

Clifton Corridor Transit Initiative Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

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Project Cost & Funding

What are potential funding sources for this project?

The planning phase for this project is currently funded by general MARTA funding, as well as the More MARTA program for the City of Atlanta portion.

To further design and build the project, multiple federal, state, and local sources can be used. A typical funding source, available for up to 50% of project funding, is the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Capital Investment Grants (CIG) program.

Typical examples of local funding sources are a referendum for a sales tax increase, local grants, a community improvement district, or a tax allocation district. The project team will continue to support DeKalb County in determining the best ways to obtain local funding.

What are the cost differences between LRT and BRT?

LRT requires more infrastructure than BRT, including more aerial/bridge segments, rails, overhead power lines, signaling systems, electrical substations, and a new vehicle maintenance/storage facility.

What is the purpose and need of this project?

The purpose of this project is to:

- Enhance mobility to, from and within the Clifton Corridor, one of Metro Atlanta's major employment and educational activity centers;
- Provide a high capacity, fixed-guideway transit service to the Clifton Corridor in a manner that increases the speed, reliability and frequency of transit services within the corridor and enhances connectivity between the corridor and metropolitan region;
- Provide alternative travel options in the event of emergencies that impair roadway travel within the corridor; and
- Sustainably provide equitable opportunities for mobility, economic development and access to jobs and essential services.

Environmental Considerations

What kind of environmental review process will this project go through?

The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) outlines, for projects receiving federal funding, a "decision-making process that agencies must follow to study the environmental impacts of proposed projects, both large and small". You can learn more about the process at

<https://www.transit.dot.gov/regulations-and-programs/environmental-programs/environmental-review-process>. Resource categories to be evaluated are:

- Acquisitions and Relocations
- Air Quality
- Biological Resources
- Community Impacts
- Economic Impacts
- Energy Conservation
- Environmental Justice
- Geology and Soils
- Hazardous Substances and Brownfields
- Historic and Archeological Resources
- Land Use and Development
- Noise and Vibration
- Public Involvement
- Safety and Security
- Lands for parks/recreation/wildlife habitat/historic properties
- Transportation Impacts
- Water Resources and Utilities

Potential impacts to these resources will be evaluated. NEPA also includes a review of climate considerations.

Can you explain MARTA's acquisition process, specifically with taking residential property?

MARTA follows the Federal Transit Administration's (FTA) compensation process when it comes to obtaining ROW (right-of-way). In the environmental process, MARTA will follow their Real Estate Acquisition Management Plan (RAMP), in which it examines the properties in the project area that could be affected. The RAMP also examines the type of property (residential, commercial, etc.) and the presence of similar properties to limit disruption. MARTA's ROW acquisition team also follows all FTA regulations, including fair and equitable standards and rules about ensuring proper payments. A partial take occurs when part of the property is being affected (e.g., 2 to 3 feet of a corner of a property is taken), but the owner can still use the property. A full take occurs when enough of the property is taken such that the owner of the home or business cannot access the driveway or the property overall.

Implementation Timeline

What is the timeline on an expected recommended alternative?

MARTA anticipates recommending one alternative in Summer 2023. After making the recommendation via a virtual public forum, the project team will open a 30-day public comment period. After the comment period, comments will be evaluated before the alternative is presented to MARTA's Board of Directors for a vote. The current goal is Summer 2023 for a Board decision.

What is the timeline for implementing Clifton Corridor BRT?

MARTA will be announcing anticipated implementation dates for Clifton Corridor and other regional transit improvements periodically through their project website and other forums.

MARTA's current goal is to deliver the project by 2030. Under the recent More MARTA re-sequencing effort, Clifton Corridor BRT is expected to begin operations in 2028. This would be for the Minimum Operable Segment in the City of Atlanta, where local funding is available.

Would either or both options be opened all at once, or could they be opened in stages as the systems are built out?

The project objective is to connect the full corridor, but MARTA will consider a phased approach if there are funding constraints. These services can potentially be extended in the future as part of an expanded network.

Mode & Alternatives

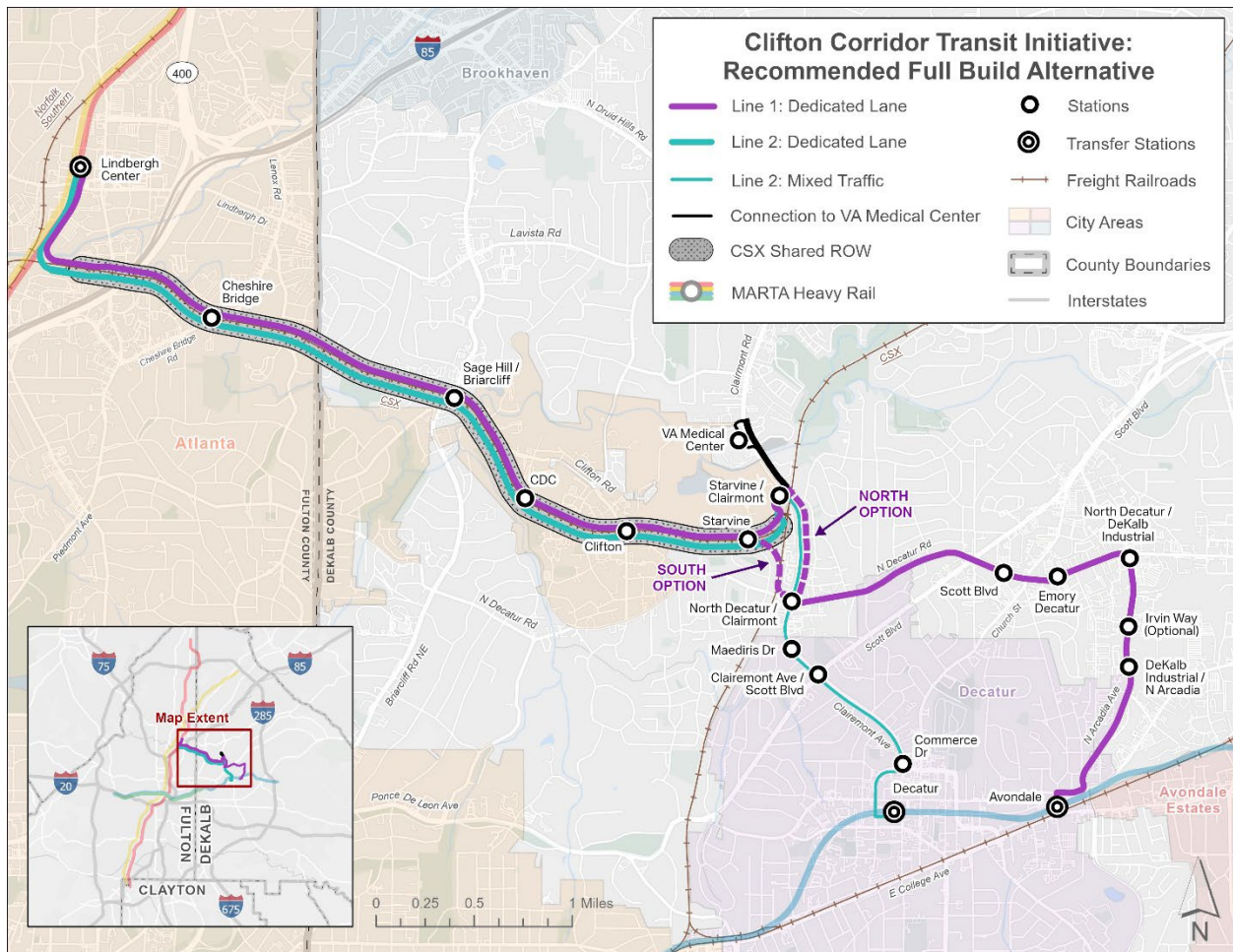
What is the recommended alternative?

MARTA is currently moving forward with bus rapid transit (BRT) alternatives for the Clifton Corridor Transit Initiative. Local funding for this project is only available within the City of Atlanta at this time. MARTA is proposing a phased approach. The full recommended alternative is Alternative 1B, which features the following service:

- BRT from Lindbergh Center station to Avondale station with 97% dedicated right-of-way.
- BRT from Lindbergh Center station to Decatur station with 77% dedicated right-of-way. BRT service would transition from dedicated right-of-way to mixed traffic operations on Clairemont Avenue within the City of Decatur.
- A frequent shuttle connection from a Clifton Corridor station to the Atlanta VA Medical Center

A map of the full recommended alternative is provided in **Figure 1** below.

Figure 1: Recommended Alternative, Full Project (Alternative 1B)

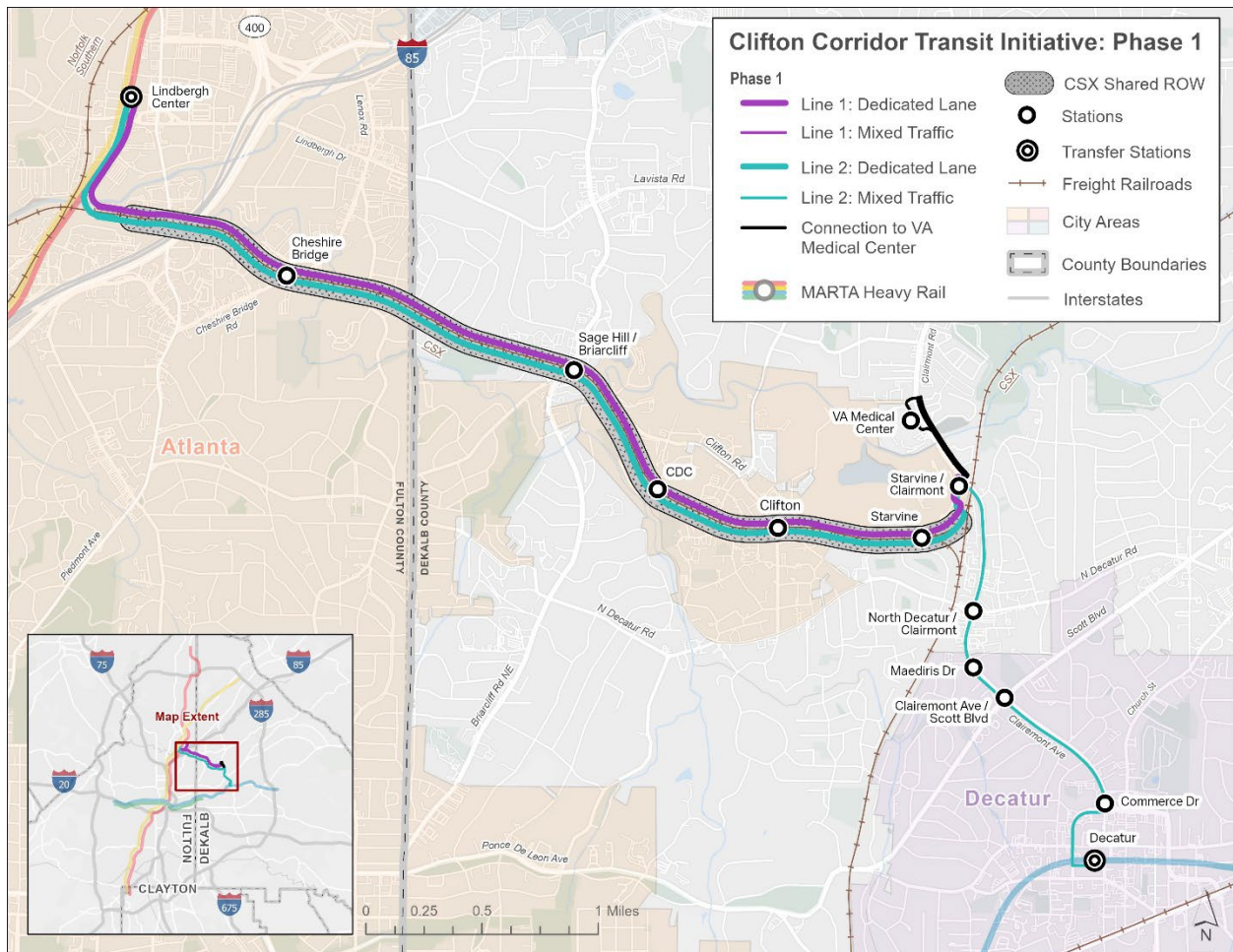


Phase 1 of the recommended alternative could be built with existing local funding from the City of Atlanta’s More MARTA Atlanta program, and would include the following transit service:

- Line 1: BRT from Lindbergh Center to the Atlanta VA Medical Center
- Line 2: BRT from Lindbergh Center to Decatur Station

Phase 1 of the Recommended Alternative is shown in **Figure 2** below.

Figure 2: Recommended Alternative, Phase 1 (Alternative 1B)



What is a minimum operable segment (MOS)?

A minimum operable segment (MOS) is a segment of the project that provides the most cost-effective solution with the greatest benefits for the project. The MOS would function as a first phase of the project that could be built using local funding from the City of Atlanta’s More MARTA Atlanta program.

What do the acronyms BRT and ART stand for? What are their frequencies?

Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) provides reliable travel time experiences through the use of dedicated lanes, transit signal priority technology, and dedicated stations that offer seamless connections to local bus and rail services.

Arterial Rapid Transit (ART) is a frequent all-day bus service that travels mostly on arterial roads. ART operates primarily in mixed traffic through queue jump lanes at key intersections with transit signal priority (TSP).

BRT frequency would be 10 minutes or better during peak times, and ART frequency would be 15 minutes. ART frequency would be better than most current local bus services provided by MARTA in the corridor. In terms of capacity, BRT holds and moves more passengers per hour than ART and the existing local buses.

How will rail and bus play a role in Atlanta's transit network?

Both rail and bus transit play important roles in Atlanta's transit network and will continue to do so in the future. MARTA and the region will implement the best alternative and transit mode for the corridor. Cost and competitiveness for federal funding are important considerations which lead to localized decisions.

Why was LRT not considered for a direct route into Decatur?

The two main challenges of adding another segment route of LRT are high cost and lack of community support for widening the ROW along Clairmont Avenue through Decatur. Some of the key drivers of LRT costs are:

- Requirements of more aerial/bridge segments compared to BRT
- Overhead power lines and related infrastructure
- A signaling system for vehicles
- A dedicated storage/maintenance facility

LRT would also require a fully dedicated ROW along Clairemont Avenue to Decatur station, which would require widening the roadway in a local historic district. MARTA received strong opposition to this concept in Summer 2022.

There are many destinations that will be served by the Avondale route, including healthcare facilities, community institutions, housing units, the Emory Decatur hospital, Veterans Affairs (VA) clinic, DeKalb Farmer's Market, and other new developments and services. There is also greater potential for future transit-oriented development along this route.

Could the recommended alternative change from BRT to LRT in the future?

MARTA can consider the option of designing the transit guideway and aerial structures to be compatible for future use with rail transit.

What is the overall capacity of LRT and BRT? Does this consider future population growth?

As defined for Clifton Corridor, MARTA estimates that the capacity of BRT is approximately 250 to 800 passengers per hour and the capacity of LRT is approximately 350 to 1,000 passengers per hour.

MARTA is aware of future population and demographics forecasts from sources like the Atlanta Regional Commission. These forecasts will be considered when conducting a ridership analysis in Summer 2023.

Transit Connectivity

Are there other high-capacity transit route projects being considered by MARTA that eventually could create a cohesive city-wide system?

Yes. Numerous high-capacity corridors are being studied by MARTA. BRT, LRT, and ART (Arterial Rapid Transit, which is essentially BRT without dedicated transit lanes) are all under consideration in a variety of corridors in the region. A cohesive system is the primary goal. Selecting the

appropriate technology for the corridor or route will increase the project's cost effectiveness and competitiveness for additional funding sources.

Pedestrian & Bicycle Connectivity

Will MARTA prioritize walking/biking on the route?

Every MARTA customer's transit trip begins with walking, biking, or rolling. Convenient, attractive, and safe access by these modes is essential to the success of Clifton Corridor. MARTA will work with stakeholders to consider bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure near and potentially within the corridor.

Stations and Transit Oriented Development (TOD)

How will BRT stations be different from local bus stops?

BRT stations are full stations with long canopies and other passenger amenities, rather than local bus stops. Stations would include real-time arrival information, wayfinding (directional signage for customers) and ticket fare machines as permanent fixtures. Another special feature is that every door of the BRT vehicles can open and can pull up to either side of the platform, and quickly accommodate payment and wheelchair users.

Will there be parking at these stations?

The only parking at this time will be at the Lindbergh Center and Avondale stations, where there is existing parking for MARTA customers. The project team will be considering other opportunities to capture parking, such as at DeKalb Industrial Way, to capture ridership from the northeast, and remote parking for the institutions in the corridor. Most of the stations would be walk-up only and focused on transit-oriented development.

Is MARTA considering transit-oriented development (TOD) at these new stations and if so, how will this be executed through private investment?

Yes. MARTA considers implementing TOD around all stations, including within the Clifton Corridor. Our team will continue examining opportunities

to work with the community and local governments to implement TOD appropriately.

CSX Corridor

Does MARTA need to acquire residential property for development of the recommended alternative near the CSX right-of-way?

Along the CSX right-of-way, MARTA is not anticipating any land acquisition from residential properties. Some land outside of the CSX right-of-way would be needed for construction, stations, and station access. Electric BRT vehicles would run alongside the existing freight railroad in a separate transitway that is dedicated to MARTA Clifton Corridor transit vehicles.

How would MARTA transit fit within the CSX corridor, and how would it be screened/separated from the surrounding residential neighborhoods?

The transitway would be configured parallel to the freight rail tracks primarily within the current railroad right-of-way. This would be accomplished by shifting the CSX freight railroad track to one side of the right-of-way where it is feasible to provide space for a dedicated transit guideway. CSX will maintain freight rail operations in the corridor. The transit guideway would be screened or separated from the surrounding residential neighborhoods by landscaping, fencing and/or barriers. The project's environmental review phase will consider visual and other potential impacts and how these can be minimized.

Has CSX decided to allow MARTA's use of their right-of-way?

MARTA's conversations with CSX Transportation are ongoing and have been positive. No decisions have been made yet. Conversations are centered around MARTA using a portion of the CSX right-of-way for public transit while maintaining freight rail operations.

How can the public stay informed regarding CSX negotiations?

MARTA will keep the public and stakeholders informed of progress regarding CSX negotiations. As always, MARTA encourages citizens to share their preferences and opinions with the Clifton Corridor project team. The project team can be reached at the email address clifton@itsmarta.com or through a comment submission form on the project website: connectclifton.com.

Will any sound barriers be considered for the locations where the new public transportation and the existing CSX tracks will run parallel?

At this point MARTA has not determined where, or if, sound barriers may be needed. BRT technology will use battery-electric vehicles, which will lower the system's noise level compared to natural gas or diesel vehicles. A noise and vibration analysis will be completed as part of the federal environmental review process; this will help MARTA determine any sound barrier considerations.

Operations & Traffic

How will BRT be affected during rush hour? Will travel time depend on the time of day?

One of MARTA's fundamental Clifton Corridor objectives is to provide a dedicated transitway through as much of the project area as can be feasibly delivered. Transit service in a dedicated transitway or reserved lanes will be much less susceptible to peak traffic congestion. The small set of Screen 2 alternatives will include options for a dedicated transitway end-to-end, with few exceptions. For BRT alternatives, the project may also offer opportunities for BRT vehicles to extend from the dedicated transitway as modernized bus service where routes operate today. Transit-priority treatments at signals and bus stops will improve peak-hour transit performance, even where MARTA and its partners cannot feasibly provide a dedicated transit lane.

How will these buses be powered? Will they be electric, gas, overhead?

This BRT service will use battery-electric vehicles. Overhead wires are used in LRT and are not considered in this project.

What is the impact on existing traffic in order to provide dedicated lanes?

MARTA is working on ridership models and traffic studies and will use the results of these studies to evaluate roadway and traffic impacts. In the CSX corridor, this is not a concern because this is a railroad corridor intended for dedicated transitway. In the eastern part of the corridor, where transit vehicles would leave the rail ROW and enter the street ROW, some streets may need to be reconfigured to allow for dedicated transit lanes. For example, In Alternative 1B, a BRT vehicle traveling in the CSX corridor that transitions to Clairemont Avenue in shared lanes is very similar to current bus operations. Therefore, there would not be a significant impact to traffic anticipated in the branch to Decatur Station.

How will BRT vehicles maneuver through traffic to reach destinations along a route?

A BRT vehicle does not need to leave its travel lane to pick up passengers. There would be new island stations located in the roadway with safe access for pedestrians that BRT vehicles can access without navigating through traffic to a curbside stop.

Will BRT be more reliable than the current Number 6 Bus?

Yes. Because the Number 6 Bus is currently in mixed traffic, it is unreliable during peak hours. This new service would provide dedicated lanes and would be faster and more reliable. It would take about 11 minutes to travel from Lindbergh Center to the Clifton station, compared to about 30 minutes on the Number 6 bus.

What about off-peak frequency?

Peak frequency would be every 10 minutes along the end-to-end Lindbergh to Avondale segment; adding service from Lindbergh to Decatur would increase the frequency of service in that shared corridor along the CSX alignment. Off-peak BRT operations would be around every 15 minutes and every 20 minutes for ART.

How will the plan affect Emory University students?

More students will be able to ride transit and MARTA intends for this service to connect to the existing Gold, Red, and Blue Lines, which provides even more access for students. There could also be future plans that would allow subsidizing student transit passes, as other universities have done. This would require further coordination with Emory University.

Will BRT serve at least 50% of the daily commute into Emory-CDC employment node?

Yes. MARTA will continue to examine the design capacity in the next phase as well.

Ridership

How will MARTA consider the shift in remote workers and apply this to any existing plans?

MARTA is investigating current trends in remote work, as well as forecasts for employees returning to their places of employment in the future. This will be included in the ridership analysis.

How will BRT attract riders from the surrounding area?

This is a regional project, so it will provide access to the jobs, services, and amenities in the Clifton Corridor to people from across the region. For residents of the corridor, the stations will be designed to promote convenient, safe, and attractive pedestrian access.

Is there a study that estimates the number of riders for this service?

MARTA is currently performing a ridership analysis and will make the results available to the public in Summer 2023.

How do you plan to increase ridership for the corridor but also for the entire MARTA system?

MARTA acknowledges that increasing ridership requires continuing to build out additional corridors and taking our customers where they need to go.

MARTA is continuously improving the transit network to enhance the convenience, attractiveness, and ridership of the entire system. Some examples of this are existing station rehabilitations, a new fleet of rail cars, and converting station parking lots to transit-oriented developments.

How would the Minimal Operating Segment (MOS) impact the number of jobs? How much of this is dependent upon other projects, and does that impact ridership numbers?

The MOS is the shortest viable project that could receive federal funding. The MOS reflects the limits of capital improvements to provide dedicated transit guideway. The MOS potentially provides transit service to the full corridor, but only partially in dedicated transit lanes. MARTA is still evaluating the limits of the MOS and how it would operate service. MARTA will provide figures for jobs and residents served, ridership, and other aspects of the MOS when these are available.

Stakeholder & Public Engagement

Who are the partners MARTA is working with to fund this project?

The City of Atlanta has dedicated funding for the project through the More MARTA Atlanta program, which was approved by voters in 2016. MARTA is currently working with other local jurisdictions and organizations to identify potential funding sources. The Federal Transit Administration (FTA) is another key partner that may provide funding through a competitive grant process.

How will MARTA ensure that community expectations are followed?

MARTA has conducted extensive engagement throughout the life of the Clifton Corridor project. For the Screen 1 Alternatives Analysis, MARTA began with a series of stakeholder meetings with elected officials, local government staff, and major employers. Those meetings helped MARTA develop the strategy for public outreach that included four public meetings (two in-person, two virtual), emails, social media, a website, a survey, and multiple pop-up events in the study area. Community acceptance will factor prominently in MARTA's identification of a preferred alternative, environmental review, project design and implementation. MARTA is aware that unless the public embraces, desires and uses Clifton Corridor, the project will not be a success.

Are you talking about project costs with DeKalb County? Do you have MOS-only capital cost numbers?

Local funding for this project would be a county decision, and we are talking with them. The Atlanta-only portion of the project (MOS) is expected to cost between \$550 million and \$700 million.

Have you surveyed the elementary and high schools and provided outreach to the Latino community?

MARTA tries to provide outreach to all areas and that is where you come in. We ask that you spread the word. All the information on the website and all the outreach material are offered in Spanish and a request can be made for any other language. If you feel there is a specific audience we can serve better, we welcome that feedback. Please email the team at clifton@itsmarta.com

Is there a public input process for the chosen alternative?

MARTA will host a public update in Summer 2023 and provide a recommendation. The project team will open a 30-day public comment period, and the community will have the opportunity to provide comments on the designs and details of the recommended alternative.

How will MARTA educate riders about BRT?

MARTA will treat this new service as it would rail. It is intended to be a premium service. There is a system activation plan in place that will have wayfinding (signage directing customers), integration with existing rail and local buses, upgraded technology and mobile apps and everything else that will make up our high-capacity transit service.

Engineering & Design

In terms of long-term investment, will BRT consider physical barrier separation for transit lanes?

Although MARTA is not currently considering physical barrier separation for transit lanes for this project, MARTA is currently communicating with the state legislature to consider implementing traffic cameras to enforce vehicle separation. MARTA will continue to evaluate physical barriers moving forward.