area;
- Development of the HSGT Project purpose and need; and
- Identification of potential environmental resources within the project study area, including:
 - “Desktop analysis” based on available mapping information; little or no field investigations conducted
 - Conservative estimates of potential effects that will be further refined and evaluated should subsequent planning work for the project take place

What are potential HSGT Technologies?

- HSGT is defined as vehicle travel speeds above 180 MPH
- HSGT technology would be further studied and selected should the Project proceed to a Tier 2 NEPA Phase

Steel-Wheeled



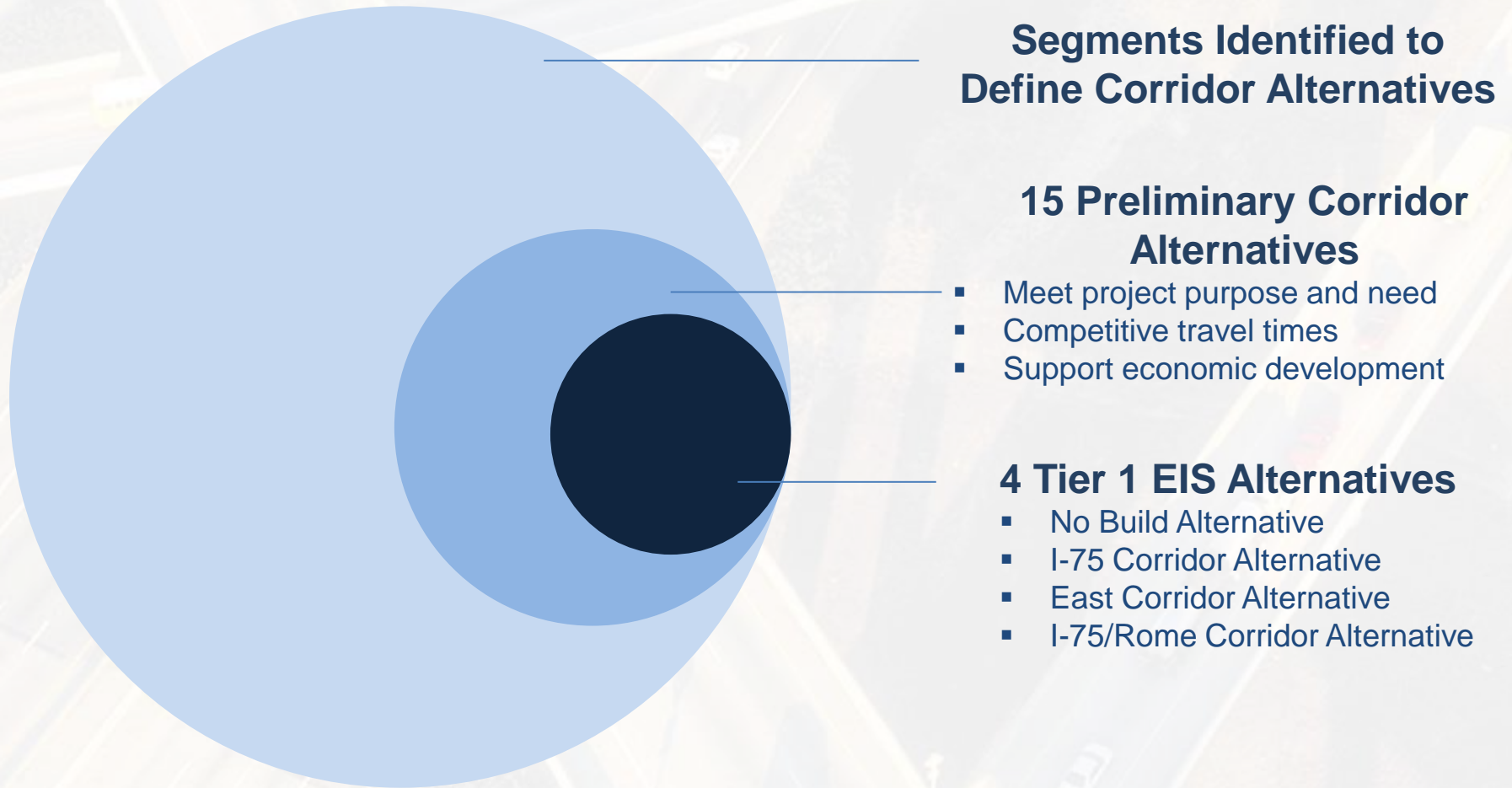
Maglev (Magnetic Levitation)



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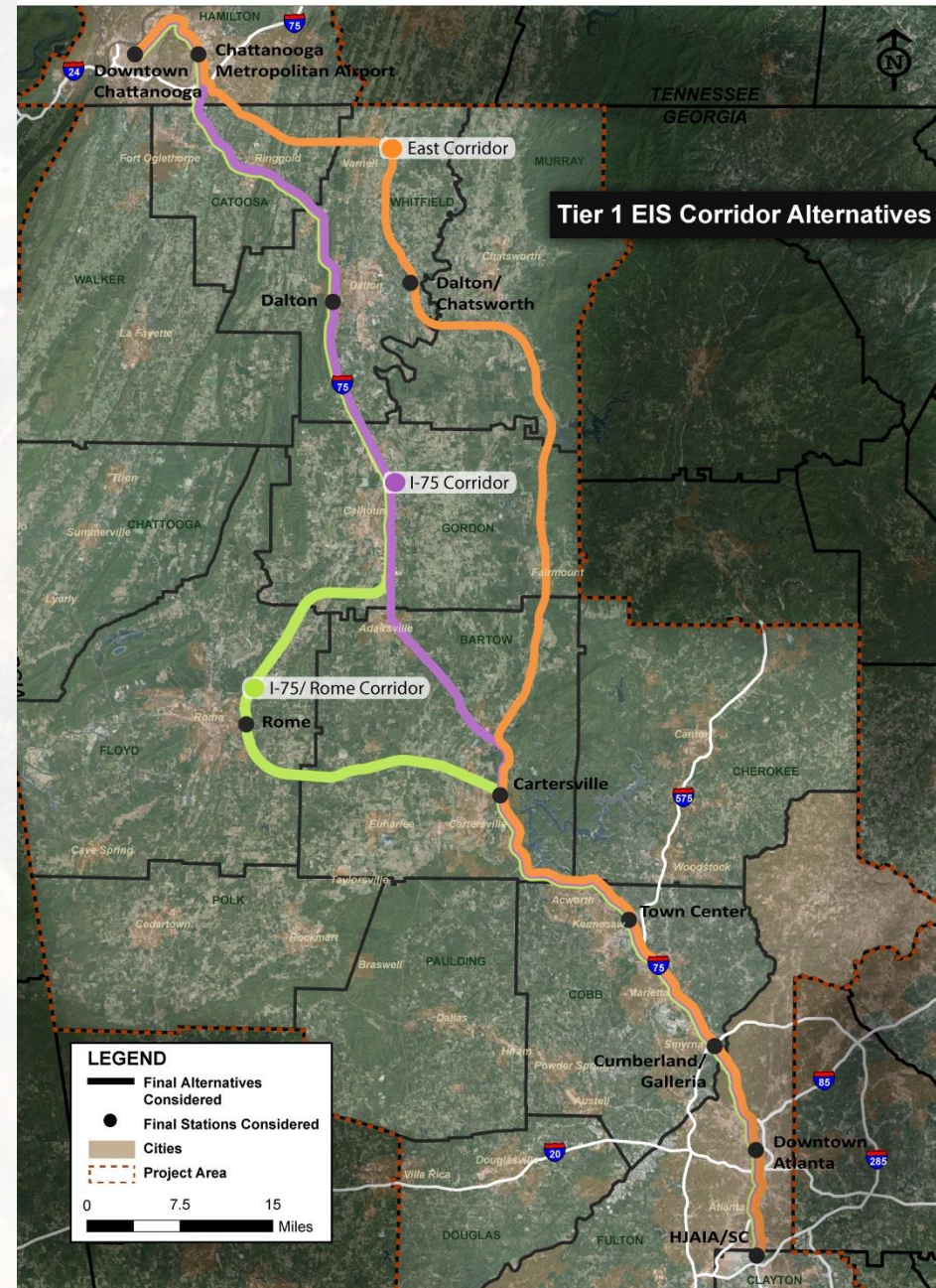
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How were the Corridor Alternatives Developed?



What Corridor Alternatives were evaluated in the Tier 1 EIS?

- **No Build Alternative** - Project Study Area's transportation system as anticipated in 2040
- **Three Corridor Alternatives**
 - I-75 Corridor
 - East Corridor
 - I-75/Rome Corridor

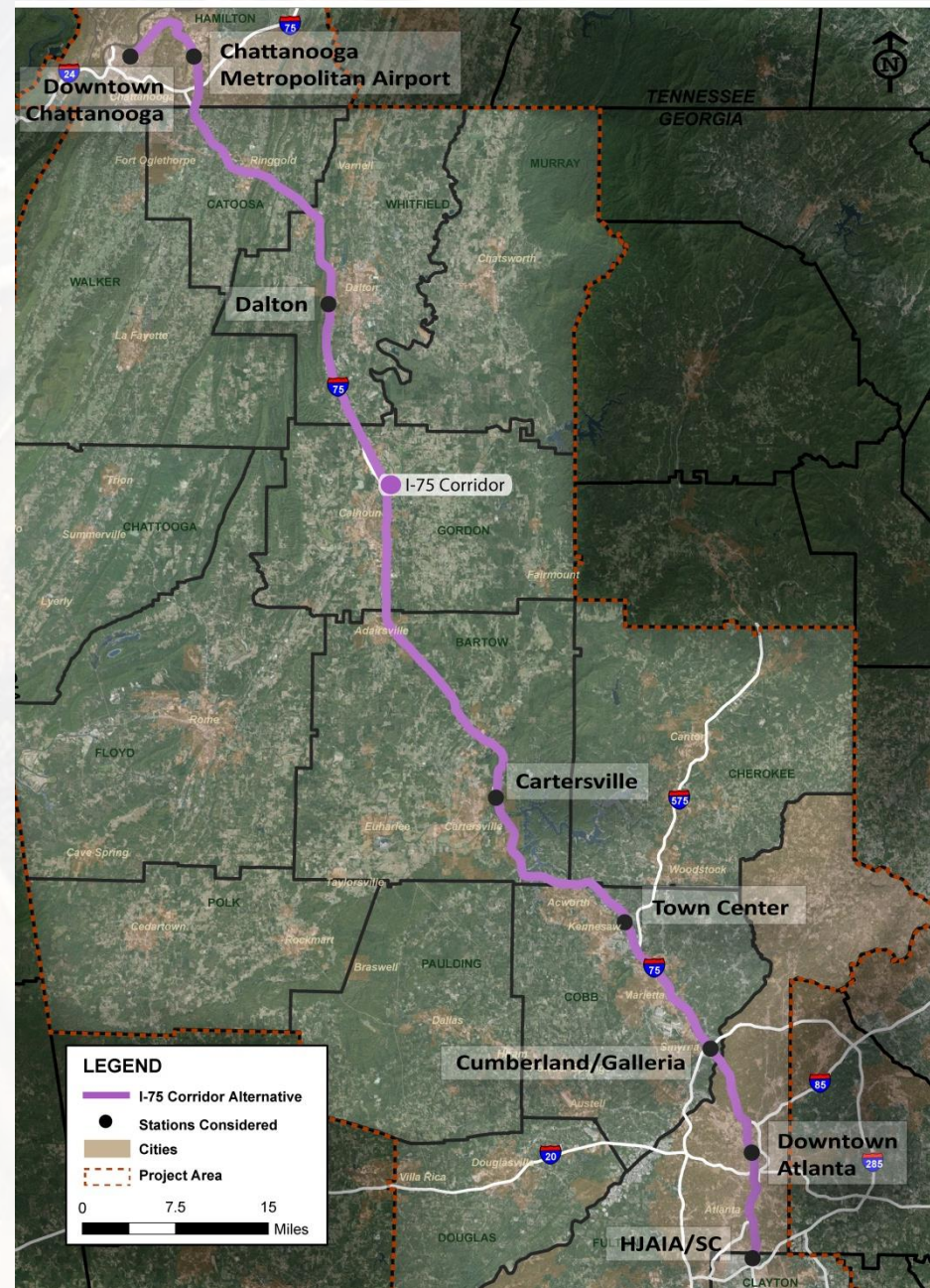


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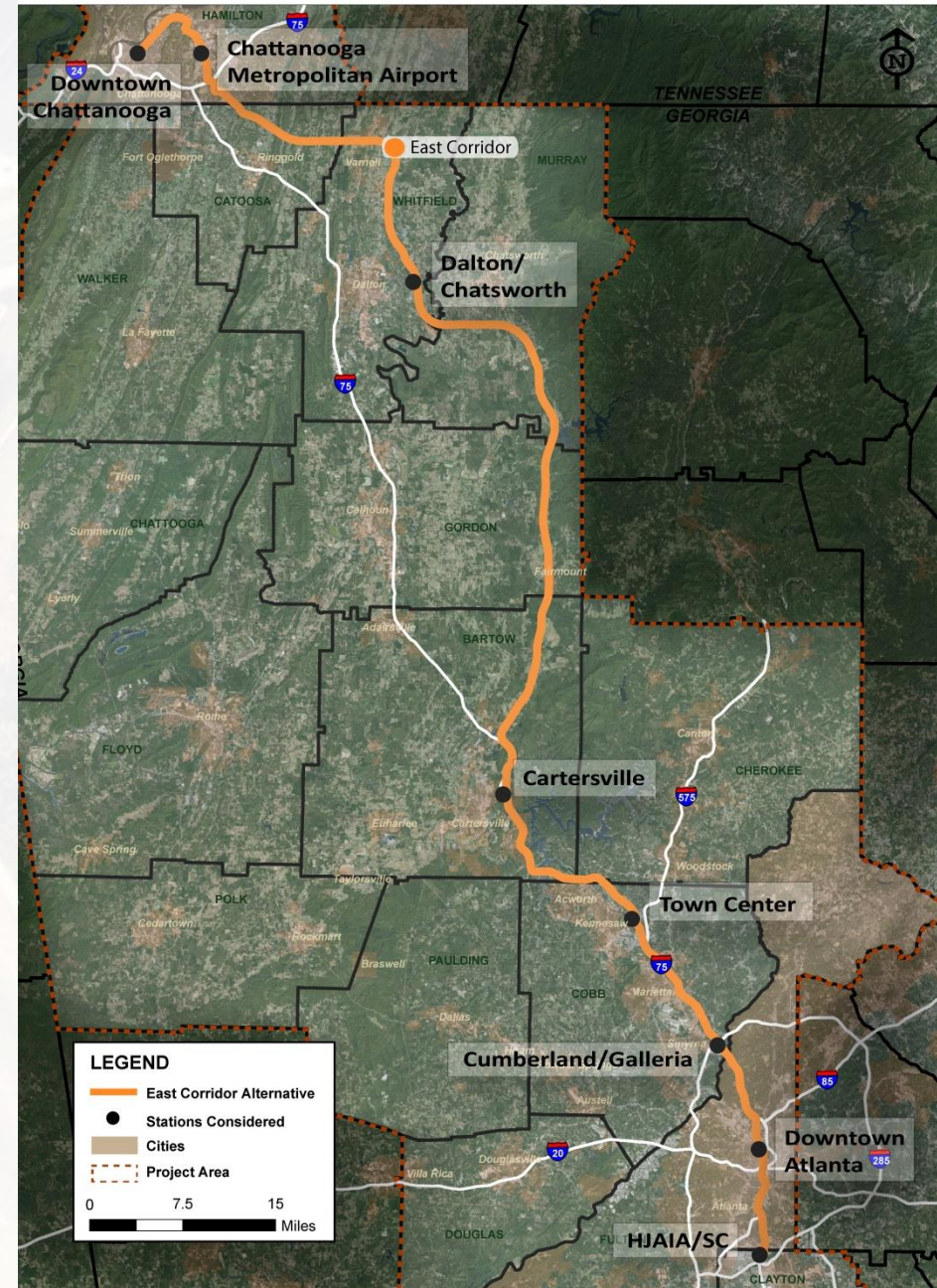
I-75 Corridor Alternative

- Begins at Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport (HJAIA); follows proposed tunnel section through downtown Atlanta to near I-285; follows I-75 into downtown Chattanooga from I-285
- 8 potential stations



East Corridor Alternative

- Begins at HJAIA and follows proposed tunnel section through downtown Atlanta to near I-285; follows I-75 north to Cartersville; continues along existing CSX rail parallel to US 411; continues north along I-75 to downtown Chattanooga
- 8 potential stations



- Begins at HJAI A and follows proposed tunnel section through downtown Atlanta to near I-285; follows I-75 north to the proposed Cartersville station; follows US-411 to Rome; continues north to downtown Chattanooga
- 9 potential stations



How were the Corridor Alternatives Evaluated?

- Transportation Effects – ridership, travel time
- Planning-level project costs
- Environmental Consequences – key resource areas

Transportation

Noise and Vibration

Historic and Archaeological Resources

Air Quality

Water Resources

Parks and Wildlife Refuges

Environmental Justice

Biological Resources

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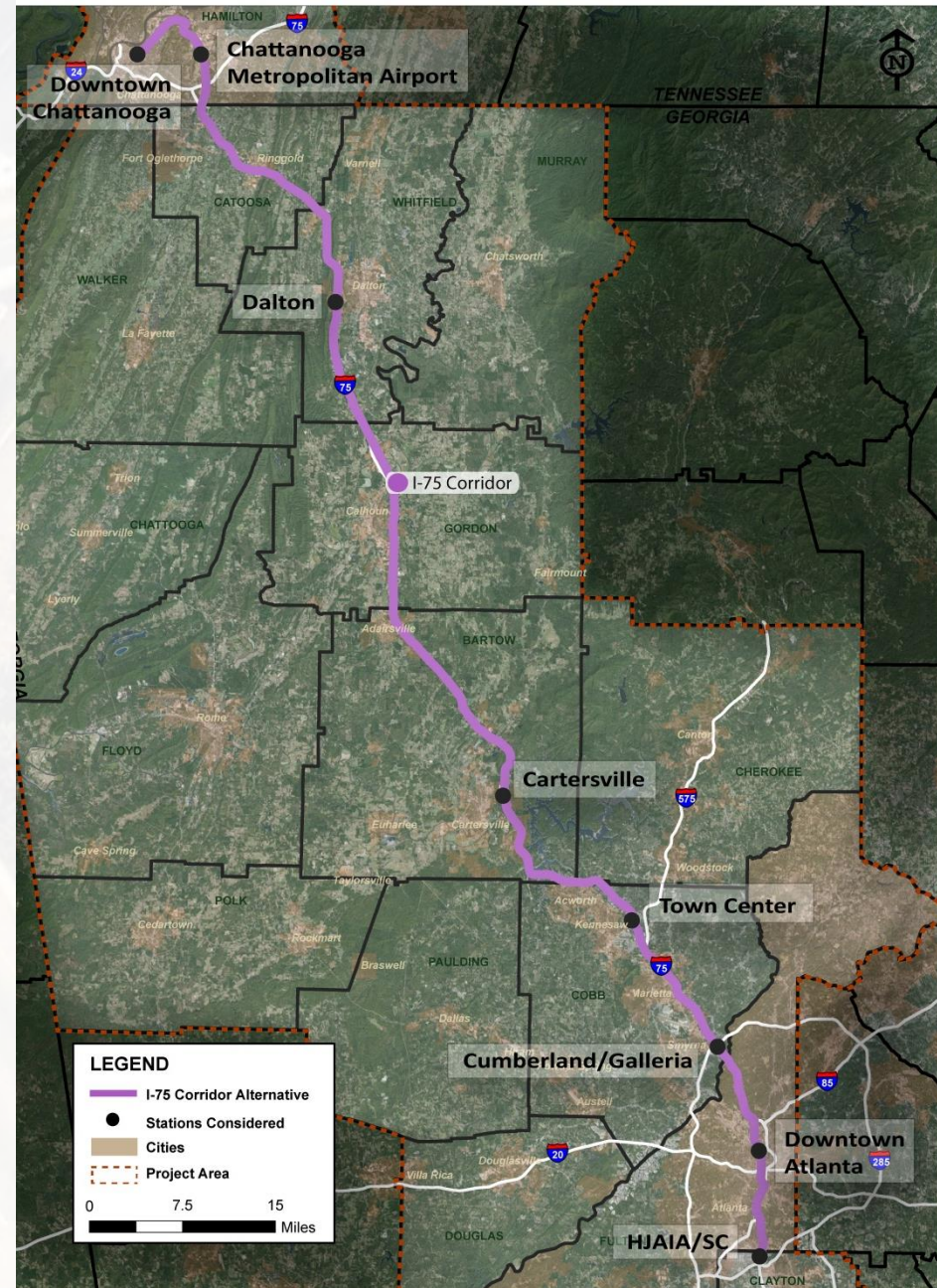
How do the Corridor Alternatives Compare?

High
Medium
Low

Needs	Measures	Corridor Alternative		
		I-75	East	I-75/Rome
Enhance regional transportation mobility and accessibility	Time to Travel Corridor Alternative End to End (minutes)	88	95	102
	Daily Ridership (number of boardings)	11,725	8,556	13,204
Spur economic growth and regional vitality	Capital Cost (2014\$ millions)	\$8,760	\$10,420	\$9,811
Minimize environmental impacts	Proportion of Corridor Alternative within Existing Transportation Corridor	76%	31%	53%
	Noise-sensitive Land Uses (acres)	5,914	7,519	8,425
	Vibration-sensitive Land Uses (acres)	891	1,695	1,372
	Known Historic Resources (number)	26	66	33
	Wetlands (acres)	205	205	251
	Stream Crossings (number)	21	18	35
	Floodplains (acres)	1,563	2,576	1,689
	Parks & Wildlife Refuges (number)	25	19	30
	Known Threatened and Endangered Species Habitats (number)	21	38	21

What is the Best Performing Corridor Alternative?

- **I-75 Corridor**
 - Fastest travel times
 - Lowest capital costs
 - Smallest number of environmental impacts



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What are the Next Steps?

- **Fall 2016 and Winter 2017**
 - ✓ Receive and review public and agency comments
- **Winter and Spring 2017**
 - ✓ Prepare Tier 1 Final EIS/Record of Decision (ROD)
- **Summer 2017**
 - ✓ Publish Tier 1 Final EIS/ROD

How can you participate?

- Comment at tonight's meeting
 - ✓ Speak with a member of the Project Team
 - ✓ Speak privately to a court reporter
 - ✓ Fill out a comment card
- Visit the project website to review project materials:
<http://www.dot.ga.gov/IS/Rail/AtlantatoChattanooga>
- Send comments to: AtlChatt@dot.ga.gov
- Will accept comments through **November 30, 2016**

Thank You!

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