

1.0 ADOPTED LOCALLY PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE (LPA)

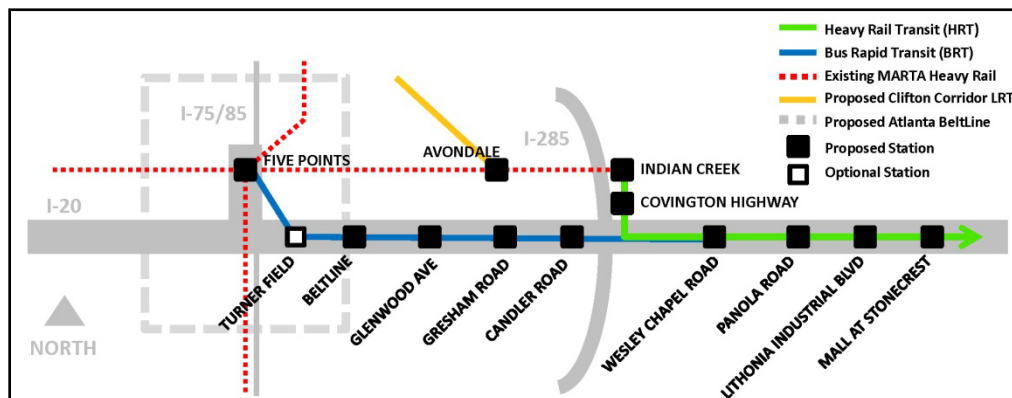
Following a two-tiered DCA which evaluated a variety of transit alignments and modes, the I-20 East Transit Initiative has selected and refined an LPA. This section presents the transit improvements that comprise the LPA, along with the refinements that the adopted LPA underwent after its selection in the DCA. The remainder of this document provides an introduction to the I-20 East Transit Initiative and an overview of the DCA process that concluded with the selection of the LPA.

The Adopted LPA

The LPA represents the HRT3 Alternative from the Tier 2 Screening with refinements, and consists of HRT and BRT components, as shown in **Figure 1-1** below and **Figure 1-2** on page 1-2. The LPA would extend the existing MARTA east-west heavy rail line 12 miles from the Indian Creek Station. The line would extend south parallel to I-285, then east along I-20 to the Mall at Stonecrest.

BRT service would be implemented between downtown Atlanta and Wesley Chapel. BRT service would operate in general use lanes and HOV/HOT lanes on I-20 and surface streets. It would be a fixed-route, branded, high frequency, all day service utilizing transit stations rather than typical bus stops. Vehicles would use transit-only interchanges to access Candler Road and Gresham Road stations, and Wesley Chapel Road, Glenwood Avenue, and Bill Kennedy Way to access stations at those locations. Arterial BRT enhancements such as TSP and queue jumper lanes would be utilized to maximize the efficiency of surface street operations. In the City of Atlanta, BRT service would utilize the Capital Avenue interstate ramps, Capital Avenue, Martin Luther King, Jr. Drive, and Broad Street for access to and from the Five Points Station, or preferably the MMPT if it is implemented.

Figure 1-1: The Recommended LPA – HRT3



The following station locations are recommended based on input from the public and stakeholders, existing and future land uses, and projected ridership:

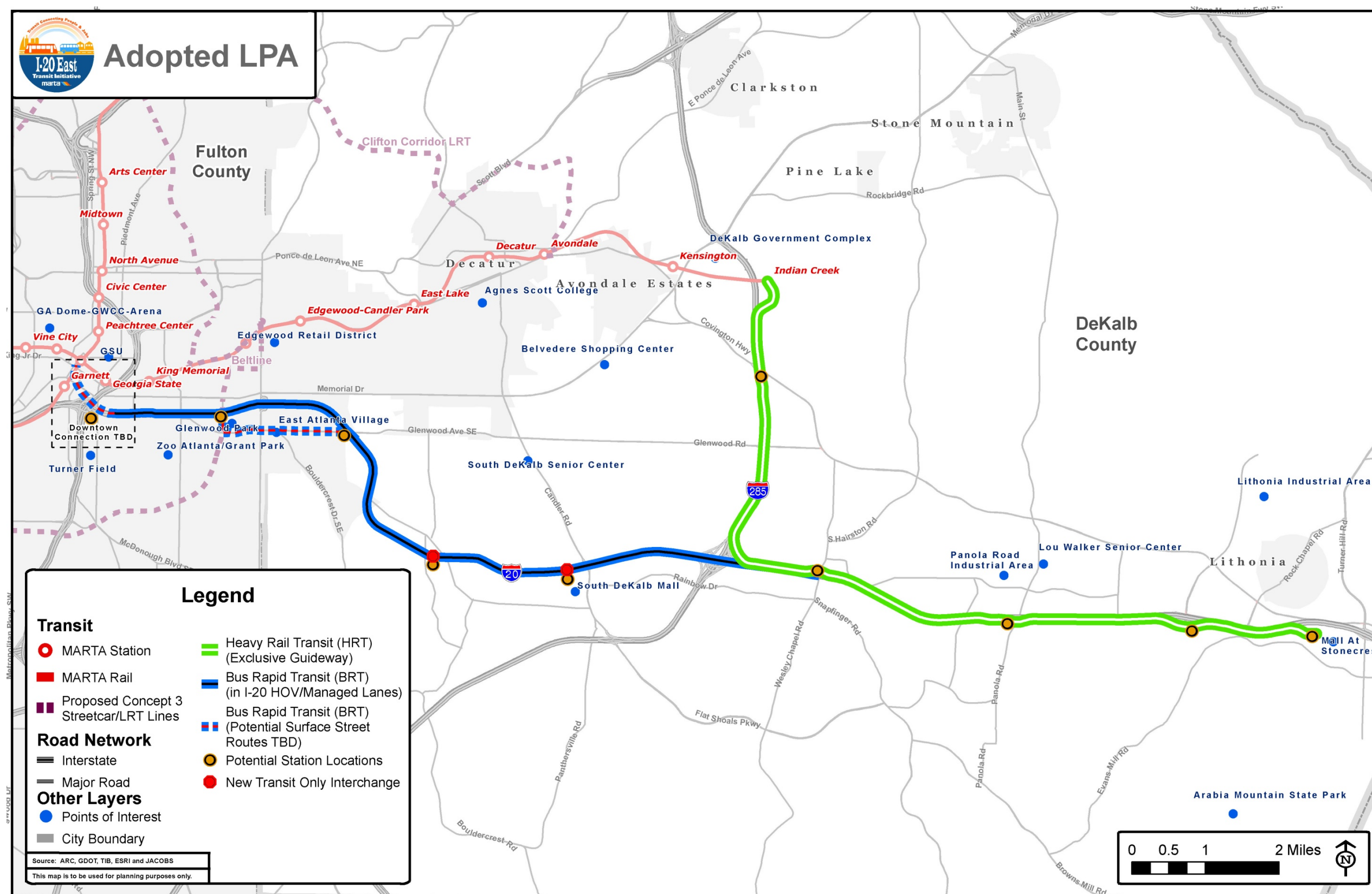
New Stations Served by HRT

- Covington Highway
- Wesley Chapel Road
- Panola Road
- Lithonia Industrial Blvd/Evans Mill Road
- Mall at Stonecrest

New Stations Served by BRT

- Turner Field (Optional)
- Glenwood Park/Beltline
- Glenwood Avenue
- Gresham Road
- Candler Road
- Wesley Chapel Road

Figure 1-2: Map of the Recommended LPA – HRT3





Currently two transit lines operate on the MARTA east-west tracks: the Blue Line, which operates between the Indian Creek Station to the east and the HE Holmes Station to the west; and the Green Line, which operates between the Edgewood/Candler Park Station to the east and the Bankhead Station to the west. Operationally, the LPA would extend the Green Line for the new service into the I-20 Corridor. As shown in **Figure 1-3** on page 1-4 the extended Green Line would serve all new heavy rail stations listed above and then operate as an express service along the existing east line, serving only select stations in order to minimize travel times between the Mall at Stonecrest and the Five Points Station. The Blue Line service would remain unchanged, providing local service to all existing stations between Indian Creek and Five Points Station.

The LPA recognizes the importance of integrating with the Concept 3 regional transit vision. To this end, the future connectivity to the proposed BeltLine and Clifton Corridor was a major consideration in the identification of the LPA. **Figure 1-4** on page 1-5 presents a map showing how the I-20 East project would integrate with other existing and planned transit investments.

1.1 Refinements to the Recommended LPA

Of the six Tier 2 alternatives considered, HRT3 was selected as the LPA because it was the alternative that would most effectively address the stakeholder-identified needs of the corridor and goals and objectives of the project. **Table 1-1** on page 1-6 details the reasons why the recommended LPA (HRT3) would best address each of these goals and objectives. Corridor stakeholders, the City of Atlanta, the general public, and other interested parties expressed overall support for HRT3. However, due to their shared concerns about the nature of BRT service attached to this alternative, HRT3 was refined after its selection as the recommended LPA.

In refining HRT3 as the recommended LPA, its BRT portion was designed to meet premium BRT standards as defined by FTA. The FTA stipulates that bus service qualifies as BRT when it offers fixed route service that either operates predominantly on fixed-guideways or offers high frequency (15 minute headways, 10 minute headways during peak hours) service separate from mixed traffic with transit stations, traffic signal priority or preemption, low-floor vehicles or level-platform boarding, and separate branding of service. Therefore, the LPA BRT service will meet the following specific refinements were made:

- BRT service between downtown Atlanta and Wesley Chapel would operate in general use lanes and HOV/HOT lanes on I-20 and surface streets as necessary to connect to downtown.
- BRT service would be fixed-route, branded, high frequency, all day service utilizing transit stations rather than typical bus stops.
- Transit-only interchanges would be constructed at Candler Road and Gresham Road for BRT access to stations at those locations.
- Arterial BRT enhancements such as TSP and queue jumper lanes would be utilized to maximize the efficiency of surface street operations.



Figure 1-3: HRT 3 Operation in MARTA System

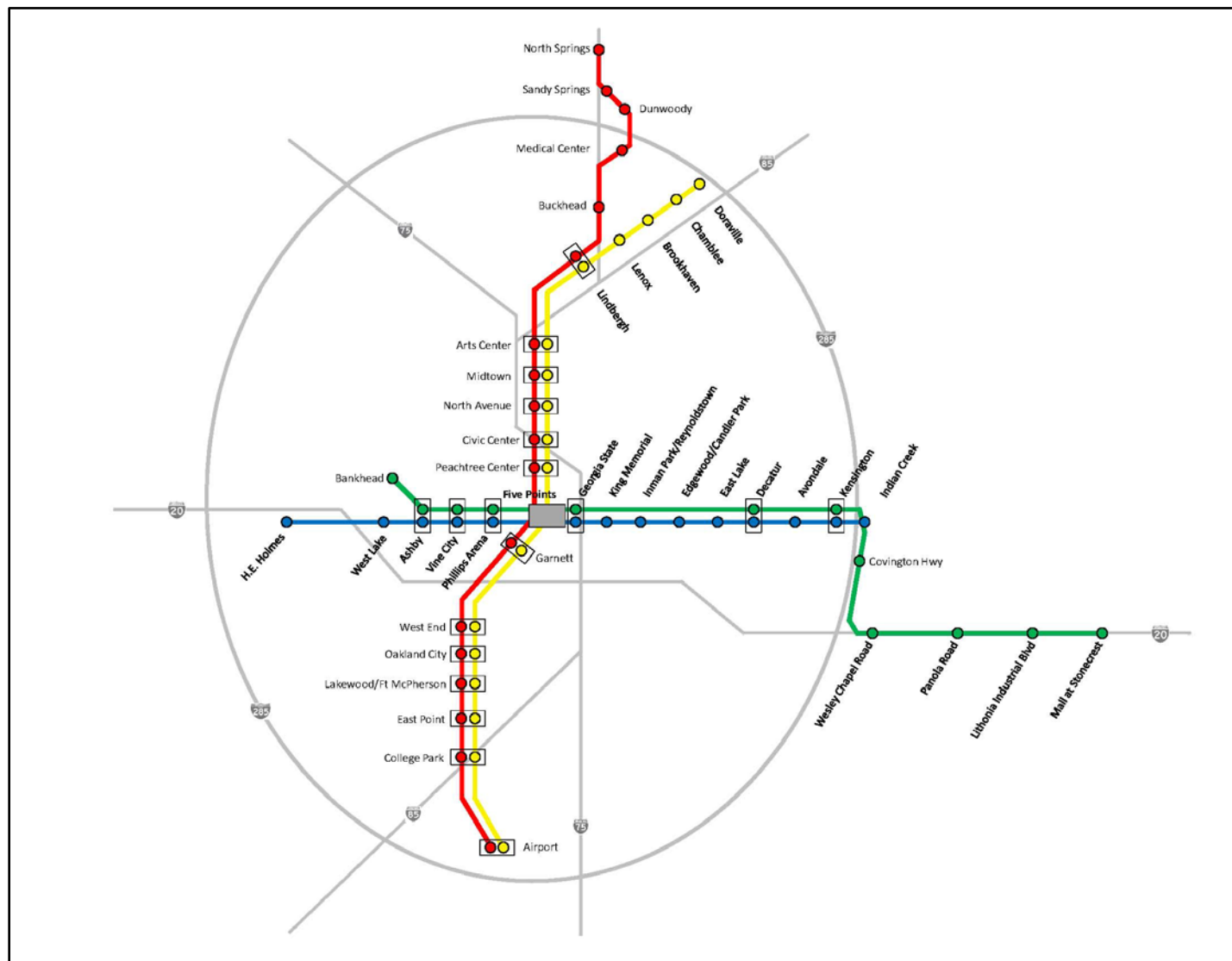


Figure 1-4: System Integration Map

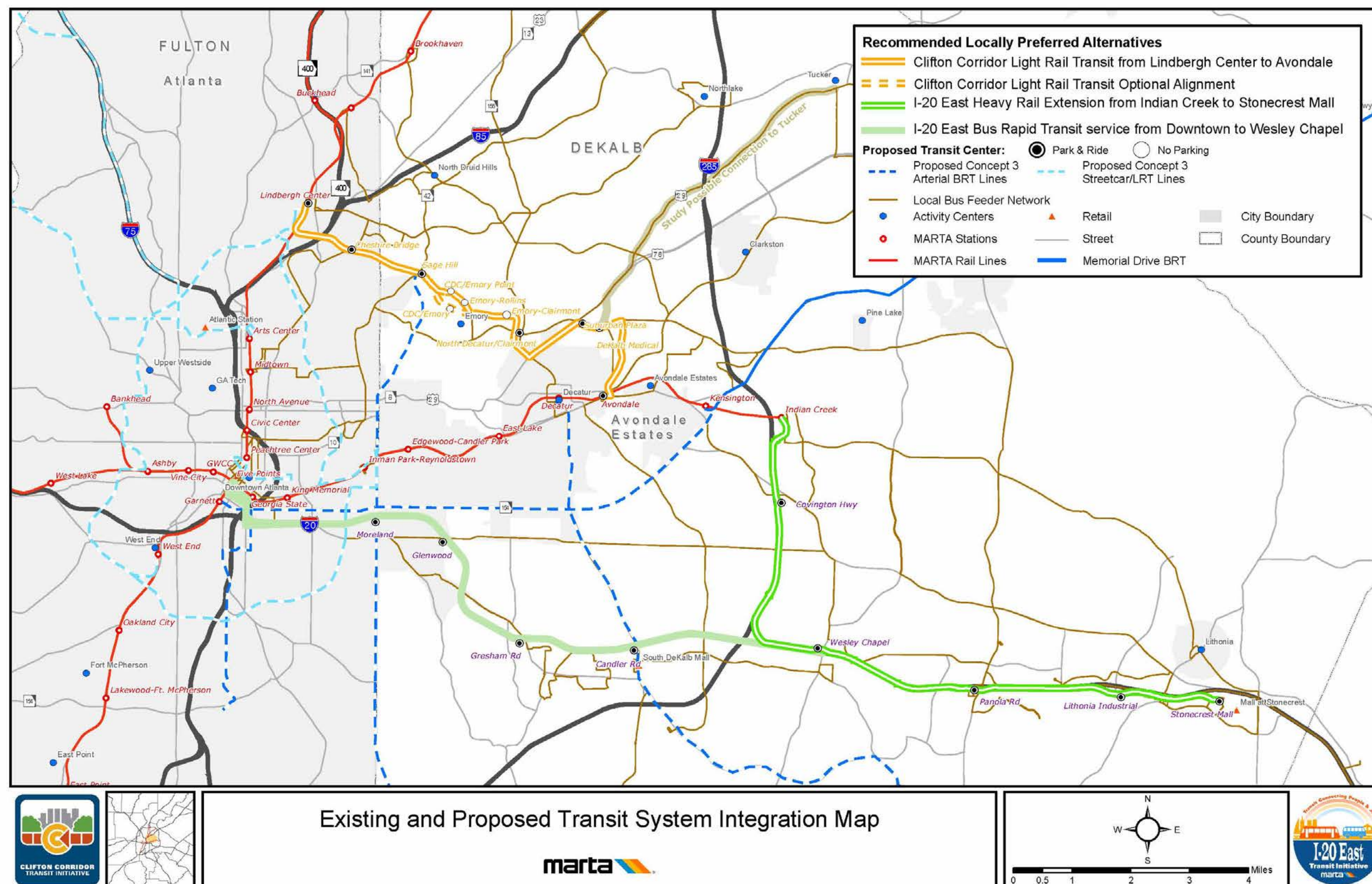




Table 1-1: Reasons for Selection of the LPA

Project Goal	Reason for Selection of LPA – HRT3
Increase Mobility and Accessibility	<p>Fast Travel Times and High Ridership: HRT3 would provide significant 2030 travel time savings for commuters in the corridor. Compared with automobile travel, HRT3 would save 34.5 minutes for commuters travelling between the Mall at Stonecrest and downtown Atlanta. Additionally, HRT3 is expected to attract 28,700 daily riders.</p> <p>Transit Access to Decatur and Proposed Clifton Corridor LRT Line: HRT3 is the only alternative that provides a direct connection to both the City of Atlanta and the City of Decatur, the DeKalb County seat. HRT3 would also provide a connection to the proposed Clifton Corridor light rail line which would provide direct service to the employment center containing Emory University and the CDC.</p>
Provide Improved Transit Service in the Corridor	<p>Service to Heavily Congested Areas of Corridor First: While all alternatives would need to be constructed in multiple phases due to funding and construction limitations, HRT3 is the only alternative that would serve the congested areas east of I-285 in the first phase of implementation. This is important since the average travel time into downtown is 20-30 minutes longer for those commuters outside the I-285 Perimeter than for those inside the Perimeter. All other alternatives would likely not extend beyond the I-285 Perimeter under the first phase of construction. Thus, HRT3 would more quickly reach those areas of the corridor most affected by congestion and long travel times.</p> <p>Ease of Implementation: There are no major construction issues associated with the implementation of HRT3. However, HRT1, LRT1, BRT1, and LRT2 would all require very complicated and expensive bridges in the median of I-20 to avoid impacts to historic neighborhoods. These bridges would require a design variance be approved by GDOT and FHWA since they would negatively impact the shoulder widths of the interstate. HRT2 would require a 2.5 mile tunnel under multiple historic neighborhoods. While technically feasible, the cost, staging, and utility conflicts associated with this tunneling constitute a major construction obstacle.</p>
Support Land Use and Development Goals	<p>Supportive of Economic Development: In addition to being consistent with existing and future land use plans, approximately 900 acres of underutilized or vacant land are located within ½ mile of HRT3 stations. Therefore, this alternative would provide significant opportunity for transit oriented development and redevelopment in the corridor.</p>
Promote Cost Effective Transit Investments	<p>Low Cost: At \$2.04B, the Adopted LPA has the lowest total cost of all alternatives and is projected to cost over one billion dollars less than the most expensive alternative (HRT1). Furthermore, the LPA is \$73.7M less expensive than the next lowest cost alternative (BRT1).</p> <p>Utilizes Existing Infrastructure: HRT3 would utilize existing MARTA East-West line to provide a direct transit connection into downtown Atlanta. By utilizing the existing transit investment, HRT3 avoids the construction of an expensive and complicated connection into downtown Atlanta. Furthermore, HRT3 avoids the construction of 11+ miles of new transit line between downtown Atlanta and I-285, which could be viewed as a second, and redundant, transit line in the corridor. HRT3 would also allow for the use of existing MARTA rail maintenance facilities rather than the construction of new facilities in the corridor.</p>
Preserve Natural and Built Environment	<p>Lowest Number of Displacements: With an expected 13 displacements, HRT3 has significantly fewer residential or commercial displacements than all other alternatives. HRT1, LRT1, and BRT1, all are expected to incur 47 displacements and LRT2 and HRT2 are expected to incur 41 and 35 displacements respectively. With much of its alignment within GDOT right-of-way, HRT3 has the least property impacts of all alternatives.</p>
Achieve a High Level of Community Support	<p>Strong Public Support: HRT3 received strong public support, especially from residents of the heavily congested portion of the corridor east of I-285. In a rating of the six Tier 2 Alternatives, 30 percent of all survey respondents rated HRT3 as “most appropriate for the I-20 East Corridor,” as did 51 percent of those respondents who lived east of I-285 (or outside the Perimeter).</p>

Sources: Travel Demand Model, GIS data analysis, HDR Engineering



Although these refinements altered the costs and ridership projections for HRT3, these changes were not substantial enough to alter HRT3's performance in Tier 2 Screening. The refinements would raise capital costs associated with HRT3 to an estimated \$1,929.6M and right-of-way costs to \$110.4M for a total cost of \$2,040.0M. Operations and Maintenance costs were not affected by the refinements, and remained at \$18.0M annually.

1.2 Adoption of the LPA

On April 9, 2012, the MARTA Board of Directors voted to adopt HRT3 as the LPA for the I-20 East Transit Initiative. The ARC is currently updating Plan 2040, the Regional Transportation Plan, and the regional transportation demand model to include the adopted LPA as a transit mode in the I-20 East corridor (AR-405, AR-406, AR-407). The resolution of the MARTA Board of Directors adopting the I-20 East LPA can be found in Appendix B.