

Summerhill Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) FAQ

General

Where are we in the overall project timeline?

The Summerhill BRT project final design was completed in July 2022. Construction is anticipated to take place from early 2023 through early 2025 with the start of revenue service in Summer 2025.

Have the route and stop locations been determined?

The MARTA Board adopted the Summerhill BRT preferred route with preliminary stop locations in Fall 2019. Exact stop locations were finalized as part of the design phase from Fall 2021 to Fall 2022.

How many stops will there be and how was that number determined?

There are 14 stops planned as part of the Summerhill BRT. These stops are approximately 0.3 miles apart, which was determined to provide the proper balance between accessibility and route travel time during the project's planning phase.

Additionally, Summerhill BRT will connect to three MARTA rail stations (Georgia State Station, Five Points Station, and Garnett Station), and various other MARTA bus routes. Stops at these locations are critical to support transfers to the rest of the MARTA system.

How was the route alignment to South Downtown and Five Points determined?

The MARTA Board adopted the final alignment based on public and stakeholder input to serve South Downtown and Five Points, to connect to the North/South and East/West rail lines, to leverage ridership from major employment locations including Federal, State, and Local government, and to connect to future redevelopment sites in South Downtown and along the Atlanta Beltline. The direct connection to Five Points and the North/South rail line was identified as a critical link by stakeholders and the public.

What are the operating hours? Will they complement MARTA bus or rail hours?

Service along the Summerhill BRT route will be coordinated with MARTA rail service hours. Operating hours are currently planned for 5:00 AM to 1:00 AM daily. These operating hours represent an improvement over current bus service and are similar to that of current MARTA rail service outside of areas served by multiple lines.

How long will I have to wait for the BRT at each stop? How does that differ for daytime and nighttime operating hours?

At this time, weekday service is scheduled to arrive every 10 minutes during the daytime peak, every 15 minutes in the evening, and every 20 minutes during the late-night hours. Weekend service is scheduled to arrive every 20 minutes in the morning, every 15 minutes midday through the evening, and every 20 minutes during the late-night hours.

What is the ridership forecast for Summerhill BRT?

The average weekday ridership is forecasted to be 2,350 in 2025 (opening year) and 3,450 in 2040 (horizon year).

What type of transit vehicle will be used?

The transit vehicle for the Summerhill BRT will be a 60-foot articulated electric vehicle. While the specific vehicles have yet to be purchased and branded, the vehicle is comparable to other articulated buses currently operating as part of MARTA's bus fleet.



Fare Collection

What is the fare structure for Summerhill BRT trips?

The fare structure for Summerhill BRT trips will be the standard MARTA fare of \$2.50 per trip with free transfers. Monthly passes and trip passes will provide a lower per trip price.

How will fares be collected for Summerhill BRT trips?

Fare collection will occur prior to boarding the vehicle. Off-board fare collection specifics are still being finalized in coordination with MARTA’s next generation fare collection project “MARTA Automated Fare Collection 2.0.”

How will MARTA enforce fare collection?

Fare collection enforcement is under discussion with the MARTA Operations, MARTA Legal, and MARTA Police Department.

Connectivity

Will the Summerhill BRT line connect to MARTA bus or rail? How will transfers between Summerhill BRT and MARTA bus or MARTA rail operate?

Summerhill BRT will connect to three MARTA rail stations (Georgia State Station, Five Points Station, and Garnett Station), four MARTA local bus routes in the Summerhill and Peoplestown neighborhoods (Routes 49, 55, 155, 832), and various other bus routes in Downtown. Transfers will operate the same as local bus to local bus transfers, or local bus to rail transfer, with the tap of a fare card.

How will this project impact existing service for Route 55?

At this time, Route 55 is planned to continue when the BRT begins service and will be able to utilize the planned bus only lanes.

How will the Summerhill BRT line connect to the South Atlanta neighborhoods, the BeltLine Southside Trail, and Carver High School?

The Summerhill BRT Southern Terminus is located on Hank Aaron Drive near Ridge Avenue, just north of the Norfolk Southern railroad tracks and the intersection of Hank Aaron Drive, University Avenue, and McDonough Boulevard.

The City of Atlanta and the Atlanta BeltLine are working with the adjacent private developers to create a connection on the north side of the railroad tracks to the Atlanta BeltLine. This access would allow pedestrians to use the Atlanta BeltLine tunnel for access to the Southern Terminus. Additionally, the Route 55 bus that currently connects South Atlanta to Downtown Atlanta will be able to utilize the bus only lanes and adjacent stops, providing transfers with the BRT system.

MARTA will continue to coordinate with Georgia DOT, the City of Atlanta DOT, and Norfolk Southern for all matters related to the at-grade railroad crossing and is committed to working with these partners to identify solutions.

Dedicated Lanes

How much of the corridor will have dedicated bus only lanes?

Approximately 85% of the corridor will have dedicated bus only lanes

Based on comments received from multiple stakeholders related to dedicated lanes as part of the 60% design phase in Fall 2021, MARTA and the project team conducted additional analysis to determine if any of the planned shared lanes within the South Downtown area could be redesigned as bus only lanes. After additional investigation and discussions with the City of Atlanta Department of Transportation, the Georgia Department of Transportation, and the Georgia Building Authority / Georgia State Properties Commission, who have jurisdiction within these segments, it was determined that additional bus only lanes are not feasible or critical at this time.

However, once the BRT is operational, MARTA will evaluate the performance of the system to determine if additional bus only lanes would provide further efficiencies, or otherwise improve service, and can be coordinated with other planned and potential Downtown improvements. Our partners at the City of Atlanta Department of Transportation and the Georgia Department of Transportation have committed to supporting future operational assessments when requested by MARTA.

How does that amount of dedicated bus only lanes compare to other BRT systems in the United States?

The Summerhill BRT project is fortunate to have 85% dedicated lanes, which is unusual for BRT systems in the United States. The Federal Transit Administration (FTA) considers Fixed Guideway BRT to be any system operating with more than 50% dedicated lanes.

How will the dedicated bus only lanes be enforced?

Bus only lanes are a new community feature that will require additional attention and effort to educate motorists on how they are to be utilized. MARTA is considering several options for the enforcement of the dedicated bus only lanes. These options include developing and marketing an education and enforcement strategy with the community and exploring the possibility of camera enforcement. Enforcement of the bus only lanes will require coordination with the Atlanta Police Department as they have jurisdiction over most roadways along the BRT route. Additionally, camera enforcement will require coordination with and enabling legislation from the State of Georgia. MARTA is currently discussing this with our state-level partners since all planned BRT lines would benefit from camera enforcement.

Have protective barriers for the bus only lanes been considered?

Due to limited curb to curb width along the corridor, vertical protective barriers for the bus only lanes are not feasible. Most arterial BRT systems, particularly in developed communities, operate without physical separation of the bus only lanes.

Will cars be able to turn right from the bus only lanes at intersections or to access a driveway?

Vehicles will be allowed to turn right from the bus only lane at driveways or intersections after yielding to transit vehicles in the bus only lane.

Bicycles

Will bicycles be allowed to share the dedicated bus only lanes?

To achieve the desired safety and operational standards, the bus only lane is intended for transit vehicles only. Bicycles will not be allowed to share the dedicated bus only lanes as it would present safety challenges for MARTA bus operators and could negatively impact operations of the BRT service.

At this time, MARTA has identified on-road and off-road bicycle accommodations that can be implemented as part of the Summerhill BRT project between Georgia Avenue and Capitol Square/Trinity Avenue. We continue to coordinate with the City of Atlanta Department of Transportation to identify safe facilities along and adjacent to the Summerhill BRT route for bicycles and scooters, which may include on-street and/or off-street accommodations.

Will you be able to take bikes on the BRT vehicles?

The 60-foot articulated electric bus design is currently being finalized. All design options under consideration by MARTA allow bicycles to be brought on-board or stowed on the front of the BRT vehicle.

Will there be bike lockers or racks at the Southern Terminus and other stops?

Yes, bike racks will be included at each stop. Additional bike racks are being considered for the Southern Terminus which is adjacent to the Atlanta BeltLine.

Sidewalks and Pedestrian Experience

Will the pedestrian experience between the BRT stops and the MARTA rail stations be improved?

MARTA and the project team conducted a site visit to inventory pedestrian needs and improvements on Forsyth Street and Broad Street between MLK Jr. Drive and MARTA's Five Points station, Piedmont Avenue between MLK Jr. Drive and MARTA's Georgia State station, and Broad Street between Mitchell Street and MARTA's Garnett station.

Several possible improvements have been identified and MARTA is working to determine which partner organization is responsible as well as jointly identify potential funding. MARTA is committed to working with the City of Atlanta and Central Atlanta Progress to create safe and pleasant pedestrian access in these areas.

Are the sidewalks along the corridor and within walking distance to the stops being improved?

MARTA has committed to making numerous multimodal safety improvements along the BRT corridor including accessible curb ramps, traffic signal improvements, clear delineation of on-street parking, updated signs, and pavement markings. MARTA coordinated with the City of Atlanta to ensure that each stop will be accessible and meet ADA guidelines. Each stop will have access to pedestrian sidewalks.

New sidewalks or major sidewalk improvements along the corridor are not included in the scope of this project. MARTA is coordinating with the City of Atlanta Department of Transportation to identify additional pedestrian needs along the corridor and between the BRT stops and MARTA rail stations to facilitate convenient and comfortable transfers.

Miscellaneous

Will the Summerhill BRT line run during downtown sporting/entertainment events? How will this relate to City of Atlanta traffic plans for special events?

BRT operations will continue and potentially increase during special events at nearby Downtown Atlanta and Summerhill sports and civic venues. MARTA will work with City of Atlanta Department of Transportation traffic operations staff to ensure minimal BRT



delay during special events through the combination of flush traffic plans and transit signal priority. More information will be provided to the community prior to BRT service operation.

How will MARTA adjust BRT operations in coordination with or response to any film permits or street closures?

MARTA continues to coordinate with the City of Atlanta to identify strategies that will minimize and mitigate any impacts on BRT service including film permits. BRT service offers great flexibility when temporary rerouting is needed due to emergency roadway or utility repairs.

How will the BRT affect the plans to convert Martin Luther King Jr. Drive and Mitchell Street from one-way to two-way streets?

The Summerhill BRT is being designed with flexibility in mind, including potential to react to future roadway changes. Proposals to convert Martin Luther King Jr. Drive from one-way to two-way will continue to be considered with final design so that such alterations are not precluded due to the BRT. Additionally, MARTA will continue to work with the City of Atlanta Department of Transportation and Central Atlanta Progress to ensure that any operational changes to these streets maintain safe and efficient Summerhill BRT operations.

What kind of security/law enforcement is planned? Has there been coordination with the Atlanta Police Department?

The MARTA Police Department and Atlanta Police Department are in constant communication and coordination during day-to-day operations of the MARTA transit system. This same coordination will apply to Summerhill BRT to maintain patrols, periodic officer ride-alongs, and enforcement of the dedicated bus only lane.

Will the streets along the corridor be resurfaced?

MARTA, in coordination with the city of Atlanta, anticipates milling and resurfacing the bus only lanes and the majority of the general-purpose lanes on the corridor.

There have been several changes to the final design compared to the design previously shared with the public. Why?

MARTA and the design team have had to make several changes to the project based on budget constraints and ongoing feedback from our partners at the City of Atlanta and Federal Transit Administration. Like most construction projects worldwide, the project budget has been strained by inflation, availability of materials and labor, and additional requirements for safety, utility relocation, and other challenges. These changes include the elimination of two stations (Capitol Gateway and Memorial at Trinity), material choices on the stations, and reduction of lane coloring. Please visit the project website for additional details, <https://itsmarta.com/summerhill.aspx>.