

# CobbLinc Transit Centers Systems Analysis and Needs Assessment Study



## Stakeholder Engagement/Outreach Technical Memorandum

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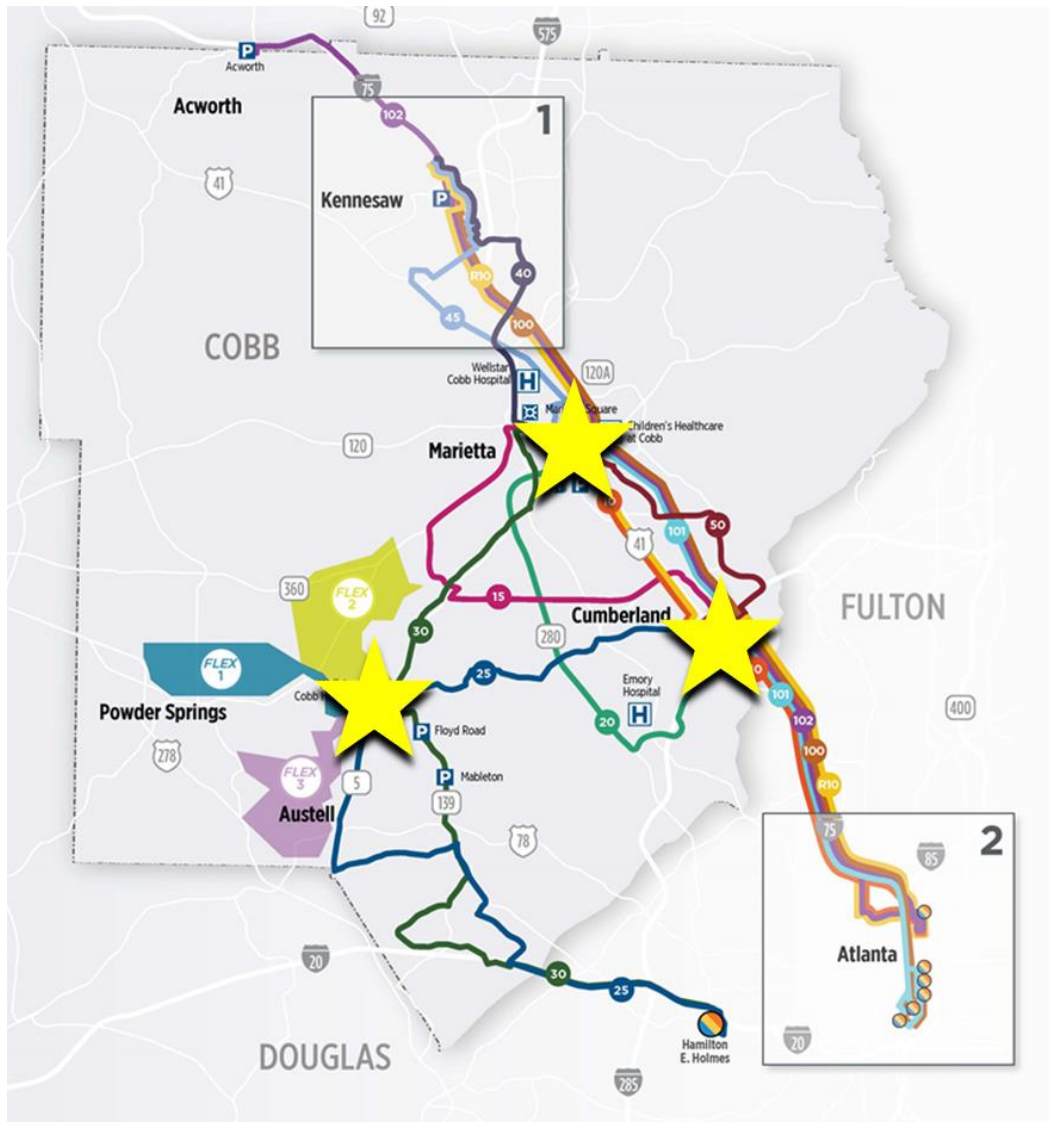
## Appendices

**Appendix A:** Stakeholder Committee Presentations

**Appendix B:** Stakeholder Committee Meeting Summaries

**Appendix C:** Operator Interviews

**Figure 1: Project Location Overview**



While the Phase 1 Study does not identify specific locations for the transit centers, it defines the needs for each transit center and factors that will be used in further identification and evaluation of potential site locations in future planning and implementation phases.

The purpose of this technical memorandum is to summarize stakeholder outreach efforts undertaken and input gathered during the Phase 1 Study. Stakeholder outreach efforts informed the needs and deficiencies for each transit center, locational considerations, and functionality considerations at each transit center. The engagement input helped confirm the program of improvements needed at each transit center and evaluation criteria to be used for further analysis of potential site locations in the next study phase.

In addition to agency stakeholder outreach conducted during the Phase 1 Study, Cobb County also used public outreach efforts to understand needs and desired improvements at each transit center. An onsite and online survey was conducted to gather input from the public and informed recommendations. The *CobbLinc Online and Onsite Survey Findings Technical Memorandum* provides additional details on the public surveys.

While the Phase 1 effort focused on first identifying transportation needs for these transit centers, subsequent project phases will incorporate additional public input and involve further collaboration with elected officials and local government land use agencies in identifying and selecting a preferred location for each transit center and further developing site concepts. Further coordination with local municipalities will be needed to integrate zoning, economic development, and transportation needs for the selected sites.

The following sections of this technical memorandum provide additional details on the Phase 1 Study outreach efforts.

- **Section 2** first provides an overview of the stakeholder and public outreach process, which involved agency stakeholders, field reviews and interviews with CobbLinc staff, and obtaining public input through an onsite and online survey.
- **Section 3** provides additional details on the input and outcomes of stakeholder outreach efforts and contains additional details on how stakeholder input combined with staff interviews and public surveys were reviewed in obtaining a consensus-driven process for recommendations.
- **Section 4** provides final conclusions and information on how outreach inputs were further combined with Phase 1 Study technical analyses in developing final study recommendations.

## Section 2 Phase 1 Outreach Process

The Phase 1 Study focused on first identifying the transportation needs for three new transit centers, including:

- Program and amenity needs
- General locational considerations based on travel patterns and transit connectivity within Cobb County
- Space requirements based on needs

The Phase 1 Study also established performance criteria for evaluating potential site locations in subsequent study phases. As further described below, the Phase 1 Study team undertook several efforts to solicit feedback and input on needs identification. The following sub-sections provide additional details on the stakeholder outreach process. Input and outcomes of this process are further discussed in **Section 3** of this technical memorandum.

### 2.1 Stakeholder Committee Engagement

#### 2.1.1 Stakeholder Committee

Cobb County assembled a stakeholder committee comprised of various local, regional, and state transportation agencies representing diverse perspectives on transportation needs. **Table 1** provides the list of stakeholders that were invited to attend these meetings.

**Table 1: Stakeholder Committee Invitee Listing**

First Name	Last Name	Organization	Department
Laura	Beall	Cobb County Department of Transportation	Planning Division
Ioana	Bovo-Nicolescu	Cobb County Department of Transportation	Senior Services/Admin
Scott	Brown	Cobb County Department of Transportation	Planning Division
Roderick	Cockerman	Cobb County Department of Transportation	Paratransit
Juliane	Dixon-Crump	Cobb County Department of Transportation	Planning Division
Ligia	Florim	Cobb County Department of Transportation	Engineering Department
Russ	Ford	Cobb County Department of Transportation	Engineering Department
Michael	Francis	Cobb County Department of Transportation	Engineering Department
Mark	Lambert	Cobb County Department of Transportation	Planning Department
Theo	Letman	Cobb County Department of Transportation	Transit Division
Derrick	Walker	Cobb County Department of Transportation	Transit Division
Karyn	Matthews	Cobb County Department of Transportation	Engineering Department
Sandee	Panichi	Cobb County Department of Transportation	Senior Services
Kelly	Patrick	Cobb County Department of Transportation	Traffic Operations Department
Thomas	Pearson	Cobb County Department of Transportation	Transit Division



<b>Laraine</b>	Vance	Cobb County Department of Transportation	Admin
<b>Karl</b>	Von Hagel	Cobb County Department of Transportation	Admin
<b>Frank</b>	Adarkwa	ATL/Xpress	Regional Planning
<b>Aileen</b>	Daney	ATL/Xpress	Regional Planning
<b>Beth</b>	Davis	ATL/Xpress	Regional Planning
<b>Gail</b>	Franklin	ATL/Xpress	Xpress Operations
<b>Cathy</b>	Gesick	ATL/Xpress	Xpress Operations
<b>Darryl</b>	Howell	ATL/Xpress	Xpress Operations
<b>Richard</b>	Wallace	ATL/Xpress	Regional Planning
<b>Cain</b>	Williamson	ATL/Xpress	Regional Planning
<b>Sidney</b>	Douse	Atlanta Regional Commission	Regional Planning
<b>Patricia</b>	Douse	Atlanta Regional Commission	Regional Planning
<b>Kofi</b>	Wakhasi	Atlanta Regional Commission	Regional Planning
<b>Ali</b>	Nuckles	Georgia Commute Options	AECOM/Contractor
<b>Philip</b>	Peevy	Georgia Department of Transportation	Intermodal
<b>Patricia</b>	Smith	Georgia Department of Transportation	Intermodal
<b>Eric</b>	Harris	MARTA	Planning and Project Development
<b>Andrew</b>	McBurney	MARTA	Planning and Project Development
<b>Shelley</b>	Peart	MARTA	Planning and Project Development
<b>Ryan</b>	Van Sickle	MARTA	Planning and Project Development

## 2.1.2 Stakeholder Committee Meetings

Four committee meetings were held during the Phase 1 Study (two in-person meetings and two virtual meetings) to share information and obtain feedback at key points aligned with the study's major objectives. Feedback from the meetings also informed the Phase 1 Study team's development of preliminary technical evaluation criteria for future evaluation of potential site locations. Below is a summary of each of these meetings. **Section 3** provides additional details on these meetings and the input received.

### Stakeholder Meeting #1

- **Date/Time:** Wednesday, November 2, 2022 / 9:00-11:00 AM
- **Location:** CobbLinc Paratransit Building (Paratransit Conference Room)
- **Meeting Purpose:** Coordinate with stakeholders and gather data and input about study needs.
- **Meeting Summary:** The Phase 1 Study team asked stakeholders to identify the types of data that should be collected and analyzed to understand (a) safety and security, (b) accessibility and connectivity, and (c) multi-modal amenity needs and deficiencies of the existing transit centers. Stakeholders also were asked to consider existing transit center deficiencies and future transit facility needs in the context of the County's growth and changes to the transit system, including future mini-hubs and new service types. The data collected complements input gathered through

online and onsite surveys.

### Stakeholder Meeting #2

- **Date/Time:** Wednesday, December 7, 2022 / 1:00-3:00 PM
- **Location:** Virtual (Microsoft Teams)
- **Meeting Purpose:** Review the Systems Operations Analysis findings with stakeholders and obtain additional input to inform generalized location preferences for the three transit centers.
- **Meeting Summary:** The Phase 1 Study team presented Systems Operations Analysis findings. The team provided stakeholders with a map package so they could follow the presentation. In addition, the Phase 1 Study team showed Five (5) transit propensity indices. These indices helped delineate travel, looking at where travelers live and where they want to go in and around Cobb County. The team also presented population and growth findings, origin and destination data, information about the existing transit services, and zoning and land use information. The team used these findings to help identify future transit services and connection needs. The findings also were used to help the team understand (a) travel flows/travel patterns across all transportation modes; (b) the transit system's alignment with existing travel needs, and (c) geographic areas that best accommodate the new transit centers based on the existing land uses and zoning.

### Stakeholder Meeting #3

- **Date/Time:** Thursday, February 2, 2023 / 10:00-12:00 AM
- **Location:** CobbLinc Paratransit Building (Paratransit Conference Room)
- **Meeting Purpose:** Engage with stakeholders to share national best practices and identify potential program elements for the new transit centers
- **Meeting Summary:** The Phase 1 Study team hosted an in-person stakeholder committee meeting to share best practices about location, size, and site circulation. The team also shared examples of similar types of transit centers to those considered for CobbLinc. The team also facilitated a discussion about the following:
  - Operation programming requirements, including onsite bus and pedestrian circulation requirements, capacity/bus bay needs, and safety programming requirements
  - Building and multi-modal amenities, including staff and customer building needs, multi-modal needs, and first and last-mile connections and amenities
  - "Future Proofing" the transit centers, including future systemwide connectivity and site-specific future program needs

### Stakeholder Meeting #4

- **Date/Time:** March 13, 2023 / 2:00-3:30 PM
- **Location:** Virtual (Microsoft Teams)
- **Meeting Purpose:** The Phase 1 Study team hosted a virtual meeting to share the final program and locational requirements for the three transit center sites, obtain feedback, and get consensus on the draft evaluation criteria and general site location needs. During the meeting, the team presented the combined survey (online and onsite) results noting how survey responses informed facility programming. The team presented the proposed facility program, including amenities, for each facility and best practice examples from facilities around the country. Finally, the team shared a list of broad site selection screening and evaluation criteria and solicited feedback on their



appropriateness. The site evaluation criteria include screening questions within the following categories:

- Transportation and System Operation/Capacity
- Locational Suitability Considerations
- Environmental/Site Costs and Risks
- Land Use Costs and Opportunities

The Phase 1 Study team distributed presentation materials and meeting summaries to all attendees following each of the four stakeholder committee meetings. Stakeholders were encouraged to share this information within their organizations and provide further input and feedback. **Appendix A** provides copies of these stakeholder presentations, and **Appendix B** includes meeting summaries and attendees' lists.

## 2.2 CobbLinc Staff Field Review and Bus Operator Feedback

CobbLinc staff was engaged to better understand day-to-day operations and needs at these transit centers. The study team conducted field reviews at each of the two existing transit centers and in South Cobb County near existing bus shelters and the WellStar Hospital area. The study team also spent two days interviewing CobbLinc operators, supervisors, maintenance workers, and customer service staff. CobbLinc staff was asked to review the current services and the improvements needed to transit service. The Phase 1 Study team also asked questions of CobbLinc staff to gain insights about program needs for relocated facilities in Marietta and Cumberland and a new transit center in South Cobb County. Staff feedback informed consideration of transit center locational needs and considerations, amenities, and other infrastructure and improvements to support existing and future services and operations.

**Appendix C** provides a summary of input received through this staff interview feedback. **Section 3** offers additional details on this feedback, as appropriate, by major topic areas covered during outreach efforts.

## 2.3 Customer Onsite and Online Surveys

In addition to stakeholder committee meetings, the Phase 1 Study collected feedback using two surveys. The first survey focused on obtaining input from existing CobbLinc riders and consisted of a 22-question onsite/onboard survey that was available in both English and Spanish. The second survey focused on getting input from Cobb County residents and consisted of a 27-question online survey. The Phase 1 Study team conducted onsite surveys along routes and at existing transit centers between November 2, 2022, and December 21, 2022. The online survey link was posted to the Cobb County website and was open from November 10, 2022, through January 2, 2023.

The objectives of the surveys were to:

- Uncover current perceptions of Marietta and Cumberland Transfer Centers
- Identify improvements that need to be made at Marietta and Cumberland Transfer Centers
- Prioritize new transfer center project goals
- Identify top amenities for new transfer centers
- Gauge reception and use of a new proposed South Cobb location

Survey questions focused on current and desired origins and destinations, desired transit center amenities and conveniences, and multi-modal mobility options. Survey questions also asked about demographic information such as race/ethnicity, gender, age, household income, and zip codes.

A webpage on the Cobb County website provided an overview of project information for the study and Phase 1 efforts and hosted a link to the online survey. The CobbLinc Twitter Feed also was used to announce the survey's availability. Additionally, Cobb County representatives provided the project stakeholder committee with a link to the online survey and asked them to share it with their constituents. The online survey was available on the Cobb County website from November 10, 2022, to January 2, 2023, and was open to input for 53 days.

To further solicit input and responses for the online survey, Cobb County representatives also sent direct electronic notifications on November 23, 2022, and December 20, 2022, to the following local agencies and organizations for further distribution to their employees, members, and constituents:

- Cobb Chamber of Commerce
- Georgia Commute Options
- Cumberland Community Improvement District (CID)
- Marietta Gateway Community Improvement District (CID)
- Town Center Community Improvement District (CID)
- Kennesaw State University
- Chattahoochee Technical College
- City of Austell
- City of Kennesaw
- City of Marietta
- City of Powder Springs
- City of Smyrna
- City of Acworth
- WellStar Health System

Cobb County DOT staff also provided survey links and announcements to all County Commissioners for their use and distribution. The December 12, December 19, and December 27, 2022, *Cobb County Government Newsletter* published the announcements. Similar statements also were published in the following County Commissioner's constituents e-newsletters:

- Commissioner Gambrill (District 1, Northwest Cobb) – Electronic distribution on December 22, 2022
- Commissioner Richardson (District 2, Southeast Cobb) – Electronic distribution on December 14 and December 21, 2022
- Commissioner Birrell (District 3, Northeast Cobb)– Electronic distribution on December 16 and December 21, 2022
- Commissioner Cupid (Chairwoman, Countywide) – Electronic distribution on December 21, 2022

Cobb County received 1,089 total survey responses (377 responses collected through onsite surveying and 712 responses collected through the online survey). Additional detailed information on the customer survey can be found in the *CobbLinc Online and Onsite Survey Findings Technical*

*Memorandum.* Survey responses and stakeholder committee input collectively informed confirmation of needs for each transit center.

## 2.4 Other Stakeholder Presentations

### **Transit Advisory Board**

In addition to stakeholder committee meetings and surveys, Cobb County staff made project and project status update presentations to the Cobb County Transit Advisory Board (TAB) to provide regular updates on the project and additional opportunities for public and stakeholder input and feedback during the Phase 1 Study. Presentations to the Cobb County TAB were made as follows:

- Monday, September 26, 2022 – Project overview
- Monday, January 23, 2023 – Multi-phased project planning process overview and Phase 1 status
- Monday, March 27, 2023 – Detailed updated on Phase 1 Study progress

The 15-member Cobb County TAB is comprised of Cobb County residents appointed by the Board of Commissioners. It is responsible for reviewing CobbLinc operations and performance data, making recommendations, and providing guidance on transit-related initiatives within the County. Providing the TAB with regular updates helped communicate the study's progress and findings, especially as consensus was reached on the transit centers' needs.

### **Atlanta-region Transit Link Authority (ATL)**

- ATL Board Presentation – October 6, 2022

All three transit centers were included in the ATL's recently approved Project Priority Investment List (PPIL), as part of the Atlanta Regional Transit Plan. Agency representatives were invited to present projects selected from their respective jurisdictions. Laura Beall (Cobb DOT Planning Division Manager) presented the status of the transit center projects and the Phase 1 and Phase 2 planning study process.

## Section 3 Feedback and Consensus Generation

A significant outcome of the Phase 1 Transit Centers Study was to confirm and document the purpose for these projects and to further define needs for each of the transit centers. Stakeholder committee meetings played a vital role in this identification and were further supplemented and compared with public onsite/online survey findings and CobbLinc field reviews and interviews to define consensus.

The following sub-sections detail stakeholder input received on the major decision-points for this Phase 1 Study and to share information and received feedback on technical analysis findings. These decision-points included: needs and deficiencies identification, determining appropriate transit center types for each of the three transit centers based on the services they offer today and in the future and their surrounding land use contexts, identifying transit service needs in the County and locational considerations for each transit center from a ridership capture perspective, to confirm final program requirements at each transit center, and in defining evaluation criteria for analyzing potential transit center locations that will be conducted in each transit center Phase 2 study.

As appropriate for each area of decision-making, the Phase 1 study team further compared stakeholder feedback with online/onsite survey data and CobbLinc operator feedback to confirm consensus on each of these key decision-points in the Phase 1 process. Additional detailed data on online/onsite surveys are provided in a separate technical memorandum and relevant survey findings are summarized within this section in comparing stakeholder feedback and survey responses.

### 3.1 Need and Deficiencies Identification

A key focus of Stakeholder Committee Meeting 1 was to understand better the need for new transit facilities and this first workshop facilitated obtaining stakeholder input through a series of interactive real-time polling questions, mapping exercises and through break out groups to obtain consensus from stakeholders on these needs. As part of break out groups, stakeholders were further asked to rank amenity needs at each transit center. Three rankings were used to assess different amenities at each transit center location: “vital,” defined as essential to have, “recommended,” defined as desirable or nice to have, and “optional,” defined as dependent on future demands. Rankings of amenities were totaled and combined from all attendee handout sheets to determine consensus rankings. Attendees’ rankings of needed amenities at each transit center were the same, with some minor differences in rankings.

#### 3.1.1 Marietta Transit Center Needs and Deficiencies – Stakeholder Input

Input received about the Marietta Transit Center showed an emphasis on enhancing the connectivity of the transit center with county-wide transit services and critical destinations. Feedback provided in the stakeholder committee meeting identified first and last-mile deficiencies, a need for enhanced safety and security at the transit center, and the need for collocation or better connection of the transit center to pedestrian/cycling activities and amenities. Additional needs for the transit center identified by stakeholders included:

- Improving transit center capacity so the center could serve more connections

- Centralizing amenities - the linear nature of the existing transit center creates long walking distances for passengers
- Providing additional public restrooms
- Providing drivers with a break area
- Adding signs against loitering and
- Enhancing safety and lighting at the transit center

Stakeholders also identified pedestrian safety issues as a deficiency of the current transit center, noting that the linear layout of the existing transit center limits driver and pedestrian visibility. Stakeholders pointed out that the transit center also has insufficient sidewalk connections, lacks adequate pedestrian crossings to and from the center, and has limited bicycle amenities to accommodate cyclists.

Stakeholders also identified essential/vital amenities for the Marietta Transit Center. Amenities identified as “essential” included:

- Bus bays and layover zones for buses
- Bus shelters
- Covered passenger waiting areas
- Parking
- Customer service kiosks
- Machine ticketing
- System maps
- Wayfinding
- Real-time information
- Enhanced lighting
- Passenger restrooms
- Driver restrooms

Other amenities that stakeholders ranked as recommended but not required included (a) emergency call buttons, (b) bicycle facilities, (c) rideshare and future automated/connected vehicle pickup/drop-off areas, (d) retail/commercial ancillary uses, and (e) sustainability components and related certification.

Optional desired amenities to be based on future demands include bus-electric vehicle charging stations, car share parking, electric vehicle charging stations, driver "Quiet Rooms," bikeshare/shared micro mobility stations, public plazas, public Wi-Fi, and agency conference rooms.

### 3.1.2 Cumberland Transit Center Needs and Deficiencies – Stakeholder Input

Stakeholder input received for the Cumberland Transit Center emphasized the need for better bus infrastructure and vehicle connections. A site layout allowing for designated and safe operating areas for buses, parking, efficient bus turnaround operations, taxi and rideshare space, and a potential kiss-and-ride were all noted as needed at this location. Stakeholders also identified the need to enhance customer experiences with better bike and pedestrian access and connections, provision of ticketing kiosks, and improved lighting for passenger safety/security.

Stakeholders identified operational needs and desires for future transit service provisions. These needs included shortening transfer times, improving layover time for drivers, and better route marketing to enhance the transit system's ease of use.

Stakeholders identified several essential/vital amenities for the Cumberland Transit Center, including:

- Bus bays and layover zones for buses
- Bus shelters
- Covered passenger waiting areas
- Parking
- Customer service kiosks
- Machine ticketing
- System maps
- Wayfinding
- Real-time information
- Enhanced lighting
- Passenger restrooms
- Driver restrooms

Other amenities stakeholders recommended as desirable included:

- Rideshare and future automated/connected vehicle pickup/drop-off areas
- Car share parking, bicycle facilities
- Retail/commercial ancillary uses
- Sustainability components and/or related certification, and
- Emergency call buttons

Much like the input received for the Marietta Transit Center, stakeholder feedback on optional amenities based on future demands for the Cumberland Transit Center included:

- Bus-electric vehicle charging stations
- Car share parking
- Electric vehicle charging stations
- Driver "Quiet Rooms"
- Bikeshare/shared micro mobility stations
- Public plazas
- Public Wi-Fi, and
- Agency conference rooms

### 3.1.3 South Cobb Transit Center Needs and Deficiencies – Stakeholder Input

The Phase 1 Study team facilitated stakeholder conversations to focus on strategic planning for a new transit center in South Cobb. Stakeholders identified the need for the proposed South Cobb Transit Center's bus infrastructure and vehicle connections to be multimodal, link to popular destinations, and facilitate connections to other neighboring counties, i.e., Fulton, Clayton, Douglas Counties. Stakeholders noted that the transit center would ideally facilitate shorter route headways by increasing service frequency and expanding service capacity in South Cobb by adding passenger vehicles.

Stakeholders expressed that the proposed South Cobb Transit Center needed to include public space and be part of a smart growth strategy that complemented the area's development character and helped increase development density. Stakeholders also conveyed that the new center should include clear signage to provide information and wayfinding, digital arrival and departure time boards, and technology upgrades such as Wi-Fi and digital messaging.



Essential/vital amenities identified by stakeholders included:

- Bus bays and layover zones for buses
- Bus shelters
- Covered passenger waiting areas
- Public parking
- Customer service kiosks
- Machine ticketing
- System maps
- Wayfinding
- Real-time information
- Enhanced lighting
- Passenger restrooms
- Driver restrooms

Recommended or desired amenities included:

- Rideshare and future automated/connected vehicle pick-up/drop-off areas
- Car share parking
- Indoor passenger waiting areas,
- Emergency call buttons
- Sustainability components

Optional desired amenities for the South Cobb Transit Center included:

- Bus-electric vehicle charging stations
- Car share parking
- Electric vehicle charging stations
- Driver "Quiet Rooms"
- Bikeshare/shared micro mobility stations
- Public plazas
- Public Wi-Fi
- Agency conference rooms

### 3.1.4 Combining Feedback and Consensus Generation

Stakeholder committee meeting inputs about customer and operator amenities mirrored observations from field reviews and interviews with operators and CobbLinc staff. Operators and staff called out the safety and security needs at the existing transfer centers, noting that these affected both passengers and operators. Other concerns that operators expressed the new transit facilities should address include lighting and removal of paper transfers from the fare payment system. Their requests are consistent with stakeholders who identified bus shelter needs, covered passenger waiting areas, customer service kiosks, machine ticketing, and passenger and operator restrooms. Based on field reviews and interviews, CobbLinc operators also believed that having driver “quiet rooms” was an important element to consider at each transit center.

Similarly, customer feedback was solicited during this study through onsite and online surveys to ascertain improvement needs and desired amenities at future transit centers. Similar rankings of vital passenger comfort amenities by stakeholders were confirmed through survey findings, with customer surveys ranking indoor passenger waiting a higher desired amenity than stakeholder input. While existing customer waiting areas and benches were rated by onsite customers as good to very good at

both Marietta and Cumberland transit centers today, passenger comfort, including passenger waiting areas and benches, was ranked as the second highest priority for improvement at all future transit centers for existing riders as part of onsite surveys. In addition, seating, covered boarding platforms, and indoor waiting areas were score as the top three desired amenities at the future transit centers for onsite survey respondents (Seating – 90.4%, Covered Boarding Platforms – 89.5%, Indoor Waiting Areas – 88.6%). In addition, online survey respondents ranked covered boarding platforms/waiting areas (79%), machine ticketing (78.2%), and restrooms (75.2%) as high priorities for future transit center amenities.

Stakeholder committee meeting participants identified bicycle infrastructure as "recommended" rather than necessary/essential amenities. Likewise, survey respondents did not rank multimodal improvements and connections highly, with only 12.2% of onsite respondents rating these amenities as a high priority. In addition, approximately 44% of online respondents indicated bicycle or scooter rental was unimportant, and approximately 31% indicated bicycle storage as unimportant to new transit facility amenities. In comparing these responses with transit center best practices and travel origins and destinations in the County, it was determined that providing better bicycle infrastructure and amenities such as bike share systems with connections to important destinations in the County is an important consideration in providing greater options for making first and last mile destinations from the transit centers.

Stakeholders workshop participants noted the need for system maps, wayfinding, and real-time information as vital program elements at each future transit center. This aligned with online and onsite survey responses. Approximately 88% of onsite respondents and 91.4% of online respondents indicated real-time bus information as a very important or important amenity. Overwhelmingly (82.3%), online respondents also indicated signage in the form of system maps, bus route signage, and directional signage at very important or important future transit centers.


Stakeholders, survey respondents and CobbLinc staff agreed that safety and security improvements are very important at each transit center. Safety and security concerns were noted as a particular priority from operator interviews at the Marietta Transit Center. Concerns were raised about loitering and the need for a stronger security and law enforcement presence at this center.

Stakeholders also noted their concern for pedestrian safety at each transit center, given the auto-centric nature of those environments and higher-speed vehicular travel movements. Survey respondents to both the onsite and online surveys also prioritized safety and security improvements at future transit centers.

## 3.2 Transit Center Typologies


The study team provided a brief overview of distinct levels of investment or “typologies” of mobility hubs during Stakeholder Meeting 1. Stakeholders in attendance received handouts with basic information about four potential transit center types: regional gateway hubs, urban district hubs, emerging urban district hubs, and community hubs. Each of these transit center typologies serve distinct land use and transportation contexts, may provide differing transit services (e.g., local, commuter, flexible local services, or may connect to region-wide transit service), and therefore may have differing levels of amenities and investments. Presentation materials also provided national examples to contextualize the four potential transit center types and aid attendee understanding. **Figure 2** provides a summary of each of these transit typologies reviewed.



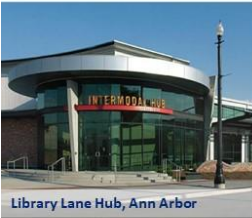

Figure 2: Transit Center Typologies



# Cobb County Transit Centers

## Transit Center Elements and Amenities Ranking Exercise



 <p style="text-align: center; font-weight: bold; background-color: #0056b3; color: white; padding: 2px;">#1: Regional/Gateway Hub</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Largest Scale</li> <li>Dense urban/regional attractors – stadiums, airports, major employment</li> <li>Connections to regional providers and range of services</li> </ul>	 <p style="text-align: center; font-weight: bold; background-color: #0056b3; color: white; padding: 2px;">#3: Emerging Urban District Hub</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Low to moderate density today</li> <li>Anticipated to be moderate to higher density in future</li> <li>Key employment, retail, or institutional hubs nearby</li> </ul>
 <p style="text-align: center; font-weight: bold; background-color: #0056b3; color: white; padding: 2px;">#2: Central Urban District Hub</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Moderate to high density</li> <li>More urban in context</li> <li>Mix of uses</li> <li>Integrated and within walking distance to key destinations</li> </ul>	 <p style="text-align: center; font-weight: bold; background-color: #0056b3; color: white; padding: 2px;">#4: Community Transit Hubs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Suburban or rural context</li> <li>Lower density</li> <li>Destinations spread out or represent a key capture market</li> <li>Longer first and last mile needs</li> <li>Visible but smaller in scale improvements needed</li> </ul>

Interactive real-time polling exercises also aided receiving input on transit center typologies appropriate for existing and future needs at each transit center general location. Detailed information about the stakeholder exercises and input can be found in the notes for Stakeholder Meeting 1, located in **Appendix B**.

### 3.2.1 Marietta Transit Center Desired Typology – Stakeholder Input

Attendees determined the existing center as an Emerging Urban District Hub. Alternatively, attendees felt the Marietta Transit Center could function as a Regional or Gateway Hub. Stakeholders determined the center should serve as an **Urban District Hub** in the future.

### 3.2.2 Cumberland Transit Center Desired Typology – Stakeholder Input

Stakeholders concluded that Cumberland Transit Center currently serves as an Urban District Hub, although some attendees believed it might function as an Emerging Urban Hub. Stakeholders expressed that the future relocated Cumberland Transit Centers should function as a **Regional/Gateway Hub**.

### 3.2.3 South Cobb Transit Center Desired Typology – Stakeholder Input

While no current transit center is in South Cobb County, attendees stated that the future transit facility should function as an Emerging District Hub or Community Transit Hub based on the dispersed land uses today and smaller, but emerging districts such as WellStar Hospital. Based on stakeholder input and

further discussion, it was determined that building a **Community Transit Hub** would serve existing rider needs today and as additional growth and development occurs in South Cobb, this transit center could evolve into an **Emerging District Hub**.

Stakeholder input about the existing and future transit centers typologies and technical systems analyses helped confirm the appropriate typologies for the proposed centers.

### 3.3 Transit System Operations and Locational Considerations

A key focus of Stakeholder Meeting 2 was to share information on the technical analysis of transit system operations within Cobb County and to define service needs and locational considerations from a ridership perspective. Meeting attendees were given maps and technical data before the meeting. The maps and technical data also were shared during virtual meeting presentations. Technical focus areas for the transit operations analysis included:

- Transit propensity
- Cobb County growth factors
- Travel origins and destinations
- existing transit services and needs, and
- County land use and zoning considerations

A facilitated question and answer period followed the review of the presentation's major topics. Stakeholder input confirmed the initial technical findings. Stakeholders also provided additional feedback about locational preferences (U.S. Census Block Group level only) based on travel and potential transit rider market needs in the County. There was a desire expressed by stakeholders in presenting initial findings on potential future transit center locations to provide a tiered scoring of potential locations that would provide greater flexibility in identifying available and appropriate land. Based on this input, the Phase 1 Study team further detailed a three-tiered scoring using combined propensity factors and further shared these findings in Stakeholder Meeting 3 for final consensus.

This scoring involved combining several all-day and peak hour metrics into an overall weighted score. All day metrics included transit orientation (e.g., combined index of population, age, households, income levels, vehicle ownership, disabled populations, and densities) and activity orientation metrics (e.g., combined job density data on retail, recreational facilities, healthcare/social assistance services, educational and government institutions). Peak hour metrics included commuter and employment indexes that considered labor force characteristics, commute mode characteristics, and employment densities. A total score of 10 was possible for each block group based on these combined metrics, and three top tiers were established: Tier 1 (Score 8-10), Tier 2 (Score 6-7), and Tier 3 (Score 4-5). Locations within these top three scoring tiers or adjacent to these top three scoring tiers were determined to be most desirable for transit center location from a strictly ridership capture perspective. The refined scoring and results were shared with stakeholder as part of Stakeholder Meeting 3 for final consensus. This approach was also utilized and incorporated into the *Systems Analysis Technical Memorandum*.

#### 3.3.1 Marietta Transit Center Service and Locations – Stakeholder Input

Stakeholders noted that the current Marietta Transit Center is conveniently located for some residents and employees. However, stakeholders also pointed out that a more central location for the transit center would be advantageous and could positively impact more potential riders, increasing their access to transit. Additionally, fifteen bus routes are expected to operate out of the Marietta Transit Centers. At least five of the fifteen bus routes are anticipated to be high-frequency Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) or Arterial Rapid Transit (ART) services. As such, centrally locating the facility was noted by stakeholder as

providing better access to these services and help BRT/ART operations by minimizing route deviations to access the center.

Depending on available locations, stakeholders identified that areas along Roswell Street NE, Church Street NE/Cherokee Street NE, or Roswell Road near Cobb Parkway would help centrally locate the new facility. Stakeholders pointed out that the Roswell Road location is near to, but not inclusive of, Kennesaw State University's Marietta campus, and that area of interest may need to expand to capture that potential collocation/connection.

### 3.3.2 Cumberland Transit Center Service and Locations – Stakeholder Input

The Cumberland Transit Center is located within the Cumberland CID near I-285 and across the street from Cumberland Mall. Pedestrian access across Cumberland Boulevard is limited, and transit vehicle access and other modes are difficult. Additional development near the transit center has created capacity issues, and a larger facility with better access was noted as needed by stakeholders. Locations of interest for the new Cumberland Transit Center included areas proximate to Truist Park at “The Battery” mixed-use development, or near the Cumberland Mall but closer to Cobb Parkway.

Stakeholders determined that the Cumberland Transit Center should focus on regional connectivity, including BRT, ART, and regional commuter bus services. Because the location of the transit center is within the Cumberland regional activity center, the transit center should serve as a regional gateway for users. Stakeholders expressed that the future transit facility should be centrally located within the Cumberland activity center instead of on the center's edge, as is the current transit center, and its design should reflect an urban feel.

A suggested location for the new transit center included the Akers Mill shopping center, across the street from the Cumberland Mall. Stakeholders identified the Akers Mill shopping center as a joint use/joint (re)development opportunity, noting that the site presented prospects for placemaking.

A Phase 2 study will follow this Phase 1 Study effort and further detail the new transit center's location. Demographic analyses and the transit propensity indices informed the Phase 1 Study's investigation of potential facility locations. However, traffic operations and other factors may also influence location alternatives in this area. The Battery Atlanta is a significant attractor. It is also a heavily traveled/congested area that needs more carefully studied consideration to identify specific sites.

### 3.3.3 South Cobb Transit Center Service and Locations – Stakeholder Input

While residential density in South Cobb is not as concentrated as it is in the Cumberland or Marietta areas, South Cobb is experiencing rapid growth that is expected to continue. Stakeholders identified the intersection of Austell Road and the East-West Connector as a potential desired location for a new South Cobb transit center. This location is where CobbLinc routes 25 and 30 intersect, and it is also within walking distance to Cobb Wellstar hospital. Cobb Department of Transportation staff acknowledged that they would engage with the City of Mableton to identify land use/zoning considerations. Additionally, stakeholder representatives of the region's transit providers inquired about the future South Cobb facility's ease of access to neighboring Douglas County. They suggested that as locations are further considered and selected in Phase 2, involving a stakeholder representative from Douglas County would be a useful addition to outreach efforts.

### 3.3.4 Combining Feedback and Consensus Generation

The systems analysis and outreach findings informed planning-level program needs for each proposed new transit center. Likewise, stakeholder suggestions led the Phase 1 Study team to develop and incorporate a tiered scoring system to provide the Phase 2 study greater flexibility with identifying and evaluating potential transit center sites.

CobbLinc operators and frontline staff also shared their observations about locations for the new transit center that were considered alongside stakeholder meeting feedback. These included:

- Moving the Marietta Transfer Center to a more centralized location that offers operators and passengers additional safety from crime
- Relocating the Cumberland Transfer Center closer to the Truist Park/The Battery activity center
- Placing the South Cobb facility near WellStar Cobb Hospital, at or close to the East-West Connector and Austell Road intersection

These operator interview findings closely mirrored stakeholder input on locational considerations and technical analysis findings on higher scoring block groups for locations that may capture the greatest ridership.

In addition to the three proposed transit centers as part of this study, CobbLinc operators and frontline staff identified a need for future transit service and transit hub considerations in Acworth, Austell, Kennesaw/Town Center, and other regional locations. These considerations may be useful in further advancement of transit centers and improvements throughout the County in the future. This is also in line with long-term transit recommendations identified in the CobbForward Comprehensive Transportation Plan.

## 3.4 Transit Center Program Requirements Confirmation

Stakeholder Meeting 3 focused on sharing and confirming with stakeholders the preliminary recommendations on transit facility program needs and general space requirements to accommodate existing and proposed transit services. Transit center program needs were broken down into the following elements/amenities:

1. Bus infrastructure and vehicle connection amenities
2. Customer and driver experience amenities
3. Bicycle and pedestrian connections/amenities
4. Information, signage, and wayfinding amenities
5. Safety and Security, and other supporting uses amenities

Preliminary recommendations on (a) required program elements as well as (b) future/desired but not required amenities were presented for each transit center with facilitated questions and answers built into each review for each transit center. Break out groups also helped to further facilitate stakeholder consensus on required and desired program elements.

### 3.4.1 Marietta Transit Center Program – Stakeholder Input

The relocated Marietta Transit Center is expected to host fifteen bus routes in the future, necessitating eighteen bus bays, according to the Transit Systems Analysis and Needs Assessment Technical Memorandum. As CobbLinc transitions its fleet to bus electric vehicles (BEV), bus bays also should accommodate BEV charging infrastructure.



Stakeholders noted that the current Marietta Transit Center mainly serves local routes to connect riders to destinations within the County or to the Cumberland Transit Center where they can make more regional connections. The existing transit center provides a large park-and-ride lot adjacent to the center and the new transit center should also include park-and-ride accommodations and accommodate access via car, i.e., kiss-and-ride and transportation network company (TNC), i.e., Uber and Lyft pickup/drop-off areas. The facility's design should take extra care to ensure passenger safety and personal vehicle security. Stakeholders, CobbLinc operators and staff, current users, and potential riders suggested co-locating a police substation or a security office within the transit center. Park-and-ride facilities should also include electric vehicle charging infrastructure.

Likewise, because Marietta Transit Center serves and will continue to serve as a hub for local service connections in the County, stakeholders suggested providing pedestrian infrastructure improvements and bicycle accommodations within the transit center program. Pedestrian infrastructure improvements include sidewalks, paths, and trail connections. They also include ADA ramp upgrades, pedestrian signals, high-visibility crossings, pedestrian-scaled lighting, and other Universal Design elements to ensure disabled persons can easily access transit services. Effective wayfinding and clear signage for both pedestrians and drivers are also needed.

Stakeholders discussed including bike parking, bike lockers, and expanding the existing bikeshare program to serve Marietta as a part of the transit center program. Stakeholders also suggested that the transit centers might accommodate other micro mobility alternatives. Micro mobility alternatives include but are not limited to, scooters, and e-skateboards. Cobb County might consider improving the connecting roadway network with on-street accommodations. Adding on-street facilities will provide a seamless, multimodal link between the station and the surrounding area.

### 3.4.2 Cumberland Transit Center Program – Stakeholder Input

The Transit Systems Analysis and Needs Assessment determined the new Cumberland Transit Center will need thirteen bus bays based on expected future services. Like the relocated Marietta Transit Center, the new Cumberland Transit Center must include BEV charging infrastructure to accommodate future CobbLinc BEVs.

The new Cumberland Transit Center is expected to be located centrally within the Cumberland regional activity center. As such, stakeholders and a combination of online and onsite survey respondents recognized the need for additional parking dedicated solely to the Cumberland Transit Center. Stakeholder attendees to Stakeholder Meeting 3 identified the potential for the facility to share its parking with the surrounding development, whether it be surface parking or, more likely, given the urban context of the activity center, structured parking. Nonetheless, traveler safety and the security of patron vehicles within the center's parking are essential, and accommodations are needed to protect both. Stakeholders suggested co-locating police or an outside security detail at the transit center to provide protection and boost traveler confidence. In addition to either surface or structured parking, stakeholders pointed out that the new center should include kiss-and-ride and TNC pickup/drop-off areas. Finally, stakeholders suggested that the share parking facilities include EVCI.

Stakeholders suggested that the Cumberland Transit Center connect to the Cumberland Sweep, a 3-mile multimodal path through the Cumberland Community Improvement District core. The planned Cumberland Sweep will include dedicated walking and cycling lanes and an autonomous shuttle system. The Cumberland Sweep's plans also contain a new pedestrian bridge across Cobb Parkway (U.S. 41), a high-volume, six-lane state route. The pedestrian bridge and a new managed lane exit near the existing

pedestrian bridge will improve access and traveler safety. Bicycle-supportive services at the new Cumberland Transit Center might incorporate include bicycle repair shops/stations and bicycle lockers.

### 3.4.3 South Cobb Transit Center Program – Stakeholder Input

Three transit center conceptual layout options for the South Cobb Transit Center were presented to attendees of Stakeholder Meeting 3. Each option would accommodate the existing bus routes and expected future demand for transit services based on transit operational analysis. These include local CobbLinc fixed routes, rapid bus, and future BRT and ART services.

However, each option reflected differing approaches for addressing existing and future needs and cost considerations, with each iteration of the center getting successively larger. Option A, for example, includes three bus bays, enough to serve existing and expected future transit services. Option B has four bus bays and curbside parking for at least three flex bus routes. Option C includes six bus bays and curbside parking for three or more flex bus routes. It was noted by the study team that there is likely minor difference in the options in terms of acreage needs for the site and costs for extending an island platform for additional bus bays is not a comparatively significant difference in cost between options.

Stakeholders discussed that the South Cobb Transit Center might begin with the smaller facility, potentially Option A or B, and grow into Option C to avoid public perceptions of transit not being used. Stakeholders also discussed the need to right-size and manage parking to avoid spillover from WellStar Hospital.

Program needs and amenities are similar to the Marietta and Cumberland Transit Centers, except stakeholders also recommended indoor passenger waiting and additional bicycle-supportive infrastructure and services. Additionally, stakeholders suggested the center's configuration should encourage walking and minimize conflicts between pedestrians and transit vehicles.

### 3.4.4 Combining Feedback and Consensus Generation

Stakeholders confirmed the preliminary recommendations for required and desirable elements for each transit center during Stakeholder Meeting 3 and input further refined a preferred option (Option 3) for site acreage and greatest future program expansion flexibility at the South Cobb Transit Center.

Required program elements presented to stakeholders closely mirrored customer survey findings as well. Customers ranked indoor passenger waiting areas as a higher desired amenity for all transit centers than input received from stakeholders, who understood that cost considerations may impact the ability to provide indoor passenger waiting amenities in an initial program.

Finally, stakeholder break out groups provided additional input beyond those received through online and onsite survey data on desired amenities. Based on this input, it is important that all transit centers consider more specific connectivity and operation as well as future technology space flexibilities as specific locations are advanced into further conceptual design phases. These additional considerations included:

**Disabled Passengers and On-Demand and Services/Micro-transit** – Stakeholders noted the importance of providing designs that consider the needs of all passengers and users of the system, particularly those with disabilities. As transit centers are advanced and implemented, they may need to further consider the ability to accommodate access by the County's on-demand transportation systems, i.e., paratransit,

senior and disabled person transportation services. These services offer direct point to point access up to four miles outside of a transit center location and may provide enhanced service for paratransit, seniors, and disabled passengers. Micro-transit may be used as well to support disabled passenger needs

**Micro mobility services** – In addition, additional micro transit services may provide better first and last mile connectivity at these centers for passengers, particularly where destinations are not in easy walking distances.

**Rideshare Access** – Stakeholders underlined the importance of providing separated space at each transit center for taxi and TNC access to safely pickup/drop-off passengers.

**EV Infrastructure** – While the existing bus fleet has not converted to EV technology and EV car charging is currently a smaller demographic in the County, this is an important consideration in designing transit centers for fleet transitions and further advancement of EV car usage that may occur in the future. It is important to ensure that EV infrastructure, such as transformers, are incorporated into the centers' design to support electric buses and electric cars.

**Autonomous or Connected Vehicles** - Transit centers should consider how to accommodate space for future autonomous or connected vehicle technology. Rideshare space or existing parking space provided for in the short-term may also be utilized for providing these future technologies.

### 3.5 Future Site Alternatives Evaluation Criteria

Stakeholder Meeting 4, the final stakeholder committee meeting for the Phase 1 Study, focused on sharing preliminary site suitability evaluation criteria and securing additional feedback. The Phase 2 Studies for each transit center will use the site suitability evaluation criteria to inform and guide each transit center's site selection process.

Stakeholders also reviewed transit center development best practices. These best practices were based on a nationwide scan of transit centers like the ones proposed in Cobb County developed within the previous 20 years. They included examples from Des Moines, Iowa, Indianapolis, Indiana, Nashville, Tennessee, Las Vegas, Nevada, St. Petersburg-Clearwater, Florida, and Phoenix, Nevada. Additional details on best practices are provided in **Appendix A**, Stakeholder Meeting 4 presentation. The scan recognized that the development environment, tools, and practices are continually evolving and that rapid changes in technology and service delivery are significantly impacting transit center program development. Collectively, best practices as well as the technical analyses conducted informed the proposed evaluation criteria and considerations for locating an efficient transit center.

The Phase 1 Study team reviewed detailed potential evaluation criteria for four major categories with stakeholders:

- Transportation and System Operations/Capacity
- Locational Suitability Considerations
- Environmental/Site costs and Risks
- Land use costs and Opportunities

The Phase 1 Study team further reviewed twenty-three evaluation criteria addressing the four major categories with stakeholders, as shown in **Table 2**. Stakeholders were asked to provide additional input

and to confirm their acceptance of the four major categories. Stakeholders were also asked to consider the appropriateness of the factors in the site selection process and submit more detailed criteria if they believed the measures presented were not comprehensive enough. Stakeholders agreed that the evaluation criteria met the needed considerations for further evaluating specific sites.

**Table 2: Site Selection Evaluation Criteria (March 2023)**

Site Selection Criteria/Matrix			
Scoring Criteria	Alt 1	Alt 2	Alt 3
Transportation and System Operations and Capacity			
1. Meets Minimum Site Acreage Requirements			
2. Maximum # Bus Bays Accommodated			
3. Minimum of Two Points of Ingress/Egress			
4. Local Street Network/Direct Access for Buses			
5. Signalized Intersections/TSP Potential			
6. Adjacency to State Roads/Major Arterials			
7. Public Parking Availability/Proximity			
8. System Operational Cost Considerations			
Locational Suitability Considerations			
1. Within or adjacent to high scoring transit propensity			
2. Compatibility with local plans and zoning			
3. Site visibility			
Environmental/Site Costs and Risks			
1. Building Development/Renovation/Demolition Needs			
2. Parcel History/Risk of Cultural Resources			
3. Utility/Relocation Needs			
4. Geotechnical (Soil) Conditions/ Remediation Risks			
5. Flooding/Stormwater Management			
Land Use Costs and Opportunities			
1. Land Acquisition Costs/Ease of Acquisition			
2. Displacements/Relocation Requirements			
3. Proximity to Activity Centers			
4. Proximity to Disadvantaged Population/Equity			
5. Pedestrian Connectivity/Level of Improvement Needs			
6. Multimodal Network Connections/Adjacency			
7. Joint Development/TOD/Ancillary Uses Potential			

Additional stakeholder input was provided after the meeting, offering more detailed metrics for six of the twenty-three criteria presented. Stakeholders did not provide additional detailed metric suggestions for other criteria presented. These more detailed suggested metrics will be further considered as each Phase 2 Study is initiated. The potential detailed metrics suggested by stakeholders are shown in **Table 3** below.

**Table 3: Suggested Site Selection Metrics**

Scoring Criteria	Metric
<b>Transportation and System Operations and Capacity</b>	
• Signalized Intersections/TSP Potential	inverse of # of signals LOS E or worse?
• Public Parking Availability/Proximity	# Parking spaces within one-eighth mile?
• System Operational Cost Considerations	total miles from existing routes?
<b>Environmental/Site Costs and Risks</b>	
• Building Development/Renovation/Demolition Needs	vacant square feet & structure square feet
• Utility/Relocation Needs	ft of utilities relocated
• Flooding/Stormwater Management	% Of area in flood zone

Additionally, four-point scoring criteria was shared with stakeholders to help score alternative site locations within each major criteria to rank how well each alternative location: fully meets/exceeds criteria, substantially meets each criterion, mostly meets criteria, or does not meet criteria. Stakeholders agreed with scoring criteria and confirmed understanding that there will be adaptability in Phase 2 scoring to further establish weighting criteria based on stakeholder and public inputs and further technical reviews of specific alternative site locations for each transit center.

The Phase 1 Study team finalized the evaluation criteria based on stakeholder and Cobb County DOT staff input. Additional details on the final criteria will be documented in the final report for this Phase 1 Study. The Phase 2 Study, which consists of three separate site evaluation studies, is expected to refine, and apply the scoring criteria and metrics to assess individual transit center alternatives.

## Section 4 Conclusions

Input from stakeholders and outreach efforts were critical in developing and defining the purpose and need, defining typologies, recommending program elements, and identifying evaluation criteria for the Phase 1 Study. The Phase 1 Study provided a consensus-driven outreach process that combined stakeholder input and feedback with a technical analysis considering Cobb County's transit systems operations, locational needs, program spacing, requirements, and amenities. The outcome of this process provides Cobb County with the necessary information to advance the development of each transit center project. Final recommendations will be detailed within a final report, the *Cobb County Transit Centers System Analysis and Needs Assessment Study Report*.

A next phase of study (Phase 2 Study) will be conducted separately for each transit center to further identify and evaluate potential site alternatives, select a preferred site, conduct additional environmental analyses, and further develop location specific conceptual plans. These studies are expected to commence immediately following completion of this Phase 1 Study.

Stakeholder and public outreach efforts will continue through the Phase 2 studies for each transit center. While Phase 1 efforts concentrated on first identifying transportation needs for the proposed transit centers, subsequent project development study phases will incorporate more public input and involve additional collaboration with elected officials and local government land use agencies. The continued outreach and coordination between land use and transportation stakeholders will be vital in identifying suitable sites for these transit centers to meet mutual land use, transportation, and economic development goals within Cobb County's communities.