



Date: August 16, 2019

Re: Responses to Public Information Open House (PIOH) Comments for SR 400 Express Lanes project held on February 28, March 5, March 7, and March 12, 2019

To: Participants at PIOHs

Thank you for your comments on the Georgia Department of Transportation's (GDOT) SR 400 Express Lanes project and MARTA's GA 400 Transit Initiative. We appreciate your participation and all the input that was received at the PIOHs for SR 400 Express Lanes project held on February 28, March 5, March 7, and March 12, 2019.

MARTA and GDOT collected written and verbal comments from open house attendees. The comments that concern the MARTA GA 400 Transit Initiative will be made part of the project's official record. The **34** formal comments received on the GA 400 Transit Initiative have been incorporated into the **nine (9) summary comments** below.

MARTA has prepared one response letter that addresses all comments received so that everyone can be aware of the comments and questions raised as well as the responses to them. Please find the comments summarized below (in italics) followed by our response.

- **Comment 1**

- *"MARTA should extend Heavy Rail Transit (HRT) north from North Springs into this corridor rather than Bus Rapid Transit (BRT)."*

- **Response:**

We appreciate the interest and support for expansion of HRT in the SR 400 corridor. In 2011, MARTA initiated an Alternatives Analysis (AA) as part of the GA 400 Transit Initiative to identify potential transit solutions for the transportation needs in the SR 400 corridor. The AA compared implementation of HRT, BRT in managed lanes, BRT in dedicated guideway, and a No-Build scenario, which refers to the absence of any improvement. In 2018, a separate study, the Fulton County Transit Master Plan, was completed and identified BRT as the preferred transit mode to serve SR 400. The MARTA GA 400 Transit Initiative was put on hold while the Fulton County Transit Master Plan was completed. The Fulton County Transit Master Plan assessed transit options that could be funded if a new sales tax referendum was put in place. In 2018, HB 930 was passed which has provisions for county governments to have a referendum for additional sales tax to fund public transportation. The bill does not allow for the funding of HRT in Fulton County. BRT was selected as the preferred option for the SR 400 corridor in the Fulton County Transit Master Plan. To further support transit Governor Deal executed a \$100-million bond to fund BRT in the corridor.

In 2018, with GDOT moving forward with express lanes in the SR 400 corridor and the recommendations of the Fulton County Transit Master Plan, the MARTA Board of Directors adopted BRT in express lanes as the locally preferred alternative (LPA) for the GA 400 Transit Initiative and therefore the Environmental Impact Study for heavy-rail option was closed out with the Federal Transit Administration.

- **Comment 2**

“Please add access to SR 400 southbound from the MARTA North Springs Station.”

- **Response:**

Creating new access points at existing MARTA stations along the SR 400 corridor is not within the scope of this project. We will keep this suggestion in mind for future projects.

- **Comment 3**

“Please explain how this BRT project will impact, interact with, or replace the existing MARTA Routes, specifically 140, 141, and 143?”

- **Response:**

Existing MARTA bus service with routes on or adjacent to SR 400 will be redesigned to work with the GA 400 Transit Initiative. Redundant bus service will be studied during the environmental review process. More specific details such as any changes to the existing service or timing have yet to be determined. More information will be made available closer to project implementation. However, it is expected that existing routes would continue to serve the community and any modifications would be improvements to existing service and public notification of any changes would be provided.

- **Comment 4**

“There is a need for more parking at North Springs Station; the lot regularly fills up by 8:30 a.m.”

- **Response:**

MARTA is aware of the parking constraints at the North Springs Station and is looking at opportunities to improve availability of parking at this location separate from the GA 400 Transit Initiative Study. Implementation of BRT on GA 400 may reduce the need for parking at the North Springs Station, as riders enter the MARTA system at stations further north along the corridor. The creation of new park and ride facilities associated with the proposed BRT station locations are currently being evaluated. The project team must consider design constraints and potential impacts (i.e. land use, environmental, community resources) to the surrounding area of the proposed park and ride facilities before the locations are finalized.

- **Comment 5**

“The Windward Parkway Park and Ride lot is difficult to access. Is there any consideration for a park and ride lot on the west side of SR 400 at Windward Parkway near Hewlett Packard? Also, will the bus-only lanes connecting to the Windward Parkway Park and Ride lot be open to anyone in the express lanes?”

- **Response:**

During the current project phase, as MARTA works in conjunction with GDOT’s Express Lanes rollout, the Windward Parkway Park and Ride lot is the only lot included in the project. However, as the BRT project progresses and additional parking is necessitated, MARTA will explore additional options for park and ride facilities along the corridor. Access to park and ride facilities are considered during the environmental review process. We will take this into consideration as we continue to explore park and ride facilities along the corridor.

Access to the “bus-only lanes” will not be open to Privately Operated Vehicles (POVs) using the GA 400 Express Lanes.

- **Comment 6**

“Is there any consideration for extending transit further north beyond Windward Parkway?”

- **Response:**

We appreciate the interest in such an expansion. At this time, the MARTA service area is in Fulton, DeKalb, and Clayton counties by state law. Expanding service into Forsyth County would require a vote from Forsyth County residents to join the MARTA system.

- **Comment 7**

“There is a need for more express bus service from Forsyth County and Windward Parkway into downtown Atlanta.”

- **Response:**

We appreciate the interest in such an expansion. At this time, however, Forsyth County is outside the MARTA service area. SRTA currently provides express bus service from Forsyth County.

- **Comment 8**

“My concern is the high cost of parking and fares for using BRT. I can’t pay \$8 per day.”

- **Response:**

Parking is free for customers using a MARTA parking deck or park and ride lot for less than 24 hours. Therefore, there would be no additional parking expense associated with incorporating BRT into your daily commute. The fare structure for the BRT service has yet to be determined but would likely be similar to rail.

- **Comment 9**
"I was hoping for a MARTA station at Northridge on the west side of SR 400 for access and to encourage redevelopment in this area."
- **Response:**
We appreciate your interest in a MARTA station at this location. A station location at Northridge Road was previously studied but eliminated due to design and cost constraints.

Again, thank you for your comments. Should you have further questions, comments or concerns, please call the Project Manager, Tracie Roberson at (404) 848-5023. For project information on the GA 400 Transit Initiative visit MARTA's website below:

<http://www.itsmarta.com/ga400-corridor-overview.aspx>

Sincerely,



Tracie Roberson
MARTA Project Manager

ER/AMR/mph

cc: MARTA Rep
PDF for Project File