



Early Scoping Report Appendix

Attachment B-5:

Project Steering Committee Meeting, June 12, 2014
Summary and Presentation



GA 400 Transit Initiative

Project Stakeholder Committee Meeting

North Fulton CID | 11605 Haynes Bridge Road, Suite 100 | Alpharetta, GA

Thursday, June 12, 2014 (10:30 am to 12:00 noon)

Meeting Format

Committee Attendees

Eric Graves, City of Alpharetta	Julia Billings, GDOT	Chris Haggard, City of Johns Creek
Kristen Wescott, City of Sandy Springs	Joe Hutto, Gwinnett Tech	Jerry Oberholtzer, Forsyth County
Lauren Travis, GRTA	Chris Chovan, City of Roswell	Rich Dippolito, Roswell City Council
Enrique Molinet, Boys Scouts/Hispanic Community	Patrice Keeter, DeKalb County	Ann Hanlon, North Fulton CID
Eric Cox, Coach USA	Liz Hausman, Fulton County Commission	Demetria Peterson, McDonald's Construction
Fred Wulfing, Resident	David Youngbluth, Coach USA	Mariska Angall, GDOT
Yngrid Jones-Huff, Fulton County Schools	Andrew Antweiler, City of Roswell	Kristin Rome, North Fulton CID
Kathleen Field, City of Milton	Brandon Beach, North Fulton CID/Chamber of Commerce	Chip Swearingan, Somerset HOA
David Centofanti, Northridge Community Association		

MARTA and Consultant Attendees

Mark Eatman, MARTA	Janide Sidifall, MARTA
Nancy Skinner, Parsons Brinckerhoff	Claudia Bilotto, Parsons Brinckerhoff
Andrea Foard, Parsons Brinckerhoff	Sean Libberton, Parsons Brinckerhoff
Inga Kennedy, PEQ	Marla Hill, PEQ

Meeting Summary

Welcome and Project Introduction

The meeting was opened by Inga Kennedy of PEQ, who welcomed attendees, thanked them for their participation and asked all participants and attendees to introduce themselves. She acknowledged and thanked meeting host North Fulton CID and provided a brief recap of the meeting's purpose.

Informational Presentation

Mark Eatman, MARTA project manager for MARTA's Connect 400 project, began the presentation with a review of the meeting agenda, project background, history and status. He explained to the committees that this project is the second phase of an early scoping process that began in August 2013; Phase II of early scoping is proceeding with additional input from Phase I, results of a public survey, and economic



analysis from the Atlanta Regional Commission. He explained that major activities under Phase II would include the beginning of preliminary New Starts evaluation, recommendation and adoption of a Locally Preferred Alternative, and development of environmental documentation. He noted that as with Phase I, Phase II would include a robust public involvement process.

Mr. Eatman next presented the preliminary results from the public survey conducted by Kennesaw State University to assess attitudes of North Fulton residents and employees on transportation issues and transit preferences. Some of the results included:

- Traffic congestion in the corridor is a significant problem.
- Better public transportation options are needed.
- Most would take transit if it were more convenient/available.
- Expansion along GA 400 is preferred for transit expansion through north Fulton County to the Forsyth County line.
- Heavy rail is the preferred transit type. Light rail was a close second and bus rapid transit (in fixed guideway or high occupancy vehicle (HOV)/high occupancy toll (HOT)) was the least preferred transit type.

Mr. Eatman then asked Claudia Bilotto, Deputy Project Manager for the consultant team, to discuss the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) New Starts evaluation process and how transit projects are ranked nationally. Ms. Bilotto discussed various aspects of federal funding and completing large transit projects, including issues associated with FTA approval, securing funds, what information goes into the environmental study, etc. Mr. Eatman then returned to review the schedule of upcoming community meetings and next steps to move the project forward.

Following the presentation, Mr. Eatman opened the meeting for questions, after which the meeting was adjourned.

Questions/Comments

The following questions were raised after the formal presentations and are summarized with the response from the project team:

Q: Has the locally preferred alternative (LPA) already been presented to and acted upon by the MARTA Board?

A: A formal recommendation for an LPA has not been presented to the Board. A recommendation will be presented to the Planning Committee once Early Scoping is completed, and the Planning Committee will make the recommendation to the Board.

Q: Please be clear in communication with the public as to whether a preferred alternative has been selected. There is a perception that a preferred alternative has been selected and approved by the MARTA Board.

A: We will be clear in our message regarding the project. Several alignments were considered and the GA 400 alignment received the most support. Three transit technologies (heavy rail, light rail, and bus rapid transit) are being considered in Phase II of early scoping.



Q: Will all three expansion projects (GA 400, I-20 and Clifton Road) compete for New Starts funding and what portion will they receive?

A: Yes. All three projects will compete for New Starts funding, and we would like to receive the maximum 50 percent contribution. The projects will be prioritized based how competitive the projects are against the New Starts evaluation criteria.

Q: Why are six stations being shown now? At the last meeting (Fall 2013), there were five potential station locations.

A: The proposed Old Milton station was added back for consideration in all transit technologies.

Q: How can GA 400 become the top priority for funding?

A: The project that brings more local funding, brings new sources of funding to the table, and has the highest New Starts ranking will likely rise to the top. The New Starts evaluation will help determine the priority, too.

Q: How many surveys were sent out?

A: The first survey was a telephone survey of randomly selected north Fulton County adults ages 18 and older. A total of 612 respondents were surveyed. The survey included adults with traditional landline telephones (412) as well as those who rely primarily on cell phones (200). The second survey was an online survey of adults who are employed within a 1-mile radius of the GA 400 highway corridor. A total of 463 persons participated in the online survey.

Q: Is FTA still funding heavy rail transit (HRT)?

A: FTA funding is transit technology/mode-neutral, but there is a recent trend in FTA funding more bus rapid transit (BRT) projects.

Q: Has the Notice of Intent (NOI) for Phase II or early scoping been published?

A: The NOI was officially published on June 23rd.

Q: What is the schedule for the project?

A: Approximately 6-12 years to service.

Q: GDOT and the ARC are advancing the GA 400/I-285 interchange.

A: N/A

Q: Have technical plans been submitted to FTA? How much leeway is there to change design after submitting to FTA?

A: No technical plans are submitted to FTA through the environmental phase. Design corrections can be made during construction, but the alignment, station locations, etc. need to be finalized before the Record of Decision (ROD).

Q: What is the status of the Old Milton station?

A: Community input and data collection from early scoping will be used to finalize stations and locations.



Q: Why are we going through Early Scoping again? Is the project in the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) phase now?

A: This additional comment period will help inform the Board's decision on the LPA. The EIS phase will begin once the LPA is determined. A Notice of Intent to prepare an EIS will be published and NEPA scoping will be conducted.

Q: Six projects in the Atlanta region are competing for New Starts funds (the three MARTA expansion projects, the Atlanta BeltLine, Gwinnett Alternatives Analysis (AA), and Cobb AA). Can all of these projects compete for New Starts funding?

A: FTA has around \$2 billion available annually in New Starts funding and FTA is interested in spreading the money around. However, the drivers to compete for funding are how competitive the project is against the evaluation criteria, the local match available for capital costs, and a sufficient operations and maintenance (O&M) revenue plan.

Q: Is the alignment set or can the SR 9 option be reconsidered? Letters have been sent (from Sandy Springs and North Fulton Schools) to consider an alternative alignment.

A: If there is overwhelming public comment, MARTA would go back and reconsider the SR 9 alignment. The alignment along the GA 400 corridor was the top choice among the alignment alternatives considered. The decision regarding the east vs. west alignment along GA 400 will be decided during the EIS process.

Q: Can the alignment be in the middle of GA 400?

A: GDOT is interested in preserving the center area for managed lanes.



Project Steering Committee

June 12, 2014

Today's Agenda

- Project Status
- Input Collected to Date
 - Early Scoping – Phase 1 Activities and Outcomes
 - KSU Survey Results
 - ARC Economic Analysis
- Early Scoping – Phase 2 Activities
- Preliminary New Starts Evaluation
- Next Steps
- Q&A

Project Status



- Re-initiated efforts in Spring of 2014 to:
 - Conduct a second phase of Early Scoping
 - Initiate the preliminary New Starts evaluation
 - Recommend / adopt a Locally Preferred Alternative
 - Begin environmental documentation (DEIS)

Early Scoping

- FTA recently updated the New Starts funding program, streamlining the environmental review process.
- Early Scoping is an optional community involvement step during the major planning phase of a transit project.
- Input and comments will be considered as part of the Federal NEPA process, should MARTA prepare an EIS for FTA review.

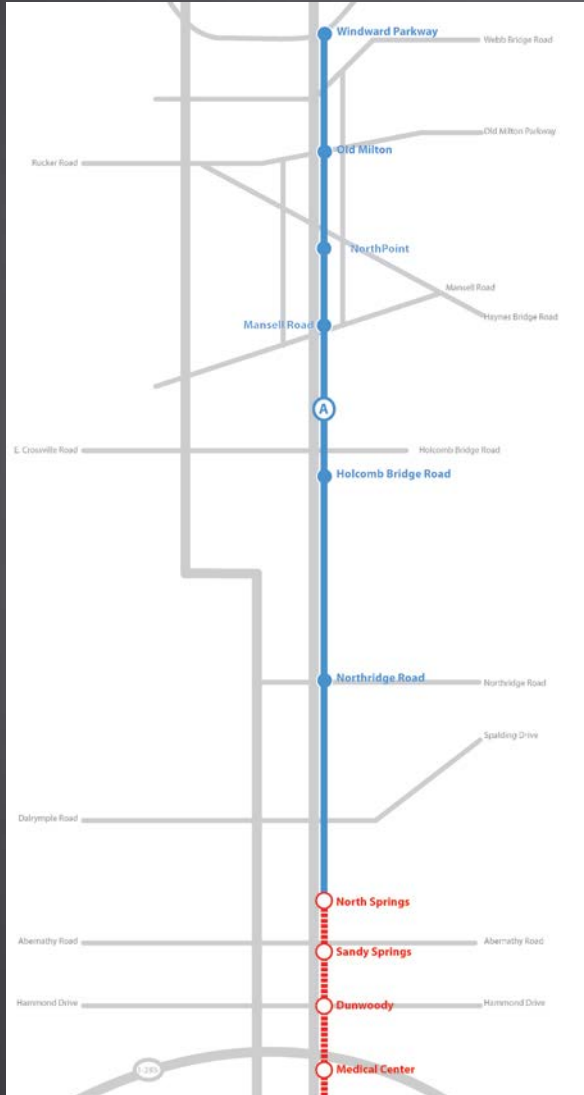
FTA = Federal Transit Administration

NEPA = National Environmental Policy Act

EIS = Environmental Impact Statement



Overview of Potential Alternatives



Georgia 400 – 1 (A)

Alignment

- 11.9 miles Long
- North Springs Station – Windward via GA 400

Transit Technology

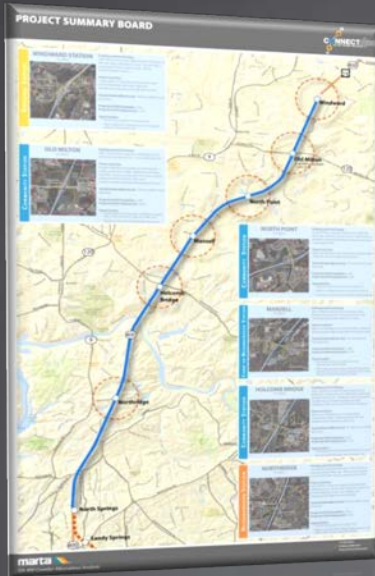
- Bus Rapid Transit
- Light Rail/Streetcar
- Heavy Rail


Potential Stations

- Northridge
- Holcomb Bridge
- Mansell Road
- North Point
- Old Milton (LRT/BRT only)
- Windward Parkway

* GDOT ROW availability on GA 400 to be determined based on Managed Lanes Study

Early Scoping Phase 1 Activities





We need your input!

Date
 Thursday, September 26, 2013

Time
 6:30-7:30 pm, Open House
 7:30-8:30 pm, Presentation & Q/A

Location
 Alpharetta City Hall
 2 Main Street
 Alpharetta, Georgia 30009

Contact: Janide Sidfall, MARTA Project Manager

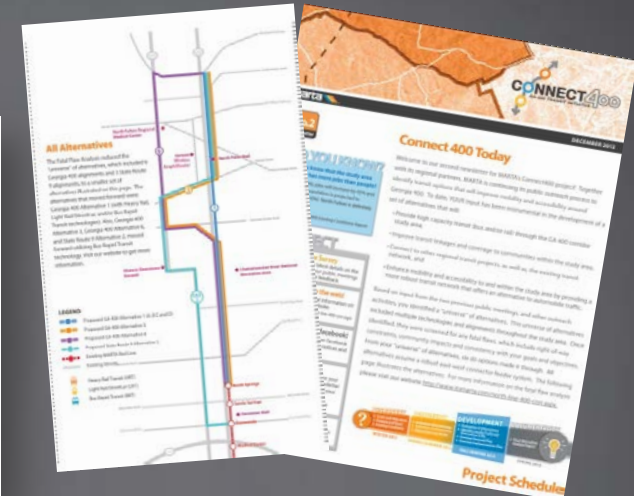


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www.itsmarta.com/north-line-400-cor.aspx

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 Like, Connect400



* The study area is depicted on the reverse side of this flyer



City Council Presentations

- Alpharetta City Council
September 16
- Roswell City Council
September 30
- Sandy Springs City Council
October 1
- Milton City Council
October 14

Public Meeting

- September 26, 2013,
Alpharetta City Hall:
over 100 attendees

PSC Meeting

- October 17, 2013

Early Scoping Phase 1 Outcomes

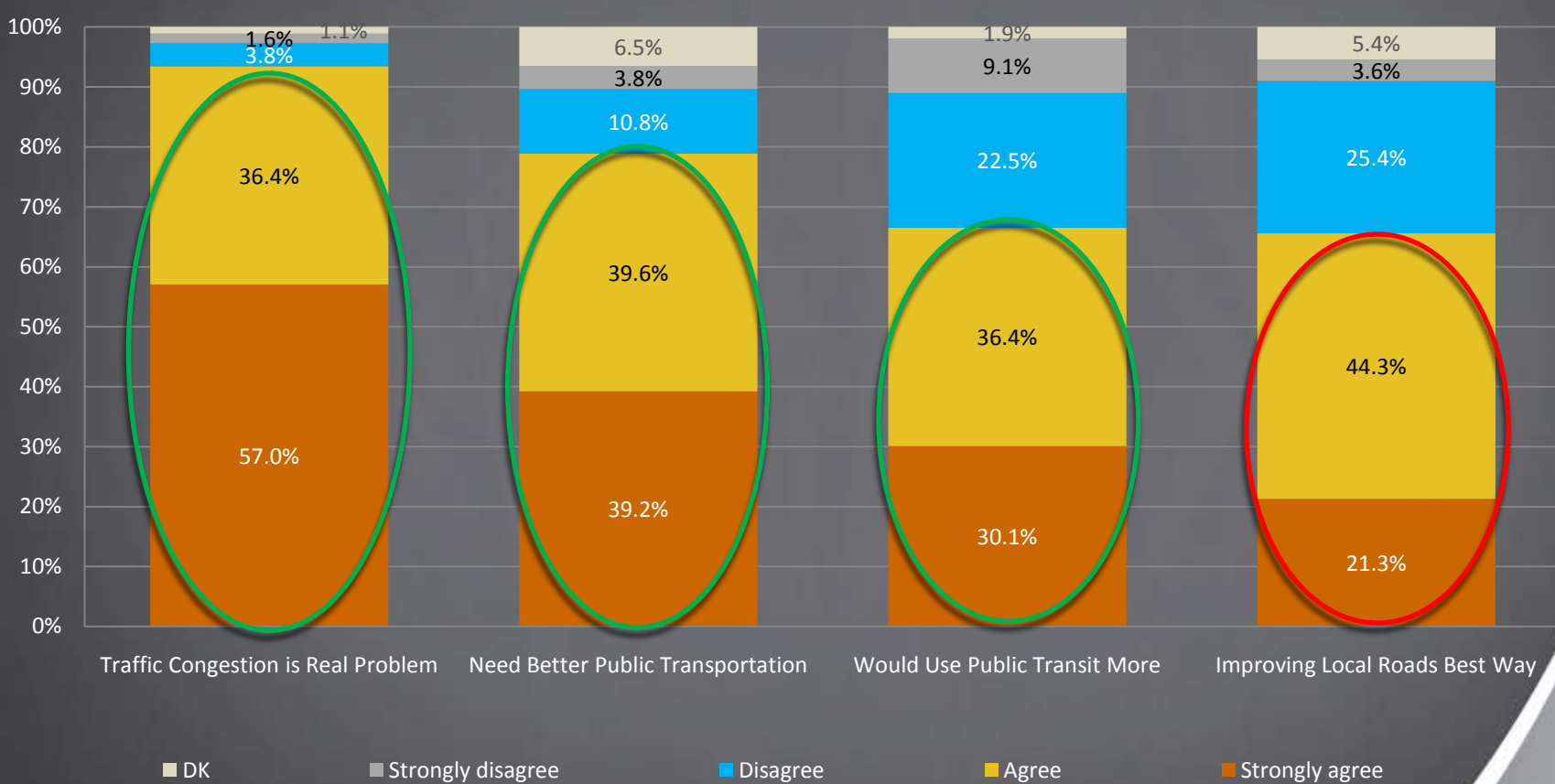
- Established GA 400 as preferred location of project
 - Alignment detail to be refined
- Suggested Heavy Rail as preferred technology
 - Initial Survey (136 participants)
- Identified the need to further explore the transit desires of area residents and employees
 - Continue community discussions
 - Conduct a statistically valid survey



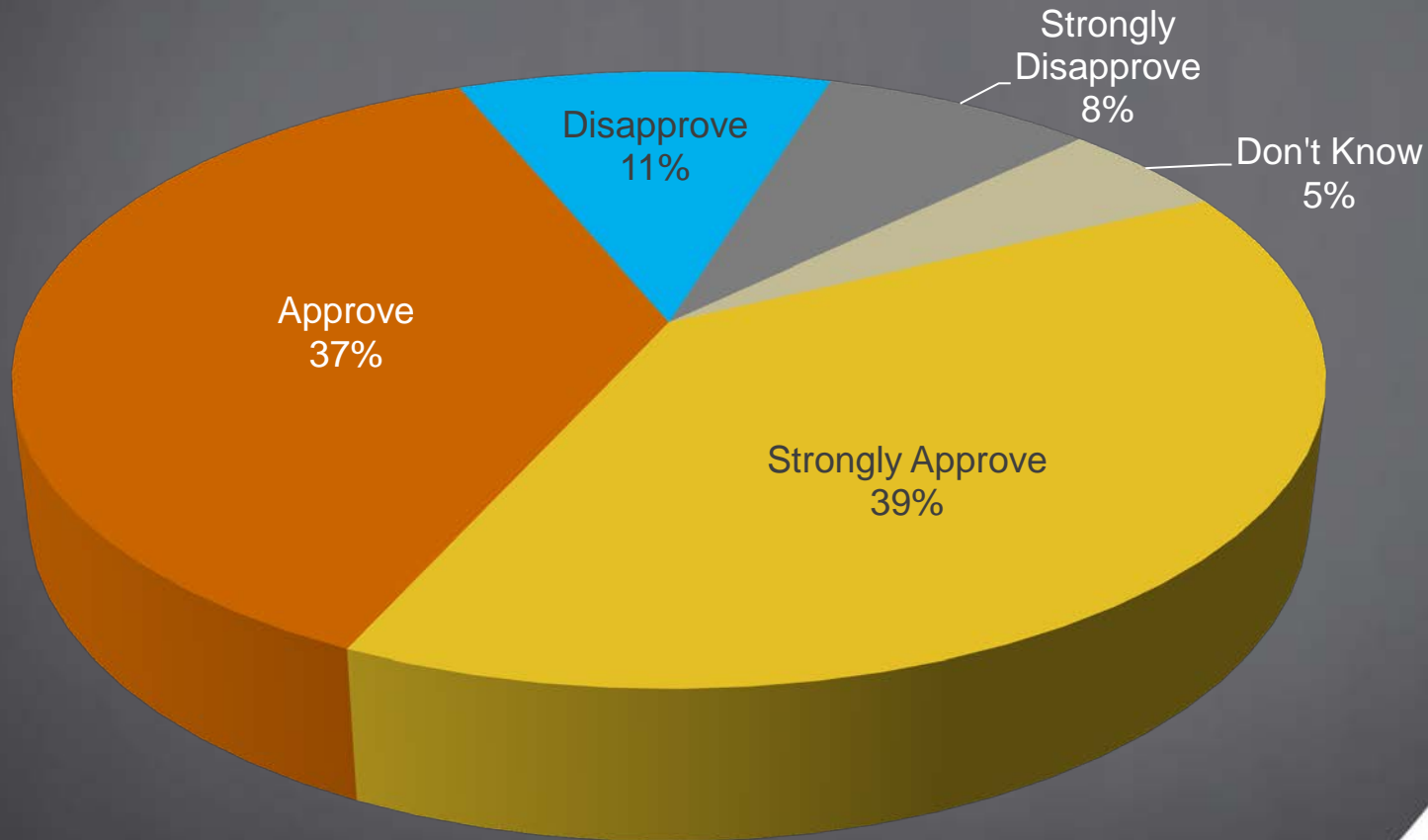
Scientific Survey Background

- Recommended as part of Early Scoping – Phase 1
- Initiated in March 2014 with KSU – A.L. Burruss Institute of Public Service and Research
- 612 North Fulton **RESIDENTS** responded via phone
 - Cellphone (200)
 - Landline (412)
- 463 North Fulton **EMPLOYEES** responded via internet
 - Online survey
 - Employees within 1-mile of GA 400 Corridor

Survey Results: Perceptions of RESIDENTS on Transportation Issues

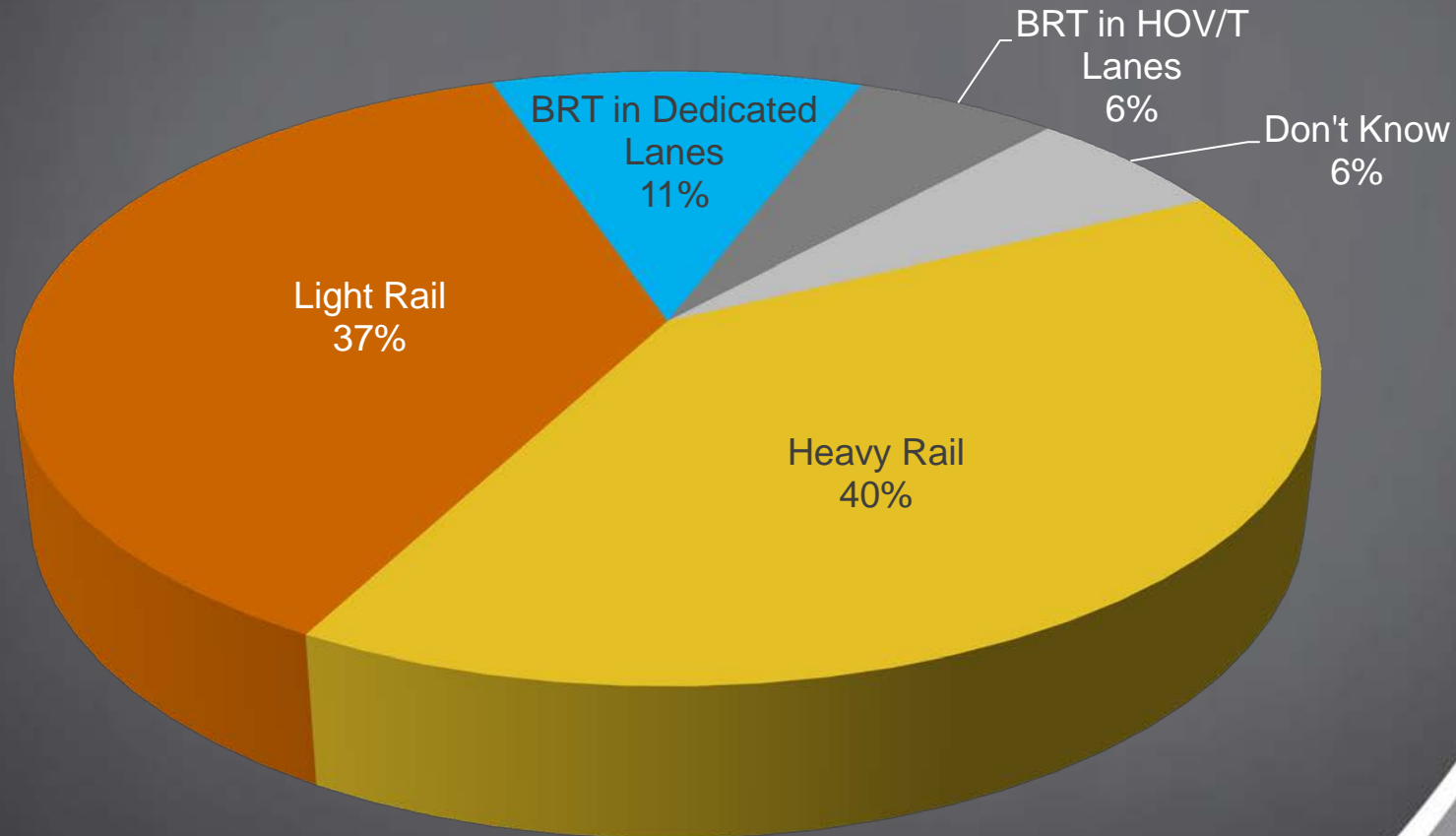


RESIDENT Survey Results: Approve or Disapprove of Potential Expansion of MARTA to Forsyth County Line?

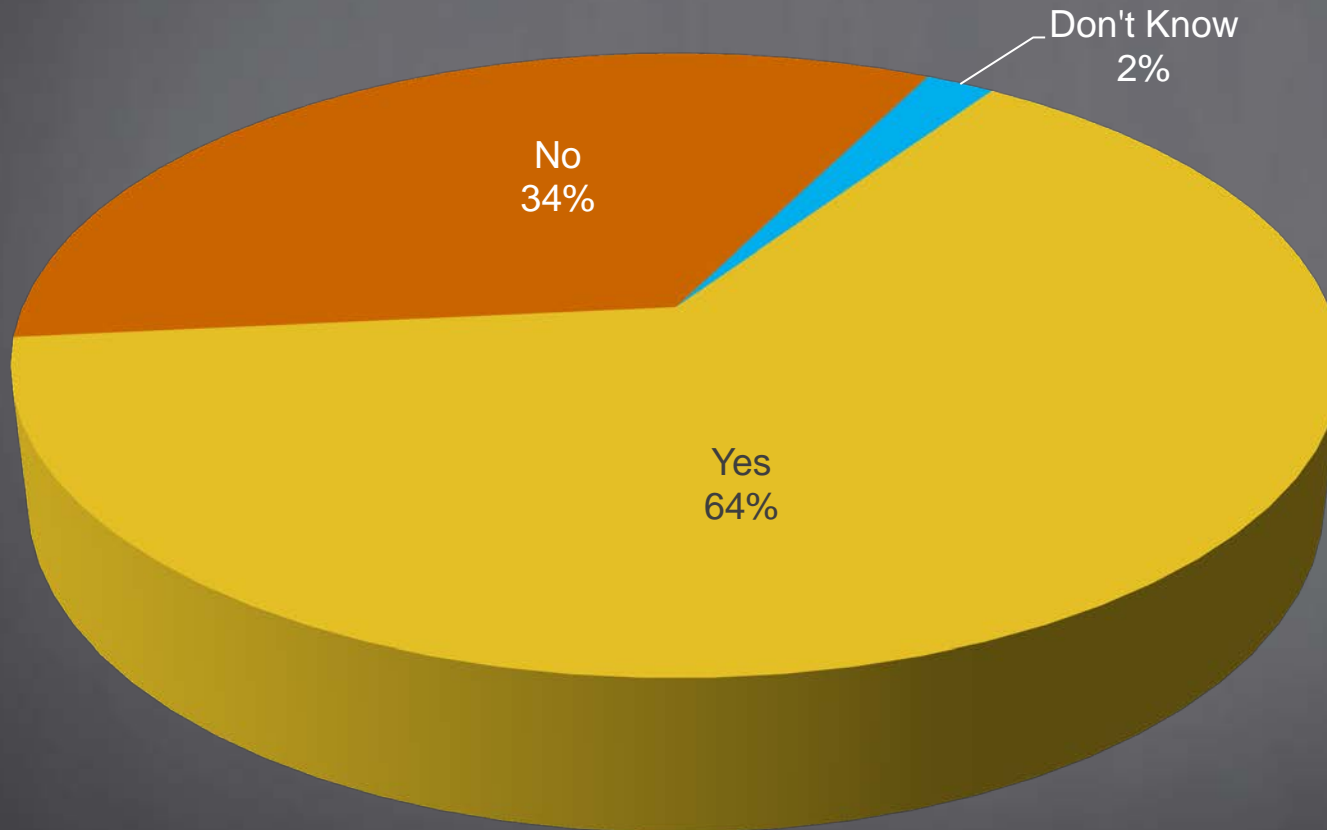


RESIDENT Survey Results: How Should MARTA Expansion Be Accomplished?*

*Asked only of those who approve of expansion

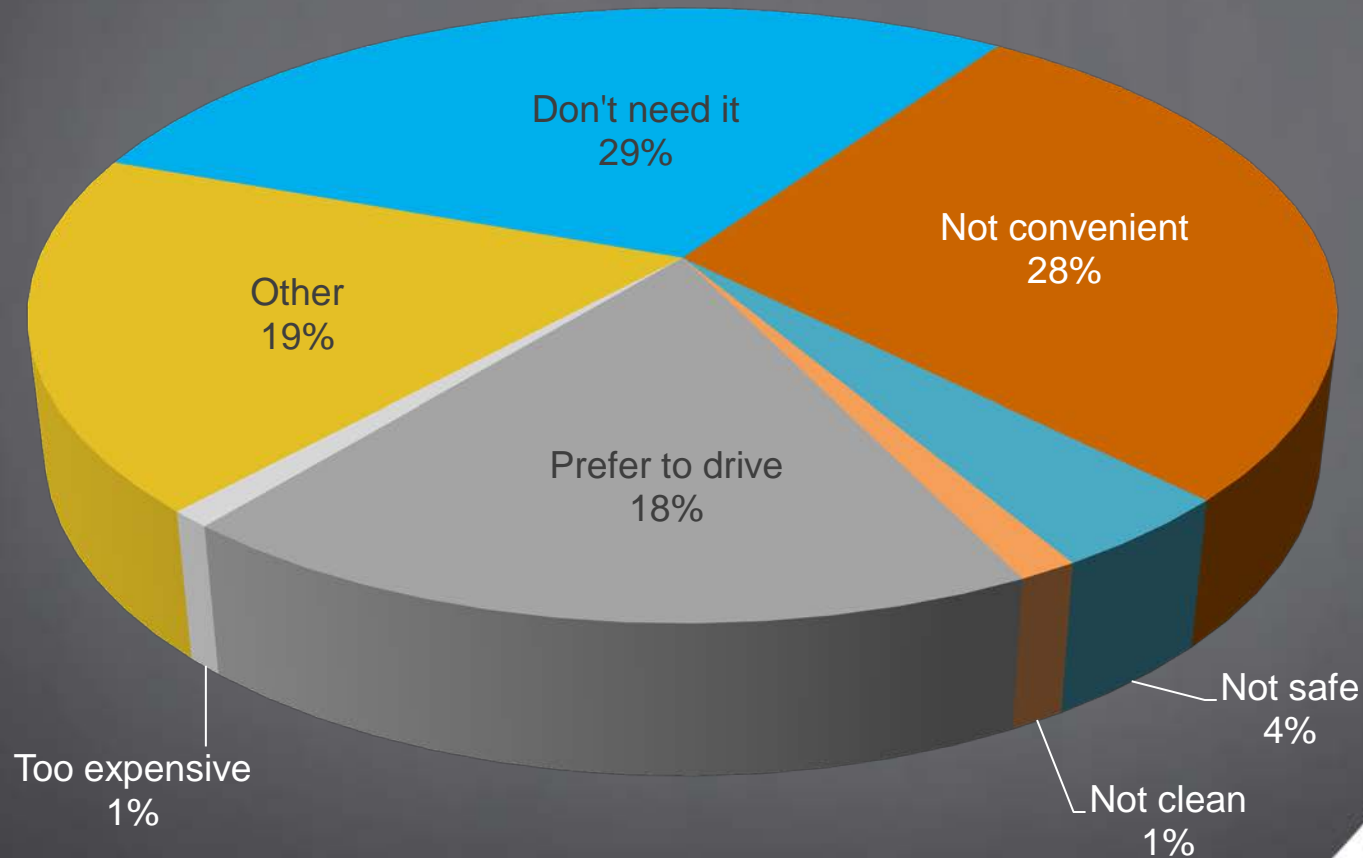


RESIDENT Survey Results: Would New MARTA Stations Up GA-400 to Forsyth County Line Encourage Respondents to Use MARTA More Often?



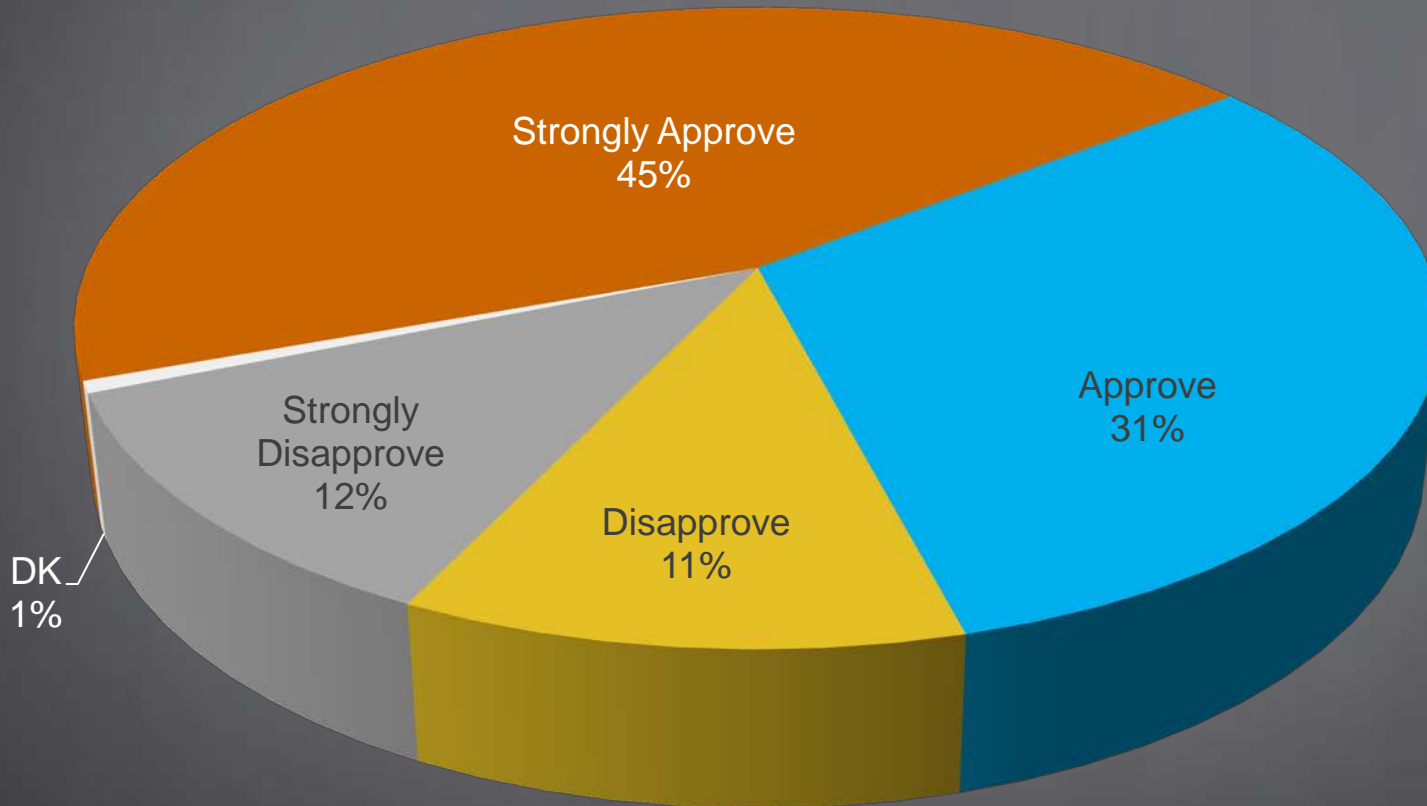
RESIDENT Survey Results: Why Hasn't Respondent Used MARTA?*

*Asked only of those who have not used either bus or train



EMPLOYEE Survey Results

Approve or Disapprove of Potential Expansion of MARTA to Forsyth County Line?

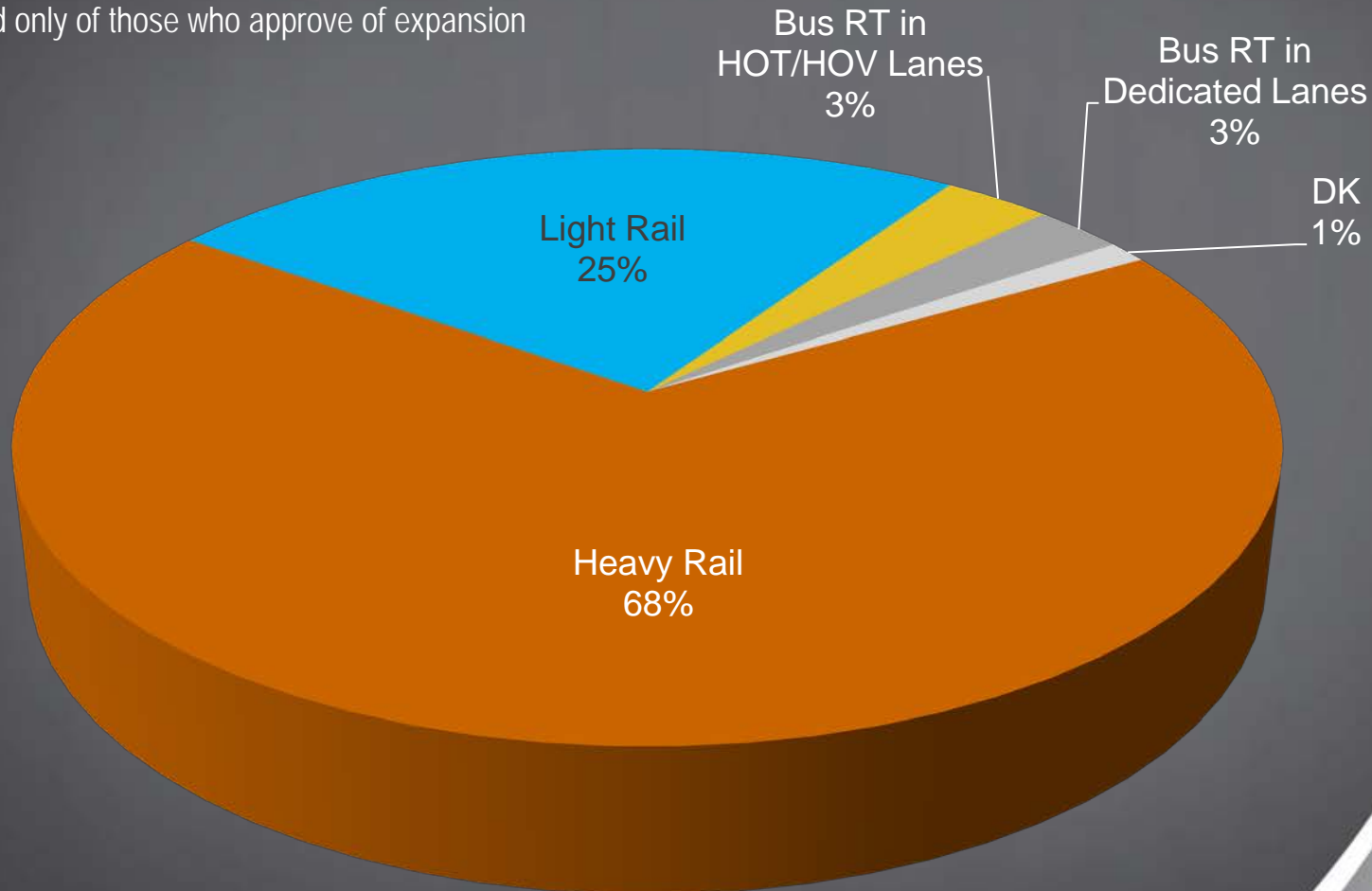


- **RESIDENTS:** 39% Strongly Approve / 37% Approve (Consistent 76% Approval)

EMPLOYEE Survey Results

How Should MARTA Expansion Be Accomplished?*

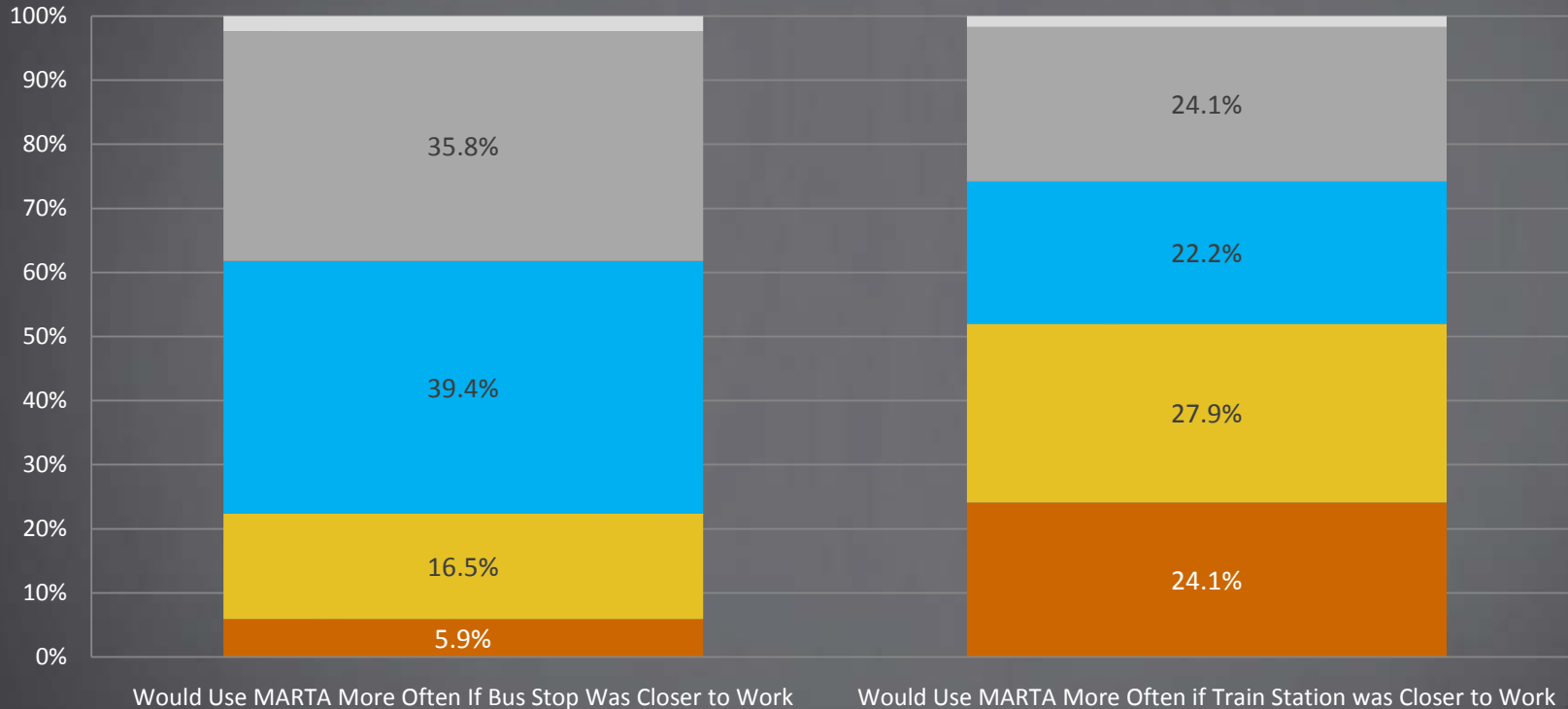
*Asked only of those who approve of expansion



- **RESIDENTS:** 40% Heavy Rail / 37% Light Rail / 17% total Bus Rapid Transit

EMPLOYEE Survey Results

Would New MARTA Stations Up GA 400 to Forsyth County Line Encourage Respondents to Use MARTA More Often?



DK

Strongly disagree

Disagree

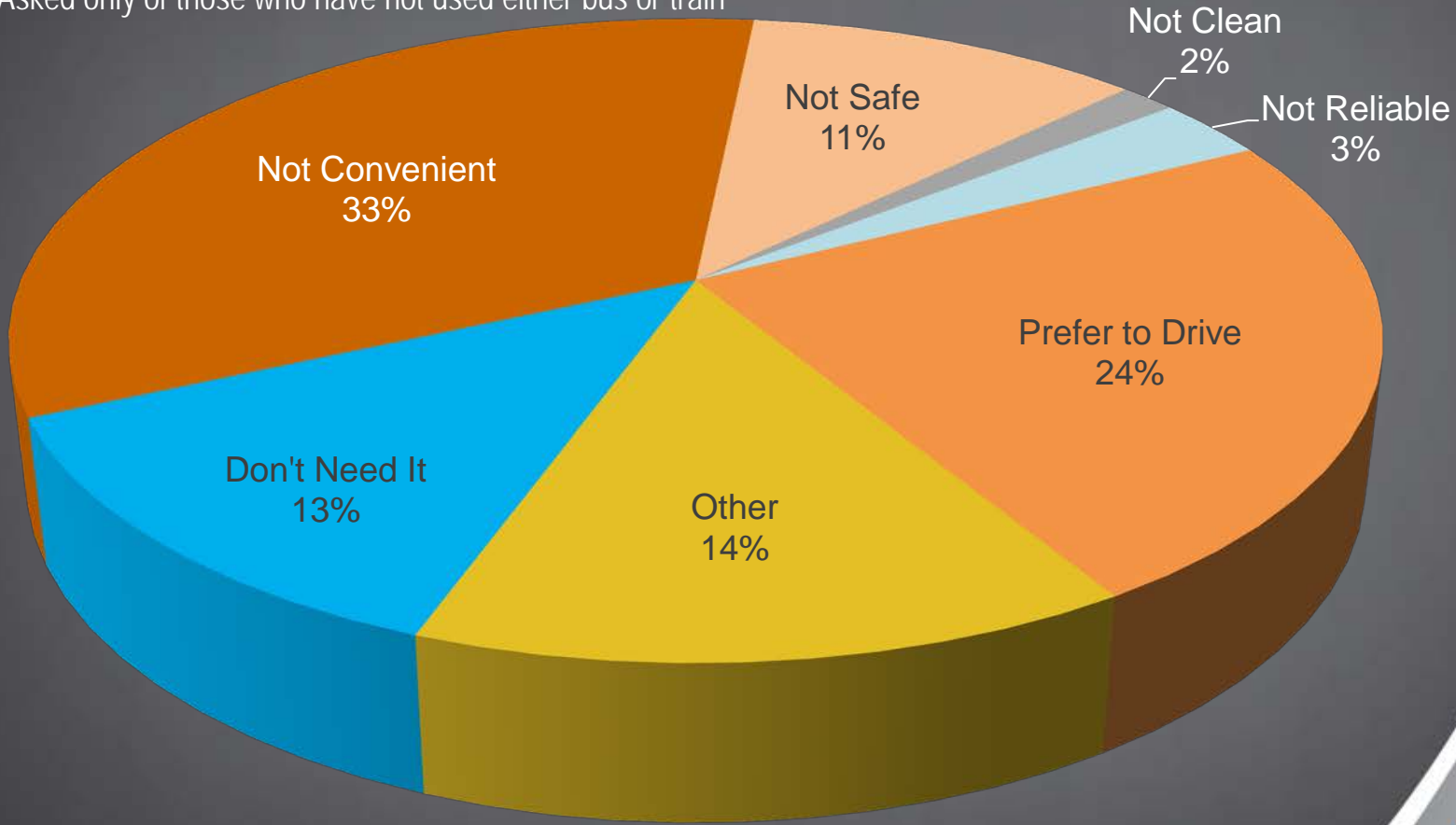
Agree

Strongly agree

EMPLOYEE Survey Results

Why Hasn't Respondent Used MARTA?*

*Asked only of those who have not used either bus or train



- **RESIDENTS:** Convenience 28% / Driving 18% / Don't Need 29% / Not Safe 4%

ARC Economic Analysis



- Study initiated in Winter 2014.
- Assesses Economic Impact of proposed expansion projects (I-20 East, Clifton Corridor and GA 400).
- Utilized PLAN 2040 regional planning assumptions.
- Preliminary results indicate positive influence on economy for all projects.
 - Increases in productivity, population, jobs, GDP, and other factors.
- Results finalized by late June 2014.



Early Scoping Phase 2 - Activities

- Conduct preliminary New Starts evaluation
- Engage elected officials, businesses, and residents, with an increased focus on community groups
 - Share survey results for consideration
 - Present completed and ongoing technical analysis
 - Preliminary New Starts Evaluation
 - ARC Economic Impact Analysis

Both steps will inform the identification of a preferred technology

Preliminary New Starts Evaluation

- Analysis underway to determine project performance with respect to:
 - Mobility Improvements
 - Cost Effectiveness
 - Congestion Relief
 - Environmental Benefits
 - Land Use
 - Economic Development
- Will inform selection of preferred technology as well as overall project approach and timing



Upcoming Community Meetings

- **Thursday, June 12, 7PM-8:30PM**
Presentation to Northridge Homeowners Association
Dunwoody Community Church
- **Tuesday, July 8, 6:30PM-8PM**
Public Meeting #1 – Johns Creek Environmental Campus
- **Thursday, July 10, 6:30PM-8PM**
Public Meeting #2 – GSU Alpharetta Center
- **Thursday, July 17, 6:30PM-8PM**
Public Meeting #3 – Hampton Inn Atlanta / Perimeter

Next Steps

- Complete preliminary New Starts evaluation (Summer 2014)
- Conduct Early Scoping Phase 2 (Summer 2014)
- Identify preferred technology and recommend Locally Preferred Alternative to the MARTA Board (Fall 2014)
- Initiate Draft Environmental Impact Statement (Fall 2014)

Questions?

Mark Eatman, PE

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