MARTA South DeKalb Transit Initiative

Virtual Public Meeting – November 3, 2022

Welcome! Tonight's Speakers:

- Shelley Peart, MARTA
- Bryan Hobbs, MARTA
- Greg Giuffrida, MARTA
- Claudia Bilotto, WSP
- Grady Smith, VHB
- Michael Hightower, The Collaborative Firm

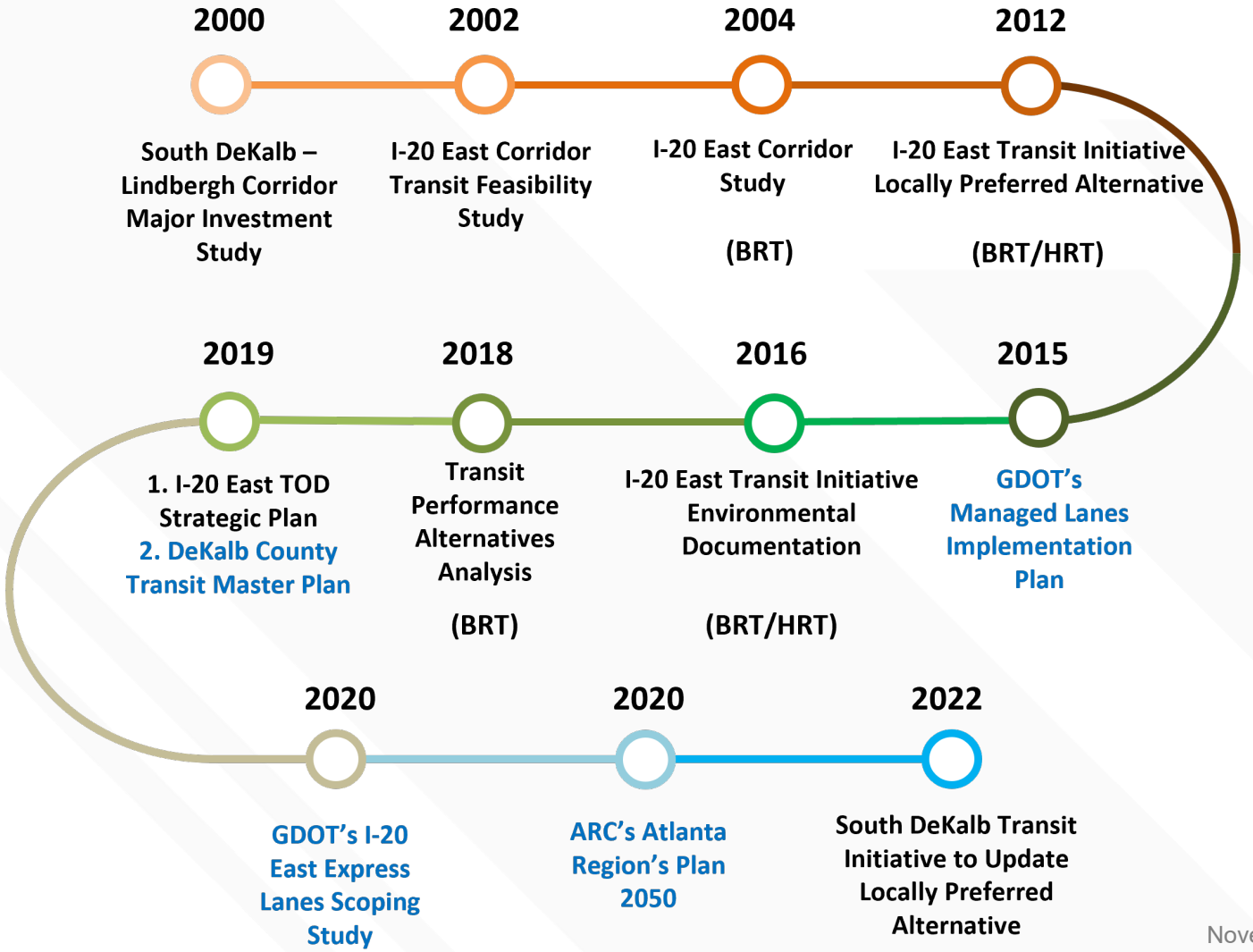
Virtual Event Participation Instructions

- Event Time: 6:00pm – 8:00pm
- Please use the **Q&A Section** to submit your project specific questions or comments. We will address as many questions/comments as time will allow.
- Your input is welcomed. Please participate in the POLL QUESTIONS!
- If you miss any details during the presentation, it will be posted on MARTA South DeKalb Transit Initiative's project website.
- For additional information on the MARTA South DeKalb Transit Initiative, visit, https://www.itsmarta.com/south-deKalb-transit-initiative.aspx

Agenda

- What is the South DeKalb Transit Initiative?
- What transit options have been studied in South DeKalb over the years?
- What are the major considerations in the planning process?
- How do I stay involved?

What transit options have been studied in South DeKalb?



Current MARTA Commitments for DeKalb County

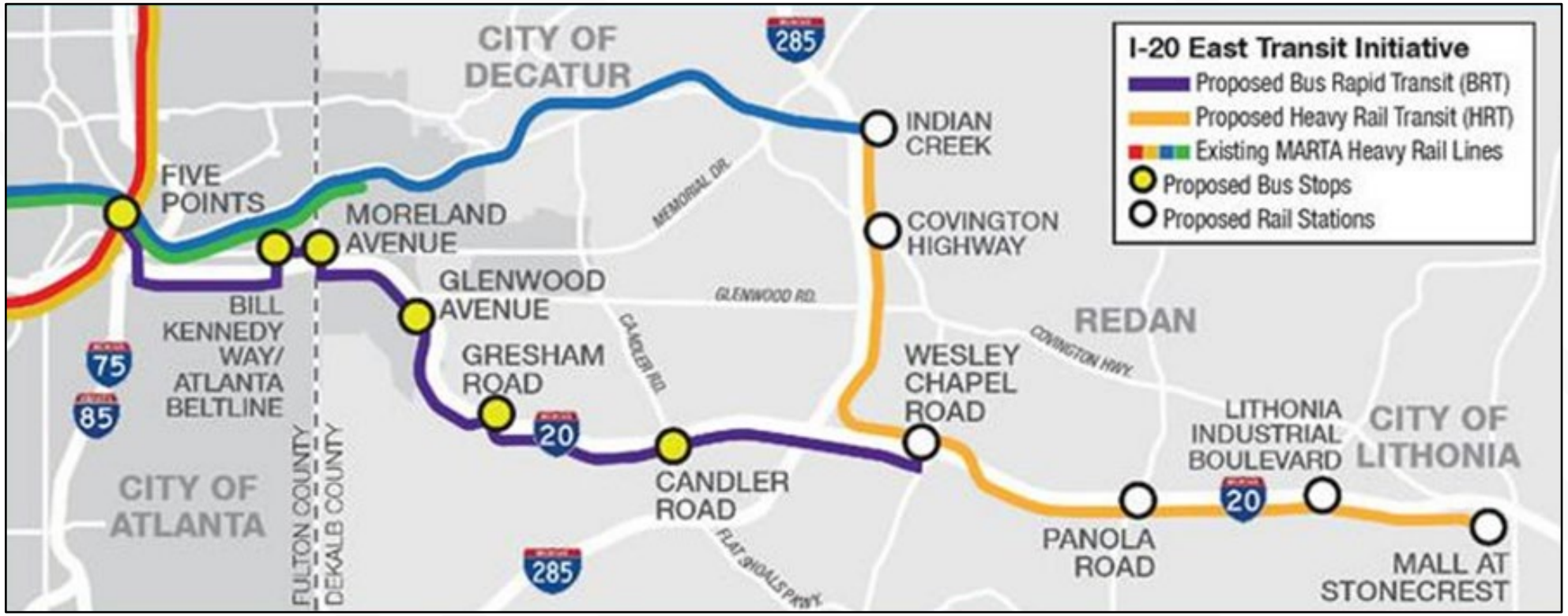
- State of Good Repair and Comprehensive Operations Analysis
- Ongoing installation of 150 bus shelters for next 5 years
- Station rehabilitation on schedule
- Buford Highway and Candler Road Arterial Rapid Transit
- South DeKalb and Stonecrest Mall Bus Transfer Centers
- Planning for BRT in GDOT I-285 Express Lanes
- Planning for South DeKalb Transit Initiative
- Continued support of TOD efforts on I-20 East

What is a Locally Preferred Alternative?

- Transit solution (mode/alignment) evaluated through the local planning process.
- Adopted as the desired alternative by MARTA through a public process.
- Identified as the preferred alternative in the National Environmental Policy Act Process.

What was the 2012 Locally Preferred Alternative (LPA)?

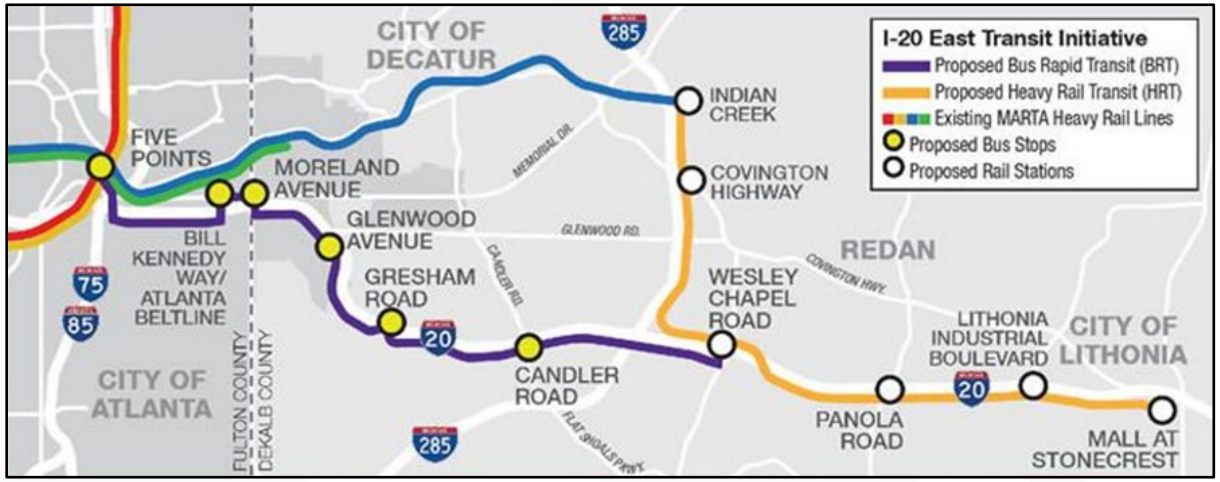
- **Heavy Rail (HRT)** from the Indian Creek Station south along I-285 then east along I-20 to the Mall at Stonecrest.
- **Bus Rapid Transit (BRT)** service between downtown Atlanta and Wesley Chapel in general use lanes and HOV lanes on I-20.



Locally Preferred Alternative (LPA) Adopted By MARTA Board 2012

What has changed since the 2012 LPA was adopted?

- GDOT plans for Express Lanes (2015) and interchange improvement (2016) reducing right-of-way for LPA implementation
- Increase in capital and right-of-way costs
- Stonecrest became most populous city in DeKalb County (2017)
- DeKalb County passed its first SPLOST (2017)
- DeKalb County adopted Transit Master Plan (2019)
- DeKalb County adopted a resolution supporting high-capacity transit in the I-20 East corridor (2022)



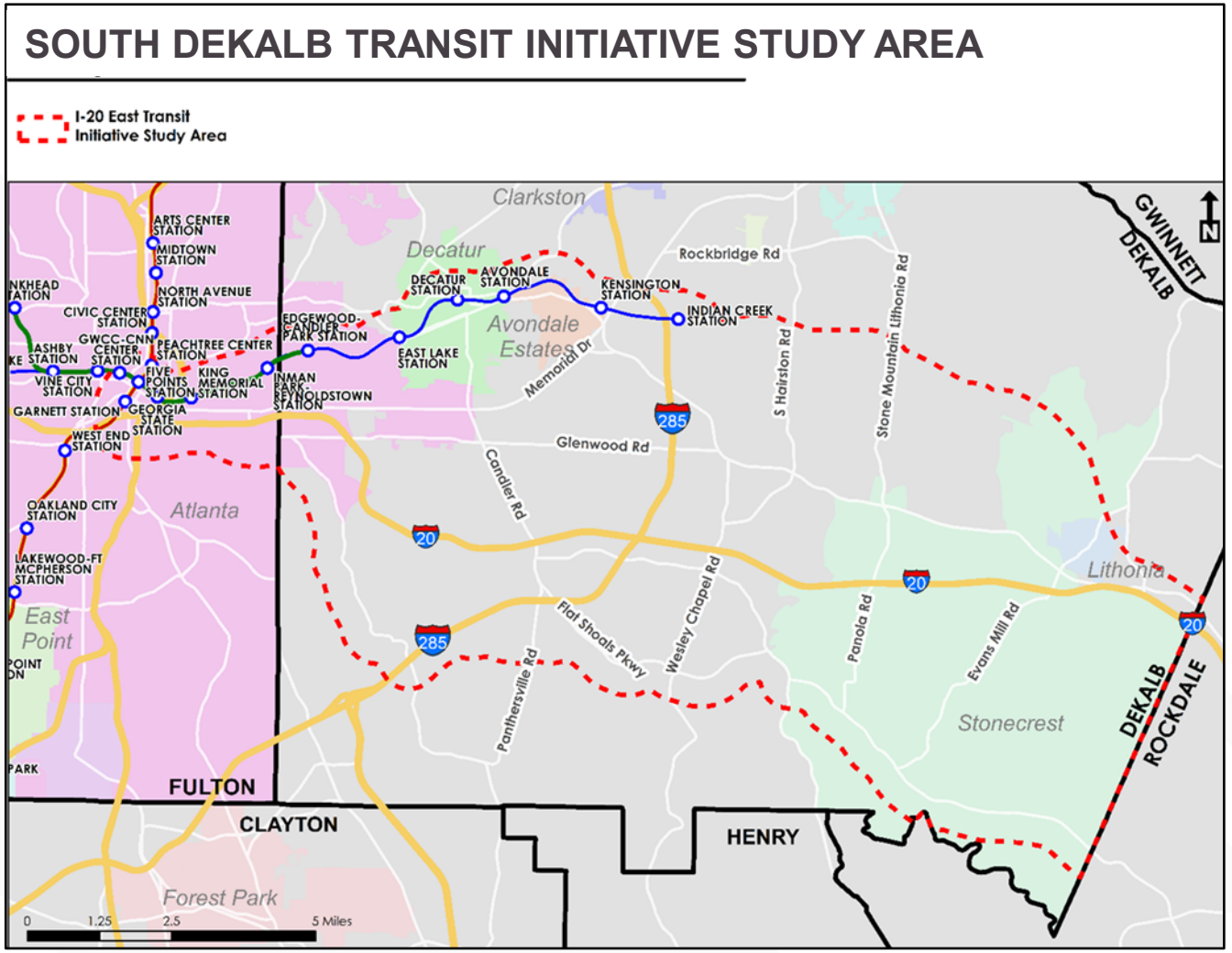
Locally Preferred Alternative (LPA) Adopted By MARTA Board 2012

Cost Estimate Changes Since Last Update

Estimated Cost	2018($)		2022($)	
Locally Preferred Alterative (LPA)	BRT	HRT	BRT	HRT
Estimated Costs	$ 84 million	$ 3.2 billion	$ 101 million	$ 6.5 - 7.5 billion

Study Area

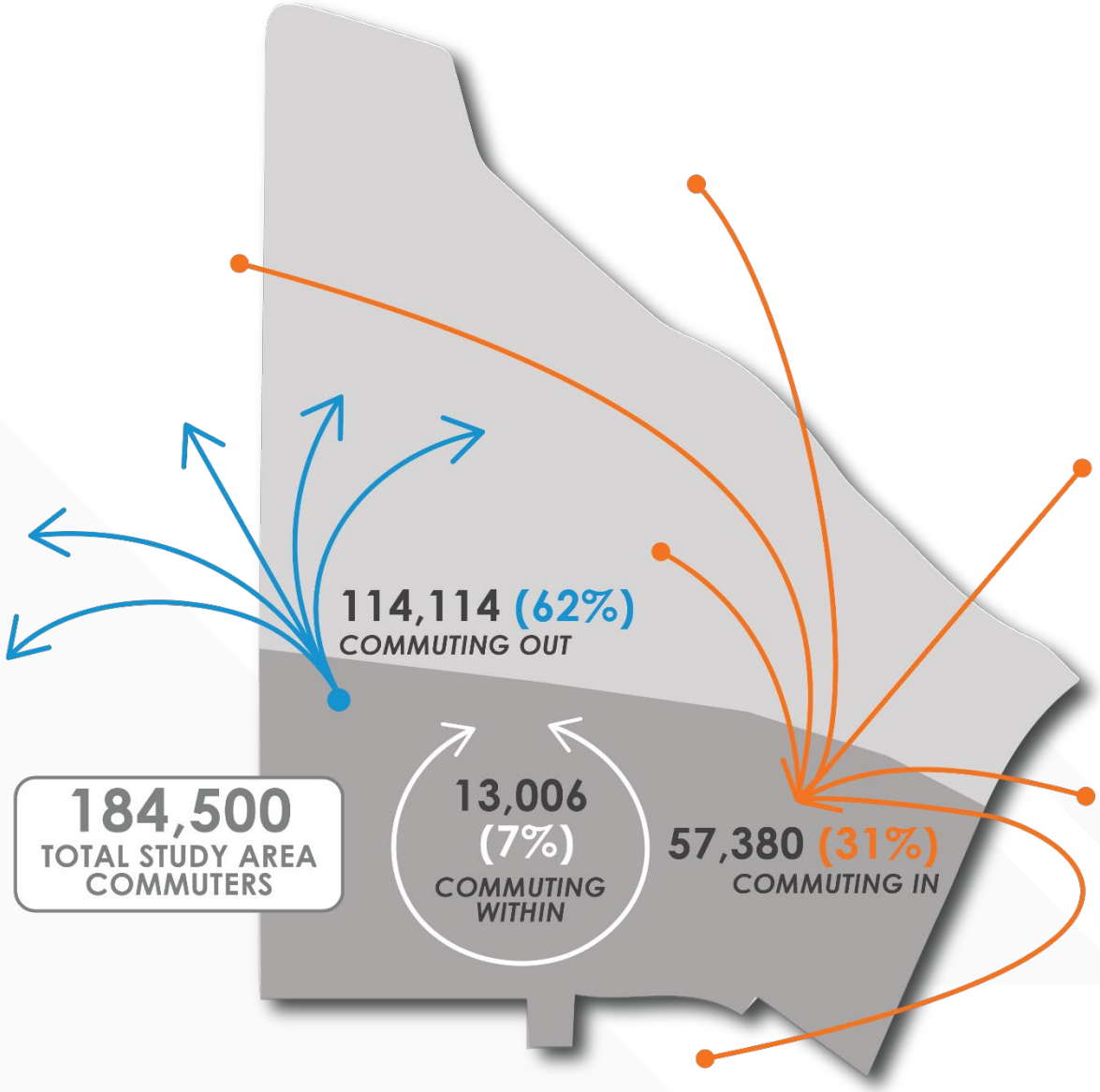
- Expanded study area to include major east-west and north-south corridors serving South Dekalb



South DeKalb Transit Initiative Study Area

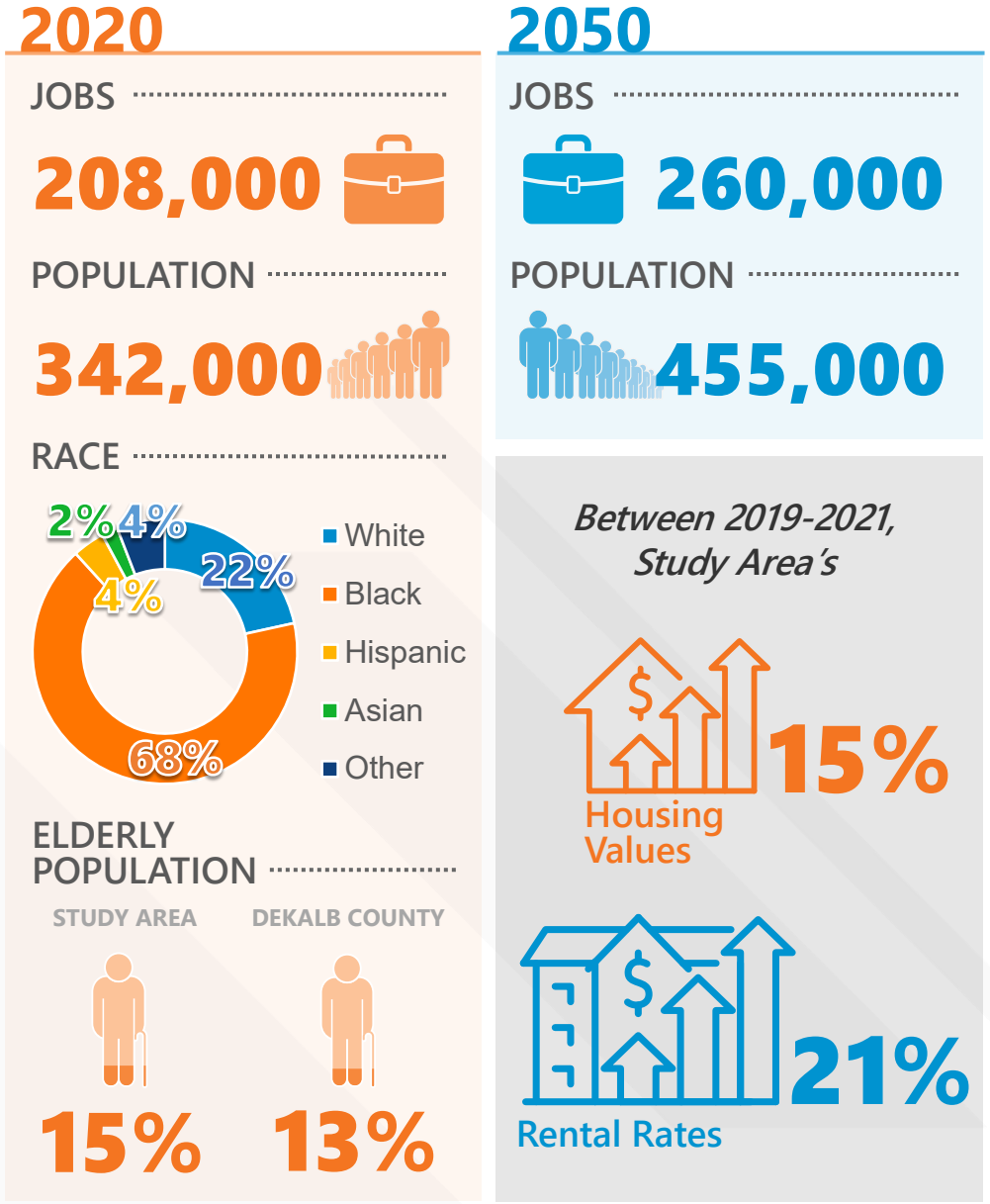
INFLOW/OUTFLOW ANALYSIS (2018 LEHD)

- Locations of employee home and work locations to understand travel flows
- More work trips leaving the study area than trips coming in
- Confirms Downtown/Midtown Atlanta as primary work destination
- Work trips to study area from North DeKalb and adjacent counties
- Only 7% of residents work in the study area



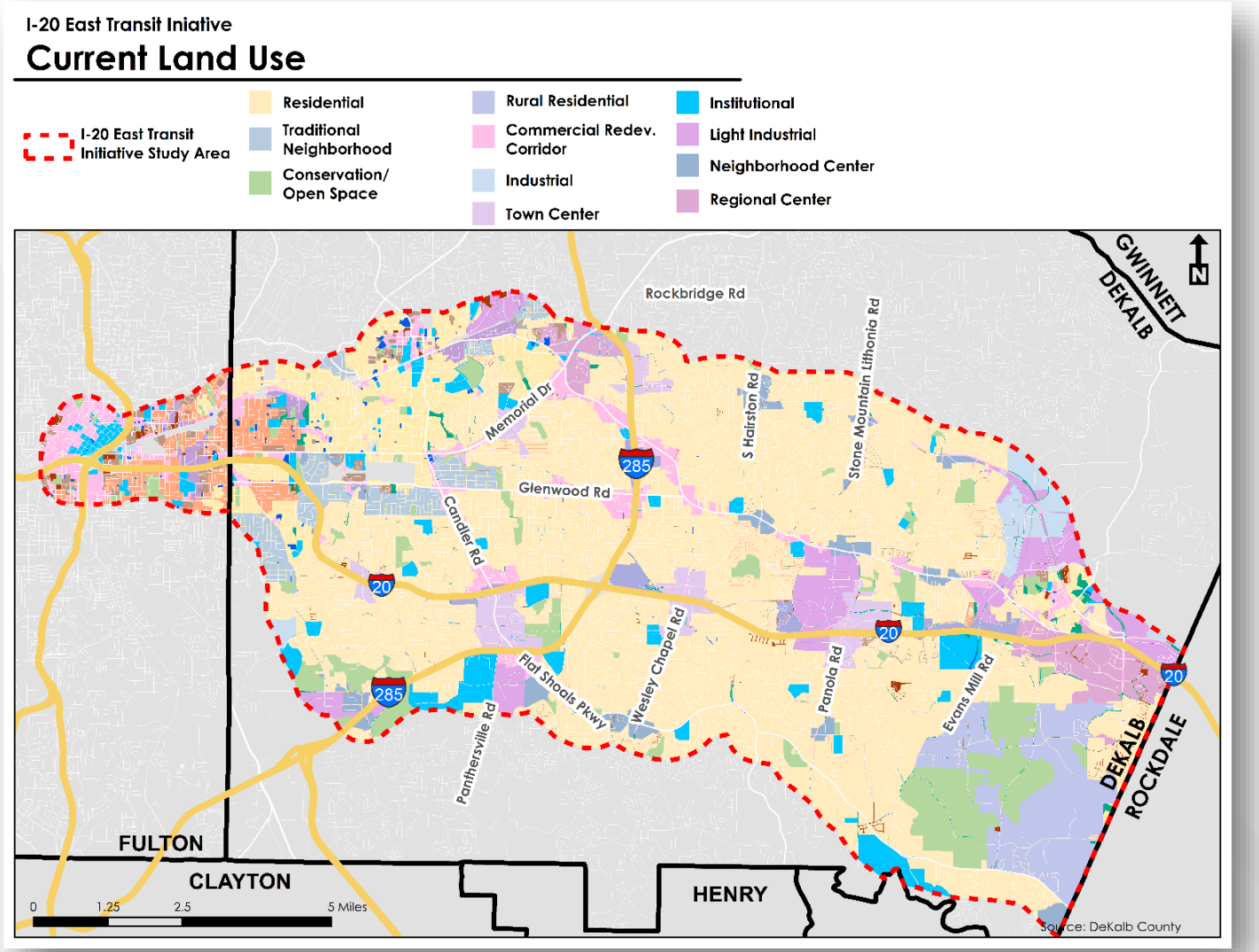
DEMOGRAPHIC TRENDS

- Continued growth and densification
- Growth near MARTA rail, along Panola Road between Covington Highway and I-20, intersection of Glenwood Road and Candler Road, and Stonecrest Mall area
- Predominantly African-American and becoming more diverse
- Growing elderly population – aging in place
- Pockets of significant transit dependent population
- Rising housing values and rental rates but still below regional average
- Limited economic development and job centers (jobs-housing mismatch)
  - 27% of jobs are low-wage jobs



LAND USE

- Predominantly suburban with pockets of commercial uses around interstate interchanges
- Mall at Stonecrest is the largest commercial area outside Downtown Atlanta with high redevelopment opportunities
- Future land use plan supports higher densities in activity centers
- DeKalb County is currently updating the land use and transportation plan (Unified Plan)



Ridership Comparison

Estimated Ridership	
2012 LPA (HRT+BRT) Future Year Boardings at New Stations	11,300
MARTA Rail System Average Weekday Boardings	86,300
CTA Red Line Extension* Daily Boardings *Part of Federal New Starts Program	38,000

Transit Supportive Densities

Low Density

>15 dwelling units/acre
20-25 jobs/acre

Medium Density

>20 dwelling units/acre
20-25 jobs/acre

High Density

20-30+ dwelling units/acre
50+ jobs/acre

Planning Process

Existing Conditions/ Confirm Purpose & Need

- Document changes in demographics, land use, travel trends, and market assessment
- Identify GDOT managed lanes corridor impacts
- Update purpose & need to confirm current transportation problem

Winter/Spring 2022

Re-evaluate Previous Locally Preferred Alternative

- Update Heavy Rail/BRT project definition to reflect GDOT managed lanes concepts
- Understand cost, performance, and impacts

Summer/Fall 2022

Develop & Evaluate Other Alternatives

- Develop up to three High-Capacity Transit alternatives
- Perform two-tiered screening evaluation
- Compare Heavy Rail/BRT alternative against other alternatives

Fall/Winter 2022

Update Locally Preferred Alternative

- Based on evaluation results and community support, identify an updated Locally Preferred Alternative and funding strategy for adoption by the MARTA Board

Summer/Fall 2023

WE ARE HERE

On-going Public & Stakeholder Engagement

Federal Funding Opportunities

- **FTA Capital Investment Grant Program ($23 Billion)**
  - Largest federal funding program for major transit fixed guideway projects
  - Funds a percentage of capital costs, based on competitive criteria and local commitment to funding
  - **Three (3) categories of projects:**
    1. New Starts (capital costs > $400 million)
    2. Small Starts (capital costs < $400 million)
    3. Core Capacity (corridor development and systems)
- **USDOT Funding Programs** – CMAQ, STBG, Formula Funds for Carbon Reduction
- **Other Grant Opportunities** – Mega, RAISE, Low-No, etc., Bus and Bus Facilities

Heavy Rail (HRT)

Light Rail/Streetcar (LRT/SC)

Bus Rapid Transit (BRT)

Funding Evaluation

Project Justification
(50% of Overall Rating)

Mobility Improvements	(16.66%)
Cost Effectiveness	(16.66%)
Congestion Relief	(16.66%)
Environmental Benefits	(16.66%)
Land Use	(16.66%)
Economic Development	(16.66%)

+

Local Financial Commitment
(50% of Overall Rating)

Current Condition	(25%)
Commitment of Funds	(25%)
Reliability/Capacity	(50%)

=

Overall Project Rating*

- Will inform selection of preferred technology as well as overall project approach and timing

South DeKalb Transit Initiative – What's Next?

- We need your feedback regarding transportation needs and preferences in the community.
- Based on your feedback, we will refine the purpose & need and evaluate transit alternatives that best serve those needs.
- We will revisit the community in early Spring with the evaluation results.
- Based on evaluation results and community feedback, we will advance an updated LPA for MARTA Board approval – Summer 2023.
- MARTA and DeKalb County will work together on a funding strategy.

Take the Survey!

Thank You