



**Planning and Technical Services
RFP P27818
Task Order No. 2014-LRSRP-5**

Georgia 400 Transit Initiative
Environmental Review and Project Planning

Scoping Summary Report

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Metropolitan Atlanta Rapid Transit Authority

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Atlanta, GA

July 2015



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0.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

0.1 Introduction

An Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) is required under the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA) for all Federal investments that have the potential for significant environmental impacts. This Scoping Summary Report discusses the role of the Scoping process in the overall project development and public involvement program (as outlined in the Public Involvement Plan (PIP)) for the GA 400 Transit Initiative EIS. The public involvement and agency coordination activities conducted during the public Scoping process are summarized, as are the comments and issues raised as a result of that coordination. Copies of the outreach materials used to engage and involve the public, government officials and agencies throughout the Scoping process are provided as Appendices to this report.

0.1.1 Project Summary

The GA 400 Transit Initiative is a planned transit expansion that extends northward from the North Springs station to Windward Parkway in northern Fulton County. The study area for the GA 400 Transit Initiative generally runs parallel to GA 400, connecting Sandy Springs to Alpharetta. Five potential transit stations are located at each of the following interchanges along GA 400: Northridge Road, Holcomb Bridge Road, Encore Parkway/North Point Mall, Old Milton Parkway, and Windward Parkway.

The **purpose** of the GA 400 Transit Initiative includes the following:

- Provide high capacity transit (Bus Rapid Transit [BRT] or Heavy Rail Transit [HRT]) through the study area;
- Improve transit linkages and coverage to communities within the study area; and
- Enhance mobility and accessibility to and within the study area by providing a more robust transit network that offers an alternative to automobile travel.

The following are the overarching **needs** for the GA 400 Transit Initiative:

- Increased travel demand and congestion along GA 400;
- Limited transit mobility both within and to North Fulton;
- Transit travel times that are competitive with automobile travel; and
- Accommodate economic development opportunities.

0.1.2 Project Alternatives

The transit technologies currently under consideration are HRT and BRT. Three Build Alternatives will be evaluated in the Draft EIS (DEIS) – one HRT alternative and two BRT alternatives.

The HRT alternative (Build Alternative 1), which is the Locally Preferred Alternative (LPA) adopted by the MARTA Board on March 5, 2015, operates in an exclusive guideway on either side of the GA 400 right-of-way (ROW). The alignment starts at the North Springs Station on the east side of GA 400, crosses to the west side south of Spalding Drive, then crosses back to the east side of GA 400 north of the Chattahoochee River, where it

runs to Windward Parkway. The location of the crossover north of the Chattahoochee River will be determined during the environmental review process.

The first BRT alternative (Build Alternative 2) uses the same alignment as the HRT alternative. The second BRT alternative (Build Alternative 3) operates within future Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) managed lanes along GA 400 and shares the ROW with other vehicles.

Figure 0-1 and **Figure 0-2** show the DEIS alternatives and design options at the time of the Scoping period.

Figure 0-1: GA 400 Transit Initiative DEIS Build Alternatives 1 and 2

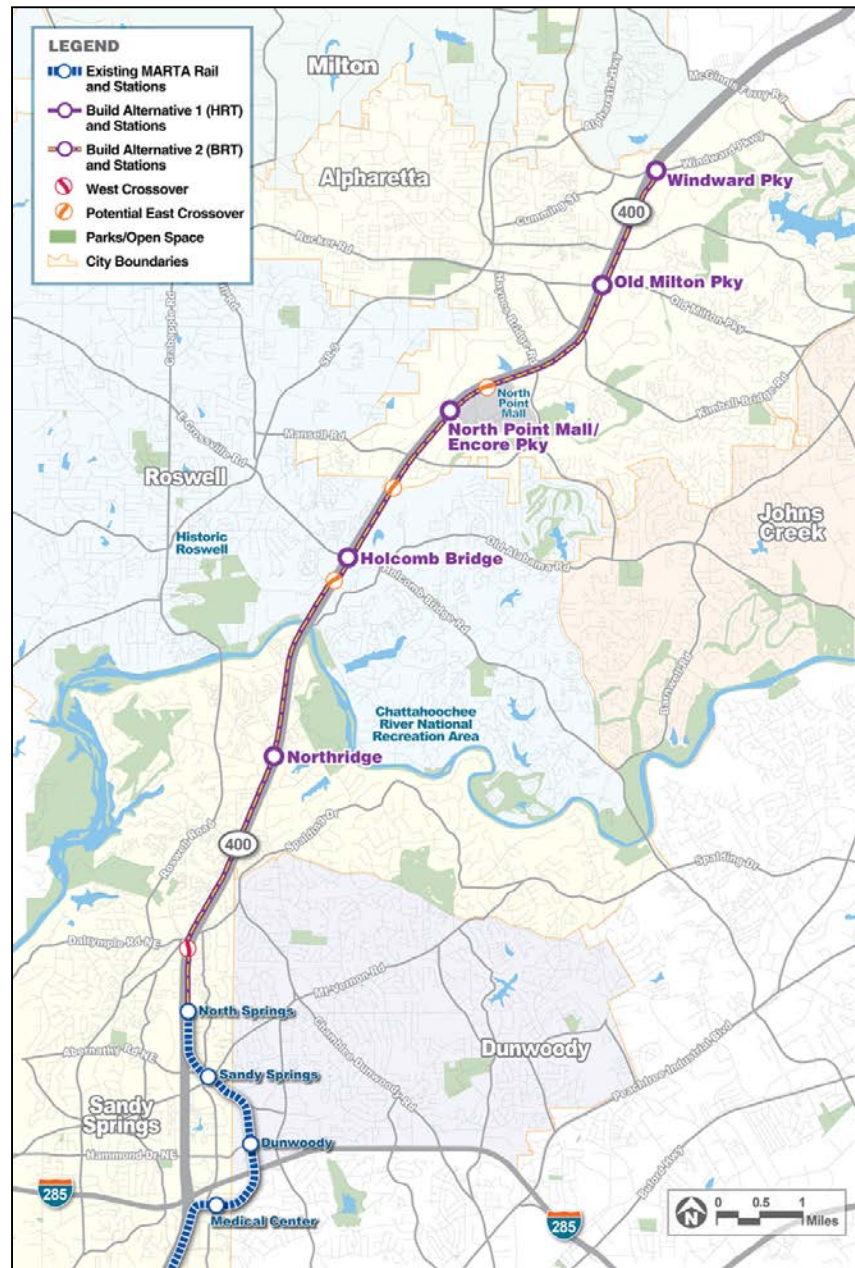
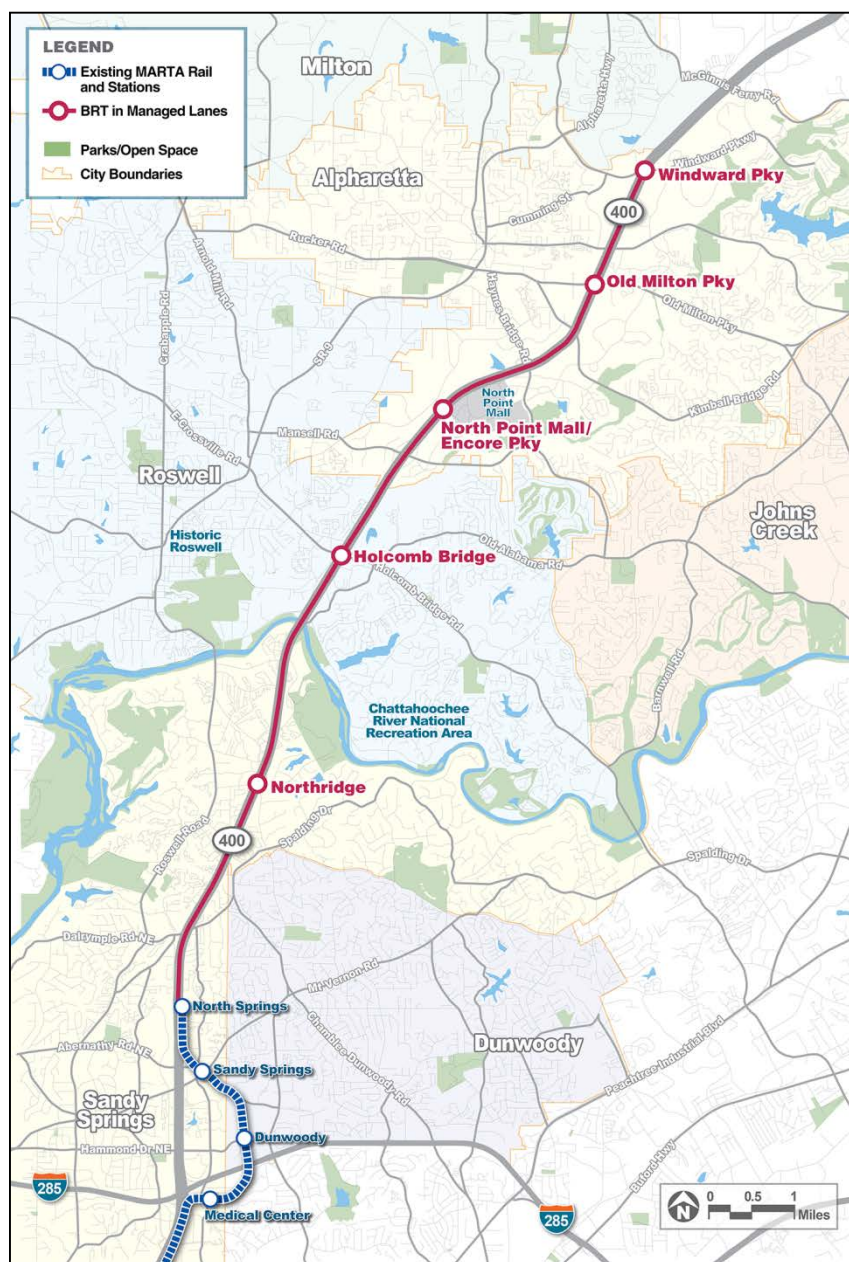


Figure 0-2: GA 400 Transit Initiative DEIS Build Alternative 3



0.2 Public Participation

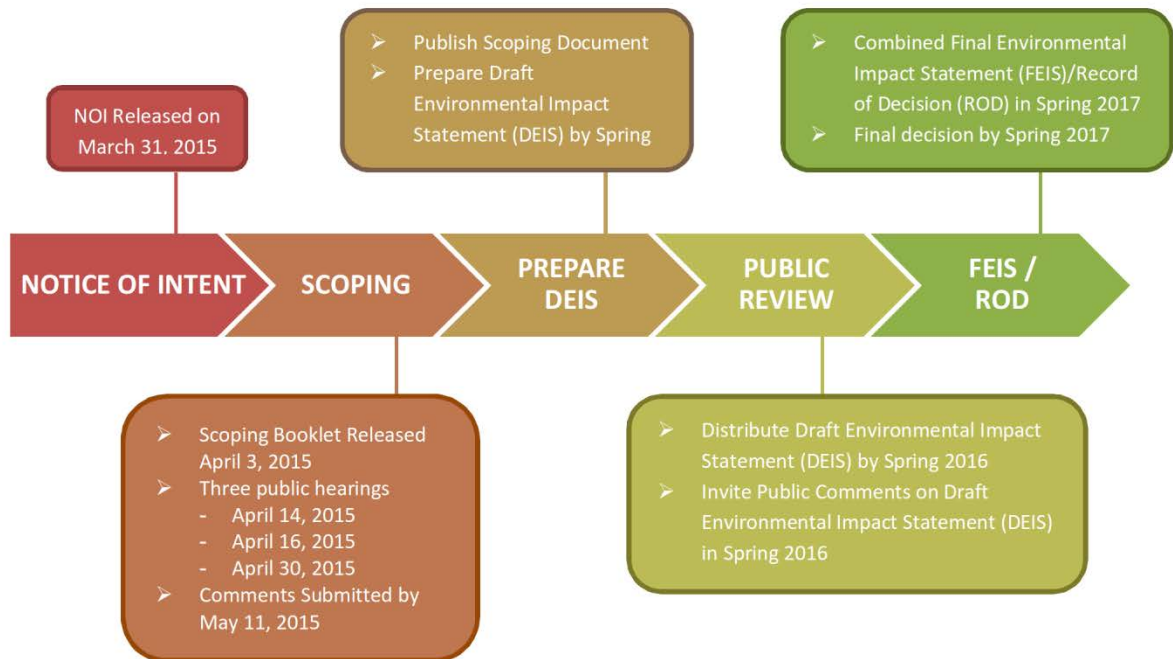
To support the development of the DEIS, a PIP was developed to detail how citizens and local decision-makers would be able to take part in the identification, development, and implementation of the GA 400 Transit Initiative. The PIP was developed at the outset of the DEIS, and it provides a framework for public and stakeholder engagement and activities throughout the development of the GA 400 Transit Initiative DEIS.

Subsequently, an Agency Coordination Plan (ACP) has been developed to identify the Lead, Participating, and Cooperating Agencies that will be involved with the project, and detail their roles, responsibilities, and opportunities to participate in the development of the DEIS.

0.3 Scoping Activities

Scoping is the official beginning of the process to prepare an EIS. It is a period of 60 to 120 days in which the public and interested Federal, State and local agencies are invited to review project information and to provide input on alternatives to be evaluated. **Figure 0-3** outlines the context of Scoping within the overall NEPA review process.

Figure 0-3: NEPA Process



0.3.1 Public Scoping Meetings

Three public Scoping meetings were held throughout the GA 400 corridor in April 2015. **Table 0-1** provides details on the dates, locations and number of attendees for the Scoping meetings. Each meeting was held from 6:30 to 8:00 pm. While the three meetings were held at different venues and required different room configurations, all Scoping meetings had identical materials, displays, presentation, and duration. The meeting materials, displays, and presentation are included in **Appendices A-7, A-8, and A-9**, respectively. Additional feedback gathered at the meetings is presented in **Appendices B-3 and B-4** and the meeting summaries are provided in **Appendix B-5**.

Table 0-1: Summary of Scoping Meetings

Date	Location	Number of Attendees
April 14, 2015	North Fulton Service Center 7741 Roswell Road, Sandy Springs, GA	19
April 16, 2015	Georgia State University - Alpharetta Center 3775 Brookside Pkwy, Alpharetta, GA	40
April 30, 2015	East Roswell Recreation Center 9000 Fouts Road, Roswell, GA	70

0.3.2 Agency Scoping

An agency Scoping coordination meeting was held to give State/Federal agencies and local municipalities the opportunity to comment on and provide input regarding alternatives to be evaluated and to offer advice on the development of the DEIS. The meeting took place on Thursday, April 16, 2015 from 10:00-11:30 am at the Bid Room within the MARTA Headquarters Building, 2424 Piedmont Rd NE, Atlanta, GA 30324. The agency meeting included a presentation tailored to the interests of representatives from the potential Participating and Cooperating Agencies and some of the project information boards were on display. Fourteen agency representatives attended the meeting. The meeting materials, displays, and presentation are included in **Appendices A-7, A-8, and A-10**, respectively. The meeting summary is provided in **Appendix B-6**.

0.3.3 Expanded Project Steering Committee Scoping

During Scoping, MARTA held an expanded Project Steering Committee (PSC) meeting, which included members of the PSC, as well as other representatives from non-profit groups within the GA 400 corridor. The purpose of the meeting was to provide stakeholders with an update on the project's status and an overview of the Federal environmental review process. The meeting was held on Tuesday, April 14, 2015 from 3:30-5:00 pm prior to the first public Scoping meeting at the North Fulton Service Center in Sandy Springs. Ten committee members attended. The meeting materials, displays, and presentation are included in **Appendices A-7, A-8, and A-11**, respectively. The meeting summary is provided in **Appendix B-7**.

0.4 Summary of Public and Agency Comments

Public Scoping comments were taken throughout the public Scoping period. Comments were submitted via a variety of methods including:

- Online survey
- Comment forms that were provided at the Scoping meetings were either submitted in the drop box provided at the meetings, or were later mailed or emailed to MARTA during the Scoping period
- Comments mailed or emailed to MARTA during the Scoping period
- Handwritten comments submitted at the Scoping meetings or during the Scoping period
- Comments made on the GA 400 Transit Initiative Facebook page during the Scoping period
- Comments provided at employment center outreach events

The most common themes represented in the comments were as follows:

- The urgent need for traffic relief on Georgia 400 and access to employment centers within and south of the corridor (i.e., Buckhead, downtown),
- The desire for a single-seat/no-transfer ride to the airport,
- Perceptions about affluent residents' willingness to use transit, safety and crime impacts associated with transit,
- Residential property impacts, neighborhood impacts, and environmental impacts of heavy rail construction and rail and bus operations.

Most commenters support the project, and there was a strong preference for the LPA (East-West-East Heavy Rail Transit). Supporters of the expansion plan cited transit operations in other large cities and suggested that Atlanta needs to invest more heavily in transit options to remain competitive.

Comments about station locations tended to favor stations removed from residential areas, but commenters also warned about placing stations in areas where traffic congestion already exists.

There were a number of comments asking MARTA to provide services outside of its current jurisdictional boundaries, noting that residents of other counties (especially Cobb, Gwinnett and Forsyth) take advantage of the MARTA service without contributing to the tax-based funding.

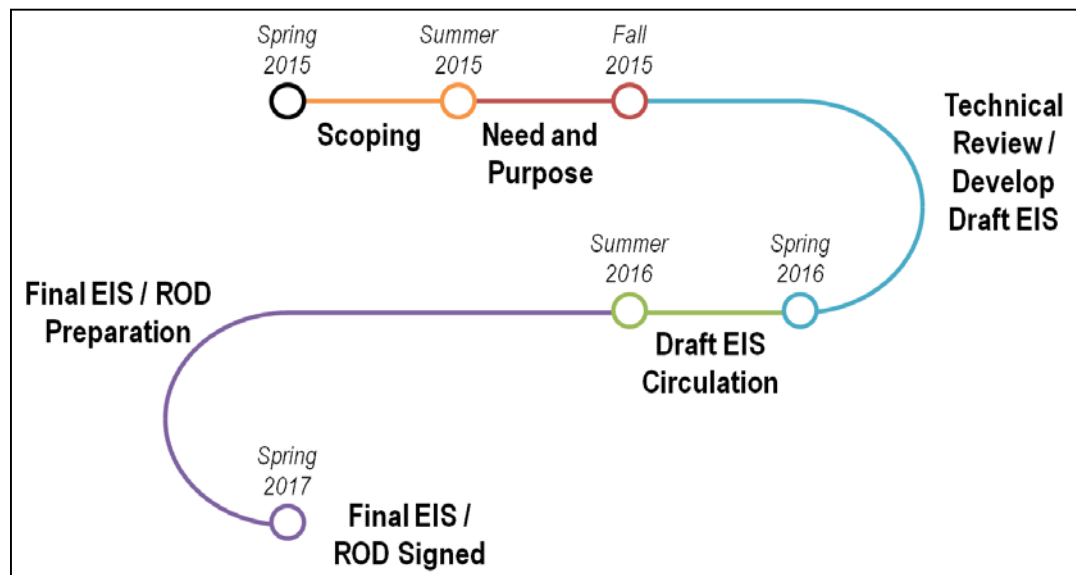
Several commenters doubted that expanding bus service would help to alleviate traffic, with some positing that bus service would actually make traffic worse.

0.5 Next Steps

Figure 0-4, provided to the public and stakeholders during the Scoping meetings and outreach, summarizes the steps between Scoping and the issuance of the combined Final EIS (FEIS)/Record of Decision (ROD). After concluding the Scoping period in Summer 2015, the project team will refine the project's Need and Purpose statement. Once the Need and Purpose is solidified, the project team will begin performing technical review in and developing the DEIS in Fall 2015. Comments received during the Scoping process and throughout the preparation of the DEIS will be considered as part of the evaluation process to support project decision-making.

Once the DEIS is circulated, a public and agency review period will allow for feedback regarding the DEIS through Summer 2016. The input received during the review period will then be incorporated into the combined FEIS/ ROD document that will be submitted to the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) in 2017. This schedule is subject to change depending on how the DEIS progresses over the next year.

Figure 0-4: Next Steps Slide from Public Scoping Meetings



1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Purpose of the Scoping Summary Report

This document has been prepared by the Metropolitan Atlanta Rapid Transit Authority (MARTA) to summarize the results of the public Scoping process for the GA 400 Transit Initiative. This Scoping Summary Report discusses the role of the Scoping process in the overall project development and public involvement program (as outlined in the PIP) for the GA 400 Transit Initiative EIS. The public involvement and agency coordination activities conducted during the public Scoping process are summarized, as are the comments and issues raised as a result of that coordination. Copies of the outreach materials used to support the Scoping process to engage and involve the public, government officials and agencies are provided in report appendices.

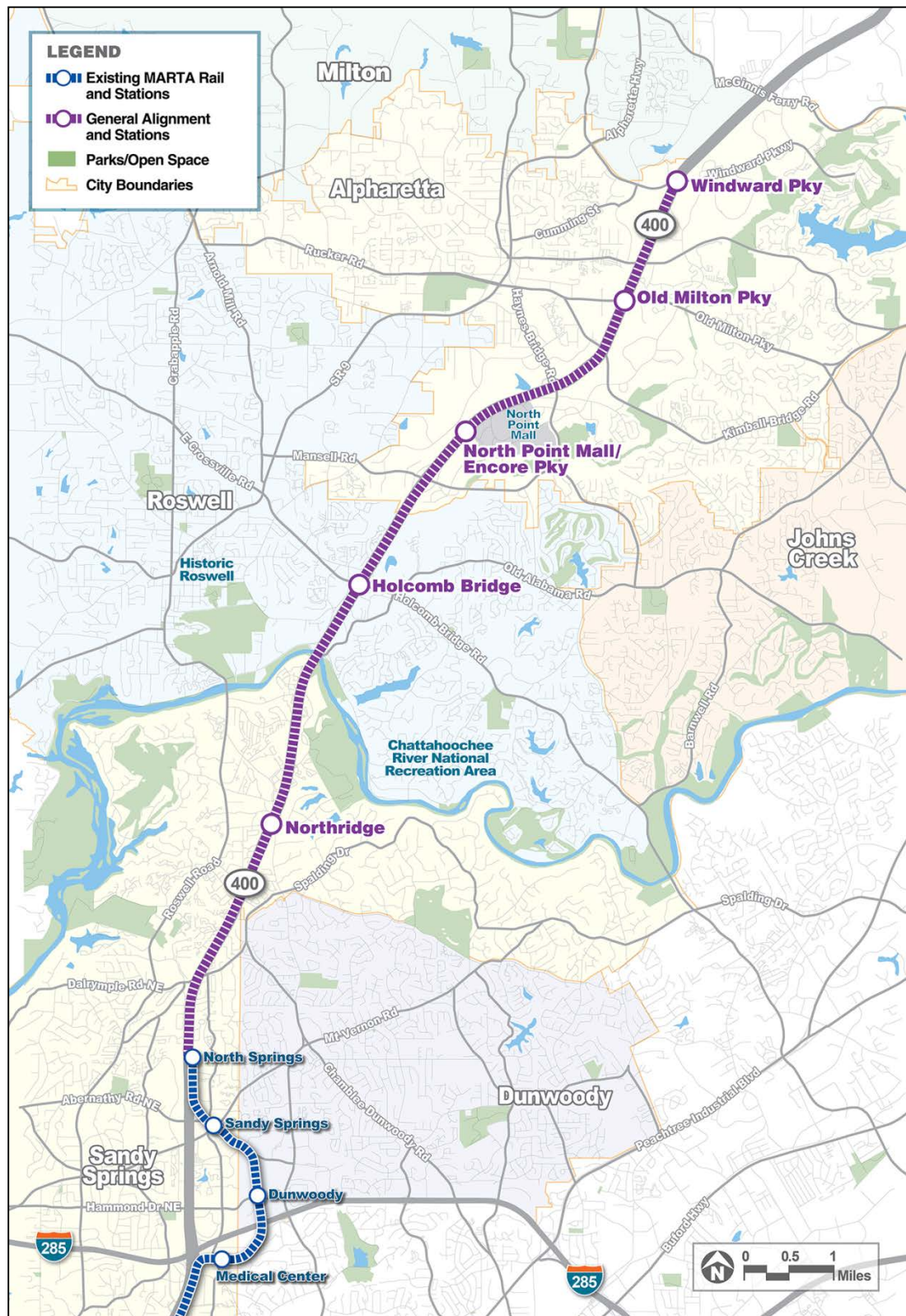
In accordance with the requirements of the U.S. Department of Transportation's (USDOT) FTA, the results of the public Scoping process will be used by MARTA to guide the development of the GA 400 Transit Initiative, consider project alternatives and develop the assessment of environmental consequences associated with the project. In addition, the results of the public Scoping process will assist MARTA in identifying and conducting the public and agency coordination necessary to support the project development process, including environmental review under the NEPA.

1.2 Project Overview and Background

The GA 400 Transit Initiative is a planned transit expansion that extends northward from the North Springs station to Windward Parkway in northern Fulton County. The study area for the GA 400 Transit Initiative generally runs parallel to GA 400, connecting Sandy Springs to Alpharetta. The GA 400 Transit Initiative is located in northern Fulton County and would operate through portions of the cities of Sandy Springs, Roswell, Alpharetta, and Milton (**Figure 1-1**).

The proposed corridor is approximately 12 miles long and would include five new transit stations at key interchanges along GA 400, providing a critical high capacity transit link between MARTA's Red Line rail service at North Springs station in Sandy Springs and the northern Fulton County sub-region, and serving major regional and corridor activity centers such as Perimeter Center, North Point Mall and Avalon. The potential transit stations are located at each of the following interchanges along GA 400: Northridge Road, Holcomb Bridge Road, Encore Parkway/North Point Mall, Old Milton Parkway, and Windward Parkway.

Figure 1-1: GA 400 Corridor High Capacity Transit Concept



1.2.1 Need and Purpose of the Project

The needs for the GA 400 Transit Initiative inform the purpose of the project, which ultimately drives the selection of a preferred alternative (**Figure 1-2**). The needs for the project are supported by the existing conditions in the GA 400 corridor, as detailed in the *Existing Conditions and Future Trends Report* (November 2012). The following are the overarching needs for the GA 400 Transit Initiative:

- Increased travel demand and congestion along GA 400
- Limited transit mobility both within and to North Fulton
- Transit travel times that are not competitive with automobile travel
- Congestion that may affect current and future economic development opportunities

The GA 400 corridor is the transportation spine of northern Fulton County, one of the fastest growing sub-regions in the metro-Atlanta region. The corridor is home to many employment centers, including Perimeter Center in the southern portion of the corridor, one of the largest employment centers in the region. However, the study area is not currently served by the MARTA rail system or any other high capacity mode of transportation. Substantial volumes of automobile traffic move daily through the GA 400 corridor, as well as on connecting roadways. Therefore, high capacity transit service would help accommodate these high trip volumes within an already constrained roadway network.

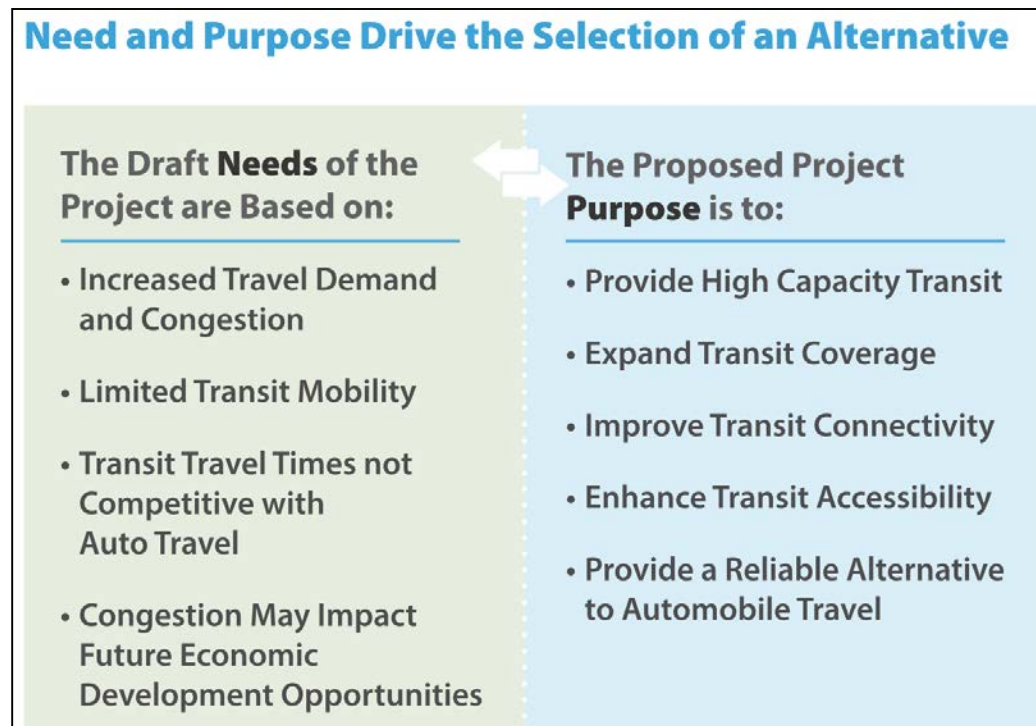
The purpose of the GA 400 Transit Initiative includes the following:

- Provide high capacity transit (BRT or HRT) through the study area;
- Improve transit linkages and coverage to communities within the study area; and
- Enhance mobility and accessibility to and within the study area by providing a more robust transit network that offers an alternative to automobile travel.

1.2.2 Project Background

In 2011, MARTA initiated the GA 400 Transit Initiative Alternatives Analysis (AA) to analyze the corridor based on current trends and conditions. The AA study process identified the following needs: enhance transportation choices, improve transit service, and increase access to jobs and activity centers for commuters and residents in the GA 400 corridor. MARTA and corridor stakeholders examined a broad range of alternatives for high capacity, fixed-route transit investments in the corridor. Over the course of the AA, a set of potentially viable alternatives was reduced through a multi-layered screening process that was steadily informed by public and stakeholder engagement. At the conclusion of the AA process, the GA 400 ROW from the existing North Springs rail station to Windward Parkway near the Fulton/Forsyth county line emerged as the preferred alignment. The transit technologies to be evaluated further were identified as HRT, Light Rail Transit (LRT), and BRT.

Figure 1-2: GA 400 Transit Initiative Need and Purpose Display Board

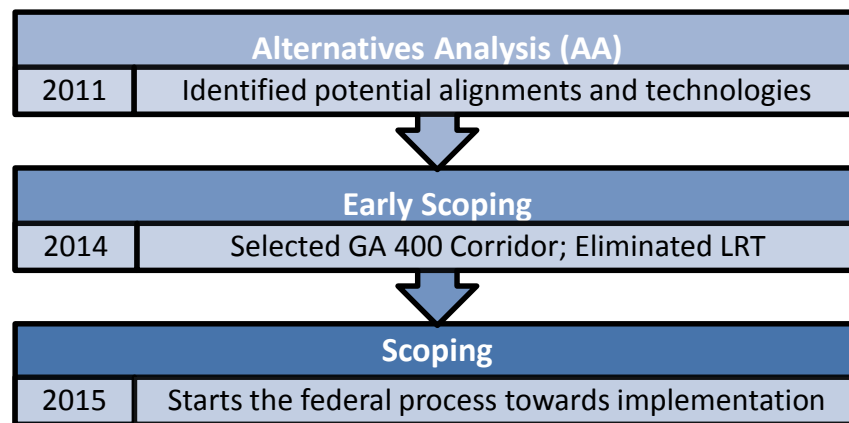


MARTA began Early Scoping in 2013 and concluded the process in late 2014. During this period MARTA performed additional technical analysis and gathered further input from members of the public and study area stakeholders. This analysis and feedback was then used as the basis for the selection of a Locally Preferred Alternative (LPA) for the GA 400 corridor that allowed the GA 400 Transit Initiative to seek entry into the next phase of the Federal project development process (i.e. NEPA). The LPA was identified as an HRT extension that would cross to the west side of GA 400 north of North Springs Station and south of Spalding Drive. This alternative would have a second crossover back to the east side of GA 400 north of the Chattahoochee River (to be determined in the environmental study). The HRT alternative received the strongest public support throughout the study process. In addition, two BRT alignments will be studied as lower cost options in the DEIS. The LRT alternative was eliminated from further consideration as a result of stakeholder input, poor performance during technical studies and its limited potential to secure Federal funding through FTA's New Starts Capital Investment Grant (CIG) program.

On March 5, 2015 the MARTA Board of Directors adopted the HRT alternative as the LPA for the GA 400 corridor, along with consideration of the additional BRT alternatives.

Figure 1-3 shows the phases leading up to the GA 400 Transit Initiative EIS.

Figure 1-3: GA 400 Transit Initiative Project Phases



1.2.3 Alternatives Considered

In addition to the No-Build Alternative, three Build Alternatives are being evaluated in the Draft EIS (DEIS). Each of the three Build Alternatives would serve the same set of stations; however, the technology and specific alignment used to provide the new transit service varies between the alternatives.

Build Alternative 1 is an extension of MARTA's Red Line, providing 12 miles of new HRT service in a dedicated guideway along GA 400. Traveling north from the existing HRT station at North Springs, the HRT alignment would cross GA 400 south of Spalding Drive to run along the west side of GA 400, cross the Chattahoochee River, and then cross back over GA 400 to run along the east side of GA 400, finally terminating at Windward Parkway in northern Fulton County. During the Early Scoping period the majority of the stakeholders and the public identified Build Alternative 1 as the preferred alternative for high capacity transit service along the GA 400 corridor. The MARTA Board has adopted a resolution supporting Build Alternative 1 as the Locally Preferred Alternative (LPA) for the corridor.

Build Alternative 2 uses the same alignment as Build Alternative 1, and would provide 12 miles of new BRT service in a dedicated guideway along GA 400.

Build Alternative 3 consists of 12 miles of new BRT service in future GDOT managed lanes within GA 400. Unlike the BRT service provided in Build Alternative 2, BRT vehicles would share the guideway (i.e., managed lanes) with other vehicles. Based on the plans provided in GDOT's *2012 Managed Lanes System Feasibility Study*, the BRT alignment and stations would be located between the general purpose lanes and managed lanes sections in each direction of travel. Implementation of Build Alternative 3 would require that MARTA reach an agreement with GDOT to operate BRT service in any future managed lanes along GA 400.

Figure 1-4 and **Figure 1-5** show the alternatives to be evaluated in the DEIS.

Other alignments or design options may be identified and evaluated in the DEIS as a result of agency coordination, public Scoping, coordination efforts with GDOT regarding the managed lanes right-of-way or potential impacts identified.

Figure 1-4: GA 400 Transit Initiative DEIS Build Alternatives 1 and 2

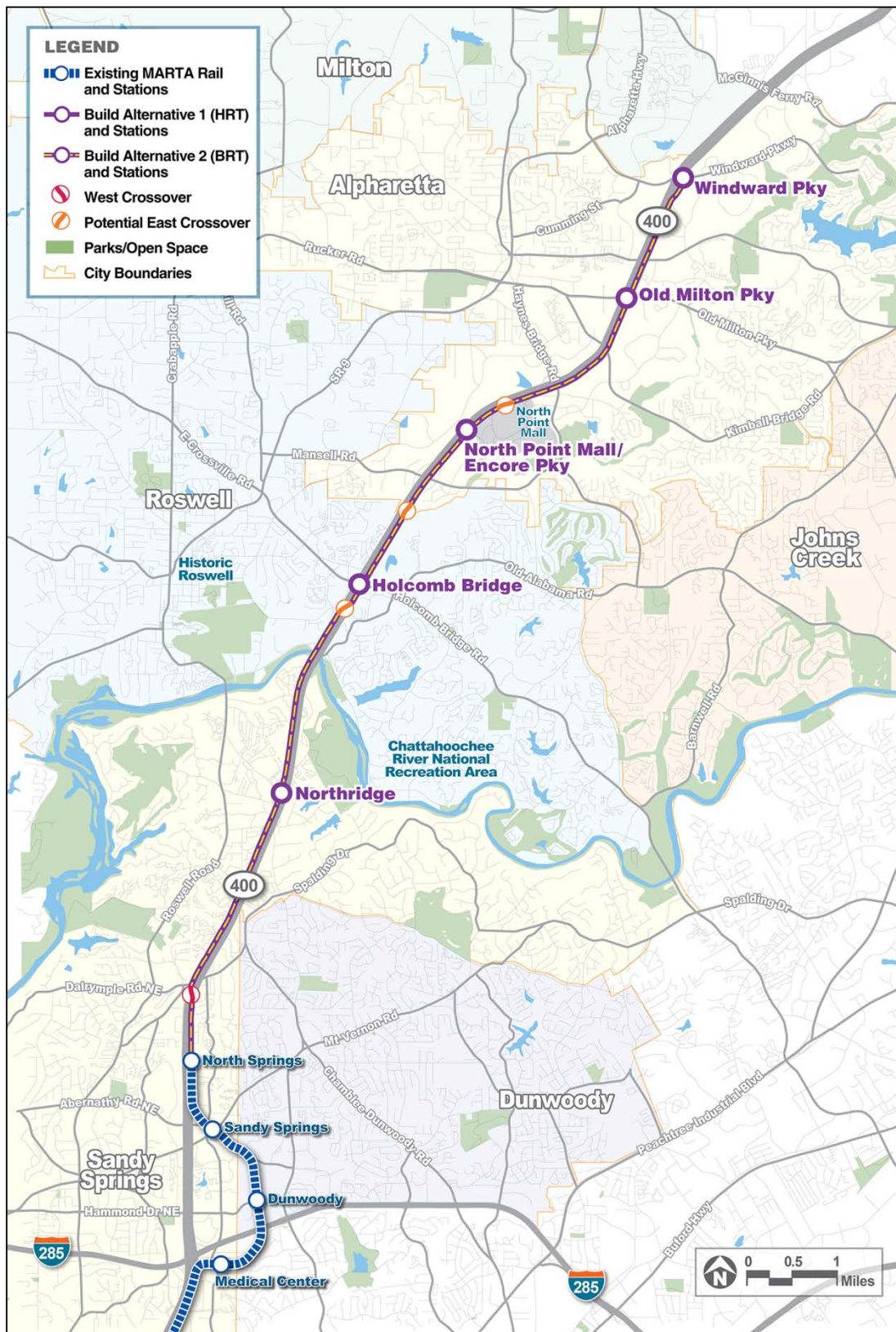
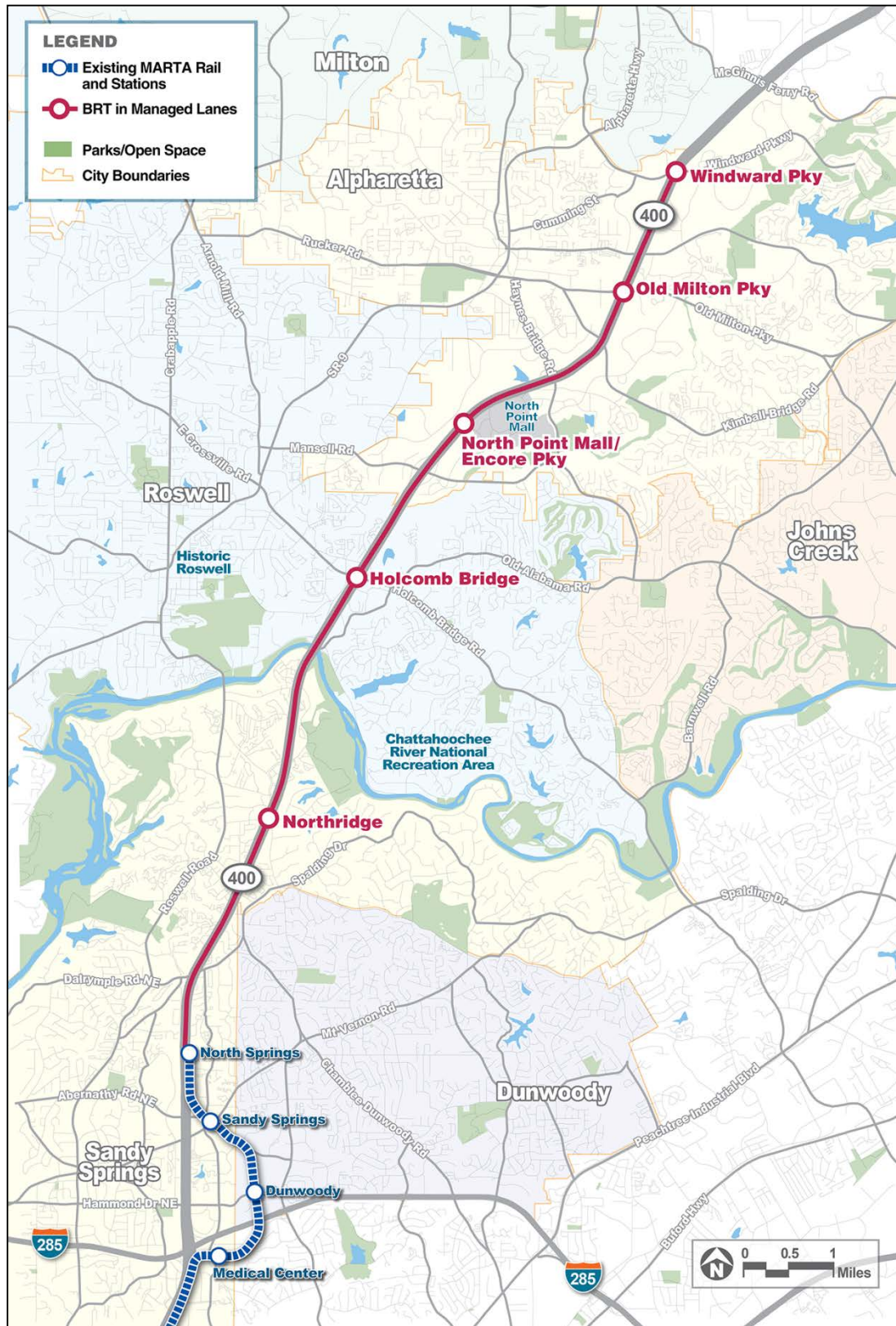


Figure 1-5: GA 400 Transit Initiative DEIS Build Alternative 3



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2.0 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

2.1 Public Involvement Plan

To support the development of the DEIS, a PIP was developed to detail how citizens and local decision-makers would be able to take part in the identification, development and implementation of the GA 400 Transit Initiative. The PIP was developed at the outset of the DEIS, and it provides a framework for public and stakeholder engagement and activities during the GA 400 Transit Initiative DEIS. The plan describes the public involvement strategies to be employed, the policy framework that guides activities, the stakeholders' committee structure and the relationship of activities to major project milestones.

The PIP documents the activities and coordination conducted during the Scoping period. The PIP also discusses the environmental justice outreach efforts and analysis, public and agency involvement, project communications and media, agency coordination, and project committees (technical, stakeholder, steering). A full list of stakeholders and MARTA contacts is provided in **Sections 3.6 and 3.7**.

2.2 Project Stakeholders

Project stakeholders are individuals or organizations that are either actively involved in the project, or whose interests may be affected as a result of the proposed project. They may also include individuals or organizations with influence over the project's outcome. Stakeholders include but are not limited to: elected leadership, public officials, civic and community groups, faith-based organizations, business community, neighborhood associations and organizations, public interest groups, property owners adjacent to the proposed transit alignments, and the general public.

A stakeholder database was created for the project and to serve as a mailing list. This database is being maintained as a living document and will be updated as the project progresses to add new stakeholders and revise contact information. The database contains more than 1,100 points of contact with mail and e-mail addresses and telephone numbers where provided.

2.3 Agency Coordination

An ACP has been developed that identifies the Lead, Participating, and Cooperating Agencies that will be involved with the project, and details their roles, responsibilities, and opportunities to participate in the development of the DEIS.

A database of Participating and Cooperating Agencies and contact information has been created, and will be maintained throughout the duration of the project. A listing of these agencies is provided in **Table 2-1**.

Table 2-1: Agency Contact List

Role	Agency/Organization	Contact
Lead	Federal Transit Administration, Region 4	Dr. Yvette Taylor Mr. Stanley Mitchell Mr. Keith Melton
Lead	Metropolitan Atlanta Rapid Transit Authority	Mr. Mark Eatman
Invited to be Cooperating/ Participating	Federal Highway Administration	Mr. Steve Luxenberg Mr. Rodney Barry Ms. Jennifer Giersch
Cooperating/ Consulting	National Park Service	Mr. Stan Austin Mr. Bill Cox
Invited to be Cooperating/ Participating	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers	Mr. Ed Johnson
Invited to be Cooperating/ Participating	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service	Ms. Cindy Dohner
Participating	U.S. Environmental Protection Agency	Ms. Ntale Kajumba Ms. Lynorae Benjamin
Participating	Federal Railroad Administration	Mr. Randall Brown
Invited to be Participating/ Consulting	Cherokee Nation	Principal Chief Bill John Baker
Invited to be Participating/ Consulting	Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians	Mr. Russell Townsend, THPO
Invited to be Participating/ Consulting	Poarch Band of Creek Indians	Mr. Robert Thrower, THPO
Consulting	Muscogee (Creek) Nation	Mr. Emman Spain, Deputy THPO
Cooperating	Georgia Department of Transportation	Ms. Hiral Patel Ms. Kaycee Mertz Ms. Marlo Clowers Mr. Matthew Fowler Mr. Harry Boxler Ms. Carol Comer Ms. Nancy Cobb
Declined to be Cooperating or Participating	Georgia Department of Natural Resources – Environmental Protection Division*	Mr. Jim Kelly Mr. Gil Grodzinsky
Consulting	Georgia Department of Natural Resources – Historic Preservation Division	Mr. Bill Hover Ms. Jennifer Dixon Mr. Bryan Tucker
Participating	Atlanta Regional Commission	Mr. Cain Williamson Mr. John Orr Ms. Janae Futrell Mr. Aaron Fowler
Invited to be Participating	Georgia Regional Transportation Authority	Ms. Laura Beall
Participating	City of Sandy Springs	Mayor Rusty Paul Mr. Bryant Poole Ms. Kristen Wescott
Invited to be Participating	City of Dunwoody	Mayor Mike Davis Mr. Eric Linton Mr. Steve Foote

Role	Agency/Organization	Contact
Participating	City of Roswell	Mayor Jere Wood Ms. Kay Love Mr. Chris Chovan
Participating	City of Alpharetta	Mayor David Belle Isle Mr. Robert Regus Mr. Eric Graves
Participating	City of Johns Creek	Mayor Michael Bodker Mr. Warren Hutmacher Mr. Justin Kirouac
Participating	City of Milton	Mayor Joe Lockwood Mr. Christopher Lagerbloom Ms. Kathleen Field
Invited to be Participating	Fulton County	Commission Chair John Eaves Mr. Richard Anderson Mr. Antonio Valenzuela
Invited to be Participating	Fulton County School System	Ms. Yngrid Huff

2.4 Project Website and Contacts

A website was established by MARTA for the GA 400 Transit Initiative, which can be found within MARTA's main website (<http://www.itsmarta.com>) or directly at <http://www.itsmarta.com/north-line-400-corr.aspx>. The GA 400 Transit Initiative website includes an overview of the project, contact information, news, updates, announcements, maps, correspondences (fact sheets and newsletters), project documents, and presentations.

MARTA also maintains a Facebook page for the project which provides basic project information, project updates, announcements and general transit news. A screenshot of the project's Facebook page can be seen in **Figure 2-1** and is located at the following address: <http://www.facebook.com/Connect400>.

There is also a Twitter account for the project which provides frequent updates on the project and local happenings along the corridor. A screenshot of the project's Twitter page can be seen in **Figure 2-2**. The Twitter handle can be reached at the following address: <http://twitter.com/MARTAcconnect400>.

Finally, MARTA also created an email address to solicit questions about the project and to allow members of the public to obtain more specific project information. Emails regarding the GA 400 Transit Initiative were sent to the following address: Connect400@itsmarta.com.

Figure 2-1: GA 400 Transit Initiative Facebook Page Screenshot

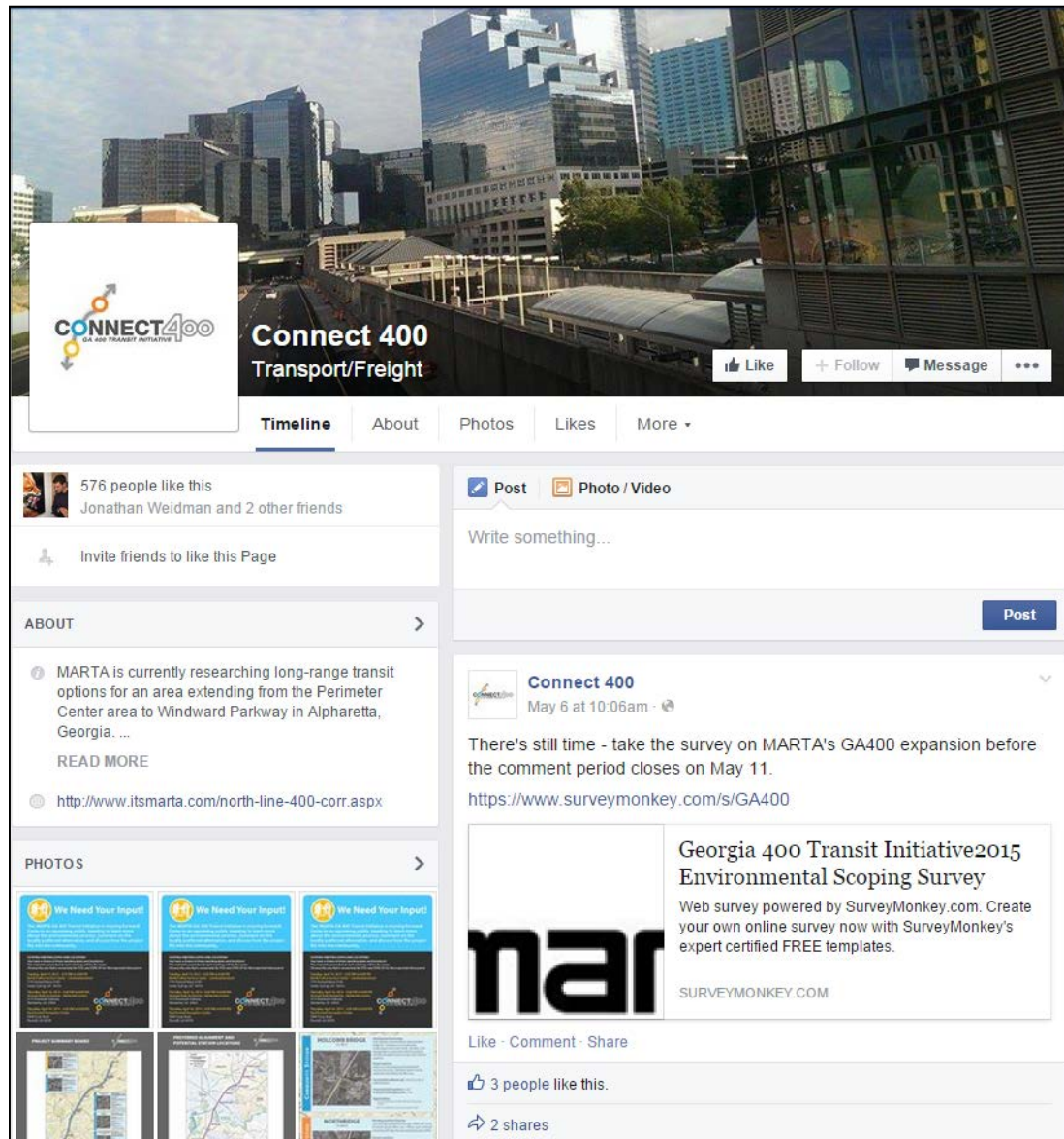
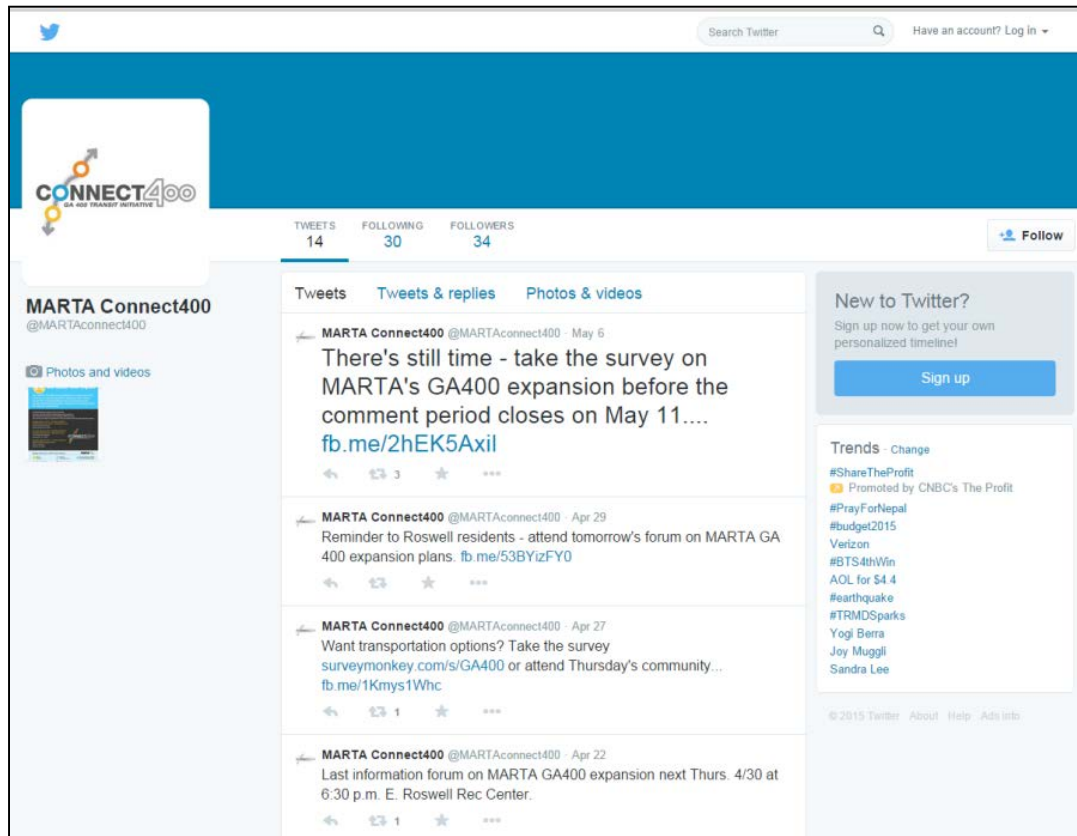


Figure 2-2: GA 400 Transit Initiative Twitter Page Screenshot



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3.0 SCOPING ACTIVITIES

3.1 NEPA Process Overview

The GA 400 Transit Initiative DEIS is being prepared by MARTA in cooperation with FTA and pursuant to the following guidelines:

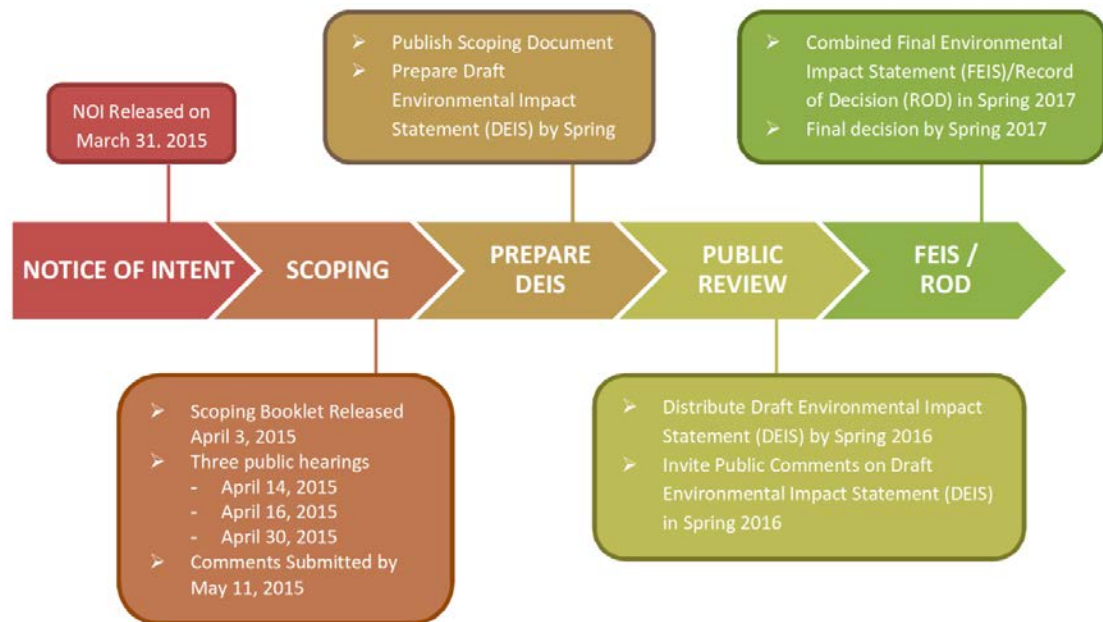
- NEPA
- The Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) NEPA implementing regulations (40 CFR sections 1500-1508)
- The NEPA implementing procedures of FTA (23 CFR Part 771)
- Regulations of Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966
- The Clean Air Act Amendments of 1990
- Other applicable federal environmental regulations, Executive Orders, and guidelines.

NEPA requires that an EIS be prepared for all projects that receive Federal funding and have the potential to result in significant adverse impacts to the environment. An EIS is required by the FTA for those projects that result in the construction or extension of any of the following types of projects: fixed rail transit facilities (e.g. HRT), separate roadways for buses, or high occupancy vehicle lanes that are not located within an existing highway. The purpose of an EIS is to conduct a comprehensive evaluation of the potential natural, cultural, physical, and socioeconomic impacts associated with a given alternative. The EIS is then used to inform decision-makers and the public of reasonable alternatives that could avoid or minimize negative environmental impacts while still addressing the project's need and purpose.

While the HRT and BRT alternatives represent substantially different transit investments and modes, a preliminary assessment of alternatives showed similar levels of impact. To better understand the extent of impacts associated with each of the alternatives, an EIS will be prepared to support the GA 400 Transit Initiative.

A general outline of the Federal environmental review process is provided in **Figure 3-1** and a discussion of the major components of the process follows the figure. It should be noted that the schedule shown below is subject to change as the project progresses.

Figure 3-1: Overview of NEPA Process



3.2 Notice of Intent and Scoping Period

The formal public Scoping process for the GA 400 Transit Initiative commenced with the publication of the **Notice of Intent (NOI)** to prepare a DEIS for the project. The NOI was published in the Federal Register on March 3, 2015. The NOI provided a description of the proposed project and the NEPA process. It included the dates, times and location of the public Scoping meetings, as well as the dates of the Scoping period. The Scoping period for GA 400 Transit Initiative ran from March 31, 2015 (date the NOI was published) through May 11, 2015 – approximately 45 days. A copy of the NOI is provided in **Appendix A**.

FTA and MARTA initiated a **Scoping** process in Spring 2015 that allowed the public and any interested agencies to comment on the scope of the environmental review process. Scoping serves as the first step towards preparing an EIS. Scoping is the process of determining the scope, focus, and content of an EIS by soliciting feedback from the public and interested parties. Scoping is an opportunity to:

- Confirm the Need and Purpose for the project
- Identify suitable alternatives that address the needs
- Identify significant issues the deserve further study in the EIS
- Eliminate issues that are not deemed significant or have already been adequately addressed as part of earlier studies

FTA and MARTA invited all interested members of the public, including individuals, non-profit and other organizations, as well as Federal, State, regional and local governmental agencies and representatives from Native American tribes that may be affected by the project to participate in the Scoping process.

Following Scoping, a **DEIS** will be prepared. The purpose of the DEIS is to evaluate existing conditions and assess the range of potential effects, both positive and negative, that the No-Build and Build Alternatives would have on the natural, cultural, social, and physical environment along the GA 400 corridor. During the development of the DEIS, FTA will coordinate with relevant Federal, State and local resource agencies (e.g. US National Parks Service, US Army Corps of Engineers, Georgia Department of Natural Resources, etc.) to review the impacts analyses and ensure that the technical methodologies used to assess the effects are appropriate.

Once FTA approves the DEIS, a **Notice of Availability (NOA)** will be published in the Federal Register and in local papers. The NOA signals the start of the public and agency review period for the DEIS. MARTA will provide an electronic copy of the DEIS for public review and will send hard copies to agencies and, upon request, to other interested parties.

Once the DEIS has been approved by FTA and circulated, members of the public and agencies will have an opportunity to comment on the document during the **45-day public and agency review period**. During the review period MARTA will hold public hearings during which interested parties can voice their concerns and also suggest potential ways to avoid, minimize or mitigate the impacts identified within the DEIS. In addition to in-person meetings, interested parties will also be able to submit their comments in writing via email or in a letter throughout the 45-day period.

At the conclusion of the public comment period, MARTA will begin preparing a combined **FEIS/ROD** based on the public and resource agency input on the DEIS. Depending on the extent of impacts identified within the DEIS and the feedback received during the comment period, MARTA may alter the design of one or more of the Build Alternatives to avoid or minimize the environmental impacts that were identified within the DEIS.

In situations where impacts of a given alternative are both significant and unavoidable, the FEIS/ROD will disclose these impacts and provide a discussion of mitigation strategies that will be used to reduce the intensity of effects caused by the alternative. The final document will describe the preferred alternative for the GA 400 corridor, the environmental effects associated with that alternative, and the mitigation, environmental commitments, and permits that will be required to implement the project.

The FEIS/ROD will then be published by FTA and an electronic version of the FEIS/ROD will be made available on the MARTA website. Hard copies of the document will be sent to resource agencies and will be made available for review by the public. The combined FEIS/ROD will serve as the conclusion of the Federal environmental review process.

3.3 Scoping Information

Several methods were used to disseminate information about the project to stakeholders and the public and to request input.

3.3.1 Project Fact Sheet

A project fact sheet was prepared for the GA 400 Transit Initiative. The project fact sheet, provided in **Appendix A-7**, is a one-page, front and back, informational document highlighting the pertinent project information. The GA 400 Transit Initiative project fact sheet includes a project schedule as well as maps and descriptions of the project alternatives being evaluated. The project fact sheet was posted on the project website and handed out at the Scoping meetings and other opportunities during the Scoping period.

3.3.2 Scoping Booklet

A Scoping Booklet was prepared to provide information on the GA 400 Transit Initiative and DEIS. The Scoping Booklet, also provided in **Appendix A-7**, is a long-format document detailing the GA 400 Transit Initiative, the Scoping process and NEPA requirements, the project's need and purpose, the alternatives considered in the DEIS, and the Project Fact Sheet. The Scoping Booklet was posted to the project website and handed out at the Scoping meetings and other meetings.

3.4 Employment Center Outreach

Additional public outreach activities were conducted at employment centers along the GA 400 corridor (see **Figure 3-2**). The purpose of the outreach activities was to provide an opportunity to employers and employees who make up a large daytime population in the study area who are unlikely to attend evening public meetings. Two employment centers allowed MARTA to participate at their locations during lunch hours. Project boards were displayed and the project fact sheet, FAQs and an information card were provided. Approximately 100 employees participated.

Figure 3-2: Employment Center Outreach - ADP Payroll Specialist

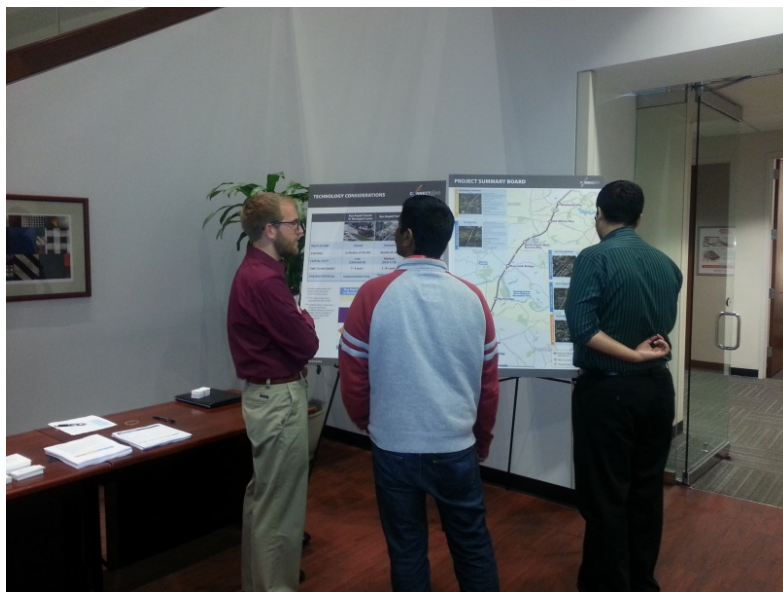


Table 3-1 provides details on the dates, locations and number of visitors for the employment center outreach. Notes from those outreach opportunities are included in **Appendix B-4**.

Table 3-1: Summary of Employment Center Outreach

Date	Host/Location	Number of Employees
April 29, 2015	ADP Payroll Specialists 5800 Windward Parkway, Alpharetta	40
May 6, 2015	AT&T Campus Building 300 400 North Point Parkway, Alpharetta	24
May 6, 2015	AT&T Campus Building 500 400 North Point Parkway, Alpharetta	32

In addition, other employers agreed to circulate the project web site and online survey to their employees to increase awareness of the project and receive feedback through completion of the survey. Those employers include:

- Georgia State University Alpharetta Center
- Georgia Perimeter College Alpharetta Center
- University of Phoenix at Northridge
- Ryder Corporation's Alpharetta Office

3.5 Public Scoping Meetings

Three public Scoping meetings were held throughout the GA 400 corridor in April 2015 (see **Figure 3-3**). **Table 3-2** provides details on the dates, locations and number of attendees for the Scoping meetings. Each meeting was held from 6:30 to 8:00 pm.

Table 3-2: Summary of Scoping Meetings

Date	Location	Number of Attendees
April 14, 2015	North Fulton Service Center 7741 Roswell Road, Sandy Springs, GA	19
April 16, 2015	Georgia State University - Alpharetta Center 3775 Brookside Pkwy, Alpharetta, GA	40
April 30, 2015	East Roswell Recreation Center 9000 Fouts Road, Roswell, GA	70

The meetings used combined group presentation and open house format, so that all information and visual and display materials were provided throughout the entirety of the session. The format helped provide flexibility for attendees so that they could come at their convenience and take in as much information about the project as desired, without risk of missing information dedicated to specific time slots.

Figure 3-3 April 30, 2015 Public Scoping Meeting



While the three meetings were held at different venues and required different room configurations, all of the public Scoping meetings had identical materials, displays, staffing, and duration. For additional information on the layout of the public meeting, as well as an overview of the materials presented, please see **Section 3.5.4**.

3.5.1 Scoping Meeting Advertisements and Press Releases

MARTA staff placed paid advertisements (see **Figure 3-4**) in a number of publications serving the study area announcing the GA 400 Transit Initiative Scoping period and public Scoping meetings in the four newspaper and online news sites. Written press releases were also submitted to these publications. **Table 3-3** lists the names of the papers, circulation and the dates the notices were published.

Figure 3-4: Scoping Meeting Advertisement

*** In Customer Loyalty and Satisfaction!**

6569 Roswell Road
(West to Steak 'N Shake)
(404) 257-9955

DRIVE-THRU
Monday - Friday: 9 am - 8 pm
Saturday: 9 am - 7 pm
Sunday: 9 am - 6 pm
No appointment necessary

SPRING CLEAN YOUR ENGINE!

\$24.99
Take 5 Conventional Oil Change

\$10.00 OFF
Any High Mileage, Synthetic Oil Change

MARTA Needs Your Input!

MARTA's GA 400 Transit Initiative is moving forward! Come to a public meeting to learn more about the environmental process, comment on the locally preferred alternative, and discuss how the project fits into your community.

You have a choice of three meeting dates and locations. The materials presented at each meeting will be the same. Choose the date that's convenient for you and JOIN US for this important discussion!

Tuesday, April 14, 2015
6:30 pm to 8:00 pm
North Fulton Service Center - Community Room
7741 Roswell Road, #104, Sandy Springs, 30350

Thursday, April 16, 2015
6:30 pm to 8:00 pm
Georgia State University
Alpharetta Center
3775 Brookside Pkwy, Alpharetta, 30022

Thursday, April 20, 2015
6:30 pm to 8:00 pm
East Point Mall
8000 Forest Road, Roswell, 30076

Contact: Mark Estlin, MARTA Project Manager
404-648-4404
www.itsmarta.com/north-line-400-cort.aspx
Connect400@marta.com
facebook.com/Connect400

CONNECT400

COMMUNITY

Food Truck Thursdays return to Brook Run this month

Food Truck Thursdays returns this month and will continue weekly through Oct. 29, according to the Dunwoody Homeowners Association. The 2015 food truck gatherings were scheduled to begin April 2. The trucks are to arrive at Brook Run Park from 5 p.m. until dusk on Thursday evenings through the spring and summer.

Former Dunwoody detective pleads guilty to running fraudulent warrant checks

A former Dunwoody police detective has pleaded guilty to disclosing sensitive law enforcement information in exchange for receiving kickbacks for him and his family. Robert Pasquale Benavidez, 64, of Woodstock, Georgia, pleaded guilty to conspiracy fraud for receiving information in the GCIC database for an improper purpose. Sentencing is scheduled for June 1 before United States District Judge Leigh Martin May.

Previous city attorney elected to DeKalb GOP

Former Dunwoody City Attorney Brim Anderson has been elected chairman of the DeKalb Republican Party. Elected leaders include First Vice Chairman (Membership) Travis Stogdill, Second Vice Chairman (Project Development) Will Friske, Third Vice Chairman (Events) Alejandro "Alex" Gimenez, Treasurer Bobbie Franks, and Secretary Chase Steen.

Gated communities required to install devices to allow emergency access

City Council on March 23 required all 39 gated communities in Dunwoody to pay for the installation and maintenance of an SOS/Trigger System at each gate to allow emergency and police vehicles access.

Police Chief Billy Grogan made the ordinance request in response to City Councilman Terry Nall's request to find a solution for problems associated with emergency access to gated communities.

Because codes on the keypad entry systems change frequently, keeping track of the correct gate code has been difficult and could create an unnecessary delay for first responders, Grogan said in a memo.

The council voted 6-1 to adopt the requirement, with City Councilman Denay Shaefer opposed.

Each device costs \$599, and an additional cost of \$20 is anticipated for the RFID tags on emergency response vehicles, which the city of Dunwoody will pay. Dunwoody's total cost should not exceed \$55,000. The gated communities will be responsible for paying about \$900 for installation. They have 12 months to comply.

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karen@hindsonmelton.com

Joy Melton
770-612-8385
joy@hindsonmelton.com

Conveniently located at:
400 Perimeter Center Terrace, Suite 900
www.hindsonmelton.com

2 | APRIL 3 - APRIL 16, 2015 | www.ReporterNewspapers.net

Source: Dunwoody Reporter

Table 3-3: Scoping Meeting Advertisements

Newspaper	Circulation	Date Published
Atlanta Journal & Constitution: Metro wide	231,094	March 31, 2015
Dunwoody Crier: Perimeter Area (Dunwoody, Sandy Springs, Brookhaven)	23,000	April 1, 2015
Alpharetta-Roswell Revue & News: Roswell & Alpharetta	28,000	April 2, 2015
Reporter Newspapers: Sandy Springs; Dunwoody	35,000	April 3, 2015

3.5.2 Scoping Meeting Media Coverage

The Scoping meetings and other outreach created substantial media coverage through articles, public announcements and television interviews. **Table 3-4** lists captures most of the coverage provided during the Scoping period.

Table 3-4: Media Coverage

News Date	Outlet Name	News Headline
March 31, 2015	Federal Register	Notice of Intent To Prepare an Environmental Impact Statement for the GA 400 Transit Initiative in Fulton County, Georgia
April 6, 2015	RT&S: Railway Track And Structures - Online	MARTA seeks public input on major transit expansion project
April 8, 2015	Rail Resource	MARTA Seeks Public Input for Atlanta Red Line Expansion
April 9, 2015	Atlanta Journal-Constitution	MARTA to hold transit feedback sessions
April 15, 2015	Planetizen	MARTA Launches Planning Effort for Northern Extension of the Red Line
April 17, 2015	Next City	Are Georgia Republicans Learning to Love the MARTA Train?
April 20, 2015	Appen Newspapers Online	Rail, buses proposed for northern MARTA expansion
April 22, 2015	Neighbor Newspapers - Online	Sen. Brandon Beach rallies for north Fulton MARTA expansion
April 24, 2015	Atlanta Journal-Constitution	North Fulton County
April 24, 2015	WXIA-TV Online	MARTA officials decide on route for northbound expansion
April 27, 2015	Curbed NY	Plans for MARTA Rail to Alpharetta are Taking Shape
May 6, 2015	Douglas Neighbor	North Fulton residents weigh in on MARTA's Ga. 400 plan
May 6, 2015	Neighbor Newspapers - Online	North Fulton residents weigh in on MARTA's Ga. 400 plan
May 8, 2015	WXIA-TV Online	MARTA competing with BeltLine, NYC Transit for rail expansion
May 15, 2015	Atlanta Journal-Constitution	At Issue: How should MARTA best expand into North Fulton County?
May 22, 2015	Atlanta Journal-Constitution	Last week: How should MARTA expand into North Fulton?

3.5.3 Scoping Meeting Flyers and Posters

Flyers and posters, provided in **Appendices A-5** and **A-6**, respectively, were also used to announce the Scoping meetings. They were distributed via email blasts, direct mail, website postings, malls, schools and other locations, as listed below:

E-mail Blasts

- Study Area Elected Officials
- Project Database
- PSC Members
- Technical Advisory Committee Members
- Employment Centers Property Managers

Direct Mail

- Project Database

Website Postings

- MARTA Project Site
- PSC Members' Sites
- Technical Advisory Committee Members' Sites
- Neighborhood Associations Sites

Malls

- Perimeter Mall
- North Point Mall
- Avalon Development

Employment Centers

- Wilton Center, Roswell
- Colonial Park, Roswell
- Heritage Square, Roswell
- Mansell Overlook, Alpharetta
- One Glenlake, Sandy Springs
- 3 Glenlake, Sandy Springs
- Lakeside Office Park, Sandy Springs
- GA 400 Center, Alpharetta
- Deerfield Commons, Alpharetta
- Deerfield Park, Alpharetta
- Northpark Complex, Sandy Springs
- One, Two & Three Ravinia, Atlanta
- Cox Communications Building Atlanta
- Royal 400, Alpharetta
- Royal Ridge, Alpharetta
- Parkway 400, Alpharetta
- Highwoods, Alpharetta
- Two Point Royal, Alpharetta
- Glenlake South, Sandy Springs
- Glenridge Point, Sandy Springs
- Windward Concourse, Alpharetta
- Perimeter Center Parkway, Atlanta
- 400 Northridge, Atlanta
- Concourse Office Park ("King and Queen"), Sandy Springs
- Bluegrass Office Park, Alpharetta
- HP, Alpharetta
- Johns Creek Business Association (email)
- IBALnet (email)
- Business400.com (email)

Schools

- Atlanta Intercontinental University
- Art Institute of Atlanta
- Georgia State University, Alpharetta Center
- Georgia Perimeter College, Alpharetta Center
- Fulton County Public Schools (as permissible)
- Study Area Private Schools (as permissible)

Other

- MARTA Bus Drops for Area Routes
- City Halls for Dunwoody, Sandy Springs, Roswell, Alpharetta, Johns Creek and Milton
- North Fulton Service Center
- North Fulton Community Improvement District / North Fulton Chamber of Commerce
- Abernathy Park
- Allen Park
- Autrey Mills Nature Preserve
- Bell Memorial Park
- Birmingham Park
- Chattahoochee River Park
- Hammond Park
- East Roswell Park
- Morgan Falls Park
- Newton Park
- Ocee Park
- North Fulton Tennis Center
- Providence Park
- Area Faith Based Institutions
- Alpharetta Branch Library
- East Roswell Branch Library
- Mt. Vernon Library
- Northeast Spruill Branch Library
- Ocee Branch Library
- Sandy Springs Branch Library
- Park Terrace Apartments
- Campbell Apartments
- Hammond Glenn Retirement Home
- The Hammonds Condominiums
- Mt. Vernon Towers
- Abernathy Apartments
- Serrano Condominiums
- The Granville Condominiums
- Alderwood Apartments
- Foxcroft Condominiums
- The Lodge at Sandy Springs
- Provence North Apartment

3.5.4 Scoping Meeting Layout, Displays, and Materials

Scoping meetings were held from 6:30 pm to 8:00 pm. A brief presentation was made at 7:00 pm, followed by a short question and answer period. For most of the meeting,

attendees were encouraged to view the Scoping displays and talk with MARTA representatives.

The layout of the public Scoping meetings was configured to funnel the public through the project display boards in a logical fashion. The same layout was used at each of the meetings. Upon entry, the attendees were asked to sign-in at a greeter's desk, where the greeter gave each attendee a project comment card; explained the room configuration; and then asked the attendee to review the Scoping boards that were on display.

The displays were arranged so that attendees could review project information from a broad perspective; understand more about the specific details of the alternatives; become exposed to the Federal environmental review process; and discuss potential areas of concern. In addition to the display boards, large-scale aerial roll plots were provided to orient attendees to the actual location of the alignment within the corridor (**Figure 3-5**).

Figure 3-5: Public Scoping Meeting Layout and Displays



Scoping Handouts

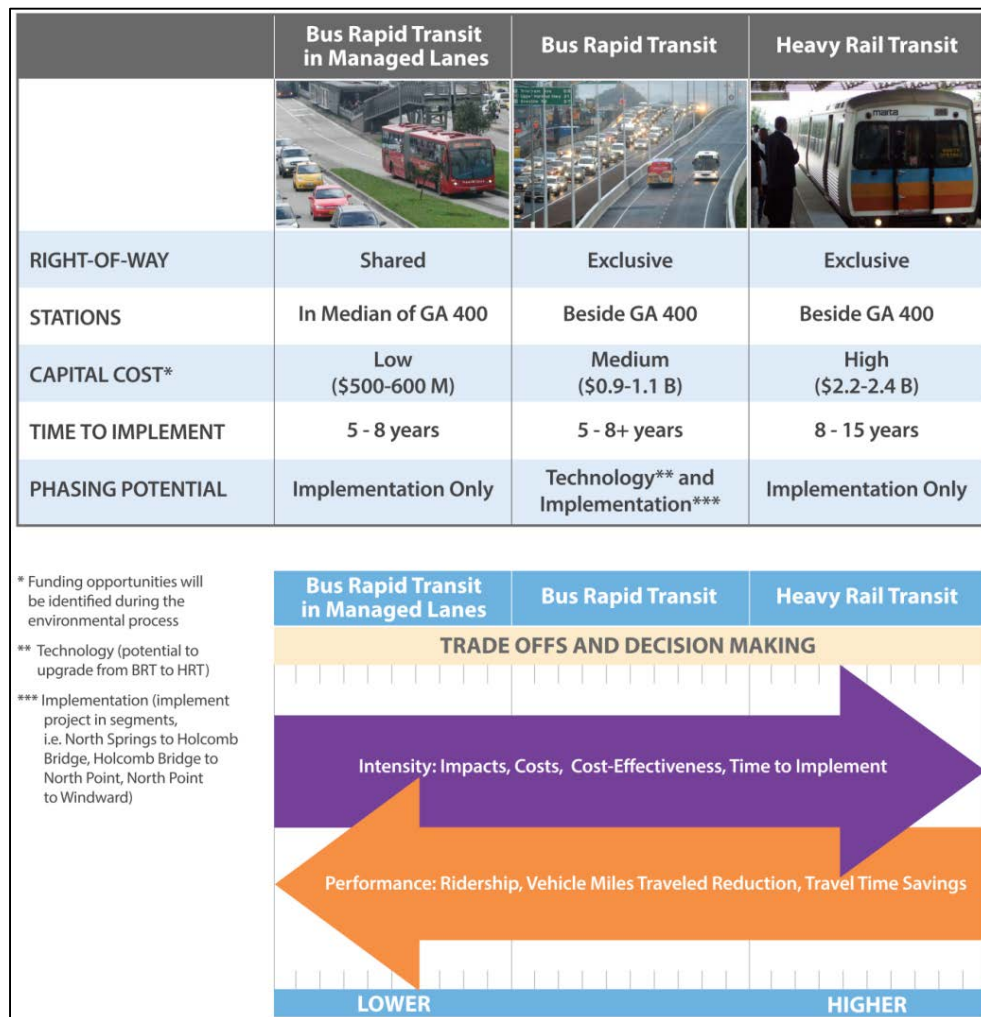
The following handouts were provided at the Scoping meetings. All are provided in **Appendix A-7**:

- *Comment Card* – provided space for attendees to give their contact information and to state their level of support for the project, preferred alternative, known resources of concern and any additional comments.
- *Fact Sheet* – provided a brief overview of the project including scope, schedule and how to provide comments
- *Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)* – provided common questions and answers regarding the GA 400 Transit Initiative.
- *Scoping Booklet* – detailed the GA 400 Transit Initiative (as described previously).

Display Boards:

- *Welcome Board* - this board was used to indicate that attendees had arrived at the correct location for the meeting.
- *Live and Work Board* – this display was used to understand the home and work locations of attendees.
- *Alternatives Board* - this board consisted of two maps displaying the alignments, potential crossover locations (Build Alternatives 1 and 2), and station locations for each of the three Build Alternatives (**Figure 1-4** and **Figure 1-5**). Given the overlap in alignment, Build Alternatives 1 and 2 were placed on the same map.
- *Project Summary Board* - this display showed an overview of the corridor and provided detail maps for each of the five potential station locations. For each station location the following information was provided: existing land use/zoning, future land use, 2040 projected population and employment within a half-mile of the interchange, significant attractions (employers, entertainment sites, and shopping centers), one-half mile walking distance and nearby community facilities.
- *Technology Considerations Board* - this board demonstrated the functional impacts of choosing any one of three Build Alternatives (**Figure 3-6**). For each alternative the following information was presented: right-of-way (i.e., does the service mix with automobile traffic?), general station location (i.e., is the station within GA 400 or outside of the roadway?), capital cost, time to implement, and potential for project phasing (i.e., whether a given alternative could be upgraded to a higher capacity technology or if the project could be constructed in segments). Additionally, the board contained an infographic that communicated the inherent tradeoffs between a given alternative's level of impact and its overall performance.
- *What Is an EIS? Board* - this display provided summary information about the purpose and contents of an EIS, including a listing a specific resource areas to be analyzed within the DEIS.
- *Project History Board* - this board consisted of a timeline running from the 2011 AA to the adoption of the LPA in early 2015 (**Figure 1-3**). At each project milestone a summary photo was included to demonstrate a major decision that came out of each planning activity.
- *Schedule/Process Board* – this display outlined the timeline for the project's environmental review process from the publication of the NOI to the eventual issuance of the combined FEIS/ROD (**Figure 3-1**). For each step within the process key outcomes and dates were provided.
- *What Is an EIS? Board* - this display provided summary information about the purpose and contents of an EIS, including a listing a specific resource areas to be analyzed within the DEIS.

Figure 3-6: Technology Considerations Display Board



- *Project History Board* - this board consisted of a timeline running from the 2011 AA to the adoption of the LPA in early 2015. At each project milestone a summary photo was included to demonstrate a major decision that came out of each planning activity.
- *Need and Purpose Board* – this board (**Figure 1-2**) showed the interaction between the project's need and purpose and noted that these factors ultimately drive the selection of the preferred project alternative.
- *Identified Environmental Resources Board* – this display consisted of a map of the general alignment of the Build Alternatives overlaid with the locations of known water features, wetlands, parks, and floodplain boundaries. The purpose of this display was to solicit input from stakeholders regarding any additional resources of concern that were not been identified during Early Scoping.
- *Identified Community Resources Board* – this board featured a map of the general alignment of the Build Alternatives overlaid with the locations of public and private schools, colleges, fire stations, and emergency services facilities.

The purpose of this board was to gather feedback from stakeholders related to the location of any community facilities that may have been overlooked during Early Scoping.

- *Aerial Roll Plots* – three large format roll plots featuring aerial imagery overlaid with the general alignment of the project. The purpose of this area was so that stakeholders could pair their comments regarding opportunities or threats to the project with a specific location on a map.

A summary of the public comments received during the public Scoping meetings and Scoping comment period and can be found in **Section 4.1** of this report.

3.6 Agency Scoping and Coordination

An agency Scoping coordination meeting was held to give State/Federal agencies and local municipalities the opportunity to comment on and provide input regarding alternatives to be evaluated and to offer advice on the development of the DEIS. The meeting took place on Thursday, April 16, 2015 from 10:00-11:30 am at the Bid Room within the MARTA Headquarters Building, 2424 Piedmont Rd NE, Atlanta, GA 30324. The agency meeting included a presentation tailored to the interests of representatives from the potential Participating and Cooperating Agencies and some of the boards were on display.

During this meeting agency members discussed key issues, project needs, opportunities, and challenges. The invitee list was made up of the following agencies:

- Fulton County, Planning and Development
- Cities of Milton, Johns Creek, Alpharetta, Roswell, Sandy Springs and Dunwoody
- Georgia Regional Transportation Authority
- U. S. Environmental Protection Agency
- Georgia Department of Transportation
- Federal Railroad Administration
- Georgia Department of Natural Resources – Historic Preservation Division
- Georgia Department of Natural Resources – Environmental Protection Division
- Atlanta Regional Commission
- United States Army Corps of Engineers
- Federal Highway Administration
- Federal Transit Administration

Supporting materials for this meetings, which are provided in **Appendices A-7, A-8 and A-10**, included the Scoping Booklet with details about the project and the NEPA Scoping process, a Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ), the Public Scoping meeting presentation, display boards, and comment forms.

A summary of the comments received during the agency Scoping coordination meeting can be found in **Section 4.2** of this report. Detailed notes from this meeting are in **Appendix B-6**.

3.7 Expanded Project Steering Committee Meeting

An expanded PSC meeting, which included members of the Project Steering Committee, as well as other representatives from non-profit groups within the GA 400 corridor, was held to provide stakeholders with an update on the project's status and an overview of the Federal environmental review process. The meeting was held on Tuesday, April 14, 2015 from 3:30-5:00 pm prior to the first public Scoping meeting at the North Fulton Service Center in Sandy Springs.

During this meeting, stakeholders from the study area discussed key issues, project needs, opportunities and challenges. The invitee list was made up of the following organizations:

- Northridge Community Homeowners Association
- Fulton County Board of Education
- North American Properties
- Perimeter CID
- North Fulton CID/Chamber
- Johns Creek Chamber
- Counties of DeKalb, Fulton and Forsyth
- Atlanta Regional Commission
- Georgia Department of Transportation
- Georgia Regional Transportation Authority
- Cities of Milton, Johns Creek, Alpharetta, Roswell, Sandy Springs and Dunwoody
- Gwinnett Technical College
- Georgia State University Alpharetta Center
- McDonald's Corporation
- Cisco Corporation
- Coach USA
- Tenet Health
- Verizon Wireless Amphitheatre
- Upper Chattahoochee Riverkeeper
- North Point Mall

The same supporting materials provided at the agency Scoping meeting were provided to the extended PSC meeting attendees. The presentation made to the attendees is contained in Appendix A-11. A summary of the comments received during the meeting can be found in **Section 4.3.1**, while **Appendix B-7** contains more detailed notes from this meeting.

3.8 Public Officials Briefings

During the NEPA Scoping period, MARTA staff attended three briefings with elected officials, identified in **Table 3-5**. The elected officials were provided the scoping materials in **Appendix A-7**.

Table 3-5: Briefings with Elected Officials

Date	Official	Meeting Location
April 30, 2015	Fulton County Commissioner Liz Hausmann, District 1	Fulton County Government Center
May 4, 2015	Fulton County Chairman John Eaves	Fulton County Government Center
May 18, 2015	Fulton County Commissioner Bob Ellis, District 2	Fulton County Government Center

A summary of the comments received during the meeting can be found in **Section 4.3.2**. **Appendix B-8** contains notes from these briefings.

Other meetings will be held as requested during this study.

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4.0 SUMMARY OF SCOPING COMMENTS

4.1 Public Scoping Comments

Public Scoping comments were taken throughout the Scoping period. More than 1,000 individual comments were received during the Scoping period via the following methods.

- Comment forms that were provided at the Scoping meetings, which were either submitted in the drop box provided at the meetings, or were later mailed or emailed to MARTA during the Scoping period, or comments submitted via the online survey. A total of 787 comment forms were received during Scoping. A full listing of these comments and the comment form are provided in **Appendix B-1**.
- Other comments mailed or emailed to MARTA during the Scoping period. Eleven comments were sent to MARTA. A full listing of these comments is provided in **Appendix B-2**.
- Comments provided at the display tables during the public Scoping meetings. Forty-one comments were made on the aerial maps and a complete listing of these comments is provided in **Appendix B-3**.
- Comments made on the GA 400 Transit Initiative Facebook page and provide on Twitter during the Scoping period.

The comment form asked respondents to provide a Yes or No to three questions to judge support for the project and for the LPA and the BRT alternatives. The number of responses received for each question is shown in **Table 4-1**. As indicated in the table, 88 percent of the responses show support for the project and an equal percent prefer the HRT alignment.

Table 4-1: Responses to Comment Forms

Questions	Responses	
Do you agree with MARTA's proposal to extend high capacity transit service up the GA 400 corridor to the Forsyth County line?	Yes – 88%	No – 12%
The Local Preferred Alternative (LPA) approved by the MARTA Board consists of heavy rail transit that would be constructed on fixed guideway extending from North Springs Station, crossing to the west side of GA 400 north of North Springs Station and south of Spalding Drive, and crossing back to the east north of the Chattahoochee River. This is referred to as the East-West-East HRT alternative (see map of LPA on the reverse side of this form). MARTA is also considering two lower cost alternatives — bus rapid transit (BRT) in the same alignment as the East-West-East HRT alignment and BRT in future GA 400 Managed Lanes. Please indicate which of these three options you believe will best improve the commuting experience in North Fulton.	East-West-East HRT	88.5%
	East-West-East BRT	4%
	BRT Managed Lanes	7.5%

Figure 4-1: April 16, 2015 Public Scoping Meeting



Common Themes

The most frequent themes discussed in the comments were related to:

- Excess traffic on GA 400
- Economic development in the corridor
- Impacts to neighborhoods/communities/location of the new transit service
- Efficacy of HRT versus BRT
- Protection of environmental and recreational resources
- Feeder service and neighborhood connectivity
- Station options and locations

Table 4-2 provides a breakdown of themes mentioned in the comments. The numbers shown in this table reflect the frequency of times a theme was mentioned, rather than the number of responses given. It should be noted that although the table shows the themes in order of frequency, it should not be concluded that these issues necessarily have a correlating order of importance.

Following the table, a summary of the major themes in the comments is given, along with responses as appropriate. Full text of the more than 1,000 comments submitted to MARTA during the Scoping period is provided in **Appendices B-1, B-2, and B-3**.

Table 4-2: Summary of Topics Noted in GA 400 Scoping Comments

Comment Type	Number
Comments about excessive traffic on GA 400	503
Comments about Atlanta's need for transit (jobs, growth, economic development)	378
Comments about whether persons in the corridor would use the transit service	248
Comments about efficacy of BRT vs. HRT	154
Comments relating to station locations/configuration/parking/accessibility	141
Comments about environmental impact of transit	82
Comments about travel to major destinations ("one-seat" ride)	64
Comments about crime and safety	52
Comments about neighborhood/community impacts	47
Comments about other infrastructure priorities	36
Comments relating to past/future investment value of transit	30
Comments about extending transit to other jurisdictions	28
Comments related to compatibility/integration with other planned developments	18
Comments about current operational/management issues	14
Comments about other transit priorities	13
Comments about construction impacts	10
Comments about alignment (East-West-East crossover, alternate routes)	9
HRT	
Comments in support of HRT	560
Stations needed beyond North Springs	77
Comments about environmental impact of HRT	35
Support for station near/on Holcomb Bridge	28
Concerns about high cost of HRT	22
Opposed to station near/on Holcomb Bridge	16
BRT	
Comments related to how BRT won't reduce traffic	224
Comments in support of BRT	30
Comments about environmental impact of BRT	25
BRT/ML	
Comments in support of BRT ML	39
Comments opposed to ML	7
Comments regarding BRT ML impact on traffic reduction	1
Comments in favor of phased or combined approach	25

4.1.1 Excess Traffic on GA 400 and Need for Transit

Summary of Comments

The most vocal concern about the GA 400 project is related to traffic congestion in the corridor. Overwhelmingly, the comments in support of the project were focused on existing traffic issues and the need for additional transit as an option to vehicle use. Many respondents expressed the challenges faced with the amount of time spent in their cars without the option of transit. The majority of the respondents also felt that HRT was

the most efficient mode and would reduce overall commute times with a smaller number supporting BRT. Comments also suggested that additional transit would address air quality issues and serve a fast growing working and residential population. Many felt extending service farther north along the corridor would provide the opportunity for increased ridership and provide opportunities to access downtown Atlanta for events and social activities in addition to commuting for work. Support was also expressed for all proposed transit projects in the region and the need to address the larger traffic congestion issue.

A smaller number of comments were in opposition to the project. Many in opposition felt that the project would not address the congestion problem and adding more lanes would be a better option. Other opposing views related to the issue of public safety and wanting to maintain a suburban feel in the area.

Examples of some the comments include:

- “The rush hour traffic on GA 400 between Windward Parkway and I-285 is a strong deterrent for people in seeking employee opportunities downtown. HRT will allow commuters to more easily reach work sites downtown and beyond.”
- “This is a much needed service. In the past few years, the number of people working in Atlanta and commuting from Alpharetta/Cumming area increased drastically. GA 400 is congested and many are spending valuable time and resources in hours long commute to Atlanta.”
- “It would benefit the residents in the area of the project. Many metro Atlanta residents north of the Perimeter don't even consider going into the city for anything due to issues like heavy traffic, parking availability, etc. Extending the MARTA line would allow for alternate ways to connect people in those areas with the rest of metro Atlanta would also benefit the businesses in the area of the project by allowing residents in other MARTA serviced areas the ability to reach amenities in North Atlanta such as the Verizon Amphitheatre, North Point Mall, etc. Overall, it could help reduce traffic related pollution in Atlanta.”
- “I believe that MARTA will eventually grow to serve as commuter rail into the City of Atlanta and that the streetcar network will grow within the City to serve for closer connections. It's vital that we better connect the suburbs to the city to grow as a region.”
- “Residents in the area need options. There are nearly 1,000 apartments in a quarter mile radius of the area west of 400 where many of the residents really can't afford to own automobiles but are forced to. Making it possible for a few of these residents let go of a car would dramatically change their economic situation. Further, you can see more and more people commuting from ITP to employment centers in Alpharetta. Many of these commuters live near a MARTA station but can't use it because it doesn't go where they need to go. Finally, having rail near the hundreds of existing apartments west of 400 would elevate the desirability of these apartments to professionals who commute but want to live near the Chattahoochee River. It might let these complexes improve over time.”
- “It has the population density to support it. Factor in the traffic problems of 400 and you have a perfect opportunity to let MARTA impact Atlanta and truly take cars off Atlanta metro roads.”

- “I currently commute from Roswell down GA-9 and GA-400 to North Springs. I would much prefer eliminating most of my drive on the already-congested main arteries in favor of a longer train ride.”
- “I sit on GA 400 every weekday for three hours to get from Milton to Coca-Cola headquarters. I want my time back!”
- “It’s just a straight line - no ancillary branches - doesn’t make it very useful to reduce the number of cars. I might see at Old Milton Parkway with the colleges but MARTA needs to focus on perpendicular lines to make the existing useful - like Chicago or New York. One straight line isn’t that useful except going to the airport and using bus lines to create perpendicular lines isn’t useful either from a time frame point of view even if you are poor and if you are rich you will drive. Fill in before extending a line.”

4.1.2 Economic Development in the Corridor

Summary of Comments

Many comments also focused on the economic development benefits the GA 400 project would bring to the corridor. With the location of large corporations such as Mercedes and State Farm and the announcement of several large-scale mixed use developments within the corridor, many respondents indicated the GA 400 project would spur additional growth. These types of developments lead to jobs and housing growth and make the North Fulton community an important part of the region. Some however, expressed opposition to the economic stimulus the project would bring.

Some of the comments on Economic Development include:

- “Many exceptional developments have occurred in the past 10 years. Consequently, commercial and residential projects have increased, magnifying the need for further effort to support quality of life (time, convenience, safety and air quality) in this area. As it continues to grow, the tax base will improve and benefit the remainder of the county.”
- “The building of a new rail line needs to occur in conjunction with planning for the development that will surely follow.”
- “Opportunities are so plentiful it is hard to list all. The additional commerce supported by easy transit is clearly a great benefit. We would have rail to North Point, Avalon, and the new Riverwalk near Holcomb Bridge. With all of that development, the fact that we are only now addressing transportation is a little disappointing.”
- “If MARTA does not aggressively make these investments in HRT, Atlanta will not be a competitive economy for attracting and maintaining talent.”
- “Getting land use and transit oriented development right from the beginning versus playing clean up twenty years later is critical.”
- “This is a great opportunity to grow the GA 400 corridor and make the area even more attractive for business and residential.”

- “This corridor represents great economic opportunity for the region but the potential will not be realized unless transportation improvement is a priority including BOTH increased bus routes and expanded rail service.”
- “Once Mercedes Benz settles in Sandy Springs, there better be a world class solution in place, those people who come with that company move from an area with alternative transportation, and we are talking about 1,200 people who will move up and down that corridor, and not necessarily in walking distance to the facility.”
- “There is no need to have our small busy community polluted with more people and more undesirable extravagance to our financial picture.”

4.1.3 Impacts to Neighborhoods/Communities

Summary of Comments

Several comments were submitted concerning the GA 400 project's impact on communities and neighborhood amenities. A number of residential communities are immediately adjacent or close to the GA 400 corridor and many comments focused on impacts such as noise and other environmental issues, housing displacement and disruption to schools. Still, others commented that environmental gains such as a decrease in pollution are worth the temporary impacts construction would bring. Some respondents also felt the project would lead to crime in their neighborhoods

Examples of comments submitted on impacts to communities include:

- “This would provide the opportunity and need to connect from the train station to housing with sidewalks, etc.”
- “As you're plotting potential stations, of course keep in mind the major potential for future TOD [transit oriented development].”
- “This will help reduce neighborhood street traffic and make MARTA more useful!”
- “I love PATH400 and use the greenway multiple times a week. Having better MARTA access would be a big step in encouraging me to move to Alpharetta/Cumming.”
- “It would be nice to have service on MARTA extending north where there isn't any at the moment, but would also like to minimize the destruction of residential areas, schools, and parks. Rail line should go through commercial areas only and stay west of GA 400.”
- “Our property backs up to GA 400 just above Northridge Road. We love our house and our yard and do not want any more trees removed. The sound of 400 is loud enough; we do not want the added noise of a MARTA train.”
- “Please keep a buffer and include facilities for bikes and walkers along the same route where trains would be going.”
- “Please consider available methods for minimizing noise for nearby residents where feasible, especially if HRT is selected. Being within earshot of an HRT

line can be seen as a negative feature for a residential property. Generally, please be environmentally sensitive and conscientious.”

- “Just because MARTA will be more of a constant, I do not want to see more high density along its path. I want current zonings for neighborhoods to stay intact and become permanent!”
- “I do not want the increase in crime associated with bringing Marta to North Fulton. Unfortunately, since MARTA has had service to Dunwoody I have seen an increase in problems. I don't want my property value or safety to be negatively affected by having the train running nearby.”
- “I believe that this action would lead to an increased population growth in this area and that this would have a negative impact on the area. Milton, for example, has decreased the rate of new home building for this reason. I have further concerns about a potential increase in crime rate, and decrease of city services and property values. All of these reasons would make metro Atlanta a less desirable place to live.”
- “The corridor you are planning on is high in residential areas. Putting the high capacity transit service decreases house values and increase in crime rates in the surrounding areas.”
- “No way to avoid the fact that most users will still need to drive to and from any stations (i.e., high capacity options won't be running into each subdivision). Traffic impacts around any station, but especially heavy rail, will be huge. Any design needs to mitigate those impacts, especially near residential areas, or this is not a net gain.”

4.1.4 Efficacy of HRT versus BRT

Summary of Comments

Several comments focused on whether HRT or BRT would be the best alternative for the proposed extension. As shown in **Table 4-1**, the vast majority of commenters expressed support for HRT in the corridor, although there were supporters of BRT alternatives.

Examples of comments submitted on the alternatives were:

- “HRT is the most desirable option and will provide the fastest and longest term investment. Now of course HRT is extremely expensive but it would be worth the cost in the long run. Not to mention extending the current heavy rail will eliminate the need for having to make a transfer at North Springs from one mode to the other. I think a one seat ride from Windward to the Airport would be very appealing to many not to mention access to all the other great destinations MARTA serves. If the line has to be built as BRT due to financial reasons it should be built to a very high standard. Many BRT systems in the US don't seem to be built to the standards of BRT systems in other nations. It should be Gold Standard BRT. It must be effective enough to entice people to get out of their cars as those "choice riders" are the main ones you'll have to target in the northern suburbs. If it's BRT the transfer to HRT at North Springs must be engineered to be as seamless as possible and timed accordingly. Making people have to wait for a train during the transfer wouldn't be ideal. BRT bus arrives, people make their way to the train, the train departs and vice versa.”

- “HRT has a big environmental footprint. BRT is much better overall for the environment.”

4.1.5 Protection of Environmental and Recreational Resources

Summary of Comments

Some respondents expressed concern that the project be planned in such a way that environmental and recreational resources are protected.

Specific comments included:

- “The environmental impact of building HRT would be offset by the long term reductions in the pollution costs.”
- “This should be a solid environmental win for many stakeholder groups. Environmentalists would see reduced emissions and pollution from all the cars on GA 400. Commuters would have options to reduce their drive and get to locations in Atlanta quicker without having to sit in traffic – not to mention reduced gas use, fewer accidents, lower insurance rates, lower stress, more productive time, etc. Employers would gain improved productivity, fewer problems with missed time due to traffic issues. Traffic through mid-town would be cut by removing some of the cars from the road (or at least reducing the rate of growth of the number of cars), positively impacting other citizens in the community. The surrounding GA 400 corridor communities can further promote quality of life and the positive impact reduced traffic will have on secondary roads.”
- “Reiterating the need to minimize the impact to the Chattahoochee River Area, North Ridge to Holcomb Bridge.”
- “Minimize damage or potential pollution to the Chattahoochee. Minimize destruction of tree cover, especially in the Riverside area of Roswell.”

4.1.6 Implementation of Feeder Service and Community Connectivity

Summary of Comments

While strong support exists for the GA 400 project, many respondents felt that implementing feeder service would greatly enhance ridership. There was particular support for planning and implementing feeder service in advance of construction. Many responses also identified connectivity issues as important to the use of additional transit service in the corridor.

Specific comments included:

- “If MARTA promises feeder bus services right away, it will certainly receive public support including some funding options as happened in Clayton County recently. Currently Route 143 serves straight north along the proposed route. But Milton in North West and Johns Creek in North East lack bus service. If feeder services are started right away from these two zones to the existing Sandy Springs station, a great support will be received for this project.”
- “If feeder services are started right away, people will agree to additional fund contribution in the form of tax, or bond or something else.”

- “Feeder services from Milton (North West) and Johns Creek (North East) can be started right away to the existing Sandy Springs station and can be changed to the new stations as and when they get built.”
- “Feeder services do not have to wait for a decade and starting them now will keep the interest of the public in this project.”
- “Please consider a bus circulator to reach Johns Creek on State Bridge at the corner Jones Bridge going to the new Old Milton transit station, or from Technology Park in Johns Creek to the new Windward Parkway or Old Milton Parkway station.”
- “Connect the new GA State Campus at Old Milton Parkway.”
- “Any plan to expand public transportation to the Roswell area must include some kind of joint initiative with the City/businesses to improve the pedestrian access to bus and or train stations. We need sidewalks, bus stops and bike lanes or people will continue to shun public transportation. It doesn't make sense to ride a bus or train if you take your life in your hands getting there.”
- “Please add multipurpose trails along the construction sites and easy access for bike commuters to bring bikes on to MARTA.”
- “Is there a way to tie in a connection between the HBR station and the river trail to improve rider access to the parks? Pedestrian and/or bike paths from station or bus route that runs from HCB down Dogwood, along Riverside to Roswell Road?”

4.1.7 Station Locations and Amenities

Summary of Comments

The LPA shows a number of potential station locations. During the public Scoping meetings, aerial roll plots containing imagery overlaid with the three alignments were shown during the open house portions of the meeting. The purpose of was to solicit feedback from attendees about community resources and other issues around the alignments. Many comments centered on station locations and options and amenities such as accessibility, parking, lighting and overall aesthetics and attendees identified specific locations for their preferences.

Comments about stations were also submitted on comment forms and include some of the following:

- “Roswell is planning a multi-use bridge called Big Creek Parkway, which will be a bridge over GA 400 between Mansell and Holcomb Bridge with Bike, pedestrian and others. Putting the station near where this bridge lands west of GA 400 near the existing high density housing might work well.”
- “Station at HBR [Holcomb Bridge Road] should land on NW quadrant; this area requires higher density residential for redevelopment and would mesh well with a station.”
- “Old Milton Parkway Station - Ideal Site within Avalon Development.”

- “There are already not enough ways to get on and off of GA 400 which helps contribute to the traffic issues. MARTA stations need to have their own exits, similar to North Springs, or be located on less popular exits. Placing a MARTA line on Holcomb Bridge, for example, will just add more traffic to an already overpopulated exit. MARTA needs to come north of the Chattahoochee River and then North of Holcomb Bridge to Haynes Bridge or Old Milton at Avalon.”
- “Please consider ample parking at stations and improved bus service to the rail stations.”
- “Please think about station pedestrian access from the opposite side of GA 400. We must not recreate North Springs, you can't get there from the west. Pedestrian and bicycle bridges must be part of the plan.”
- General Comment on the Station at Haynes Bridge with Dedicated On/Off Ramps: Respondent felt that the stations should be built on less traveled roads to provide easier ingress and egress and avoid additional traffic impacts to already congested roads.

Figure 4-2: April 30, 2015 Public Scoping Meeting



4.2 Agency Comments

During the meeting with regulatory and resource agencies, comments and questions were received from the 14 representatives in attendance. Copies of the notes from these briefings are included in **Appendix B-6**; the notes contain comments made by attendees and responses provided.

The following comments were received during this meeting.

Cities:

- When will more refined concepts be available?
- Is MARTA considering early acquisition of land at station locations or wait until new developments are in place and then displace that development?

- What is the schedule for project implementation since new development is now underway or planned? Would like the decision to be made sooner rather than later.
- Can GDOT's Managed Lanes plans and MARTA BRT in Managed Lanes alternative be coordinated so that it can be built in more expedited timeframe than 2041?
- Concerned about feeder bus routes; would like increased service in communities (i.e., John's Creek).
- Minimize additional ROW and intruding into established buffers.

GDOT

- When can they see information on how bus service will be integrated/how will it will be affected by the alternatives?
- Status of GDOT's managed lane plan – what is MARTA assuming for costs for costs, types of proposed stations relative to ROW, and separation for managed lanes
- Will ridership forecasts be revised?
- There is a Colonial pipeline somewhere between Abernathy and Spaulding. GDOT is trying to identify impacts.
- Has National Park Service been invited to participate?

ARC

- Potential phasing for implementation of heavy rail?
- This will be a hard EIS to pull off; there is a need for close coordination among all parties to make this project happen.

4.3 Project Steering Committee and Public Officials Comments

During Scoping, MARTA held a meeting with the PSC and an extended list of invitees, and met individually with three local elected officials. Comments received during these meetings are summarized below:

4.3.1 Expanded Project Steering Committee Meeting

During the Expanded PSC meeting, the 11 members provided the following comments and questions during their meeting. Copies of the notes from these briefings are included in **Appendix B-7**; the notes contain comments made by attendees and responses provided.

- Posed questions about the costs of the study phase and ability to use EIS costs as local match.
- What is included in the project engineering estimates?
- Coordination with private developments along the corridor for station locations.

- Status of other transit projects in the region (such as the Beltline and Cobb County BRT as well the other MARTA expansion projects) and their effect on the viability of the GA 400 study.
- Ensure that environmental and community impacts are reviewed and well documented
- Coordination with other agencies including GDOT is important
- Indicate how public input will be in the decision making process
- Need to consider elements of security and resiliency of the system.

4.3.2 Public Officials Briefings

During the briefings with the three public officials, the following comments were made. Notes from these meetings are included in **Appendix B-8**; the notes contain comments made by attendees and responses provided.

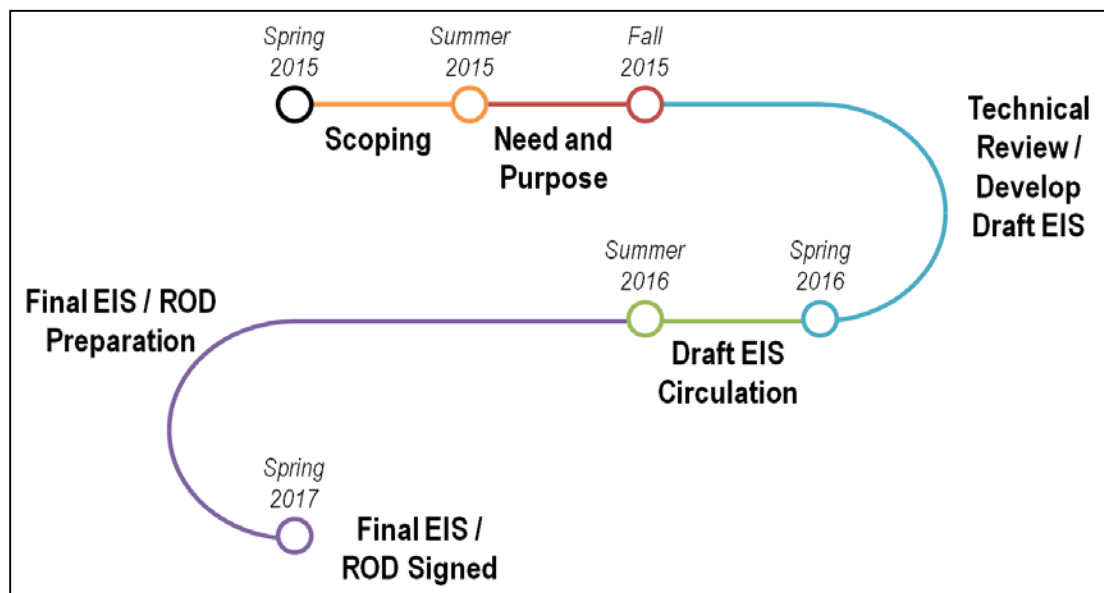
- Interest in how the public is responding and level of participation
- Costs of the project including the variations between BRT and HRT
- Schedule of implementation (HRT vs BRT)
- Level of support from North Fulton municipalities

5.0 NEXT STEPS

Figure 5-1, shown to the public and stakeholders during the Scoping meetings and outreach, outlines the steps between Scoping and the issuance of the combined FEIS/ROD. After concluding the Scoping period in Summer 2015, the project team will refine the project's Need and Purpose statement. Once the Need and Purpose is solidified the project team will begin performing technical review in and developing the DEIS in Fall 2015. Comments received during the Scoping process and throughout the preparation of the DEIS will be considered as part of the evaluation process to support project decision-making.

Upon completion of the DEIS, the document will be circulated to members of the PSC, as well as representatives from Cooperating and Participating Agencies. Once the DEIS is made publicly available, a public and agency review period will allow for feedback regarding the DEIS. The input received during the review period will then be incorporated into the combined FEIS/ROD document that will be submitted to the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) in 2017. This schedule is subject to change depending on how the DEIS progresses over the next year.

Figure 5-1: Next Steps Slide from Public Scoping Meetings



After publication of the combined FEIS/ROD, the Project Team will continue to develop a detailed design and refine the operating characteristics of the proposed alternative. Construction of the project will not begin until the design is finalized and a detailed financial plan has been developed.

MARTA anticipates that up to 50 percent of the capital costs related to the GA 400 Transit Initiative will be provided by FTA through its New Starts Capital Investment Grant (CIG) Program. To fund the remaining capital costs MARTA will continue to engage stakeholders along the GA 400 corridor to identify potential sources of funding. MARTA will investigate both local (sales tax and/or bond revenues) and private sources of funding (CIDs, private investment, concessions and station development) that could be used to match the Federal capital grant.