

# GWINNETT COUNTY ATL REGIONAL TRANSIT PLAN AMENDMENT

APRIL 23, 2020

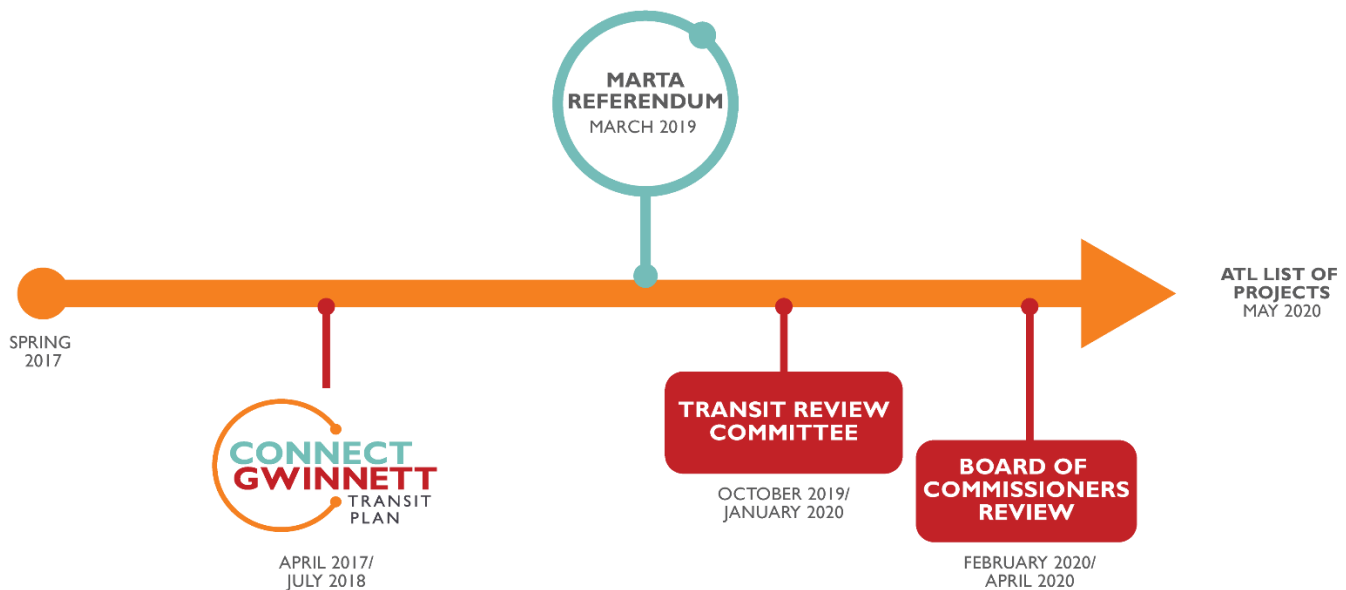


## Gwinnett County Submittal to Atlanta-Region Transit Link Authority (ATL)

Since the initial submittal of transit projects to the ATL in 2019, Gwinnett County has undertaken substantial additional planning efforts related to its vision for future transit services in the County. This amendment provides details on the recent transit planning and community engagement efforts and includes lists and maps of updated projects being submitted to the ATL for review and inclusion into the ATL Regional Transit Plan (ARTP).

### GWINNETT TRANSIT PLANNING AND OUTREACH

Gwinnett County Transit (GCT) began Express Commuter Bus operations in November 2001 followed by Local Bus operations in November 2002. Since that time, GCT has grown to operate five Express Commuter Bus routes and seven Local routes with complementary paratransit surrounding the fixed-route Local Bus network. In 2015, Gwinnett County initiated its Comprehensive Transportation Plan update, known as Destination2040. A short-term recommendation from the plan was to conduct a more formal transit review to evaluate the community's transit needs and to develop project and policy recommendations to address those needs.



### GWINNETT TRANSIT PLANNING AND OUTREACH PROCESS

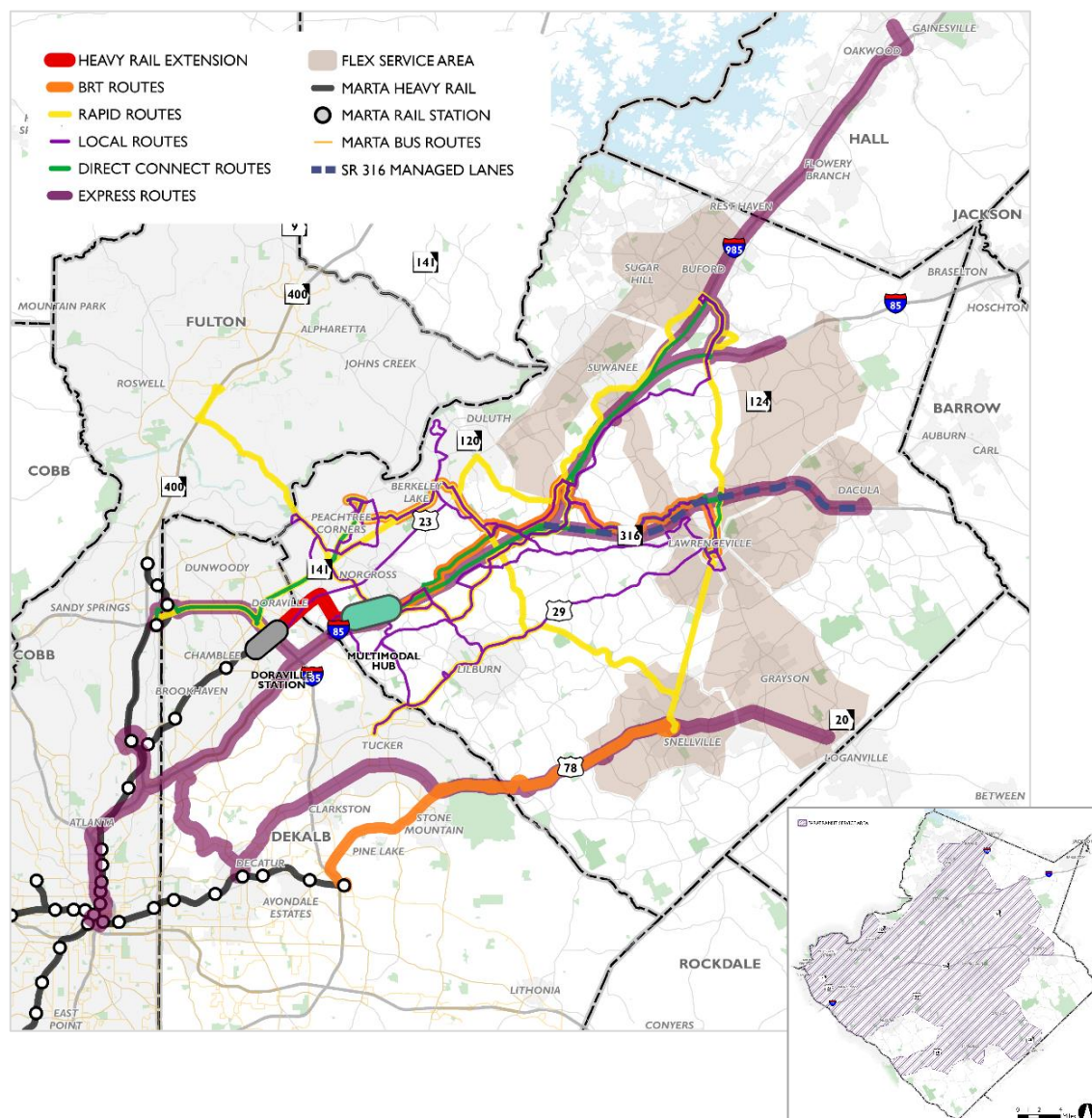
#### *Connect Gwinnett: Transit Plan*

In Spring 2017, Gwinnett County began its first major Comprehensive Transit Development Plan known as Connect Gwinnett: Transit Plan. The planning process balanced detailed technical analysis with robust community engagement efforts. Consultants and County staff worked to understand the community's transit needs, assess demand to define appropriate modes for service, and develop a financially constrained 30-year plan that included short-range (5-year) and mid-range (10-year) recommendations. To understand the community's desire for transit services and to vet proposed recommendations, the project team conducted in-person, phone, and online outreach, including translated material in Spanish, Korean, and Vietnamese. Outreach activities included more than 30 community events, a 12-stop countywide bus tour, 10 focus groups, and the engagement of nearly 5,700 survey participants, more than 200 public open house attendees, and 1,000 scientific phone survey participants.

The resulting 30-year financially constrained plan included the following elements:

- 1 Heavy Rail Transit (HRT) extension
- 3 Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) routes
- 8 Rapid/Arterial Rapid Transit (ART) routes
- 9 Express Commuter Bus routes
- 3 Direct Connect routes
- 12 Local Bus routes
- 8 Flex/Microtransit zones
- Extended evening and added Sunday service on all routes

The majority of the projects were proposed to be implemented within the first 20 years of the plan with the remaining 10 years being focused largely on debt service.



CONNECT GWINNETT LONG-RANGE PLAN AND PARATRANSIT NETWORK

## *MARTA Referendum*

On August 1, 2018, the Gwinnett Board of Commissioners voted to call for a referendum during a specially called election on March 19, 2019, to decide if the County should join the MARTA system. If passed, the contract between Gwinnett County and MARTA would extend through 2057 and provide the local funding needed to implement the projects identified in the Connect Gwinnett: Transit Plan.

In preparation for the referendum, Gwinnett County organized 19 official public open houses, and staff participated in an additional 33 speaking engagements. The County also provided education through online and social media outlets and multilingual print collateral.

Approximately 91,000 Gwinnett residents voted in the referendum, which ultimately failed to pass.

## *Transit Review Committee (TRC)*

Following the March 19<sup>th</sup> referendum and the decision by voters not to join the MARTA system, the Gwinnett Board of Commissioners assembled and decided to take a proactive approach to review the transit plan recommendations and needs. On September 3, 2019, the Gwinnett Board of Commissioners voted to establish a Transit Review Committee (TRC) composed of 13 members representing an array of community stakeholder groups. As stated in the resolution forming the TRC, the Board of Commissioners:

*Recognizes that **there are multiple options for the provision of transit services...and desires to pursue options that will be feasible** and meet the needs of the Gwinnett community;*

***Seeks the assistance of members of the Gwinnett community** in assessing potential transit options and **determining a feasible approach** to providing transit services to meet the increasing and changing needs...;*

*Believes that the best way to obtain this assistance is through the establishment of a Transit Review Committee whose purpose is to **conduct a thorough and thoughtful review of Gwinnett's transit needs and options** for addressing these needs.*

TRC members were selected as representatives of each Commissioner as well as organizations representing seniors, college students, the paratransit community, non-profits, the business community, young professionals, civic organizations, and Gwinnett cities.

The TRC met nearly every week from October 2019 through the end of January 2020. Over the three-and-a-half-month period, the TRC met 11 times, including 3 Saturday workshops. Meetings early in the TRC process focused on education on general transit planning principles and the technical analysis and community engagement efforts behind the creation of Connect Gwinnett. The TRC also reviewed results from the referendum and heard from stakeholders representing various community groups. The TRC discussed various goals for the plan as well as the tensions that often exist among them—for example, increasing coverage and service throughout the County may reduce the ability to provide robust, premium service along high-demand corridors. These discussions led to the Committee vetting of various transit scenarios. The TRC considered cost estimates for Light Rail Transit (LRT) and HRT from Doraville to the Mall of Georgia and the impacts to available funding for transit service throughout the remainder of the County. Ultimately, the TRC focused on three primary scenarios for evaluation and comparison:

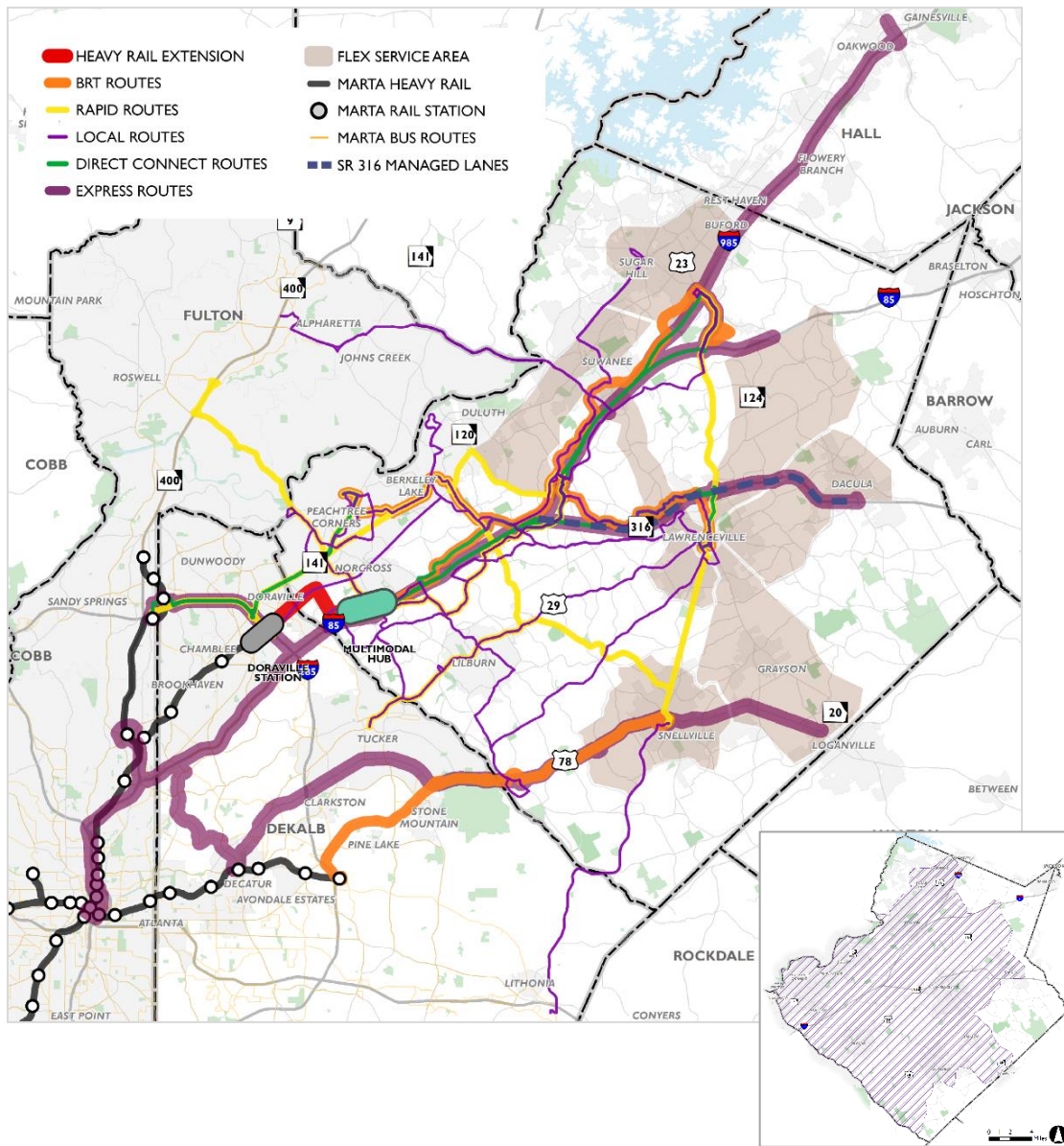
- Heavy Rail from Doraville to Jimmy Carter Boulevard
- Heavy Rail from Doraville to Gwinnett Place Mall
- No Heavy Rail Extension

After a series of meetings and technical evaluations, the TRC voted (not unanimously) to advance the Heavy Rail from Doraville to Jimmy Carter Boulevard scenario to the Gwinnett Board of Commissioners for further consideration. The TRC-recommended Plan also included an aspirational extension of Heavy Rail to Gwinnett Place Mall.



The TRC-recommended plan, as seen below, improves upon the original Connect Gwinnett: Transit Plan in the following ways:

- Outlines a more aggressive, first 10-year implementation strategy than Connect Gwinnett
- Provides more fixed-route coverage in the County, including routes in Lilburn, Sugar Hill, and Suwanee/Buford
- Increases regional connectivity, including routes to Alpharetta and Stonecrest
- Adds an additional BRT to the Mall of Georgia
- Increases paratransit coverage



**TRC-RECOMMENDED LONG-RANGE PLAN AND PARATRANSIT NETWORK**

### *Board of Commissioners Deliberations*

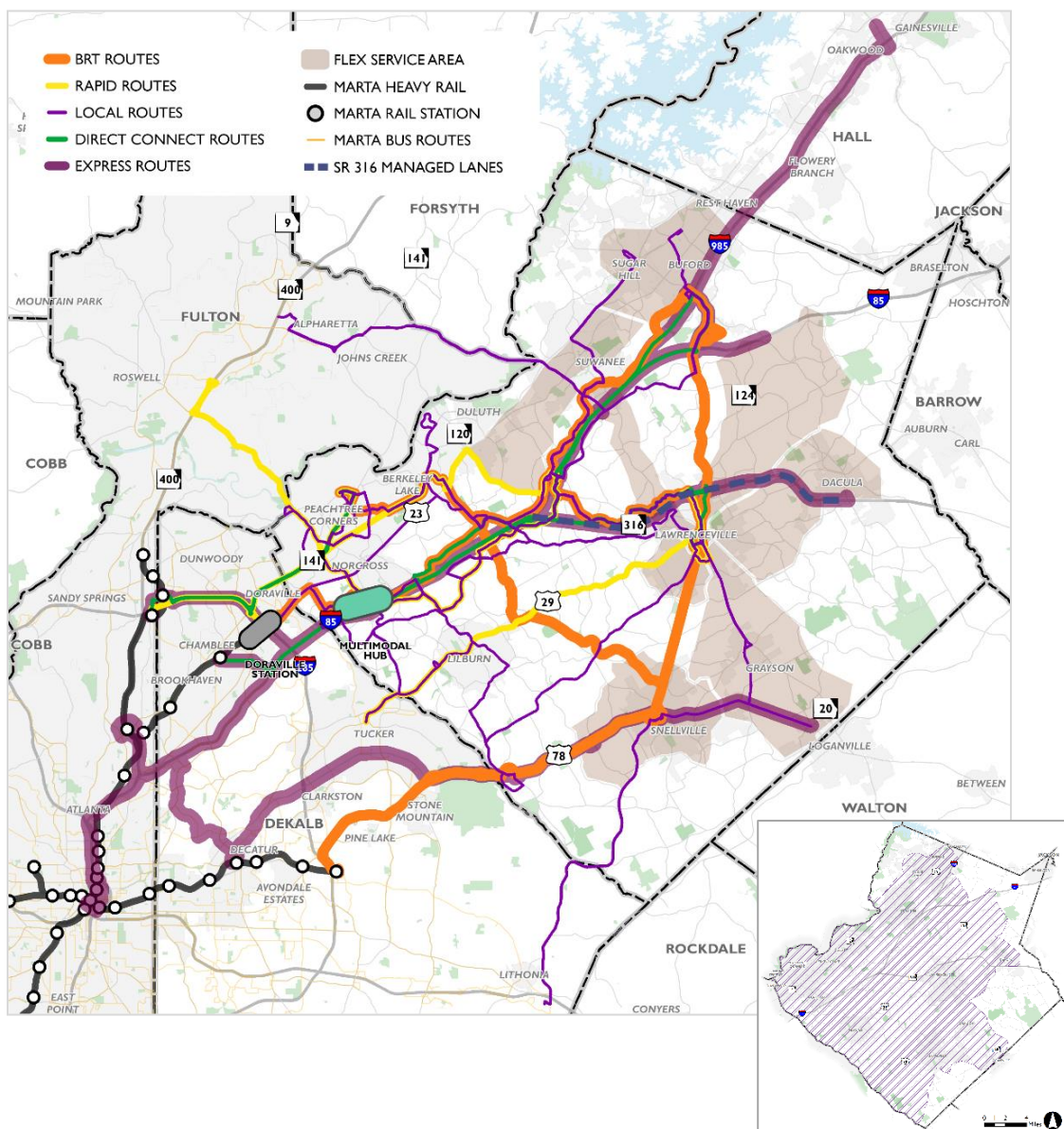
Following the conclusion of the TRC process, the Board of Commissioners held five additional work sessions in which they considered their priorities for transit as well as the TRC's recommendations. The Board meetings were advertised in advance with opportunities for members of the public to attend (some in person, some virtually), and community members could provide public comment during regularly-scheduled Board meetings. Local media outlets also covered the meetings to provide the larger community updates on the discussions.

The Gwinnett County Board of Commissioners considered a total of four plans:

- Connect Gwinnett: Transit Plan
- TRC-recommended Plan
- No-Rail Option
- GEM Plan (developed by Commissioner Ben Ku)

As the Board of Commissioners considered the various options, they requested a scenario that does not include a Heavy Rail extension into Gwinnett County and instead reallocates some of the additional investments to other areas of the County. The TRC-recommended plan was used to build a No-Rail Option. When removing the HRT extension, the No-Rail Option provides the following added benefits:

- Removes HRT extension and reroutes some service to Doraville/Chamblee
- Extends I-85 BRT system from Jimmy Carter Boulevard to Doraville
- Adds 2 BRT routes (6 vs. TRC's 4) and upgrades some local routes to Rapid/ART
- Creates new local routes to Buford, Grayson, and Loganville
- Extends paratransit buffer (1.25 miles)
- Provides robust, initial 10-year implementation strategy (similar to TRC-recommended Plan)



## NO-RAIL OPTION LONG-RANGE PLAN AND PARATRANSIT NETWORK

Staff and consultants conducted a detailed evaluation of the plans, comparing a variety of metrics that enabled the Commissioners to consider strengths and limitations of each of the financially constrained plans. A summary of some of the metrics considered across three plans (Connect Gwinnett, TRC-recommended Plan, and No-Rail Option) are listed in the following tables.

The first set of metrics provides insight into the percentage of the population that has access to the planned transit routes, including those within ¼ mile of Local Bus service and ½ mile of High Capacity services or within a Flex/microtransit zone. Metrics include the total 2050 projected population as well as 2017 estimates of low-income, minority, and age 65+ communities.

CRITERIA	FIXED ROUTE <sup>1</sup>	FLEX/MICROTRANSIT ZONES <sup>2</sup>
% 2050 Population	29% - 35%	30% - 31%
% 2017 Low-Income	41% - 47%	27% - 29%
% 2017 Minority	36% - 42%	27% - 28%
% 2017 Age 65+	26% - 33%	34% - 35%

<sup>1</sup> Population within ¼ mile of Local Bus service and ½ mile of HRT, BRT, and ART (High Capacity modes) service

<sup>2</sup> Population exclusively within the flex/microtransit zones

Other services not reflected include Express Commuter Bus, Direct Connect, vanpool subsidies, TNC subsidies for those outside service areas, and paratransit service

The portion of the County (both by land area and population) included within the paratransit zone is of particular importance to those who have mobility issues. Paratransit coverage metrics for the plans are included below.

CRITERIA	PARATRANSIT ZONE
% County Area	63% - 74%
% 2050 Population	74% - 85%



Finally, other criteria considered in the comparison of plans include the following metrics:

- Reliability of the system – those routes operating in a fully or partially dedicated space (miles of HRT, BRT, and/or ART)
- Frequency of the system – routes operating with frequencies less than 30 minutes
- Route miles – total route miles of the system
- Bus hour increase – percentage increase in bus miles over the existing system

CRITERIA	RANGE
<b>Reliability</b> (miles of HRT, BRT, and ART)	166 - 179 miles
<b>Frequency</b> (<30-minute frequencies)	20 - 22 routes 392 - 436 miles
<b>Route Miles</b> (Total Route Miles)	632 - 787 miles
<b>Bus Hour Increase</b> (Over Existing Operations)	587% - 807%

Following deliberation of these plans, the Board of Commissioners assembled a list of projects from across the four plans to submit to the Atlanta-Region Transit Link Authority (ATL) for an update to the ARTP.

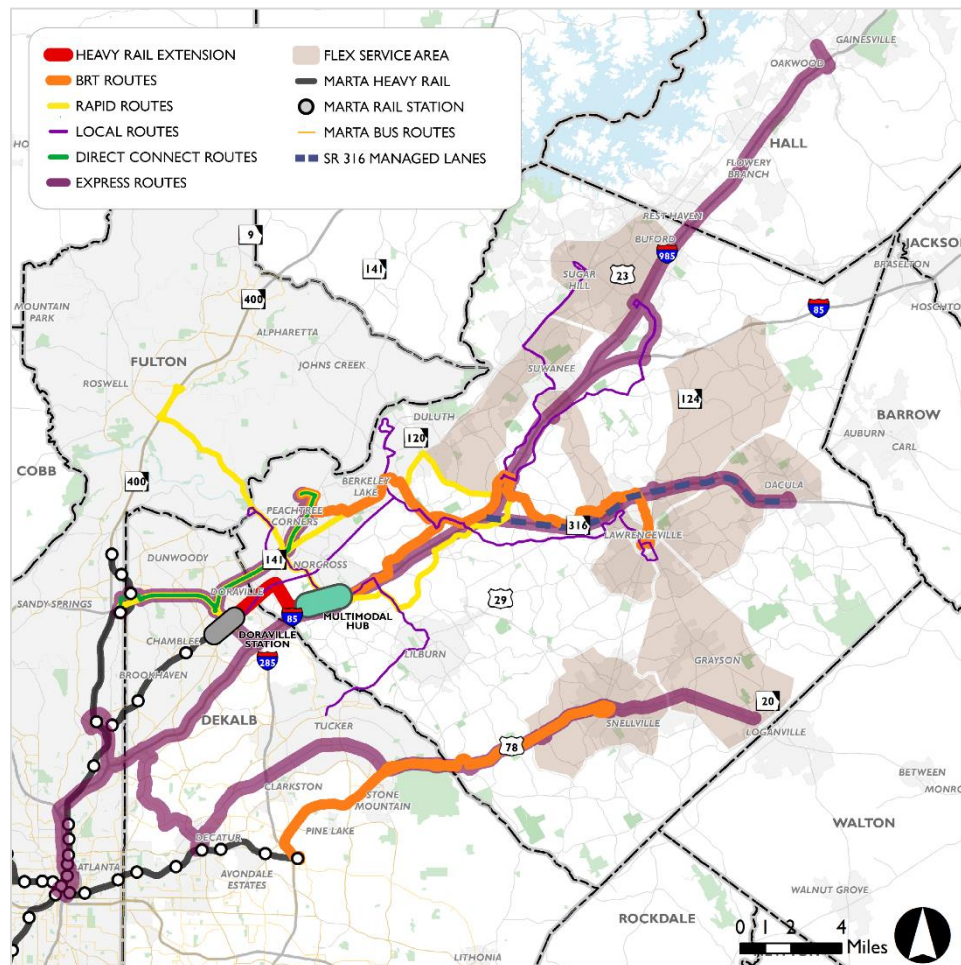
The following portion of the document is dedicated to outlining the amended project list submittal.

The project list being submitted to the ATL Board and staff for review and approval combines project lists from Connect Gwinnett, the TRC-recommended Plan, the No-Rail Option, and BOC deliberations detailed in the previous section of this report. As the Gwinnett Board of Commissioners works to narrow the list of projects that may be advanced in a potential future referendum, project costs provided include the highest estimated capital cost and the highest operations/maintenance cost from across all plans to provide the greatest flexibility in the future. If a referendum is advanced, a financially constrained subset of the projects submitted to the ATL will be selected for funding. Projects included in the amended submittal are classified into four categories:

- Projects with Minor Changes
- Projects with Modified Termini
- Projects with Change in Mode
- New projects

### Projects with Minor Changes

Projects considered to have minor changes are those where the alignments and modes remain the same as in the original ATL project list submitted in 2019. Possible differences in the projects may include modified frequencies and spans of service resulting in different capital and operating costs. Additionally, these projects may have changes in federal funding assumptions depending on the financially constrained subset of projects selected.



## PROJECTS WITH MINOR CHANGES

## PROJECTS WITH MINOR CHANGES – HRT, BRT, ART, AND LOCAL BUS

PROJECT ID	PROJECT NAME
HRT1	HRT Extension: Doraville MARTA Station to Jimmy Carter Multimodal Hub
BRT700A	BRT Route 700: Multimodal Hub to Sugarloaf Park-and-Ride
BRT701	BRT Route 701: Lawrenceville to Peachtree Corners
BRT702	BRT Route 702: Snellville to Indian Creek MARTA Station
ART200	Rapid Bus Route 200: Peachtree Industrial Boulevard
ART201	Rapid Bus Route 201: Steve Reynolds Boulevard
ART202	Rapid Bus Route 202: Infinite Energy Center/Mall of Georgia
ART203	Rapid Bus Route 203: Pleasant Hill Road
ART204	Rapid Bus Route 204: State Route 124
ART205	Rapid Bus Route 205: Jimmy Carter Boulevard/Holcomb Bridge Road
ART207	Rapid Bus Corridor 207: Lawrenceville Highway
ART208	Rapid Bus Corridor 208: Peachtree Industrial Boulevard
LB10	Local Bus Enhancement Route 10
LB15	Local Bus Expansion Route 15
LB21	Local Bus Expansion Route 21
LB25	Local Bus Expansion Route 25
LB40	Local Bus Enhancement Route 40
LB45	Local Bus Enhancement Route 45
LB50	Local Bus Expansion Route 50
LB55	Local Bus Expansion Route 55
LB60	Local Bus Expansion Route 60
LB65	Local Bus Expansion Route 65
LB70	Local Bus Expansion Route 70
LB75	Local Bus Expansion Route 75
LB80	Local Bus Expansion Route 80
LB85	Local Bus Expansion Route 85

**PROJECTS WITH MINOR CHANGES – COMMUTER, FLEX/MICROTRANSIT, AND PARATRANSIT**

PROJECT ID	PROJECT NAME
EB101	Express Commuter Bus Enhancement Route 101
EB102	Express Commuter Bus Enhancement Route 102
EB103	Express Commuter Bus Enhancement Route 103
EB104	Express Commuter Bus Enhancement Route 104
EB106	Express Commuter Bus Expansion Route 106
EB110	Express Commuter Bus Enhancement Route 110
EB111	Express Commuter Bus Enhancement Route 111
EB120	Express Commuter Bus Expansion Route 120
EB131	Express Commuter Bus Expansion Route 131
EB140	Express Commuter Bus Expansion Route 140
DC403	Direct Connect Expansion Route 403
FB500	Flex Expansion Route 500
FB501	Flex Expansion Route 501
FB502	Flex Expansion Route 502
FB503	Flex Expansion Route 503
FB504	Flex Expansion Route 504
FB505	Flex Expansion Route 505
FB506	Flex Expansion Route 506
FB507	Flex Expansion Route 507
PARA	Paratransit Service



## PROJECTS WITH MINOR CHANGES – CAPITAL AND NON-ROUTE-SPECIFIC

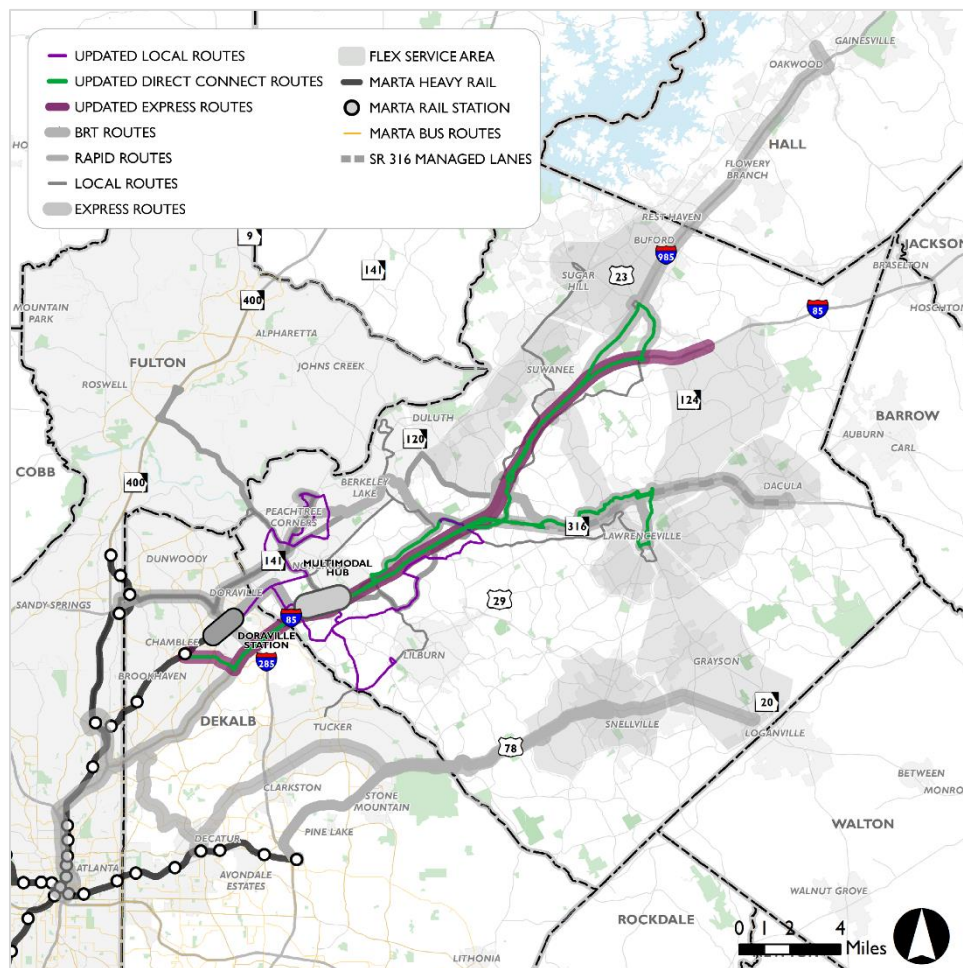
PROJECT ID	PROJECT NAME
GPTC	Gwinnett Place Transit Center Improvements
IECTC	Infinite Energy Transit Center
GGCTC	Georgia Gwinnett College Transit Center
LTC	Lawrenceville Transit Center
985PNR	I-985 Park-and-Ride Upgrades
SNLPNR	Snellville Park-and-Ride Upgrade
MCGPNR	McGinnis Ferry Direct Access Ramps and Park-and-Ride
PTCPNR	Peachtree Corners Park-and-Ride
ITPNR	Indian Trail In-Line Stop and Park-and-Ride
HARPNR	New Harbins Road Park-and-Ride
BUFPNR	New Buford Drive Park-and-Ride
BRSPNR	New Braselton Park-and-Ride
LGPNR	New Loganville Park-and-Ride
SGRPNR	Sugarloaf Park-and-Ride Upgrades
ADPNR1	Additional Park-and-Ride Expansion 1
ADPNR2	Additional Park-and-Ride Expansion 2
SGRFOR	Sugarloaf Park-and-Ride Flyover Ramp and Upgrades
LMAINT	Lawrenceville Maintenance Facility
TNC	TNC/Rideshare Subsidy
VAN	Vanpool Subsidy
BKPED	Bike/Pedestrian Access Improvements
TECH	System Technology Upgrades
FBCAP	Flex Service Capital
LBSUPG	Local Bus Stop Upgrades
FLTTSF	Fleet TSP Enhancements
FLTSGR	Bus Replacement and Rehab

In addition to the projects with minor changes, there are three projects included from the original ATL project list submitted in 2019 that have no changes but are included on the project list for consideration for a future referendum. These projects are:

- State Route 316 Managed Lanes Support
- BRT to Light Rail Transit Conversion Seed Funding
- Regional Transit Project Support

## Projects with Modified Termini

As a part of the No-Rail Option—due to the removal of the Heavy Rail extension from the Doraville MARTA station to the Jimmy Carter Boulevard Multimodal Hub—many of the connecting routes that transferred at the Multimodal Hub need to be rerouted to either the Doraville or Chamblee MARTA stations. For each of these routes, one terminus remains the same; however, the second terminus changes location. Cost increases were assumed for all projects due to route lengthening associated with the removal of the Heavy Rail extension.



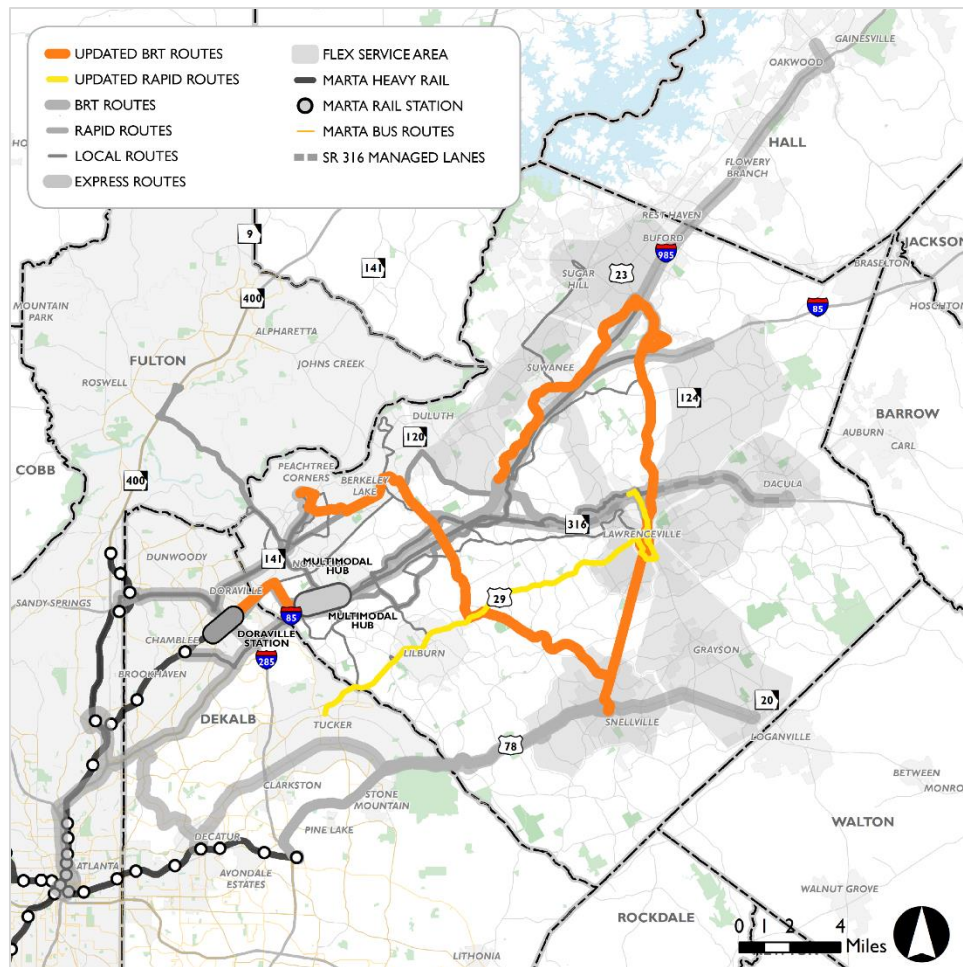
### PROJECTS WITH MODIFIED TERMINI

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PROJECT ID	PROJECT NAME
LB20	Local Bus Enhancement Route 20
LB30	Local Bus Enhancement Route 30
LB35	Local Bus Enhancement Route 35
EB130	Express Commuter Bus Expansion Route 130
DC401	Direct Connect Expansion Route 401
DC402	Direct Connect Expansion Route 402

With the potential removal of Heavy Rail as an option, there is the ability to reallocate some funding to enhance other projects throughout the County. Projects in this category include a modal upgrade, either from a Local Bus route to an ART route or from an ART route to a BRT route. Differences in the costs are associated with capital and operating upgrades.

14



### MODE IN NEW SUBMITTAL

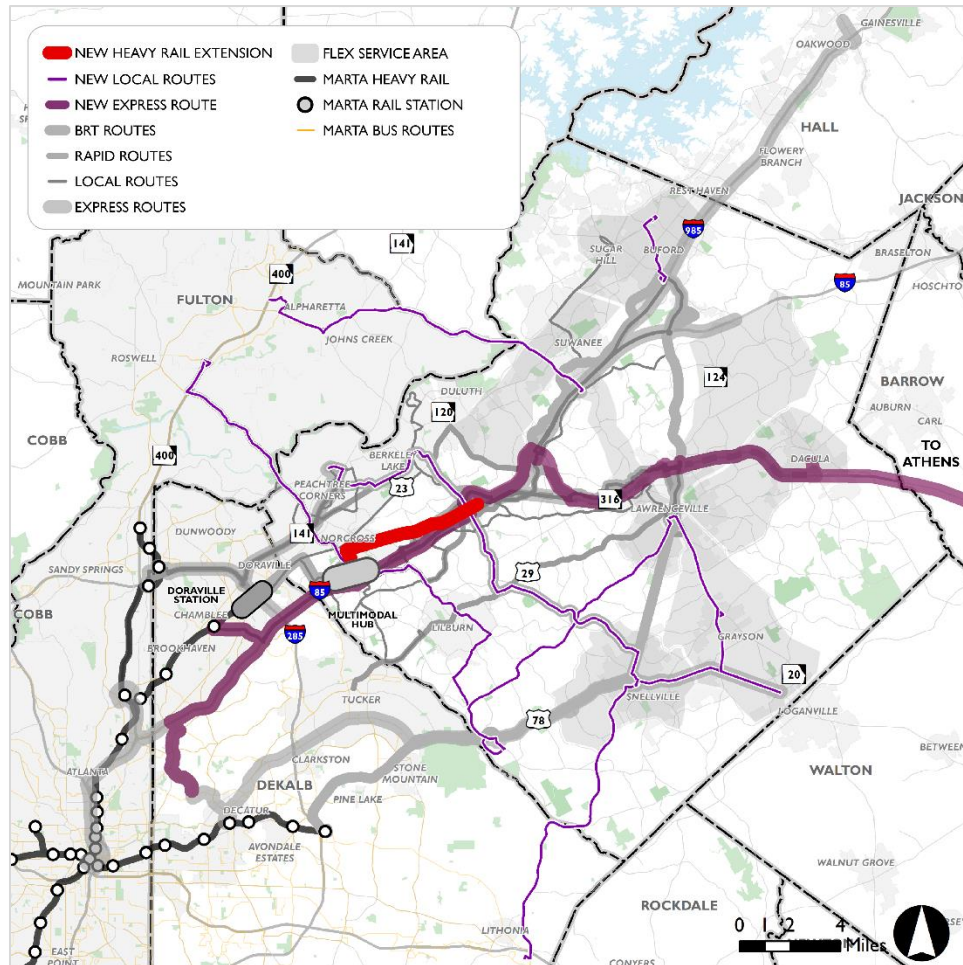
### PROJECTS WITH CHANGE IN MODE

PROJECT ID	PROJECT NAME
BRT700B	BRT Route 700: Doraville MARTA Station to Multimodal Hub
BRT703	BRT Route 703: Infinite Energy Center to Mall of Georgia
BRT704	BRT Route 704: Snellville to I-985 Park-and-Ride
BRT705	BRT Route 705: Snellville to Peachtree Corners
ART209	Rapid Bus Route 209: Lawrenceville Hwy



## New Projects

The final category of projects includes those that are new to the ARTP project list. These projects include a combination of seven new Local Bus routes within Gwinnett; three regional Local Bus connections to Stonecrest/DeKalb, Alpharetta/North Fulton, and the southern Alpharetta/Holcomb Bridge corridor; and two new Express Bus Commuter routes to Athens and Emory/CDC. These projects also include an aspirational HRT extension to the Gwinnett Place Mall area.



## NEW PROJECTS

## NEW PROJECTS

PROJECT ID	PROJECT NAME
HRT2	HRT Extension: Jimmy Carter Multimodal Hub to Gwinnett Place Mall
LBRG1	Local Bus Expansion Route RG1
LBRG2	Local Bus Expansion Route RG2
LBRG3	Local Bus Expansion Route RG3
LBGW1	Local Bus Expansion Route GW1
LBGW2	Local Bus Expansion Route GW2
LBGW3	Local Bus Expansion Route GW3
LBGW4	Local Bus Expansion Route GW4
LBGW5	Local Bus Expansion Route GW5
LBGW6	Local Bus Expansion Route GW6
LBGW7	Local Bus Expansion Route GW7
EB112	Express Commuter Bus Expansion Route 112
EBAT1	Express Bus Expansion Route AT1 (connection to Athens)

## CONCLUSION

Gwinnett County has undertaken substantial technical analysis and community engagement since the development of Connect Gwinnett to create a refined set of projects to advance transit within the County and to connect to the greater metro Atlanta region. Projects included in this amended list represent the collective planning efforts from Connect Gwinnett, the TRC process, and the considerations of the Gwinnett Board of Commissioners. The projects in this ARTP amendment will serve as a comprehensive list from which the Board of Commissioners will select a financially constrained set of projects, if a referendum is pursued.