



Clayton County Transit Feasibility Study

Briefing Report for the
Board of Commissioners

June 2014



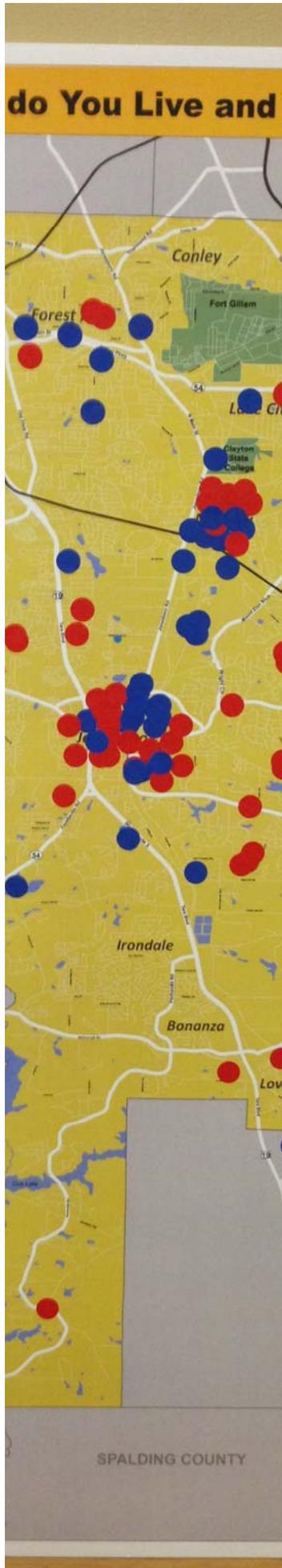


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A

Introduction

"[Clayton County residents] need service, they need public transportation, and we as public servants have an obligation to study the feasibility of providing it to them."

*Clayton County Commission Chairman Jeff Turner
Clayton News Daily, July 26, 2013*

The Clayton County Board of Commissioners requested a transit feasibility study to ensure that they have the best information available to support their decisions regarding the future of transit in Clayton County.

A study was conducted that includes a number of elements aimed at determining transit needs and costs in Clayton County. This briefing report includes summary information for the following key elements of the transit feasibility study:

- ✓ Overview of the project approach
- ✓ Public participation activities and input
- ✓ Economic development objectives and target growth areas
- ✓ Transit markets, demand, and mobility needs
- ✓ Preliminary transit vision and incremental development
- ✓ Preliminary service plans for 2016, 2025, and 2040
- ✓ Preliminary annual projections for hours of service, operating costs, and ridership
- ✓ Potential transit revenues
- ✓ Next steps for Clayton County





B

Background and Study Objectives

Clayton County is the only core metro county in the Atlanta region without local bus service. The purpose of the Clayton County Transit Feasibility Study is to determine the extent to which transit is needed in Clayton County.

From 2001 to 2010, C-TRAN bus service (Clayton Transit – “Tomorrow’s Transportation Today”) operated in Clayton County and provided connections to MARTA, the Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport, and major commercial and academic centers throughout the county. Due to budget shortfalls, C-TRAN bus service was discontinued in March 2010.

Currently, the only services available to Clayton County are the *Xpress* routes that the Georgia Regional Transportation Authority (GRTA) operates in the South Corridor. These services connect numerous cities to MARTA in Downtown Atlanta, including McDonough, Stockbridge, Hampton, Jonesboro, Riverdale, Union City, and Newnan.

The purpose of the Clayton County Transit Feasibility Study is to determine the extent to which transit is needed in Clayton County and, if needed, in what form it should be provided. The study has four key objectives:

- 1) Determine the feasibility of transit in Clayton County.
- 2) Define what transit services are needed and when.
- 3) Identify potential revenue sources to pay for the transit system.
- 4) Set the stage for becoming eligible for federal funding to support transit in Clayton County.





C |

Study Approach

Nearly 60% of respondents to the on-line survey conducted in April–May 2014 indicated that they would “definitely” use a transit system if it were provided in Clayton County. Another 26% expressed an interest in riding if the service is able to meet their transportation needs.

The study approach is straightforward and includes three basic steps:

- 1) Market Assessment
- 2) Vision Concepts
- 3) Feasibility

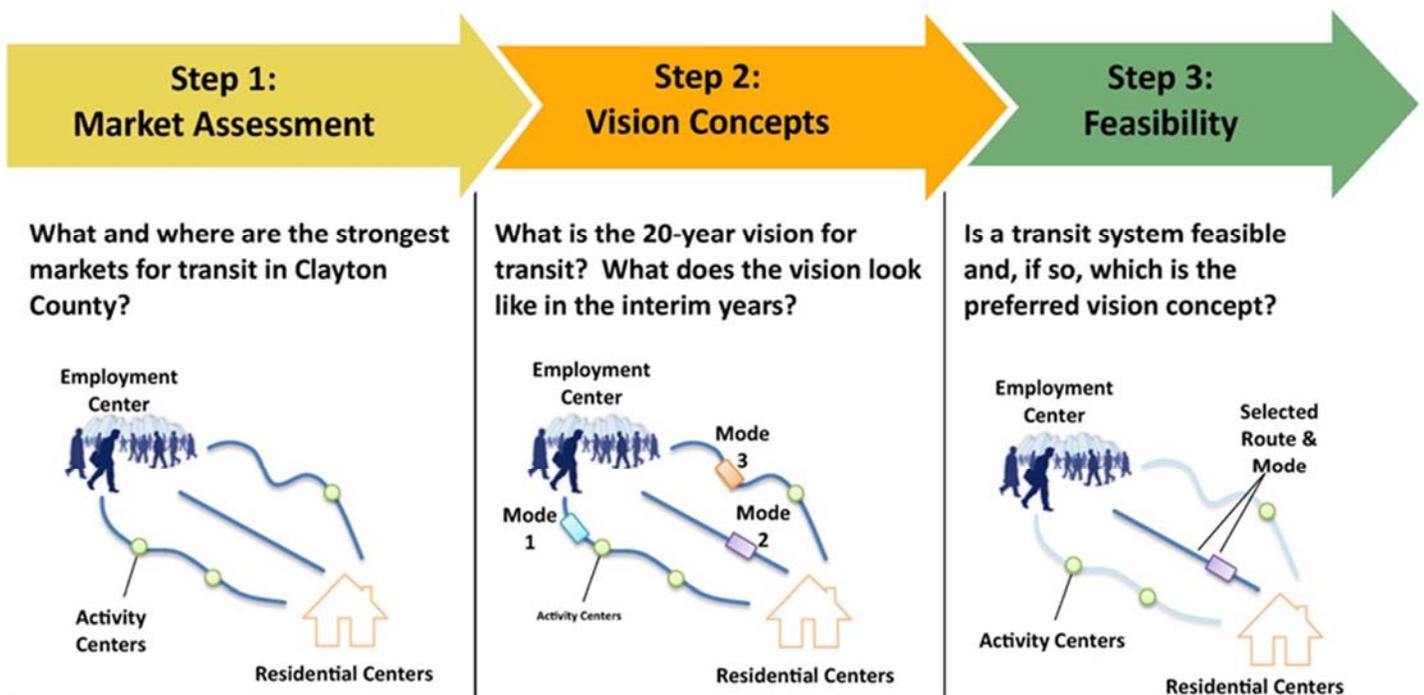
Each step is conceived to answer basic questions about the markets for transit, the vision that responds to these markets, and the nature and characteristics of a transit system that would be feasible in responding to these markets. The approach is illustrated in Figure 1.

Public participation is critical to the successful execution of the study approach and is summarized in the subsequent section of this briefing report.



Clayton County’s Director of Transportation and Development, Jeff Metarko, discusses the transit feasibility study with citizens of Clayton County.

Figure 1: Three-Step Study Approach, Clayton County Transit Feasibility Study





D

Public Participation

Multiple activities were conducted to gather input on the transit feasibility study and included stakeholder interviews, discussion groups, electronic surveys, comment forms, public meetings, and a project website. In total, the project had more than 3,800 active participants.

Techniques and Extent of Public Involvement

Clayton County implemented a robust public outreach plan in support of the feasibility study. Multiple activities were conducted to gather input from the public that included:

- ✓ stakeholder interviews
- ✓ electronic surveys and comment forms
- ✓ public meeting workshops

In total, the project had **more than 3,800 active participants (see Table 1)**. Active participants were those who attended a public meeting, viewed the project webpage, submitted a comment, viewed a project email, or completed a survey. (Note: A single individual could be counted multiple times as an active participant because he/she took part in more than one of these activities.)

Two emails containing project information were distributed through the Clayton County Government Communications system (one in late April and one in mid-May 2014). Each email went to 1,800 to 2,100 people, and approximately 30% of the recipients viewed the email. Clayton County Access Television (CCTV-23), with 50,000–80,000 viewers, also carried announcements for upcoming project workshops.

Interviews with representatives from key community organizations were conducted in April and May 2014 to gather information about the interests and needs of the citizens they represent. Included in these interviews were representatives from the following organizations:

- ✓ Citizens for Progressive Transportation
- ✓ Clayton Chamber of Commerce
- ✓ Clayton County Office of Economic Development
- ✓ Clayton State University

- ✓ First Baptist Church Jonesboro
- ✓ Forest Park Ministers Association
- ✓ Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport
- ✓ The Sierra Club
- ✓ Southern Regional Medical Center

In addition to these stakeholders, a discussion group with Chairman Turner and municipal mayors or their representatives was held on May 21, 2014 to discuss the implications of a transit system for their cities.

Eight public workshops were held in April-May 2014. The first round of four workshops focused on gathering input from the public regarding their transportation needs, including origin and destination data. The second round of four workshops focused on presenting a transit vision for Clayton County and asking the public to provide input on this vision. Geographically diverse locations were selected to

Table 1 – Project Public Participation

Description	Number
Public Meeting Workshops (4) Attendees (Round 1)	288
Public Meeting Workshops (4) Attendees (Round 2)	339
Survey Respondents	870
Stakeholder/Group Interviews	9
Municipal Discussion Group Attendees	7
Project Email Views	1,089
Project Website Views	1,275
Total Participants	3,877

host the workshops in anticipation that this would assist residents in attending at least one workshop. Workshop locations were determined at the request of the Commissioners such that at least one workshop was held in each Commission District. Over the course of 8 workshops, 627 attendees participated. Each Clayton County Commissioner participated in one or more of the workshops.

Two on-line surveys were conducted to collect information from participants, and approximately 870 surveys were completed. The surveys were used to both gauge interest in transit and gather information about necessary operating characteristics of transit service if it were to be implemented.

As illustrated in Figure 2, more than 80% of respondents to the surveys support the establishment of a transit system in Clayton County, and nearly 70% indicated a willingness to support an increase in taxes to make it happen. The survey did not ask respondents to clarify the type of tax they would support, but rather whether or not they support an increase in taxes generally.

Finally, to track participation by area of Clayton County, the project team collected the home ZIP codes of citizens participating in the study. Figure 3 illustrates the magnitude of public participation by Commission district.

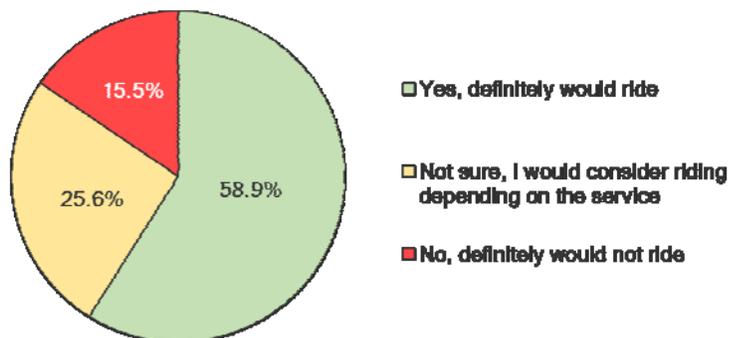
Key Themes

As a result of the public outreach, the following key themes emerged:

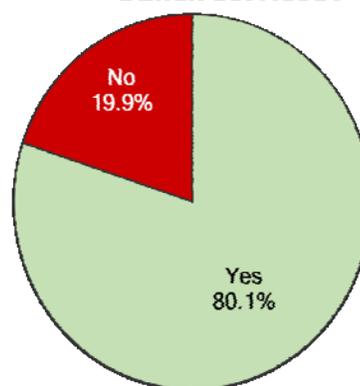
- The majority of participants are in favor of having a transit system in Clayton County.
- Residents support transit because they believe it will increase mobility options for those who do not have options and will contribute to economic development.
- Supporters often stated that there was a need for rail and not just bus options for the transit system.
- There is some concern among supporters about the impacts of a full-penny or half-penny increase in the sales tax rates on economic development.
- Those who are opposed to transit cited two reasons: (1) they are opposed to increasing taxes and/or (2) they believe it will contribute to an increase in the crime rate.

Figure 2 – Results of Selected Survey Questions

If there were transit service in Clayton County today, would you use it?



Would you support Clayton County funding transit services?



Would you support additional taxes to provide funding for transit services in Clayton County?

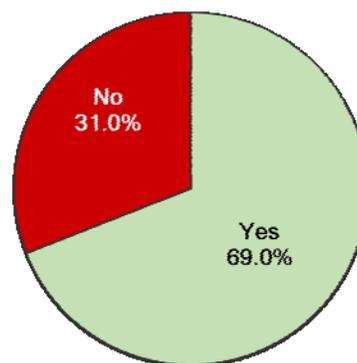
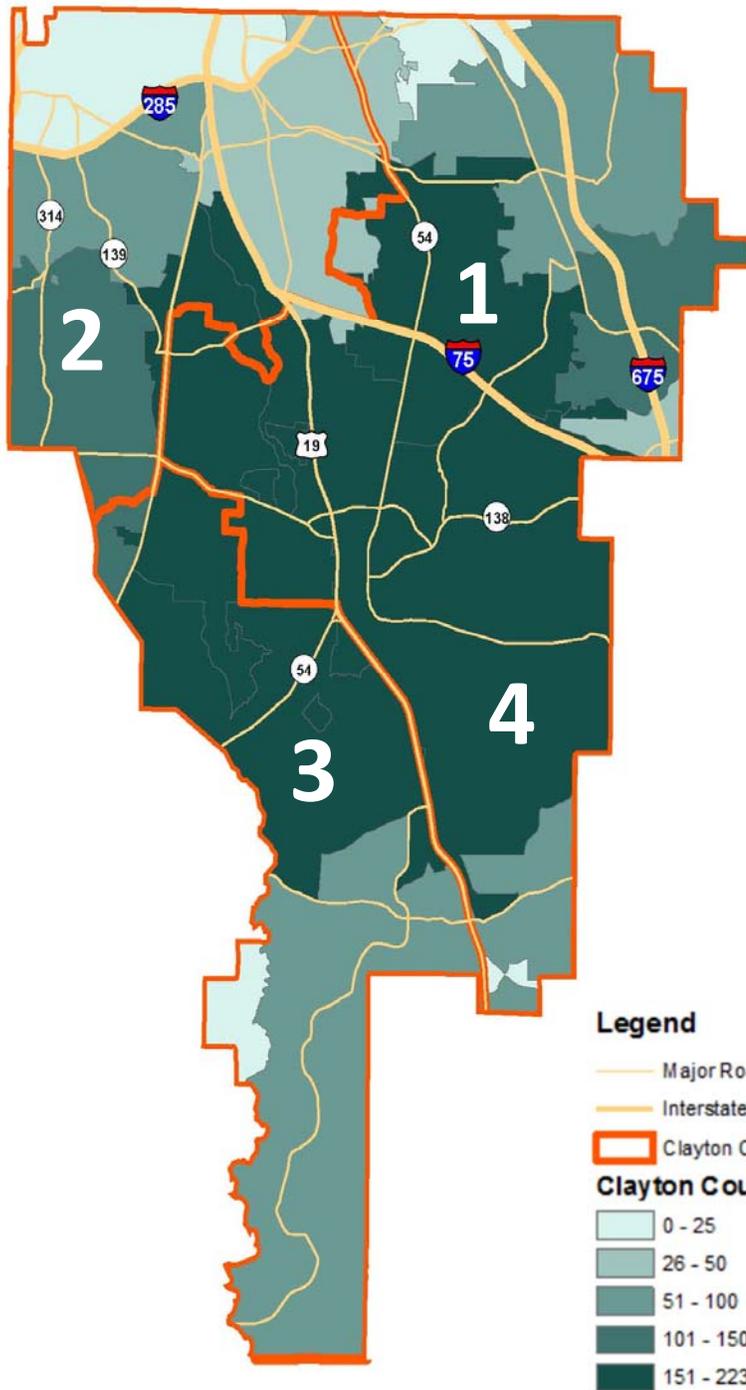
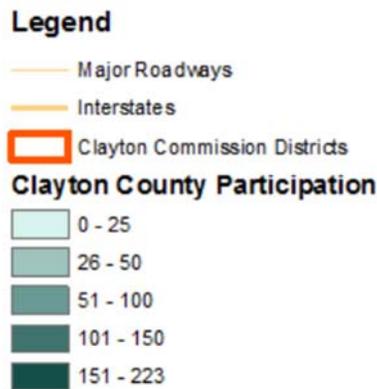


Figure 3: Public Participation by Clayton County Commission District



Commission District	Count	%
District 1	395	35%
District 2	261	23%
District 3	188	17%
District 4	273	25%
TOTAL	1,117	100%

Totals may differ from total number of participants presented previously because some participants did not provide ZIP code data or they live outside of Clayton County.





E |

Transit Feasibility

Of more than 133,000 jobs in Clayton County, 81% are filled by workers commuting from other counties, and only 19% are filled by county residents. Of the nearly 98,000 employed Clayton County residents, 74% leave the county to work.

Source: 2011 Longitudinal Employer Household Dynamics (LEHD) Data

Introduction

The transit feasibility assessment includes a review and assessment of the following:

- ✓ Overall Transit Feasibility
- ✓ Transit Needs in Clayton County
 - Regional Connectivity
 - Countywide Connectivity
 - Economic Development
- ✓ Summary of Needs and Feasibility



County Demographic Profile

The key to determining the need and feasibility of transit is whether an area has a demographic profile conducive to transit usage. Table 2 illustrates populations that historically have demonstrated a much greater propensity to use transit. A comparison of Clayton County demographics to these transit use demographics supports a strong need for transit services and high propensity for transit usage.

Noteworthy demographics for Clayton County related to transit feasibility include:

- ✓ The median age is the youngest in the metro area (31.6 years); younger populations are more likely to use transit.
- ✓ The median annual income is the lowest in the metro region (\$42,569); lower-income groups typically are more likely to be dependent upon transit.
- ✓ The percentage of households without a vehicle is the highest of the metro area counties without transit service (7.5%); this typically is a characteristic of transit-dependent populations.

Table 2 – Populations More Likely to Use Transit

Group	Times More Likely to Use Transit
Low-Income	3.6
Minorities	1.8–3.6
Zero-Vehicle Households	7.2

Source: University of South Florida, Center for Urban Transportation Research

Transit Needs in Clayton County

A younger and lower-income market is an important market for transit, with young people taking transit in record numbers across the county and low-income persons being more than three times more likely to take transit in a large metropolitan area than the average person. In addition, other important markets for transit include elderly populations and persons with disabilities, both of which often need transportation to medical appointments, senior

centers, shopping centers, churches, social/recreational destinations, and sometimes jobs.

Residential areas of Clayton County that are characterized by demographics that are traditionally correlated to greater transit use are illustrated in Map 1.

- ✓ The highest areas of residential transit orientation are in north Clayton County near south DeKalb and South Fulton counties.
- ✓ There are smaller pockets of higher transit ridership potential in and around Riverdale and west Jonesboro.

In contrast, an important element of transit feasibility is the choice-rider market. Choice-riders have access to a car, but on at least some trips choose to take transit. Choice-riders are very sensitive to issues such as travel-time reliability, cleanliness of buses and facilities, and safety and security on transit.

Not only does Clayton County have demographic populations that have a significant propensity to ride transit, it is the only county without transit service whose median age and income are below the region average, when compared to other Metro Atlanta counties, as illustrated in Figure 4.

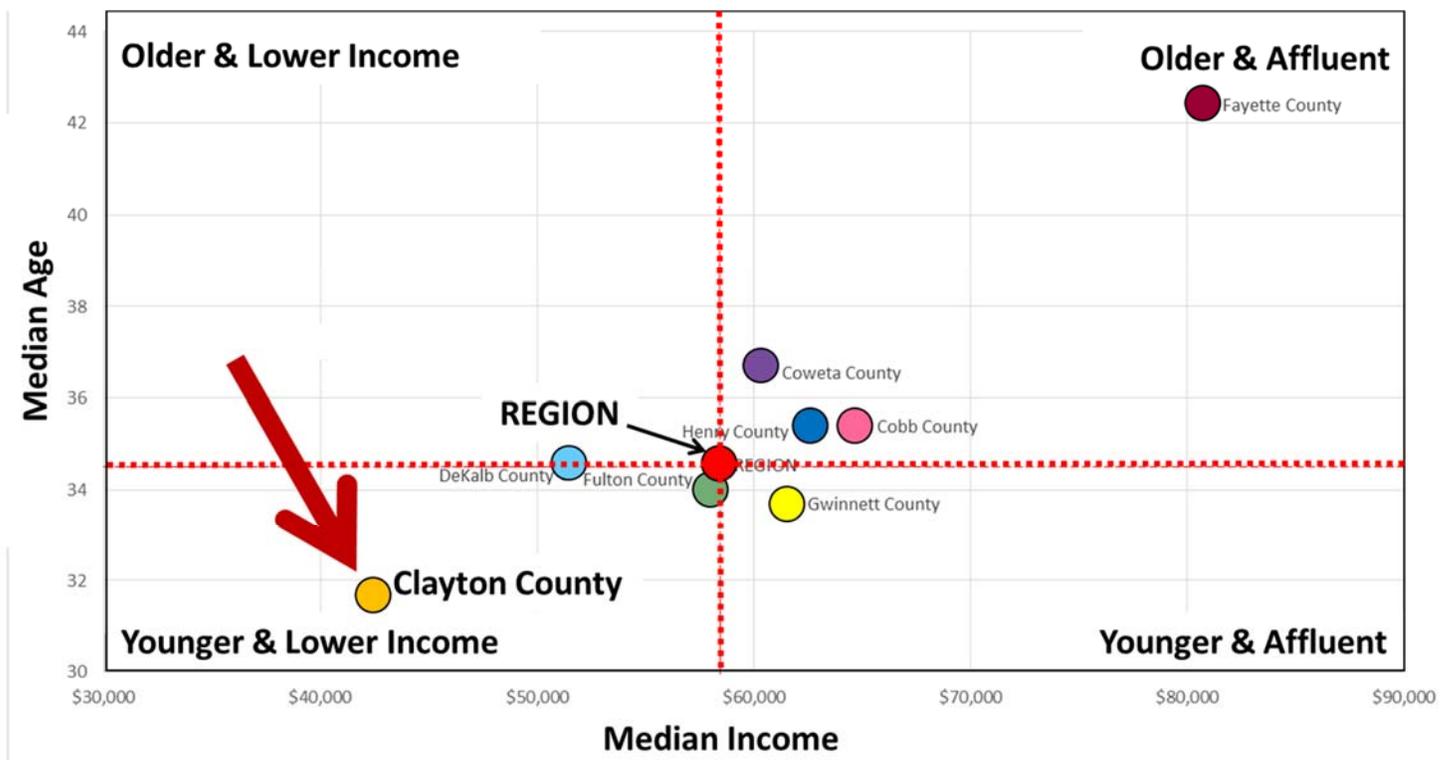
Regional Connectivity

The evaluation of travel patterns, job location analysis, and economic growth initiatives also supports the addition of transit service in Clayton County. The trips made by Clayton County residents were grouped into two categories: trips internal to Clayton County (to/from destinations within Clayton County) and regional movements or trip-making external to Clayton County (to/from Clayton County to other parts of the metro Atlanta region).

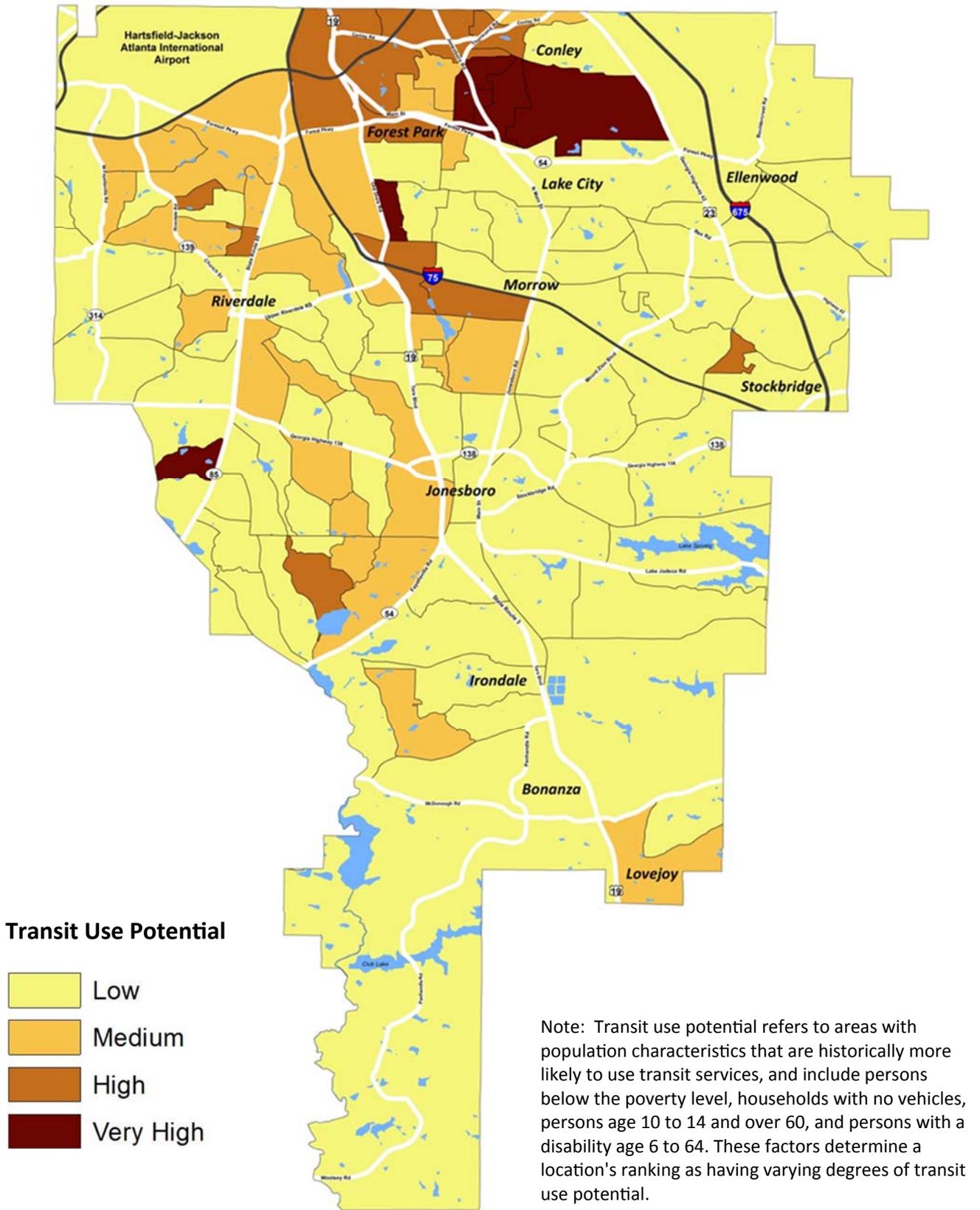
The Atlanta Regional Commission’s (ARC) regional travel demand model was used to forecast person trips in and out of Clayton County for the years 2015 and 2040. As shown in Map 2 (2015) and Map 3 (2040) on the following pages, Clayton County has a significant demand for connectivity to the Atlanta Metro region. Maps 4 and 5 display the demand for travel within Clayton County.

This analysis indicates that Clayton County will not only need transit service to provide an alternative for travel between various areas within the county, but it also will need to connect Clayton County with the greater metro region via Metropolitan Atlanta Rapid Transit Authority (MARTA), which currently provides local bus and rail service to Fulton and DeKalb counties and connections to transit service within Gwinnett and Cobb counties.

Figure 4 – Median Age and Income by County in the Metro Atlanta Region

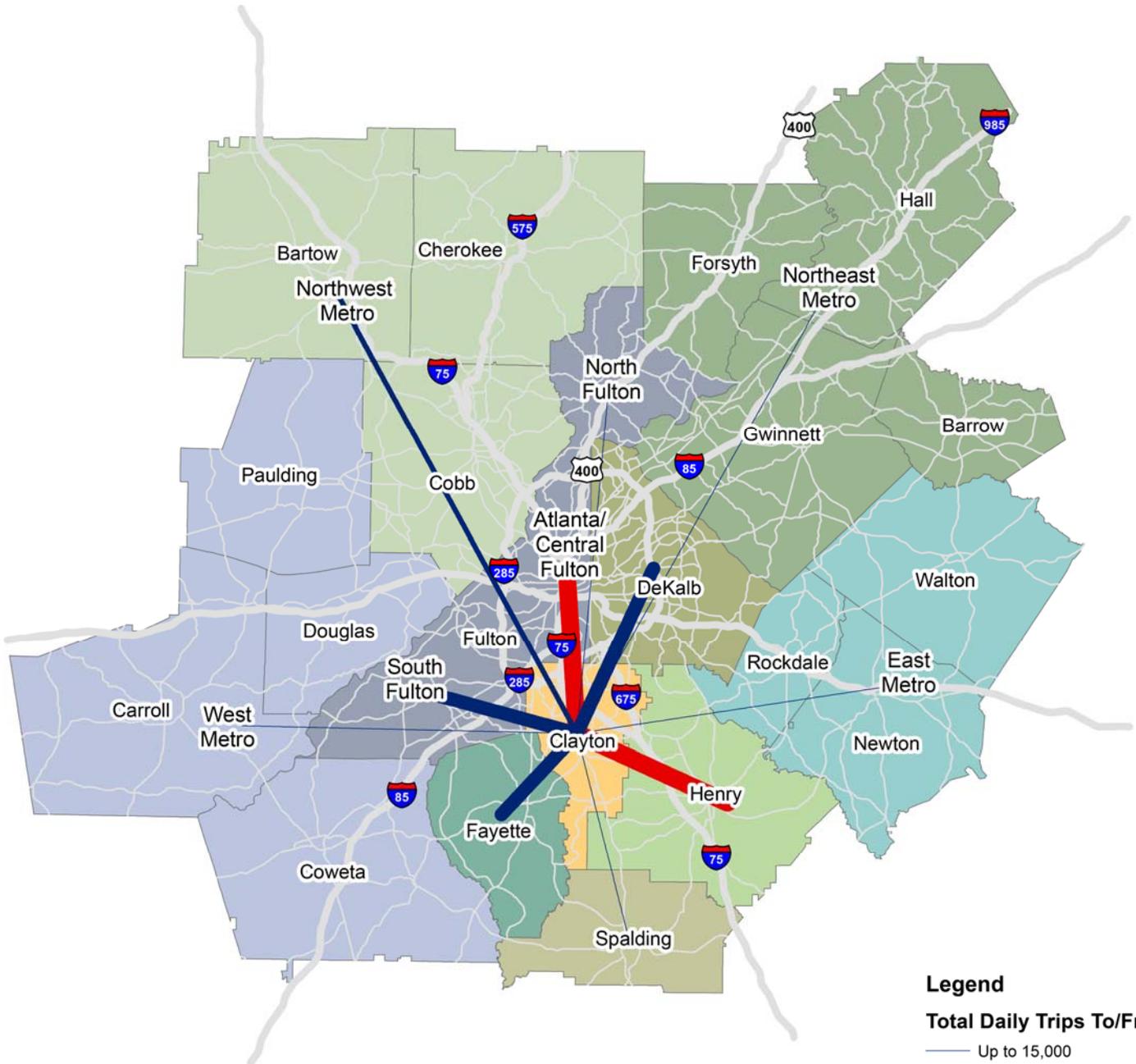


Map 1 – Transit Use Potential by Residential Area



Source: U.S. Bureau of Census, American Community Survey, 5-Year Estimates (2008-2012).

Map 2 – Regional Daily Travel Demand in the Region (2015)



Legend

Total Daily Trips To/From

- Up to 15,000
- 15,001 - 30,000
- 30,001 - 50,000
- 50,001 - 100,000
- Greater than 100,000
- Expressways
- Major Roadways

2015 Top 3 Regional Destinations

Atlanta (30%)

- Downtown
- Midtown
- Buckhead

Henry County (23%)

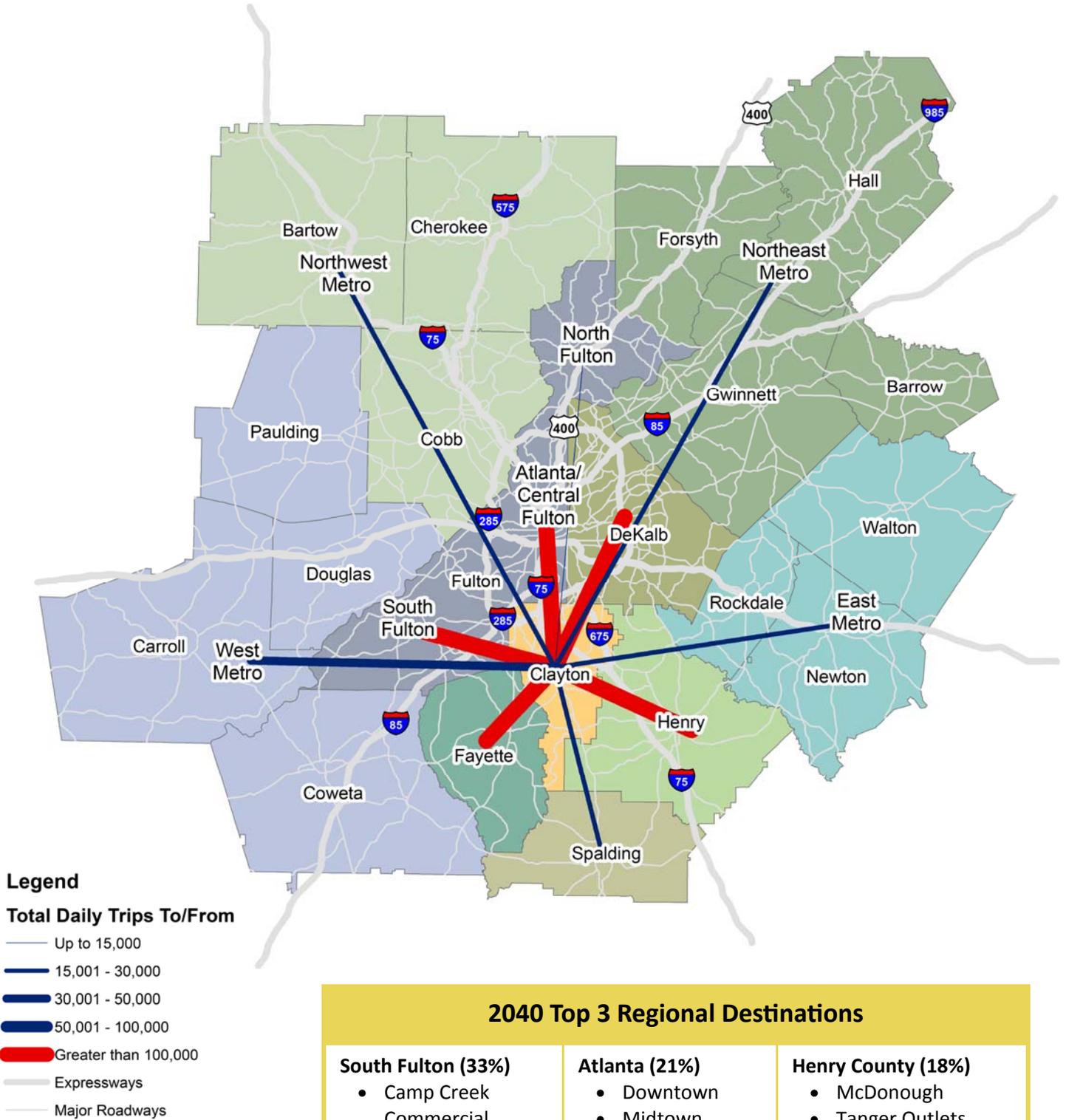
- McDonough
- Tanger Outlets
- Motor Speedway
- Stockbridge
- Emory & Piedmont Hospitals

DeKalb County (15%)

- Decatur
- Emory University
- CDC
- Stone Mountain

Source: Atlanta Regional Commission, Regional Travel Demand Model (2015)

Map 3 – Regional Daily Travel Demand in the Region (2040)



2040 Top 3 Regional Destinations

South Fulton (33%)

- Camp Creek Commercial
- East Point/College Park
- Union City
- Fulton Industrial Blvd
- Industrial Parks

Atlanta (21%)

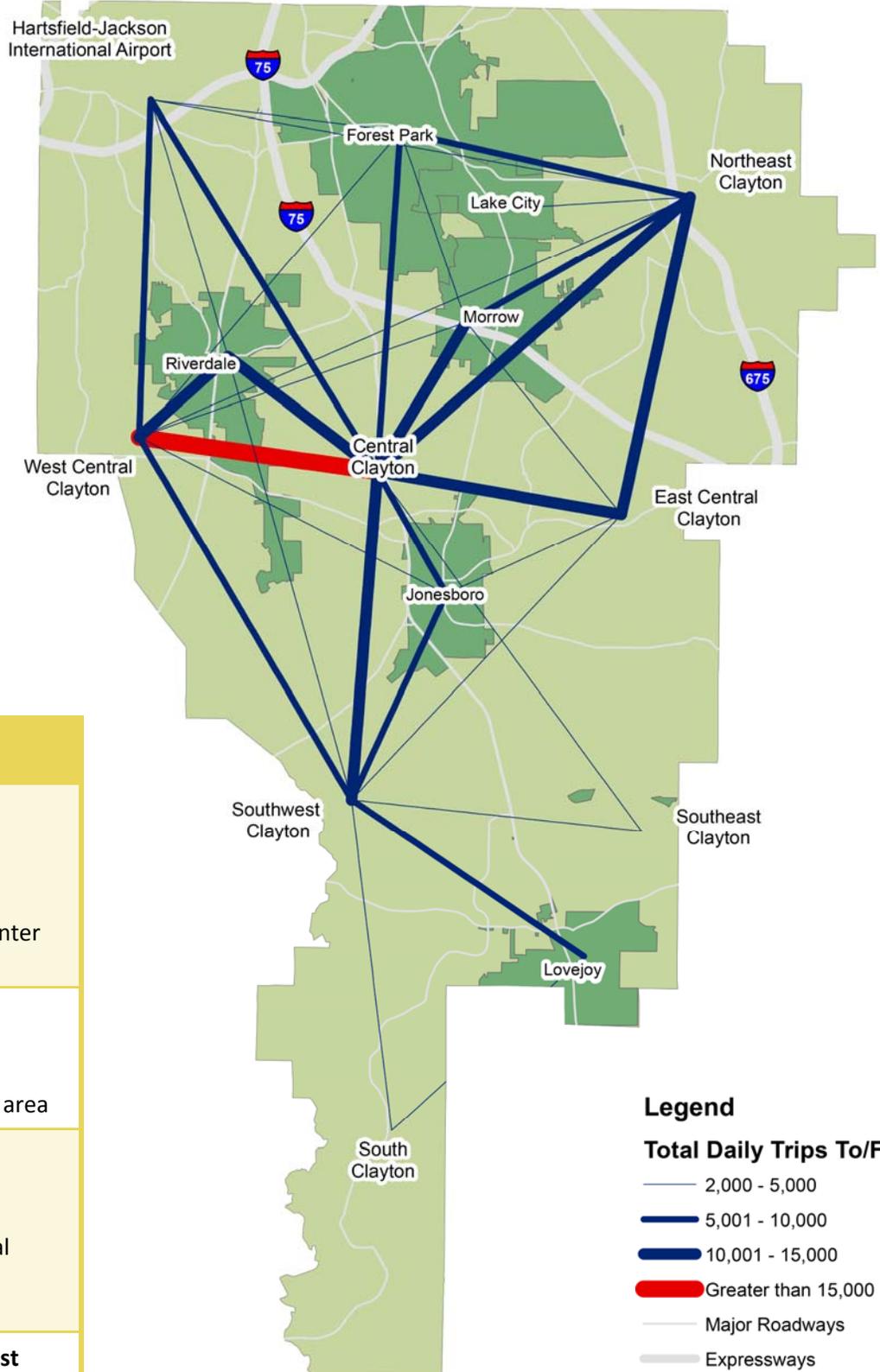
- Downtown
- Midtown
- Buckhead

Henry County (18%)

- McDonough
- Tanger Outlets
- Atlanta Motor Speedway
- Stockbridge
- Emory & Piedmont Hospitals

Source: Atlanta Regional Commission, Regional Travel Demand Model (2040)

Map 4 – Total Daily Travel Demand Within Clayton County (2015)



2015 Top Destinations

1. Morrow/Central Clayton Area, including:

- Southlake Mall
- Mt. Zion Commercial
- Southern Regional Medical Center
- Clayton State University

2. Riverdale/West Clayton Area, including:

- SR 85 Commercial
- Dense multi-family residential area

3. Jonesboro Area, including:

- City and County Offices and Administration
- Jonesboro/Irondale Residential Areas
- Multiple shopping centers

4. Ellenwood/Fort Gillem/ Northeast Clayton Area, including:

- Ellenwood Development
- Fort Gillem Development
- Freight and Truck services

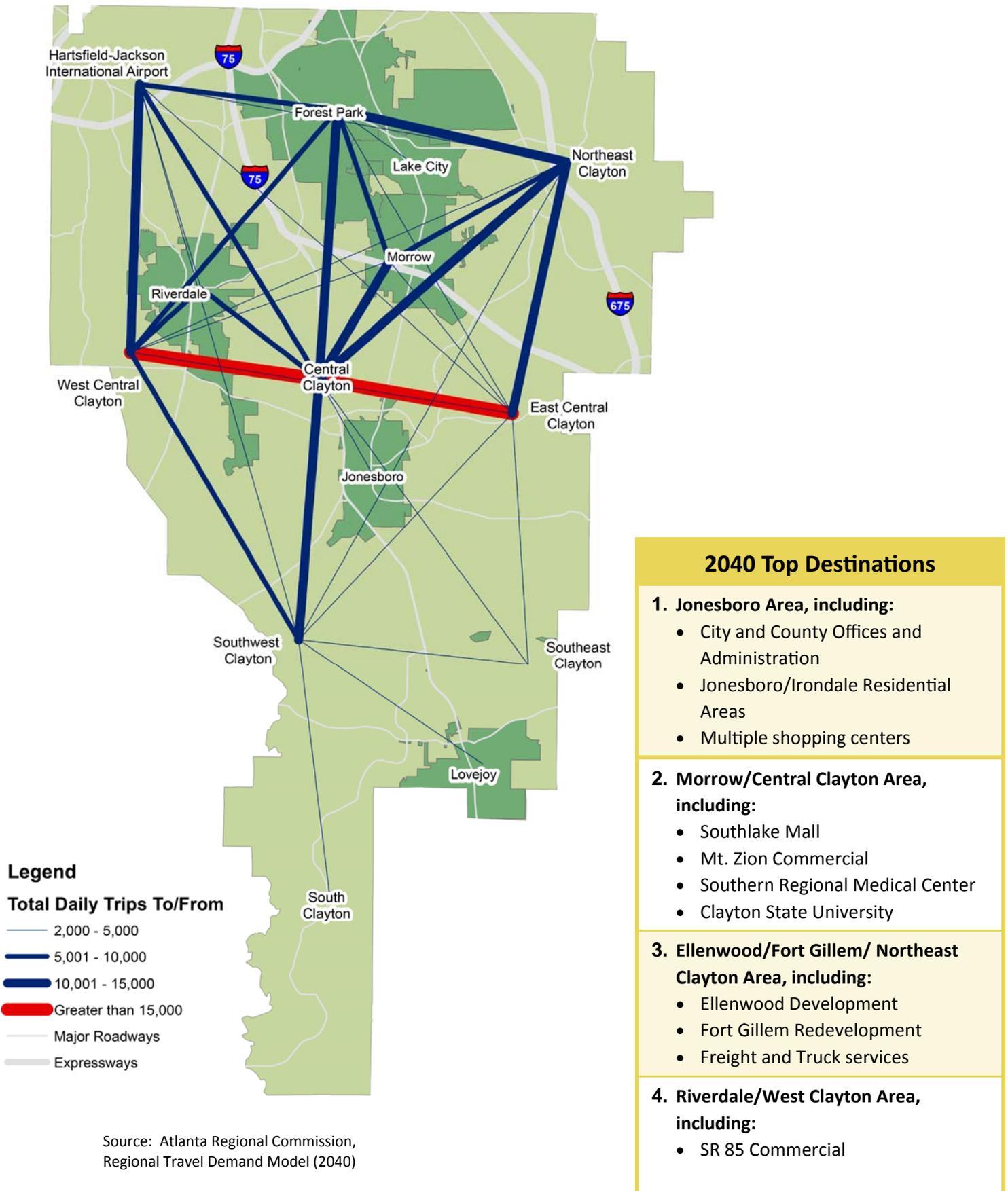
Legend

Total Daily Trips To/From

- 2,000 - 5,000
- 5,001 - 10,000
- 10,001 - 15,000
- Greater than 15,000
- Major Roadways
- Expressways

Source: Atlanta Regional Commission, Regional Travel Demand Model (2015)

Map 5 – Total Daily Travel Demand Within Clayton County (2040)



Currently, on a daily basis, the largest travel movements to/from Clayton County are with the City of Atlanta and Henry County. In 2040, South Fulton and DeKalb counties are added to this list of high-demand locations within the metro region that will generate at least 100,000 daily trips. Atlanta and South Fulton and DeKalb counties currently have transit, so connecting Clayton County residents with MARTA would significantly expand the area to which they have public transit access.

Today, Fulton and DeKalb counties are accessible from Clayton County via I-75, I-675, and I-285, but transit access would provide an alternative travel mode for these popular travel patterns. Whereas GRTA currently operates commuter transit service from Riverdale and Jonesboro into Downtown and Midtown Atlanta, these services are limited to park-and-ride lots in Clayton County and are not easily accessible without a vehicle.

At the heart of transportation needs in Clayton County is job flow and commuting. Figure 5 shows how many people commute to Clayton County for work, how many live and work in the county, and how many leave. Nearly 73,000 Clayton County residents leave the county for work. Of these, 42% commute to Fulton County and 14% commute to DeKalb County.

Countywide Connectivity

Clayton County has a need for improved access and mobility within the county boundaries, and transit can play an important role to this end. Based on LEHD data from the U.S. Census Bureau, there are a significant number of jobs

in Clayton County; however, very few of these are filled by county residents.

As demonstrated by the overall commuting flows in Figure 5, the low-income commuting flows in Figure 6, and the commute patterns between major activity centers throughout the region, the following observations can be drawn:

- ✓ Clayton County has a large and young workforce with significant potential.
- ✓ Only **18%** of those who are commuting within Clayton County are doing so for low-income jobs.
- ✓ **80%** of the jobs in Clayton County that are not considered low-income are filled by commuters from other counties.

Additionally, the ARC travel demand model was used to identify general travel patterns within the county. While it is important to note that this model typically is used on a larger, regional scale, it can be used at the county level to provide a general sense of travel movements. As illustrated previously in Maps 4 and 5, daily travel demand patterns within Clayton County are provided for the years 2015 and 2040, respectively.

As seen in the tables associated with the maps, both the Jonesboro and Ellenwood/Fort Gillem/Northeast Clayton areas are predicted to see significant growth in the number of trips generated by 2040. In addition to the previously-mentioned need to connect Clayton County to the region, there is also a need to connect the growing areas within the

Figure 5 – Clayton County Commuting Flows (2010)



- ✓ Of 133,340 jobs in Clayton County, **81%** are filled by workers commuting from other counties, and only **19%** are filled by county residents.
- ✓ Off the 97,920 employed Clayton County residents, **74%** leave the county to work.

Source: 2011 LEHD data

Figure 6 – Clayton County Low-Income Worker Commuting Flows (2010)



- ✓ Of the 26,750 low-income jobs in Clayton County, only **26%** are held by county residents.
- ✓ Similarly, **75%** of the employed, low-income population must leave the county for work.

Source: 2011 LEHD data

county and provide improved access for Clayton County residents to the jobs, education, training, and other vital resources within the county.

Two examples further demonstrate specific travel patterns in Clayton County. Map 6 illustrates the commuting patterns for employees of the Southern Regional Medical Center (SRMC) and travel patterns for students of Clayton State University (CSU). SRMC provided home ZIP codes for its 1,754 employees, and CSU provided home ZIP codes for its 6,884 students. The results of this analysis are illustrated in Map 6. Note that Clayton County is home to only **28%** of SRMC workers and **25%** of CSU students.

Economic Development

Transit can play a major role in reinforcing the economic development objectives of Clayton County, as summarized below:

- ✓ Permanent investments in rail or exclusive-lane bus service are anticipated to have significant and direct economic development impacts around stations. Clayton County will want to reevaluate its economic development plans if a decision is made to move forward with transit investments, especially those of a fixed and permanent nature.
- ✓ According to the American Public Transportation Association’s (APTA) *Economic Impact of Public Transportation Investment, 2014 Update*, **“Increased public transportation investment can lead to significant economic growth, as a consequence of both the short-term stimulus impact of public transportation outlays**

and a longer-term, cumulative impact on economic productivity.”

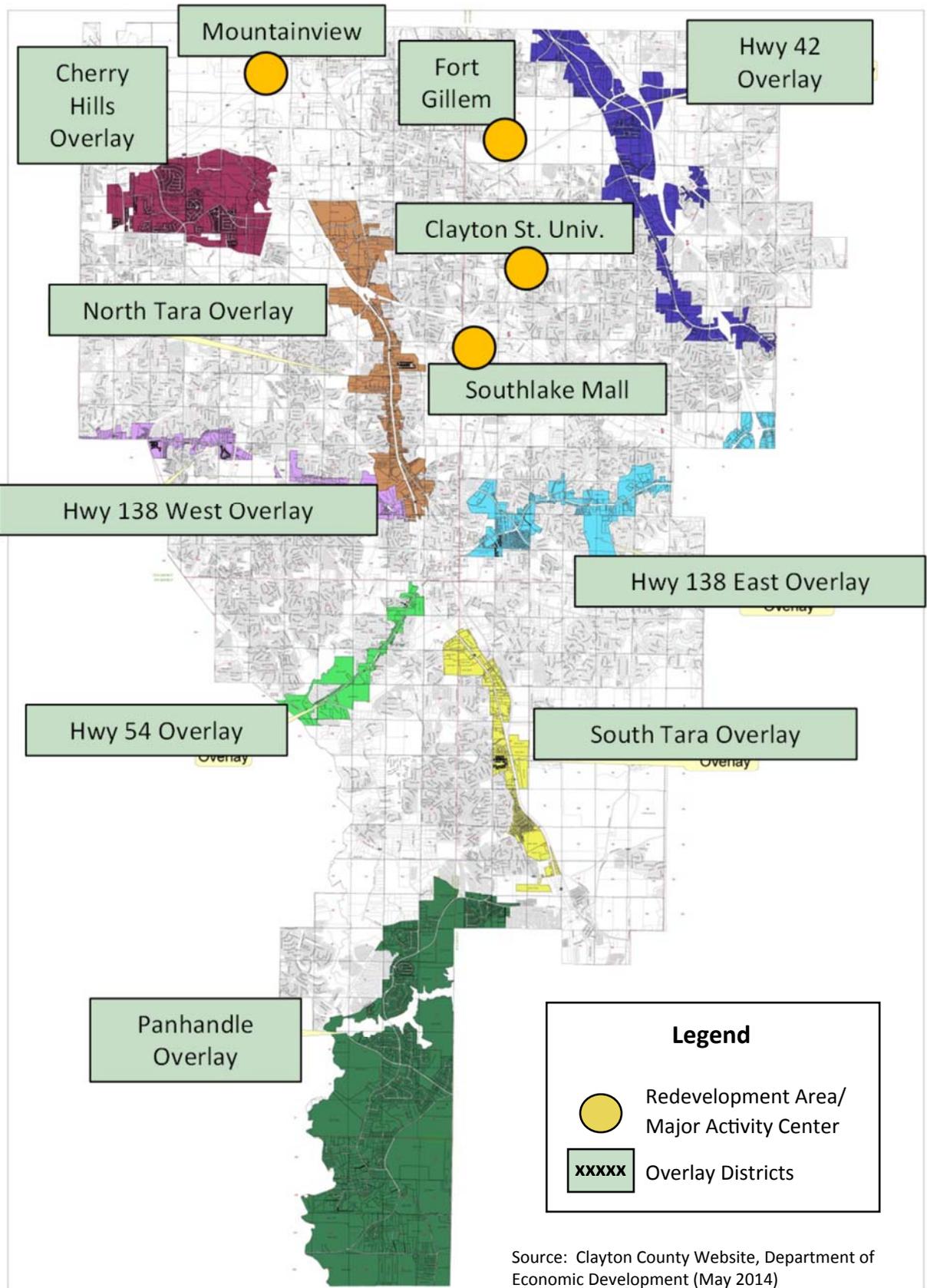
Clayton County’s transit feasibility includes consideration of its economic development plans and priorities. Implementing transit in the county will help reinforce the target economic development and growth areas that are illustrated in Map 7.

Summary of Transit Feasibility

In summary, transit services in Clayton County are not only feasible, but also are significantly needed to address mobility issues and improve quality of life. The transit concept for Clayton County must help address the following issues highlighted in the transit feasibility study:

- ✓ Improve the mobility and accessibility of the young, unemployed, those in households without a vehicle, older adults, and persons with disabilities;
- ✓ Provide an alternative transportation mode for Clayton County residents commuting and traveling to the core of the Atlanta Region without adding single-occupant vehicles to already congested highways;
- ✓ Support Clayton County economic development initiatives, especially those planning for walkable, live-work-play communities that are transit-oriented; and
- ✓ Increase access to local jobs and increase the number of residents who live *and* work in Clayton County for jobs at all income levels.

Map 7 – Economic Development and Target Growth Areas







Overview of Results

The transit feasibility study resulted in the development of a transit vision concept for Clayton County for 2016, 2025, and 2040. The transit vision includes progressively greater levels of bus service and the addition of premium bus and commuter rail in 2025.

During the transit feasibility study, the team heard comments both in support of and concerned about transit. It is important to understand both perspectives, to leverage the reasons behind these comments, and to address concerns if the decision is made to move forward.

Common Themes in Support of Transit

- ✓ Improve access to jobs, education, and training opportunities, both within Clayton County and throughout the metropolitan region
- ✓ Support the economic development objectives of Clayton County and reinforce target growth areas
- ✓ Provide mobility options and connectivity within Clayton County and throughout the region
- ✓ Increase independence and quality of life for citizens with limited or no transportation options due to economic reasons or mobility impairment

Common Concerns about Transit

- ✓ Public safety and potential for more crime (while industry literature does not support a correlation between the provision of transit service and crime levels, such a perception will need to be addressed)
- ✓ Potential consequences of higher taxes on citizens and potential negative impacts on the economic competitiveness of Clayton County to attract business
- ✓ Underutilization of service or overcrowding; service implementation must be done at the right level and quality of service to meet demand

Transit Vision Concept (2040)

Once transit service in Clayton County was determined to be feasible, the next step was to develop a transit vision

concept. Key guiding principles for the development of the transit vision concept include the following:

- ✓ Provide transit service to meet the needs of traditional markets (low-income, youth, older adults, and persons with disabilities) and choice markets
- ✓ Support regional connectivity, especially to the airport and various parts of Atlanta
- ✓ Support in-county connectivity to provide mobility options and access to destinations within the county
- ✓ Match the right type of service to meet the demand and specific markets identified throughout the county
- ✓ Define a long-term vision with a plan for incremental implementation
- ✓ Identify opportunities for transit to support growth and economic development

Once a 2040 transit vision concept was developed, the project team then developed a phasing plan reflective of:

- ✓ Implementation of a bus system as soon as possible at a level and quality of service that meets the projected transit demand in Clayton County
- ✓ Implementation of commuter rail in Clayton County by 2025, within the first 10 years of the transit vision plan

Figures 7 through 9 illustrate the transit vision for Clayton County in three phases: 2016, 2025, and 2040. Due to the time required to purchase buses and build infrastructure, 2016 was identified as the likely first year for transit service. Each illustration is accompanied by a summary of key elements. For reference, the types of transit services are illustrated and defined at the conclusion of this section to facilitate a better understanding of the vision concepts.

Figure 7 – 2016 Transit Vision

- ✓ Implement local bus routes
- ✓ Complement GRTA Xpress bus routes
- ✓ Provide flexible, circulator bus routes
- ✓ Establish transit hubs to support bus connections
- ✓ Provide complementary ADA paratransit service for eligible persons with disabilities
- ✓ Establish bus stops with shelters and other amenities at key bus stops
- ✓ Provide connections between key cities and activity centers within Clayton County
- ✓ Provide connections to the airport and existing MARTA rail stations and bus routes

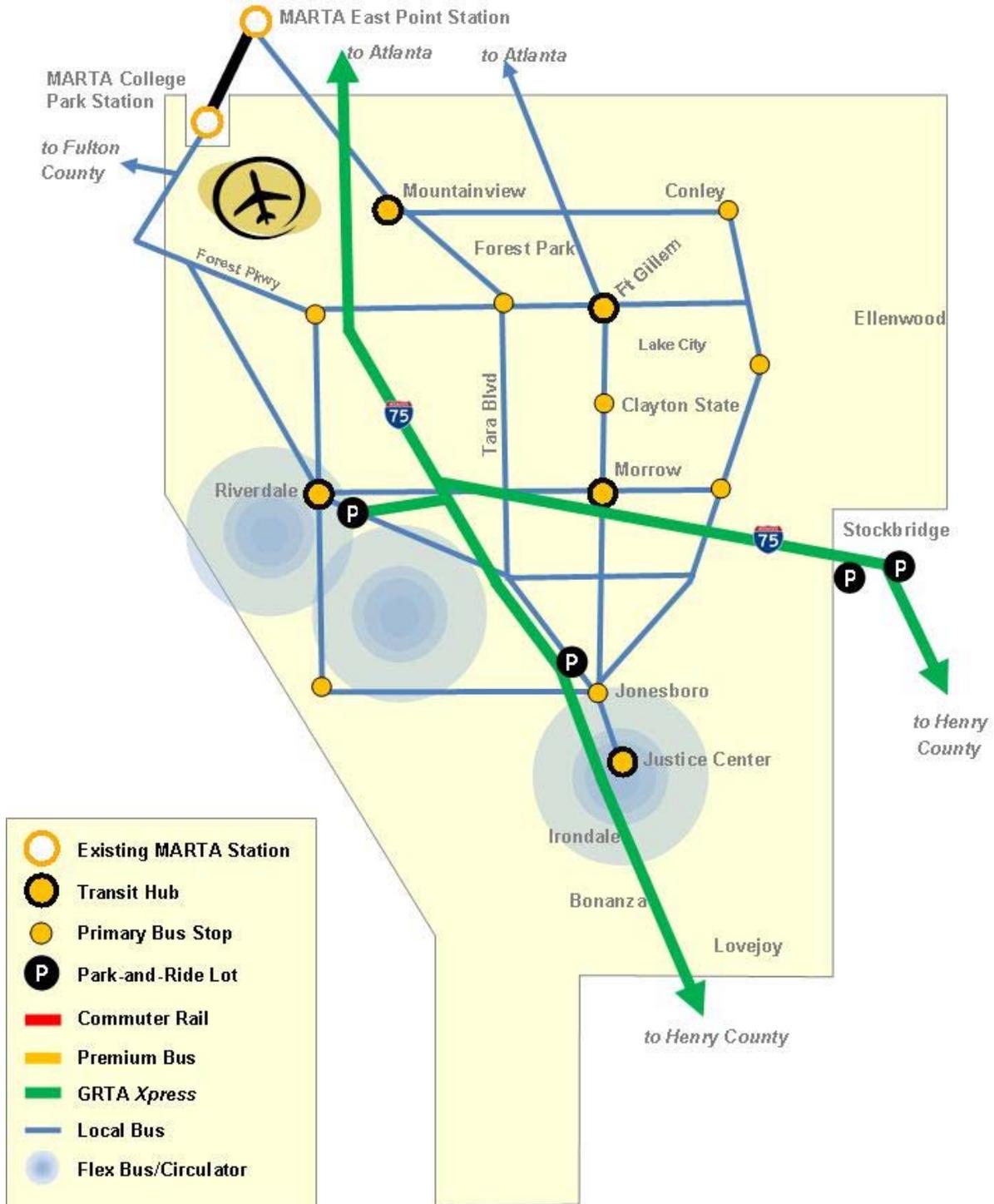


Figure 8 – 2025 Transit Vision

- ✓ Implement additional local bus routes, including new connections to Lovejoy and DeKalb County
- ✓ Implement premium bus service connection to Riverdale
- ✓ Increase frequency and hours of service on bus routes
- ✓ Implement more flexible, circulator bus routes
- ✓ Add new transit hub in Lovejoy
- ✓ Implement commuter rail, connecting existing MARTA rail to Lovejoy within the existing railway corridor

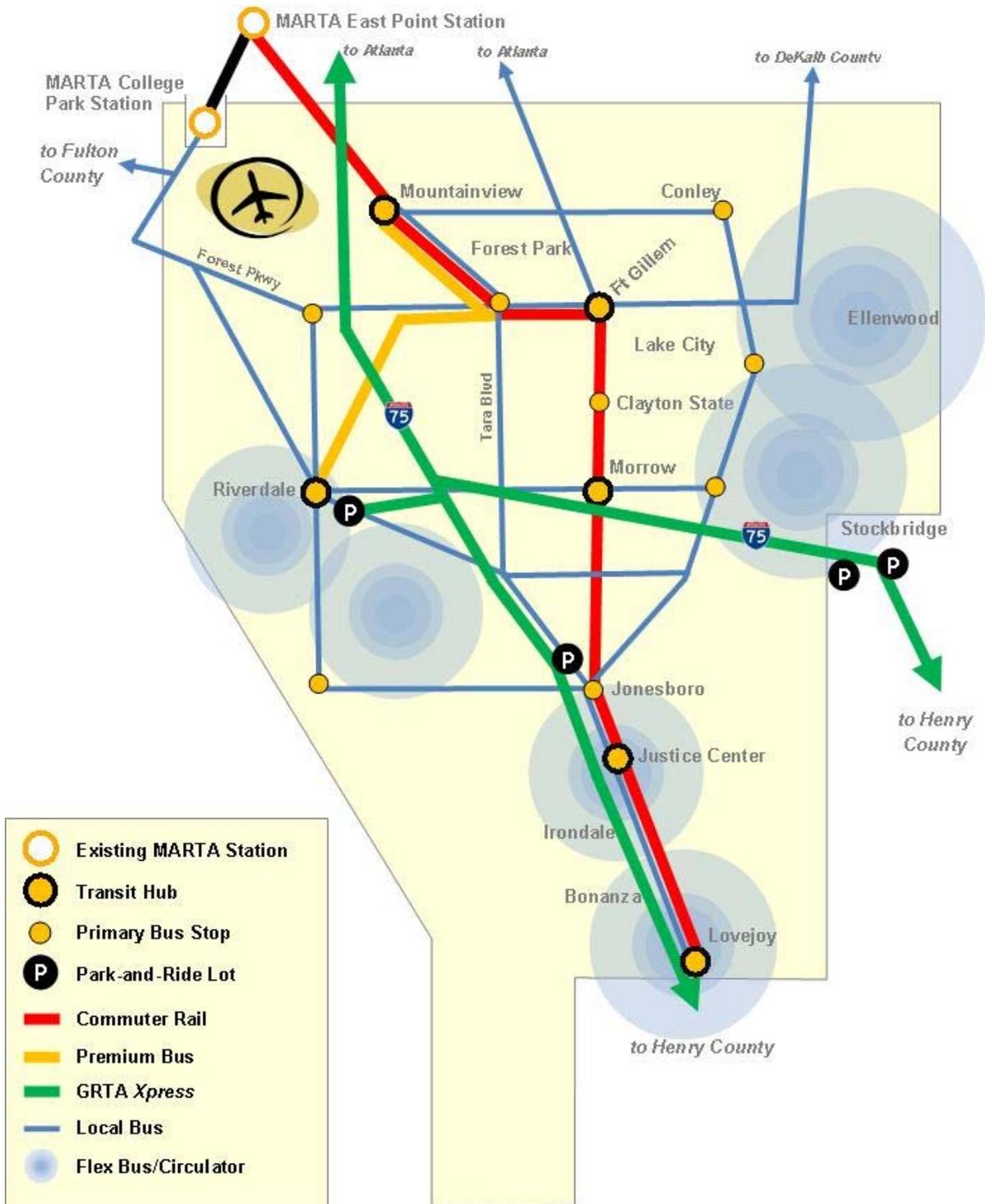
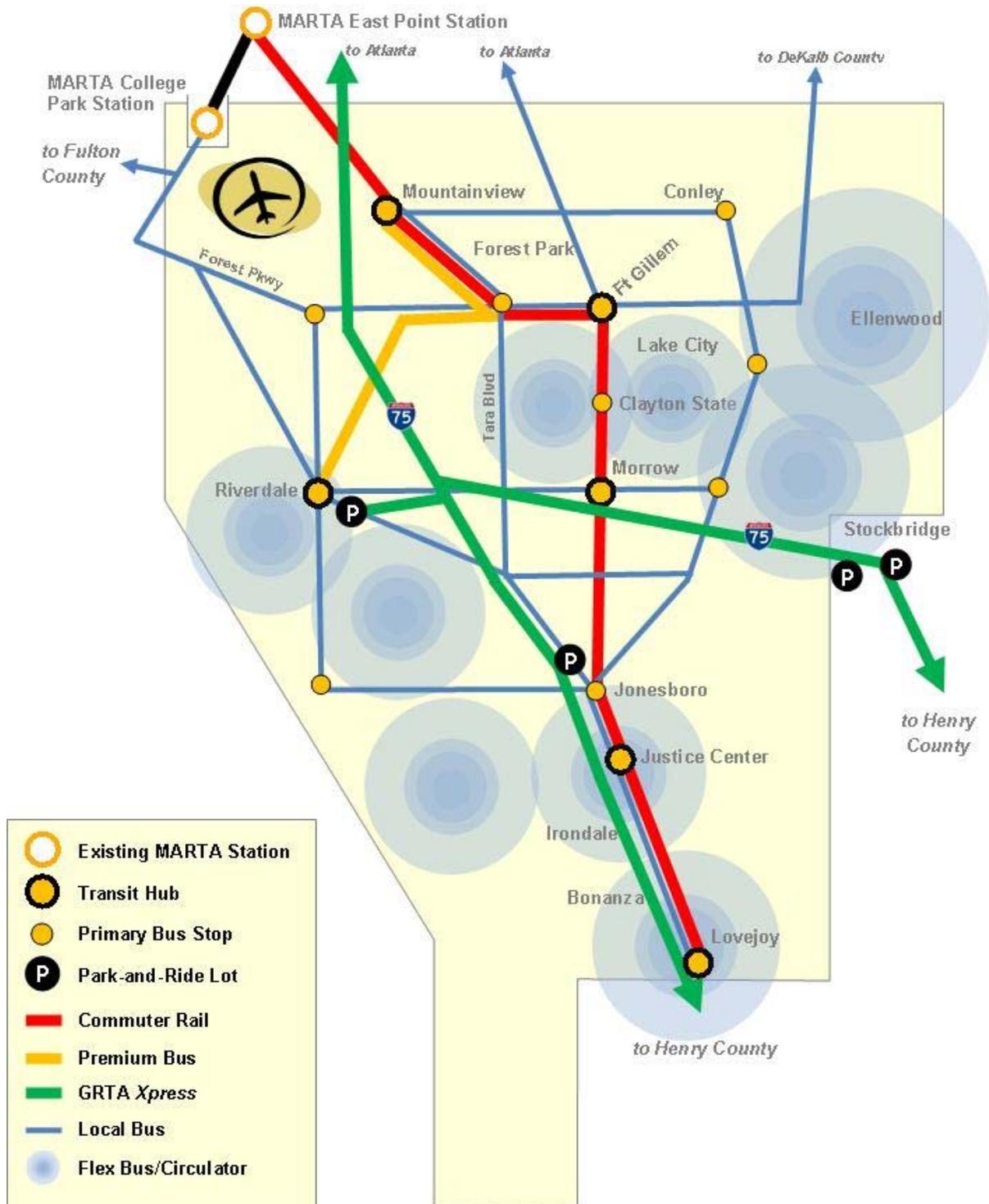


Figure 9 – 2040 and Beyond Transit Vision

- ✓ Increase frequency and span of local and premium bus service
- ✓ Complement future GRTA Xpress bus service
- ✓ Implement technologies to improve bus service and the customer experience
- ✓ Implement additional flexible, circulator bus routes
- ✓ Convert flexible, circulator bus service to more traditional bus routes when appropriate
- ✓ Continue expanding transit hub and bus stop customer amenities to match demand



Preliminary Service Plan

A preliminary service plan was developed for each phase of the transit vision concept. Included in the service plan are the following:

- ✓ Preliminary bus route alignments and assumptions for frequency and span of service
- ✓ Resulting annual hours of service by type of service and system total
- ✓ Resulting range of annual operating cost by type of service and system total
- ✓ Range of annual ridership for local bus, flex/circulator, and premium bus services

The hours, annual operating costs, and annual ridership projections are summarized in Tables 3 through 5 on the following pages, and Table 6 summarizes the percent change in hours of service from each phase to the next.

More detailed service planning is still required to refine service characteristics, refine operating costs, and establish capital needs and costs. Transit capital needs will include buses, transit hubs/transfer facilities, maintenance facility, shelters, other bus stop amenities, rail investment, and other capital needs to be determined.

Potential Revenue Sources

A detailed financial plan will need to be developed should the Clayton County Board of Commissioners decide to call for a sales tax referendum and move forward with plans for the transit system in Clayton County.

Based on discussions with Clayton County staff, the sales tax opportunity that came about from recent state

legislation is the key potential local revenue source that would be necessary to fund a transit system that is demanded by the citizens of Clayton County.

Should the Board of Commissioners vote to call for a sales tax referendum and it passed, the sales tax is projected to generate \$40 to \$50 million for a full-penny tax and \$20 to \$25 million for a half-penny tax (see Figure 10). These projections are based on information provided in various media outlets, but more detailed analysis by Clayton County is needed to provide more precise figures.

Also note that, while not intended to be a legal interpretation, the project team understands that the MARTA Act stipulates that no more than 50% of the annual proceeds of the sales tax shall be used to subsidize operating costs of the system, exclusive of depreciation, amortization, and other costs and charges provided for in the act. The remainder is to be used for transit capital. This has implications for what level of transit service is feasible to operate given funding available for operations.

Some of the advantages and disadvantages of a half-penny versus a full-penny sales tax are provided as follows:

Half-Penny Sales Tax

Advantages

- ✓ Revenues generated from a half-penny sales tax may be sufficient to support a transit vision concept similar to 2016 (but may require some service reductions depending upon the extent of revenue generated from fares and sources other than the sales tax). Regardless, it is important to understand that a detailed financial plan is still needed to support an agreement with MARTA.
- ✓ Limiting the sales tax increase to a half-penny lessens the perceived impact of a higher sales tax being detrimental to growth and economic development.

Disadvantages

- ✓ This sales tax would not be sufficient to support the implementation of commuter rail and bus service expansion as illustrated in the visions for 2025 and 2040.
- ✓ Representation on the MARTA Board would likely be reduced from that anticipated with a full-penny sales tax.

Figure 10
How much revenue would a sales tax generate for transit in Clayton County (in millions)?



**Table 3 – Transit Vision Concept
Projected Annual Hours, Operating Cost, and Ridership (2016)**

Type of Service	Annual Hours of Service	Estimated Cost per Hour (in 2014 \$)	Annual Operating Cost (in millions of 2014 \$)		Range of Annual Bus Ridership (one-way trips)	
			Low (-15%)	High (+15%)	Low	High
Local Bus	153,000	\$106	\$13.8	\$18.7	2,700,000	3,600,000
Paratransit	23,000	\$82	\$1.6	\$2.2	No projection	No projection
Flex/Circulator	20,000	\$82	\$1.4	\$1.9	300,000	400,000
Premium Bus	n/a	\$125	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Commuter Rail	n/a	\$332	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
TOTAL	196,000	n/a	\$16.8	\$22.7	3,000,000	4,000,000

**Table 4 – Transit Vision Concept
Projected Annual Hours, Operating Cost, and Ridership (2025)**

Type of Service	Annual Hours of Service	Estimated Cost per Hour (in 2014 \$)	Annual Operating Cost (in millions of 2014 \$)		Range of Annual Bus Ridership*	
			Low (-15%)	High (+15%)	Low	High
Local Bus	171,000	\$106	\$15.4	\$20.8	3,000,000	4,100,000
Paratransit	26,000	\$82	\$1.8	\$2.4	No projection	No projection
Flex/Circulator	41,000	\$82	\$2.8	\$3.8	630,000	850,000
Premium Bus	7,000	\$125	\$0.7	\$1.0	435,000	590,000
Commuter Rail	45,000	\$332	\$12.3	\$16.7	No projection	No projection
TOTAL	290,000	n/a	\$33.1	\$44.8	4,065,000	5,540,000

*Ridership projections exclude commuter rail and will need to be prepared by MARTA at a future date.

**Table 5 – Transit Vision Concept
Projected Annual Hours, Operating Cost, and Ridership (2040)**

Type of Service	Annual Hours of Service	Estimated Cost per Hour (in 2014 \$)	Annual Operating Cost (in millions of 2014 \$)		Range of Annual Bus Ridership* (one-way trips)	
			Low (-15%)	High (+15%)	Low	High
Local Bus	245,000	\$106	\$22.0	\$29.8	3,500,000	4,700,000
Paratransit	37,000	\$82	\$2.6	\$3.5	No projection	No projection
Flex/Circulator	118,000	\$82	\$8.2	\$11.1	600,000	810,000
Premium Bus	12,000	\$125	\$1.3	\$1.7	300,000	415,000
Commuter Rail	45,000	\$332	\$12.3	\$16.7	No projection	No projection
TOTAL	457,000	n/a	\$46.4	\$62.8	4,400,000	5,925,000

**Ridership projections exclude commuter rail and will need to be prepared by MARTA at a future date.*

**Table 6 – Transit Vision Concept
Percent Change in Hours of Service**

Type of Service	2016*	2025	2040
Local Bus	49%	12%	43%
Paratransit	50%	12%	43%
Flex/Circulator	New	104%	188%
Premium Bus	n/a	New	83%
Commuter Rail	n/a	New	0%
TOTAL	66%	47%	58%

**Reflects the percent change in hours of service from what was provided previously by C-TRAN.*

Full-Penny Sales Tax

Advantages

- ✓ It is believed that the vision concepts for 2016, 2025, and 2040 are likely to be attainable with the anticipated proceeds from a full-penny sales tax, with the understanding that a detailed financial plan is still needed to support an agreement with MARTA.
- ✓ It is understood that Clayton County would have formal representation on the MARTA Board.

Disadvantages

- ✓ There is concern that raising Clayton County's total sales tax to 8% will be detrimental to the economic competitiveness of the county in attracting growth and economic development. To provide perspective, of the 159 counties in Georgia, the Georgia Department of Revenue reports the following sales tax levies: 5% (1 county), 6% (9 counties), 7% (104 counties), and 8% (45 counties).

Other revenue sources that will need to be integrated into a more-detailed financial plan include:

- ✓ Farebox revenue – It is anticipated that 25–30% of operating costs will be recovered through passenger fares. This is contingent upon a fare policy that will be determined at a future date, along with more refined ridership projections.

- ✓ Federal funding – Implementing the transit system will result in eligibility for federal funding, similar to other transit agencies throughout the U.S. The extent and use of this funding will need to be established as part of a more-detailed financial plan.
- ✓ Public private partnerships – As opportunities arise and redevelopment occurs in Clayton County, public private partnership opportunities should be pursued to help fund specialized transit services and transit oriented development.

Transit Management and Governance

After significant discussion, analysis, and clarification of legislation, it is clear that joining MARTA is the best and only choice for implementing a transit system in Clayton County. Some of the key reasons for this are summarized as follows:

- ✓ Legal interpretations provided to the project team regarding recent legislation and the MARTA Act indicate that joining MARTA is a requirement if a sales tax referendum is to be pursued.
- ✓ The urgency and interest in implementing a transit system as quickly as possible make MARTA the best choice for getting a bus system into operation in the shortest time possible.

Figure 11: Characteristics of the Types of Transit Services included in the Clayton County Transit Vision

Paratransit Characteristics

- Reservation-based system
- Door-to-door service
- Typically for persons with disabilities
- Specialty vehicles
- Variable routing/scheduling - reservations
- Also known as Demand Response, Dial-a-Ride



Flex Bus/Circulator Characteristics

- Local bus service
- Rural/suburban areas
- May deviate from route to pick up passengers
- Deviations typically 1/4- to 1/2- mile from route
- Connects with other routes
- Low to medium frequency
- Smaller service area
- Few fixed stops/many stops based on reservations



Local Bus (Fixed Route) Characteristics

- Traditional bus service
- Urban/suburban areas
- Low to high frequency
- Roadside bus stops
- Frequent stops
- Lower speeds
- Travel in regular traffic



Express Bus Characteristics (Premium Bus)

- Medium-to-high capacity vehicles
- Charter bus style vehicles
- Travel in regular traffic
- Limited stops concentrated at ends of route
- Higher frequency during peak commute periods
- Minimal service during non-peak commute periods
- Longer distance travel
- Commuters
- Park-and-Ride
- Potential amenities: wireless internet, radio, or television
- May operate on managed lanes



Bus Rapid Transit Characteristics (Premium Bus)

- Operated on roadways
- May have exclusive lanes
- Urban/regional service
- Stylized vehicle design
- High capacity vehicles
- Traffic signal priority
- High frequency (10- to 15-minute headways)
- May have higher average speeds if in exclusive lanes
- Larger, more substantial stations
- Special branding
- Level boarding at stations
- Potential for off-board fare collection



Commuter Rail Characteristics

- Separated right-of-way
- Operated on rails
- Multiple coaches (2-8)
- Higher speed (30-50 mph)
- Low frequency
- Long-distance travel
- Less frequent stops
- Significant stations
- Special branding
- On- or off-board fare collection
- Low level or high platform loading





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Next Steps

The primary mechanism for advancing implementation of transit service in Clayton County, presuming passage of a referendum, is consensus on a Rapid Transit Contract and Assistance Agreement between Clayton County and MARTA.

Recognizing the feasibility determination of the need for transit services in Clayton County discussed herein and the opportunity for a voter referendum to partner with MARTA to collect a half-penny or full-penny sales and use tax for transit services in Clayton County, this section provides next steps to advancing transit service implementation. The primary mechanism for advancing implementation, presuming passage of the referendum, is consensus on a Rapid Transit Contract and Assistance Agreement between Clayton County and MARTA.

The following are “guiding principles” that should be considered by Clayton County and MARTA in developing and negotiating the contract and assistance agreement. They are not intended to represent contract terms or specific transit operating requirements, but, rather, they respond to input received as part of the public outreach efforts and technical analysis completed during the transit feasibility study.

The guiding principles include the following:

- ✓ **Flexible transit service provisions** – Recognizing the demographic profile and the county’s dispersed land use patterns, transit in Clayton County should be customized to get patrons to work, shopping, medical services, and education. This includes fixed-route and non-fixed-route “flex” bus service types that may require adequate off-peak operations and a robust ADA paratransit network of services. The fleet should include the appropriate scale/size vehicles, wheelchair accessibility, and camera and equipment for safety and security. The agreement should leverage federal matching funding guidelines.
- ✓ **Saturday and Sunday service provisions** – The agreement should address both Saturday and Sunday service. If it does not, MARTA and Clayton County may be under pressure almost immediately to institute transit on these days in response to the growing service-



related job market that most often requires workers on Saturday and/or Sunday and to respond to public comments calling for weekend service heard throughout the public outreach meetings.

- ✓ **Transit-related amenities** – The agreement should place emphasis on maximizing passenger shelters (while reducing the number of unprotected bus stops), sidewalk connectivity to transit, adequate lighting, benches, bicycle racks, trash cans and proper collection/clean-up, walking paths adjacent or leading to transit stops, traveler information systems such as real-time arrival/departure information, pedestrian signalization, and appropriate roadway geometric improvements conducive to bus operations. Such amenities will add comfort for passengers and, at the same time, will speed up the operation and efficiency of the system. The agreement should address both installing the transit-related amenities and maintaining them.

- **Transit-related infrastructure** – needed to facilitate transit-oriented development, including the design and construction of access for transit vehicles, vehicle turnarounds and lay-over areas, and passenger amenities.
- **Constructing turnarounds and lay-over areas** – the agreement should provide that if such facilities are required to implement a needed service, they will be constructed at the expense of MARTA and not Clayton County.
- ✓ **Coordination of policing and safety/security efforts** – The security of the transit system should be MARTA’s responsibility. However, there must be direct communication between MARTA Police and Clayton County Police to reduce and discourage crime on the transit system. This should include identifying livability issues and crime activities in the neighborhoods and business centers served by transit that could migrate onto the system.
- ✓ **Rail expansion alternatives** – In the case of levying a one-penny sales and use tax, the agreement should clearly define the extent of rail expansion to be incorporated into Clayton County. This would include the general alignment, stations, technology, safety/

security, maintenance/operations (O&M) facilities and other requirements, implementation timeframe, anticipated system performance, financial plan, and capital and O&M costs. The agreement also should address how rail expansion into Clayton County would impact MARTA’s current obligations, expansion priorities, and future creditworthiness/favorable bonding capacity.

It is vitally important that these guiding principles are fully addressed in development of the Rapid Transit Contract and Assistance Agreement between Clayton County and MARTA. Moreover, if the Clayton County Board of Commissioners decides to call for the transit referendum to be held in November 2014, it will be imperative that both parties move quickly to negotiate terms and system specifications and finalize the agreement during the early July 2014 timeframe.

Finally, it is recommended that Clayton County and/or MARTA immediately engage in an intense public education and outreach campaign. This program should build on the outreach efforts completed during the feasibility study and be carried out up until the date of referendum. The program can help clarify expectations of MARTA and Clayton County as well as continue community dialog around transit issues.



**Visit the Clayton County
Transit Feasibility Study website at:**

transit.claytoncountga.gov

For more information, please contact:

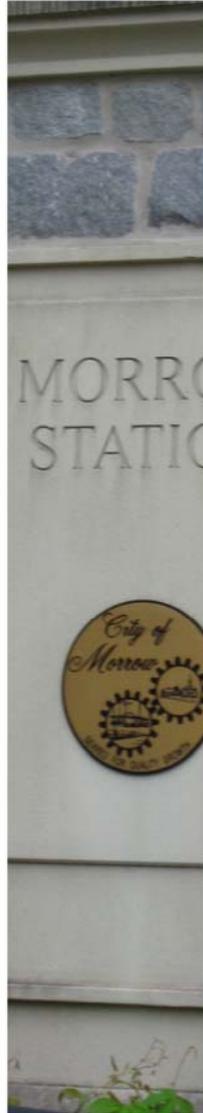
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