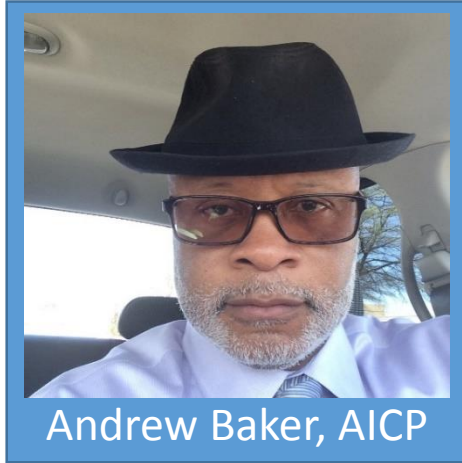


What Comes First: Transit or Transit-Oriented Development?

Georgia Planning Association Spring Session
March 27, 2019



Introductions



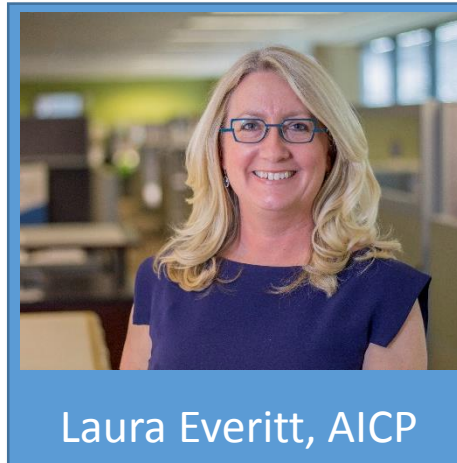
Andrew Baker, AICP



Sylvia Smith



Audra Rojek, AICP



Laura Everitt, AICP



Kristine Hansen-Dederick, AICP

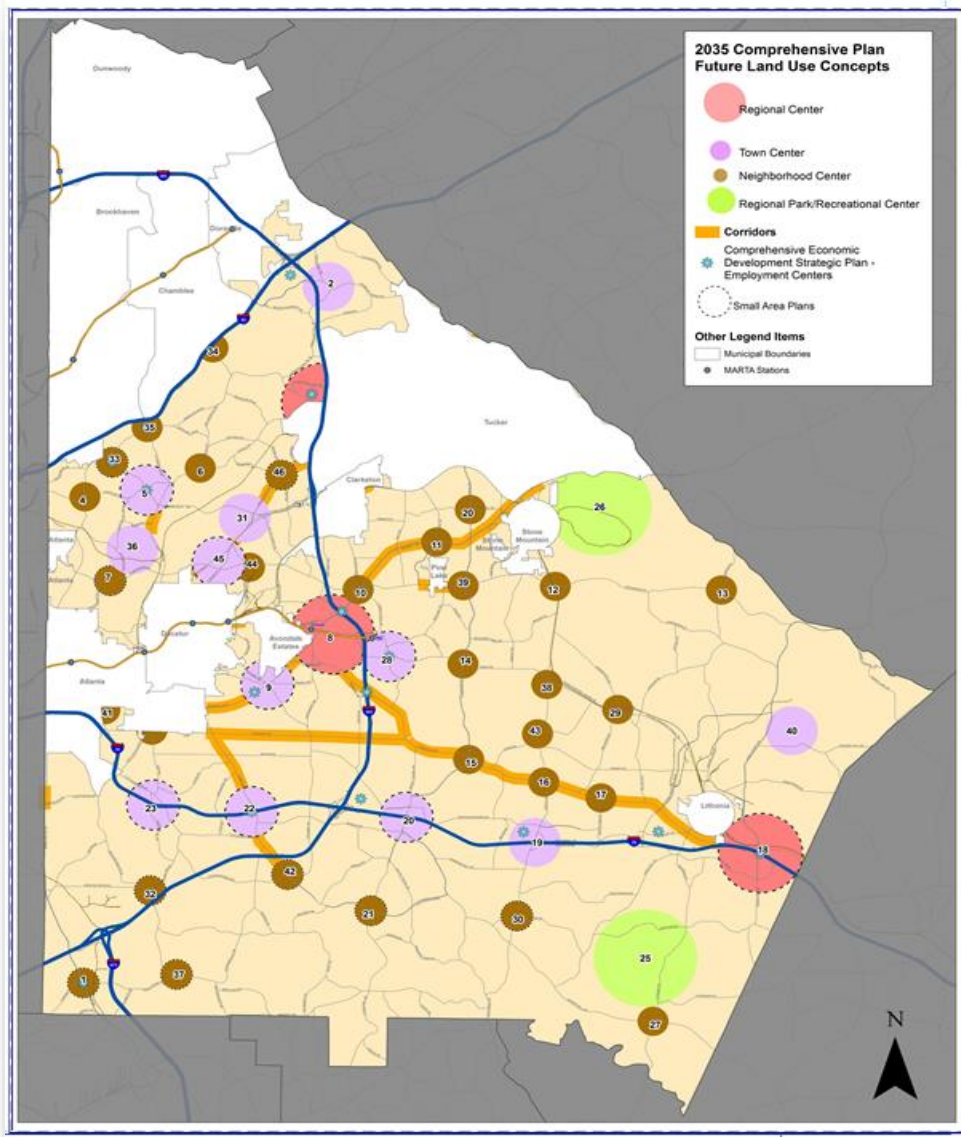


BACK DROP – PERSPECTIVE FROM INSIDE DEKALB

DEKALB HAS A UNIQUE AND LONG HISTORY RELATED TO TRANSIT



Future Land Use Map



Future Land Use Activity Centers



Neighborhood Center



Town Center



Regional Center



DeKalb County Perspective

- DeKalb County residents were one of three original supporters of Transit (1968 -City of Atlanta, Fulton County, DeKalb County)
- In 2012 – TSPLOST was an approach to fund transportation projects within a region based on a 1% sales tax to be used to improve regional transportation congestion issues.
 - Atlanta Regional voters rejected the 2012 T-SPLOST tax measure. The Atlanta Region voted 418,423 (62.43%) to 251,778 (37.57%) against the referendum.
 - DeKalb residents felt the project list focused too many dollars in the city of Atlanta and the streetcar without heavy rail along I-20 (south DeKalb)
- Two Views – Clifton Corridor vs. I-20 East Corridor
- FTA grant – and a TOD Strategic Plan co-sponsored by MARTA and DeKalb County
- Transit Master Plan

MISPERCEPTIONS OF THE PUBLIC

How to reverse the belief that new growth is the cause of the traffic congestion. There is a lack of understanding of mixed use activity centers:

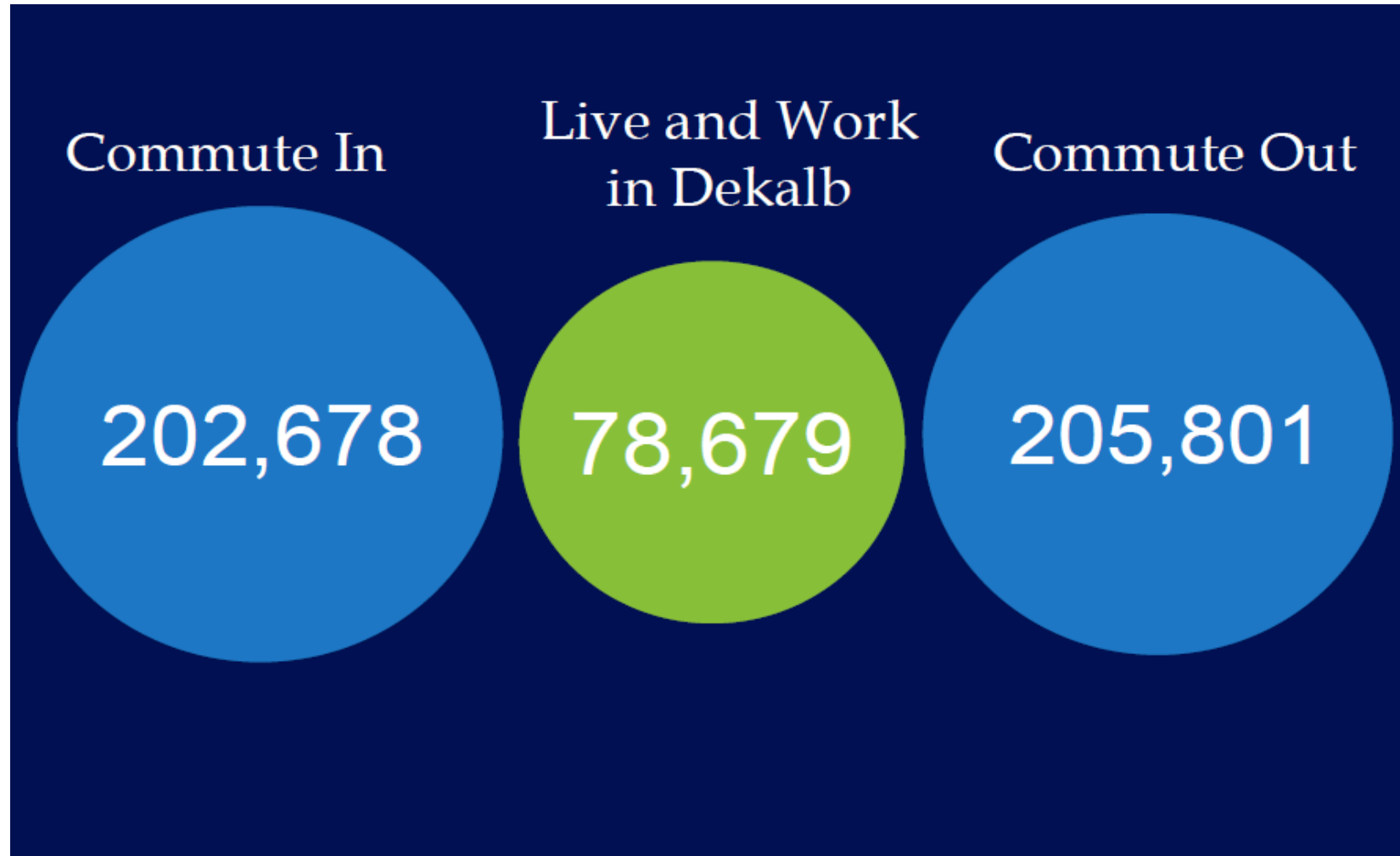
- Can decrease traffic
- Can decrease the number of trips
- Can decrease the amount of time spent in cars/traffic
- Can create live, work and play environments

Current Issues:

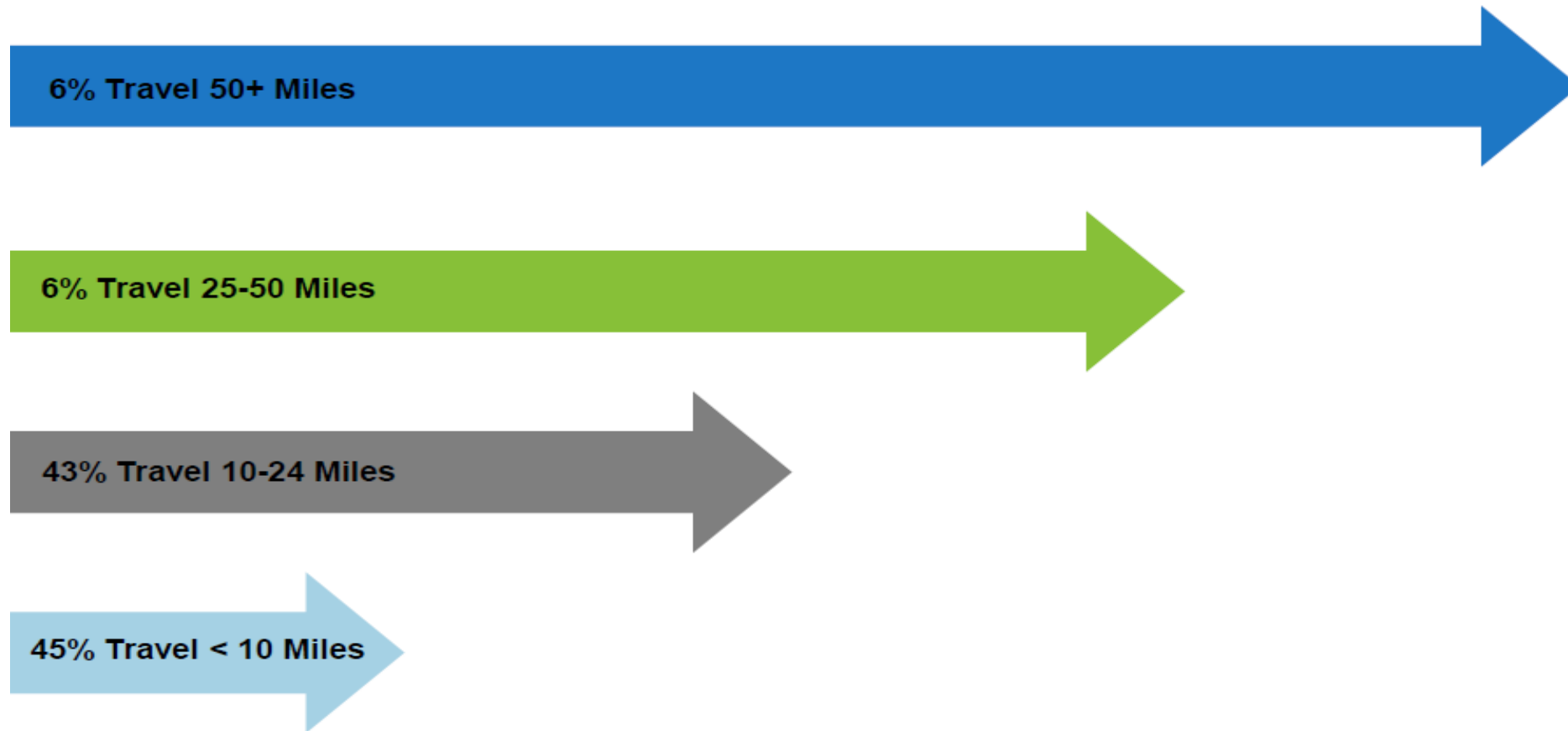
- Too many residents are commuting to work or do not live near source of employment.



Work Commutes:

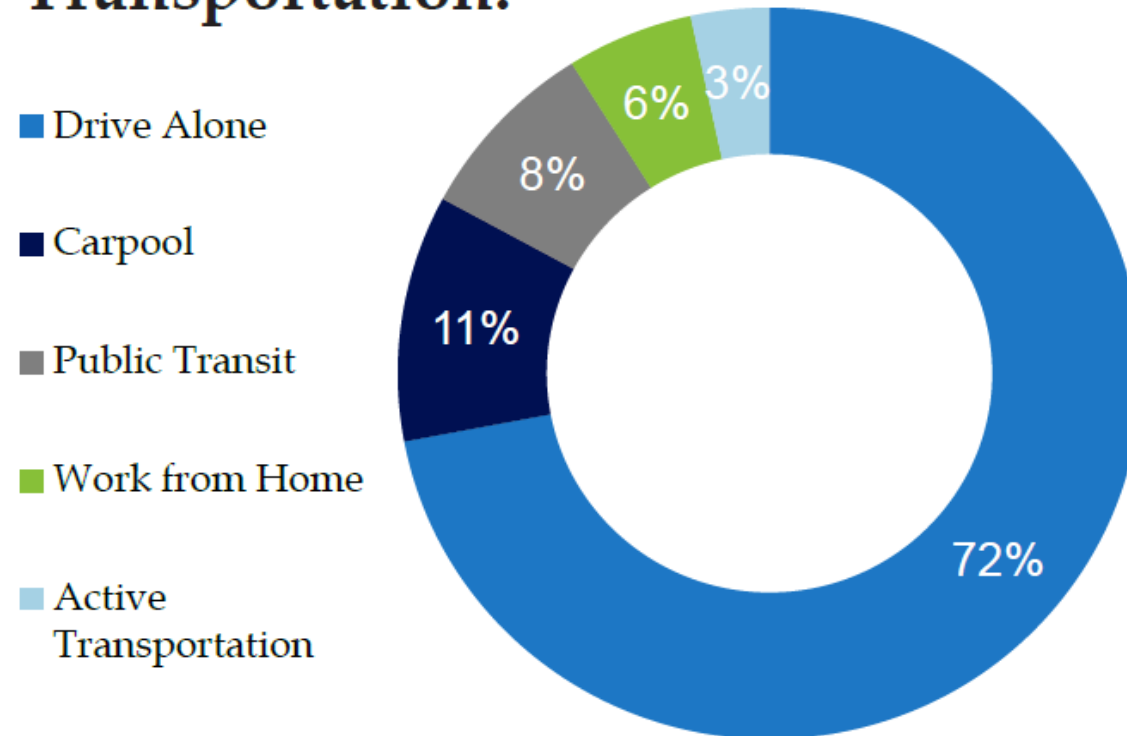


Distance Traveled to Work:



Mode of Transportation:

Mode of Transportation:



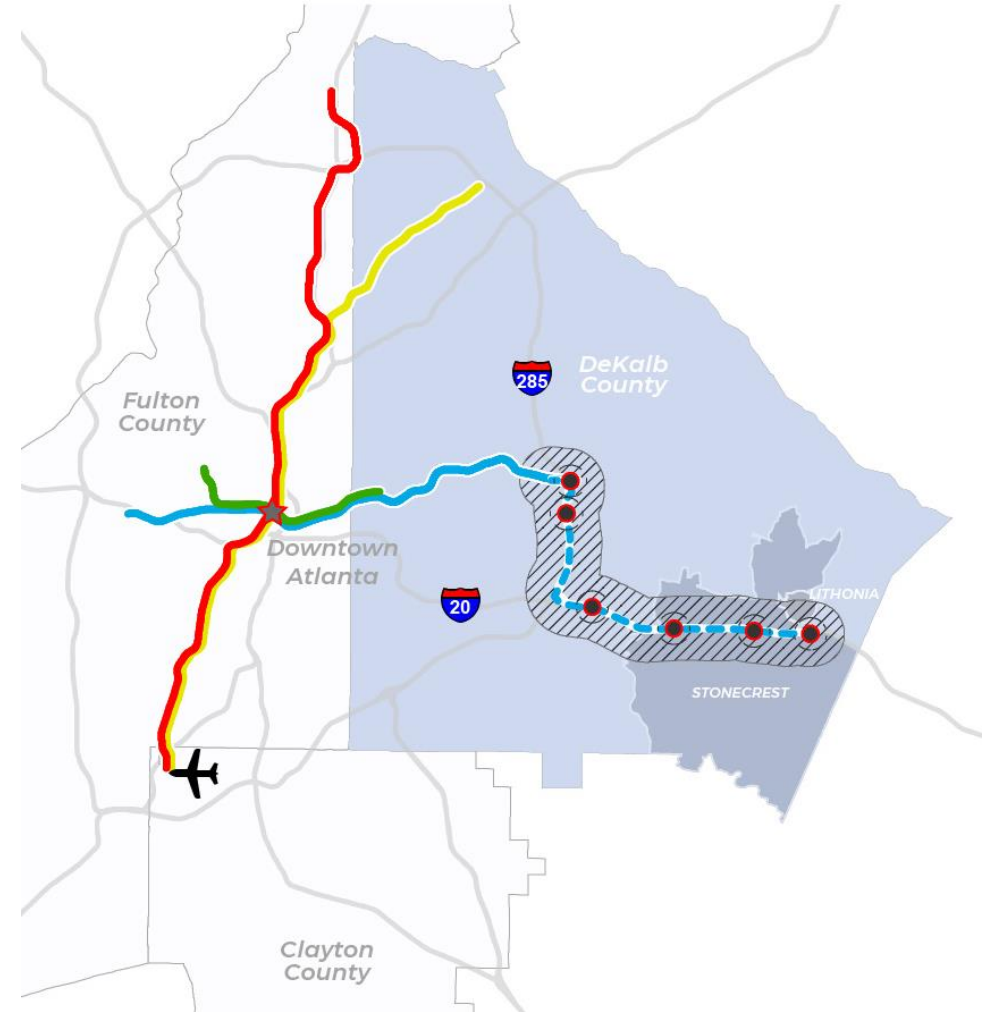
Challenges – These issues must be recognized and aggressively attacked to answer the question: Which comes first, Transit or TOD?

- Lack of community outreach and education
- Perception that increase density/intensity will increase traffic
- Perception that increased affordable housing or rental housing in general will lower property values
- Perception that commercial will bring crime to residential neighborhoods.



I-20 East Transit-Oriented Development Strategic Plan

- **Owner(s):** MARTA and DeKalb County
- **Partner(s):** DeKalb County Transit Master Plan (DeKalb County); I-20 E Transit Initiative (MARTA)
- **Consultant(s):** WSP, Planners for Environmental Quality, Sycamore Consulting, Nickel Works
- **End Date:** 12/31/2019
- **Website:** www.I20ETOD.com
- **Key Contact(s):**
Sylvia Smith, DeKalb County, sasmith@dekalbcountyga.gov;
Greg Floyd, MARTA, gfloyd@itsmarta.com;
Audra Rojek, WSP, Audra.Rojek@wsp.com



Goals

Goal 1:

Identify specific policies and incentives for context-sensitive development at proposed station locations

Goal 2:

Create partnerships to catalyze PRIVATE development around stations, anticipating a 10-20 year buildout

Goal 3:

Set the stage for TOD that can support an investment in high-capacity transit in the corridor

Timeline/Major Tasks

Project Kick-off – June 2017

Public Open House – November 2017

- TOD Land Use Program Survey

Existing Conditions & Site Analysis

- Issues and Opportunities
- Economic Market Conditions

TOD Public Workshop - April 2018

- Station Area Design Visioning

Refine Station Area TOD

- Finalize Station Area Plan and Implementation Strategies

TOD Open House – August 2018

- Review of the TOD Concept Plan

Final Public Meeting – Summer 2019

- Present Final Concepts, Implementation and Next steps

Major Opportunities and Challenges

- FTA grant funding to support TOD in project corridor received
- Uncertainty about transit project assumptions
- Coordination between MARTA, DeKalb County (project co-sponsors) and City of Stonecrest (formed after FTA grant received).



PUBLIC WORKSHOP - 04.27.2018



Outcomes

- Station Area Land Use Visions



INDIAN CREEK
REIMAGINE THE PARK & RIDE STATION AS AN INTER-MODAL TOWN CENTER MAIN STREET

- WHAT WE HEARD:
- Public access to Indian Creek
 - Green corridor



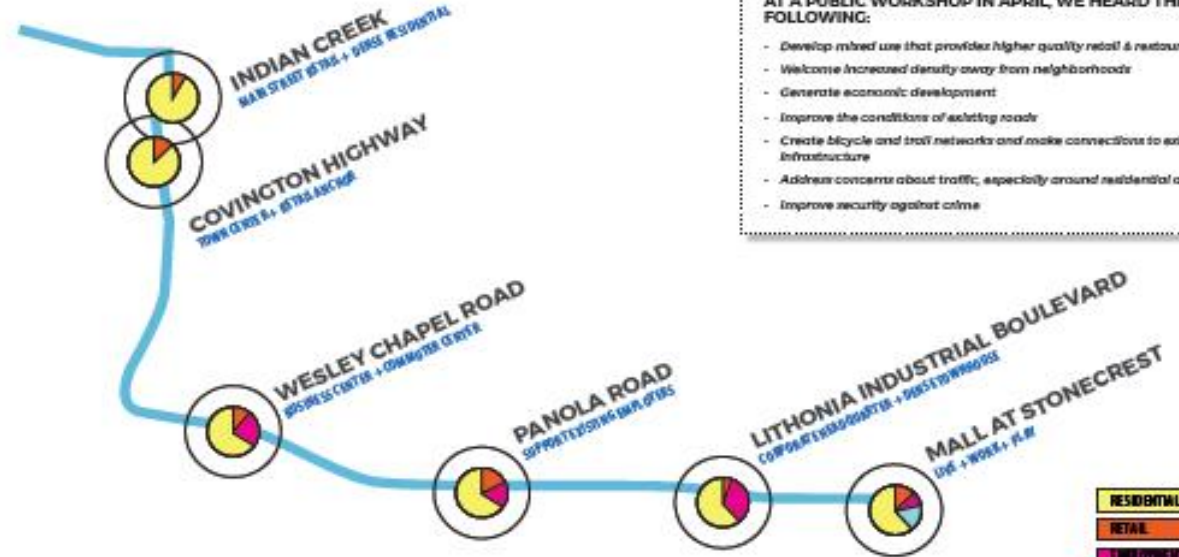
COVINGTON HIGHWAY
REDEVELOP COVINGTON HIGHWAY STATION AREA INTO A TOWN CENTER

- WHAT WE HEARD:
- An anchor on Covington Highway
 - New retail and gathering space



WESLEY CHAPEL RD
LEVERAGE IN ULTI-MODAL CONNECTION TO CREATE A TRANSIT HUB

- WHAT WE HEARD:
- Business center / job-creating uses
 - Redevelop retail



CORRIDOR-WIDE TAKEAWAYS

AT A PUBLIC WORKSHOP IN APRIL, WE HEARD THE FOLLOWING:

- Develop mixed use that provides higher quality retail & restaurants
- Welcome increased density away from neighborhoods
- Generate economic development
- Improve the conditions of existing roads
- Create bicycle and trail networks and make connections to existing infrastructure
- Address concerns about traffic, especially around residential areas
- Improve security against crime



PANOLA RD
DENSIFY AN EXISTING ANCHORS TO ESTABLISH A TOWN CENTER

- WHAT WE HEARD:
- Enhance industrial & business area



LITHONIA INDUSTRIAL BLVD
PLOT OUT AN OFFICE PARK AND HEADQUARTERS FOR NEW BUSINESSES

- WHAT WE HEARD:
- Create a campus for headquarters



MALL AT STONECREST
REIMAGINE AREA AROUND THE MALL AS A FUTURE REGIONAL LIVE + WORK + PLAY DISTRICT

- WHAT WE HEARD:
- Integrate Sports City facilities with mixed-use main street

RESIDENTIAL
RETAIL
EMPLOYMENT
ENTERTAINMENT



Outcomes

- Funding and financing incentives for economic development
- Coordination with DeKalb County Transit Master Plan

NEXT STEPS



DeKalb County should work with developers of proposed TOD to identify possible tax abatements for large investments along the corridor. The County will need to be strategic in selecting sites for abatements, carefully considering where TADs may be proposed.

TOD Spotlight

In 1995 the Oregon State Legislature amended legislation to enable local jurisdictions to adopt a Transit Oriented Development tax abatement program. Recognizing the higher development costs associated with building higher densities, the legislation's purpose is to promote higher-density residential and mixed use development near major public transit facilities (Figure 6-5). These tax exemptions increase a TOD project's financial feasibility by reducing their operating costs through a ten-year tax abatement on the improvement of the property. The property owners continue to pay taxes on the land value during the exception period.

Figure 2-5: Portland TOD



Opportunity Snapshot - Property Tax Abatement



Developers will benefit from a reduced property tax bill



\$\$ \$1 to 5 million



Lowers annual operating costs of developments.

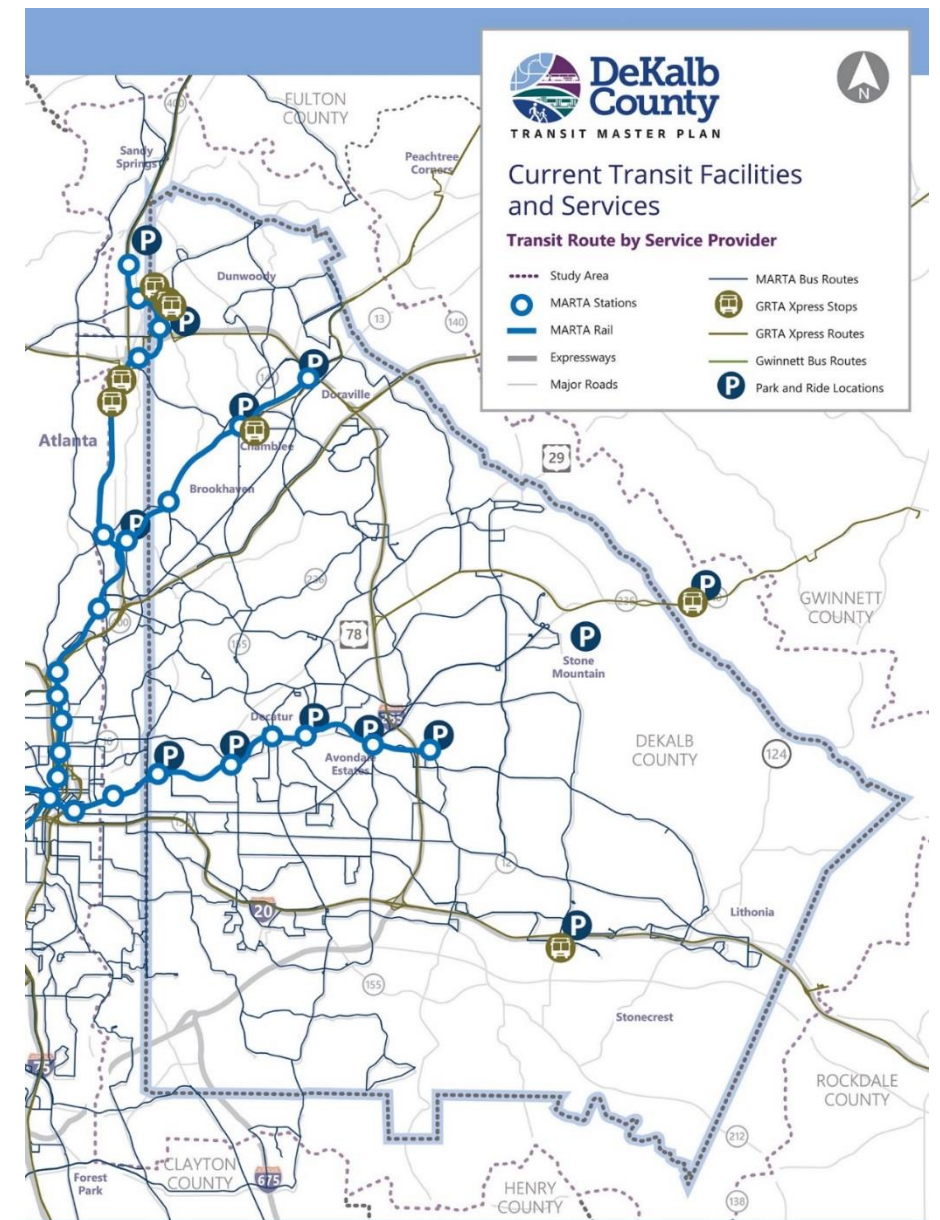


DeKalb County can provide property tax abatements to assist projects that are not otherwise financially viable. The abatements are made on a project-by-project basis. The County provided a tax abatement for Stonecrest Mall through 2020.



DeKalb County Transit Master Plan

- **Owners:** Atlanta Regional Commission & DeKalb County
- **Partners:** MARTA & all DeKalb municipalities
- **Consultant(s):** VHB, WSP, The Collaborative Firm, Sycamore Consulting, Bleakly Advisory Group, Cincar Consulting Group, & Corporate Environmental Risk Management
- **End Date:** June 2019
- **Website:** www.DeKalbTransitMasterPlan.com
- **Key Contacts:**
Lori Sand, ARC (The ATL), lsand@ATLtransit.ga.gov
Grady Smith, VHB, gsmith@vhb.com



Goals



Live, work, play and use transit



Make sure thriving and emerging areas have transit service

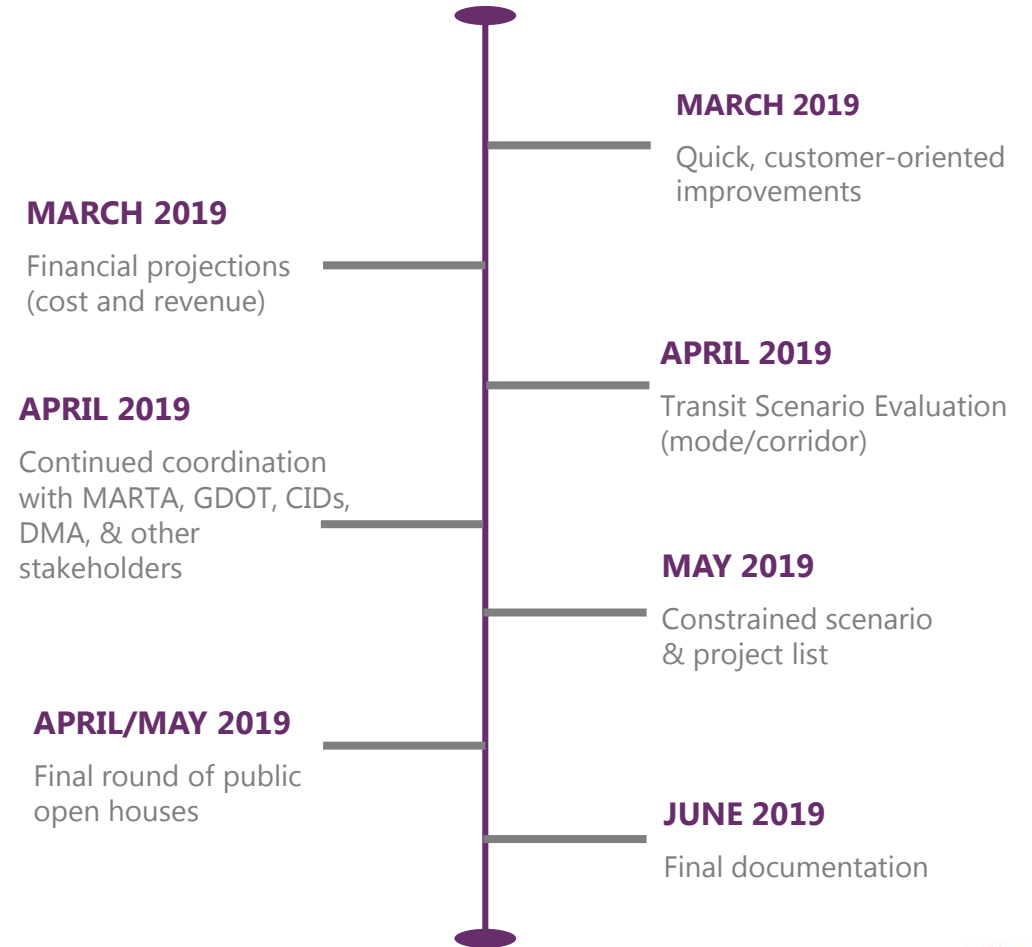


Ensure that the transit vision is affordable and effective



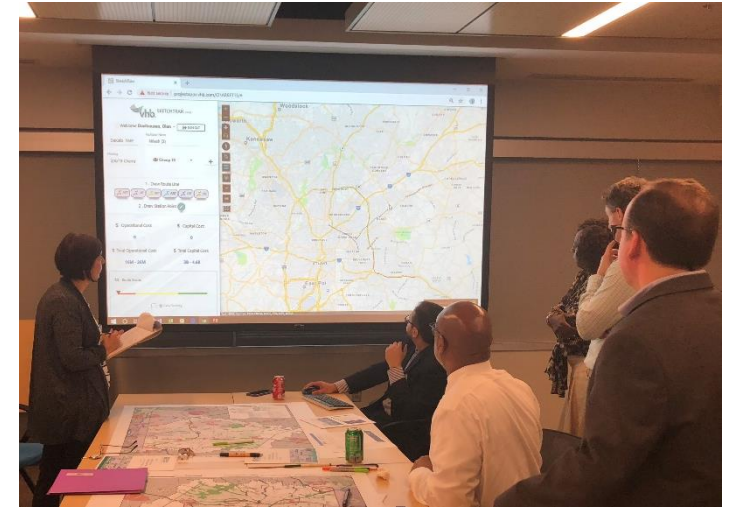
Make sure transit is available for everyone

Timeline/Major Tasks



Major Opportunities and Challenges

- Belief that transit investment has been disparate between the northern and southern parts of the County
- Attitudinal differences regarding transit investment between the northern and southern parts of the County
- Education on modes/stigma related to bus use
- Historical context of I-20 corridor rail investment
- Lack of land use intensity/density to support transit modes
- Existing funding can not support transit expansion
- Balancing desire for transit investment versus limited funding
- Changing landscape of transit funding and governance
- Unknown impacts of Gwinnett County potentially joining MARTA



Major Outcomes

- Stakeholder trip to Minneapolis
- Understanding of DeKalb County sales tax revenue projections
- Understanding of impacts of HB 930 on MARTA Act and DeKalb County
- Development of a universe of transit improvement projects with cost projections
- Equity analysis of investment
- Deepening of understanding of historical decision making
- Education on different modes and contribution to regional definition of modes (BRT versus ART)
- Strengthening the collaboration between DeKalb County and its municipalities



Key Coordination Opportunities

- Bringing land use and economic development specialists together
 - Consultant team
 - Charrette
- Having stakeholders join the DeKalb County staff
- Aligning DeKalb County municipalities, stakeholders, and general public transit vision
- Understanding how to input projects into the ATL's Regional Transit Plan
- Significant hands on involvement of elected officials and MARTA Board appointees
- Strengthening the collaboration between DeKalb County and MARTA
- Coordination with I-20 East TOD Strategic Plan



So...Which Comes First: Transit or TOD?

- Moderated Discussion

