

Transit Planning Committee

Charlie Sutlive, Chair

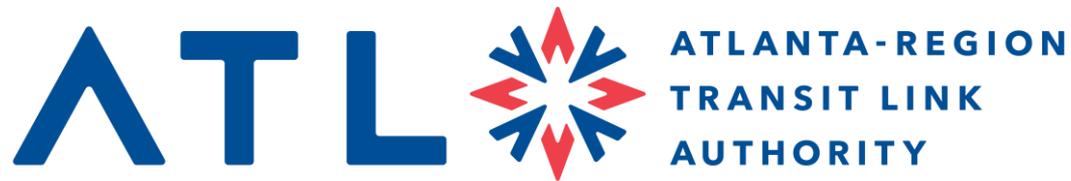
December 7, 2023

Regional Transit Planning Committee Meeting

Thursday, December 7, 2023

Proposed Agenda

- I. Call to Order – Charlie Sutlive, Chair
- II. Approval of the Meeting Minutes for October 5, 2023
- III. Approval of the Agenda for December 7, 2023
- IV. ARTP Amendment – Beth Davis
- V. The Transit Report Development and Outcomes – Beth Davis
- VI. Rockdale County Transit Master Plan – Brian Kelly, Rockdale County
- VII. Adjournment



ARTP Update and Amendment #2

Beth Davis

December 7, 2023

Amendment #2 Schedule

- ▶ **October 5, 2023** – Amendment Process Overview
- ▶ **October – November 2023** – ATL staff coordinate with project sponsors and finalize project details
- ▶ **November 4 – December 3, 2023** – Public Comment Period
- ▶ **December 7, 2023** – Amendment #2 **Action Item**
- ▶ **November 5, 2024** – Referendum Vote

Fast Forward Amendment 2 – Public Comment

▶ November 4 – December 3, 2023

▶ Two public meetings

Wednesday, November 29th

12:00PM until 2:00PM

5:00PM until 7:00PM

Amendment #2 – Projects Overview

Project Sponsors



▶ 89 Projects from 8 operators and 1 CID

▶ Projects from 8 Local Plans

▶ Projects Proposed by Type

- Expansion – 54
- Enhancement – 24
- State of Good Repair – 3
- Systemwide – 9

▶ 7 Different Transit Modes Represented



ROCKDALE COUNTY
GEORGIA



Central Atlanta Progress



Board Action Item

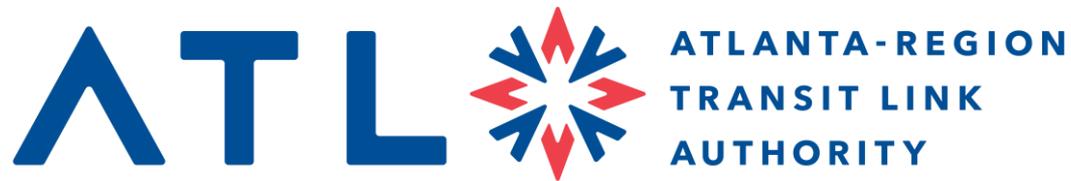


ACTION ITEM

»» 12.07.23

For approval –

1. Requesting Board approval for Amendment #2 to the 2020 ATL Regional Transit Plan (ARTP)



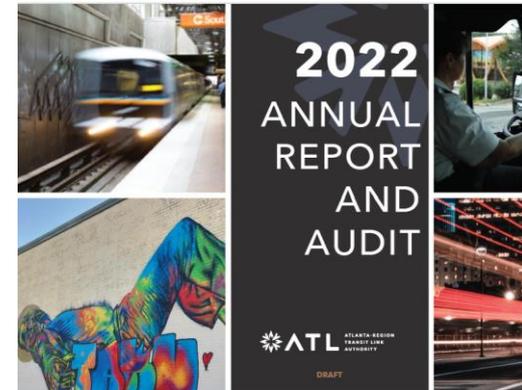
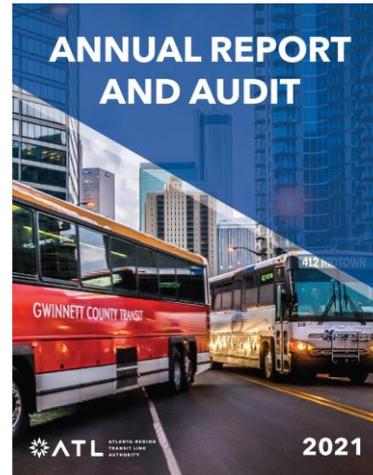
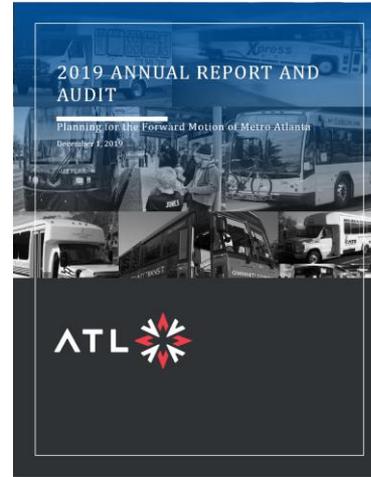
The Transit Report

Beth Davis

December 7, 2023

Transit Report – Definition and History

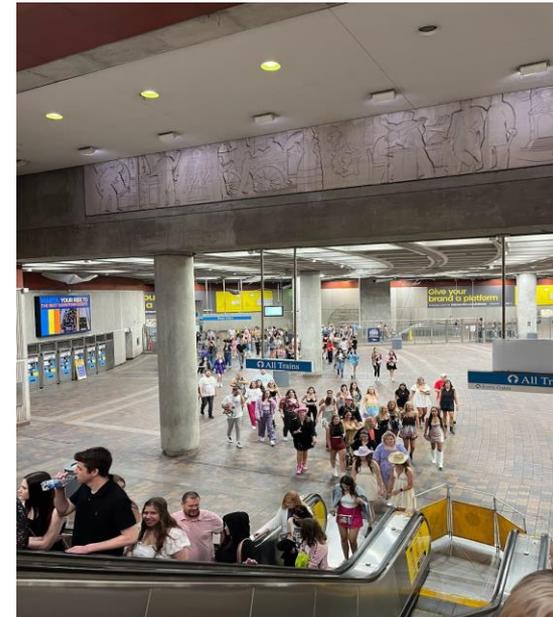
“The authority shall formulate an annual report and audit of all transit planning, funding, and operations within the jurisdiction of the authority which shall be presented by December 1 of each year to the Senate and House Transportation Committees and the local governing authorities of those counties within the jurisdiction of the authority.”



Economic Development

► The Taylor Swift Eras Tour Alone saw approximately 140,000 people taking transit to and from the concert over the course of three nights. This represents a **three-fold increase over normal weekend ridership**

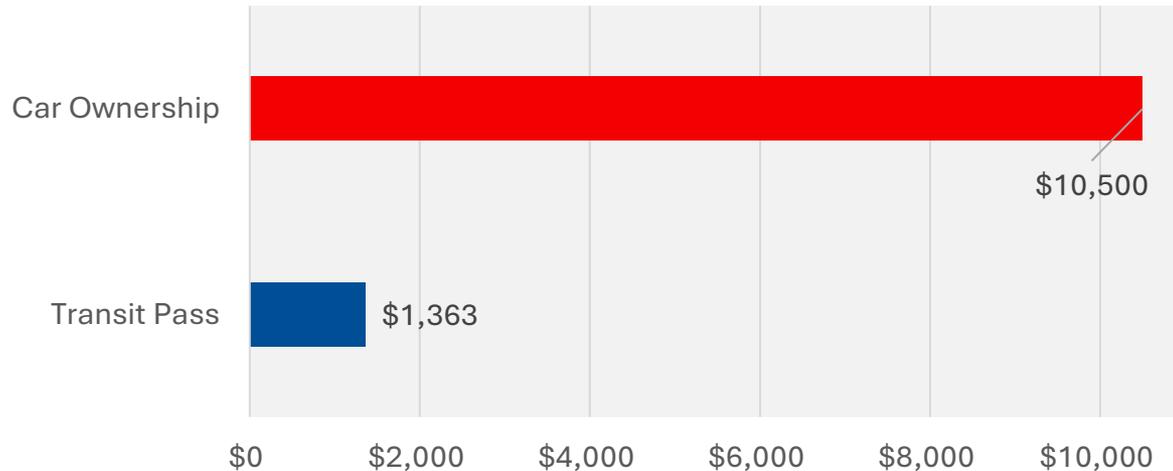
► Through planned traffic management and expanded transit service, Atlanta experienced the **second lowest percent of traffic increase (32%)** out of a sample of 9 stadiums nationwide where the average percent traffic increase was 90%



Access and Affordability

Analysis results illustrate that **compared to the 11-county regional average, people with 45-minute transit access to major activity centers on average have:**

- ▶ Lower Household incomes
- ▶ Lower monthly housing unit rents
- ▶ Higher percent of cost-burdened households and housing units



While transit accessible areas tend to have less costly housing, disparities in household income mean that housing cost burdens are higher. This amplifies the importance of affordable mobility- for people and for businesses.

Post COVID Travel Trends

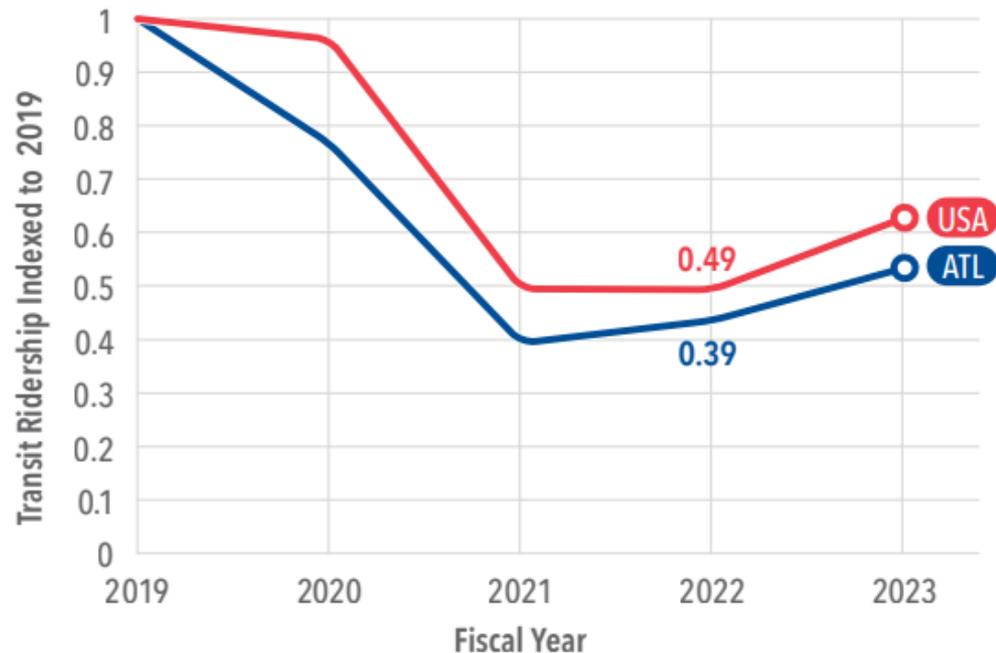
ATL ridership dropped to
39%
of FY19 levels in FY21.

Nationwide ridership
declined to
40%
of pre-pandemic levels at
the same time.

Transit ridership in the Atlanta region and nationwide was hit hard by the pandemic. Riders are starting to return.

Since 2021, ATL ridership has grown significantly, but is still lagging relative to transit nationally.

TRANSIT RIDERSHIP BENCHMARKED TO PRE-PANDEMIC LEVELS: ATL COMPARED TO NATIONAL



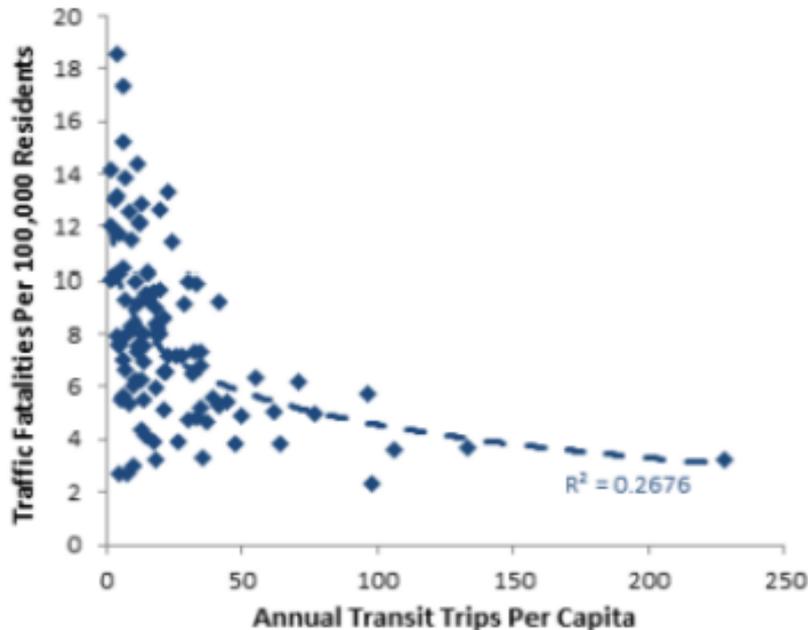
ATL ridership grew 36%
from FY21-23.

National ridership grew 70%
in the same period.

Safety

- ▶ Nationally, public transit travel is significantly safer than car travel. Higher rates of transit use correlate with lower rates of traffic fatalities.
- ▶ **Cities where residents take an average of 50 or more annual transit trips have about half the average traffic fatality rate as those where residents take fewer than 20 annual transit trips**

**TRAFFIC FATALITIES VS TRANSIT RIDERSHIP
FOR US URBAN REGIONS**



ATL Region:

Safety incidents decreased significantly in 2023.

- ▶ In 2023, most fixed-route bus operators had the lowest safety incident rates since 2019.
- ▶ All demand response operators saw a significant decrease in safety incidents, with no more than one incident per 10,000 VRH.



10x

Public transit is 10 times safer per mile than traveling by car

\$16,000,000

The average cost of one fatal crash in the ATL region

\$8.0 Billion

The region's annual economic loss, based on an average 500 fatal crashes per year

Note: crash data involving transit vehicles does not include crashes for bicyclists and pedestrians traveling to transit unless a transit vehicle was involved in the crash.



Transit Technology Investments- Customer Experience

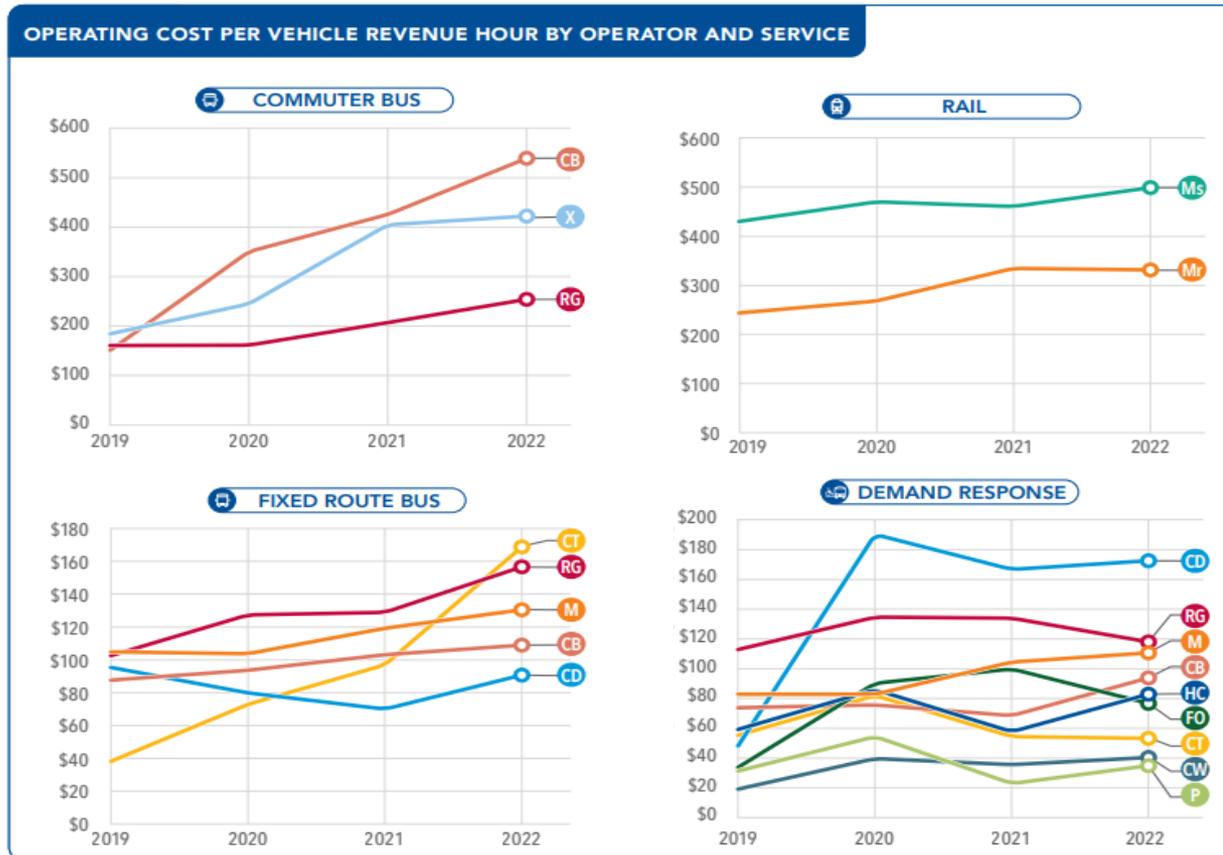
- ▶ Automated Vehicle Location (AVL) / Real-Time Information
- ▶ Trip Planning Apps
- ▶ GTFS
- ▶ Fare Payment Innovation
- ▶ On-vehicle Wi-fi and Electricity



Operating Cost Per Revenue Hour

▶ Operating cost per Vehicle Revenue Hour is highest for rail services, followed by commuter bus, and then by demand response and fixed-route bus service

▶ Since 2020, operating cost per VRH continued to increase moderately for all fixed-route and commuter bus operator services



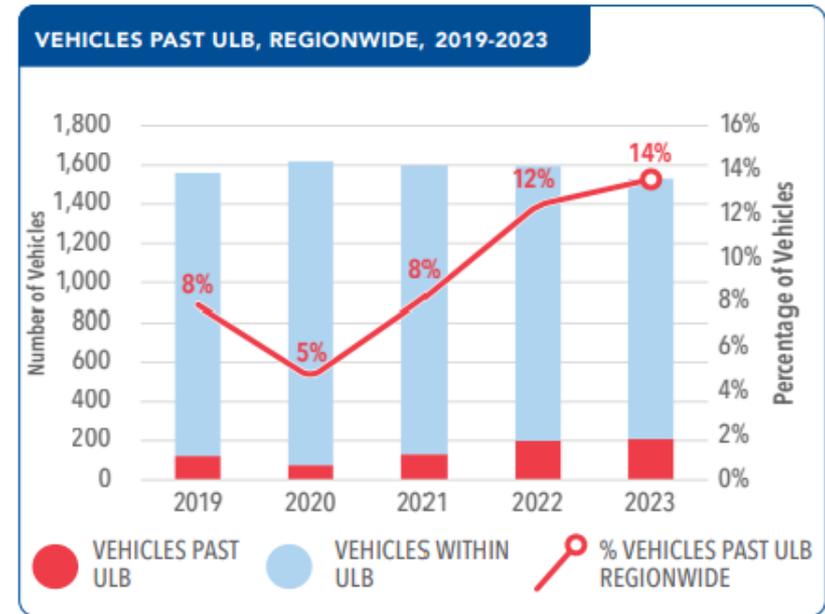
LEGEND

OPERATORS

- FO ACCESS FORSYTH
- CT CATS
- CB COBBLINC
- CD CONNECT DOUGLAS
- CW COWETA CONNECT
- HC HENRY CONNECT
- M MARTA
- Mr MARTA HEAVY RAIL
- Ms MARTA STREETCAR
- P PAULDING
- RG RIDE GWINNETT
- X XPRESS

State of Good Repair

- ▶ **About one-quarter (26 percent) of the region's commuter bus fleet exceeds its Useful Life Benchmark (ULB).** This has remained steady since 2022.
- ▶ Going beyond the ULB can have varying implications for an operator's fleet.
 - Could mean the asset is able to continue to operate safely and efficiently beyond the ULB
 - Or could be used as an indicator as to when a bus would become less efficient and reliable
- ▶ Agencies are using the ULB to develop a vehicle replacement schedule.



This metric, over the last four years, illustrates the need for sustained, annual capital investment to maintain fleets.

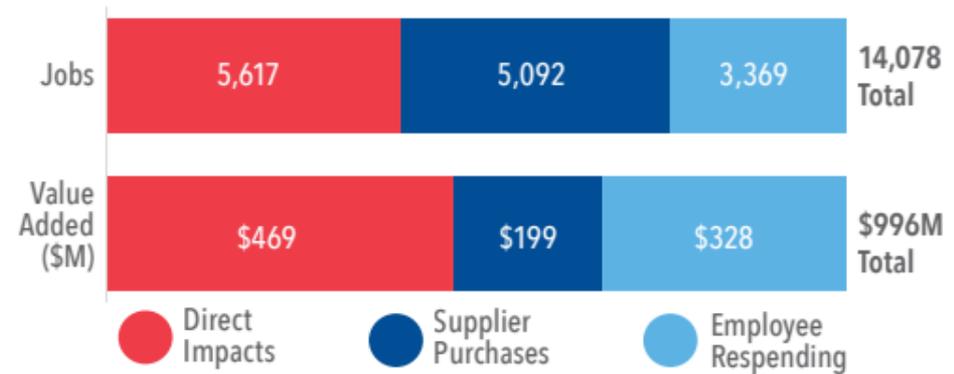
Regional Economic Impact of Expenditures

► In FY 2022, transit agencies within the ATL region invested \$908 million, including \$608 million to support operations and maintenance and \$300 million on capital projects.

- This is in addition to the \$996M in Value Added as shown in the chart to the right, for a total impact of \$1,902,000

► Major capital expenditures include **purchase of new vehicles, improvements to stations, and work on transit guideway** (e.g., rail tracks or dedicated bus lanes)

TOTAL ECONOMIC IMPACT OF TRANSIT OPERATIONS, MAINTENANCE, AND CAPITAL EXPENDITURES (FY 2022)



ROCKDALE

Transit Development Plan

Atlanta-Region Transit Link Authority
Board Meeting

December 7, 2023

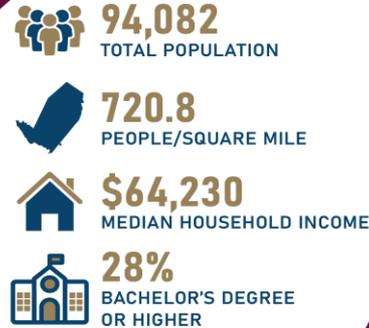


CONDITIONS ANALYSIS

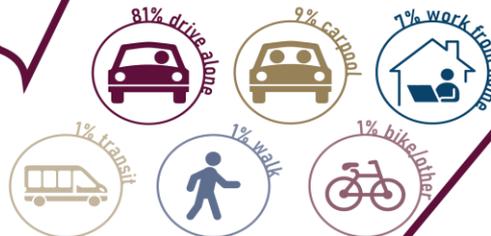
WELCOME TO ROCKDALE



ROCKDALE BY THE NUMBERS



HOW ROCKDALE COMMUTERS GET TO WORK:



33.8 Minutes
Median Commute Time

27% of residents are **<19**
48% are **45+**

Q AhoSlides

How would you describe Rockdale County in one word?

apprehensive
changing
diverse
opportunity

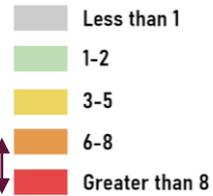
willing
developing
emerging
growing

complex
small

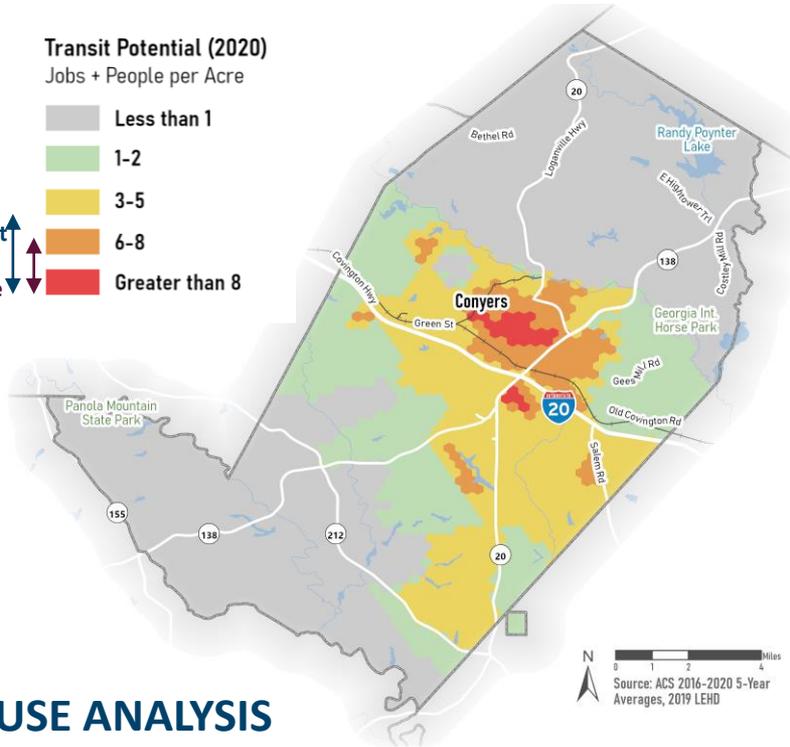
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TRANSIT POTENTIAL AND PROPENSITY

Transit Potential (2020)
Jobs + People per Acre

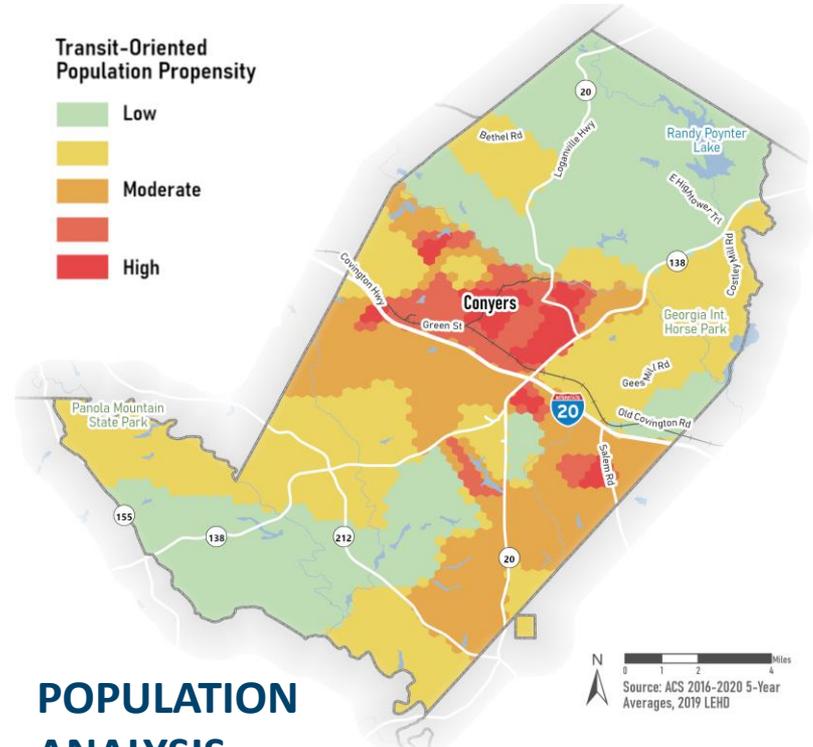
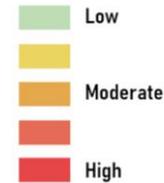


Microtransit
Fixed Route



LAND USE ANALYSIS

Transit-Oriented Population Propensity



POPULATION ANALYSIS

MICROTRANSIT SUITABILITY

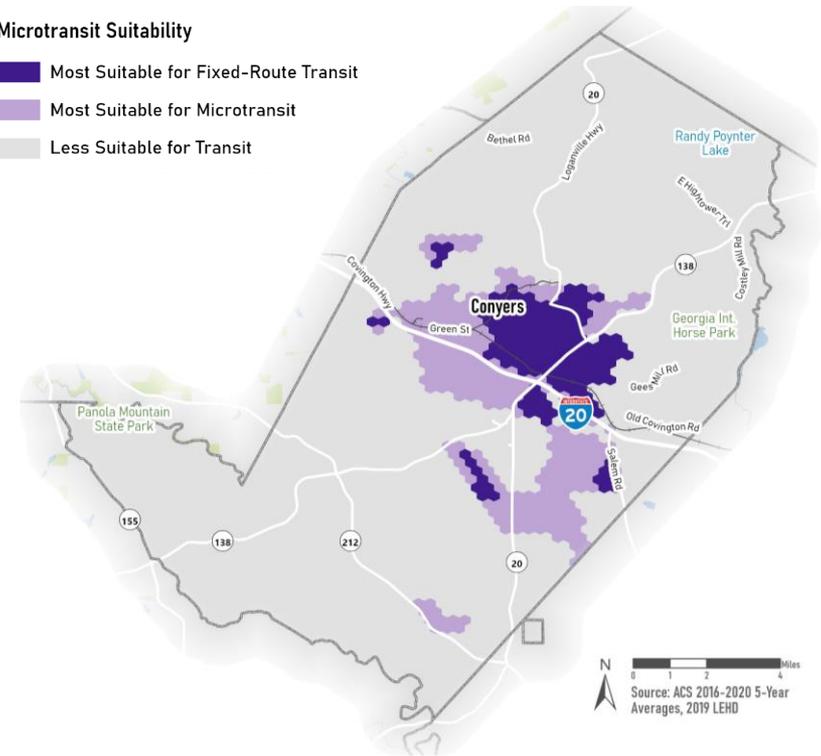


Intensity of transit service grows with intensity of land use

An ideal microtransit zone has a transit propensity value of at least “Moderate” and a density of fewer than five jobs + people per acre

Microtransit Suitability

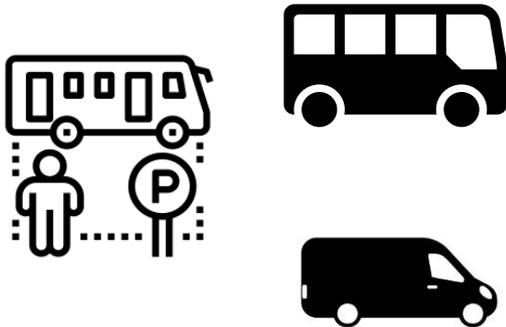
- Most Suitable for Fixed-Route Transit
- Most Suitable for Microtransit
- Less Suitable for Transit



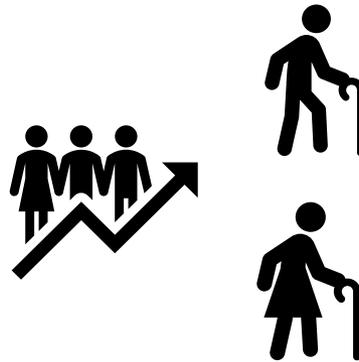
Source: ACS 2016-2020 5-Year Averages, 2019 LEHD

FINDINGS

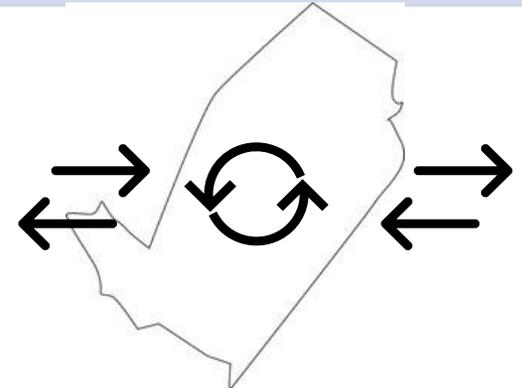
Areas of the county, especially Conyers and the I-20 corridor, could support fixed-route bus, commuter bus, and on-demand microtransit.



The projected increase in the county's senior population further supports the need for a variety of mobility options beyond driving a single-occupancy vehicle.

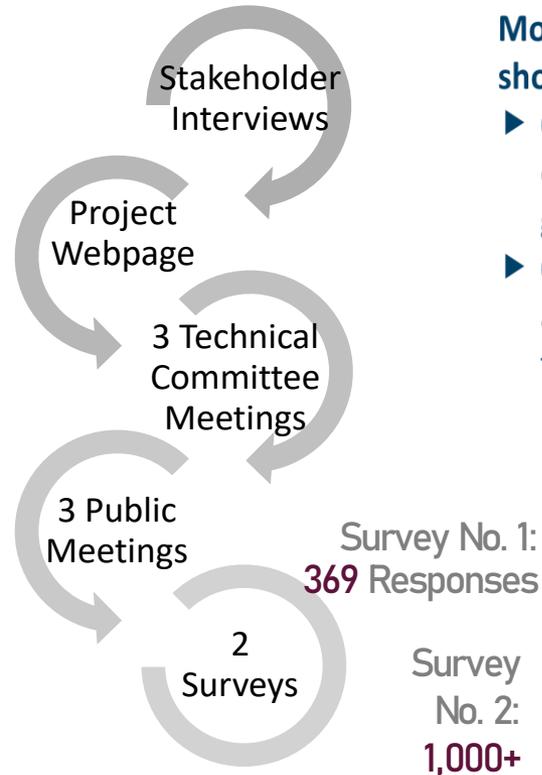


More trips are starting or ending outside Rockdale County; Newton County and eastern DeKalb County are important connections.



STAKEHOLDER & PUBLIC INPUT

WHAT WE DID & WHAT WE HEARD



Most think the purpose of transit should be:

- ▶ **68%:** Get seniors and people with disabilities to places they need to go
- ▶ **62%:** Get people who don't have access to a car to places they need to go



What form of transit would people take?

- ▶ 1 in 4 respondents (**24%**) is very interested in bringing transit to Rockdale
- ▶ More than one-third of respondents (**35%**) were open to using microtransit
- ▶ More than one-quarter of respondents (**28%**) would take fixed-route shuttle service



Where do people want to take transit?

- ▶ Airport (56%)
- ▶ Downtown, Midtown, and Buckhead Atlanta (55%)
- ▶ More destinations within the County (48%)



Greatest Concerns About Transit:

- ▶ **26%:** Safety and potential to bring in crime
- ▶ **17%:** Impacts on traffic congestion



How should transit be funded:

- ▶ **60%:** Strongly against additional taxes to fund transit
- ▶ **35%:** Would reallocate existing county funds for transit

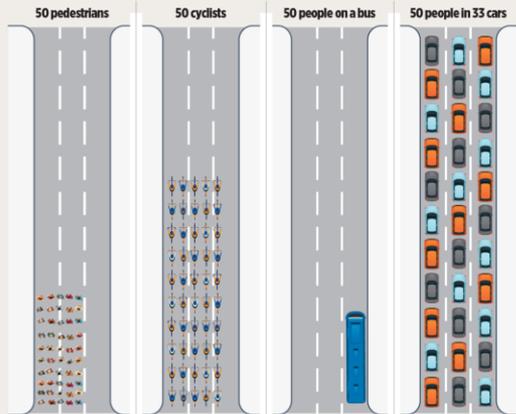
WE HEARD YOU!

In our most recent survey, you raised concerns on safety and congestion surrounding transit service. Below are some examples of how transit service can affect these elements and what's been done in peer systems.

TRANSIT + TRAFFIC CONGESTION

- ▶ Transit can help Reduce Congestion: In LA during a transit strike, congestion increased by **47%**¹
- ▶ Transit can Boost the Economy: Individuals save an estimated **\$9,000** annually by taking transit²

- ▶ Transit Saves Space: Single drivers **take up more space** compared to transit vehicles³



TRANSIT + CRIME

Most evidence suggests that new transit does not lead to crime.

- ▶ When MARTA opened the Kensington and Indian Creek stations, crime rates did not change substantially over time. In some neighborhoods transit had no effect on crime, in others, crime was actually reduced⁴



- ▶ A study on the Green Line in LA found that new transit service did not have a statistically significant impact on crime rates in adjacent communities⁵

PILOT PROGRAM & FUTURE TRANSIT SERVICE OPTIONS

MICROTRANSIT PILOT PROJECT OVERVIEW

WHY A PILOT PROJECT?

- ▶ Begin service quickly
- ▶ Use available federal funding
- ▶ Try transit out before committing
- ▶ Limit county's capital investments
- ▶ Minimize impact on DOT staff time

Microtransit would provide service to:



53,000+
RESIDENTS



34,000+
JOBS

and these key destinations



SERVICE DETAILS:

Wait Times	20-min average wait time
Span of Service	6:00am – 8:00pm Mon- Sat
Est. Annual Cost	\$800,000*

*Planning-level cost estimate.
Subject to change.

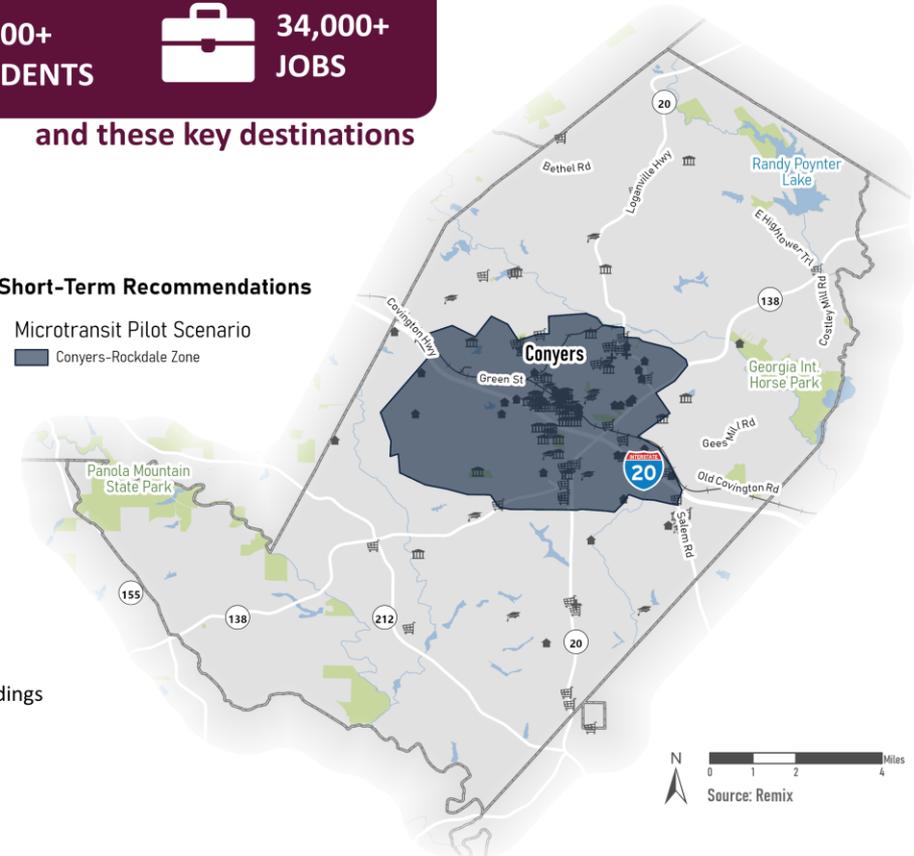
KEY DESTINATIONS:

- ▶ Kroger at Conyers Square
- ▶ Aldi on Stockbridge Highway
- ▶ Target at Conyers Commons
- ▶ Walmart on Dogwood Drive
- ▶ Publix at Milstead Crossing
- ▶ Publix at The Village at Millers Chapel
- ▶ Piedmont Rockdale Hospital
- ▶ 20th Television
- ▶ Rockdale County High School
- ▶ Many Rockdale County government buildings
- ▶ Golden State Foods
- ▶ Southeast Connections LLC

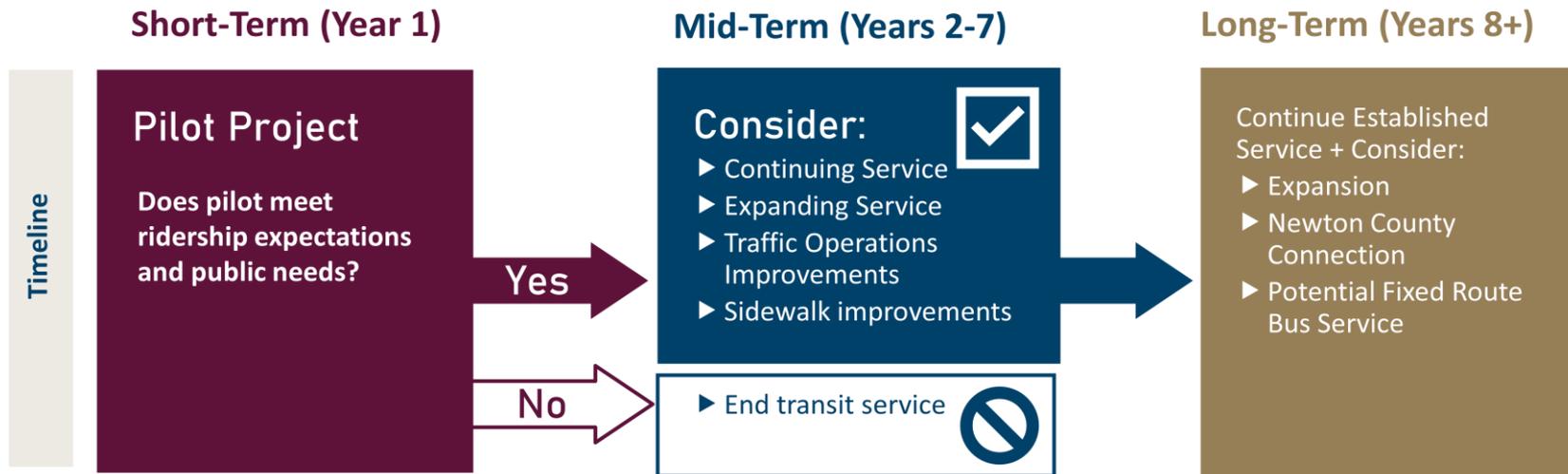
Short-Term Recommendations

Microtransit Pilot Scenario

Conyers-Rockdale Zone



MICROTRANSIT PILOTING PROCESS



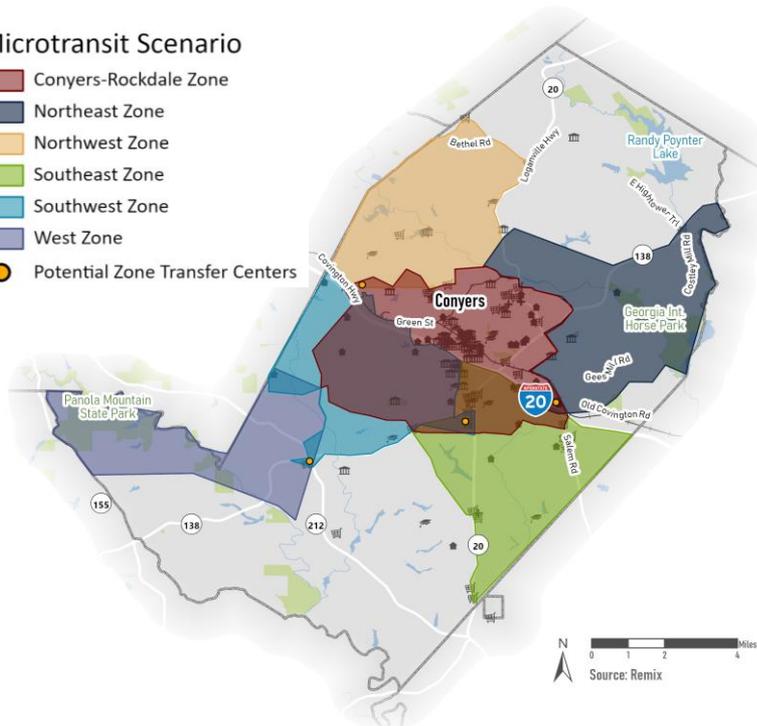
WHAT DOES SUCCESS LOOK LIKE?

- ▶ Rockdale County will evaluate how well the microtransit pilot meets the needs of its residents and employers and supports the county's goals. Place a dot next to the criteria you most support – or add your own!
 - ▶ Do people use it? How many?
 - ▶ How long are wait times?
 - ▶ Do riders rate it highly?
 - ▶ Can the service meet demand?
 - ▶ How many trips are helping people get to work?
- ▶ What is the cost per rider?
- ▶ Is it operating reliably?

MICROTRANSIT EXPANSION OPTIONS

Microtransit Scenario

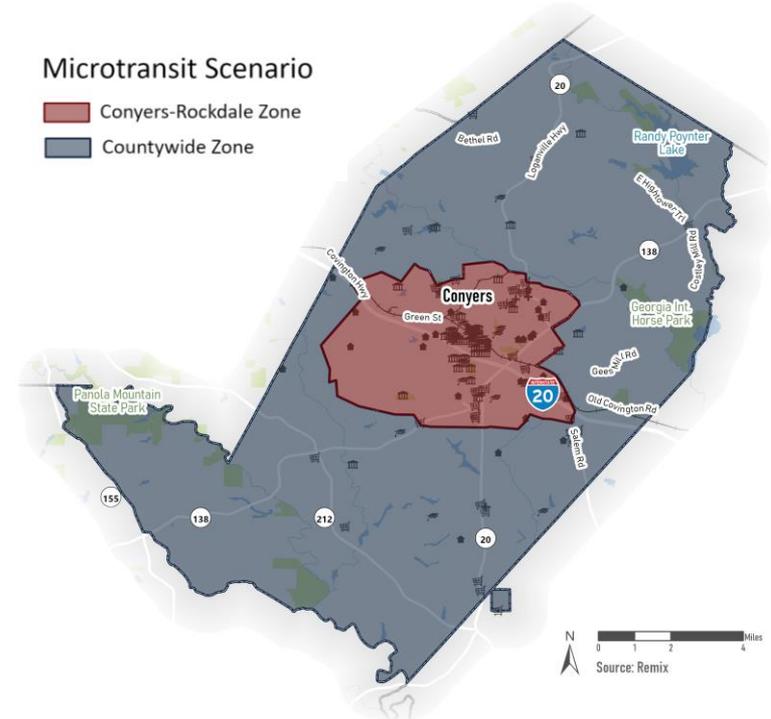
- Conyers-Rockdale Zone
- Northeast Zone
- Northwest Zone
- Southeast Zone
- Southwest Zone
- West Zone
- Potential Zone Transfer Centers



ZONE-BASED MICROTRANSIT SERVICE

Microtransit Scenario

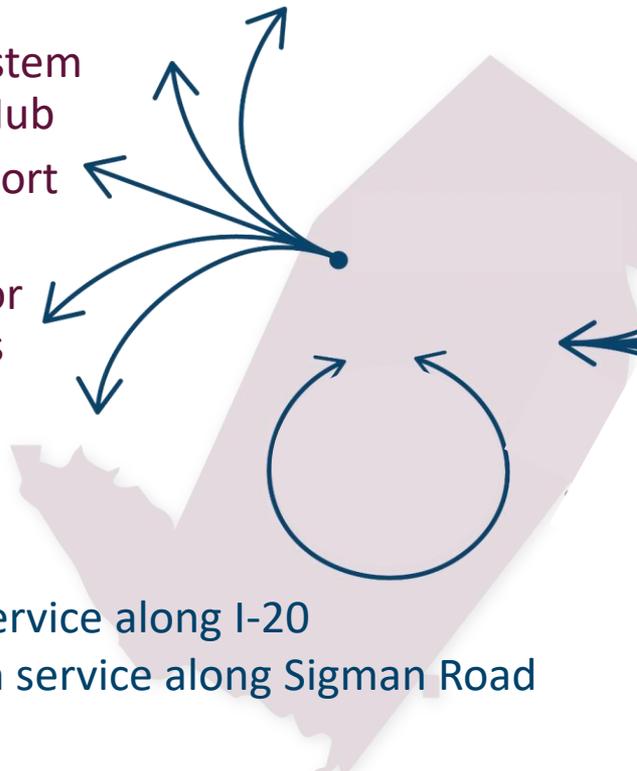
- Conyers-Rockdale Zone
- Countywide Zone



COUNTYWIDE MICROTRANSIT SERVICE

FIXED ROUTE TRANSIT OPTIONS

Connect to MARTA System
at Stonecrest Transit Hub
Service to Atlanta Airport
Service to Downtown
Atlanta (regularly or for
special events, such as
Falcons games)



Connect to Gwinnett

Connect to
Covington

Connect to Henry

Internal East-West service along I-20
Internal North-South service along Sigman Road

PROJECT PHASING

Short-Term Strategies:
Solutions for immediate implementation to address current needs

- Establish microtransit pilot service in the Conyers area
- Lays the groundwork for future transit investment

Mid-Term Strategies:
Solutions for implementation in 2-7 years to address existing and emerging needs

- Continue operation of microtransit service in Conyers area
- Expand microtransit service either as a zone-based service or countywide

Long-Term Strategies:
Solutions to address the future needs of Rockdale County through 2050

- Development of a fully built-out and integrated transit network
- Continuation of microtransit service
- Establish fixed-route transit service in Conyers area
- Establish commuter service between Conyers and Covington

Ongoing policy and programmatic strategies to help ensure success of transit service and expansion.

PAYING FOR IT

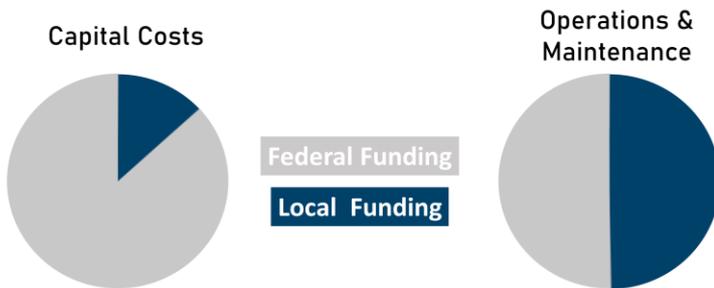


PILOT FUNDING STRATEGY

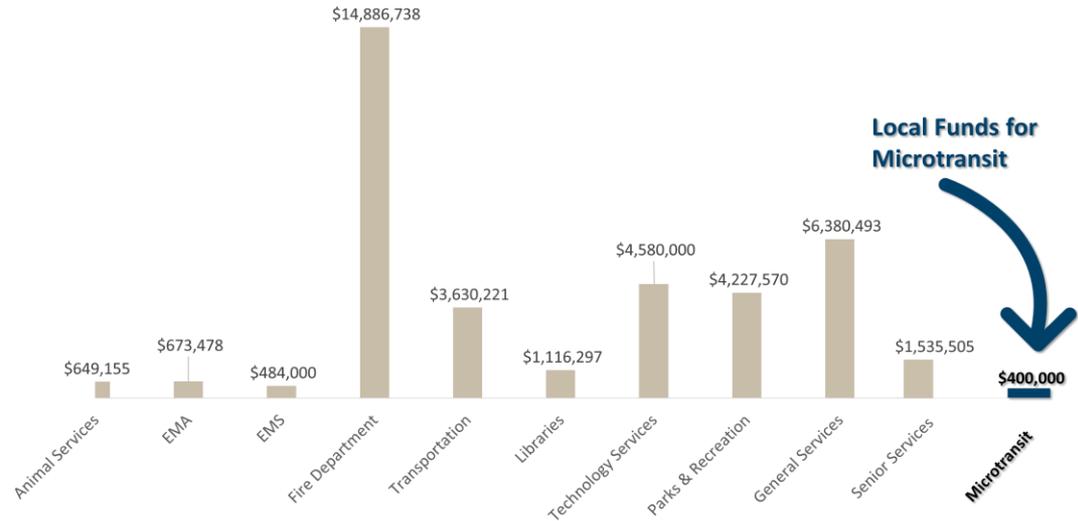
PILOT FUNDING STRATEGY

Claim funds allocated by the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) for Rockdale County

- ▶ Federal Formula funds – distributed annually
- ▶ Local general fund
- ▶ Level of local funding match depends on what the funds are being used for



COMPARING COSTS

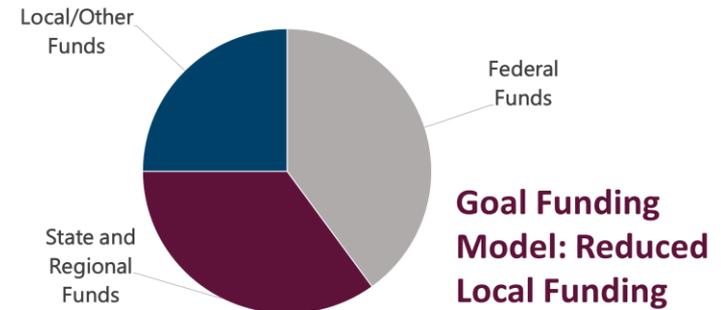


Annual budgets shown are for selected Proposed 2023 Rockdale County General Fund Expenditures. Total annual microtransit cost is based on annual vehicle hours and assumes a required 50% local match.

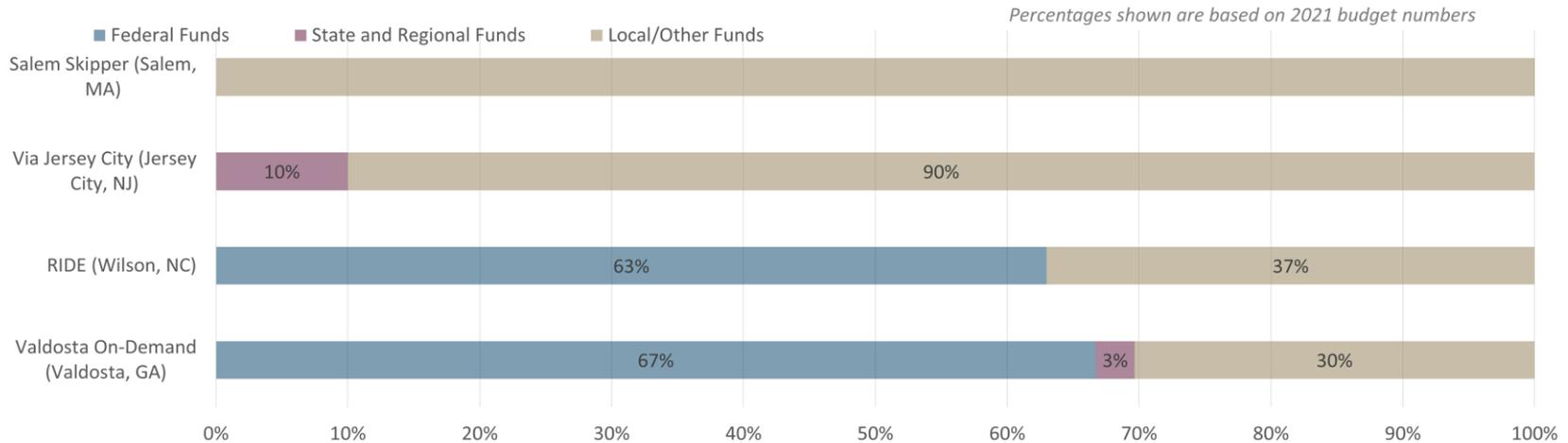
NEXT STEPS

DEVELOP AN OPTIMAL FUNDING STRATEGY

- ▶ Combine multiple funding types to reduce share of local funding
- ▶ Leverage federal and state/regional funding to reduce local match
 - Federal: Add competitive grant programs
 - State and Regional: Add competitive grant programs (i.e., CMAQ, Carbon Reduction Program, STBG funds)
 - Local: Add farebox revenue, advertising revenue



HOW PEER SYSTEMS FUND MICROTRANSIT



Tentative Implementation Timeline

Task	Target Completion Date
Complete Transit Development Plan	October 2023
Rockdale County BOC adopts TDP	November 2023
RFP for Microtransit pilot turnkey operator	February 2024
ATL Board approves subrecipient agreement with Rockdale	February 2024
Conyers Microtransit zone begins operations	May 2024

Thank you!

www.RockdaleCountyTDP.com

Brian A. Kelley, P.E.
Director of Transportation
Rockdale County
Brian.Kelley@RockdaleCounty.gov



ADJOURN

**The ATL Board Meeting
Will Begin Momentarily**