

I-285 Top End Express Lanes

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Booming Region Is Outgrowing Road Capacity



\$605B

Metro Atlanta GDP in 2024

Up 127% since 2009



+1.8M

New residents by 2050

+30%, to 7.9M people



+856K

New jobs by 2050

+22%; over half in Fulton,
Gwinnett, Cobb, & DeKalb



75 hours

Lost to traffic each year

3rd-highest traffic growth among
metro areas in the US since 2023



~358K jobs

along the I-285 Top End today

3× the US growth rate

Top End East population growth

Growth & Expansion of I-285



1969

2 lanes

Opened to traffic
in each direction



1989

4 lanes

Widened
in each direction

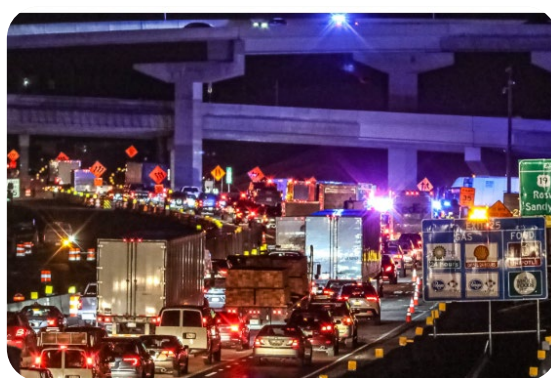
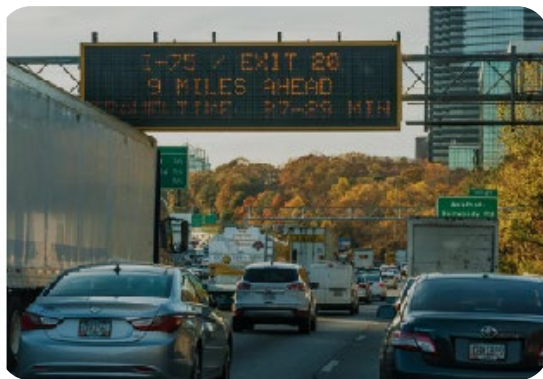
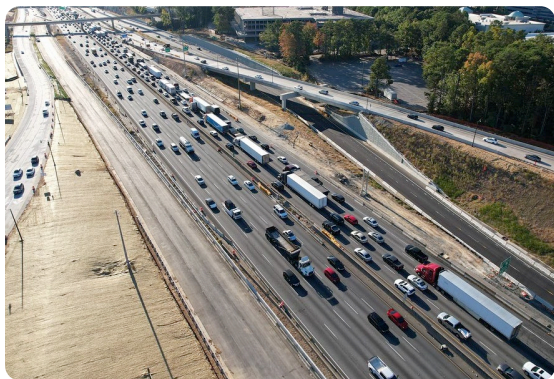


1996

5 lanes

Many segments widened
in each direction

I-285 Today



Congestion, incidents, and delays are a daily reality

I-285 Today: Congested and Unreliable

EVERY WEEKDAY

250K



vehicles use the corridor



4 in 10 drivers (101K)

crawl below 45 mph



8 hours

of congestion every weekday



+20-45 min

extra to budget for an on-time trip



+25%

more traffic within 15 years
of opening



5-20 mph

speeds along ~70% of the corridor
in 2057 without Express Lanes

GDOT's Stakeholder Coordination



~300

stakeholder meetings since 2019
along the I-285 and SR 400 corridors



Counties



Cities



Community Improvement Districts



Business Organizations



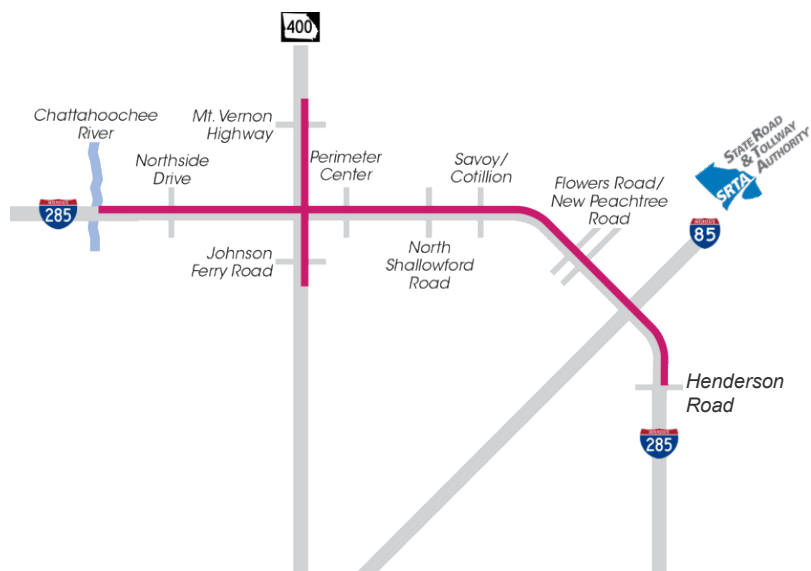
Communities & HOAs



Schools



I-285 Top End East Express Lanes Phase 1 - Westbound



I-285 Top End East Express Lanes Phase 1

19

centerline miles

47

lane miles incl. max.
extent limits

Vehicles: Class 1–6 (passenger, light commercial)

KEY MILESTONES



FINANCIAL CLOSE (target)

October 29, 2027



CONSTRUCTION COMPLETION

April 2034

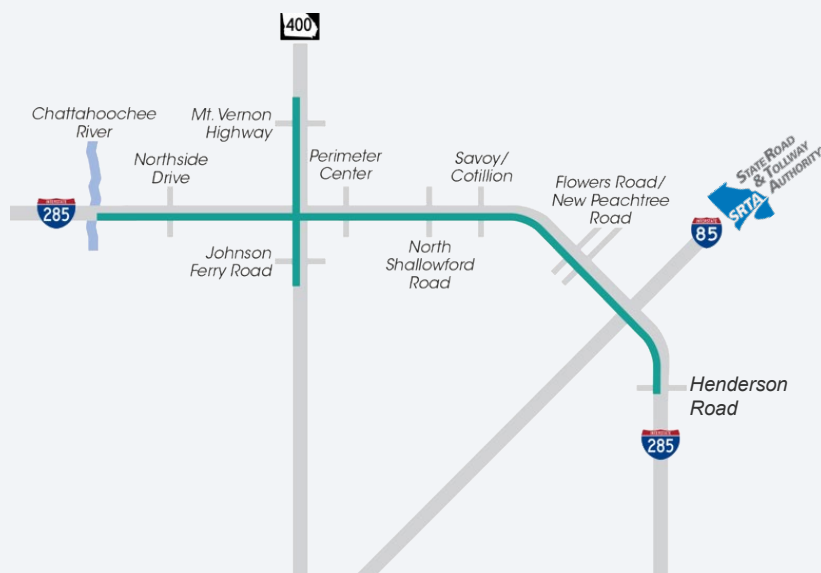
~\$515M

Phase 1 State investment to-date (Fed/State)

\$100M

Phase 1 public subsidy available

I-285 Top End East Express Lanes Phase 2 - Eastbound



I-285 Top End East Express Lanes Phase 2

19

centerline miles

47

lane miles incl. max.
extent limits

KEY MILESTONES



DEVELOPMENT PERIOD

Dec 2026 – Dec 2028



FINANCIAL CLOSE

Q1 / Q2 2029



CONSTRUCTION COMPLETION

Likely 2036 / 2037

Why Express Lanes Are the Right Approach

Faster Trips in Every Lane

128K

hours saved per day on existing lanes in 2050*

- ✓ +40% capacity:
2 new lanes alongside 5 existing lanes
- ✓ On I-75N, regular lanes ran up to 20 mph faster after express lanes opened

Market-Based Toll Rates

\$2/mile

upper limit to maintain 45 mph in ELs (\$2025)

- ✓ Can be higher, only when specific congestion thresholds are surpassed
- ✓ Over time, may be adjusted to a higher base toll to reflect growing economic conditions
- ✓ SRTA will monitor for toll rate setting compliance

Strong Demand for Reliability

22M

Express Lanes trips in the opening year

- ✓ Growing 50% by 2050*
- ✓ Connects to the regional express lane network, with no forced merges
- ✓ Commuters' value of time rises 30% by 2050



I-285 Express Lanes Transit Project



I-285 Top End Express Lanes Transit

From Grass Roots to a Regional Solution

2017

Brookhaven Mayor John Ernst leads mayors of 7 cities across I-285's Top End and 2 CIDs to study I-285 Top End Transit Feasibility*



2019

Mayors' I-285 Top End Transit Feasibility Study finds bus rapid transit system using the GDOT Express Lanes is operationally and financially feasible across Top End of I-285

**I-285 Top End Transit Feasibility Study city and CID partners included: Brookhaven, Chamblee, Doraville, Dunwoody, Sandy Springs, Smyrna, Tucker, Cumberland CID, and Perimeter CIDs*

Bus Rapid Express Lanes Transit is the right fit for I-285



Heavy rail: 8–10X the cost, with lower productivity

Planning-level estimates put heavy rail at least 8–10 times the cost of bus rapid transit, with lower productivity due to the in-line stations it would require along I-285



Strong demand for Bus Rapid Express Lanes transit

Modeling demonstrated strong demand for bus rapid transit service within the I-285 Top End Express Lanes



Community-based stations draw the most riders

The I-285 Express Lanes will be built primarily elevated outside of the existing general-purpose lanes, not in the median as on SR 400, so community-based stations attract stronger demand than in-line stations



Built to scale with the corridor

As bus rapid transit solution, Express Lanes Transit can scale and adapt as development and travel patterns across the corridor evolve

I-285 Top End Express Lanes Transit

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2022

Local planning led to historic Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) detailing collaboration and initial funding to advance planning and design of transit in I-285 Top End Express Lanes

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2022 MOU Signatories and Study Partners



- City of Atlanta
- City of Brookhaven
- City of Chamblee
- City of Clarkston
- City of Doraville
- City of Dunwoody
- City of Mableton

- City of Sandy Springs
- City of Smyrna
- City of Tucker
- Assembly CID
- Chamblee Doraville CID
- Cumberland CID
- East Metro DeKalb CID

- Gateway85 Gwinnett CID
- Lilburn CID
- Perimeter CID
- South Fulton CID
- Tucker Summit CID (formerly Stone Mountain CID)
- Tucker-Northlake (CID)



I-285 Express Lanes Transit Study



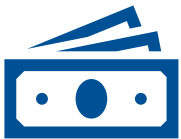
I-285 Express Lanes Transit Study Goals



Develop a plan and preliminary designs for potential Express Lanes Transit service along I-285 between the H.E. Holmes and Indian Creek MARTA stations

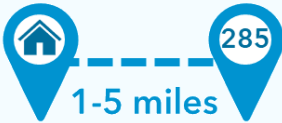


Identify opportunities to leverage the planned Express Lanes to serve customer demand and major employment centers across the corridor



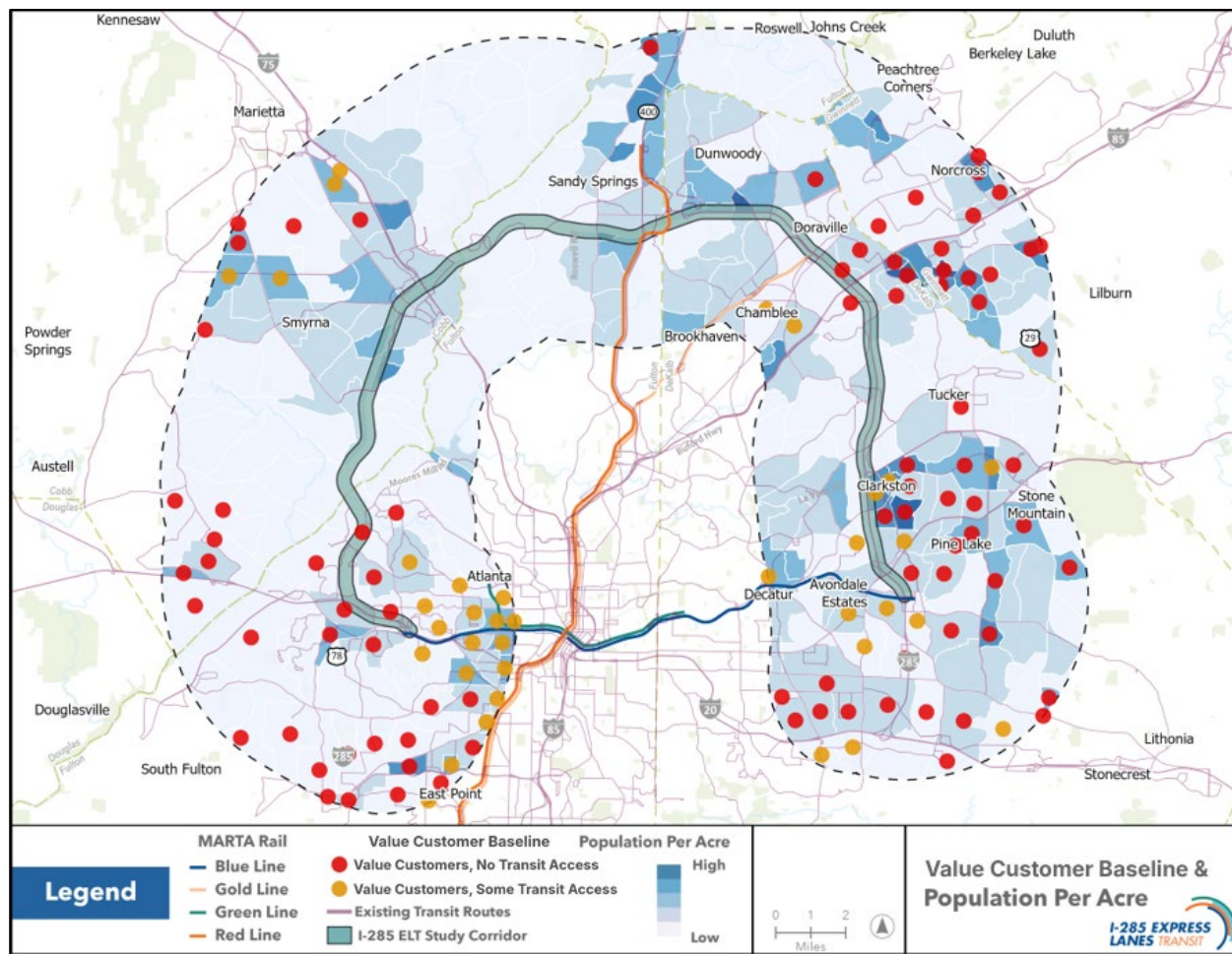
Position the region to seek funding for the future implementation of Express Lanes Transit

Three customer segments shaped the concept level service design

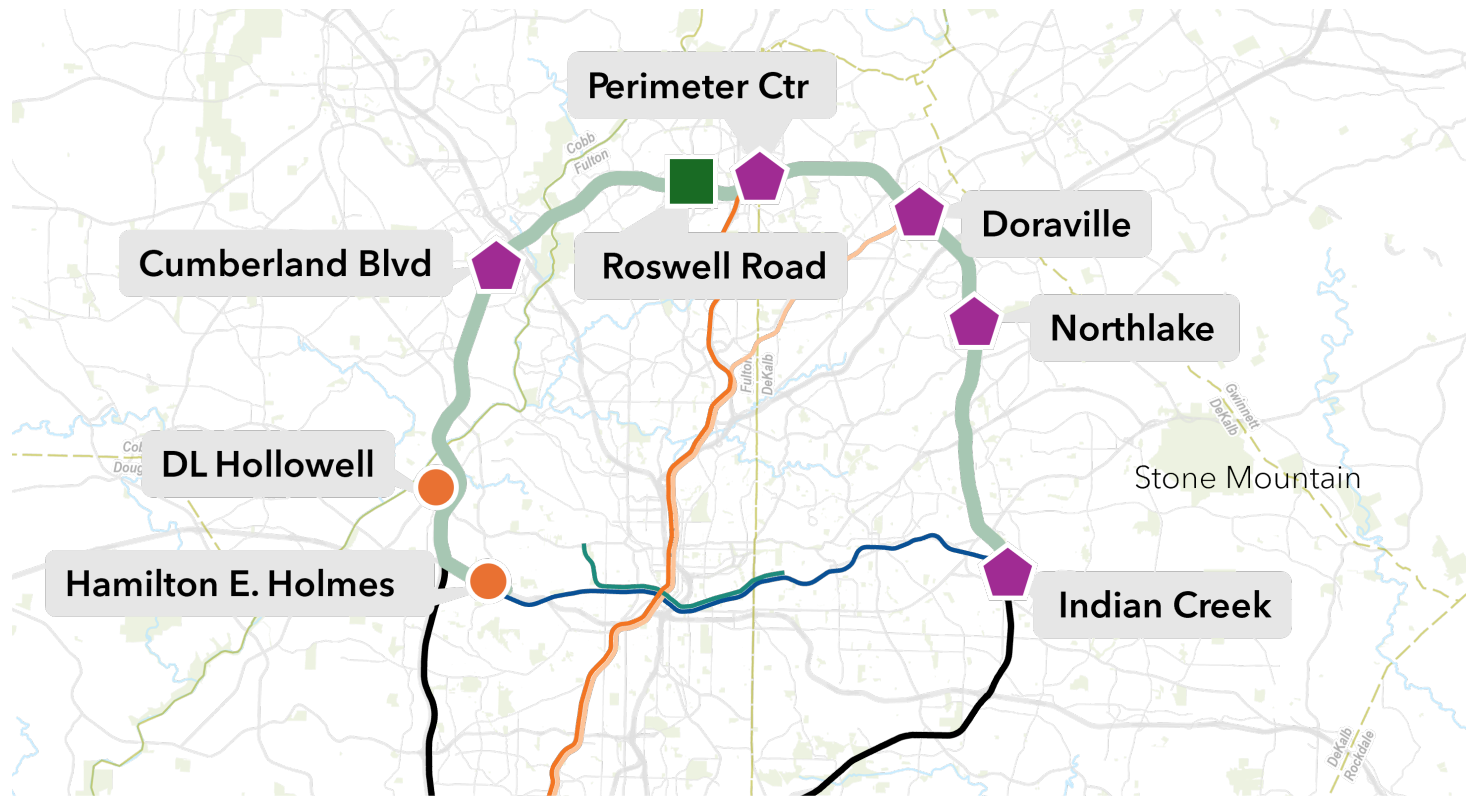
	Corridor Residents	Value Customers	Commuter Customers
Distance from I-285			
Why they ride	Speed, reliability, and limited stops	Reliable, affordable access to jobs and services	Time and cost savings compared to driving
Who they are	Residents and employees along the I-285 corridor	Budget-conscious, with limited or no car access	Employees with longer distance commutes
Trip types	All-day I-285 express lanes transit trips	All-day work, shopping, and daily errands	Peak-hour work trips
Access mode			

Customer Demand Increases with More Access and Higher Reliability

- Most I-285 corridor trips connect to major employment and activity centers
 - ✓ Cumberland
 - ✓ Perimeter Center
 - ✓ Doraville
- Strong market demand from residents around the corridor
- Limited demand for entire length: “end-to-end” trips from H.E. Holmes and Indian Creek MARTA Stations
- Concept-level service plan balances ridership, access, reliability, and cost-effectiveness



Proposed Stations & Improvement Types



Key



**Express Lanes (Tier 1)
Improvements**

*Queue jumps, bridge pier locations,
station locations, signal & operational
improvements*



**Community-Based Infrastructure
(Tier 2) Improvements**

*Dedicated bus lanes, enhanced stops,
queue jumps, bridge widening,
station location, signal & operational
improvements, coordination*



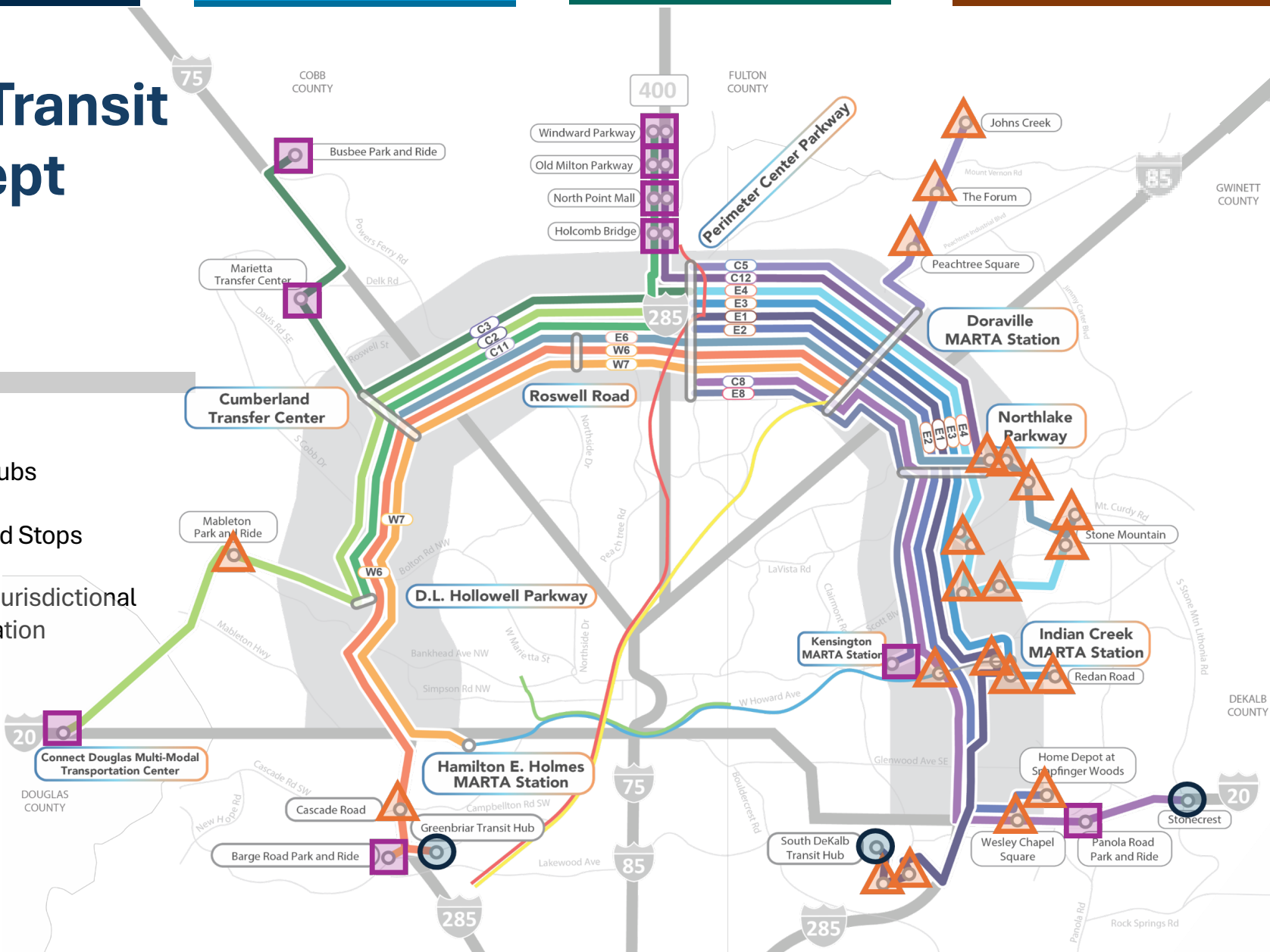
**Both Tier 1 & 2
Improvements**

*Combination of both Tier 1
and Tier 2 improvements*

Draft Transit Concept

Key

-  MARTA Transit Hubs
-  Enhanced Stops
-  Agency/Jurisdictional Coordination





Current Project Status & Next Steps



Current Status

I-285 Express Lanes Transit Plan	Status
Public Meetings	<i>Completed May 2025</i>
I-285 Express Lanes Transit Study	<i>Completed July 2025</i>
Initial Improvements	<i>Recommended to GDOT for Procurement Documents</i>

Next Steps



Ongoing Coordination With GDOT

Continued reviews of I-285 Express Lanes design



Update Concept Level Service Plan

Revisit service plan for updated travel, service, and development patterns



Initiate 30% Station Design

Prioritize and advance community-based station engineering in preparation for implementation



Express Lanes Transit Implementation Plan

Develop financial strategy and timeline for service implementation