

## **Appendix: Areas Requiring Special Attention**

### **Areas Requiring Special Attention**

Georgia DCA rules require that ARC consider projected development patterns and other sources of information to evaluate the land use trends within the region to identify any areas “requiring special attention”. Georgia DCA describes these areas to include:

- Areas identified on the Regionally Important Resources map;
- Areas where significant natural or cultural resources are likely to be impacted by development;
- Areas where rapid development or change of land uses are likely to occur, especially where the pace of development has and/or may outpace the availability of community facilities and services, including transportation;
- Areas in need of redevelopment and/or significant improvements to aesthetics or attractiveness (including strip commercial corridors);
- Areas with significant infill development opportunities, including scattered vacant sites, large abandoned structures, or sites that may be environmentally contaminated;
- Areas of significant disinvestment, levels of poverty, and/or unemployment substantially higher than average levels for the region as a whole.

Using demographic information and existing known redevelopment locations, ARC has developed maps of the potential areas of special attention in the region. Identification of areas of special attention can aid ARC in determining priorities for regional action. While the Atlanta region is a large and diverse area, it is evident that specific and unique land use and infrastructure policies will be needed for diverse areas of the region. The following is a draft list of Areas Requiring Special Attention.

As ARC develops the Plan2040 Regional Agenda there will be significant outreach to local governments and stakeholders from around the region. This process is likely provide additional input as to the areas in the region that are likely to require additional programmatic attention.

## Areas Requiring Special Attention-Poverty

### **What are these areas?**

Throughout the region, there are areas of high concentrations of poverty among its residents. These areas have a variety of other issues that also impact those residents including, higher unemployment, education and access to quality education, and poor health. Research has also shown that poverty can negatively affect economic growth by rates of crime and social unrest<sup>1</sup>. These factors limit the opportunities for these areas to break out of the poverty cycle and to become successful vibrant mixed income communities.

### **Where are these places?**

Concentrations of poverty are not only located within the City of Atlanta but also areas in DeKalb, Cobb, Newton, Carroll, Clayton and Spalding Counties, and the Cities of Chamblee, Marietta, Griffin, East Point, College Park, Forest Park and Covington.

### **Why should these areas be a focus of Plan2040?**

The concentrations of poverty in the region need special planning, policies, and tools to further limit their decline and to encourage reinvestment to break the poverty cycle to improve health, education, and employment opportunities.

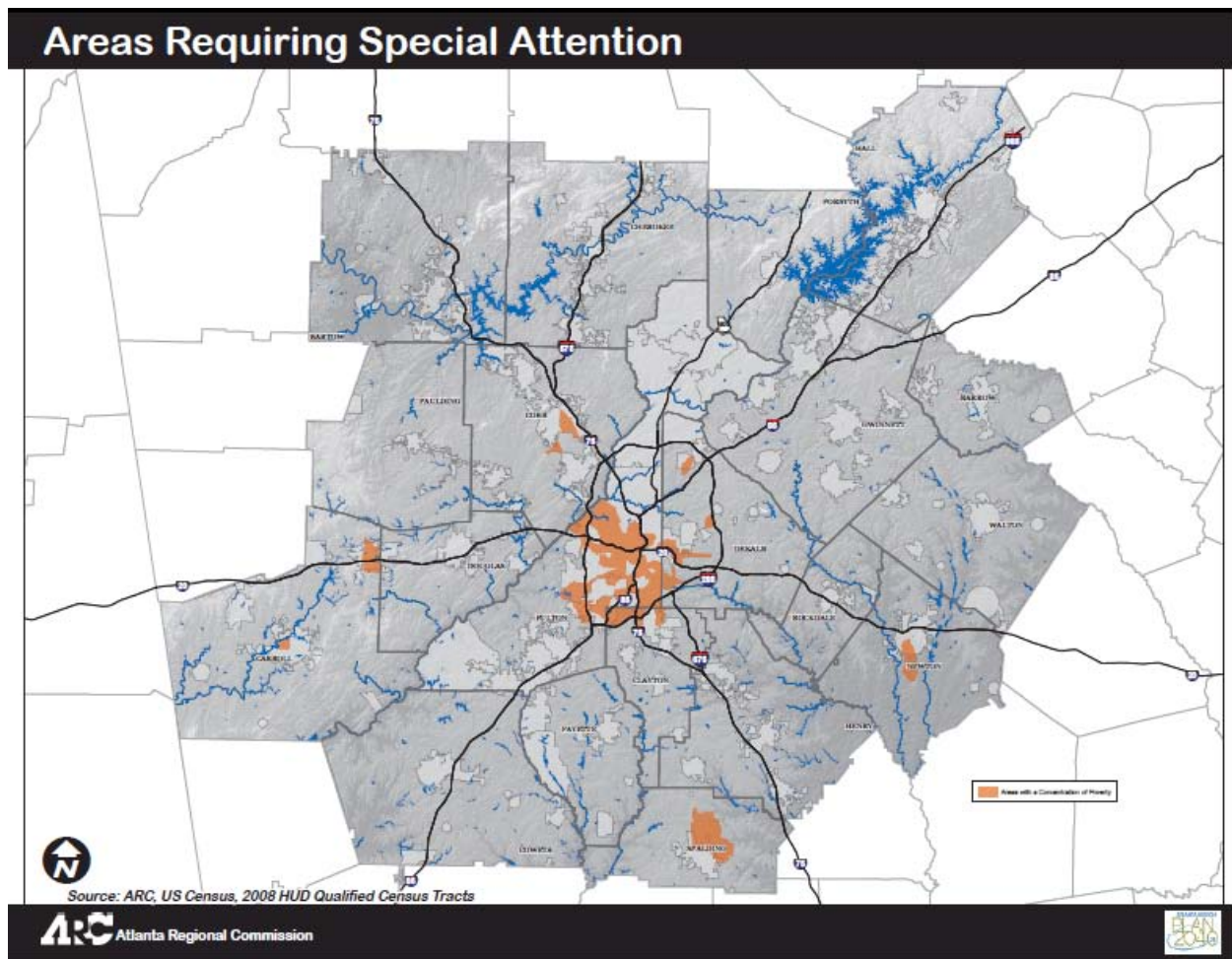
### **How did we get the data?**

The areas are identified as concentrations of poverty are census tracts where 50% of the households have an income less than 60% of the region's gross median household income. For 2009 the median family income is \$71,700. These areas are shown where over 50% of the households earn less than 43,029 a year.

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<sup>1</sup> United States Government Accountability Office, POVERTY IN AMERICA  
Economic Research Shows Adverse Impacts on Health Status and Other Social Conditions as well as the Economic Growth Rate, January 2007.

**Figure 1: Areas Requiring Special Attention - Poverty**



## Areas Requiring Special Attention - Freight Areas

### What are these areas?

The Atlanta Region is a major transportation and distribution center for the shipment of goods in the United States. Freight Areas are typically located at the intersection of major interstate routes, including the I-85 and I-75 highways at the compass corners bisected by I-20 running east/west, and also encompassing main lines of the Norfolk Southern and CSX railroads. The region is also home to Hartsfield-Jackson International Airport and proximal to major marine container ports, linking world commerce to southeastern markets and in many cases points beyond. The Atlanta region is just 250 miles from the Port of Savannah, and within 350 miles of the Ports of Charleston and Jacksonville. These factors make the Atlanta region home to one of the highest concentrations of workers in wholesale trade and transportation services in the country. It also brings planning challenges including preserving freight mobility and land use conflicts between different land uses.

### Where are these places?

There are multiple different large industrial clusters within the Atlanta region. These clusters are near the Inman Yards in Northwest Atlanta, the Fulton Industrial Boulevard Area, adjacent to Hartsfield-Jackson International Airport, the Peachtree Corners area within Gwinnett County, and the GA 155 interchange within Henry County. Many other areas have a growing number of freight related uses.

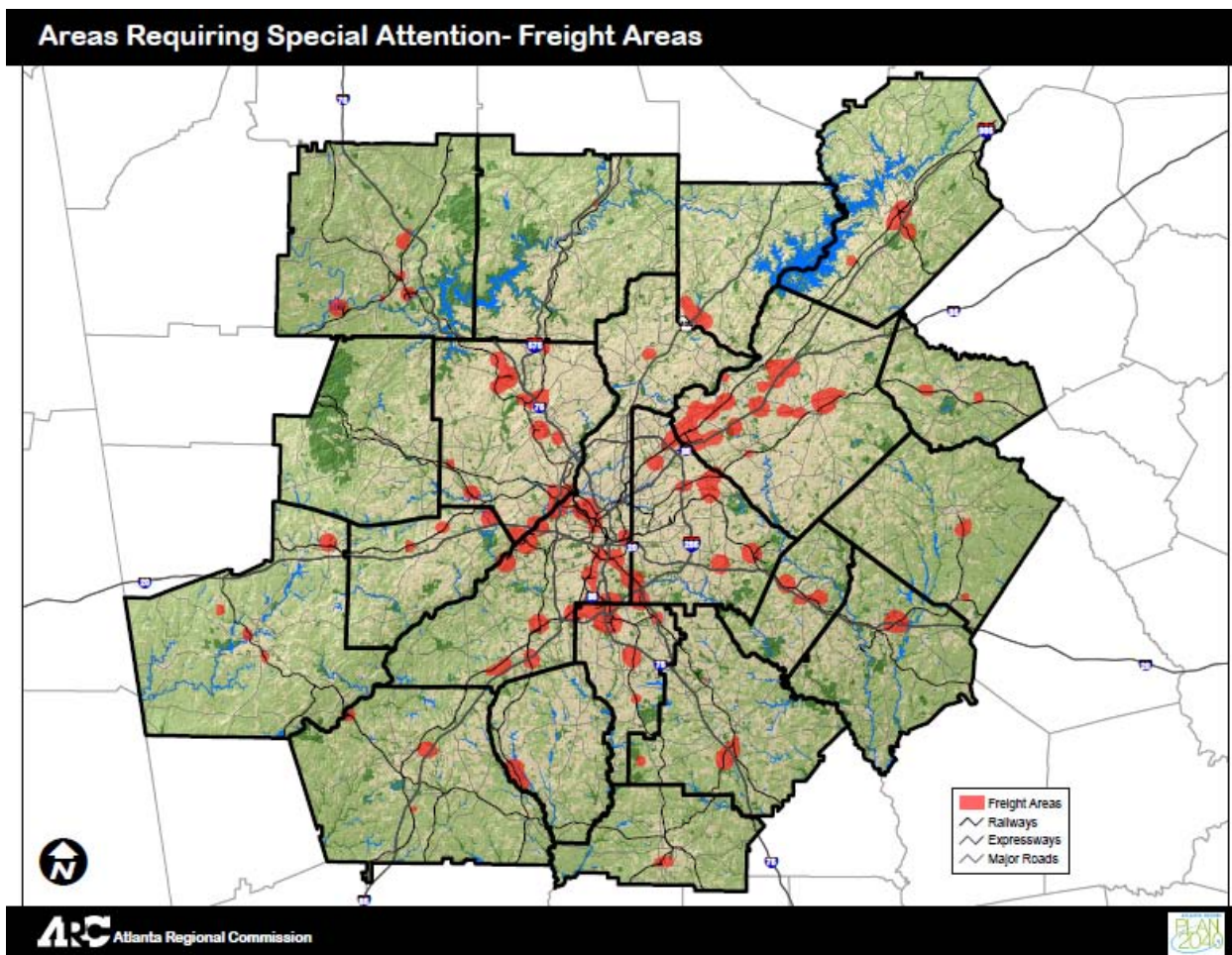
### Why should these areas be a focus of Plan2040?

Freight and logistics employment is one of the largest regional sectors of employment in the Atlanta region. While critical to the regional economy the operation of these facilities can create challenges in providing regional mobility, as well as local land use conflicts.

### How did we get the data?

Freight Areas are defined as concentrations of Industrial, Transportation Communications Utilities, Industrial/Commercial Complexes as defined by the 2007 LandPro coverage developed by ARC.

Figure 2: Areas Requiring Special Attention – Freight Areas



## Areas Requiring Special Attention - Activity Centers

### What are these areas?

Activity Centers are the major employment and retail centers of the region. Not only are they regional centers but they are also defined places within the region that have their own unique identity. These areas identified make up about 1.45% of the total region's land area but contain over 30% of the region's total jobs. Because of the high concentration of jobs these areas can have higher levels of congestion but they can also support transportation alternatives. These areas can support infill development of residential and new commercial development.

### Where are these places?

The majority of the activity centers are located along interstates or limited access highways. Regional malls and shopping centers are also included, however some malls are slowly becoming obsolete and they can be redeveloped. With the exception of Hartsfield-Jackson International Airport all of the region's largest Activity Centers are located north of I-20.

### Why should these areas be a focus of Plan2040?

Activity Centers are key pieces in the land use transportation connection because of their ability to support transportation alternatives, and potentially higher density housing, though many are currently concentrations of employment without a significant housing within the center.

**Figure 3: Job Categories with Significant Concentrations of Regional Employment in Activity Centers**

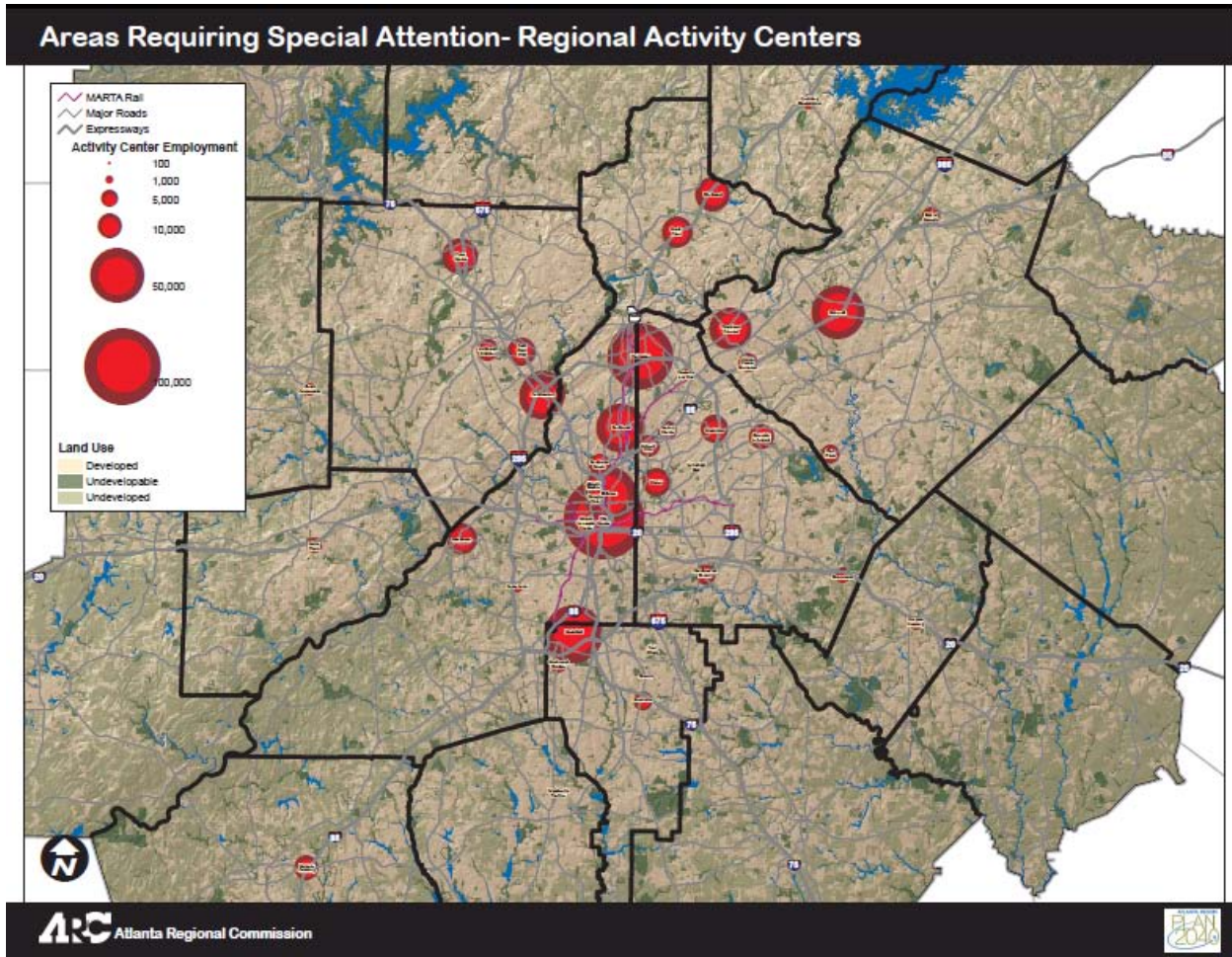
Job Category	Regional Employment	Activity Centers Employment	Percent of Region's Employment
Information	88,043	49,263	56%
Management of Companies	41,442	21,497	52%
Public Administration	107,786	48,218	45%
Finance	107,547	47,655	44%
Professional, Scientific and Technical	170,707	72,978	43%
Transportation & Warehousing	138,845	56,444	41%



### How did we get the data?

ARC works with the GA Department of Labor on our employment estimates. Activity Center locations are developed as part of the Unified Growth Policy Map and must include 1.5 million square feet of commercial space (including office) in an identifiable area.

Figure 4: Areas Requiring Special Attention – Regional Activity Centers



## Areas Requiring Special Attention - Areas of Redevelopment.

### **What are these areas?**

Many commercial properties within the region are facing the end of their designed lifecycle. Numerous jurisdictions around the region are struggling with commercial “big box” developments that are vacant or supporting marginal commercial uses. Many older traditional commercial corridors within the region are now facing obsolescence both in terms of development and in some cases the infrastructure used to support the development. In addition some very large sites within the region are facing transition as they redevelop from manufacturing or military use to new ownership and new uses.

### **Where are these places?**

The majority of vacant retail properties are within the first generation of suburbs of the region. These areas were largely developed in the 1950's, 60's and 70's and have auto-oriented commercial uses that have existed well beyond their lifecycle. The region also has the opportunity to redevelop some unique sites - Fort Gillem, Fort McPherson, Hapeville Ford Plant and the Doraville General Motors plant. These areas are very large sites that are in different stages in the process to redevelop to new uses.

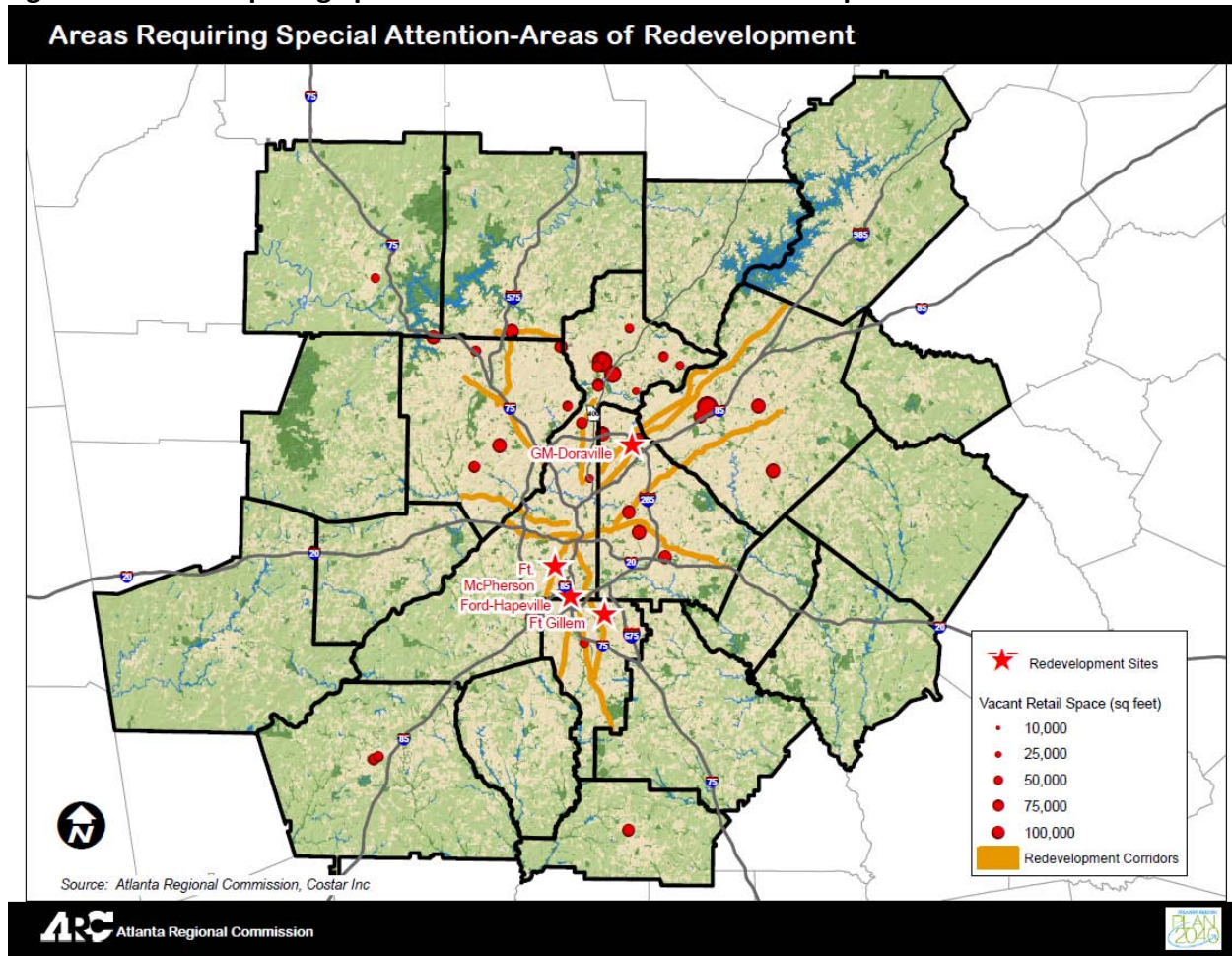
### **Why should these areas be a focus of Plan2040?**

Redevelopment of vacant or marginal commercial uses is a primary focus of local governments throughout the Atlanta region. Local and regional policies, development tools and infrastructure investments are needed to encourage redevelopment. Redevelopment of individual sites is a very complicated effort and many resources are needed to achieve the desired end result, developments that meet the needs of local and region plans and contribute to local tax rolls. Currently there are very few examples in the region of primarily commercial areas being redeveloped, but this will be crucial to developing a more sustainable land use pattern over the next 30 years.

### **How did we get the data?**

ARC as part of the Unified Growth Policy Map identified Urban Redevelopment Corridors. In addition to developing regional data, ARC is increasing using private vendor data to supplement ARC data in planning work. CoStar Inc, is a private firm that tracks commercial development. CoStar data was used to determine vacancy rates for large commercial shopping centers (over 100,000 square feet). The redevelopment sites were placed on the map manually based on interpretation of aerial photography.

Figure 5: Areas Requiring Special Attention – Potential Redevelopment Areas



## Areas Requiring Special Attention - Transit Areas

### What are these areas?

The Atlanta region has significant transit investments that are currently operating, but has also determined that transit expansion is key component in the region's ability to support growth and development in the future. Existing and new transit investments need supportive land use and transportation investments to maximize the ridership potential. The Atlanta Region currently has the one fixed-guideway system in two counties (MARTA); however Concept 3, the region's long-term transit vision, greatly expands the region's network of transit facilities.

### Where are these places?

The current MARTA system is in only two counties, Fulton and DeKalb, but the region has not fully captured the opportunity to develop transit-supportive land use patterns around existing stations. Concept 3 provides for an extensive expansion of transit service to all counties within ARC 10-county planning area and beyond.



### Why should these areas be a focus of Plan2040?

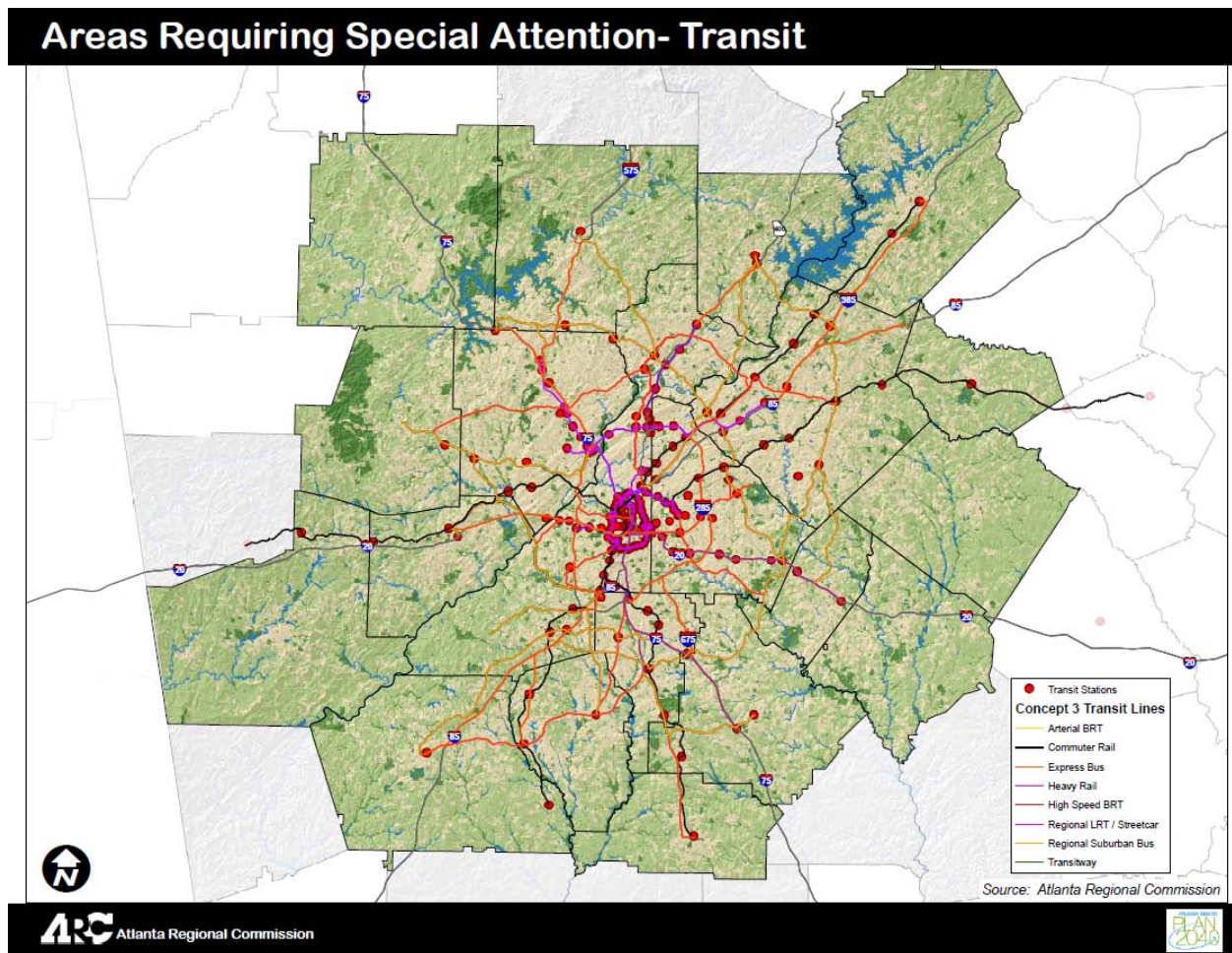
Transit infrastructure and service is a significant regional investment that needs appropriate land use, operations and governance strategies in order to be successful. Density, land use diversity and transit supported design are necessary to support transit ridership. Additionally, regional coordination and support of transit issues is needed in order for the region have a seamless and efficient system that can provide an alternative to SOV trips.

### How did we get the data?

MARTA began service in 1972 with system expansion over the past few decades to now include 38 rail stations, covering 48 rail miles. The North Springs station is the most recent station added to the system. It was opened in 2000.

Concept 3 was adopted by the ARC Board in December 2008 and now serves as the transit component of the region's long-range Aspirations Plan. The development of Concept 3 was a two-year effort overseen by the Transit Planning Board (TPB), a regional partnership created in 2006 by a joint resolution of ARC, MARTA, and GRTA.

Figure 6: Existing Future Transit Lines and Stations



## Areas Requiring Special Attention - Areas of Rapid Development

### **What are these areas?**

During the next 30 years the 20-county Atlanta region will add 3 million people. This increase will be due to people being born in the region, but also people migrating to the region for economic reasons. Development of housing, employment areas and supportive services will be needed throughout the region to meet the needs of an additional 3 million residents. Much of this development will be focused in already developed or areas or in areas with limited transportation infrastructure to support needed mobility and/or limited water and wastewater infrastructure. These areas need policies and appropriate investments to handle the increased development pressures or tools to better manage growth in areas lacking needed infrastructure.

### **Where are these places?**

Areas forecasted to receive high levels of growth include the urban core, but also along the GA400 corridor in Forsyth County, the I-75 corridor in Henry County, as well as areas in Gwinnett, Douglas, and Cherokee counties. Existing major activity centers also are forecasted to receive increased household growth by 2040.

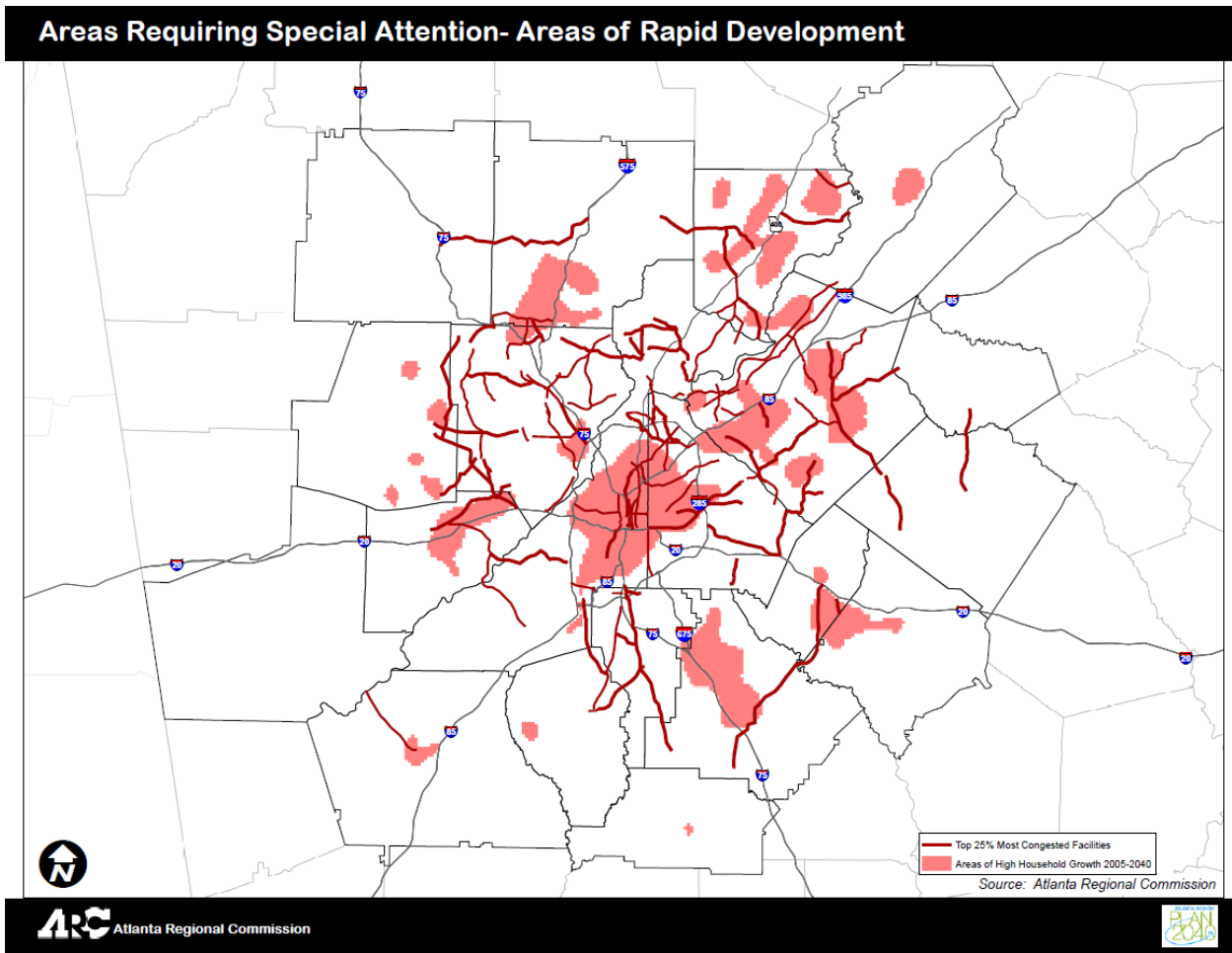
### **Why should these areas be a focus of Plan2040?**

The areas receiving high growth need to have supporting infrastructure, policies and tools, to accommodate growth. Those areas with limited existing infrastructure will likely need to how to manage growth in such as way as to limit the demands for new infrastructure given the ongoing gap between demand for infrastructure investments and available funds. While the region continues to add significant population and jobs it is likely that the infrastructure the region has today will be the vast majority of infrastructure we have in the future.

### **How did we get the data?**

ARC as the MPO for the Atlanta region produces a long-range forecast for population and employment for the 20-county planning area. The areas shown as High Household Growth came from the Draft forecast. Also included in the map are the region's top 25% most congested non-freeway corridors from ARC's travel demand model. This highlights that many higher growth areas are already experiencing significant levels of roadway congestion.

Figure 7: Areas Requiring Special Attention – Areas of Rapid Development



## Areas Requiring Special Attention –Regional Important Resources and Conservation Areas

### **What are these areas?**

New rules and procedures for the identification of Regionally Important Resources (RIR) became effective on July 1, 2009. The rules require development of a plan for protection and management of regional resources and review of activities potentially impacting these resources. ARC is the agency charged with developing a Regional Resource Plan and RIR map for the 10-county area of the Atlanta region (Cherokee, Clayton, Cobb, DeKalb, Douglas, Fayette, Fulton, Gwinnett, Henry and Rockdale).

Designation as a Regionally Important Resource does not denote that areas are off limits to development or create a new regulatory requirement. It does suggest that these areas should have an enhanced level of management and careful consideration should be given to new development in the area. Identifying the region's conservation priorities will promote collaboration and investment in these areas that are critical to the region's quality of life and ecological diversity.

### **Where are these places?**

A public nomination process for submittal of potential RIR locations occurred in 2009. ARC received over 150 individual nominations, with many of these nominations including multiple properties. Using guidance from the ARC Board and the Georgia Department of Community Affairs (DCA) ARC evaluated the nominated resources as well as other potential resources around the region. ARC has developed an initial RIR map that will guide the development of a Regional Resource Plan that will further detail potential strategies to manage these important resources.

### **Why should these areas be a focus of Plan2040?**

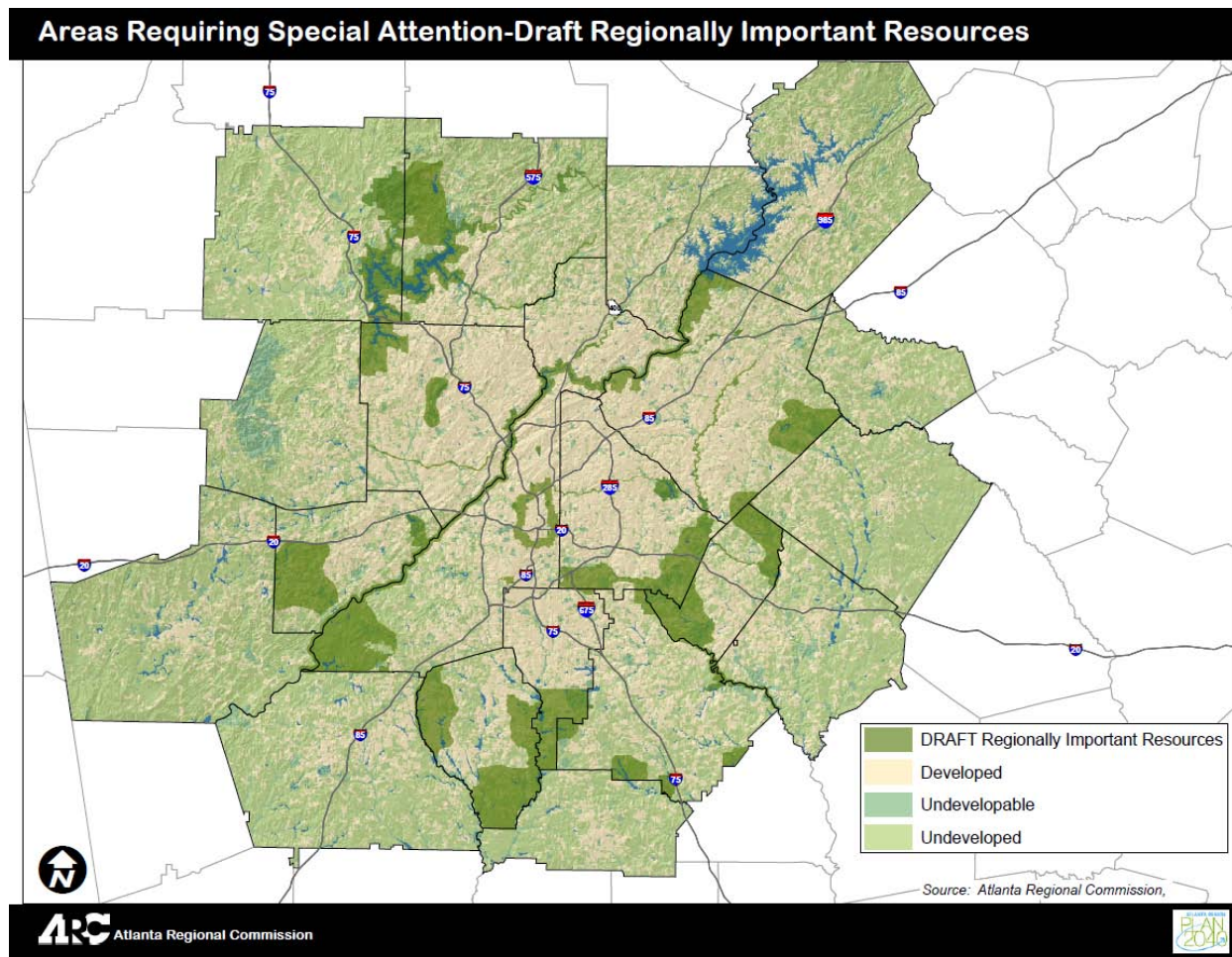
The region is fortunate to have major parks and recreation areas; wildlife management areas; conservation areas; nature preserves; regional trails and water resources that can serve as the beginning of an effort to develop a green infrastructure framework for the Atlanta region. Many of these resources require cooperation and coordination in order to ensure that can meet the needs of the region's population while also meeting the varied purposes. Additionally, the region will likely need to invest in new green infrastructure in the future to meet the needs of a growing population. Areas identified in the RIR map may provide opportunities for conservation efforts, including but not limited to acquisition, promotion low-impact development and cultural and heritage preservation.

### **How did we get the data?**

The Draft RIR Map was created using input from public nominated resources and evaluation of appropriate resources that fit into the overall intent of the RIR program as overseen by DCA.



**Figure 8: Areas Requiring Special Attention –Draft Regional Important Resources**



## Areas Requiring Special Attention - Naturally Occurring Retirement Communities (NORCs) and Opportunities to Develop Lifelong Communities

**What are these areas?** A naturally occurring retirement community (NORC) is a geographic area with a concentrated population of older adults. These are areas where older adults live and will likely continue to live and “age in place.” A Lifelong Community is an opportunity to create a place where individuals can live throughout their lifetime with access to housing and transportation options, access to healthy living and access to information and services.

**Where are these places?** ARC’s Area Agency on Aging serves the 10-county ARC region. The areas shown in Figure 9 below identifies concentrations of older adults over the age 55 by a percentage of the total population. While these are not officially defined as naturally occurring retirement communities or lifelong communities, they are locations where older adults are currently living and where high concentrations of older adults will likely continue to live in the future. These locations represent opportunities to advance lifelong community principles.

### **Why should these areas be a focus of Plan2040?**

Older adults both want and plan to “age in place”. In a recent survey by the Carl Vinson Institute for the Atlanta Regional Commission, 83% of the region’s 55+ population said they plan to remain in their community as long as possible. Access to reliable transportation plays a key role in supporting the concept of “aging in place”. Understanding the concentration of the aging population helps to determine their relationship to the transportation services and the ability to access services.

Many of the areas with existing concentrations of older adults do not have adequate access to existing transit service. According to the 2000 census, approximately 13,000 people over the age of 55, residing in the 10-county area, did not own a vehicle, many more are likely driving because they have no other choice if they are to access needed services. Older adults living in these areas of the region must rely on various state and/or county based services that have limited funding to provide transportation services, which may only provide transportation for medical care.

Furthermore, understanding the location of older adults helps establish a baseline to discuss potential policies, programs and actions that support:

- Providing public transportation services to meet the demands of an aging older adult population
- Developing housing options that are affordable, accessible and located close to services within existing communities
- Improving access to services the older adult population needs and developing linkages to resources, communication infrastructure and access to education and long term care resources
- Directing aging service structure to better serve the region’s needs
- Identifying areas to logically advance lifelong community principles

The region is testing the concept of the NORC Supportive Service Programs (SSP) at 5 locations. These pilot programs are helping to analyze various methods to provide community-based health and supportive services to concentrations of older adults living in these locations. The results of these efforts and the advancement of lifelong community principles, those that promote housing and transportation options, encourage healthy lifestyles, and expand access to information and services, will help ARC develop programs that can address the needs of older adults residing in these concentrated areas.

**How did we get the data?** Demographic and population estimates were obtained from ESRI 2009 Population Estimates (source: Atlanta Regional Commission) and the Atlanta Regional Commission’s data source on existing transit services in the 10-county Atlanta Region. Information was also obtained from *the “Older Adults in the Atlanta Region: Preferences, Practices and Potential of the 55+ Population”* survey performed by the Carl Vinson Institute, 2007.

Figure 9: Areas in Region with More than 35% of Local Population over 55 Years of Age

Areas Requiring Special Attention-Naturally Occurring Retirement Community

