



CITY COUNCIL AGENDA ITEM

TO: Mayor & City Council **DATE:** September 26, 2013
FROM: John McDonough, City Manager
AGENDA ITEM: MARTA Connect 400 – GA 400 Transit Initiative Presentation
MEETING DATE: October 1, 2013, City Council Work Session Meeting Agenda

BACKGROUND INFORMATION: (Attach additional pages if necessary)

See attached:

Memorandum
Presentation
Newsletter

APPROVAL BY CITY MANAGER: JFM APPROVED

PLACED ON AGENDA FOR: 10/1/2013

CITY ATTORNEY APPROVAL REQUIRED: () YES () NO

CITY ATTORNEY APPROVAL: [Signature]

REMARKS:



TO: John McDonough, City Manager

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

DATE: September 27, 2013 for Submission onto the Work Session Agenda of the October 1, 2013 City Council Meeting

ITEM: MARTA Connect 400 – GA 400 Transit Initiative Presentation

Recommendation:

Staff recommends that the Council provide input on the MARTA 400 transit study related to the proposed alignment and station locations. The current proposed alignment is on the east side of SR 400 and includes an additional station in Sandy Springs at Northridge.

Background:

In late 2011, MARTA initiated a feasibility and alternatives study to examine providing high capacity transit service from the Perimeter area to North Fulton within the SR 400 corridor. Since that time, MARTA has defined an evaluation methodology, developed and tested potential alternatives, and refined alternatives to determine a proposed alignment, technology, and station locations. Technologies considered include bus rapid transit (BRT), light rail transit (LRT), and heavy rail transit (HRT) in addition to rail options utilizing diesel multiple unit or automated guideway propulsion and standard bus service.

On August 28, 2013, the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) published an early scoping notification for the GA 400 Transit Initiative in the Federal Register. This notification triggered a public comment period which will conclude on October 28, 2013. An early scoping meeting for the public will be conducted on September 26, 2013 from 6:30 pm to 8:30 pm at the Alpharetta City Hall, 2 Main Street, Alpharetta, GA 30009.

Discussion:

Due to initiation of scoping through FTA, MARTA is within the formal public comment period for the study. Council is invited to provide comment on the alignment, station location(s), and technology.

Financial Impact:

At this point within the GA 400 Transit Initiative, there is no direct financial impact to the City.

Attachments:

- I. Connect 400 Transit Initiative Presentation
- II. Fall 2013 Newsletter



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

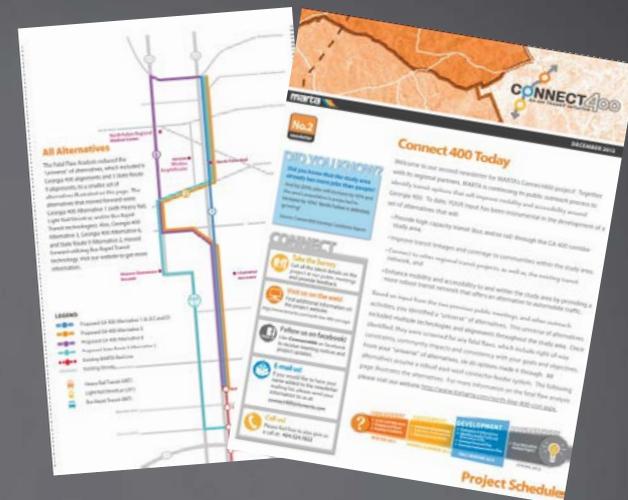
Where We Are

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

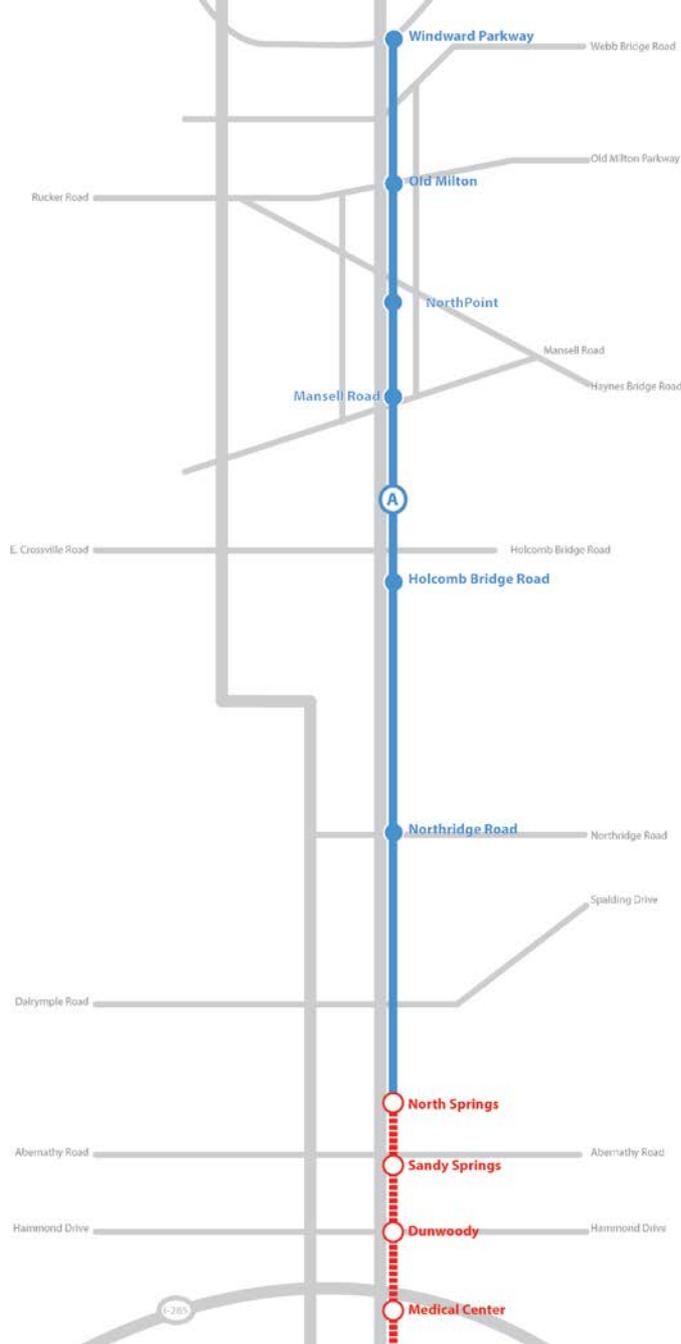
Transit Technology

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

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



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 |

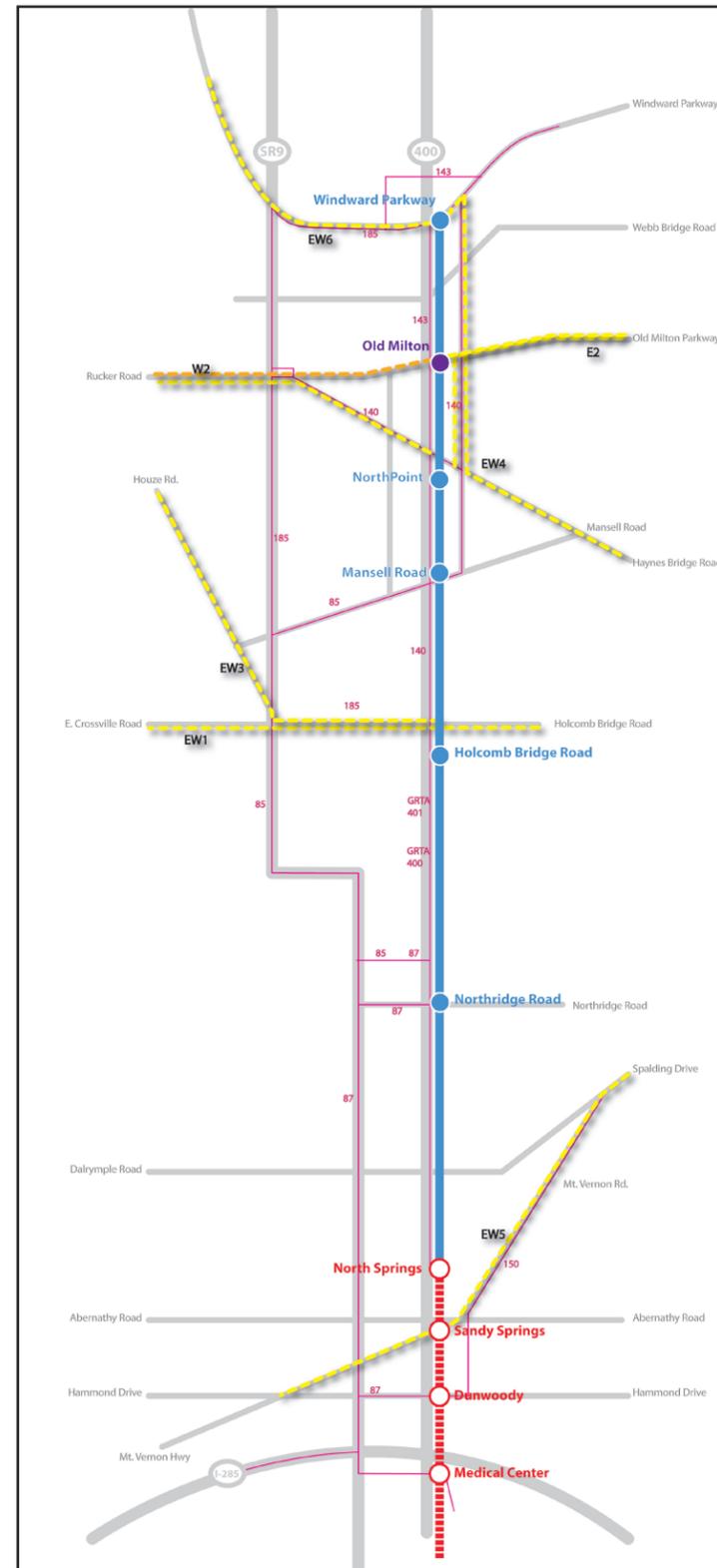
GOAL 4 Minimize Environmental Impacts



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