



7.0 Conclusion

7.1 Key Findings

This Existing Conditions and Future Trends Report provides background information pertaining to known features, trends, opportunities and constraints that may warrant further analysis as the project advances through the study process. This chapter discusses the key findings of the report and strategies to be addressed in the AA process.

7.1.1 Socioeconomic Conditions

Key findings regarding socioeconomic conditions include the following:

- **Population Growth** – The study area population has grown at a more rapid rate than the surrounding portions of northern Fulton County during this last decade. In 2000, the study area population was 76,335 residents. The 2010 US Census indicated that it increased by 22 percent to 93,136. The population is forecast to grow to 102,182 by 2040, a 10 percent increase over the year 2010 population. A growing population will continue to place demands for additional transportation capacity on an already overburdened transportation system in the study area and the region.
- **Employment Growth** – Forecasts predict the study area will become an increasingly important destination for work trips. Employment is forecast to grow from 95,096 jobs in 2009 to nearly 141,329 by 2040, a 49 percent increase. Assessments of transportation impacts will need to consider the changing travel patterns that are likely to result from this growth in employment and changes to the housing and employment balance in the corridor.

- **Transit Use** – According to the US Census, approximately four percent of the residents 16 years of age and older in the study area currently use transit to get to work. Improvements in transit, bicycle, and pedestrian facilities in the corridor may provide significant mobility and quality of life enhancements for these residents as well as those who own private automobiles but may choose to use other modes of transportation for a share of their trips. According to the ARC's Travel Demand Model, approximately two percent of the study area population uses transit for all trips.
- **Community Diversity** – About 41 percent of study area residents are from minority populations; about eight percent of all residents are in poverty, as defined by the US Census; and approximately eight percent are over the age of 65. Maintaining and enhancing the character and functionality of the study area neighborhoods will be an important consideration in assessing potential project impacts.

The AA will provide an assessment of socioeconomic characteristics of each community within the study area. It will assess, at a general level, the project's potential effects and benefits to community services and community cohesion. The analysis will also begin to discuss potential mitigation strategies addressing negative impacts.

7.1.2 Land Use, Zoning, and Local Plans

Key findings regarding land use, zoning and local plans include the following:

- **Land Use** – Predominate existing land uses in the study area include residential (42%), commercial (26%), and open space (16%). Future land use plans show that residential

uses will continue to be the dominate type of use, but mixed-use development will increase, especially along major corridors. DRIs have been concentrated in the Perimeter Center area and the northern portion of the study area.

- **Related Plans and Efforts** – In addition to the planning efforts of local jurisdictions, several regional entities and CIDs have contributed guidelines and incentives to guide land development. The ARC’s LCI program continues to promote transit-supportive developments, as has MARTA’s TOD guidelines and station area developments.

During the AA planning process, an assessment of effects on land use and zoning will assist in making an informed decision for the LPA. The analysis will provide descriptions of the general locations where potential land use conversions might occur and where existing or planned zoning is inconsistent with the proposed action. The analysis will include a statement of potential economic impact of the alternatives and begin to discuss strategies to avoid or minimize potential adverse land use impacts.

7.1.3 Water Resources

Preliminary research identified 681 acres of wetlands, 2,016 acres of floodplains, and six named rivers and streams within the study area. The crossing of the Chattahoochee River could be a significant consideration in the development and analysis of potential alternatives. Many of the water resources within the study area are co-located with parks. The AA will provide the locations of identified resources and an “order of magnitude” area of potential impacts to those resources as a way to compare alternatives.

7.1.4 Contaminated and Hazardous Materials Sites

Preliminary assessments have identified five sites of potential concern. Further research conducted as part of the study process may yield more potential contaminated and hazardous materials sites. The AA will identify areas of known and potential contamination and consider these when determining the LPA.

7.1.5 Parks

The study area includes 1,069 acres of parkland that consists of portions of 11 public parks. Parks are frequently along natural areas and water resources. Local plans show considerable community support for parks and a desire for physical continuity and community access. The development of the LPA should consider improved accessibility and connectivity of these parks while avoiding or minimizing the potential for any negative impacts to parklands.

The AA will identify park and recreational facilities in the study area and assess potential impacts. It will also identify ownership of the resources for purposes of assisting the Section 4(f) evaluation. The parks and recreational resources analysis

will identify the type of impacts to each resource and discuss potential mitigation strategies.

7.1.6 Historic and Cultural Resources

Preliminary research has identified two National Register historic sites in the study area. Forty-two other surveyed sites and three districts were identified as having potential historic significance. Two historic cemeteries and eight archaeological sites are also located in the study area. Historic and cultural resources are predominantly found along SR 9, the study area’s original travel corridor and location of the historic town centers of Alpharetta, Roswell, and Sandy Springs.

7.1.7 Transportation Conditions

In the study area, as in the Atlanta region as a whole, roadway congestion coupled with a high dependence on roadway travel have an adverse impact on mobility. Of the nineteen arterial roadways in the study area, only seven have a V/C ratio under 1.0 in the year 2010. In 2040, three are forecast to have a V/C ratio under 1.0 and two roads, McGinnis Ferry Road and Glenridge Connector are forecast to have a V/C ratio of 2.0.

In addition, transit service in the study area is not time competitive with automobile travel or used as frequently. According to ARC’s travel demand model, transit travel times are significantly longer relative to automobile travel, and transit provides a significantly smaller share of all trips. Without an exclusive ROW, the buses that provide transit service to the North Springs MARTA Station must share the congested roadways with other motor vehicles. The planned introduction of managed lanes on GA 400, if shared with transit, could improve transit travel times. However, between the years 2010 and 2040, as additional improvements are completed, forecasts predict the number of transit trips produced by and attracted to the study area will increase by 38 and 48 percent, respectively. Table 7-1 presents the trip volumes to, from, and within the study area as forecast by the regional travel demand model.

Between the years 2010 and 2040, the travel demand model forecasts an increase of trips from the study area of 28.7 percent, trips to the study area of 45.4 percent, and trips within the study area of 35.6 percent. Trips to and from Forsyth County are forecast to increase by approximately 90 percent during this period.

In accordance with the findings of Plan 2040, the GA 400 corridor is designated as a Regional Employment Corridor. These corridors represent the densest development outside of the Regional Core and connect the various Regional Centers and the Regional Core via existing and planned high capacity transportation facilities. These are the areas proposed for

increased housing and employment density, and the focus of improved connectivity between Centers and the Region Core.