



GEORGIA 400 CORRIDOR ALTERNATIVES ANALYSIS

Early Scoping Report: Technical Appendix

Prepared for:

Metropolitan Atlanta Rapid Transit Authority

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- A-2 Transcript of September 26, 2013 Early Scoping Meeting and Meeting Presentation
- A-3 Summary of Project Steering Committee Meeting, October 17, 2013
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2.0 TRANSIT ORIENTED DEVELOPMENT GUIDELINES

Transit oriented development (TOD) has enormous potential along the Georgia 400 corridor. The availability of vacant and/or underutilized commercial land, coupled with access to major regional economic drivers and connections, makes this corridor prime for capitalizing on a future transit investment.

The Existing System

MARTA's existing heavy rail transit system generally focuses on major transportation corridors moving east-west and north south. Traveling north from Atlanta's downtown core, MARTA's Red line stations within the I-285 perimeter, are generally structured around existing employment centers with limited to no supporting parking infrastructure, a street network with smaller blocks that helps support multi-modal connections, and a mix of uses. As the transit line moves outside the I-285 perimeter, along the GA 400 corridor, the land use changes to become more suburban in nature with large supporting park and ride infrastructure, a limited street grid focused towards the automobile, and supporting large-scale single land uses.

The extension of the Red line towards the Fulton County/Forsyth County border creates an opportunity for local municipalities along the corridor to capitalize on transit investments. These investments, if implemented correctly, will enhance future growth in a manner that reflects the strategic goals of MARTA by:

- Promoting sustainable and affordable future growth
- Generating greater transit ridership
- Creating a return on investment

Transit Oriented Development

Transit is not a silver bullet for successful TOD. It is most successful when supportive land use policies are coupled with quality transit and transportation investments. Transit oriented development, as outlined in MARTA's Transit Oriented Development Guidelines, are built around four principles:

- Station-area development that is compact and dense relative to its surroundings
- A rich mix of land uses
- A great public realm
- A new approach to parking

TODs are generally defined as a ½ mile area centered on a transit station. The mix of uses, parking, and densities and intensity of development can vary between station areas and transit technology.

Figure 2-1: Transit Oriented Development Diagram

A Proposed Transit Oriented Development Diagram

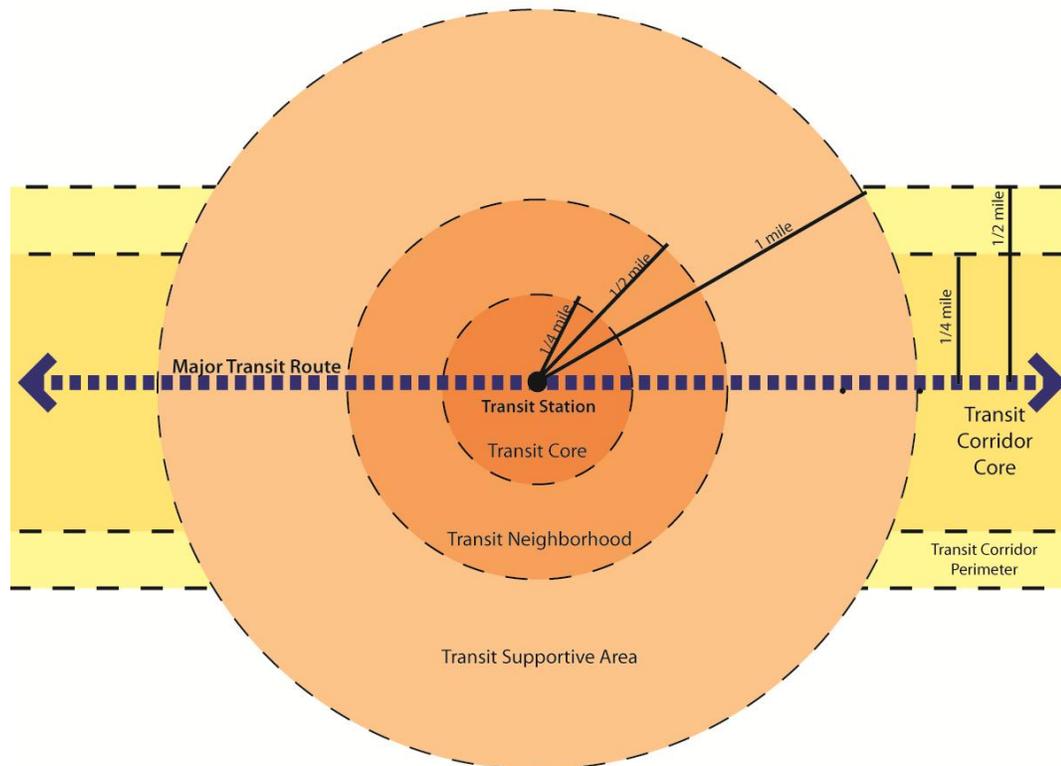
Station Area: ½ mile around a transit station (approximately 500 acres)

Transit Core: ¼ mile around a transit station- (approximately 125 acres)

Transit Neighborhood: area between a ¼ and ½ mile of the transit station

Transit Supportive Area: 1 mile around a station area

Transit Corridor: high capacity transit corridor (Heavy Rail Transit, Light Rail Transit, and Bus Rapid Transit)



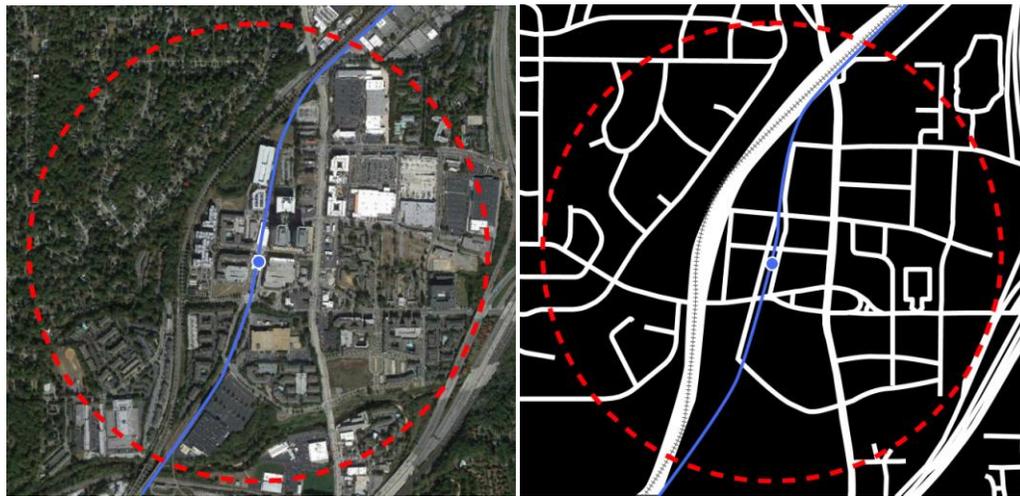
MARTA’s TOD Guidelines outline general station area requirements for seven station typologies. These typologies were developed to illustrate the general theme of the station rather than be prescriptive. The station typologies include:

- | | |
|----------------------|------------------------------|
| Urban Core | Arterial Corridor |
| Town Center | Special Regional Destination |
| Commuter Town Center | Collector |
| Neighborhood | |

Two examples of successful TOD within the MARTA system are Lindbergh Station and Decatur Station. These stations illustrate how TOD can be applied in both an existing urban context and a redeveloping suburban context. The principles of connectivity, scale, and land use can be applied to the proposed station areas along the Georgia 400 corridor. The below graphics are at the same scale and illustrate overall mobility within the ½ mile station area of Lindbergh, Decatur, and the proposed Holcomb Bridge Station.

Lindbergh Station (existing)

- Designated a “commuter town center” station in MARTA’s TOD Guidelines
- Redeveloped parcels with walkable street grid
- Mix of land uses including 14-story office towers
- Structured parking



Downtown Decatur Station (existing)

- Designated “town center” station in MARTA’s TOD Guidelines
- Historic walkable street grid
- Mix of land uses between 1-5 stories
- No parking associated with station



Holcomb Bridge Road Station (proposed)

- Designated “community” station
- Limited street grid oriented towards east-west vehicular movement
- Single land use



At the conclusion of the presentation the public was given eight dots as a tool to vote on the most applicable station typology for the proposed stations. The results are presented in Table 2-1.

Table 2-1: Preferred Station Types

Proposed Access Point	Preferred Station Type
Northridge/Pitts	Community Station (14 dots)
Holcomb Bridge	Community Station (11 dots)
Mansell	Community Station/Neighborhood Station (10 dots each)
North Point	Community Station (12 dots)
Old Milton	Community Station (11 dots)
Windward	Regional Station (19 dots)

As the Connect 400 project moves forward and local municipalities set the development framework for the transit investment, the outlined general TOD principles illustrating land use, mobility, and open space should be encouraged.

3.0 OUTREACH ACTIVITY SUMMARY

Between March 2012 and August 2014, MARTA and the project team have worked to educate and engage the public for the GA 400 Corridor Alternatives Analysis (AA). The public outreach recognizes the diversity of the communities within the study area and as such, developed a framework that tapped into existing community structures with both high-tech and high-touch outreach methods. MARTA developed a Public Involvement Plan to describe the program developed for community outreach and interagency coordination.

MARTA established the following public involvement goals:

- Establish meaningful on-going, two-way communication between MARTA, the stakeholders, and the public in order to build consensus.
- Educate the public about the planning process and the role of government, stakeholders, and citizens, and provide a structure and forum for interested and affected parties to provide input and comment on major issues, problems, and alternatives.
- Ensure that the public had input into the technical analysis and study findings, including the evaluation criteria and mitigation needs.
- Inform the public of the progress of the study and of new opportunities to participate in the planning process.

This report provides a summary of the public involvement activities over the course of the project. In general, there were three outreach focus areas:

- Stakeholder and agency involvement
- Public involvement
- General outreach

3.1 PUBLIC AND STAKEHOLDER OUTREACH PRIOR TO EARLY SCOPING

3.1.1 Stakeholder and Agency Involvement

To reach stakeholders and agencies, MARTA used several strategies, include stakeholder interviews and meetings with the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) and the Project Steering Committee (PSC). The TAC is made up of representatives from state, local, and federal agencies that are responsible for providing input on the technical and policy framework. The PSC is comprised of members of the TAC as well as the Stakeholder Advisory Committee (SAC) members.

Stakeholder Interviews

Stakeholder interviews were critical early in the process to identify first-hand the area's opportunities and challenges. The stakeholders, identified by MARTA, were composed of representatives from a variety of area organizations including advocacy groups, citizen and business organizations, and elected officials.

Approximately 30 stakeholder interviews were conducted between February and April 2012. The interviews were designed to be both informative and informal, and to allow

the interviewee to discuss topics that might not be known by the project team. Each meeting kicked-off with an overview of the project and corridor, the schedule, and concluded with a discussion about how the project team’s outreach could be more effective.

The reoccurring key issues identified in the stakeholder interviews included:

- East-West circulation a problem
- Lack of transportation funding
- Need for ‘last mile’ circulation so there is an alternative to private vehicle
- Need for local inter-nodal/ transit circulation
- Need for feeder system to GA 400 transit
- Several options for transit compatible with managed lanes along GA 400
- Concern of worsening traffic at interchanges if station located there
- River crossing is a challenge
- Desire to preserve visual aesthetic, including river buffers and tree buffers
- Safety, and perception of safety, are important
- Phase transit improvements to build market/ ridership
- ROW limitations along Roswell Road
- There is no ‘reverse commute’ on GA 400, both directions are bad during peak hours
- Need to improve existing MARTA station accessibility and efficiency
- Need to improve existing MARTA bus routes and add additional routes

Project Steering Committee (PSC) Meetings

Following the aforementioned stakeholder interviews, MARTA identified a subset of community representatives to comprise the Project Steering Committee (PSC). The PSC included individuals with technical skills (who were also members of the Technical Advisory Committee), community leaders, and representatives from each municipality within the corridor. The dates and purposes of the PSC meetings in 2012 and 2013 are listed below.

Date	Meeting Purpose
January 18, 2012	Presented the project purpose and schedule; outlined the PSC’s role in the process; reviewed the major themes from the existing conditions of the project; reviewed the Purpose and Need of the project; established the Goals and Objectives of the project.
March 22, 2102	No Presentation. An interactive session was held to review the Project’s Purpose, Needs, Goals and Objectives, and Evaluation Framework; introduced transit mode possibilities; begun development of potential project alignment alternatives.
November 11, 2012	Reviewed major findings and recommendations from the fatal flaw analysis; presented preliminary Screen 1 results; identified potential station locations and issues/opportunities associated with each station area.

February 26, 2013	Reviewed Screen 1 findings; presented preliminary operations plans; presented station typologies; identified station typologies for proposed stations.
May 9, 2013	Reviewed transit alignments and alternatives to move forward in the process.

Technical Advisory Committee (TAC)

MARTA identified the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC). It included individuals with technical skills in a number of areas including, but not limited to, environmental resources, transportation and land uses. The TAC was utilized throughout the study to ensure technical proficiency. The dates and purposes of the TAC meetings in 2011 and 2012 are listed below.

Date	Meeting Purpose
December 13, 2011	Presented the project purpose and schedule; outlined the TAC's role in the process; reviewed the major themes developed from the existing conditions; and uncovered existing opportunities and constraints within the area.
February 28, 2012	Presented where we are in the process; presented major themes we've heard to date from the TAC, PSC, stakeholders and members of the public; presented the final draft of the Purpose and Need, and Goals and Objectives; developed performance measures for the evaluation matrix.
October 25, 2012	Hosted on-line. Presented the technical screening process; presented an overview of the fatal flaw analysis including the technology assessment and major findings; discussed which alternatives to advance into Screen 1.

3.1.2 Public Meetings

It was important throughout the planning process for the public to understand the basis for project decisions. It was also crucial that the public acknowledged that the process for arriving at decisions was fair and that their input was carefully considered. The public meetings were designed to educate and engage the public with the aim of achieving "informed consent" on various milestones throughout the process.

Prior to Early Scoping Phase 1, MARTA held three public meetings in the corridor and conducted an on-line public opinion poll between January 2012 and March 2013. The meetings and the public opinion poll are described below.

Meeting #1 – January 26, 2012

The purpose of the meeting was to present the AA purpose, process and schedule; presented why transportation decisions are important. During the meeting, MARTA reviewed the major themes from the Existing Conditions and Future Trends Report, the draft Purpose and Need Report, and the draft Goals and Objectives. Participants were encouraged to provide comments.

MARTA heard from the participants that the following key items are important to consider:

- Travel Reliability
- Service Type
- Connectivity
- Congestion
- Land Use
- Outreach
- Funding/Cost
- Policy

Meeting #2 – May 22, 2012

MARTA presented the project schedule, what they have heard from the public to date, and why transportation and land use is important. MARTA also presented potential transit modes asked for input on potential transit connections.

The key points that MARTA heard during this public meeting were:

- Georgia 400 and State Route 9 are most appropriate for transit.
- East-West service needs to be enhanced.
- Heavy rail transit is thought to be infeasible due to major right-of-way constraints and community impacts.
- Potential station locations should include Holcomb Bridge Road, North Point Mall, and Windward Parkway.
- A large park-and-ride is appropriate at the northern terminus.
- Improvements are needed to existing bus service.
- • Project should be consistent with local and regional initiatives.

Meeting #3, Holiday Outreach – December 12, 2012 through January 17, 2013

In lieu of a scheduled public meeting, MARTA developed a survey to obtain feedback on the preferred alignment, transit technology and station location. A total of 136 people responded to the survey with 87.5% of respondents completing the survey.

Key observations from the survey were:

- 82% of respondents chose GA 400 Alternative 1A as the “most appropriate” alignment.
- GA 400 Alternatives 1B, 1C, and 1D were all selected as “moderately appropriate” (72% (1B), 69% (1C), and 65% (1D)).
- GA 400 Alternative 3 scored the lowest with 80% of respondents stating this alternative was “least appropriate”.
- An overwhelming majority of respondents selected heavy rail transit as the most appropriate transit technology for GA 400 Alternatives 1A, 1B, 1C, and 1D.

- A majority of respondents stated that Bus Rapid Transit was not an appropriate technology for GA 400 Alternative 3, 6 and State Route 9 Alternative 2 due to existing State Route 9 congestion.
- A majority of respondents stated that the Pitts Road access point should be relocated to Northridge Road.
- Several open-ended responses discussed the need for true Transit Oriented Development and concern about the quality of the last mile.

Meeting #4 – March 21, 2013

At this meeting, MARTA reminded the participants of the transit technologies under consideration, presented the screening process and the findings, and presented station typologies.

Results of the comments from this meeting were:

- All votes were in favor of High Speed Rail (HRT).
- Pitts Station should be eliminated and moved to Northridge Road.
- A Community Station was preferred for Northridge/Pitts Station, Holcomb Bridge, North Point and Old Milton locations.
- Votes were split on whether Mansell Road should be a Community Station or a Neighborhood Station.
- Windward Station should be a Regional Station.

3.1.2.1 Environmental Justice Assurance

Special attention was paid to ensure that all populations in the study area, including those that are historically under-represented in the transportation decision-making process, had role in the study. The goal of the Environmental Justice Executive Order 12898 (February 11, 1994) and the U.S. Department of Transportation Order on Environmental Justice (DOT Order 5610.2) dated April 15, 1997, is to ensure the full and fair participation by all potentially affected communities in the transportation decision-making process.

There were two outreach sessions held specifically to engage minority and non-English speaking communities. These sessions were in addition to the identification of members to serve as part of the PSC committee. Outreach efforts included:

December 13, 2011 Minority and Non-English Speaking Leadership Meeting

At this meeting, MARTA presented the project purpose, schedule, and study area. The participants brainstormed on additional outreach mechanisms and existing opportunities and constraints within the area.

August 18, 2012 El Banco

At this meeting, MARTA presented the project purpose, schedule and study area and engaged the community to uncover existing opportunities and constraints within the area.

3.1.3 General Outreach Methods

The outreach methods developed for the Georgia 400 project used a two-pronged blended approach for public engagement- “high-tech and high-touch”. The variety of engagement tools helped to maximize public involvement and bridge the socio-economic, age and technology gap.

High-Tech

The high-tech method of public involvement used the latest technologies to distribute a message across the broadest spectrum.

Project Website

The project team utilized MARTA’s existing website to update the community on the following:

- Upcoming meetings
- Contact information
- Project progress
- Meeting materials for PSC, TAC, and public meetings

Project Business Card

A project business card was created and distributed at all meetings. The business card included a phone number for the project hotline, contact name, e-mail address, and a link to the project website and Facebook page.

Facebook

A project Facebook page was created on October 11, 2011 and updated throughout the project. Posts included updates on the project schedule, proposed meetings, and relevant transit articles. September 17, 2014, there were 463 “likes” and 70 posts.

On-Line Survey

In lieu of a public meeting over the 2012 holiday season, MARTA developed a survey to engage the community on a preferred alignment, transit technology and potential station locations. The survey, administered between December 12, 2012 and January 17, 2013, had over 130 responses and an 87.5% completion rate.

Key findings were:

- 82% of respondents chose GA 400 Alternative A1 as the “most appropriate alignment.”
- GA 400 Alternatives 1B, 1C and 1D were all selected as “moderately appropriate” (72%, 69% and 65%, respectively).
- GA 300 Alternative 3 scored the lowest with 80% of respondents stating it was the “least appropriate.”
- A majority of respondents selected HRT as the most appropriate transit technology for Alternatives 1A, 1B, 1C, and 1D.
- Most thought BRT was not an appropriate technology for GA 400 Alternatives 3 and 6 and SR 9 Alternative 2 due to existing SR 9 congestion.
- Several open-ended responses discussed the need for true TOD development.

Project Hotline

A project hotline was operated by the project team. Three calls were made to the project hotline and each was returned or forwarded to the appropriate party to address.

Video and Animation

The project team developed a transit technology video, of existing transit corridors, to play during the second PSC meeting and second public meeting. The video was also posted on Facebook.

High-Touch

The high-touch method focused on personal contact through individual phone calls or notes, distribution of hard copies of project materials, and attention to face-to-face contact.

Newsletters

Several newsletters were developed throughout the project. The main purpose of these newsletters was to provide information regarding the status of the project and to promote upcoming public meetings and other input opportunities. The bi-lingual newsletters were published on the on-line project forums and were distributed throughout the community.

Fact Sheets

A fact sheet was developed at the project initiation to cover the purpose and context for the study area. The fact sheet was published on the on-line project forums, and distributed at public events and public buildings.

Other Activities

Over the summer of 2012, the project team went out to MARTA stations located in the study area to engage existing transit riders on where transit can be most effective. There were three stations where this outreach took place:

- Dunwoody Station
- North Springs Station
- Sandy Springs Station

The majority of riders who were approached were primarily interested in obtaining the handouts being distributed. The handouts included the newsletter and fact sheet. About two dozen riders at each station stopped to talk with project team members. Of those who stopped to discuss:

- 42% live in the corridor.
- 72% work in the corridor.
- A majority of people identified Perimeter Center and Perimeter Mall as the most important activity center.
- A majority of people identified Northridge Road, Holcomb Bridge Road, and Roswell Road as potential transit connections between activity centers and GA 400.

3.2 Early Scoping Phase 1

Supporting documentation for the public and stakeholder outreach conducted as part of Early Scoping Phase 1 is presented in Attachment A. The following materials are in Attachment A.

A-1	<i>Federal Register</i> Notice of Intent for Early Scoping, August 28, 2013, and Announcement Flyer
A-2	Transcript of September 26, 2013 Early Scoping Meeting and Meeting Presentation
A-3	Summary of Project Steering Committee Meeting, October 17, 2013
A-4	Summaries of City Council Meetings, September and October 2013
A-5	Media Articles – Phase 1

3.3 Early Scoping Phase 2

Supporting documentation for the public and stakeholder outreach conducted as part of Early Scoping Phase 2 is presented in Attachment B. The following materials are in Attachment B.

B-1	Kennesaw State University Public Opinion Survey Summary Report, June 2014
B-2	Announcements of Early Scoping Phase 2: <i>Federal Register</i> Notice June 23, 2014, Press Release and Flyer
B-3	Presentation Materials from Early Scoping Meetings, July 2014
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