

# 1 INTRODUCTION AND GOALS OF DIRECT XPRESS

For the past several decades, Atlanta has maintained its position as one of the country's fastest growing cities largely in part to its culture, affordable cost of living, ample supply of good jobs, and a steadily growing economy. At the same time, this growth and expansion has come with significant traffic congestion and long commutes. Traffic-induced uncertainty and lost productivity are certainly contributing factors to why the Metropolitan Atlanta Chamber of Commerce once noted that traffic congestion was the "greatest threat to Atlanta's continued economic prosperity." For these reasons, the Georgia Regional Transportation Authority's (GRTA) *Xpress* services are a critical component to the region and should be seen as an efficient and indispensable tool for improving Atlanta's commutes and relieving congestion.

GRTA provides commuter transit and vanpool service in the Greater Atlanta area. *Xpress* commuter services operate throughout the region, focusing most of its service on destinations within the Atlanta urban core (see Figure 1-1).

*Xpress*'s positive organizational momentum, trajectory of growth, and continued economic expansion within the Atlanta region justify the need and importance of the Direct *Xpress* Comprehensive Operational Analysis (COA) to support both operational goals as well as providing a strategic foundation for the system's growth.

Direct *Xpress* is an 18-month, comprehensive analysis of the Georgia Regional Transportation Authority's (GRTA) *Xpress* regional commuter coach service. This study is designed to maximize the productivity and effectiveness of the service and increase ridership through improvements across all aspects of operations. Existing service was evaluated based on ridership, cost efficiency, system reliability, safety, capacity utilization, and key performance indicators to determine changes that would enhance the overall system. Direct *Xpress* also explored current and future market trends and commuting patterns to ensure the *Xpress* service is best positioned to meet the needs of metro Atlanta's commuters and businesses.

Figure 1-1 Existing GRTA Services



### Legend

- P North Corridor P&R
- P West Corridor P&R
- P East Corridor P&R
- P South Corridor P&R
- P Northeast Corridor P&R
- Cities
- MARTA Stations
- MARTA Rail
- Major Roads
- Expressways

0 5 10 Miles

[www.XpressGa.com](http://www.XpressGa.com)

For specific times and stop locations, please visit [www.XpressGa.com](http://www.XpressGa.com) or call 404-463-GRTA (4782).  
For the hearing impaired (TDD) 404-463-8351.

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Source: GRTA

## **WHY CHANGE?**

After assessing existing service for weaknesses and opportunities, GRTA weighed input from transit experts, local government leaders, transit partners, and area employers, as well as more than 9,000 comments from our riders. This information resulted in changes to every route in the system that will help make *Xpress* more valuable to more of the region's commuters.

## **GOALS OF DIRECT XPRESS**

### **More Reliable**

Improve the system and ensure *Xpress* is a commute service passengers can rely on. Improved routing will avoid congested intersections, tight turns, and excess traffic lights, helping *Xpress* buses move more reliably through the city.

### **More Flexible**

Add more options to meet the diverse needs of more commuters in the region. Longer service hours in every corridor will enable more flexibility for work hours. Additional frequency during peak hours will cut wait times between buses, sometimes by more than half.

### **More Intuitive**

*Xpress* can be confusing, especially for first-time riders. Making *Xpress* friendlier and easier to understand by simplifying routes and implementing more intuitive bus stop locations will help make *Xpress* easier to navigate. Improved signage, maps, and schedules, as well as a reorganized website and a new bus tracking app will help passengers get the information they need.

### **More Service**

*Xpress* is investing in the future and exploring long-term expansion plans and improvements. In 2016, *Xpress* will provide service to more destinations, more frequently, with extended service hours. Over the next decade, *Xpress* plans to add new routes, park-and-rides, and destinations, as well as all-day *Xpress* service and service to Hartsfield-Jackson Airport. Additional trips and park-and-ride facilities will leverage the future expansion of Georgia Express Lanes across the region.