



TO: John McDonough, City Manager

FROM: Garrin M. Coleman, P.E., Public Works Director

DATE: November 22, 2013 for submission onto the Work Session Agenda of the December 3, 2013 City Council Meeting

ITEM: Resolution in Support of High Capacity Transit in the SR 400 Corridor

Recommendation:

Staff recommends that Mayor and Council support a resolution for extension of high capacity transit northward from North Springs MARTA station and a preference for siting a future station in the vicinity of Northridge Road west of SR 400 to support existing and future development.

Background:

The City of Sandy Springs has participated in the Connect 400 Alternatives Analysis (AA) study since it was initiated in late 2011 through the Project Steering Committee (PSC) and Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC). On October 1, 2013, MARTA staff briefed Council on the project status. To date, MARTA has developed a range of options to winnow the alternatives to one primary alignment, Georgia 400-1(A), and consideration of three transit technology alternatives, Bus Rapid Transit (BRT), Light Rail Transit (LRT), and Heavy Rail Transit (HRT). For Alternative 1(A), the extension of high capacity transit is identified for the east side of SR 400 served by up to six new stations at Northridge (Sandy Springs), Holcomb Bridge, Mansell Road, North Point, Old Milton (LRT/BRT only), and Windward Parkway.

Discussion:

Prior adopted Sandy Springs transportation plans have supported extension of regional rail transit north along the SR 400 corridor including the Transportation Master Plan (adopted 2008, Resolution 2008-08-44) and the North Fulton Comprehensive Transportation Plan (adopted 2010, Resolution 2010-10-83). In addition, prior planning studies have identified a northern Sandy Springs station location in the vicinity of Northridge Road at SR 400. The City's adopted Comprehensive Plan supports future mixed use land use development at Northridge and Roswell Road as well as at Dunwoody Place. The prior MARTA North Line study, the North Line Transit Oriented Development (TOD) Study (2006) identified Northridge as a potential TOD cluster area. As indicated in the study, the Northridge cluster was associated with the highest potential generation of transit trips, possessed a higher potential for transit oriented development, and experienced a high level of congestion on the street network, indicating that transit could serve as a reasonable option to driving. In addition, Northridge Road at SR 400 is included in Atlanta Regional Commission's Plan 2040 Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) 2012 Unified Growth Policy Map (UGPM) as a "Station Community." All of this future development is planned for the west side of SR 400.

PUBLIC WORKS

Alternatives:

The Mayor and Council can elect not to take a position on the project at this time.

Financial Impact:

There is no immediate fiscal year impact for supporting future high capacity transit extending north from the North Springs MARTA Station. In the future, the siting of an additional rail station in Sandy Springs may require local network infrastructure investment such as traffic controls, street improvements, or pedestrian connections.

Attachments:

- I. Proposed Letter to MARTA
- II. Connect400 Presentation
- III. MARTA Newsletter
- IV. Resolution



December 18, 2013

Mr. Keith Parker
General Manager and Chief Executive Officer
MARTA
2424 Piedmont Road, NE
Atlanta, GA 30324-3311

RE: Connect 400 Transit Initiative

Dear Mr. Parker:

The City of Sandy Springs extends a thank you to MARTA for briefing Council on October 1, 2013 regarding the Connect 400 Transit Initiative status. The City recognizes that MARTA has initiated Early Scoping through the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) New Starts program and is seeking input on the proposed transit alternatives and station locations.

Sandy Springs citizens have been funding MARTA through the one-cent sales tax since the early 1970's. Although the City is well-served by the MARTA north Red line through three heavy rail stations, the current alignment does not extend to North Fulton County. Sandy Springs supports extension of the Red line to the north across the Chattahoochee River but is sensitive to the siting of future rail stations. Should a future station to serve the extension be located in the vicinity of Northridge Road, this station should complement the City's existing and future land use plan and be sited on the west side of GA 400 which would complement an identified redevelopment node. This is consistent with the City's adopted *2027 Comprehensive Plan* which provides for mixed-used development west of GA 400 but only low-density residential uses (zero to one units per acre) designated as a "Protected Neighborhood" area east of GA 400.

Sandy Springs appreciates your consideration of its input and requests ongoing involvement and coordination for the Connect 400 Transit Initiative through active participation by staff, periodic briefings to Council as well as providing opportunities for general public input.

Sincerely,

Eva Galambos
Mayor

Enclosure

cc: John McDonough, City Manager
Bryant Poole, Assistant City Manager
Garrin Coleman, Public Works Director
Janide Sidifall, Project Manager, MARTA



CONNECT400
GA 400 TRANSIT INITIATIVE

Today's Meeting Purpose

- Where We Are
- What We've Heard
- Evaluation of Alternatives
- Where Do We Go From Here?
- Q&A

Purpose and Importance of this Study

- Evaluate **feasibility** of increased transit service
- Identify potential for high-capacity transit project **implementation**

Differentiation Between Past Studies

- Focused investment along GA 400 corridor
- Assessed land development over past decade
- Considered demographic changes in study area
- Advanced planning process from previous studies

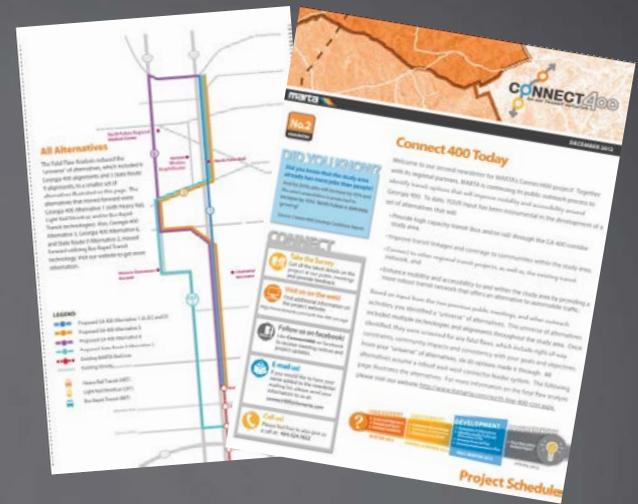
Where We Are

Connect 400 Alternatives Analysis Schedule



What We've Heard

Outreach



Stakeholder Interviews Technical Advisory Committee Project Steering Committee

- **Stakeholder:** 30 Meetings
- **TAC:** December 13, 2011; February 28, 2012, October 25, 2012
- **PSC:** January 18, 2012; March 22, 2012; November 14, 2012; February 26, 2013; May 9, 2013

Public Meetings

- **2011:** December 13- Minority and Non-English Speaking Leadership Meeting
- **2012:** January 26; May 22; March 21; August 21-El Banco; August 30- North Fulton Chamber of Commerce Breakfast Forum
- **2013:** March 21

Holiday/Winter Survey

- December 12, 2012 to January 17, 2013
- 136 Respondents

General Themes

- Lack of transportation funding
- Need for 'last mile' circulation
- Need feeder system to 400 transit
- Need for transit-oriented development around the stations
- Desire to preserve visual aesthetics, including river buffers and tree buffers
- Phase transit improvements to build market/ ridership
- There is no 'reverse commute' on 400, both directions bad during peak hours
- Need to improve existing MARTA bus routes and add more
- Georgia 400 Corridor preferred alignment
- Strong community support for Heavy Rail Transit



Evaluation of Alternatives

Screen 2 Alternatives

Georgia 400 – 1 (A)

Alignment

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

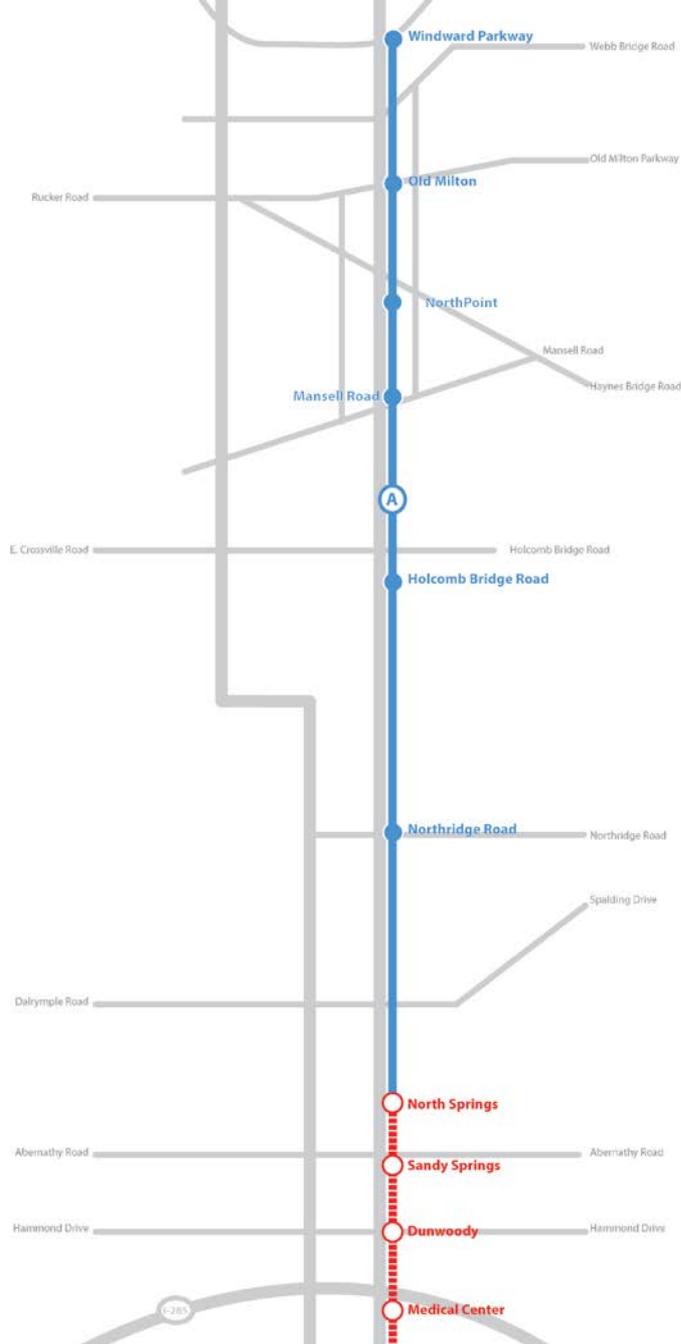
Transit Technology

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

Potential Stations

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

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



Evaluation of Alternatives

Summary Results

- **Goal 1: Mobility & Access**

HRT provides higher ridership numbers, transit benefits and reductions in vehicular traffic

- **Goal 2: Land Use & Economic Development**

All three alternatives are relatively equal in supporting land use & economic development planning

- **Goal 3: Cost Effective Service**

BRT is much cheaper and cost-effective than the other alternatives

- **Goal 4: Environmental/Community Impact**

HRT presents least environmental impact, and most beneficial to reducing VMT and air pollutants



Where do we go from Here?

Next Steps

- MARTA Board adoption
- Begin second round of stakeholder interviews
- Environmental Review
 - Scoping
 - Technical Studies
 - FTA approval



Connect 400 Contact

Janide Sidifall, MARTA Project Manager

Connect400@itsmarta.com

Follow us at Connect 400 on facebook

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

WEBSITE <http://www.itsmarta.com/north-line-400-corr.aspx>
EMAIL connect400@itsmarta.com
FACEBOOK Connect400
HOTLINE 404 524 1822



FALL 2013

2,000+ FLYERS DISTRIBUTED **136** SURVEY PARTICIPANTS **2** FACT SHEETS **11.9** MILES OF PROPOSED TRACK
181 "LIKES" ON FACEBOOK **4** PUBLIC MEETINGS **9** ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED **70** FACEBOOK POSTS **30** STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWS **3** NEWSLETTERS

No.3
newsletter

Connecting to the Future

Welcome to the third newsletter for MARTA's **Connect 400** project! We've had an exciting process and are looking towards moving this transformative project forward.

Your involvement over the last 18 months has been crucial to this project's success. MARTA and our entire project team, have worked with you to refine your goals and develop transit alternatives and technologies that you feel are most beneficial for the Georgia 400 Corridor. To reach a set of alternatives (see pages 2-3) to move forward the team, with your input, went through a detailed screening process:

- **Step 1: Fatal Flaw Analysis**- A review, at a high level, of the project's purpose and need, constructability and generalized technology assessment to determine a universe of alternatives. There were 9 alignments and 3 transit modes along Georgia 400 and State Route 9 screened in this step.
- **Step 2: Screen 1**- Applies quantitative and qualitative criteria to reduce the number of alternatives. This criteria was developed from your purpose and need, and goals and objectives. From your input the alignment along the Georgia 400 corridor was selected with the transit modes of heavy rail, light rail, and bus rapid transit.
- **Step 3: Screen 2**- A more in-depth analysis using additional performance measures. The selected alignment and its transit modes from Screen 1 were further refined (see next page for more details).

Where do we go from here? The Federal Transit Administration (FTA) recently updated their process for moving transit projects through the New Starts funding program, including a streamlined environmental review process. MARTA is taking advantage of this change to move Connect 400 forward. MARTA will begin early scoping, a process in which public and agency participation in the planning process can be counted towards the environmental review process. The final public meeting will serve as an early scoping meeting for Connect 400. During early scoping, the selected alignment and its transit modes along with the project's purpose and need and potential environmental issues and opportunities will be reviewed by the public, FTA, and other agencies. Your comments from the early scoping meeting will be compiled and considered during the environmental review process, when MARTA will prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the FTA. The early scoping meeting will be held on September 26th at the City of Alpharetta.

The Federal Project Development Process



Public Outreach Summary

Over the course of 18 months, the Project Team worked with you to develop your vision and goals for the transit in North Fulton. The below summarizes the key discussion points for each public outreach activity that occurred between January 2012 and July 2013.

MEETING #1- JANUARY 26, 2012

- Project Purpose
- Major Existing Conditions Themes + Future Trends
- Draft Purpose + Need



MEETING #2 -MAY 22, 2012

- Why Transportation + Land Use is Important
- Potential Transit Technologies
- Potential Transit Connections



SUMMER OUTREACH 2012

Mobile engagement stations were used throughout the summer of 2012 in an effort to continue the dialogue with the community on where transit can be most effective. Outreach efforts were conducted at the following locations:

- El Banco
- Dunwoody Station
- North Springs Station
- Sandy Springs Station
- North Fulton CID Breakfast Forum



AGENDA

1. Open House
2. Welcome and Introduction
3. Presentation
 - Where We Are
 - What We've Heard
 - The Process and Findings
 - Transit Technologies
 - Station Typologies
4. Question and Answer Session
5. Breakout Stations
6. Next Steps

3.21.13



HOLIDAY OUTREACH (MEETING #3)-

DECEMBER 12, 2012 - JANUARY 17, 2013

In lieu of a scheduled public meeting a survey was established to:

- Obtain feedback on preferred alignment
- Preferred transit technology
- Preferred station location



MEETING #4- MAY 21, 2013

- Screening Process
- Station Typologies

MEETING #5- TBD

- Screening Results
- Early Scoping/Next Steps

Por favor, únete a MARTA y al Equipo Connect400 para nuestra tercera reunión pública. En esta reunión se presentarán las alternativas para mover hacia adelante futuros análisis, incluyendo propuestas tecnológicas de transporte y tipos de estaciones.

CONNECT



Visit us on the web!

Find additional information on the project website:

<http://www.itsmarta.com/north-line-400-corr.aspx>



E-mail us!

If you would like to have your name added to the newsletter mailing list, please send your information to us at:

connect400@itsmarta.com



Follow us on facebook!

Like **Connect 400** on facebook to receive meeting notices and project updates.

Goals and Objectives

Early on in the project, the project team worked with residents, business owners, government agencies, and municipalities to develop the project need and purpose and supporting goals. Below outlines how the selected alternatives meet the goals the stakeholders developed.

GOAL 1 Improve Mobility and Access



Heavy Rail Transit (HRT) was the best performing alternative and rated high in the following areas:

- Daily projected transit boardings
- New transit riders
- annual corridor crash reductions
- Projected 2040 population and employment within a 10-minute drive
- Low-income residents within a 10-minute walk
- Interface with existing future transit (including Concept 3)

	HRT	LRT	BRT
Daily Transit Boardings (2040)	23,700	15,800	13,300
New Transit Riders	10,900	7,000	5,400
Annual Crash Reductions	44	14	9
Daily Travel Time Savings (Hours of User Benefits)	9,300	6,200	4,500

GOAL 2 Support Land Use and Economic Development Planning



All three alternatives rated similarly for Goal 2. Light Rail Transit was the best performing alternative and rated high in the following areas:

- Consistency with adopted local/regional plans
- Transit-supportive land use/zoning within 1/2 mile of stations
- Acres of vacant or underutilized land within 1/2 of stations

	HRT	LRT	BRT
Consistency w/ Local and Regional Plans	High	High	Medium
Vacant/Underutilized Land per Station Area	141 acres	159 acres	159 acres
Transit-supportive Zoning/Future Land Use per Station	24 acres	33 acres	33 acres

GOAL 3 Provide Cost-Effective Transit Service



Bus Rapid Transit was the best performing alternative and rated high in the following areas:

- Annual Operating and Maintenance (O&M) Costs
- Construction Capital Costs

	HRT	LRT	BRT
Annual O&M Costs	\$19 Million	\$20 Million	\$10 Million
Construction Capital Costs	\$1.6 Billion	\$1.8 Billion	\$473 Million
Cost per Transit Trip	\$14	\$22	\$8

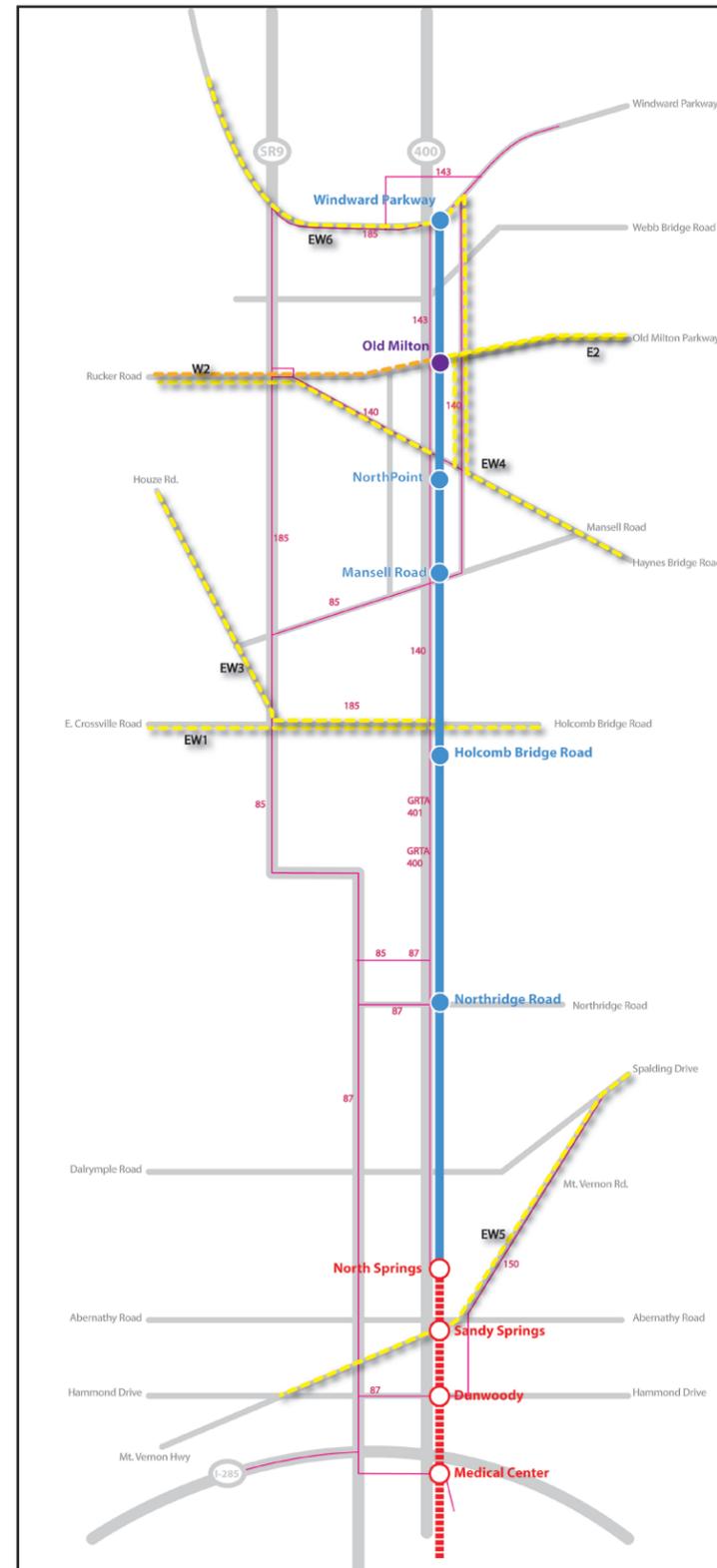
GOAL 4 Minimize Environmental Impacts



Heavy Rail Transit was the best performing alternative and rated high in the following areas:

- Ability to reduce vehicle miles traveled and air quality pollutants
- Low impact to water resources, historic resources and vibration sensitive locations

	HRT	LRT	BRT
Change in Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT)	-48,000	-24,000	-16,000
Reduction in Air Quality Pollutants	Highest	Medium	Low
Noise-sensitive Land Uses	841 acres	250 acres	73 acres



GA 400-1

TRANSIT TECHNOLOGY TO MOVE FORWARD:



ALIGNMENT DESCRIPTION:

Alternative 1, heavy rail, provides 11.9 miles of service north along the Georgia 400 corridor, within existing right-of-way, from the existing North Springs Station. This option terminates at Windward Parkway.

STATIONS (5):

- Northridge Road
- Holcomb Bridge Road
- Mansell Road
- North Point
- Windward Parkway

ADVANTAGES:

- Best Ridership Numbers
- Most Travel Time Savings
- Higher Reduction in Vehicle Miles Traveled
- Higher Reduction in Air Quality Pollutants

DISADVANTAGES:

- Higher Capital Costs
- Higher Operating/Maintenance Costs
- Lower Cost-Effectiveness
- Less Stations Served

GA 400-1A

TRANSIT TECHNOLOGY TO MOVE FORWARD:



ALIGNMENT DESCRIPTION:

Alternative 1A, light rail or bus rapid transit, provides 11.9 miles of service north along the Georgia 400 corridor, within existing right-of-way, from the existing North Springs Station. This option terminates at Windward Parkway.

STATIONS (6):

- Northridge Road
- Holcomb Bridge Road
- Mansell Road
- North Point
- Old Milton Parkway
- Windward Parkway

ADVANTAGES:

- Lower Capital Construction Costs
- Lower Operating/Maintenance Costs (BRT)
- More Stations Served
- Better Cost-Effectiveness

DISADVANTAGES:

- Lower Ridership
- Lower Travel Time Savings
- Less Reduction in Vehicle Miles Traveled
- Less Reduction of Air Quality Pollutants

MAP LEGEND

- Proposed Alignments + Stations
- Existing MARTA Rail + Stations
- Existing Streets/Highways
- Existing/Planned MARTA Bus Routes
- East-West Connector Routes (proposed)
- Station Only in GA400-1A
- East-West Segment Only in GA400-1A

STATE OF GEORGIA
COUNTY OF FULTON

**A RESOLUTION OF SUPPORT FOR THE METROPOLITAN ATLANTA RAPID TRANSIT AUTHORITY
(MARTA) EXTENSION OF HIGH CAPACITY TRANSIT IN THE GA 400 CORRIDOR AND CONSIDERATION
OF SITING A FUTURE NORTHRIDGE TRANSIT STATION WEST OF GA 400**

WHEREAS, Sandy Springs Citizens in Fulton County, Georgia contribute one-cent of sales tax proceeds to MARTA for capital and operating funding,

WHEREAS, Sandy Springs is served by three heavy rail stations on the MARTA north Red Line, Medical Center, Sandy Springs, and North Springs that provide transit access to the Perimeter market with more than 123,000 employees, an estimated 18 million visitors per year to Perimeter mall and surrounding area retail, and thousands of patient visitors to the medical centers facilities,

WHEREAS, MARTA initiated the Connect 400 Transit Initiative in 2011 to examine alternatives and feasibility to provide high capacity transit in the Georgia 400 corridor,

WHEREAS, adopted Sandy Springs plans support regional transportation initiatives to provide cost-effective transportation alternatives through expansion of transit service to serve Sandy Springs and the Perimeter area and support continued economic development and reduce air pollutants,

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF SANDY SPRINGS, GEORGIA

That it supports the expansion of MARTA high capacity transit service to North Fulton.

IT IS FURTHER RESOLVED Sandy Springs supports continued efforts by MARTA to continue the federal project development process to be eligible for Federal Transit Administration New Starts funding,

IT IS FURTHER RESOLVED that Sandy Springs supports a seamless connection to continue the MARTA heavy rail line to North Fulton through the utilization of heavy rail transit which results in the highest estimated ridership, greater travel time benefits, greatest reduction in vehicle miles traveled and air pollutants, and

IT IS FURTHER RESOLVED that Sandy Springs supports a future rail station in the vicinity of Northridge Drive on the west side of GA 400 that would provide access to land use Node 14: Northeast Corner of the Roswell Road and Dunwoody Place Intersection which envisions future mixed use development comprising of residential, commercial and office uses.

RESOLVED this the 3rd day of December, 2013.

Approved:

Eva Galambos, Mayor

Attest:

Michael Casey, City Clerk

(Seal)