



Early Scoping Report Appendix

Attachment B-8:

Frequently Asked Questions 2014



Connect 400 – GA 400 Transit Initiative Frequently Asked Questions July 2014

What is the GA 400 Transit Initiative (Connect 400)?

This GA 400 transit initiative is evaluating the feasibility of increased transit service in the GA 400 corridor to address congestion caused by rapid growth. The effort will identify and compare potential high-capacity transit options that enhance transit access to activity centers and employment sites. This corridor extends from the existing MARTA station at North Springs north to Windward Parkway.

The study builds on previous planning efforts in the corridor, accounting for changes in land use and development patterns over the last decade as well as changes in demographics. In 2013, the study team completed a detailed screening of alignment and transit technology options and gathered stakeholder and public input. Based on that screening, three transit technology options were identified to move forward into Early Scoping.

What are the alternatives under consideration?

Based on technical review of several alternatives, as well as public and stakeholder feedback collected during the alternatives screening process, one general alignment and three technology alternatives emerged as the most viable. The preferred alignment is the GA 400 right-of-way from the North Springs Station to Windward Parkway. The technologies under consideration include heavy rail transit (HRT), light-rail transit (LRT), and bus-rapid transit (BRT). Potential locations for new MARTA stations include interchanges along GA-400 at Northridge Road, Holcomb Bridge Road, Mansell Road, North Point Mall, Old Milton Parkway and Windward Parkway.

Potential transit alternatives are only being evaluated at this time, and no determination of a locally preferred alternative (LPA) has yet been made, nor have funding sources been identified.

What is Early Scoping?

Early Scoping is an optional step that can occur during the planning phase of a transit project. The Federal Transit Administration (FTA) encourages Early Scoping as soon as there is enough information to describe the proposal so that the public and relevant agencies can participate effectively. During Early Scoping, the public and agency officials are invited to comment on the project's purpose and need, the project study area, the alternatives being considered, the transportation problems in the area and how they are being addressed by the alternatives, public participation and outreach methods, the potential impacts and benefits of each alternative, and known environmental issues. The Early Scoping process will inform the selection of a LPA. The next step is to move forward into the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) formal scoping process. Early Scoping helps to streamline the future development of an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), if warranted.



Wasn't Early Scoping conducted in 2013?

MARTA conducted an initial phase of Early Scoping for the project in September and October 2013, at the conclusion of the Alternatives Analysis process. This included meetings with corridor area municipalities and organizations, a public meeting on September 26, and a Project Steering Committee meeting on October 17. The outcomes of the 2013 Early Scoping were:

- Established GA 400 as the preferred location for the project
- Suggested heavy rail as the preferred technology but with no final determination
- Identified the need to further explore the transit desires of area residents and employees before a decision on the preferred alternative is made

Why is additional Early Scoping being conducted?

Following the initial Early Scoping process, MARTA determined the need to continue the examination of potential alternatives prior to deciding upon a preferred alternative. The activities informing this Phase II of Early Scoping include:

- Continued community discussions and outreach, including meetings with local jurisdictions and community groups
- A statistically valid public opinion survey conducted by Kennesaw State University
- An economic analysis to assess the economic benefits of expanded high capacity transit in this corridor, being conducted by the Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC)
- A preliminary analysis of how the project would rate under the FTA's New Starts program

What is the schedule of the Phase II Early Scoping meetings?

The purpose of these meetings is consistent with the initial Early Scoping meeting in September 2013, to gather feedback on the purpose of the effort, alternatives, stations, technologies, and potential impacts, as well as to present the results of the additional studies that have been conducted since then. The intent of reopening Early Scoping is to generate additional public, local government and agency review and comments on the scope of the project that will help MARTA determine a LPA. This LPA will receive more focused study and development during the NEPA process. The same materials will be presented at each meeting.

- Tuesday, July 8, 2014, 6:30 to 8:00 PM, at Johns Creek Environmental Campus, 8100 Holcomb Bridge Road, Roswell
- Thursday, July 10, 2014, 6:30 to 8:00 PM, at Georgia State University Alpharetta Center, 3775 Brookside Pkwy, Alpharetta
- Thursday, July 17, 2014, 6:30 to 8:00 PM, at Hampton Inn Atlanta – Perimeter Center, 769 Hammond Dr. NE, Atlanta

The comment period for Early Scoping extends to August 8, 2014



What are the next steps after Early Scoping?

Once the comment period for Early Scoping closes, the input received from stakeholders and the public will be reviewed and considered. MARTA's Planning Committee will then recommend a LPA to the MARTA Board for approval. With an LPA formally adopted, a Notice of Intent to Prepare an EIS will be published to initiate the NEPA process, if the project moves forward.

How will this project be funded?

The FTA provides grants for new and expanded fixed guideway rail and/or bus rapid transit systems through the New Starts Capital Investment Program. The FTA typically funds up to 50 percent of the capital cost of a project. The potential for alternative funding through public-private partnerships and other alternatives delivery methods is also being investigated in conjunction with the federal process.

For more information about the project or to submit comments:

- Visit: <http://www.itsmarta.com/north-line-400-corr.aspx>,
- Contact Mark Eatman, MARTA Project Manager at (404)848-4494, or
- E-mail the project team at Connect400@itsmarta.com.