

Freight Transportation: Moving Our Economies



NADO National Regional Transportation Conference

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Atlanta Regional Commission



Session Overview

Part 1: Atlanta Regional Commission Freight Cluster Plan Program

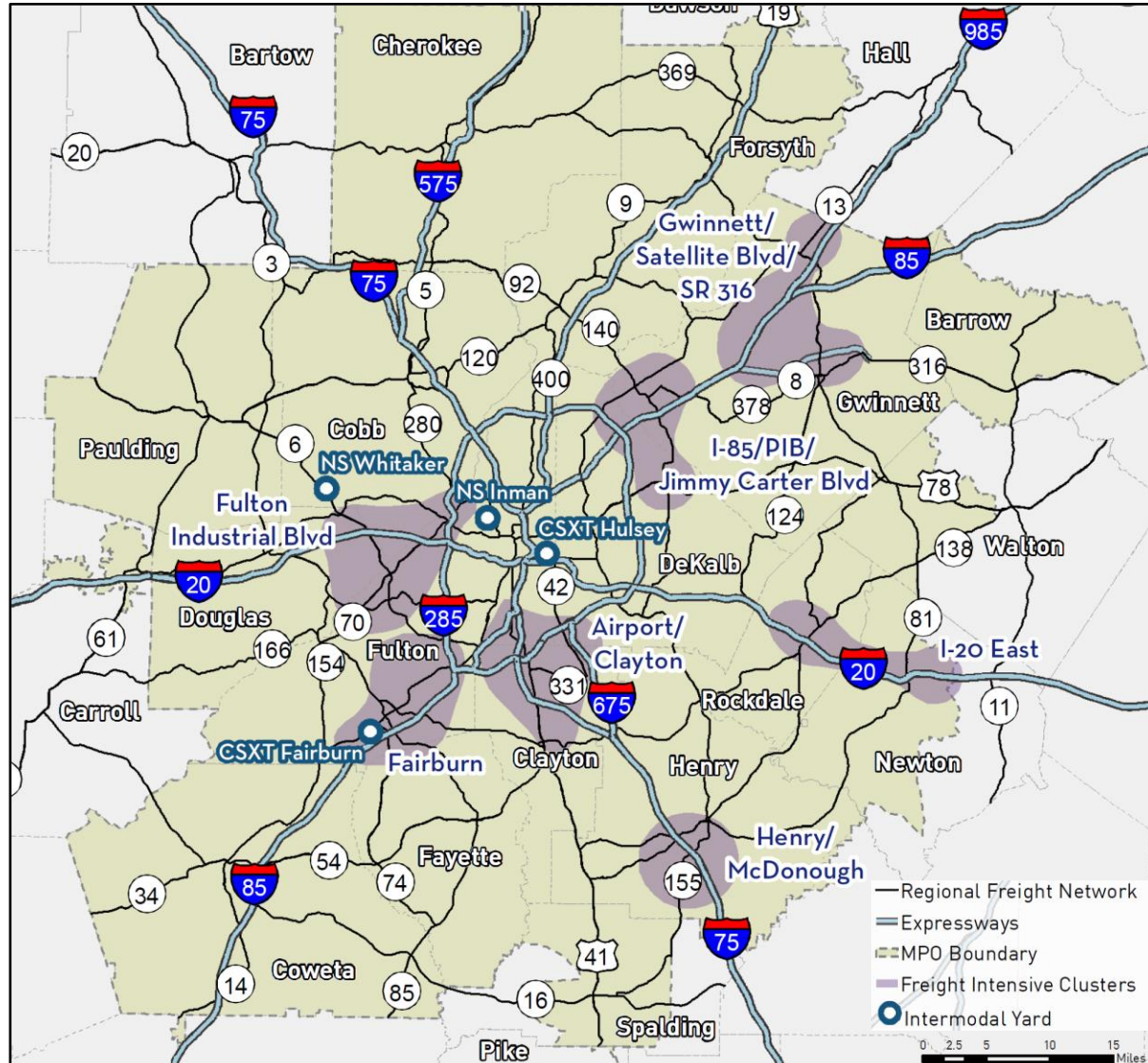
- Program Overview
- Case Studies / Examples

Part 2: 2024 Regional Freight Mobility Plan

- Plan Overview
- Integrating Freight and Land Use



Original 2016 Freight Clusters



- Developed as part of the *2016 Atlanta Regional Freight Mobility Plan Update*
- Most intense areas of industrial development in the region
- Infrastructure in these Freight Clusters supports jobs and economic development
- Basis for the Freight Cluster Planning Program

Freight Cluster Plan Scope Highlights

Transportation
Improvement Program (TIP)
Metropolitan
Transportation Plan (MTP)



Freight Cluster
Plan

Roadways/Connectivity

- Identification of freight routes
- Route conflicts/issues
- Access management
- Bridges
- Signage needs
- Field review
- Traffic study
- ITS

Safety/Crash Data Review

- Crash hotspots
- Freight specific needs

Truck Parking

- Unauthorized parking locations
- Staging near industrial

Railroads

- Freight activity
- RR Crossings: Vehicle operations/design analysis

Access to Jobs

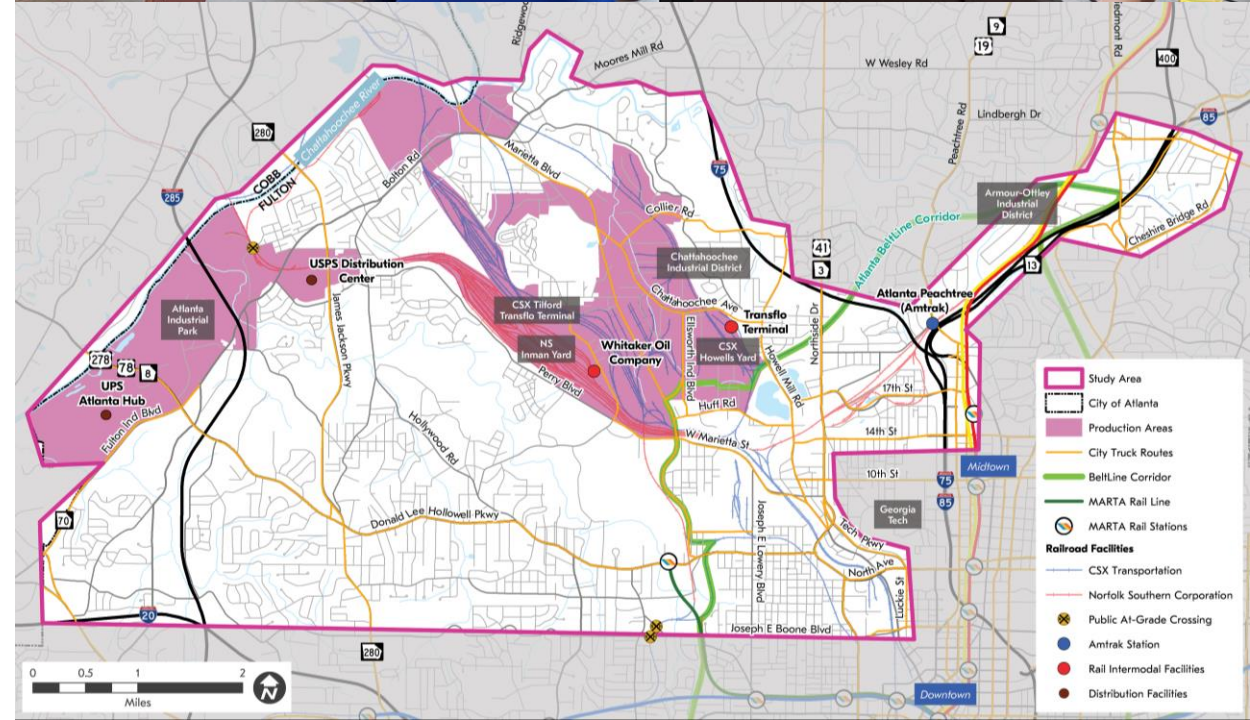
- Transit Access
- Bike/ped infrastructure
- Context sensitive design
- TDM strategies

Outreach

- Freight Advisory Task Force
- Stakeholder Interviews
- Truck Driver Surveys

Plan Elements / Key Tasks

- Review of Best Practices
- Inventory/Assessment of Existing Conditions and Needs
 - Traffic volumes, safety
 - Bicycle, pedestrian, transit network
 - Land use and demographics
- Traffic Study
 - Intersection level analysis
 - Field review to identify design and operational issues
- Community and Stakeholder Engagement
 - Public and private sector
- Recommendations
 - Prioritized project list
 - Financially feasible
- Final Report



Case Studies



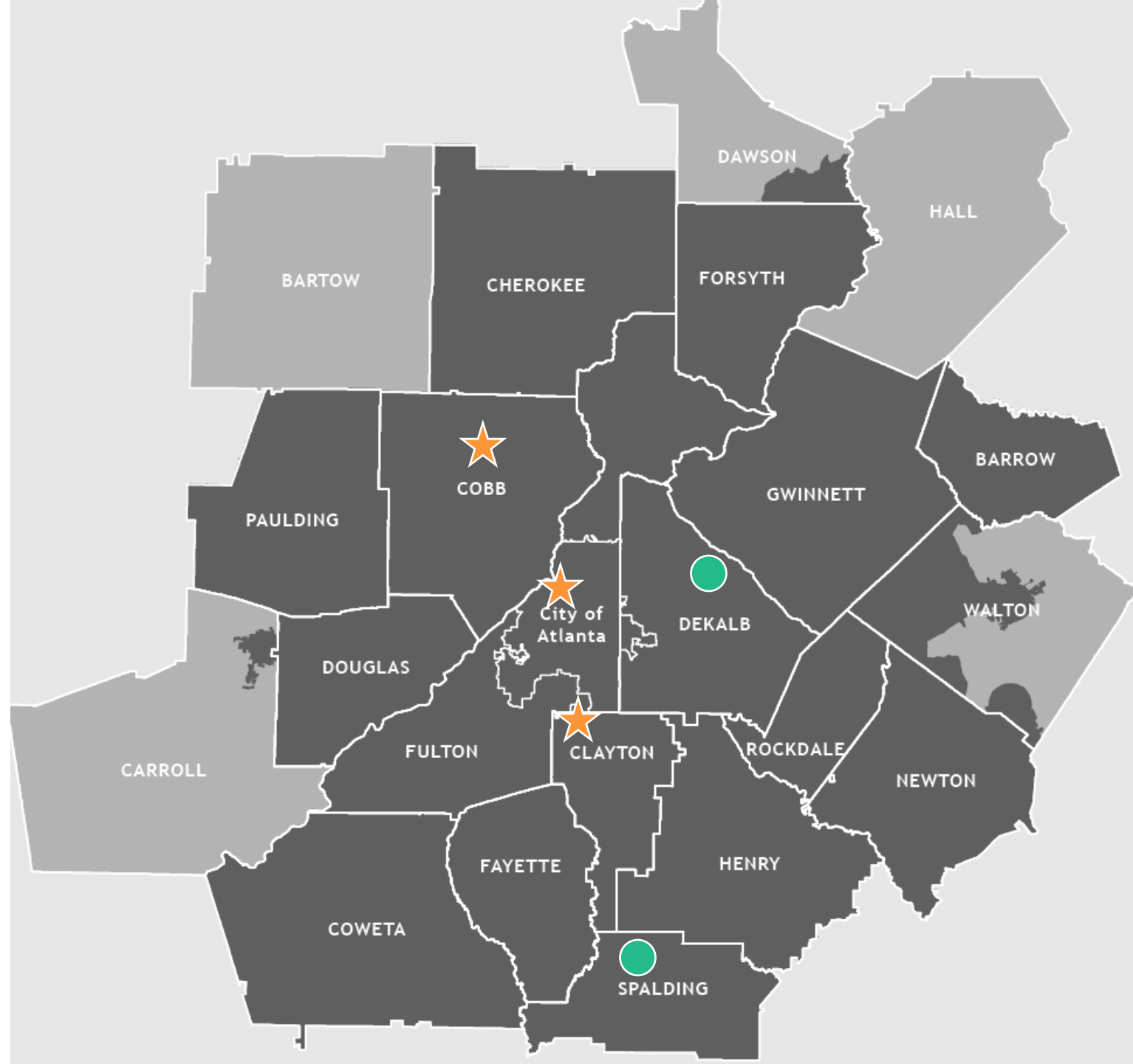
Freight Cluster Plan Experience



Prime Experience

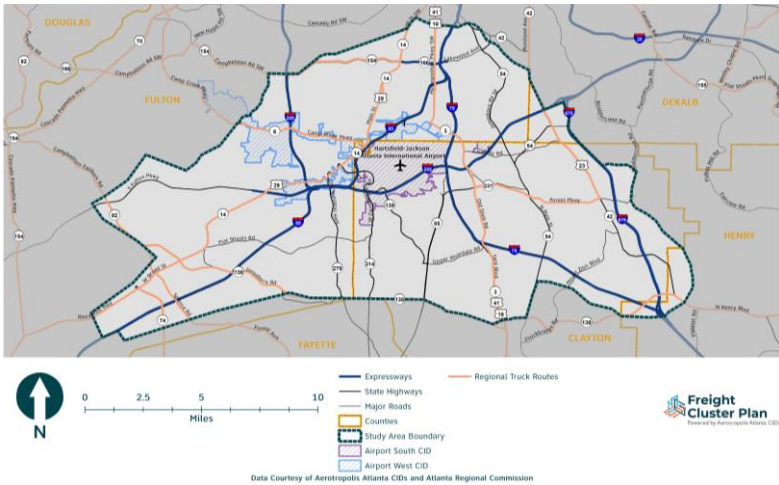


Subconsultant Experience



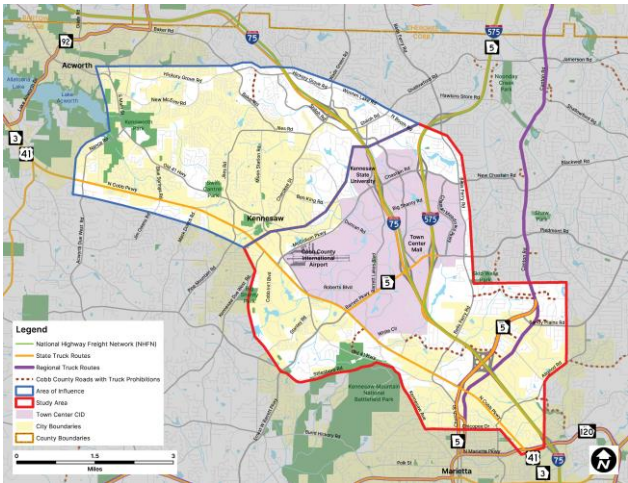
Three Key Projects

Aerotropolis Freight Cluster Plan



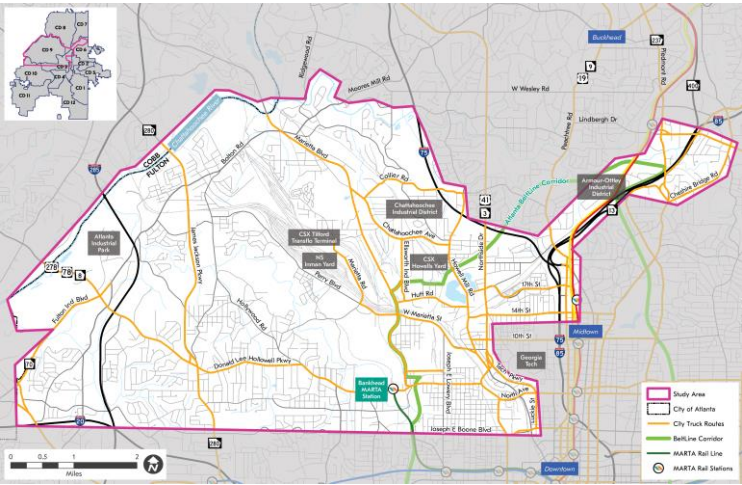
Client: ATL Airport Community Improvement Districts (AACIDS)
Completed in 2020

Town Center Freight Cluster Plan



Client: Town Center CID
Completed in 2024

Freight ATL: Northwest



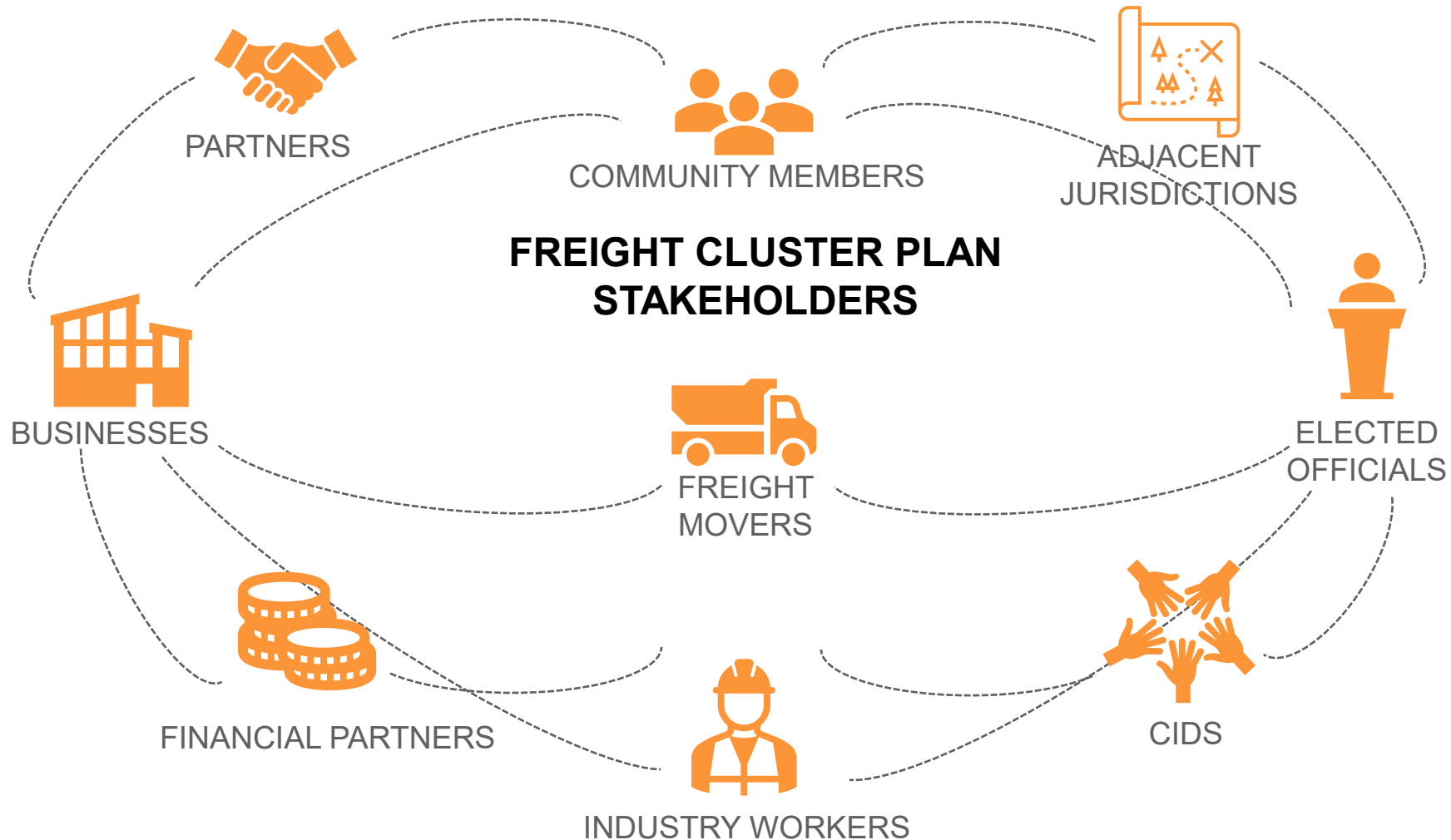
Client: City of Atlanta
Completed in 2023



Community Engagement



Stakeholder Relationships in the Planning Process



Example Activities



INSIGHT SESSIONS

Facilitated small-group discussions with industrial workers, businesses, and/or community members to establish rapport for ongoing engagement and get input.



WEBSITE & ONLINE ACTIVITIES

Online platforms for information sharing and gathering input or feedback through surveys, questionnaires, and interactive maps.



ADVISORY COMMITTEES

Comprised of elected officials, public agencies, industry representatives, and community members that bring to bear experience and insights to balance needs and concerns of industry and neighborhoods.



WALK & TALK TOURS

On-site interaction for people to experience local conditions, share stories, document concerns, and meet people where they are.



PUBLIC OPEN HOUSES

Virtual and in-person forums to reach a broad spectrum of community members to share project information and gather input and feedback.



INTERCEPT SURVEYS

Quick interviews in-person on-site at industrial facilities or community destinations to gauge opinions and gather input. Can include truck drivers or warehouse workers, etc.



Example Activities



INTERCEPT SURVEY



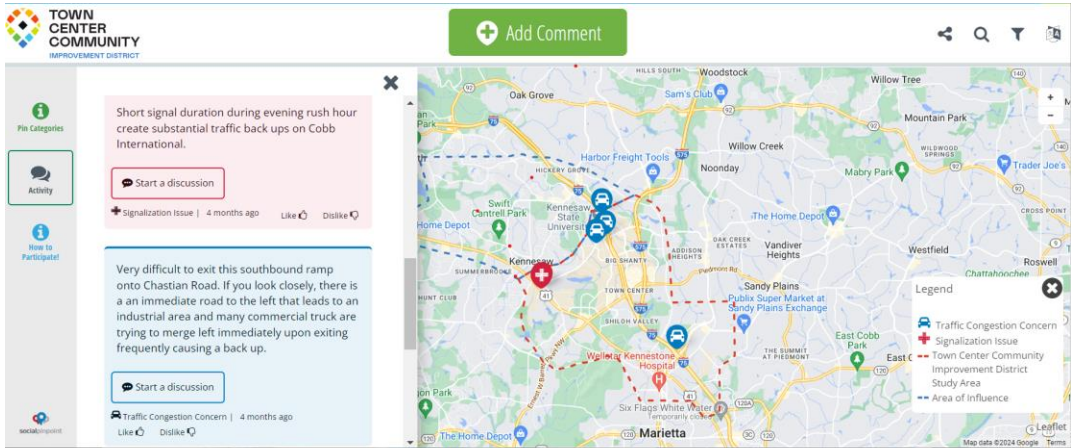
ADVISORY COMMITTEES



POP-UP EVENTS



WALK & TALK TOURS



WEBSITE MAPPING ACTIVITY



Example Stakeholders

PUBLIC SECTOR

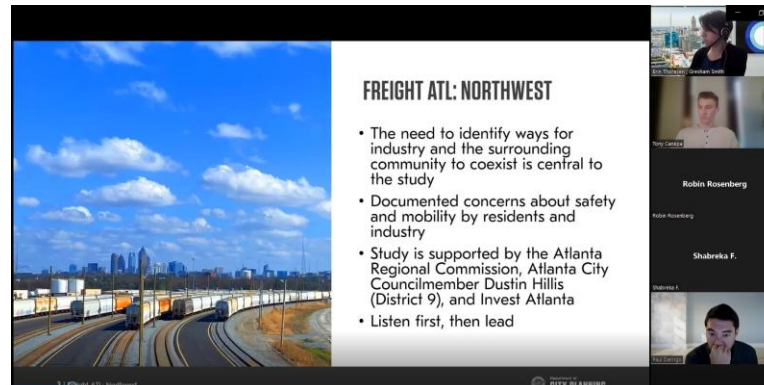
- GDOT District, Intermodal, Office of Planning representatives
- City agencies
- County agencies
- Airports
- Transit agencies

OTHER GROUPS

- Colleges and universities
- Neighborhood groups
- Community organizations

PRIVATE SECTOR

- Freight movers (companies, drivers)
- Industrial businesses (workers, owners)
- Railroads
- Truck drivers
- Chambers of Commerce or Industrial Authorities
- Georgia Motor Trucking Association
- Clean Cities Georgia
- Georgia Transportation Alliance
- Real estate developers, property managers



Examples of Recommendations



Examples: Issues/Opportunities & Potential Strategies

ISSUES & OPPORTUNITIES

- Tight corner geometry
- Queuing, congestion, and poor level of service
- Worn, damaged, or missing pedestrian facilities
- Long crossing distances and distance between crossings
- Worn, outdated truck route signage
- Lack of dedicated bike facilities
- Signal timing issues
- Crashes due to congestion and turning movement conflicts

POTENTIAL SOLUTIONS

- Longer / new turn lanes
- Widen tight turning radii
- New intersection control – potential roundabouts
- Adjustments to signal timing and phasing
- Route guidance and signage
- Technology improvements - coordinate with GDOT and SigOps
- Sidewalk, crosswalks, bikeways, raised medians
- Pedestrian hybrid beacons, rapid-flashing beacons
- Improve sight distance

Short-Term Action Plan vs. Long-Term Vision Plan

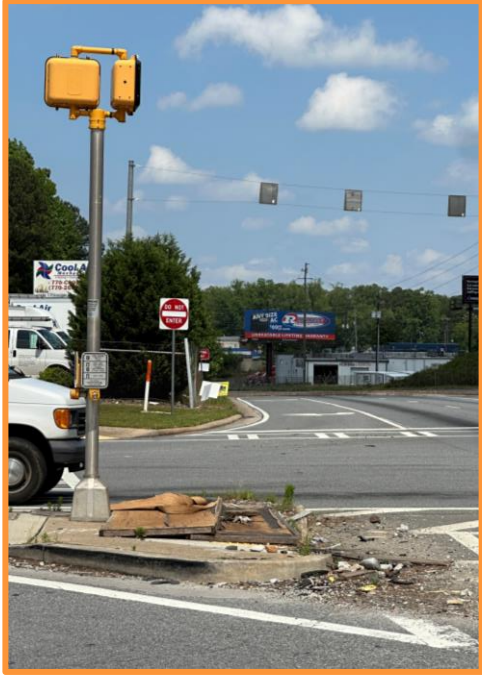
Short-Term Action Plan

- 10-year planning horizon
- Financially Feasible (or Fiscally Constrained)
- Based on:
 - Previously identified projects
 - Findings from inventory & assessment, field observations
 - Results of project prioritization, input from local sponsor organization and key stakeholders
 - Projected funding available to sponsor
 - Project cost estimates
 - Share of project costs to sponsor

Long-Term Vision Plan

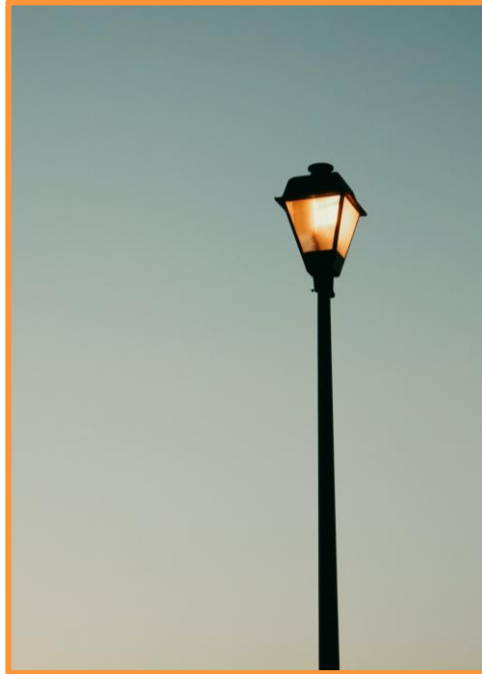
- Encompasses projects that cannot be initiated in the 10-year short-term plan based on financial feasibility
- Typically divided into two “tiers” or “buckets”
 - Higher priority
 - Lower priority

Examples: Infrastructure Projects



Intersection Improvements

Improve operations and safety through realignments, signage, pedestrian crossing upgrades, pavement markings, etc.



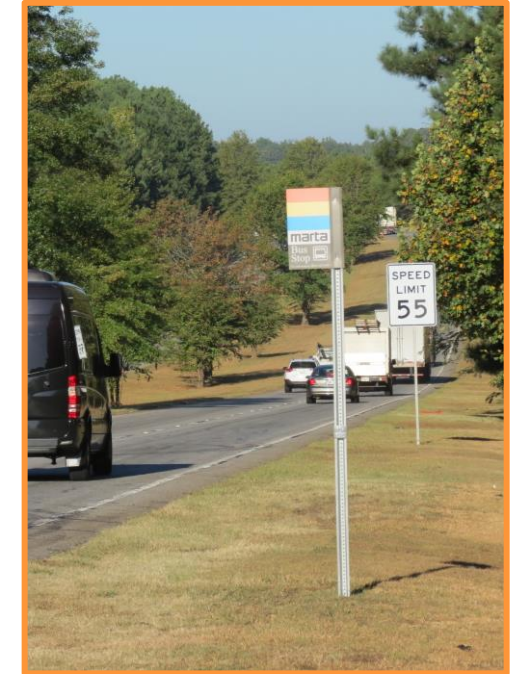
Lighting

Install lighting along dark corridors to improve visibility and safety for commercial vehicles and other roadway users



Signage

New and enhanced signage to clarify and reinforce truck prohibitions, and direct truck drivers to appropriate corridors



Transit Supportive

Install new sidewalks and fill sidewalk gaps near bus stops and industrial and freight-related workplaces

Example Improvements

- **Additional turn lanes**
- **Corridor improvements**
 - Streamline turning movements with center turn lane and dedicated turn lanes at signalized intersections, key destinations
- **New intersection control**
 - Restricted crossing U-turn
 - Median U-turn
 - Roundabout
- **Adjustments to signal phasing and timing**
 - Adding protected phases
- **Improvements to intersection geometry**
 - Address insufficient sight distance
 - Tight turning radii
- **Access management and safety improvements**



Example Improvements

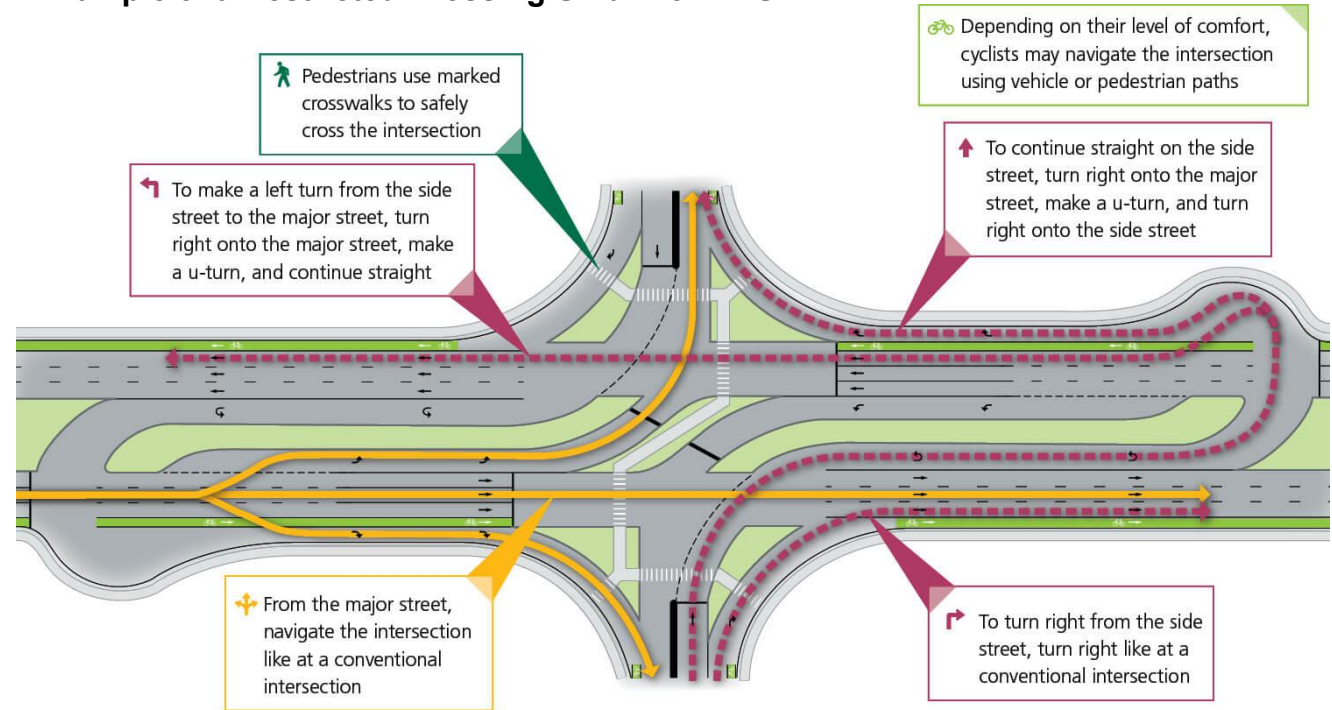
- **Increase capacity**
- **Coordination to improve freight access to airport**
- **Truck parking**
 - Shared-use/shared parking agreements – short-term or temporary basis
 - Explore use of vacant/underutilized warehouse lots
 - Partner to develop or recruit new technology
- **Bus stop upgrades along bus routes in warehouse / employment centers**
- **Provide dedicated space for biking and walking, mid-block crossings**
- **Leverage forthcoming connected signal technology to improve freight mobility**



Example Improvements: Operational and Safety

- **Smart signals, freight signal priority**
 - Coordinate with GDOT's RTOP program
- **Signal timing and phasing**
- **Longer / new turn lanes**
- **Intersection control**
 - Restricted Crossing U-Turn
 - Median U-Turn
 - Roundabout
- **Access management**
 - Raised medians
 - Driveway consolidation

Example of a Restricted Crossing U-Turn or RCUT



Credit: Virginia DOT, https://www.virginiadot.org/info/innovative_intersections_and_interchanges/rcut.asp

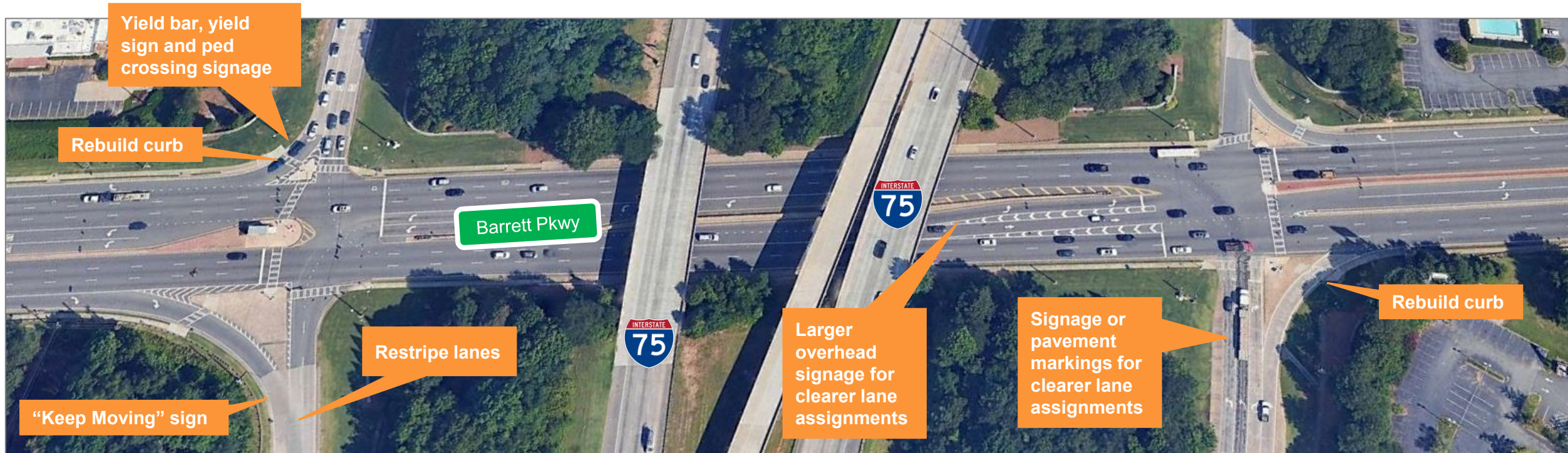
Example Barrett Pkwy at I-75 Ramps

Barrett Pkwy (SR 5 Conn) at I-75 Northbound Ramp

- Convert eastbound left protected/permissive phase to protected-only during peak hours
- Add intersection lighting, signage

Barrett Pkwy (SR 5 Conn) at I-75 Southbound Ramp

- Restripe lane lines and crosswalks
- Add intersection lighting, signage

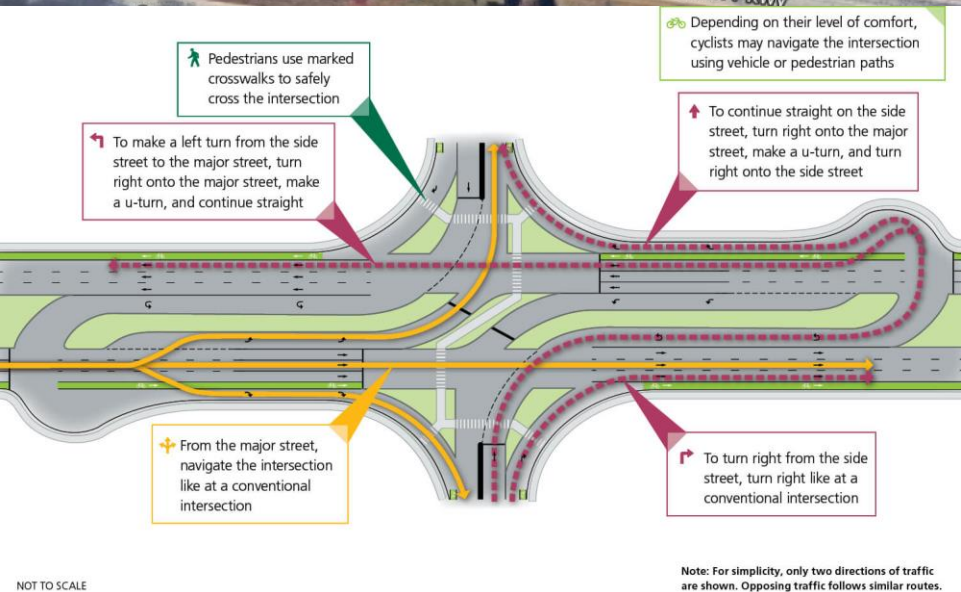
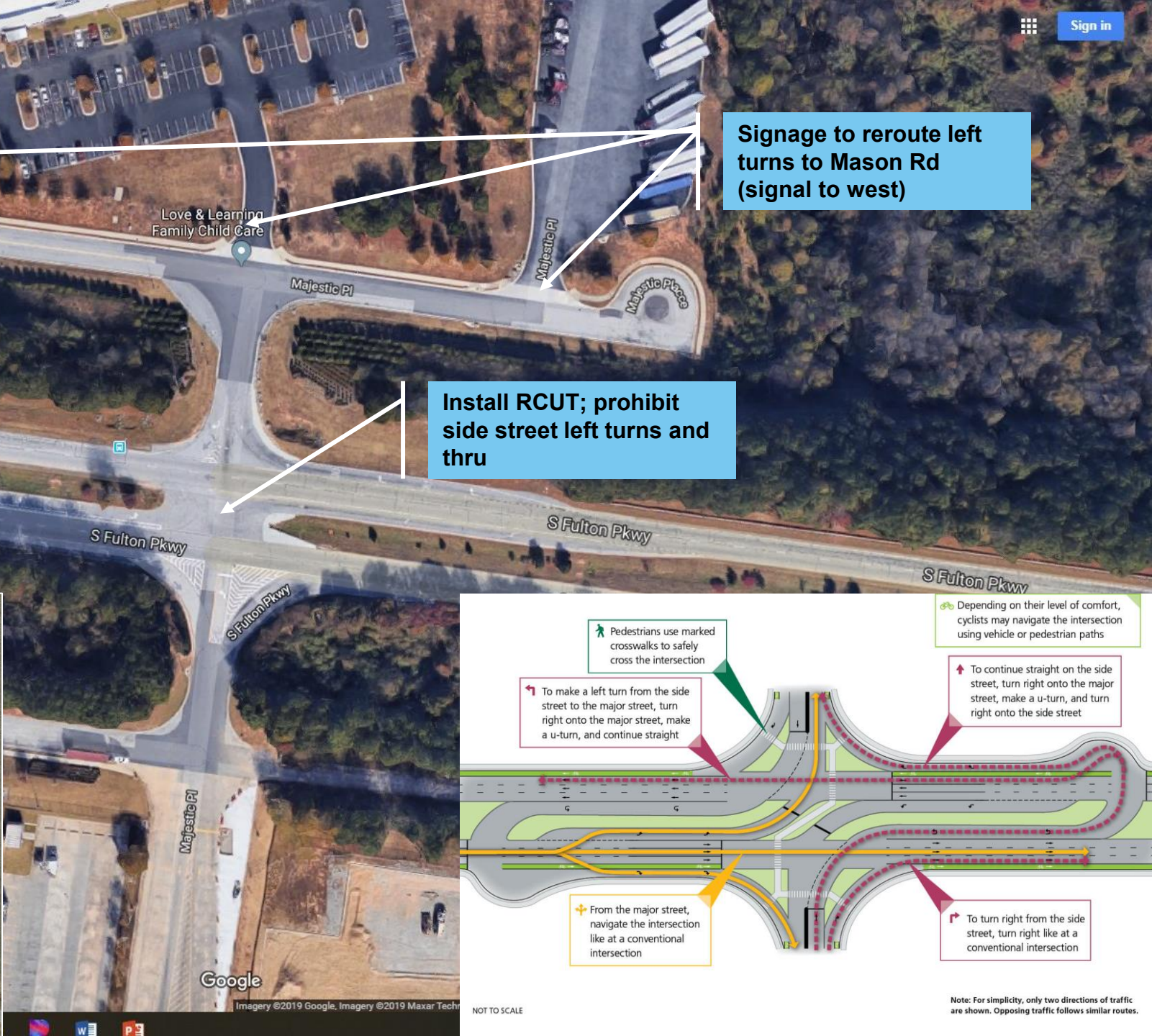


**SR 14 @
Majestic PI**

**Signage to reroute left
turns to Mason Rd
(signal to west)**

**Cut back
vegetation along
SR 14**

**Install RCUT; prohibit
side street left turns and
thru**

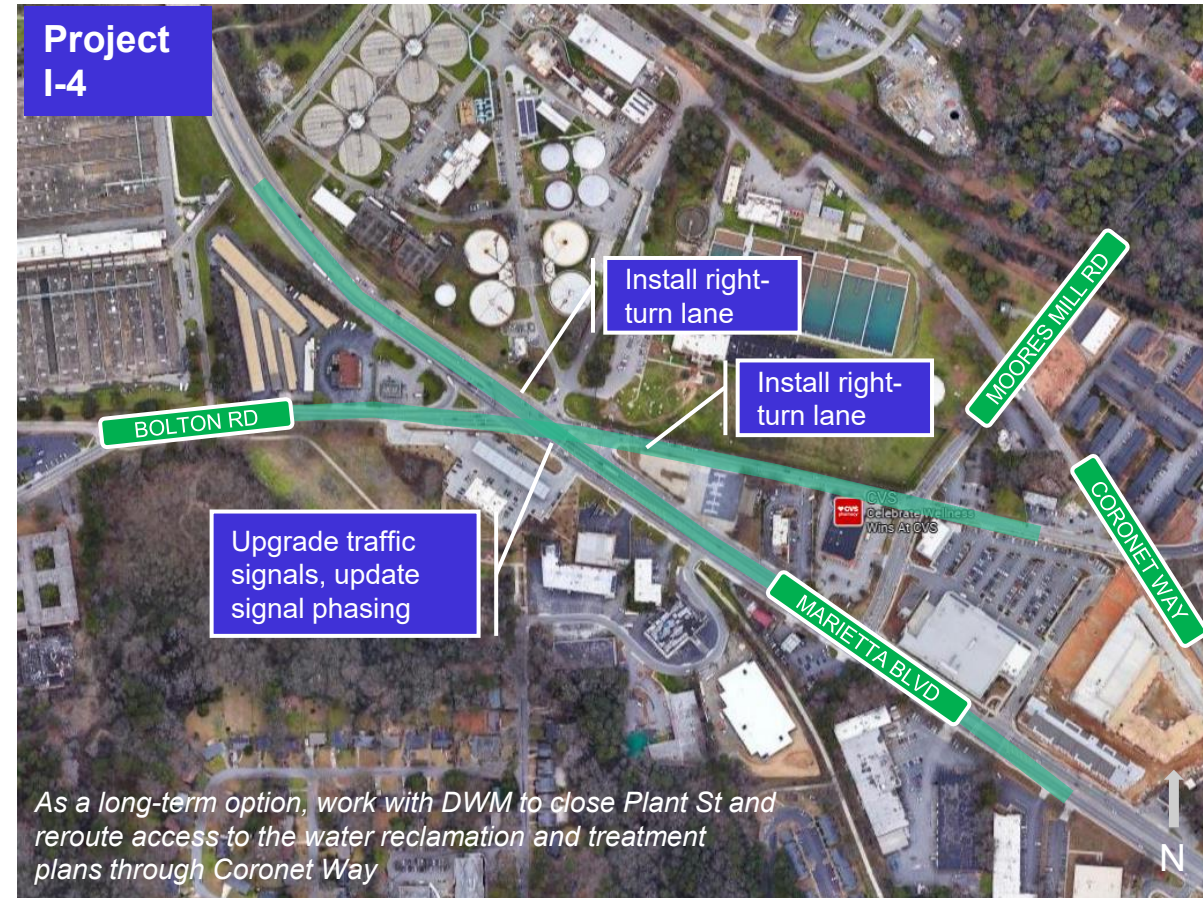


Example: Marietta Blvd at Bolton Rd

Advance all improvements proposed as part of Moores Mill Road Multimodal Roadway Extension & Transit Layover Facility project (FC10451)

Intersection improvements to reconfigure turn lanes and upgrade traffic signals.

- Install southbound and westbound right-turn lanes
- Install “Traffic Signal Ahead” signs on all approaches
- Install post-mounted roadway signs, overhead lane assignment signs, overhead directional signage to I-285, and route shield pavement markings
- Add and update “No Trucks” signs
- Repave, restripe, add raised pavement markers, upgrade traffic signals, adjust phasing



Examples: Policies and Strategies



Truck Parking & Staging

Work with DOTs and local partners to identify potential locations for future truck stops for overnight and staging areas for temporary parking



Street Design for Trucks

Develop or adopt design guidance for roads with high truck traffic adjacent to existing/planned trails and in activity centers



Signal Technology

Work with GDOT and partners to evaluate and/or install CV technologies such as emergency vehicle pre-emption or freight signal priority



Truck Prohibitions

Prohibit trucks on select roads as appropriate (based on surrounding land use, destinations), or direct trucks away from key corridors



Additional Coordination

Implement standing meetings/coordination with GDOT, ARC, and/or and establish freight-specific advisory committee

Outcomes & Implementation Success



Aerotropolis Freight Cluster Plan

OUTCOMES

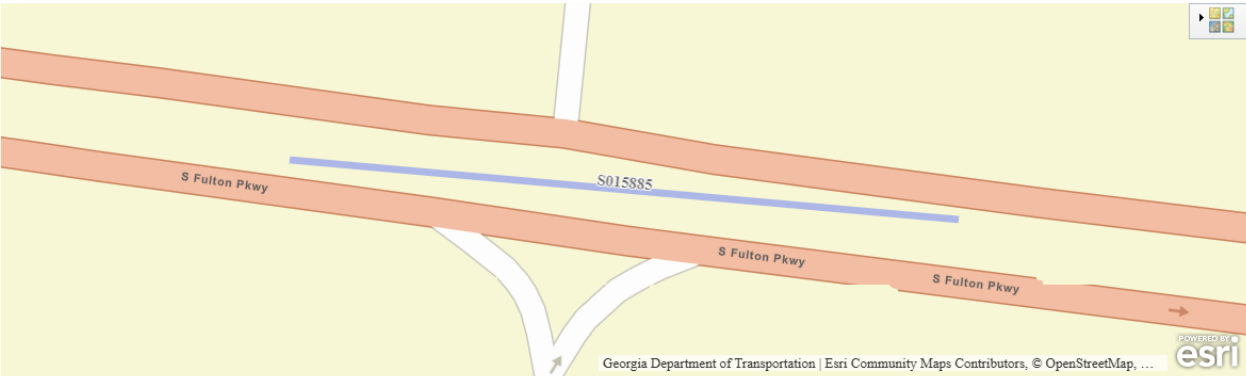
- Following the completion of the plan in 2020, GDOT undertook a project to close the median on SR 14/South Fulton Parkway at Majestic Place – a recommendation from the plan
- The project was completed in 2023
- Several other intersection improvements were also under consideration

Close Median on SR 14/South Fulton Parkway at Majestic PI

Project ID:	S015885	Notice to Proceed Date:	
Project Manager:	Bill Wright Jr	Construction Percent Complete:	0.00%
Office:	Local Grants Office	Current Completion Date:	
County:	Fulton	Work Completion Date:	
Congressional District:	013	Construction Contract Amount:	
State Senate District:	039	Construction Contractor:	
State House District:	068	Preconstruction Status Report	
Project Type:	Operating	Construction Status Report	
Project Status:	Complete		
Right of Way Authorization:		Contact Us	

Project Description:

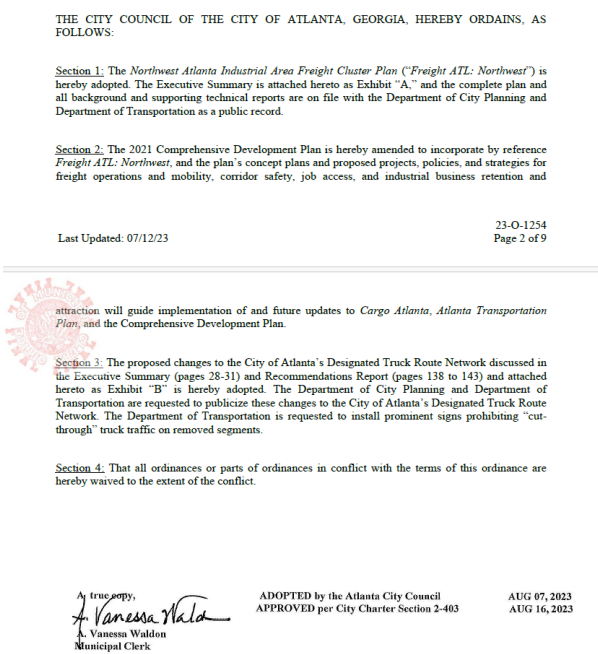
Activity	Program Year	Cost Estimate	Date of Last Estimate
TSA (TSAP Projects)	2023	\$178,292.68	



Freight ATL: Northwest

OUTCOMES

- Plan was unanimously adopted by City Council in August 2023
- In 2025, City began installing signs to prohibit trucks on streets that were removed from the City’s designated truck route network as part of the plan





Atlanta Regional Commission

WHO WE ARE

WHAT WE DO

PLANS & RESOURCES

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Freight Cluster Plans

A program to assist local governments and CIDs with local planning and funding for areas with significant freight activity to improve freight mobility, safety, and access.

Program Background

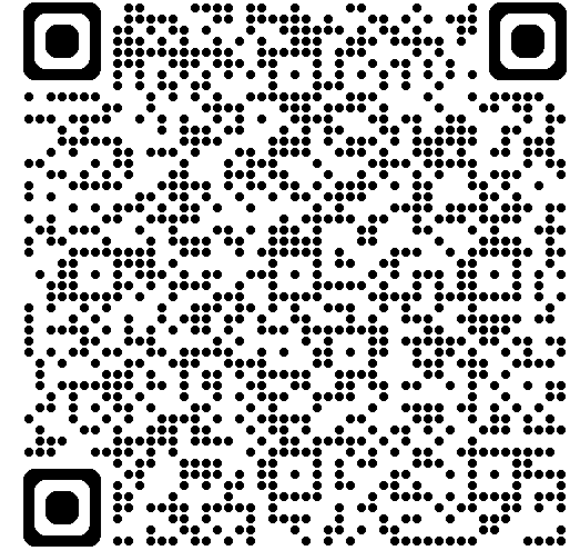
The [2016 Atlanta Regional Freight Mobility Plan Update](#) identified the need to conduct local, small area freight planning in the Atlanta Region to address transportation issues related to this key part of the region's economy. The Freight Cluster Plan Program was created to address this need, and it provides local governments and Community Improvement Districts (CIDs) funds for local planning with a focus on freight movement. The purpose of freight cluster plans is to address transportation planning, traffic operations, and related planning needs, and to identify recommended projects and policy changes to address those needs.

This program is intended to complement the comprehensive transportation plan (CTP) program and assist project sponsors by clearly defining goals, needs, and priorities for the study area. Freight Cluster Plans focus on facilitating efficient movement of freight, improving access to jobs, reducing traffic congestion, changes in the freight industry, and improving safety, mobility, and access for all roadway users.

The project recommendations from each plan will form the basis for future funding requests from local sponsors during the ARC [Transportation Improvement Program \(TIP\)](#) and [Metropolitan Transportation Plan \(MTP\)](#) update cycles, as well as future funding requests via GDOT, FHWA, and other sources. These plans, while focused on local issues and needs, also serve as the groundwork for regional planning efforts led by the Atlanta Regional Commission.

TRANSPORTATION PLANNING

- + Metropolitan Planning Organization
- + Metropolitan Transportation Plan
- + Transportation Improvement Program
- + Community Engagement
- + Bicycle & Pedestrian Planning
- + Community Transportation Programs
- + Electrification/Alternative Fuels
- × **Freight Planning**
 - Freight Transportation
 - Atlanta Regional Freight Mobility Plan
 - **Freight Cluster Plans**
 - Truck Parking
 - Freight Advisory Task Force
 - Atlanta Strategic Truck Route Master Plan (ASTRoMaP)
- + Modeling
- + Roadway Planning
- + Safety Planning
- + Technology
- + Transit Planning
- + Transportation Dashboards



Scan the Code to
access Standard
Scope & Resources

Thank You!

Erin Thoresen, AICP

Georgia Planning Dept. Leader

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