



Early Scoping Report Appendix

Attachment A-4:

Summaries of City Council Meetings,
September and October 2013



City Council Attendees

David Belle Isle, Mayor of Alpharetta
Donald Mitchell, City Council, Post 1
Mike Kennedy, City Council, Post 2
Chris Owens, City Council, Post 3
Jim Gilvin, City Council, Post 4
Michael Cross, City Council, Post 5
D. C. Aiken, City Council, Post 6

MARTA Staff:

Don Williams, Sr. Director of Transit Systems Planning
Janide Sidifall, Project Manager

Presentation Summary

Janide Sidifall provided an overview of the GA 400 Transit Initiative. The presentation reviewed the:

- overall purpose and need for the study
- alternatives evaluation and project development process
- community outreach efforts and general themes
- performance of the alternatives under consideration against established evaluation criteria

Following the presentation, City Council members made the following general remarks:

- Showed appreciation that MARTA staff had provided a briefing but wondered why local officials were not consulted before now
 - MARTA staff responded that local officials had been briefed and interviewed at the beginning of the study and that local staff have been involved through a Technical Advisory Committee and a Stakeholder Advisory Committee. Local officials were also briefed at the North Fulton Mayors Association.
- Expressed concern about the lack of opportunities for Alpharetta residents to participate in the process
 - MARTA staff responded that several meeting opportunities had been held in the Alpharetta area for the business community and other stakeholders to provide input but the meeting on September 26th would be the first public meeting in the city.
- Expressed concern that the survey results conducted over the December 2012 holiday period were not a valid representation of the views of Alpharetta residents
 - MARTA staff responded that plans are underway to conduct a statistically valid survey.



- Disagreed that there was strong support for the heavy rail extension; in their opinion, most Alpharetta residents would never use transit except to get to the airport or major events downtown
- Expressed concern that the heavy rail alternative does not have a station at Old Milton
 - MARTA staff explained that the Old Milton station was not currently being considered for the heavy rail extension (HRT) because of a time savings opportunity with regards to service. It is assumed that commuters would access the North Point Station or Windward Parkway station to the south and north of Old Milton Parkway. However, this could change based on community input.
- Questioned how MARTA, which is currently operating at a deficit, could afford transit expansion in the GA 400 corridor or any other corridor – Is MARTA demanding state funding in order to fund its expansion program?
 - MARTA staff responded that efforts are underway to improve the efficiency of MARTA operations and that any expansion efforts would require new funding sources. These funding sources could be federal, state, or local. The potential for alternative funding through public-private partnerships and other delivery methods is also being investigated in conjunction with the federal process in order to start the project. However, MARTA is not “demanding” state funding.
- Suggested that MARTA was promoting expansion to leverage its real estate investments in the corridor
 - MARTA staff responded that the Authority owns very little real estate in the corridor apart from properties around its stations and the park and ride lot at Windward Parkway.
- MARTA needs to focus on improving its existing service before looking to expand service
 - MARTA staff pointed to current efforts to conduct a Comprehensive Operations Analysis of its existing service
- Questioned whether the corridor had the densities to support a heavy rail extension
 - MARTA staff responded that while both population and employment in the study area are projected to increase by 2040, employment growth is expected to outpace population growth. The area currently has one of the highest daytime employment populations in the region. Each of the proposed station areas have great potential for transit-oriented development (TOD) as city future land use plans generally support increased density around proposed station areas.
- Questioned the cost estimates – how could heavy rail be cheaper than LRT?
 - MARTA staff responded that these are high level cost estimates based on conceptual plans, not detailed engineering plans. Given that LRT is a new technology, the estimates include the cost of new vehicles and a new maintenance facility.



The Mayor of Alpharetta specifically requested that MARTA provide the City with a grant to conduct its own survey with a consultant of their choice and suggested that MARTA could increase its ridership significantly by providing an express service from North Springs to one of its downtown stations and then to the Airport.

During the public comment period, the following general remarks were made by citizens in attendance:

- Preserve the historic farmhouse in the vicinity of the proposed Old Milton station
- MARTA needs to define its role in providing transportation services. Is MARTA's role to provide transportation for the poor or is it to help alleviate congestion? MARTA should structure its service around its role.
- Expressed support for BRT expansion supported by a strong feeder bus network
- Expressed support for heavy rail transit expansion

Another citizen also mentioned the litter problem at the North Springs station.



City Council Attendees

Jere Wood, Mayor
Rich Dippolito, Post 1 Councilmember
Betty Price, Post 3 Councilmember
Nancy Diamond, Post 6 Councilmember

City of Roswell Staff:

Steve Acenbrak, Transportation Director
Chris Chovan, Transportation Planning Manager
Andrew Antweiller, Transportation Planner
Kay Love, City Administrator
Marlee Press, City Clerk

MARTA Staff:

Cheryl King, AGM, Planning
Janide Sidifall, Project Manager
Leeshu Kennedy, Government Affairs

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Following the presentation, questions were asked by Mayor Jere Wood, Councilmembers Rich Dippolito, Betty Price, and Nancy Diamond.

- Several years ago it was determined that Holcomb Bridge Road exit was not feasible because of various reasons. (Price)
- What roads will light rail utilize? Would it be primarily east-to-west or north-to-south? (Dippolito)
- Did you get your projections from ARC? (Woods)
- Who is our competition? Is the Board going to pick one or two expansion projects? Will the study continue with all 3 projects? (Woods)



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- What funding are you looking at? (Woods)
 - What is value capture? (Woods)
 - Thank you for extending bus service across GA 400 to Holcomb Bridge. (Dippolito)
 - Is there enough bus service in downtown Atlanta that allows individuals who travel from Windward Parkway to be mobile in the downtown area? (Dippolito)
 - Will the Streetcar connect with MARTA without paying? (Dippolito)
 - The challenge is getting down Holcomb Bridge Road to GA 400. Is there a park & ride that will be somewhere on Holcomb Bridge Road that will make it easier for individuals using MARTA? (Dippolito)
 - How do you determine if an analysis of one mode is better than another? (Price)
 - Having a system of some type based on what the citizens are willing to pay for is going to be the most beneficial. (Woods) Will the survey address this?
 - How do you determine which study gets priority? (Diamond)
 - What was the cost for Clifton Corridor? (Woods)
 - How would BRT work going down 400? (Diamond)
 - Woods discussed that there has been preliminary discussion about having managed lanes on 400. How will they work with Rail?
 - Without committing City Council members, would it be appropriate to have a resolution from Roswell City Council members to the MARTA Board? (Woods)
 - Is the cost analysis over a 14-year period? (Dippolito)
 - After MARTA's 2010 cutbacks, what has changed? What is your secret today?
 - Cheryl responded with MARTA's cost saving measures (eliminating vacant positions; going paperless with pay check stubs; self-service HR functions; more efficient use of personnel and better procedures) and Woods stated that he appreciates everything MARTA is doing in that regard.



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- Who are your survey participants? Do you plan to do an actual survey that will include cost? (Dippolito)
 - Are you surveying the business community? What do they feel about having MARTA in the north? (Woods)
 - Will this require a lot of additional right-away? (Price)
 - Are there dollars (from MARTA or that are in the cost estimates) that speak to the surrounding roadway improvements at GA 400 & Holcomb Bridge Road? It is very congested in that area. It is important that this is looked at closely. (Dippolito)
 - Is there any scenario where all of this could be above ground? (Price)
 - In regards to managed lanes, how will buses get over to the exits? (Diamond) Roswell's Transportation Director interjected by reminding the Council that he has been trying to communicate to them that GDOT is advancing managed lanes and MARTA is moving forward with the Corridor study and there needs to be coordination. We (MARTA transit improvements) are still at the boundary lane and we don't know enough about our details or from the GDOT project.
 - How do you determine where stops will be located? (Price)
 - Transportation Director – I am happy to hear that there are no plans to make Holcomb Bridge Road the last stop. There has been a lot of murmuring that it (transit improvements) would be the last stop. Having a master plan that speaks to all the stops would be a great blueprint to use to explain when each stop is scheduled to come online.
 - I am happy to know that MARTA is addressing customer conduct (Code of Conduct adoption) issues. (Woods)



City Council Attendees

Eva Galambos, Mayor
John Paulson, City Council, District 1
Dianne Fries, City Council, District 2
Chip Collins, City Council, District 3
Gabriel Sterling, City Council, District 4
Tiberio “Tibby” DeJulio, City Council, District 5
Karen Meinzen McEnery, City Council, District 6

City of Sandy Springs Staff:

John McDonough, City Manager
Eden Freeman, Assistant City Manager
Bryant Poole, Assistant City Manager
Michael Casey, City Clerk
Garrin Coleman, Public Works Director
Angela Parker, Community Development Director
Sharon Kraun, Communications Director
Ronnie Young, Recreation and Parks Director

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City Council Attendees

Joe Lockwood, Mayor

Council Members: Karen Thurman, Matt Kunz, William Lusk, Burt Hewitt, and Joe Longoria

City of Milton Staff:

Carter Lucas, Director, Public Works

City Clerk

MARTA Staff:

Janide Sidifall, Project Manager

Tameka Wimberly, Planning

Leeshu Kennedy, Government Affairs

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Following the presentation, questions were asked by Mayor Joe Lockwood and City Councilmembers Matt Kunz, William Lusk, and Joe Longoria

1. Is there much light rail in use? (Mayor Lockwood)
2. Your budget figures are diverse ranging from low to high dollar amounts. How are you calculating the numbers? If you choose light rail, would riders have to change at North Springs? Light rail in Minnesota seems to be heavy rail. What is the distinction between heavy rail and light rail? (Longoria)
3. How do you calculate cost per transit trip? Why does light rail cost 50% more than heavy rail? (Lusk) Light rail would not have as much ridership that is why the cost is higher? (Mayor Lockwood)
4. With costs being so high, why are you not looking to expand your bus system? (Kunz)



5. MARTA has had financial issues over the years. Have you performed a cost analysis for the GA 400 Corridor to see if expansion is feasible? Would there be a maintenance facility on the north end of GA 400? (Lusk)

6. Did you mention timing? Is there any sort of feedback you need from us? (Mayor Lockwood)