



FULTON COUNTY TRANSIT MASTER PLAN



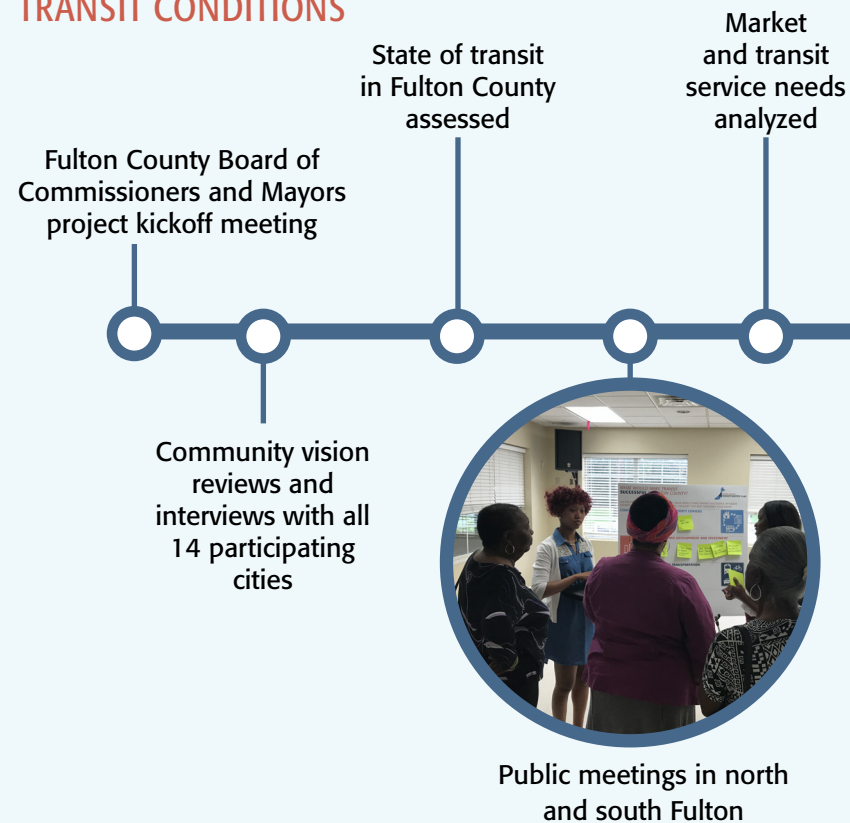
- Alpharetta
- Chattahoochee Hills
- College Park
- East Point
- Fairburn
- Hapeville
- Johns Creek
- Milton
- Mountain Park
- Palmetto
- Roswell
- Sandy Springs
- South Fulton
- Union City

INTRODUCTION

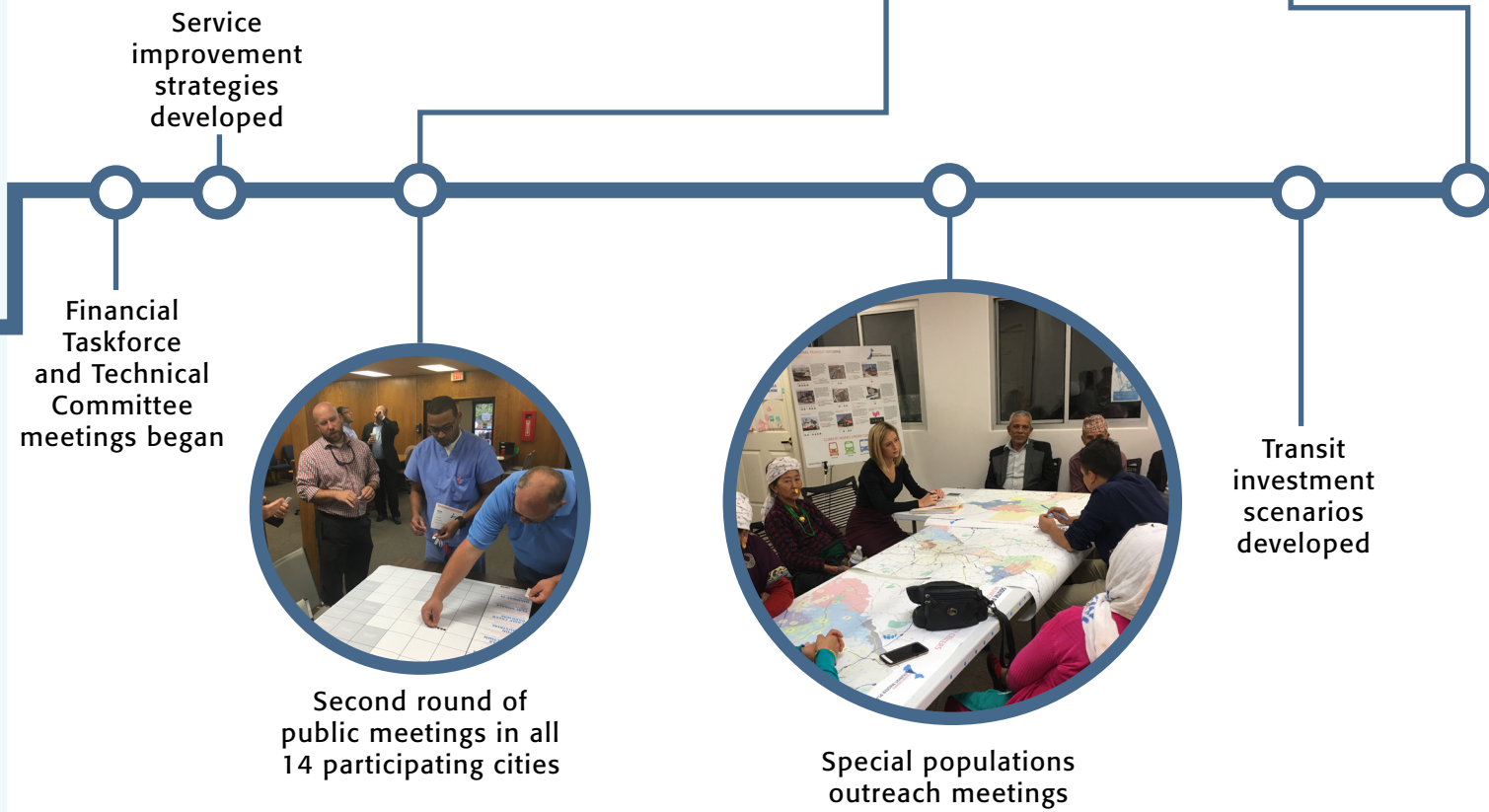
In 2016, voters in Fulton County, outside of the City of Atlanta, approved a 3/4-cent special purpose local option sales tax for transportation (T-SPLOST). Funding raised from T-SPLOST can be spent only on transportation improvements, such as roads, bridges, sidewalks, and bicycle paths. In February 2017, the Fulton County Board of Commissioners and Mayors affirmed that a plan was needed to determine potential expansion of transit services in Fulton County. The Atlanta Regional Commission in collaboration with MARTA, Fulton County, and the 14 participating cities helped fund and manage this study.

The Fulton County Transit Master Plan includes a review of each city's community vision and economic development strategies, an analysis of existing transit services and needs, a market analysis, transit scenario development, and a financial model to determine the potential for expanded transit services within Fulton County. The Master Plan included **an extensive public engagement process** that reached more than 850 participants face-to-face at public meetings, special population meetings, stakeholder interviews, community events and more than 2,400 participants through online surveys.

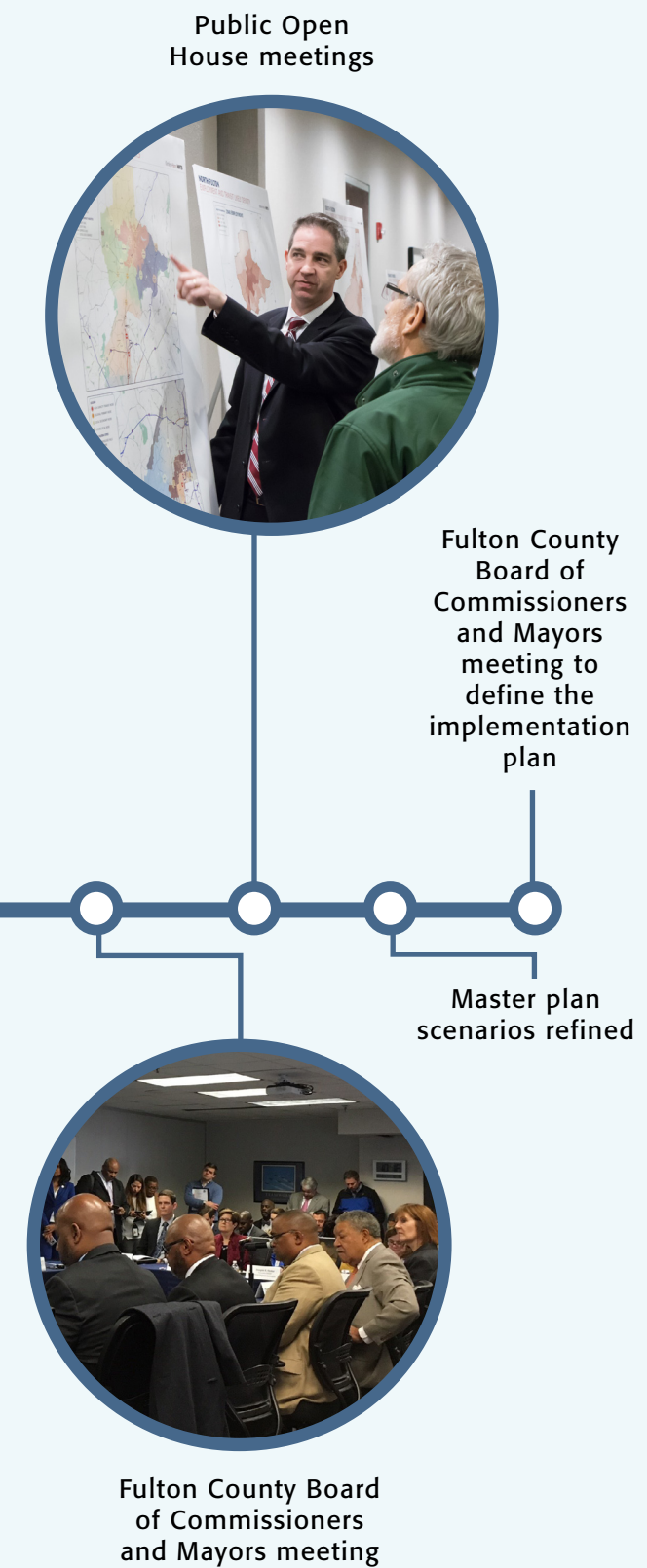
PHASE 1 APR.-JUL. 2017 COMMUNITY VISION AND EXISTING TRANSIT CONDITIONS



PHASE 2 JUL.-OCT. 2017 SCENARIO DEVELOPMENT



PHASE 3 NOV. 2017-JAN. 2018 TRANSIT MASTER PLAN REFINEMENT

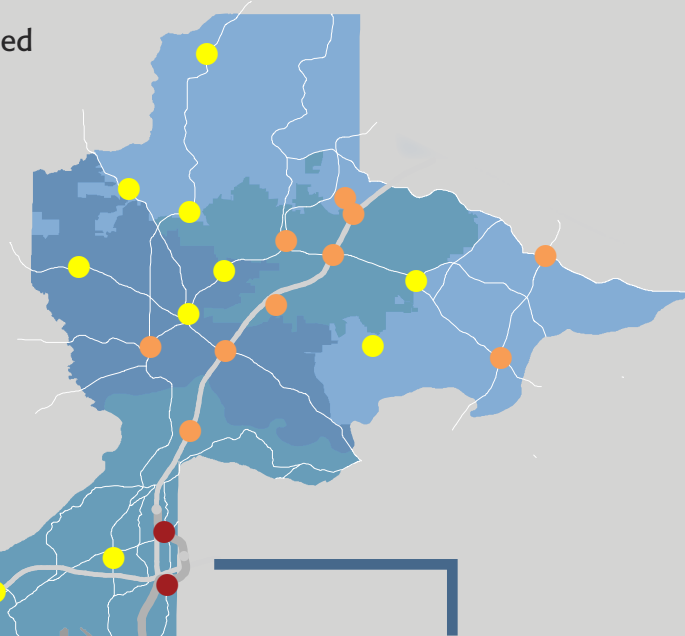


PLANNING FOUNDATIONS

COMMUNITY VISION

As a result of interviews with elected officials and staff from the 14 participating cities, the planning team identified and confirmed current and planned activity centers to connect via future transit investment.

Each of the 14 cities' recent planning documents were reviewed to understand the policies and projects that will guide future community development. A combination of transit needs; public input; stakeholder interviews; and current planning documents and policies helped establish the community's vision for future transit services in Fulton County. The map to the right illustrates north and south Fulton's current and planned activity centers, also known as nodes.



LEGEND

- Existing Transit Node
- Regional Primary Node
- Local Secondary Node
- Future Local Node

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Six guiding principles were identified through the planning process. These principles were developed based on each city's community vision, existing planning documents, interviews with elected officials and stakeholders, and transit best-practices from across the country. Guiding principles were prioritized through a second round of public meetings and an online survey. Tier 1 principles ranked as the highest priority in both north and south Fulton, while Tier 3 principles were lower priority. The six guiding principles played a key role in evaluating proposed transit corridors and mode types based on their consistency and applicability to that scenario. These principles were utilized to ensure that the finalized transit plan aligns with the community's vision.



PROVIDE GREATER ACCESS TO EMPLOYMENT CENTERS AND DESTINATIONS

- ◆ Identify transit improvements and extensions that better connect Fulton County citizens to jobs and economic opportunity
- ◆ Prioritize transit services that interconnect existing and emerging Fulton County job centers
- ◆ Enhance last-mile connectivity within employment areas and regional destinations



PROVIDE FASTER, MORE RELIABLE MOBILITY AND MITIGATE CONGESTION

- ◆ Identify transit enhancements and extensions that provide fast, efficient, and reliable services
- ◆ Prioritize transit services along heavily traveled corridors to reduce highway demand
- ◆ Focus investments on frequency of service and improved travel times

TIER 1



CATALYZE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, INVESTMENT, AND PLACEMAKING

- ◆ Consider enhancements and extensions that advance economic development, investment, and job growth
- ◆ Prioritize transit services in areas that have significant growth and investment potential
- ◆ Focus investments in activity centers that mix transit access, jobs, entertainment, and residential uses



ENHANCE TRANSPORTATION OPTIONS AND ACCESS

- ◆ Identify improvements that enhance transit access and quality of life for seniors, mobility-challenged populations, and by-choice transit users
- ◆ Prioritize transit routes and services that provide mobility options for populations with a greater need and likelihood to utilize transit

TIER 2



MAXIMIZE THE RETURN ON INVESTMENT

- ◆ Focus on transit improvements that provide the greatest ridership and alternatives along congested corridors for the dollars invested
- ◆ Prioritize transit services that will provide the greatest return on investment within the County



ESTABLISH A FRAMEWORK FOR GREATER REGIONAL CONNECTIVITY

- ◆ Identify transit enhancements and extensions that not only meet the needs of Fulton County, but also enhance potential regional connections
- ◆ Prioritize transit routes that address critical regional linkages

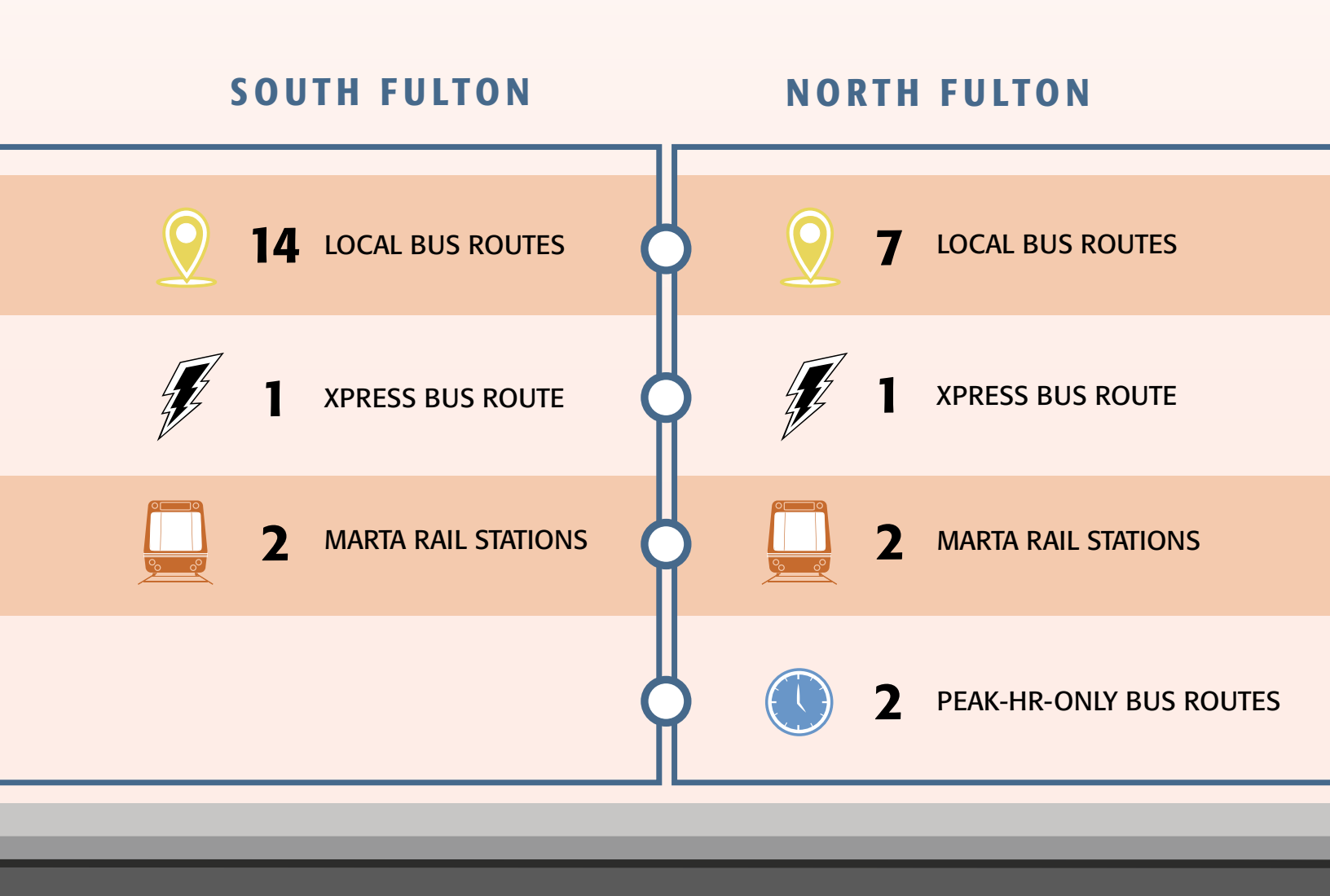
TIER 3

TRANSIT IN FULTON COUNTY TODAY

To begin identifying and analyzing transit needs, solutions, and costs, the planning team reviewed existing transit services throughout Fulton County. The analysis included a detailed inventory of existing services and unmet needs based on demographics, density, land use, and the plan's guiding principles. The findings informed the development of transit scenarios.

Most of Fulton County's transit services are located within or adjacent to the City of Atlanta. Two MARTA rail stations are located in south Fulton (4 miles of track) and three MARTA rail stations are located in north Fulton (5 miles of track). Local bus coverage is greatest in the City of Atlanta with 69 bus routes, south Fulton has 22 bus routes while north Fulton has 11 bus routes. Below and on page 6 are other key findings highlighted from the transit analysis.

Existing Transit Services



Average Annual Rail Boardings

SOUTH FULTON
6.4M
NORTH FULTON
6.0M

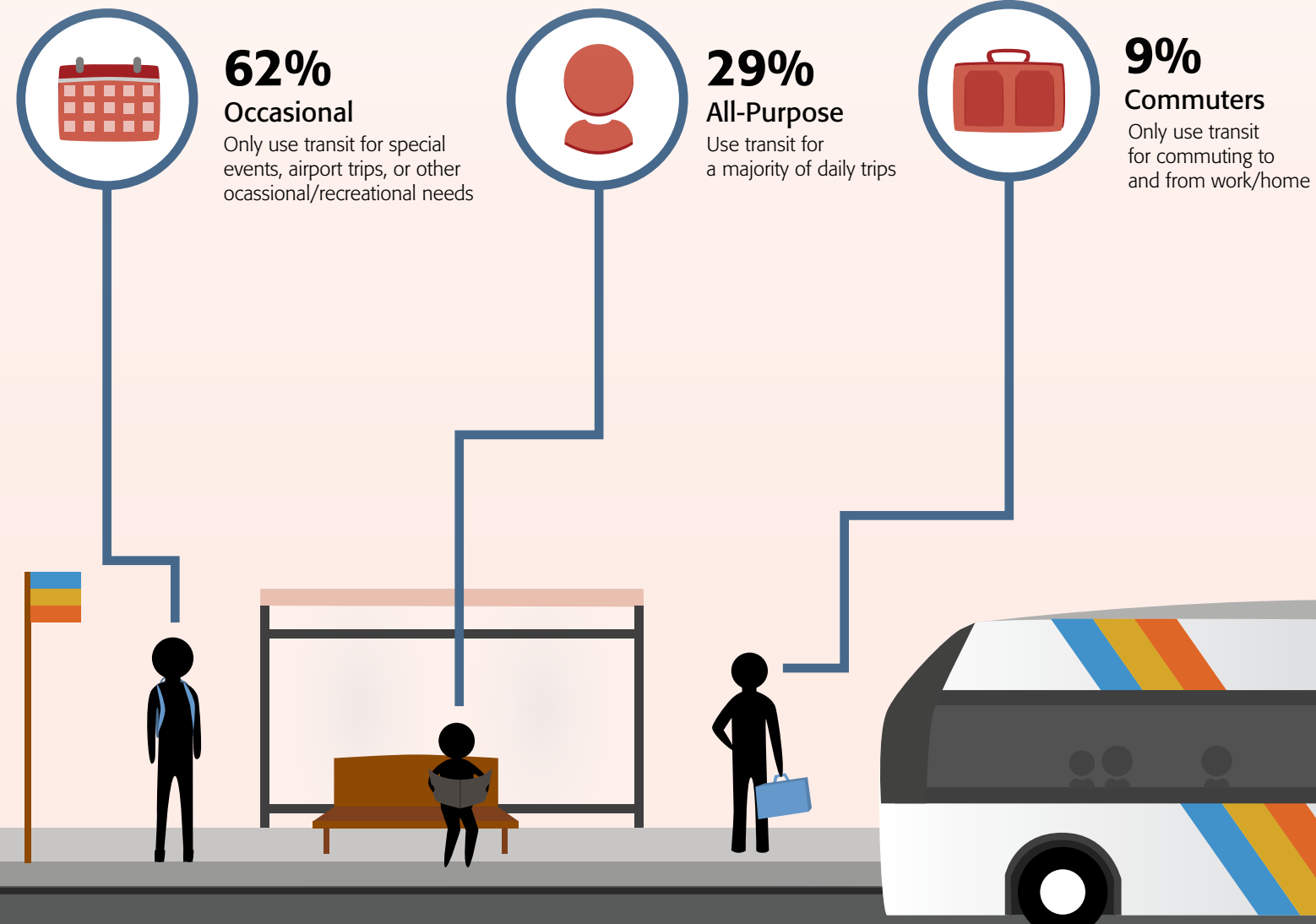


Average Annual Bus Ridership

SOUTH FULTON
9.4M
NORTH FULTON
3.6M



Types of Riders

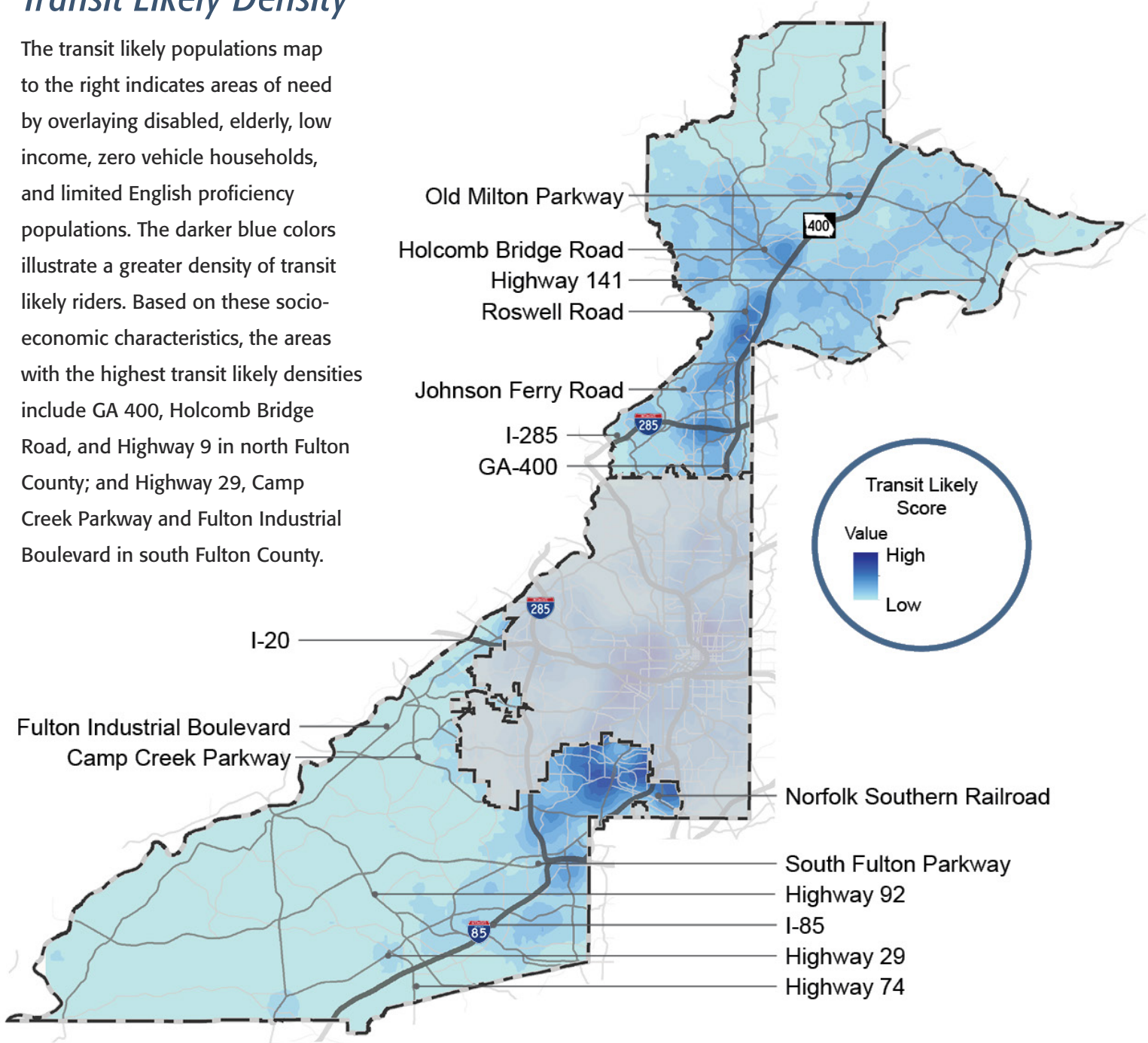


TRANSIT SERVICE NEEDS AND MARKET ANALYSIS

The project team conducted a market analysis to understand transit demand and where multimodal connectivity is needed. The market of likely transit riders is diverse and based on an analysis of socio-economic demographics, current travel patterns, and population and employment density as projected to 2040 by the Atlanta Regional Commission.

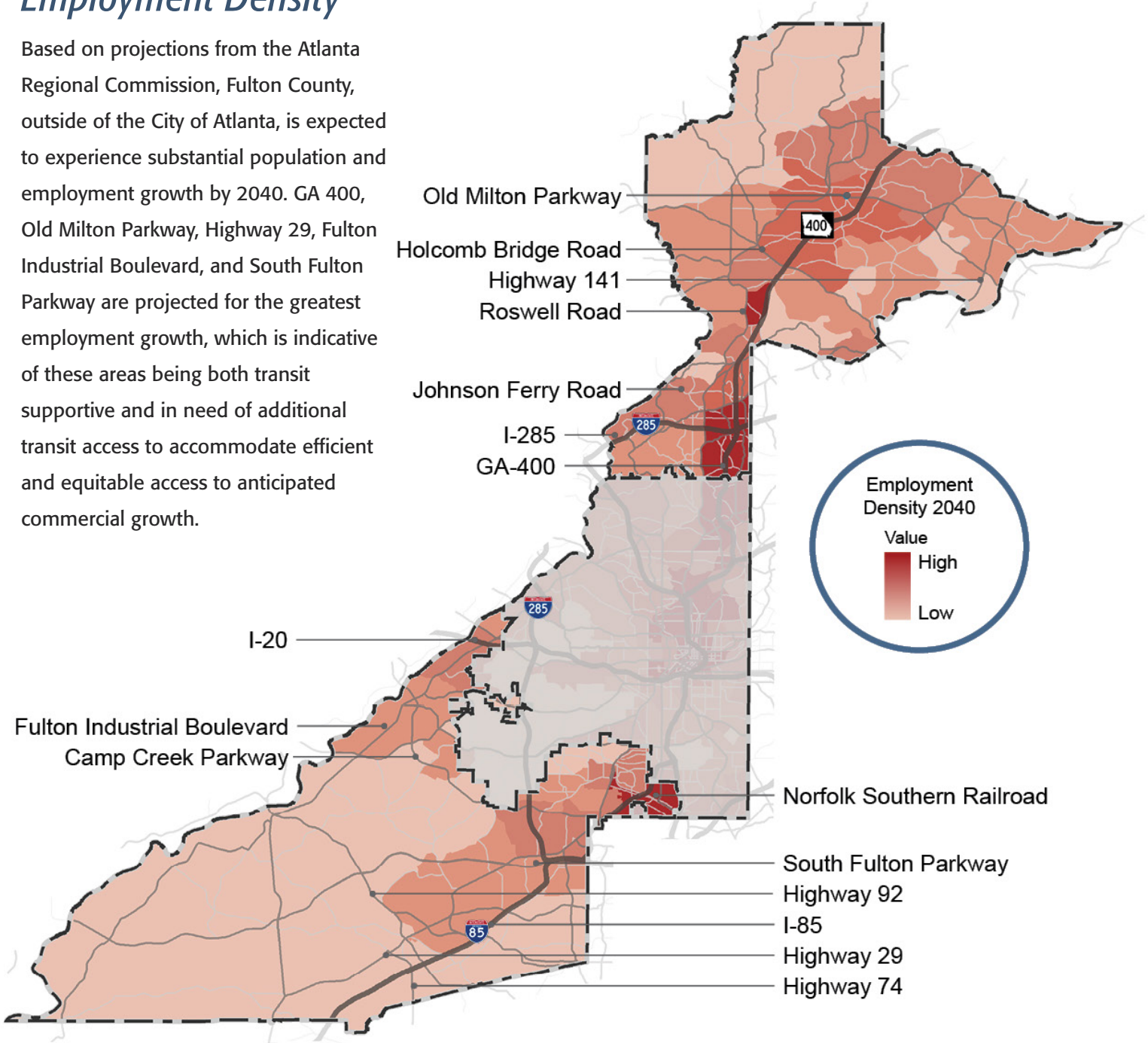
Transit Likely Density

The transit likely populations map to the right indicates areas of need by overlaying disabled, elderly, low income, zero vehicle households, and limited English proficiency populations. The darker blue colors illustrate a greater density of transit likely riders. Based on these socio-economic characteristics, the areas with the highest transit likely densities include GA 400, Holcomb Bridge Road, and Highway 9 in north Fulton County; and Highway 29, Camp Creek Parkway and Fulton Industrial Boulevard in south Fulton County.



Employment Density

Based on projections from the Atlanta Regional Commission, Fulton County, outside of the City of Atlanta, is expected to experience substantial population and employment growth by 2040. GA 400, Old Milton Parkway, Highway 29, Fulton Industrial Boulevard, and South Fulton Parkway are projected for the greatest employment growth, which is indicative of these areas being both transit supportive and in need of additional transit access to accommodate efficient and equitable access to anticipated commercial growth.



SCENARIO DEVELOPMENT

IDENTIFIED CORRIDORS

Based on analysis of collected data; input from public meetings; and feedback from meetings with city staff, committees, and elected officials, the project team identified corridors and potential transit modes. Each corridor was then evaluated to determine which mode(s) would be most suitable. The evaluation included the number of activity centers the corridor served, surrounding population and employment density, transit likely riders, average daily traffic, feasibility for transit on the corridor, and an evaluation of each alternative's ability to meet the project's guiding principles.

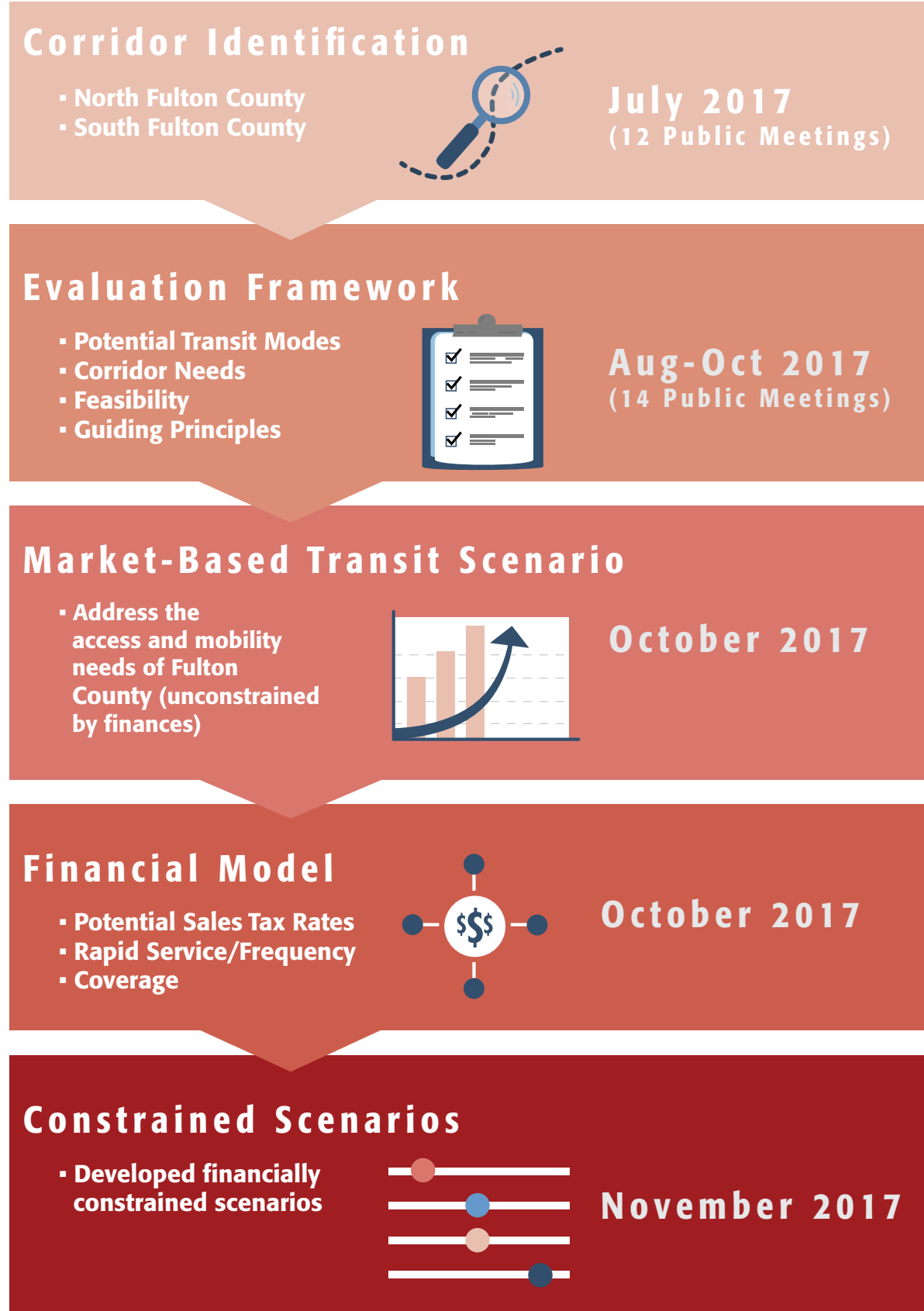
Eight corridors were evaluated in north Fulton and eight corridors were evaluated in south Fulton. These alternatives were reviewed by the public between August and October 2017.

POTENTIAL SERVICE CORRIDOR	∅ = NOT FEASIBLE ✓ = FEASIBLE ✗ = DOES NOT MEET NEED					
	HEAVY RAIL	LIGHT RAIL	BUS OR ARTERIAL RAPID TRANSIT	FREQUENT LOCAL BUS	LOCAL BUS	FLEXIBLE BUS
NORTH						
GA 400	✓	✓	✓	✗	✗	✗
I-285	∅	✓	✓	✗	✗	✗
HOLCOMB BRIDGE ROAD	∅	∅	✓	✓	✓	✗
OLD MILTON PARKWAY	∅	∅	✓	✓	✓	✗
HIGHWAY 141	∅	∅	✓	✓	✓	✗
ROSWELL ROAD/HIGHWAY 9	∅	∅	✓	✓	✓	✗
ABERNATHY/JOHNSON FERRY	∅	∅	∅	✓	✓	✗
WINDWARD PARKWAY	∅	∅	∅	∅	✓	✓
SOUTH						
I-85	✓	✓	✓	✗	✗	✗
ROOSEVELT HWY./HWY. 29	✓	✓	✓	✗	✗	✗
SOUTH FULTON PARKWAY	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗	✗
HAPEVILLE CONNECTION	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗	✗
FULTON INDUSTRIAL BLVD	∅	∅	✓	✓	✓	✗
CAMP CREEK PARKWAY	∅	∅	✓	✓	✓	✗
FLAT SHOALS ROAD	∅	∅	∅	✓	✓	✓
HIGHWAY 74	∅	∅	∅	✓	✓	✓

Note: While multiple corridors in South Fulton could be candidates for long-term rail service, potential funding sources limit the number of corridors that can reasonably be prioritized for rail-based transit.

CORRIDOR EVALUATION PROCESS

The graphic below shows the process used to identify and evaluate potential transit corridors and mode options.



TRANSIT MODES CONSIDERED

A range of transit technologies and modal options were considered as part of the Fulton County Transit Master Plan. Mode types for each potential service corridor were narrowed through an evaluation framework that considered capacity, cost, corridor needs and characteristics, feasibility of implementation, and adherence to the plan's six guiding principles. Below is a summary of implementation costs, travel speed, typical service frequency, and modal-specific characteristics for the transit types determined to be most suitable for Fulton County.

HEAVY RAIL



- ◆ High capital cost (\$250 - \$300M/mile)
- ◆ High capacity
- ◆ Powered by third rail
- ◆ High right-of-way acquisition
- ◆ Dedicated tracks
- ◆ Service every 5-20 minutes
- ◆ Likely to spur economic development at/or adjacent to stations

LIGHT RAIL

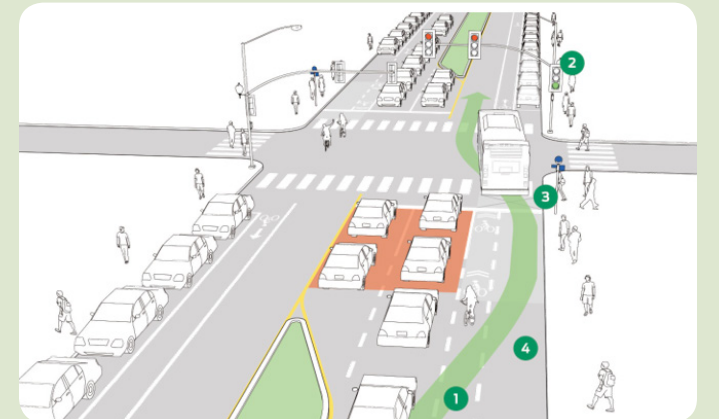


- ◆ Medium to high capital cost
- ◆ Medium to high capacity
- ◆ Powered by overhead cable system
- ◆ Medium right-of-way acquisition
- ◆ Mostly dedicated right-of-way
- ◆ Service every 5-20 minutes
- ◆ Likely to spur economic development at/or adjacent to stations

ARTERIAL RAPID TRANSIT

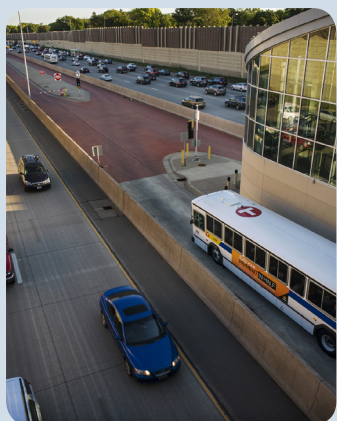


- ◆ Low cost
- ◆ Low capacity
- ◆ Travels in mixed traffic
- ◆ Signal coordination and priority
- ◆ Service every 15-30 minutes
- ◆ Queue jumpers at major intersections
- ◆ Serves major transit stations and local stops



NACTO TRANSIT DESIGN GUIDE

BUS RAPID TRANSIT IN EXPRESS LANES



- ◆ Low to medium capital cost
- ◆ Low to medium capacity
- ◆ Does not pay managed lane fees
- ◆ Travels faster than general purpose lanes
- ◆ Service every 5-20 minutes
- ◆ Serves in-line stations and park-and-ride lots
- ◆ Supports nearby development

BUS RAPID TRANSIT ALONG MAJOR CORRIDORS



- ◆ Medium capital cost
- ◆ Medium capacity
- ◆ Travels in dedicated lane
- ◆ Signal coordination and priority
- ◆ Service every 5-15 minutes (in peak travel times)
- ◆ Serves major transit stations
- ◆ Likely to spur economic development at/or adjacent to stations

FREQUENT & LOCAL FIXED ROUTES



- ◆ Low cost
- ◆ Low capacity
- ◆ Travels in mixed traffic
- ◆ Frequent Local Bus: service every 15-30 minutes
- ◆ Local Bus: service every 30-60 minutes

FLEX/MICROTRANSIT



- ◆ Low cost
- ◆ Low capacity
- ◆ On-call service
- ◆ Serves only requested stops
- ◆ Demand responsive service connecting major transit stations
- ◆ Serves low-density areas

MARKET BASED TRANSIT SCENARIO

A market based scenario was developed to provide a demand-based plan to meet the access and mobility needs of Fulton County over the next 40 years. This market based plan is based on matching the most appropriate mode of transit to each corridor based on current and anticipated development patterns. The scenario envisions expanding heavy rail north along GA 400 to Holcomb Bridge Road, west along I-20 to Fulton Industrial Boulevard, and south from College Park through the City of Hapeville and into Clayton County. The vision includes light rail along the top end of I-285, but would require Cobb and DeKalb Counties to participate in funding to extend rail between Cumberland and Doraville. Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) and Arterial Rapid Transit (ART) lines are proposed along several north and south Fulton corridors. The market based scenario identifies a program of projects that meets current travel needs, has capacity for growth, creates new transit connections, creates opportunities for new regional transit, and integrates into the existing rapid transit system. From the market based plan, four additional scenarios were developed to be affordable, yet responsive to community needs. The four scenarios are based on varying levels of revenue that could be generated by a Fulton County Transit Sales Tax and/or other funding sources. These scenarios were reviewed with the Fulton County Commission and Mayors in December 2017 and presented online and at a series of public open houses in January 2018.

SHORT-TERM INITIATIVES

In addition to potential transit routes and modes, all scenarios include funding for three critical short-term initiatives—Last Mile Connectivity Program, Bus Stop Program, and Rail Station Program. Input from city interviews, committee meetings, and the public proved the importance of these critical investments to Fulton County’s existing and future transit system. These programs will be immediate implementation items of the plan.

LAST MILE CONNECTIVITY PROGRAM (\$25M)

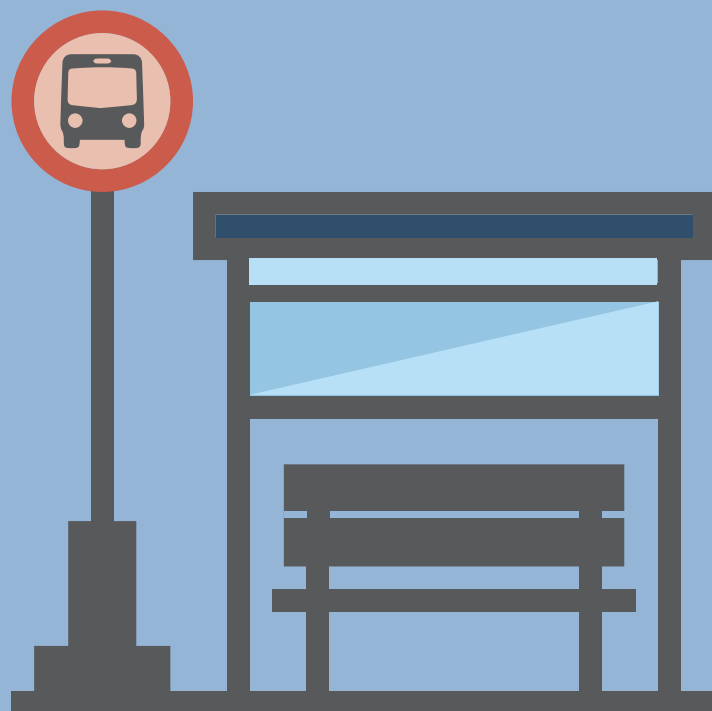
- ◆ Will connect sidewalk/bike infrastructure to transit
- ◆ To be delivered by cities

BUS STOP PROGRAM (\$25M)

- ◆ Will provide shelters, benches, trash receptacles, lighting, and amenities at bus stops
- ◆ Potentially delivered by cities

RAIL STATION PROGRAM (\$30M)

- ◆ Will update and improve existing rail station amenities and adjacent crosswalks, sidewalks, etc. in College Park, East Point, and Sandy Springs



Market Based Plan

HEAVY RAIL

- ◆ GA 400 (North Springs MARTA Station to Holcomb Bridge)
- ◆ Norfolk Southern Railroad (East Point MARTA Station to Clayton County)
- ◆ I-20 Extension (H.E. Holmes MARTA Station to Fulton Industrial Boulevard)

LIGHT RAIL

- ◆ I-285

BUS RAPID TRANSIT

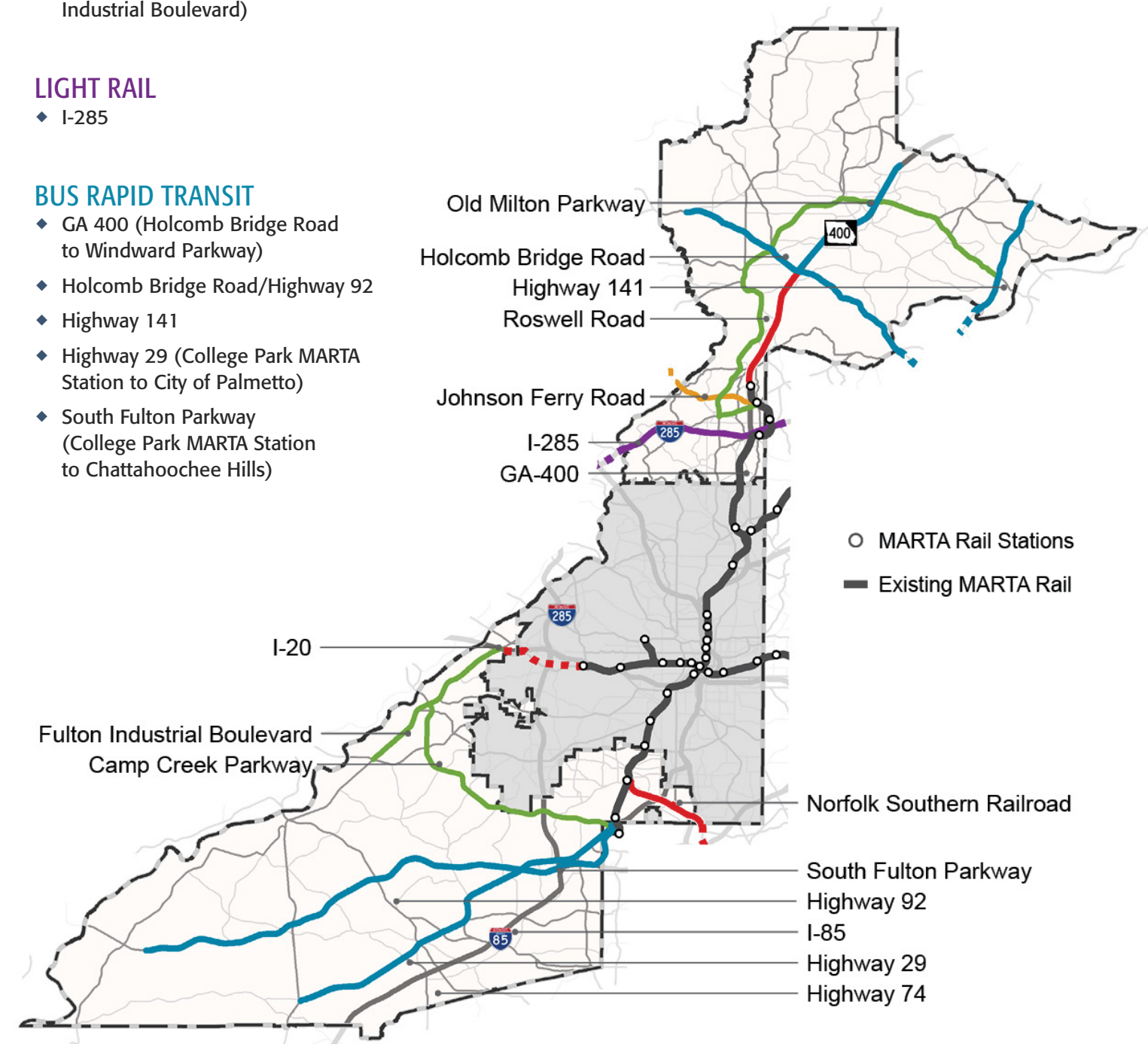
- ◆ GA 400 (Holcomb Bridge Road to Windward Parkway)
- ◆ Holcomb Bridge Road/Highway 92
- ◆ Highway 141
- ◆ Highway 29 (College Park MARTA Station to City of Palmetto)
- ◆ South Fulton Parkway (College Park MARTA Station to Chattahoochee Hills)

ARTERIAL RAPID TRANSIT

- ◆ Roswell Road
- ◆ Old Milton Parkway
- ◆ Camp Creek Parkway
- ◆ Fulton Industrial Boulevard

FREQUENT LOCAL BUS

- ◆ Johnson Ferry Road



Note: Dashed lines denote regional connections with neighboring jurisdiction.

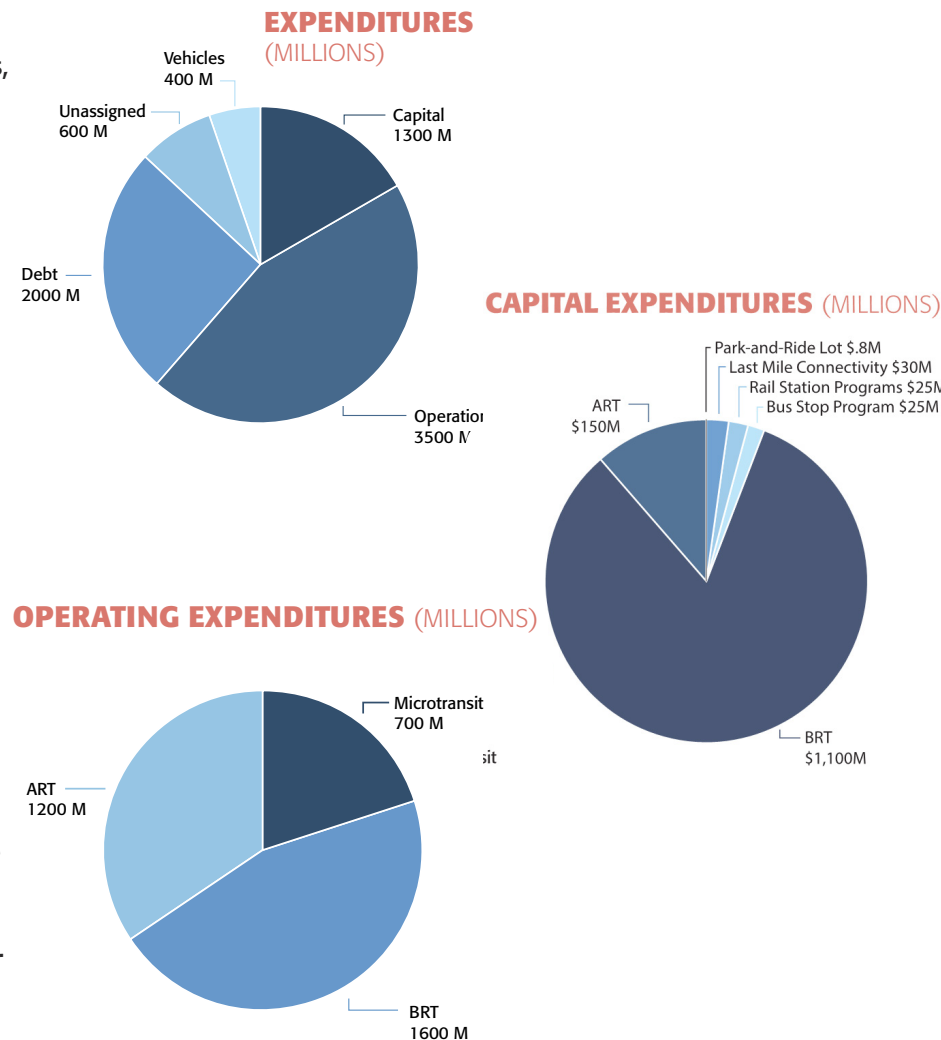
PREFERRED TRANSIT INVESTMENT SCENARIO

On January 29, 2018, a special called meeting was held with the Fulton County Board of Commissioners and the Mayors of Fulton County. The Fulton County Transit Master Plan team presented the findings from a final round of public open houses conducted countywide in January 2018. Following the presentation, the Commissioners and Mayors/Cities present reached consensus that the group would support approaching the legislature for funding of transit improvements based on the proposed BRT/ART option. This scenario provides a flexible framework to build on with a clear, actionable short-term investment plan that extends transit access into underserved areas of the County, and allows continuing discussion regarding longer term improvements, such as rail. The County will also work with MARTA to determine if the current 1% MARTA sales tax can implement portions of the preferred plan.

Estimated project costs include all expenditures, including capital, operating, and financing over 40 years. Expenditures include financing and bonding costs to deliver all projects in the first 10-12 years of the plan. Expenditures include:

- ◆ **Operations:** Costs associated with the daily operations and ongoing maintenance
- ◆ **Capital:** Costs associated with engineering and constructing projects
- ◆ **Vehicles:** Purchase costs of vehicles
- ◆ **Debt Service:** Debt to be paid over the life of the tax, due to borrowing near the start of the program to deliver all projects in the first 10-12 years
- ◆ **Unassigned:** The remaining balance based on conservative estimates and funds that build up near the end of the program as debt is paid off

In terms of capital costs, BRT is more expensive than ART to construct due to right-of-way acquisition and construction of dedicated lanes. Operating costs are similar over 40 years.



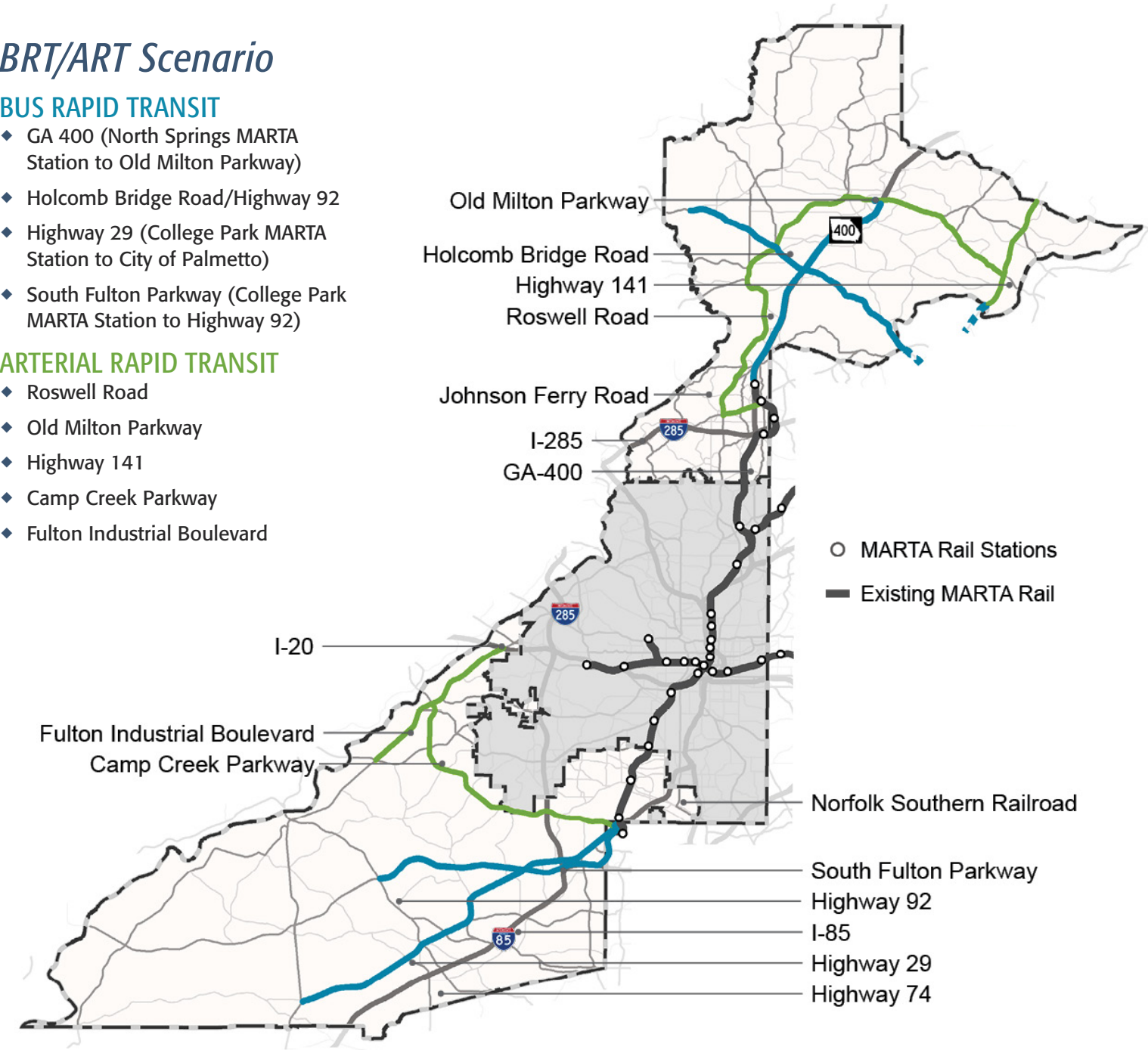
BRT/ART Scenario

BUS RAPID TRANSIT

- ◆ GA 400 (North Springs MARTA Station to Old Milton Parkway)
- ◆ Holcomb Bridge Road/Highway 92
- ◆ Highway 29 (College Park MARTA Station to City of Palmetto)
- ◆ South Fulton Parkway (College Park MARTA Station to Highway 92)

ARTERIAL RAPID TRANSIT

- ◆ Roswell Road
- ◆ Old Milton Parkway
- ◆ Highway 141
- ◆ Camp Creek Parkway
- ◆ Fulton Industrial Boulevard



The BRT/ART Scenario allows regional discussion to continue regarding the expansion and funding of rail service in Metro Atlanta. While other funding sources will be necessary to support rail investment, the Fulton County Transit Master Plan prioritizes and includes potential future rail service on the following corridors:

- ◆ GA 400 (North Springs MARTA Station to Old Milton Parkway)
- ◆ I-285
- ◆ South Fulton Parkway (future potential upgrade from proposed BRT)
- ◆ I-20 West (H.E. Holmes MARTA Station to Fulton Industrial Boulevard)
- ◆ South line through Hapeville into Clayton County

FUNDING PLAN

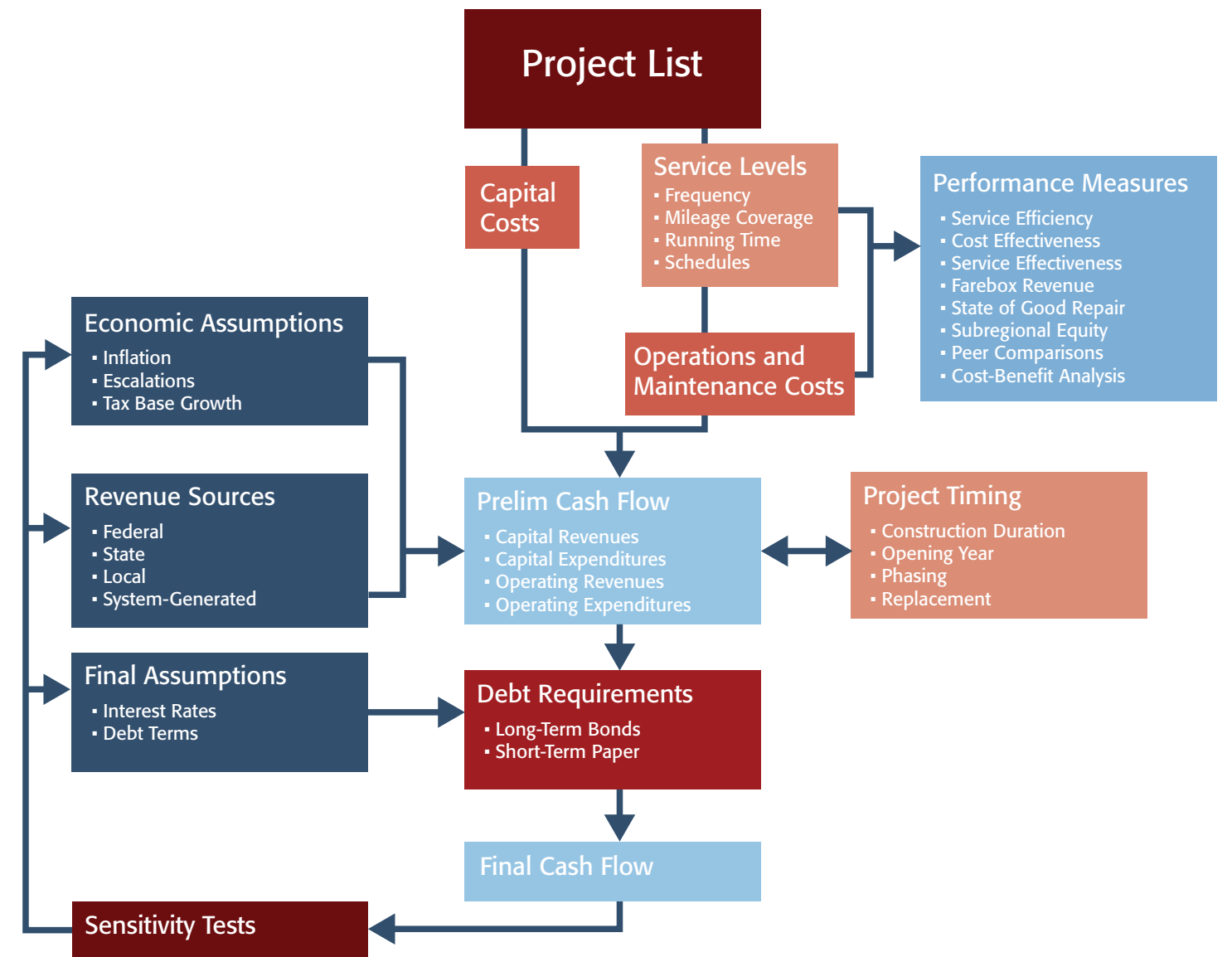
FINANCIAL MODEL

Multiple financial scenarios were developed to optimize the County's limited resources and fund additional transit projects across Fulton County. A Fulton County Transit financial model was built with oversight from MARTA, Fulton County, and other community leaders. The financial model is a complex analysis tool utilizing a variety of inputs to develop a long-range cash flow forecast. The model includes projected sales tax revenues and conservative inflation estimates and forecasts future cash flows from a dedicated Fulton County sales tax, excluding the City of Atlanta. The model also considers other funding sources such as federal capital grants and farebox revenue. The model then matches those funds against the cost to finance, build, operate, and maintain desired transit improvements over a 40-year timeframe to arrive at a financially sustainable program.

Each project's capital and annual operating costs were based on the best available data. Some projects from the transit master plan were previously planned by MARTA and those estimated costs informed the model. For new projects, MARTA-estimated costs and averages were used from similar transit modes. Capital cost estimates included right-of-way acquisition, all phases of engineering and construction, and vehicles. Forty-year operating costs for each project were developed using the identified mode and service characteristics for weekdays and weekends including peak and off-peak hours, hours of operation, route length, and running time.

The figure to the right shows the various inputs used to inform the financial model to develop reasonable cost estimates and long-term projections. Note that the model also considers debt incurred to deliver projects over the first 10 to 12 years, and makes conservative projections for generated revenue.

Financial Model Inputs



Key Financial Model Assumptions

- ◆ Federal funding is assumed for 50% of the GA 400 projects
- ◆ Federal funding is assumed for 25% of all other capital projects
- ◆ Farebox revenue is assumed using existing MARTA levels of farebox recovery
- ◆ For projects that cross county lines, only the cost within north and south Fulton County are considered
- ◆ Tax duration is 40 years with all projects being delivered in the first 10 to 12 years
- ◆ Within the financial model, MARTA is assumed to operate all projects

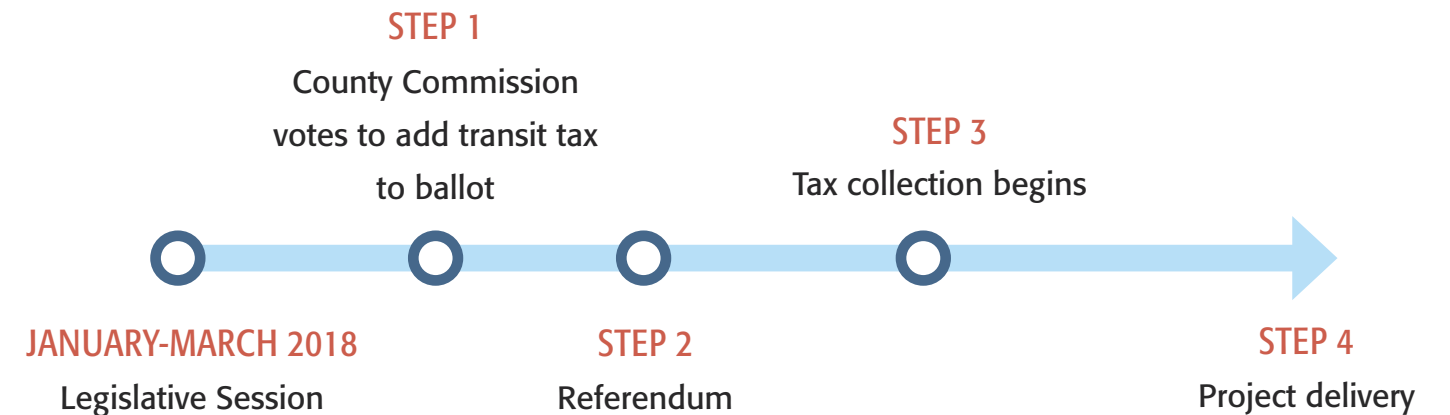
IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

For the preferred transit scenario and any other transit project identified through this study to move toward implementation, the State Legislature must amend current local funding statutes. The Fulton County Commission and Mayors of Fulton County support the ability to allow a sales tax for transit funding, maintenance, and operations.

Once legislation is passed in the General Assembly, a public referendum for transit funding in Fulton County can be held. Due to the current 3/4-cent T-SPLOST in Fulton County, any new sales tax would be limited to 1/4-cent under the current state sales tax cap. The current Fulton County TSPLOST expires in April 2022.

If transit funding is approved, the transit operator could begin delivering projects within two to three years. To support, sustain, and grow transit ridership, transit operators and local cities and counties should work to coordinate and enact connecting services as part of a regional transit system that serves the Atlanta region.

Potential Next Steps



In addition to potential County funds, county and state leaders expressed a desire to partner with MARTA to better understand if current and future revenue from the existing transit sales tax could be used to fund a portion of the envisioned improvements. State funding may also be possible as a product of recent and ongoing discussions concerning state funding of transit in Georgia.

Actions are needed by officials at the state and local level as well as the public for transit funding to come to fruition. Key steps and supporting strategies by various parties are outlined below.

CITY/COUNTY OFFICIALS	STATE LEGISLATORS	PUBLIC
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Recommend and support unified Fulton Transit Plan ◆ Coordinate with delegation for integration of funding into state law ◆ Coordinate with the House Commission on Transit Governance and Funding 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Enable transit tax for Fulton County ◆ Allow 40-year or longer term for transit tax ◆ Integrate Fulton transit tax into new Atlanta regional transit finance and governance bill 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Vote on transit tax referendum

While the Fulton County Transit Master Plan is based on a transit sales tax as the primary funding mechanism, other revenue sources may be explored to reduce or augment the amount of a likely sales tax. While dedicated, long-term funding is necessary to fund transit improvements and operations, other potential funding options include:

- ◆ Pursue individual transit projects with the transit operator as local funds are available and potential projects are eligible for federal grants and programs. Projects can be delivered with a local commitment to operating funds.
- ◆ Collaborate with state officials for either one-time transit funds (i.e. Go! Transit Fund) or dedicated state funding source to implement locally identified projects.
- ◆ Partner with other counties pursuing transit funding streams to deliver regional projects prioritized in this plan.
- ◆ Various city/county fees dedicated towards transit (i.e. hotel/motel tax, drivers license fees, administrative fees, development fees, etc.)
- ◆ Implement Tax Allocation Districts and/or Special Service Districts to leverage increasing property values and growth surrounding transit stations.
- ◆ Partner with private property developers around planned transit stations.

PLAN SPONSORS:



- Alpharetta
- Chattahoochee Hills
- College Park
- East Point
- Fairburn
- Hapeville
- Johns Creek
- Milton
- Mountain Park
- Palmetto
- Roswell
- Sandy Springs
- South Fulton
- Union City

FACILITATED BY:



