U.S. Department of Transportation,
Federal Transit Administration

Georgia Department of Transportation

City of Albany, Georgia

Environmental Assessment
Pursuant to 23 CFR Part 771.119 and 771.121

Albany Multimodal Transportation Center, Dougherty County, Georgia

DRAFT – January 2018

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Acronyms List

ACS	American Community Survey
APE	Area of Potential Effect
ASTM	American Society for Testing and Materials
ATS	Albany Transit System
BG	Census Block Group
BMPs	Best Management Practice
CBD	Central Business District
CERCLA	Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act
CT	Census Tract
dBA	Decibels
DFIRM	Digital Flood Insurance Rate Map
EA	Environmental Assessment
EJ	Environmental Justice
ESA	Environmental Site Assessment
FEMA	Federal Emergency Management Agency
FIRM	Flood Insurance Rate Map
FONSI	Finding of No Significant Impact
FTA	Federal Transit Administration
GDNR	Georgia Department of Natural Resources
GDOT	Georgia Department of Transportation
GNAHRGIS	Georgia's Natural, Archaeological, and Historic Resource GIS
GNHP	GDNR Natural Heritage Program
GPR	Ground-Penetrating Radar
HHS	U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
IPaC	Information, Planning, and Consultation
Ldn	Day-Night Sound Level
Leq	Equivalent Sound Level
MOA	Memorandum of Agreement
MSAT	Mobile Source Air Toxics
MTC	Multimodal Transportation Center
NAAQS	National Ambient Air Quality Standards
NEPA	National Environmental Policy Act
NPDES	National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System
NRHP	National Register of Historic Places
NWI	National Wetlands Inventory
REC	Recognized Environmental Conditions
ROD	Record of Decision
SHPO	State Historic Preservation Officer
SIP	State Implementation Plan
SWGRDC	Southwest Georgia Regional Development Center
TDP	Transit Development Plan
USDOT	U.S. Department of Transportation
USEPA	U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
USFWS	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
UST	Underground Storage Tank

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The City of Albany, Georgia, with funding from the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) and the Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT), proposes to construct the Albany Multimodal Transportation Center (MTC) to consolidate and coordinate the operations of the Albany Transit System (ATS) operated by the City, as well as other public and private transit systems, including paratransit and intercity bus services. The proposed MTC would be constructed in the same general location as the current interim ATS transfer center, at 300 West Oglethorpe Boulevard, in downtown Albany, Dougherty County, Georgia. Because federal funds would be used in the construction of the proposed project, an Environmental Assessment (EA) is being prepared to fulfill the requirements of the *National Environmental Policy Act* (NEPA).

The proposed action involves the site preparation and construction of a multimodal transportation center. The proposed project would make the interim bus transfer location permanent. In addition to its functionality as the central transfer station for ATS buses, the facility would also house and support dispatch facilities and accommodate other potential uses, such as intercity bus, rural transit, taxis, private auto services, and typical transit oriented and transit-related commercial uses. It would also include a small computer lab to provide low-income students and adults with increased access to such technologies, which is an initiative for the City of Albany and the Dougherty County School System.

The site at 300 West Oglethorpe Boulevard, shown in **Figure 1-1,** was identified as the "Preferred Site" for the proposed MTC in site selection studies in 2005 and 2013. Selection criteria included providing adequate space for both the current and future multimodal center program, enabling safe and efficient operation of bus and passenger movements into and around the site, being convenient to local bus routes, having minimal impact on adjacent uses, and providing good pedestrian access. The Preferred Site has support from the public and business owners as evidenced in public meeting notes and support from local officials.

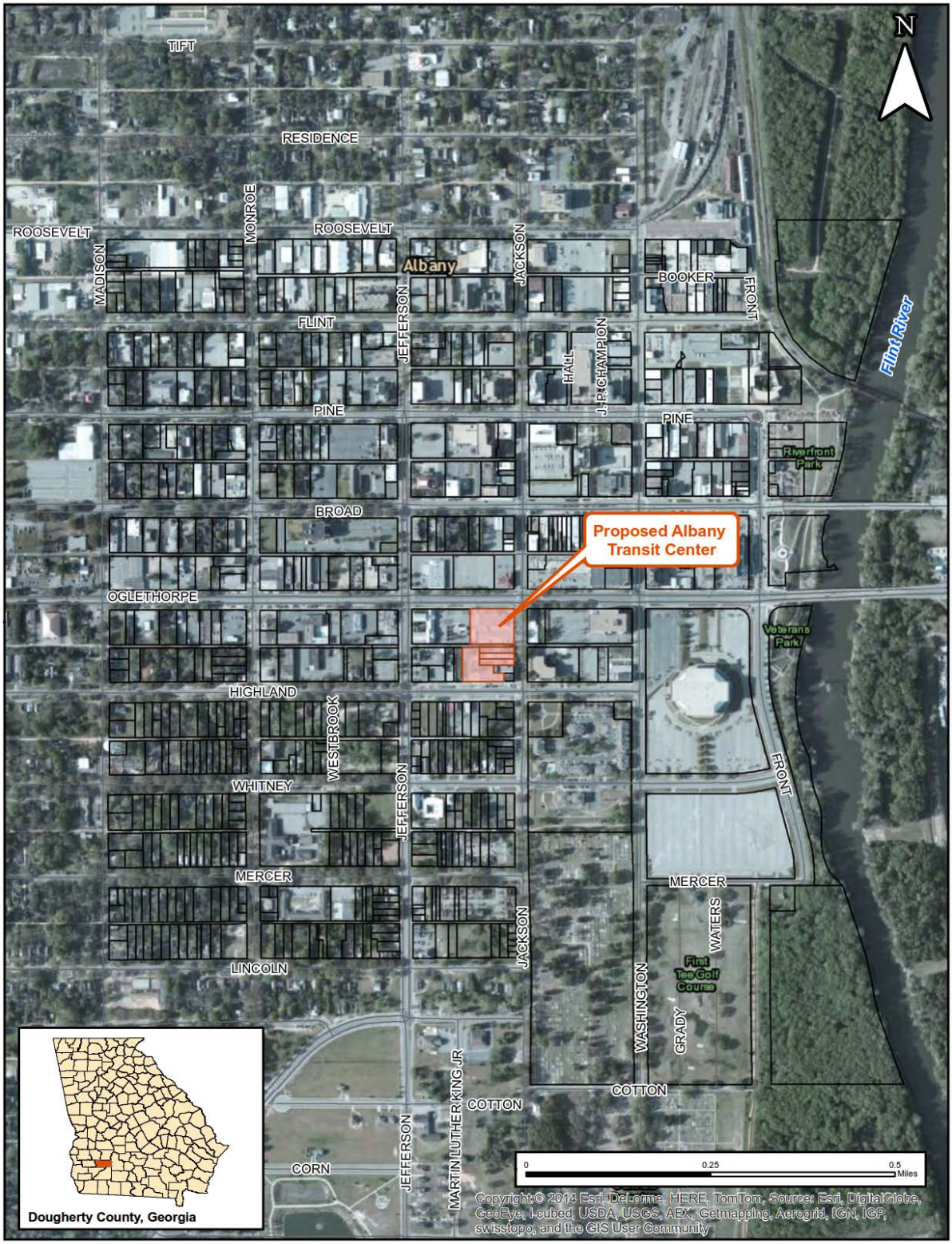
Key elements recommended for the MTC include the following uses:

- Transfer center facility for ATS
- Intercity bus facility
- Accommodations for taxis, shuttle buses and charter buses (drop off and waiting)
- Parking for transit vehicles, staff and passengers

FTA and GDOT have authorized preparation of this EA as part of the effort to develop the Albany MTC under consideration. The objectives of the proposed project include the following:

- Develop a permanent site for the bus transfer facility;
- Select a site with potential for long-term uses that could be combined at the site; and
- Select a site with traffic-flow characteristics that are consistent with or support a multimodal transportation center.

Figure 1-1: Project Location Map



Source: WSP | Parsons Brinckerhoff, 2017

2.0 NEED AND PURPOSE

This EA has been developed to fulfill the requirements of NEPA. The EA identifies and evaluates the potential environmental impacts associated with the proposed construction and operation of the Albany MTC which would provide a coordinated facility for public and private transit systems.

The FTA is the lead Federal agency for the EA, and GDOT and the City of Albany, Georgia are the joint lead agencies. The ATS will be the ultimate operator when the station is constructed.

This chapter introduces the project, discusses the environmental document being prepared, and the transportation problems that will be resolved by the proposed project.

2.1 Project Background

In the late 1990s the ATS transfer center was on Pine Street in the downtown area. The City and a non-profit group, Albany Tomorrow Inc. (now defunct), determined that the property on which the transit center was located would be incorporated into the proposed River Center complex (since opened as the Riverfront Park and Flint Riverquarium). The transfer center was sold in 2000 and the bus transfer operations were initially relocated to the Civic Center parking lot at 100 West Oglethorpe Boulevard until summer 2001 when the transfer operations were relocated to their current location at the Albany Transportation Center at 300 West Oglethorpe Avenue. The relocation from the Civic Center to the Albany Transportation Center was clearly identified as a "temporary location" until the City could determine a permanent location for the transfer station.

2.1.1 2001 Albany Multimodal Transportation Center Location Study

In spring 2001, ATS and the City initiated a location study to identify the permanent location of the ATS multimodal transportation center. The planning efforts and initial site screening processes were documented in the *Albany Multimodal Transportation Center Report* (Day Wilburn Associates, final report dated January 2002, on file with City of Albany). The current transfer center site was one of the four sites evaluated in that study. Sites A – D are described briefly below and shown on **Figure 2-1**.

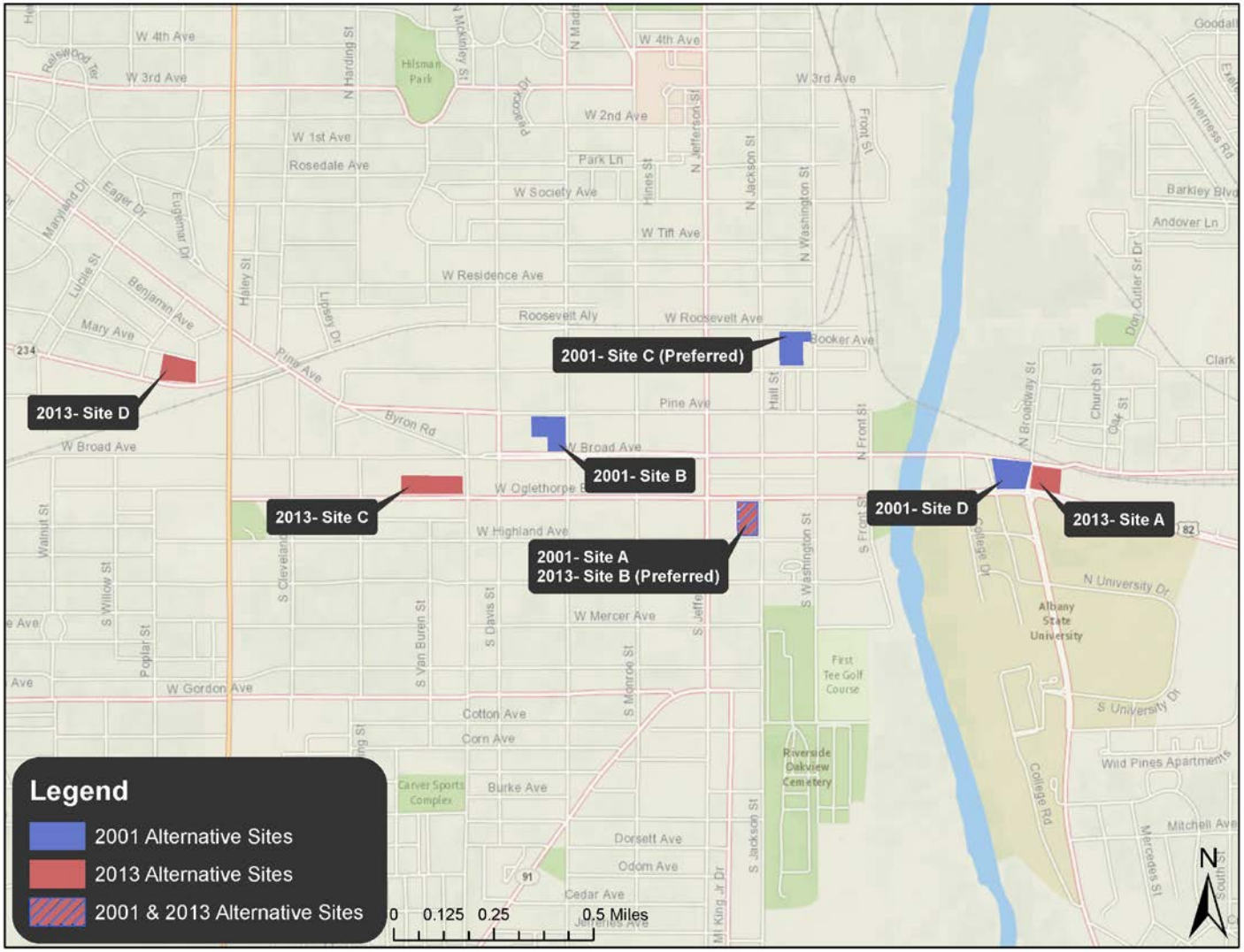
Site A: 301 West Oglethorpe Boulevard, southwest quadrant of West Oglethorpe Boulevard and Jackson Street; current site of the intercity terminal and the temporary ATS transfer center - approximately 2.28 acres.

Site B: Southwest quadrant of Pine Avenue and Madison Street - approximately 6 acres.

Site C: Government parking lot between Roosevelt Avenue and Flint Avenue - approximately 3.4 acres.

Site D: East Broad Street Shopping Center (now Shackleford Shopping Center) - approximately 3 acres.

Figure 2-1: Alternative Sites Considered, 2001-2013



Source: WSP, 2017.

Other sites were discarded because they either lacked proximity to downtown or access would be constrained from operational, cost or system expansion perspectives.

In November 2001, the City approved the selection of the government employee parking lot between Roosevelt Avenue and Flint Avenue (identified as Site C in the report). Key elements in support of this recommendation included:

- Size of the site (approximately 3.4 acres) accommodates both the current and future multimodal center facility program.
- Configuration of the site and surrounding street network is supportive of safe and efficient bus and rail operations.
- Proximity to existing rail lines in anticipation of future intercity rail service, which the State of Georgia was studying at that time.
- Minimum deviation and adjustments of local and regional bus routes is required to access the site.
- Fronts on both Roosevelt Avenue and Flint Avenue and provides good site accessibility.
- Limited ownership (government ownership) and no on-site business displacements facilitate acquisition.
- Minimal anticipated transit impact to adjacent uses, which are already highly complementary, transit-supportive developments.
- Good local pedestrian access by way of existing street and sidewalk networks.
- Opportunities can be provided for public-private partnerships.

The current ATS transfer facility at 300 West Oglethorpe Boulevard (Site A) was not selected as the preferred site in 2001 in part due to its less than optimum size and its remoteness from existing rail lines and a future intercity rail terminal.

Following the selection of the 2001 preferred site (Site C), the City prepared a plan to ensure that the multimodal facility was replaced in a timely fashion and to assess the long-term transit system goals related to the multimodal center, presented in the report, *Strategic Plan for the Albany Multimodal Transportation Center* (Day Wilburn Associates, February 2002, on file with the City of Albany).

2.1.2 Evaluations of the 2001 Preferred Alternative (Site C)

The 2001 preferred alternative, Site C, faced opposition from downtown stakeholders (including individuals and business groups). Some people were concerned that the proposed facility would not be compatible with the commercial and residential resurgence of the Sandy Bottom neighborhood. The Sandy Bottom Association suggested in April 2004 that the site would be better used by returning the parking lot to a commercial use in the redeveloping neighborhood, and that tying the location of the new transit center to a potential future intercity passenger rail terminal should not be a deciding factor because the realization of intercity rail service was far from happening. Also in April 2004, the Harlem Business District Association, representing the historically black commercial district that includes the area of the current terminal (Site A), presented the City with a petition signed by 32 business owners/managers who opposed Site C. This group felt

that moving the transit center to Site C, and away from the current bus transfer center (Site A), would have a negative impact on their businesses.

In response to the opposition to Site C from downtown stakeholders, the City communicated its concerns to GDOT regarding a potential change in the selected site. GDOT advised the City that considerable work had already been done on the selected site and the City was in danger of losing Federal transit funding if the development of the new transit center did not proceed expeditiously. GDOT also advised that a new alternative site selection study would have to be prepared to demonstrate why another site was preferred, but that a change in site should only be done as a last resort if there is a substantial reason to do so.

The City contracted with the Southwest Georgia Regional Development Commission (SWGRDC) to update the 2002 *Albany Multimodal Transportation Center Report* and prepare an objective evaluation of the four sites from 2001. In May 2005, SWGRDC recommended changing the selected site from Site C to the current transit center site (Site A), as shown in **Figure 2-1**.

Discussions with GDOT and FTA on the reevaluation identified potential financial penalties, additional costs to the city, and delays associated with a change in the preferred site from Site C to Site A. In April 2006, the City Commission adopted a resolution reaffirming the selection of Site C for the new multimodal transportation center.

In early 2008 the City and GDOT identified potential federal funding sources to advance the project development of the proposed multimodal transportation center on Site C. Because the project would involve federal funding, it was necessary to follow the NEPA process. The City and GDOT initiated the required NEPA evaluation for this project in spring 2008 and completed a draft EA for the project in October 2008. On May 28, 2009, FTA issued a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) for the project.

Four months later, on September 15, 2009, attorneys representing a property owner adjacent to the government parking lot site (Site C) sent a letter to U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT) identifying flaws in the NEPA process previously completed for the project. The attorneys maintained that the project did not follow the procedures of Section 106 of the *National Historic Preservation Act*, and that input from the public was not considered as part of the NEPA process. In addition, a letter from a local citizen was provided to FTA on September 29, 2009 that reiterated the concern that public comments had not been considered as part of the NEPA process.

Due to the procedural concerns and additional public comments on the previously approved EA/FONSI, FTA issued a retraction of the May 28, 2009 FONSI in a letter to GDOT dated October 21, 2009. The FTA letter noted that GDOT would be required to reevaluate the project and prepare a revised EA that must address the public comments on the original EA, and that the Section 106 process must be completed in accordance with 36 CFR Part 800 (related to Section 106). In addition, FTA's letter stated that the City must hold a public hearing on the revised EA before FTA would make a final decision on the project.

In 2010, the City, in conjunction with GDOT, initiated a new EA and environmental review process for the project on Site C that would be fully compliant with NEPA and respond to

the public concerns that had been raised previously. The City held two public hearings on the approved EA on March 17, 2011, and FTA issued a FONSI on September 11, 2011.

Following the issuance of the 2011 FONSI, the City proceeded to the design phase of the multimodal transportation center on Site C. However, business owners and other members of the community continued to press their concerns that the project on the government parking lot would adversely affect downtown special events and access to tourist attractions. In addition, those persons objecting to Site C expressed the concern that the proposed move of the transportation center from West Oglethorpe Avenue to Roosevelt Avenue would impose a burden on the low-income and minority communities who use the current transfer center on West Oglethorpe Boulevard.

2.1.3 2012-2013 Evaluation of Possible Replacement Sites

In response to the community's concerns and pressures regarding Site C, in 2012 the City initiated a review of four possible replacement sites (including the current transfer center site, two others along Oglethorpe Boulevard, and one on Gillionville Road. These sites are listed below and shown on **Figure 2-1**).

Site 2012-A - 301 East Oglethorpe Boulevard, northeast corner of US 82 Business (East Oglethorpe Boulevard) and North Broadway Street; approximately 2.58 acres.

Site 2012-B – 300 West Oglethorpe Boulevard at southwest quadrant of West Oglethorpe Boulevard and South Jackson Street, site of the intercity bus terminal and the temporary ATS transfer center (Site A in 2002 study); approximately 2.10 acres. (Note that an additional parcel of 0.18 acre fronting on Highland Avenue was subsequently added to the site.)

Site 2012-C – 732 West Oglethorpe Boulevard at southwest quadrant of West Oglethorpe Boulevard and South McKinley Street; approximately 3.36 acres.

Site 2012-D – 1121 Gillionville Road, in the block surrounded by Gillionville Road, William Jr. Street, Mary Avenue, and Eva Street; approximately 4.81 acres.

The City held a public meeting on February 12, 2013 to solicit comments on the site selection process. The City held a second public meeting on April 9, 2013, to seek additional input. The public input received during the comment period included a 740-signature petition to keep the current transit center location. During the two public meetings and comment periods, the City received overwhelming support to using the existing transit center site as the permanent multimodal facility.

After review of the public input, the City Commission determined in summer 2013 that the current location of the transfer facility center (Site 2013-B, and Site A in the 2001 feasibility study) is the preferred site location for the proposed multimodal transportation center. Among the reasons for the selection of this site are the following:

- Existing established transportation use are already on the site.
- The site is within local, state, and federal government centers.
- It will be an investment on streetscapes/community.

- The site has cultural value for the city and the Harlem community.

The current EA was initiated in spring 2014 to evaluate the potential impacts for the preferred site, which is the current location of the ATS transfer center at 301 West Oglethorpe Avenue.

2.2 Project Description

The proposed action involves the design, site preparation, and construction of a multimodal transportation center in the City of Albany, Dougherty County, Georgia. The proposed project would make permanent the existing bus transfer location at 300 West Oglethorpe Boulevard. In addition to its functionality as the central transfer station for ATS buses, the facility would house and support dispatch facilities and driver break area, and accommodate other potential uses, such as intercity bus, rural transit, taxis, private auto services, and typical transit-oriented and transit-related commercial uses. It would also offer a small computer lab that provides low-income students and adults increased access to such technologies, which is a greater initiative for the City of Albany and the Dougherty County School System.

Key elements for the multimodal transportation center include the following:

- Transfer center facility for ATS
- Intercity bus facility
- Accommodations for taxis, shuttle buses and charter buses (drop off and waiting)
- Parking for transit vehicles, staff and passengers

FTA and GDOT authorized preparation of this EA as part of its efforts to develop the Albany MTC under consideration. The objectives of the proposed project include the following:

- Develop a permanent site for the bus transfer facility;
- Select a site with potential for long-term uses that could be combined at the site; and
- Select a site with traffic-flow characteristics that are consistent with or support a multimodal transportation center.

2.3 Need and Purpose

2.3.1 Project Need

ATS manages the city-wide public transportation services including fixed route and reserved paratransit services throughout the City of Albany. ATS procures, operates and maintains vehicles; develops, manages and maintains facilities; develops, monitors and evaluates contracting opportunities; conducts route scheduling; and monitors operational performance and services for the transit system. Presently, ATS operates daily service Monday through Saturday on 10 established fixed routes as well as providing on-call reservation-based paratransit service. The current combined annual ridership for ATS is approximately 1,000,000 boarding passengers, providing service to more than 2,000 passengers on any given weekday. In its current configuration, ATS operates a hub-and-

spoke system with the hub of the operation being the Albany Transportation Center, at 300 West Oglethorpe Boulevard. A hub-and-spoke system is based on a centralized station or "hub" and the routes are the "spokes" that travel to and from this location.

ATS currently leases space within the building at the Albany Transportation Center, and shares the exterior operational and parking areas with intercity bus service. The current building and loading/unloading area serves as a central transfer facility within ATS's current system operations.

Three primary needs that have been identified as follows:

- *Need for a permanent transfer station site*

  The current operation is in a shared arrangement through a lease with a private entity at the Albany Transportation Center. Since relocating the ATS transfer site to this shared and leased site in 2001, the City's goal has been to use this to be an interim arrangement until such time that a permanent site for centralized ATS operations could be established.

- *Need to improve transfer station operational safety and efficiency*

  Under the current arrangement, private automobiles are permitted to access and drive through the bus parking/loading facility, which promotes vehicular conflicts with intercity buses, ATS vehicles and staff and private automobiles. The current arrangement does not provide safe and efficient access between the site and the street network; the existing site layout and circulation patterns mix buses, automobiles and pedestrians, thereby compromising safety and efficiency; the deficiencies associated with the existing site layout, loading and unloading areas, and site circulation do not minimize vehicular or pedestrian conflicts; the bus loading and unloading bays have sight distance limitations which impede bus backing and turning maneuvers. The above deficiencies at the current shared site compromise the ability of ATS to provide reliable and efficient transit service which is measured consistently by expectations of maintaining safety, headways and schedules.

- *Need to reduce transit system operational costs-*

  The deficiencies stated above, along with the leasing arrangement for the shared operation and occupation of the existing transfer site, have a direct consequence on the operational efficiency of the system.

In addition, city officials and the public have indicated a need for providing economic development and community gathering opportunities in the downtown area. The development of a new, multi-use, permanent and sustainable facility is anticipated to promote consistency between other transportation improvements and the planned growth of the community to act as a catalyst for economic development. The inherent nature of a transit center may also lend itself to a community gathering place and is expressed as a need from the public.

2.3.2 Project Purpose

The purpose of this project is to develop a fully accessible and non-discriminatory multimodal transportation center that can improve the operational capacity, efficiency, and safety of the transit services provided by the ATS and private transportation services.

The proposed multimodal transit center would improve serviceability and promote and enhance multi-modal transportation opportunities. This would be accomplished by better accommodating and coordinating existing transit operations and services on the current site, while at the same time providing the necessary site and building components to accommodate future service expansion and other modes. The consolidation and accessibility of the transit and transit-related services to a centrally located site within the City would increase capacity, community connectivity and efficiency for a diverse range of customers, modal operations and services.

3.0 Alternatives Consider in this EA

This section describes the No-Action Alternative and the preferred Build Alternative.

3.1 No-Build Alternative

The No-Build Alternative is defined as the existing transportation facility that serves the study area, plus any other committed transportation improvements independent of the project affecting the study area. In the NEPA process, the No-Build Alternative is used as a starting point to provide a comparison of all Build Alternatives in terms of costs, benefits, and impacts.

The No-Build Alternative includes the continued operation of the current ATS transfer center at the intercity bus station at 300 West Oglethorpe Boulevard, with no improvements or plans for a centralized multimodal transportation facility. Buses and private autos would continue to enter the site via South Jackson Drive, with no separation from pedestrian traffic.

This alternative is not a viable long-term option because the current facility is temporary in nature and is not owned by the City of Albany. In addition, it would not meet the project need and purpose, which is a fully accessible multimodal transportation center that can improve the operational capacity, efficiency and safety of the transit services provided by the ATS and private transportation services, while also providing community amenities and opportunities for economic development in and around the facility.

3.2 Build Alternative

The location of the Build Alternative is the half block bounded by US Routes 19/82 Business (State Routes (SR) 3 / 520, West Oglethorpe Boulevard) to the north, South Jackson Street to the east, and West Highland Avenue to the south (see **Figure 3-1)**. The site, approximately 3.0 acres in size, is in downtown Albany in a densely-developed commercial area and adjacent to residential areas to the south. SR 19 (South Jefferson Street) borders the block to the west.

Figure 3-1: Build Alternative Location

Source: WSP | Parsons Brinckerhoff, 2017

The northern portion of the site is currently occupied by the Albany Transportation Center, which houses the intercity bus terminal and is the interim ATS transfer station. The southeastern portion of the site is occupied by several vacant or underutilized commercial buildings. A small area of vacant, vegetated land is on the southwestern portion of the site. An east-west city alley divides the site. The site lies within the Harlem portion of downtown, the historically black commercial district and neighborhood, famous for its Civil Rights heritage.

Based on the findings of the 2013 feasibility input from the public and business community, as well as local officials, the City determined that the best site for the MTC is the current ATS transit station. The Build Alternative satisfies the criteria established in the selection process and meets the project need and purpose. A detailed description of the Build Alternative is provided in **Section 3.3**.

Key elements in support of this selection include:

- The site maintains ATS and intercity bus service on the current transit station.
- The site maintains the current routing of local and regional bus routes services.
- The size of the site (approximately 3.0 acres) accommodates both the current and future multimodal center facility program.
- The configuration of the site and surrounding street network is supportive of safe and efficient bus operations.
- The site fronts on West Oglethorpe Boulevard, West Highland Avenue, and South Jackson Street, and provides good site accessibility for bus and automobile traffic.
- There will be minimal anticipated transit impact to adjacent uses.
- The site provides good local pedestrian access by way of existing street and sidewalk networks.
- The site provides opportunities for public-private partnerships.

The site is close to major trip generators, including city and county offices. Development of the Albany MTC will be supportive of planned redevelopment in downtown Albany, particularly the *Albany Riverfront and Gateway Tax Allocation District Redevelopment Plan*, and would help to improve regional transit accessibility to private development projects throughout the downtown area, consistent with the goals of the tax allocation district.

3.3 Description of the Proposed Action

This section describes the proposed action based on the comparison and evaluation of alternatives provided in the previous section. The proposed action will be presented to the public and various agencies and to the decision-makers for their ultimate selection.

The proposed action involves the site preparation and construction of a multimodal transportation center in the City of Albany. The proposed project would make permanent the existing ATS bus transfer location. In addition to its functionality as the central transfer station for ATS buses, the facility also would house and support dispatch facilities, and accommodate other potential uses, such as intercity bus, rural transit, taxis, private auto

services, and typical transit-oriented and transit-related commercial uses, as well as small public computer lab.

The transportation center would include a one-story, approximately 10,330 square foot building in the northeastern corner of the site. The building would serve the day-to-day ATS operational needs, including ticketing and waiting areas where the main bus transfer operations would occur. Additionally, it would provide the daily operational needs of intercity bus service. More specific uses and square footages allotted for each area would be determined during the building plan development process.

The site would contain two bus bays for intercity bus operations, a covered pedestrian island and bus bays for 12 buses oriented north-south between West Oglethorpe Boulevard and Highland Avenue. Buses would enter/exit via West Oglethorpe Boulevard and Highland Avenue. A drive/parking area accessed from South Jackson Street would serve employee and center visitor parking, curbside drop-off and pick-up, taxi service, and off-street loading and service vehicles. Approximately 25 parking spaces would be provided on the site for center-related parking. In addition, up to 17 spaces would be provided for public parking. On-street parking would remain along South Jackson Street and Highland Avenue.

The proposed site would be developed to promote safe and efficient modal operations and circulation with a goal of minimizing the opportunities for conflicts between non-motorized and motorized modes of transportation. This includes striping, signage and crosswalks. Additional landscape and streetscape features are proposed to enhance safety and aesthetics.

The alley between Oglethorpe and West Highland Avenue would be closed at South Jackson Street; however, it would remain open west of the project site to Jefferson Street to permit neighboring parcels access.

The site layout and features and the exterior of the proposed building would be architecturally sensitive to the adjacent historic areas to ensure compatibility with the surrounding character. The building and site would be designed to minimize maintenance requirements as a further means of reducing system operational costs. **Figure 3-2** shows the approximate layout of the site including the location of proposed building.

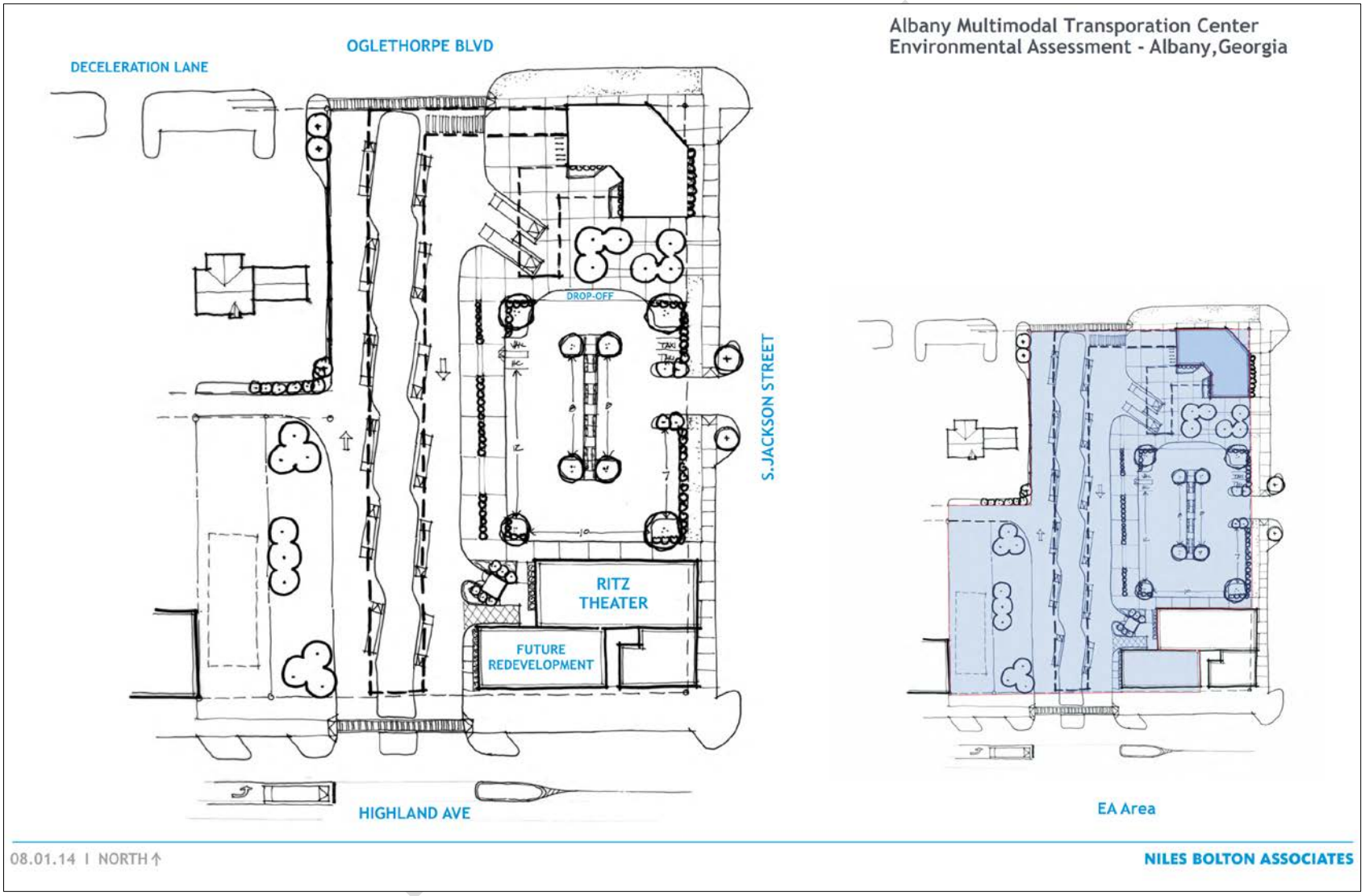
Appendix A includes a conceptual site plan, floor plan, and exterior renderings of the proposed building and transit features.

The following parcels would be incorporated into the proposed transportation center site:

- 300 West Oglethorpe Boulevard is privately owned and houses the intercity bus terminal and the interim ATS transit station. The site is 1.27 acres in size, consisting of a single-story masonry building (approximately 9,200 square feet) that serves the transit station operations with paved drives and parking lots surrounding the building. This property would be acquired and the building and parking pad razed for this project.
- Three adjacent parcels with address numbers 215, 219, and 221 South Jackson Street are all owned by the City of Albany. The combined parcel area is about 0.51 acre. These parcels include a single-story masonry building of approximately 8000 square feet in size that is currently vacant; the prior building use was as the Ritz Cultural Center. A paved loading area is in the rear of the building. The building and the paved areas would be razed for this project.

- 303 West Highland Avenue is privately owned and is currently vacant. The site is 0.81 acre in size. Two single-story masonry buildings are in the southeast portion of the site with a common, zero-lot-line wall between them, and their combined size is about 11,700 square feet. The western and northern portions of the site are vacant and unpaved with grasses and scattered trees. This property would be acquired and the buildings razed for this project.
- 313 West Highland Avenue is privately owned and is currently vacant. The site is 0.26 acre in size. A single-story masonry building on the site occupies approximately 2,900 square feet of the parcel. This property would be acquired and the building razed for this project.
- A 315-foot long portion of the public alley south of the 300 West Oglethorpe Boulevard property is owned by the City of Albany. The area to be incorporated into the project is 0.14 acre. The alley right-of-way has about 18 feet of pavement and utilities serving adjacent properties; the alley pavement would be removed for this project but the utilities will be left in place or re-routed as needed.

Figure 3-2: Site Concept Layout



4.0 AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT AND ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES

This chapter summarizes the existing human and natural environment for the No-Build Alternative and the Build Alternative. A detailed description of existing environmental conditions and the impacts of the project are provided. A description of the methodology, relevant laws, regulations, and guidelines used to assess impacts for each resource area are also included.

The Build Alternative is examined to determine the potential environmental impacts that may result from construction and operation of the proposed facility. The assessment of environmental conditions and impacts requires the consideration of direct, indirect and cumulative impacts. The terms "effect" and "impact" are often used interchangeably throughout this EA and current regulations and guidance suggest that these terms are interchangeable and are regarded as such by the federal agency or agencies charged with reviewing this Environmental Assessment document. The Council of Environmental Quality's *Regulations for Implementing the Procedural Provisions of the National Environmental Policy Act* (40 CFR §1500-1508) requires that not only direct impacts, but indirect and cumulative impacts also be evaluated. Direct, indirect, and cumulative effects can be defined as follows:

Direct effects are caused by, and coincide in time and place, with the action.

Indirect effects are caused by the action and are later in time, but are still reasonably foreseeable. Indirect effects may include growth inducing effects and other effects related to induced changes in the pattern of land use, population density or growth rate, and related effects on air and water and other natural systems, including ecosystems.

Cumulative effects are the impact on the environment which results from the incremental impact of the action when added to other past, present and reasonably foreseeable future actions regardless of what agency (Federal or non-Federal) or person undertakes such other actions.

The effects for the proposed project at the Build Alternative are presented in the subsections that follow. Indirect effects from the project are not anticipated to occur unless specifically presented. Additionally, when direct or indirect effects are not anticipated as a result of the proposed project, cumulative impacts are not expected and are, therefore, not discussed.

As described below, the Build Alternative would satisfy the need and purpose for the proposed project and would be consistent with current and long-range land use and zoning plans and economic development plans for the City of Albany. The Build Alternative would also enable the proposed project to be fully integrated with existing and proposed transportation networks in the City of Albany.

4.1 Land Use and Zoning

This section identifies the existing land uses and zoning, including applicable overlays, within and around the project site. It also discusses potential land acquisitions and displacements that would be needed for the Build Alternative.

4.1.1 Existing Conditions

The proposed site is zoned C-3 (Commercial District) and is within the southwest area of the City of Albany's Central Business District (CBD). C-3 zoning is specifically for developments along major arterials with higher vehicular use than other commercial districts, and for businesses that are regional in nature. The site is also at the northern portion of the designated Harlem Commercial Center, within the Albany Downtown Riverfront District and locally-designated historic district. The City developed the *Albany Downtown Riverfront Master Plan* in 1996 with one goal of promoting economic vitality; the proposed project site is within the southern boundary of the area addressed in the master plan.

The land use in the immediate vicinity of the proposed site consists of a few undeveloped lots and various commercial businesses, including banks, a restaurant, a barber shops, a hair salon, a taxi company, as well as several vacant buildings. The proposed site currently houses the Albany Transportation Center (serving as the intercity bus terminal and the ATS transfer station) as well as parking and associated site improvements, a vacant publicly-owned building, a vacant lot, a vacant commercial building, and part of a city alley.

4.1.2 Impacts

Direct Effects

The Build Alternative would replace the existing intercity bus terminal and interim ATS transfer facility with a new multimodal transportation center. Regarding land use and zoning, the evaluation of direct effects considers the project's immediate impact on and relationship with land uses in the surrounding area. The proposed project use is permitted and consistent with the current zoning.

The locally adopted plans propose that transportation facilities provide public and community benefits through improved access to existing amenities, improved regional mobility, and by supporting economic development in the CBD. The proposed project would be consistent with existing local and regional zoning, land use, economic development, and capital improvement plans that apply to the project site and surrounding area. The development of the proposed project site must comply with Riverfront District development guidelines. The proposed Albany MTC would also be consistent with the ATS *Transit Development Plan (*RSH, June 1, 2015, on file with the City of Albany).

Evaluation of land use and zoning considers existing and future land uses in the project area and their relationship to the Build Alternative. This evaluation considers whether that relationship is consistent with adopted local and regional plans. The Build Alternative would be consistent with existing local and regional land use, zoning, capital improvement/infrastructure and economic development plans applicable to the project area. The proposed Albany MTC would also be consistent with these plans through their support of mixed-use development and transit oriented development as outlined in the *Redevelopment Plan for the Albany Riverfront and the Gateway Tax Allocation District* (on file with the City of Albany). Furthermore, many of these plans suggest transportation center facilities would provide public and community benefits such as improving access to existing amenities, improving regional mobility, and fostering economic development in the CBD.

Indirect Effects

The evaluation of indirect effects of land use and zoning considers both the project's impact and related actions' impact on existing land uses in the surrounding area. This proposed project would result in indirect impacts to land use. Impacts would include the support and encouragement of the development and growth of adjacent businesses and the development of nearby vacant structures and properties. This type of mixed-use commercial development is anticipated and promoted in the City's current growth strategies for the downtown area and are identified and supported in applicable local and regional planning documents that apply to the project area.

Cumulative Effects

Regarding land use and zoning, the evaluation of the cumulative effects considers past actions, present project actions, reasonably foreseeable future actions, and related actions linked to the proposed project. Reasonably foreseeable transportation impacts and projects are generally listed in in adopted capital improvement programs or long-range transportation plans, while foreseeable community developments are described in local and regional planning documents. Based upon review of local, state, and federal planning documents applicable to the proposed project area, the planned or reasonably foreseeable future projects, including future mixed-use development in the downtown, would mitigate this project's potential impact to adjacent lands.

Since the proposed project replaces and expands an existing bus facility that has similar functions, the reasonably foreseeable impact would result in only minor environmental changes whether the proposed project is completed or not. The growth generated in this urbanized area with its likely moderate development would create the need for associated transportation and community improvements in intersection operations, vehicle parking, and pedestrian sidewalks/crosswalks. Since this growth is planned for and addressed in local and regional plans, it is not considered a negative environmental consequence of the proposed project at the proposed project site.

Because the project would have only minor direct and indirect effects to land use, the incremental impact of this project to land use is expected to be minor.

4.2 Farmland

Existing Conditions

The Build Alternative is in the downtown area of Albany and has been developed with residential and commercial structures since the early 1930s. The project area does not contain farmland that is prime, unique or of other local or state importance, and thus the project is not subject to the provision of the *Farmland Protection Policy Act.*

Impacts

Since there are no prime, unique or other protected farmlands on or adjacent to the proposed site, no effects (direct, indirect or cumulative) would occur from the proposed project.

4.3 Parking, Traffic and Transit Service

This section describes the existing conditions as they relate to parking, traffic conditions, and bus and paratransit services. It also analyzes how these conditions change because of the Build Alternative.

Based on the revised location for the Build Alternative, an analysis and subsequent technical memorandum was prepared in August 2014 (*Traffic Operations and Parking Technical Memorandum*, included in **Appendix B**) and is summarized in the following section. The discussion below is also informed by the June 2015 *Albany Transit System Transit Development Plan 2015-2020.* The analysis focuses on traffic operations and parking conditions for the study area to determine the feasibility and impact of the proposed MTC. The analysis, conducted in accordance with guidance from FTA, includes:

- Documentation of traffic data collection in the study area;
- Traffic forecasts based on the data that project traffic volumes and patterns to the base year of the analysis; and
- A trip generation analysis of the proposed transit center based on its projected uses and volume.

4.3.1 Existing Conditions

Parking

Construction of the proposed MTC would take place at 300 West Oglethorpe Boulevard, where the existing ATS operations occur as well as intercity bus services. An existing surface lot within the Albany Transportation Center property provides approximately 16 spaces. In addition, there are approximately 13 spaces that border the facility along South Jackson Street.

Traffic

Traffic data was collected for the roadways in the study area prior to the traffic forecasting and traffic operations analysis. This data includes 24-hour bidirectional counts from GDOT and the City, intersection turning movement counts, and at the four intersections surrounding the project site. Using the historical and existing data collected, a traffic forecast was conducted relative to the base year, defined by the FTA as one year following the proposed completion date of a transit improvement project. For the proposed transit center, the base year is assumed to be 2020. The collected traffic data was adjusted to this year by applying factors based on when and how the data was collected and forecasting it to the base year using a developed growth rate.

In addition to forecasting, a trip generation analysis was performed. This is necessary for the overall traffic analysis to determine the changes in traffic volumes and patterns that would be generated by the proposed transit center.

To determine the changes in traffic volumes and patterns that would be generated by the proposed transit center, the uses of the transit center were analyzed to determine the number and direction of trips (defined as a one-way vehicle movement from an origin to a destination) that occur, in part, within the study area. This included ATS bus service as well as paratransit and private transit operations. In addition, the changes in existing

transit route patterns and changes for employees and passengers accessing on-site parking or drop-off areas were also included in to the trip generation analysis.

Transit Service

As previously stated, the ATS currently operates in a fixed-route hub and spoke system. The fixed routing means that the same buses run on consistent daily schedules that have been established and posted. The hub and spoke system is a means of operations whereby the individual transit routes extend (like spokes on a wheel) from a central point (the hub) to provide service throughout the service area. The "hub" of the transit system is currently the existing transfer station at 300 West Oglethorpe Boulevard and the "spokes" extend along the primary thoroughfares throughout the City of Albany (see **Figure 4-1**).

Albany Transit currently operates ten bus routes within the City of Albany and Dougherty County, providing coverage to major activity centers throughout the City, including several routes serving the downtown area. All 10 of the bus routes operate on a scheduled fixed-route system six days per week. Although each route has a different schedule, the typical hours of bus service are between the hours of 5 AM and 8:30 PM Monday to Friday and on Saturdays between 6 AM and 8:30 PM. Each route or pair operates at either 30-minute or 60-minute frequencies, with between 13 and 16 daily runs, except for Route 6 Green, which operates every 30 minutes, with 30 daily runs. Typical idle times for the bus to complete a passenger transfer cycle (the time from when the bus stops at the transfer station to the time that the bus departs) range from zero minutes to 10 minutes. The bus schedules and headways are consistent throughout the daily schedule with no adjustments for peak hours.

4.3.2 Impacts

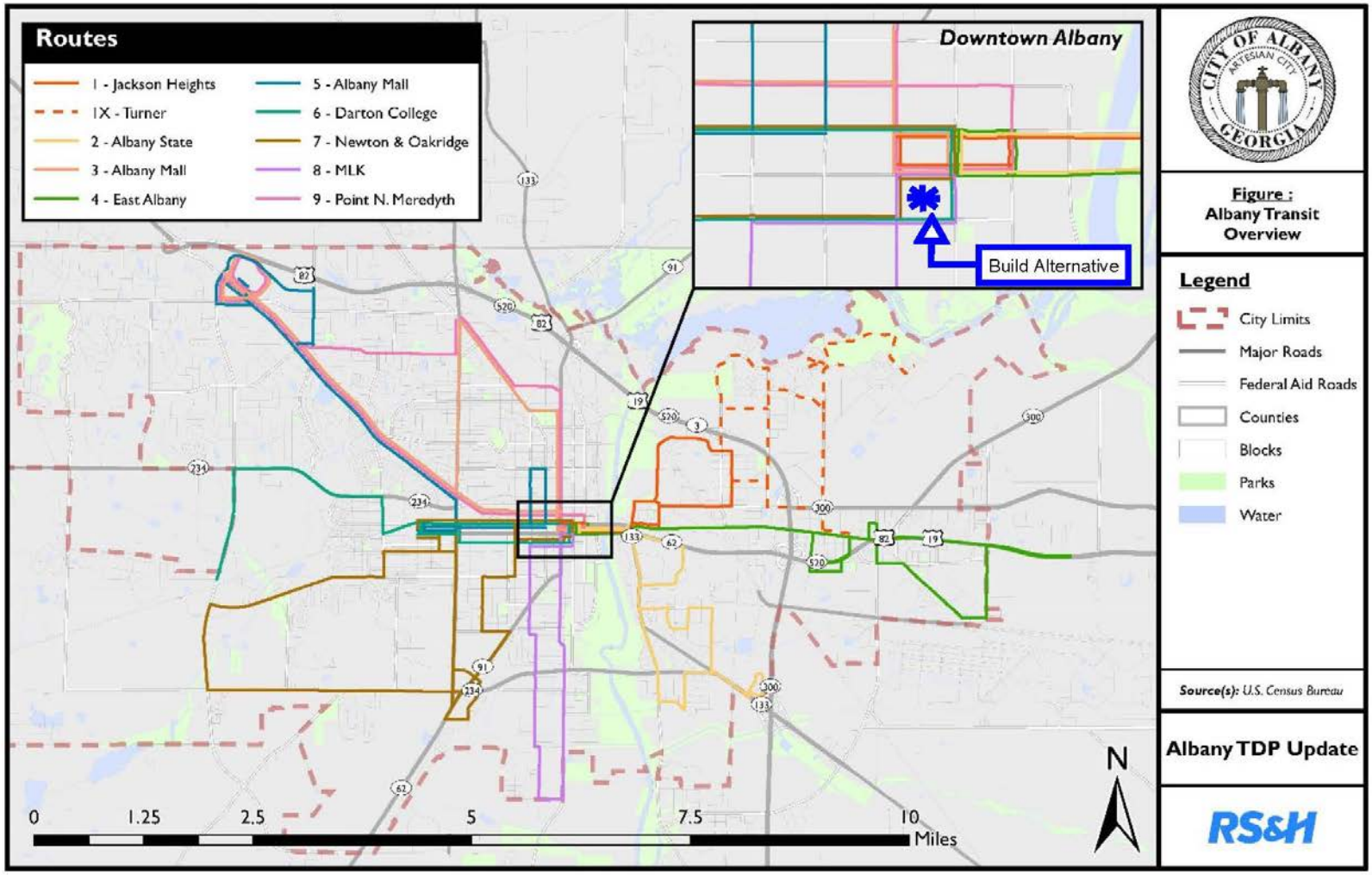
Direct Effects

Parking

Based on FTA criteria, this project was excluded from performing a standalone parking analysis. An analysis was not warranted because it eliminates about 12 on-street parking spaces and provides replacement parking through new parking facilities as part of the proposed facility. The replacement parking is estimated at 56 spaces, which would increase the amount currently available.

In addition, the City of Albany operates two parking decks in Central Square that have a combined availability of approximately 500 spaces. The parking decks are provided at no cost to users and are in proximity and accessibility to the project site and central destinations in Albany's CBD. Based upon occupancy information presented in other studies recognized by the City of Albany, the average occupancy rate of the Central Square parking decks is between 50 percent and 60 percent; therefore, the average vacancy rate is between 40 percent and 50 percent. At a conservative 40 percent vacancy rate, the parking decks at Central Square have an available parking surplus (absorption allowance) of approximately 200 spaces. These readily available and accessible parking spaces would supplement the proposed on-site parking spaces at the MTC facility.

Figure 4-1: ATS Bus Routes with Service Areas



Source: *Albany Transit System Transit Development Plan (TDP) 2015-2020*, June 1, 2015.

Because the proposed project would provide a net increase in parking for on-site activities and that a surplus of parking is available at two nearby parking decks, the parking impacts created by the proposed transit center would be minor.

No indirect or cumulative impacts related to parking are anticipated.

Traffic

To measure the impact of a proposed transit improvement project on traffic operations in an area and to identify possible mitigation measures for that impact, the FTA recommends a detailed traffic analysis for projects in which projected traffic volumes for their respective base years exceed 600 vehicles per lane per hour for principal arterial roadways or 500 vehicles per lane per hour for minor arterial or collector roadways.

Based on the traffic data forecasts and trip generation analysis detailed above, the traffic volume projections suggest that no traffic volumes on roadways within the study area would exceed 600 vehicles per lane per hour for principal arterial roadways or 500 vehicles per lane per hour for minor arterial or collector roadways. As such, the traffic impacts created by the proposed transit center are generally not significant and a more detailed traffic analysis is unnecessary.

No indirect or cumulative impacts related to traffic are anticipated.

Transit Service

The proposed project would allow the transfer station to remain at its current location. Based on the proposed MTC site layout, ATS would need to make only minor adjustments to the schedules and routes. No formalized re-routing or rescheduling plans have been prepared or evaluated. The new circulation routes will make use of South Oglethorpe Boulevard and Highland Avenue for ingress and egress. Because both entry and exit points are off two-way streets, the multimodal facility and transit specific routing and circulation plans would be developed to use the existing surrounding street network with minimal alteration to the overall “hub and spoke” system. Given the adequacy of a well-defined street network grid system accessing the proposed site, the overall operations and serviceability of the system would not be affected.

The proposed development of the multimodal transportation facility that would support those operations would not change the City of Albany’s transit market, nor should it result in or require new route selections or designations to serve the existing or anticipated customer base. It is the goal of ATS to integrate the proposed multimodal transportation facility into the operational logistics plan with minimal changes in bus timing, routing and mileage. Therefore, the development of the proposed project would not have a consequential negative impact on existing or new customers, transit operations or the existing roadway network in the project area.

The indirect effect of the project would likely be positive in terms of the user’s experience at the transit center, which in turn may attract new riders to the system. No cumulative impacts are anticipated.

4.4 Cultural Resources

This section identifies and assesses potential effects to cultural resources resulting from the project. Cultural resources include historic and prehistoric archaeological sites as well

as historic districts, structures, cultural landscapes, and objects listed in or potentially eligible for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP). It also identifies and discusses impacts to locally-designated historic districts and sites.

In compliance with Section 106 of the *National Historic Preservation Act of 1966* and amendments thereto, the proposed project has been surveyed for historic architectural and archaeological resources, especially those on or eligible for inclusion in the NRHP. The purpose of the surveys was to locate, identify and evaluate the significance of any historic architectural and archaeological resources within the Area of Potential Effect (APE) for the project. The project's APE for archaeology encompassed the boundaries of the project site, while the APE for historic architectural resources included the project site and its viewshed (see **Figure 4-2**).

The survey boundary and methodology were established using the GDOT Cultural Resource Survey Guidelines. These guidelines were established based on past interaction with the Georgia State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) and his staff and were agreed upon by GDOT and the Georgia SHPO, and by FTA.

Detailed investigations of cultural resources are contained in the Historic Resources Survey report (July 10, 2017), Archaeological Survey and Evaluation report (March 6, 2017), and Assessment of Effects Report for the Proposed Albany Multimodal Transportation Center (November 17, 2017), included in **Appendices C**, **D**, and **E**, respectively. The findings of these reports are summarized in the following sections.

4.4.1 Historic Resources

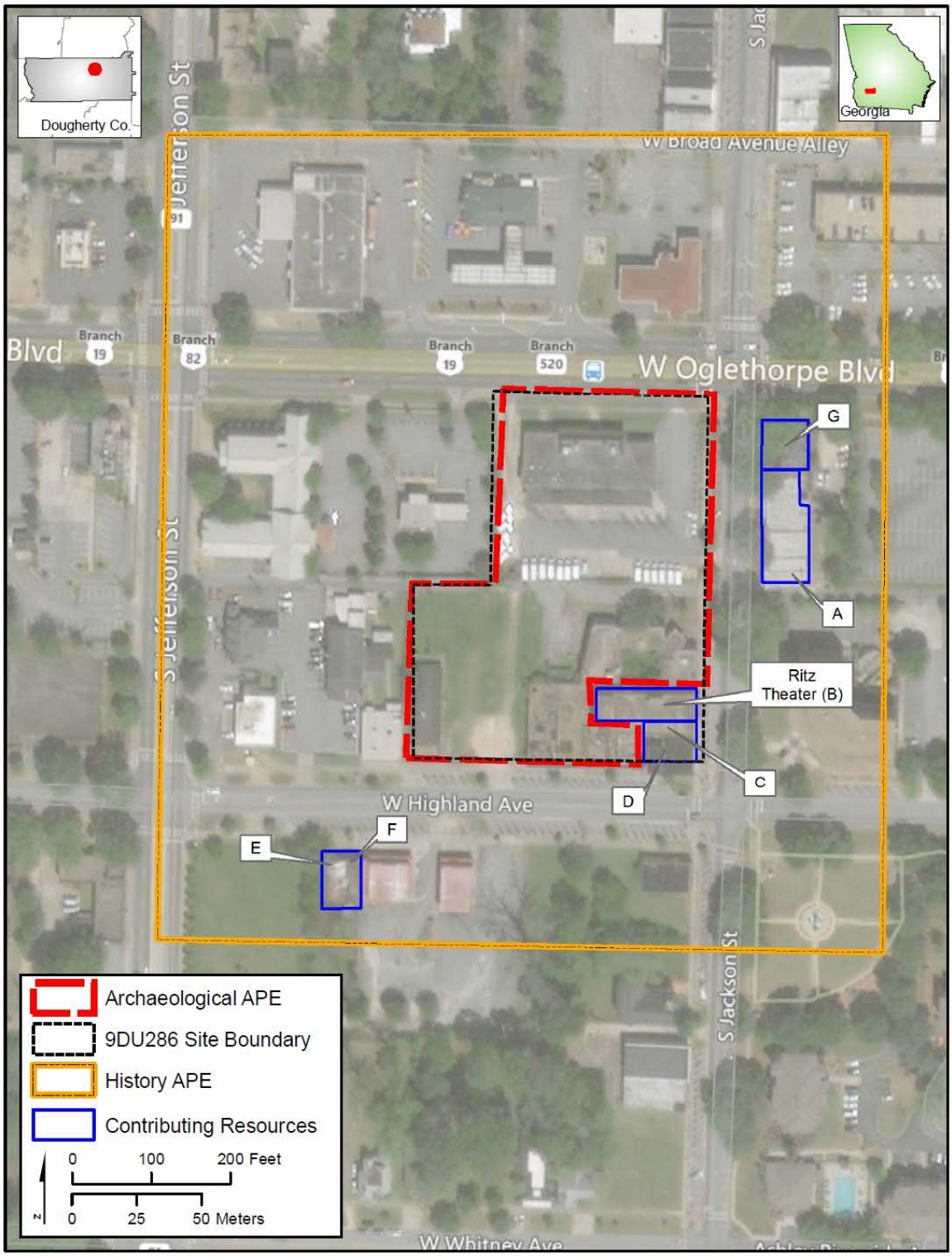
The APE for historic resources was identified as the project site and areas in its viewshed, consisting of locations from which the project site could be seen. In practice, the viewshed consists of an area measuring roughly 300 feet in all directions from the project site margins and encompassing about half of a city block (see **Figure 4-2**).

The architectural historian conducted surveys of the project area along West Oglethorpe Boulevard, South Jackson Street, West Highland Avenue, and South Jefferson Street in 2014 and again in 2016. Previously recorded resources were inspected to note any alterations or additions since the last survey. Any undocumented buildings, structures, or cemeteries greater than 50 years of age within the APE were digitally photographed and a physical description recorded. All identified resources were then evaluated for their eligibility for nomination to the NRHP.

Existing Conditions

The project area lies in the southern portion of the NRHP-eligible Albany Freedom Historic District, which was previously defined during a 2009 historic resources survey. The district's boundary, covering 1.7 square miles, is based on the locally designated Albany Downtown Historic District and was recommended eligible to the NRHP for Section 106 review. The Georgia SHPO concurred with this finding in a letter dated December 14, 2009.

Figure 4-2: Cultural Resources



Source: New South Associates, 2017, Bing Hybrid Maps.

The Albany Freedom Historic District is a large, diverse district centered in the heart of the commercial and governmental core of the City of Albany, west of the Flint River. The

district consists of areas of historic residential, commercial, industrial, and institutional properties and includes the principal landmark buildings in the heart of the City of Albany.

The residential and commercial properties within the district represent a variety of vernacular building types, as well as high style examples. The residential and commercial properties vary from one to three stories in height. Most of the residential properties are of frame construction and the commercial properties are primarily of brick construction, Residential house types include the Georgian Cottage, Front-Gabled Bungalow, Georgian House, Queen Anne House, and Minimal Traditional. Residential house styles include Folk Victorian, Queen Anne, Craftsman, Second Empire, and Colonial Revival. The district also contains widely scattered, two-story, multi-family residential buildings and one- and two-story commercial buildings. These latter building types are primarily of brick or concrete block construction with flat roofs. Live oak trees line the streets in the district and create a canopy over the streets and sidewalks.

The eligible NRHP boundary is a visual boundary and includes approximately 1,083 acres (1.7 square miles). All significant and character-defining features of the property are included within the legal boundary.

The Albany Freedom Historic District was evaluated under Criteria A, B, and C and appears to possess a local level of significance in the areas of architecture, commerce, community planning and development, entertainment/recreation, government, social history and transportation, and a state and national level of significance in the areas of ethnic heritage: black and social history. Criterion D and eligibility for archaeological research potential were not listed in the Albany Freedom Historic District's eligibility determination.

Within the historic resources' APE, seven contributing resources to the district were identified, all of which had been previously recorded. These resources are listed in **Table 4-1**, along with their location and a brief description.

The project is in Albany's Harlem neighborhood, an area recognized as the commercial and entertainment district for African Americans. Harlem is situated south of Oglethorpe Avenue, stretching down Jackson Street to Whitney Avenue and east to Washington Street. Considered a downtown for the African American community, grocery stores, barber shops, restaurants, and night clubs lined the streets, especially along Whitney Avenue, which purportedly had clubs "on both sides" (Lawson 2003). With clubs, a theater, and retail shops, Harlem was a draw for African Americans living in town and in the country. By the late 1970s, Harlem was in decline, as most of the commercial buildings and clubs were vacant. Most of Harlem's businesses have been torn down and replaced by an apartment complex, the Albany Civic Center, and a government complex.

The Ritz Theater opened in 1930 in the Harlem neighborhood. The theater served as an important aspect of African American social life, showing movies and hosting live entertainment. The theater also produced plays written by local playwrights. The Ritz Theater closed in the late 1960s or early 1970s, and underwent renovations in the late 1980s. Modern commercial windows and doors were installed over the original entrances and windows on the first story, while double hung sash windows were replaced on the second story. A large, one-story masonry addition was constructed on the north elevation. In 1991, the building re-opened as the Ritz Theater Cultural Center and once again hosted live performances, as well as workshops and seminars.

This resource was documented during the Albany Downtown Historic District survey, completed in 2006. The building was also considered a contributing resource during the SHPO's evaluation of the Albany Downtown Historic District. The building exhibits a plaque stating it is listed on the NRHP; however, background research and an inquiry to the SHPO found that it is not currently listed.

Table 4-1: Contributing Resources to the Albany Freedom Historic District

Resource Number (GNAHRGIS #)	Name	Location	Brief Description
205053	Al's Barber Shop/ Rainbow Records/ Jimmie's Hot Dogs	202-210 S. Jackson Street	1930 Circa 1945 one-part commercial block building with multiple storefronts
205054	Ritz Theater	225 S. Jackson Street	Classical Revival style theater constructed in 1928
205055	Harlem Cab/ Bess Restaurant	227-229 S. Jackson Street	Two-part commercial block building constructed in 1928
205056	Chatmon Building	231 S. Jackson Street	Circa 1920 two-part commercial block building
215609	Unknown	318 Highland Avenue	Circa 1920 Bungalow
215610	Unknown	318A Highland Avenue	Circa 1940 two-part commercial block building
215613	Unknown	220 W. Oglethorpe Avenue	Circa 1920 Colonial Revival-style residence

Source: New South Associates, Assessment of Effects Report for the Proposed Albany Multimodal Transportation Center, November 2017

The Ritz Theater was evaluated under Criterion A: *Event* to assess its local significance in the areas of recreation and culture. The theater was constructed shortly after the Albany Theatre, which was segregated. Located two blocks south of the Albany Theatre, the Ritz Theater had about half the seating capacity, but catered to the African American community and culture through live musical performances, as well as producing plays written by local African American playwrights. The Ritz Theater was Albany's primary venue for African American culture, music, performance, and entertainment. Therefore, the Ritz Theater is recommended eligible for inclusion on the NRHP under Criterion A.

The Ritz Theater was also evaluated under Criterion C: *Design and Construction*. While the form and design of the building is recognizable as a small, early twentieth-century theater, the large modern addition and alterations to the front façade have diminished the building's integrity of design, materials, and workmanship. Therefore, the Ritz Theater is not recommended eligible for the NRHP under Criterion C.

Effects

The project's impacts to the Albany Freedom Historic District are summarized below. The results are documented in the *Assessment of Effects Report for the Proposed Albany Multimodal Transportation Center* (November 2017), in **Appendix E.**

The project would not directly impact the 220 West Oglethorpe Avenue residential property. No indirect impacts are anticipated since the resource's setting has been altered by previous development.

Project implementation would result in the demolition of three buildings within the historic district; however, this effect would not be considered adverse. Three buildings within the APE would be demolished during project implementation: the current bus station (1968), a one-story commercial building (circa 1945) facing Highland Avenue, and a non-historic one-story addition (circa 1985) constructed onto the north elevation of the eligible Ritz Theater. Demolishing the current bus station and the one-story commercial building would not adversely affect the district, as neither building is a contributing resource to the district and the setting surrounding the project area has changed from a mix of medium-density, small-scale commercial and residential buildings to a primarily automobile-oriented, late twentieth-century to early twenty-first-century commercial and institutional setting.

Demolition of the non-historic addition to the Ritz Theater would require removal from the north elevation of the theater and reconstruction of sections of the exterior wall where doorway openings were cut to create egress between the theater and the addition. Demolition of the non-historic addition and the reconstruction of portions of the theater's exterior wall would be executed per the *Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation* (36 CFR Part 67) and applicable guidelines. Since the repair to the theater's northern wall would be consistent with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards, the removal of the non-historic addition would not be considered an adverse effect to the theater or the district.

The proposed project would not indirectly impact the setting of the Ritz Theater because the setting has already been altered by modern development.

To ensure these standards are met, the SHPO requires an opportunity to review and comment on preliminary constructions plans prior to proceeding with the removal of the non-historic addition. Additionally, all involved agencies and the demolition contractor will need to reach agreement on required monitoring during demolition as well as a work procedure document detailing the demolition process and best practices, such as the best method for the removal of concrete block from a historic building. Stipulations regarding the review and oversight before, during, and upon completion of the demolition and reconstruction process will be outlined in a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) to be executed by the Georgia SHPO, FTA, GDOT, and the City of Albany.

The SHPO concurred with FTA's finding of No Adverse Effect in a letter dated XX XX, 2018. The MOA will be executed prior to the issuance of a FONSI or a Record of Decision (ROD).

4.4.2 Archaeological Resources

Literature Review

Cultural resource specialists conducted background research to obtain information for developing historic contexts of the study area, which are necessary to interpret and evaluate any cultural resources found in the project site. The specialists consulted Georgia's Natural, Archaeological, and Historic Resource GIS (GNAHRGIS) database to identify previously recorded historic resources and those listed on, or eligible for listing on, the NRHP within the APE. Historic maps and aerial photographs were reviewed to

identify areas that could potentially contain historic resources and to develop a general understanding of the development of the area over time. The specialists also reviewed secondary sources discussing the history of Albany.

The review of the GNAHRGIS files found that no sites within the project's APE for archaeology have been previously recorded. Eleven previous archaeological surveys had been conducted within 1.0 kilometers (0.6 mile) of the site along the Flint River and in upland settings overlooking the river valley. Pre-contact components (prior to European settlement) were identified at 10 of those sites, while seven sites contained historic components (since initial European settlement). These prior surveys and evaluation studies indicate that despite urban development, archaeological deposits remain in Albany.

Background research indicated the project site was occupied by at least the 1880s and included mixed residential, commercial, and light industrial land use. Dwellings occupied the southwestern portion of the APE while the northeastern portion contained a cotton warehouse that was later converted for other commercial and industrial uses. The warehouse and dwellings remained here until the mid-twentieth century. In addition, the project vicinity was among Albany's African American neighborhoods by the early 1900s and contained both dwellings and African American-owned businesses. While no prior archaeological sites were identified within the APE, historic maps indicated a high potential for historic archaeological resources associated with commercial and residential activities in the APE.

Archaeological Survey and Assessment

Archaeological investigations for this study included a reconnaissance survey and, where conditions permitted, shovel testing. This was followed by a ground-penetrating radar (GPR) survey of the entire APE and test unit excavations.

The Phase 1 archaeological field survey occurred in May 2014, consisting of a pedestrian reconnaissance of the site, followed by limited shovel testing. Approximately 70 percent of the APE is occupied by buildings and hard paved (asphalt or cement slab) surfaces, which could not be surveyed. A vacant and unpaved lot in the southwestern portion of the APE, along Highland Avenue, was the only area that could be examined by hand excavations.

The shovel testing and inspection of the unpaved vacant lot indicated mixed historic and modern deposits that probably represent past residential activities, demolition, and post-occupation activities. Historic maps indicated dwellings in this location during the late nineteenth century and as late as the middle twentieth century, but the archaeological results did not provide clear evidence of historic surfaces or cultural features. Although some architectural and domestic artifacts probably reflected the site's historic occupation, they could not be clearly discerned from materials discarded at the site after its historic occupation because of overlapping dates and mixed depositional contexts. Nevertheless, no evidence was found to conclusively indicate that post-occupation activities had impacted deeply buried levels; thus, cultural features such as wells and privies could remain.

The assessment resulted in the identification of a historic site, 9DU286, which was potentially eligible for the NRHP under Criterion D for the information it contains on Albany's African American history and community, as well as for its potential to contain

information on earlier historic occupations, industrial occupations, other ethnicities, and potentially pre-contact occupations. See **Figure 4-2** for the proposed site boundary.

To better assess the archaeological potential of Site 9DU286, cultural resource specialists conducted a GPR survey of paved and unpaved locations in February and March 2016. This GPR survey indicated the presence of structural remains and other potential features in all parts of the site. It also found a high potential for buried cultural features associated with the historic warehouse at the location of the present-day bus terminal.

The GPR survey findings supported the determination of eligibility for the site and suggested that additional areas may have significant intact resources. The boundaries of Site 9DU286 were extended to include the area under the current day bus terminal. The larger site has significant information potential and good physical integrity and is potentially eligible under Criterion D for its potential to contribute to research about Albany's history.

The shovel testing and GPR survey did not provide sufficient data for making a definitive recommendation concerning the site's archaeological significance. Consequently, GDOT required the excavation of test units to ground-truth potential archaeological features, and more fully assess the site's content and integrity. The test unit excavations focused on investigating GPR anomalies and assessing conditions in the southwestern portion of the site, which had consisted of a series of houses. Although no data-rich features were identified, modern disturbance appears minimal and limited in depth. Therefore, there is a high potential that features with significant data potential are present, particularly along historic property boundaries. The test units also revealed the presence of a pre-contact component that had minimal artifacts deposits and had probably been disturbed by historic and modern land use. Because the artifacts recovered provided no information on chronology or function, the pre-contact component was judged to have low research potential and was determined not be contributing to the potential archaeological significance of the site.

In summary, Site 9DU286 has been determined to be NRHP-eligible under Criterion D for its archaeological research potential. The site is located within the boundaries of the NRHP-eligible Albany Freedom Historic District and based on historic research, the site is associated with Albany's African American community. The site could yield important information on aspects of urban residential life and industrial/workplace activities of this community. As discussed in *Historical Archaeology in Georgia* (Joseph et al. 2004:147), a focus of urban archaeology in the state should seek to study ethnic enclaves. Among the research topics that are applicable are better understanding African American urban life in Georgia, making comparisons in terms of material culture to rural areas (for the time period in this instance, the comparison would be between urban residents and possibly tenant farmers), consumer behavior, and other topics. Comparisons could also be made with African American occupations identified in other cities, such as Augusta and Columbus (Joseph et al. 2004:137–138, 143), as well as between white and black urban residents. A general lack of archaeology of African American urban experience in Georgia, and in Albany in particular, further strengthens the potential archaeological significance of any such resources.

In a letter dated April 10, 2017, the SHPO concurred with FTA's finding that the Archaeological Site 9DU286 is eligible for the NRHP, and concurred with the avoidance

of the site, along with archaeological monitoring during all demolition and paved surface removal activities.

Assessment of Effect

The fieldwork indicated surface deposits of cultural material across most of the testable area, designated as Site 9DU286. These deposits consisted of a mix of historic and modern artifacts. No cultural features were found during the shovel testing. The artifacts collected during the shovel testing were relatively diverse but did not include pre-contact American Indian artifacts. The GPR survey found primarily structural remains and debris, the type of material mostly associated with historic features of interest. Intact subsurface features include structural remains of the warehouse as well as piers, post, pit, and privy type features associated with domestic occupation of the site.

The ground-disturbing activities required during demolition and construction would result in the destruction of subsurface archaeological deposits and features related to its nineteenth- to twentieth-century uses. The proposed project would result in the disturbance of Site 9DU286, and thus have an adverse effect. This effect will be mitigated through a program of archaeological data recovery.

Memorandum of Agreement

A MOA will be negotiated between FTA, GDOT, SHPO, and the City of Albany to stipulate the measures that will be carried out to mitigate the impact of the project on Site 9DU286. The executed MOA will be included in the final environmental decision document. The MOA will stipulate a data recovery plan reporting requirements for the investigations, the process for addressing unanticipated discoveries of archaeological sites or human skeletal remains during planning and construction, the treatment of human remains; duration of the MOA, monitoring and reporting requirements, dispute resolution procedures, and the process to amend or terminate the MOA.

4.4.3 Historic Markers

A review of the Georgia Historic Markers page of the Georgia Department of Community Affairs webpage was conducted to identify any existing historical markers within the APE of the proposed project. The website review was supplemented by a field review. No existing historical markers are present in the project area.

4.4.4 Parks, Recreation Areas, and Wildlife Refuges

The city-owned Charles M. Sherrod Civil Rights Park is in the southeast quadrant of the intersection of South Jackson Street and Highland Avenue, diagonally opposite the -proposed project site. The approximately 1-acre passive park houses the Albany Civil Rights Memorial.

The project would not encroach into the park property. Indirectly, the project has the potential to increase access to the park from improved transit and multimodal access.

No other publicly owned parklands, recreation acres, or wildlife or waterfowl refuges are near the project area.

4.5 Water Quality

This section identifies water bodies that exist in the study area and evaluates the potential impacts resulting from the project pursuant to the *Clean Water Act*.

4.5.1 Existing Conditions

The project site is within the Flint River basin. The Flint River is approximately 150 miles long and drains 8,460 square miles of western Georgia, flowing south from the upper Piedmont region south of Atlanta to the wetlands of the coastal plain in the southwestern corner of the state. Along with the Apalachicola River and the Chattahoochee River, it forms part of the Apalachicola-Chattahoochee-Flint river basin.

The propose project occurs within HUC 03130008, the Flint River Basin, which is a U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Region 4 priority watershed. The latest available USEPA data (2014, shows that the Flint River watershed in the project area is "good," meaning it is fully supporting its uses https://iaspub.epa.gov/waters10/attains_index.search_wb?p_area=GA&p_cycle=2014).

The Flint River flows through the city in a north-south direction, about 2,000 feet east of the project site. No surface water resources exist within the immediate construction area for the proposed project. Similarly, there are no environmentally engineered stormwater features that provide a connection from the proposed project site to any naturally occurring water features. Currently, stormwater drains to existing storm drains at the site and is piped to the Flint River.

4.5.2 Effects

Standard construction specifications provide for erosion control to limit sedimentation because of ground disturbing activities. The Georgia Department of Natural Resources (GDNR) has indicated that any construction activity that bares the soil of an area greater than or equal to one acre may require a stormwater discharge permit from GDNR. USEPA has designated the authority to GDNR to issue these stormwater permits in accordance with the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) requirements developed to implement Section 402 of the *Clean Water Act*. The proposed project site is approximately three acres and ground disturbing activities would take place within the boundaries of this 3-acre area. Therefore, the project would require the approval of a stormwater permit application before these activities would take place. The design for the multimodal transportation facility would include stormwater management measures such as bioswales to treat any additional stormwater runoff prior to discharge in the existing municipal stormwater management system. With the implementation of the proposed stormwater mitigation measures, any adverse impact to water quality should be negligible.

No indirect or cumulative impacts to water quality by the project are anticipated.

4.6 Floodplains

This section assesses and describes potential impact to Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA) designated 100-year flood hazard zones. The FEMA Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRM) and Digital Flood Insurance Rate Maps (DFIRM)

have been used to identify 100-year flood zones in the study area and quantify potential impact.

Executive Order 11988, Floodplain Management, requires Federal agencies to take action to minimize development inside floodplains. Order 5650.2, issued by the USDOT, has similar requirements that must also be met for projects that use FTA funds.

4.6.1 Existing Conditions

Dougherty County has been mapped for floodplains under the FEMA Flood Insurance Program. The City of Albany's FEMA FIRM data shown on Map Panel 13095C0109E (see **Figure 4-3**) was updated in September 2009. The FIRM shows that the proposed project site is in an area designated as "OTHER AREAS, Zone X," and is outside of all floodway and boundaries of the identified floodplain area for the Flint River. Zone X is "determined to be outside the 0.2% annual chance floodplain." Thus, Executive Order 11988 is not applicable to this project, and the requirements under the USDOT Order 5650.2 on Floodplain Management and Protection are fulfilled.

The nearby Flint River area has recorded flood elevations that have reached a maximum crest elevation of 43 feet. This event occurred in 1994 and inundated the project area. The 1994 flood was calculated to be a 400-year event occurrence. Flood elevations of 36.92 feet and 32.33 feet have been recently recorded in 1998 and 2005, respectively. Neither of the latter events involved flood encroachment into the project site.

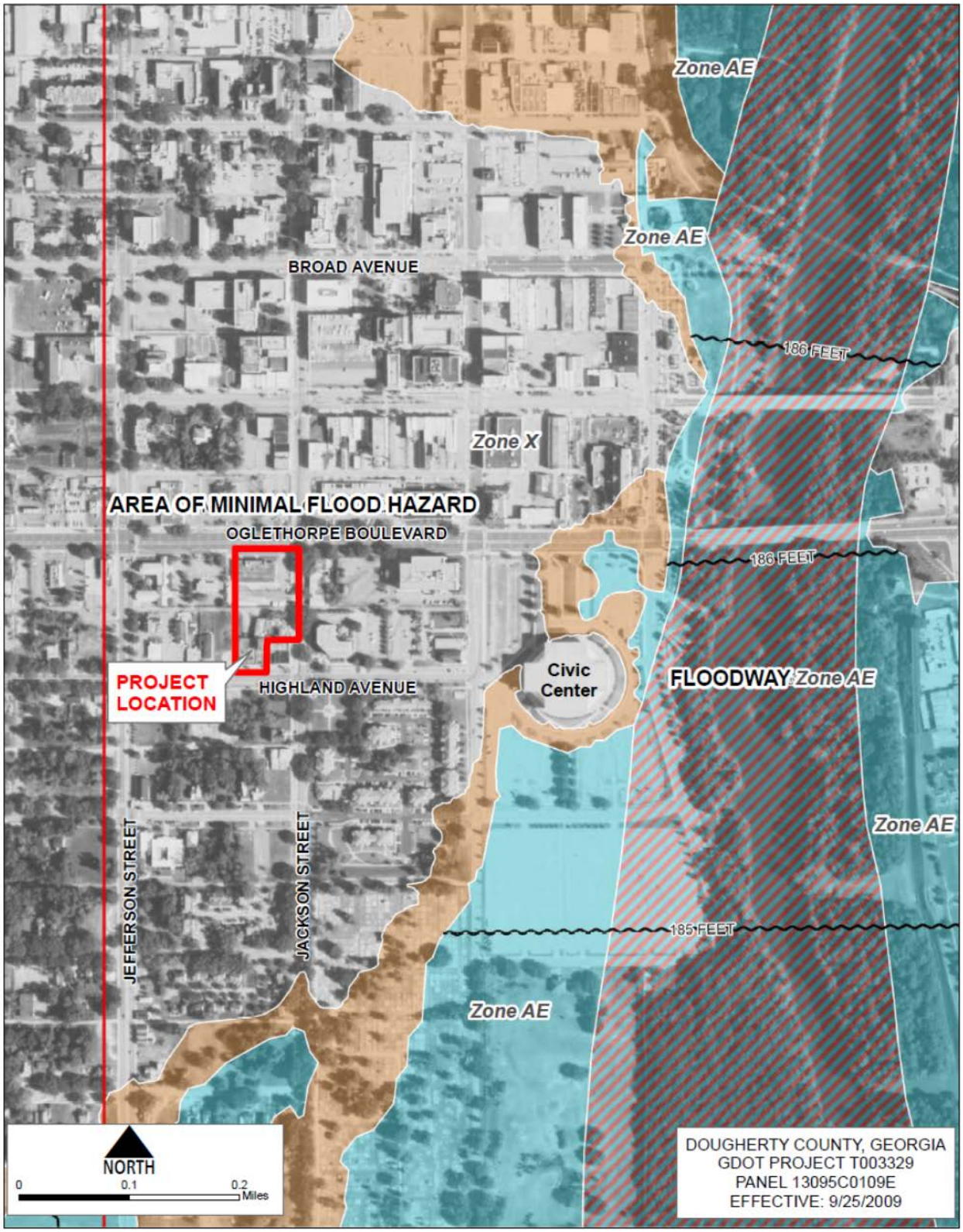
4.6.2 Effects

Given the site's ground surface elevation with respect to the Flint River and the site's location in Zone X, outside of all floodplains, the project site is in an area of low risk with minimal flood hazard potential. In accordance with the FEMA designation for Zone X, flooding within this zone usually results from a failure in locally constructed stormwater management facilities.

Construction of the proposed project would not alter the existing topographic features of the proposed project area, nor would the proposed project result in additional impervious surface area that would inhibit, redirect, or intensify the flow of stormwater within the proposed project area. The proposed project would not result in any adverse effects to the 100-year floodplain for the Flint River.

No indirect or cumulative impacts related to floodplains are anticipated.

Figure 4-3: Floodplain Map



4.7 Water Resources

This section identifies and assesses potential impact to wetlands, Wild and Scenic Rivers, and Waters of the U.S. within the study area. Waters of the U.S. include all waters, such as intrastate rivers, streams (including intermittent streams), wetlands, and natural ponds. The results of this analysis are described in the *Summary of Ecological and Natural Conditions* memorandum (September 28, 2016, included in **Appendix F** and summarized below.

The guiding state and federal regulations included in the assessment of water resources include the Federal *Clean Water Act*, the *Wild and Scenic Rivers Act* and the *Georgia Water Quality Control Act*.

4.7.1 Wetlands

Existing Conditions

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) National Wetlands Inventory (NWI), which is developed mostly with the use of aerial photography with some data collection, was checked for information on wetlands at the project site. A review of the NWI maps and field inspections of the project site and environs revealed no wetlands near the project.

Effects

Because no wetlands are within the vicinity of the proposed project area, there would be no direct, indirect or cumulative impact to wetlands.

4.7.2 Wild and Scenic Rivers

Existing Conditions

The *Wild and Scenic Rivers Act* (16 U.S.C. 1274-1276) preserves selected rivers in free-flowing condition and protects those rivers and their immediate environments for the benefit and enjoyment of present and future generations. No such resources are in the project area.

Effects

Because no wild and scenic rivers are within the vicinity of the proposed project area, there would be no direct, indirect, or cumulative impact to such resources.

4.7.3 Waters of the U.S. (Non-Wetlands)

Existing Conditions

As previously described, the proposed project is within a heavily urbanized area near downtown Albany. The proposed project area is primarily developed with commercial and retail businesses with paved parking lots. The vacant lot on the project site is the only undeveloped land within the project area; however, it is an upland landscape dominated by various upland grass species with a few mature trees.

Potential impacts to jurisdictional Waters of the U.S. (i.e. streams, and open waters) were assessed to satisfy the requirements of Executive Order 11990, NEPA, and Section 404 of the *Clean Water Act*. To assist with the identification and classification of non-wetland Waters of the U.S., the USGS 7.5-minute topographical quadrangles, county soil surveys,

and NWI maps, were consulted. Jurisdictional limits for non-wetland waters were based upon the ordinary high water mark.

The field surveys revealed no non-wetland Waters of the U.S. (i.e., wetlands, open water bodies, and streams) within the limits of the proposed project area, as shown in **Figure 4-4**.

Effects

No wetlands, wild and scenic rivers, or Waters of the U.S. occur within the proposed project area and/or would be impacted by the project. Therefore, a Section 404 permit, or compensatory mitigation, would not be required to construct the proposed project. No indirect or cumulative impacts from the project are anticipated.

4.8 Air Quality

This section summarizes the project's conformity status with national, state and regional air quality goals pursuant to the Federal *Clean Air Act* and the State Implementation Plan (SIP).

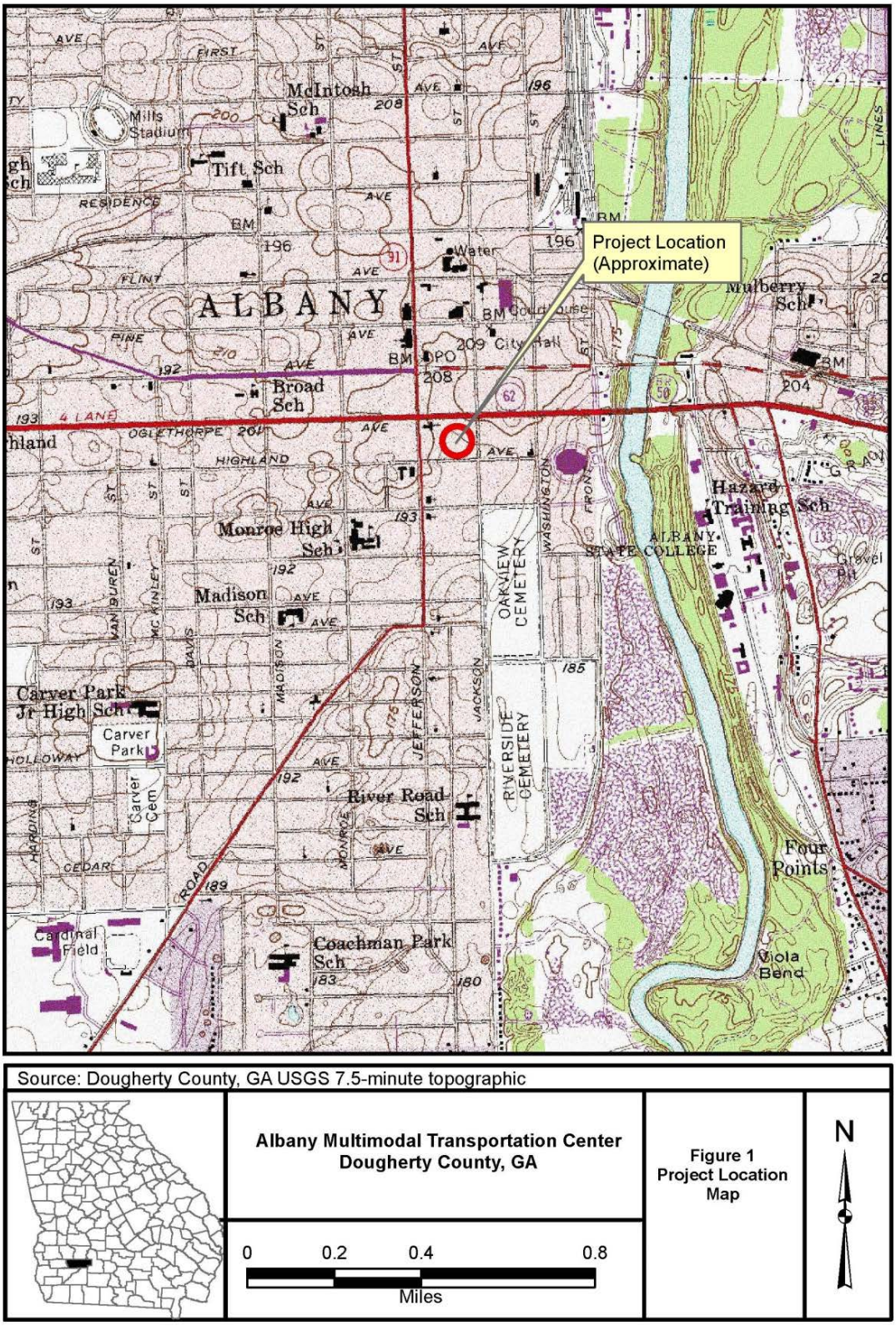
The *Clean Air Act's* Section 176 (42 U.S.C. 7506 [6]) requires that Federal transportation projects be consistent with state air quality goals, found in the SIP. The process to ensure this consistency is called Transportation Conformity. Conformity to the SIP means that transportation activities will not cause new violations of the National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS), worsen existing violations of the standards, or delay timely attainment of the relevant standard.

In addition to the criteria air pollutants for which there are NAAQS, the USEPA also regulates Mobile Source Air Toxics (MSATs). MSATs are a subset of the 188 air toxins defined by the *Clean Air Act*, and more specifically compounds emitted from highway vehicles and non-road equipment. The USEPA is the lead federal agency for administering the CAA and has certain responsibilities regarding the health effects of MSATs.

4.8.1 Existing Conditions

The proposed project is in Dougherty County. The USEPA reports that Dougherty County, Georgia is in attainment for the criteria pollutants specified by the NAAQS, comprising carbon monoxide (CO), nitrogen oxides (NOx), ground-level ozone (O3), lead (Pb), sulfur dioxide (SO2), and particulate matter (PM).

Figure 4-4: Waters of the US



4.8.2 Effects

The proposed project was evaluated for compliance with state and federal air quality goals. Because the proposed project area is in an attainment area for transportation-related air pollutants, the proposed project complies with both Georgia's state implementation plan for attaining and maintaining the NAAQS, and complies with the conformity requirements of the *Clean Air Act Amendments of 1990*.

No indirect or cumulative environmental impacts associated with air quality are anticipated.

4.8.3 Construction Impacts

All phases of construction operations would temporarily contribute to air pollution. Particulates would increase slightly in the corridor as dust from construction collects in the air surrounding the project. The construction equipment would also produce slight amounts of exhaust emissions. The Rules and Regulations for Air Quality Control outlined in Chapter 391-3-1, *Rules of Georgia Department of Natural Resources' Environmental Protection Division*, will be followed during the construction of the project. These include covering earth-moving trucks to keep dust levels down, watering haul roads, and refraining from open burning, except as may be permitted by local regulations.

The USEPA has listed approved diesel retrofit technologies; these technologies will be deployed when feasible as emissions mitigation measures for equipment used in construction.

4.9 Noise

This section includes an analysis of existing and future noise levels in and around the proposed site locations. The summary identifies nearby sensitive receptors (e.g. residences), and the potential impact from temporary construction and build conditions.

A noise assessment was performed to evaluate potential community noise impacts associated with the construction and operation of the Albany MTC. The noise assessment was conducted in accordance with procedures, criteria, and prediction algorithms contained in FTA's *Transit Noise and Vibration Impact Assessment Manual* (2006).

The approach used to evaluate potential noise impacts from this project is based on sensitive land-use categories and relative changes in noise exposure caused by the project. The FTA noise criteria limits incorporate both *absolute* criteria (which consider activity interference caused by the bus project alone) and *relative* criteria (which consider annoyance due to the potential change in the noise environment).

Noise impact criteria are also dependent on the land-use category of the receptor. *Category 1* land use includes tracts of land where quiet is an essential element in their intended purpose, such as outdoor concert pavilions, recording studios, concert halls, and historical sites with significant outdoor use. *Category 2* land use includes residences and buildings where people normally sleep. This category includes homes, hospitals, and hotels where nighttime sensitivity to noise is assumed to be of utmost importance. *Category 3* land use includes institutional properties with primarily daytime and evening

use, such as medical offices, churches, schools, libraries, and theaters. Most businesses and commercial buildings are not included in these land use categories.

The *New Bus Facility - Noise Assessment* technical memorandum, dated September 24, 2014, describes the methodology used to evaluate the project's impact and presents the results of the analysis. This technical memorandum is included in **Appendix G**. The following sections summarize the information in the technical memorandum.

4.9.1 Existing Conditions

The existing noise environment is characterized primarily by vehicular traffic. The project site and surrounding area primarily consists of Category 2 (residential) land uses.

Sensitive receptors that were determined to require additional analysis include single-family residences along West Whitney Avenue south of West Highland Avenue and multifamily residences at the Ashley Riverside Apartments (320 South Jackson Avenue, in northeast quadrant of South Jackson and West Whitney Avenue).

The thresholds for noise impact project for residential receptors was estimated to be 53 decibels (dBA) for moderate impacts and 60 dBA for severe impacts.

4.9.2 Effects

Project-related noise impacts are anticipated from both the operation of bus service under the Build Alternative and from construction of the Build Alternative.

Operational Noise

For the operation of the proposed MTC, predicted noise is expressed in terms of a Day-Night Sound Level (Ldn), which is an energy-averaged 24-hour noise metric in which a penalty has been applied to noise sources operating at night (10 PM to 7 AM) to account for people's greater sensitivity to noise intrusion at night. The proposed MTC would operate between 5 AM and 8:30 PM, thus including two hours of night time operation (5 AM to 7 AM).

Project-generated noise levels are expected to mildly exceed FTA's moderate noise impact criteria limit by 1 to 3 dBA for six residential receptors south and southwest of the project site. **Table 4-2** summarizes the noise receptor locations and the predicted noise levels. The receptors highlighted in blue in **Table 4-2** are those that would exceed the moderate threshold for a noise impact.

Project noise is not expected to exceed FTA's severe noise impact criteria limit at any receptor location. This area is already a developed neighborhood with exposure to similar bus activity noise.

Because the ATS buses are not expected to operate throughout the night, noise mitigation measures are not recommended for this project.

Table 4-2: Operational Noise Impacts

Noise Receptor Location	Existing Noise Exposure dBA Ldn	FTA Impact Criteria dBA Ldn		Predicted Project Noise dBA Ldn	Exceedance or Compliance
		Moderate	Severe		
Single-family residence on W. Whitney Ave.	50	53	60	56	Exceeds Moderate by 3 decibels
Single-family residence on W. Whitney Ave.	50	53	60	56	Exceeds Moderate by 3 decibels
Single-family residence on W. Whitney Ave.	50	53	60	54	Exceeds Moderate by 1 decibel
Multifamily residence at Ashley Riverside Apts.	50	53	60	54	Exceeds Moderate by 1 decibel
Multifamily residence at Ashley Riverside Apts.	50	53	60	54	Exceeds Moderate by 1 decibel
Multifamily residence at Ashley Riverside Apts.	50	53	60	54	Exceeds Moderate by 1 decibel
Multifamily residence at Ashley Riverside Apts.	50	53	60	53	Complies
Multifamily residence at Ashley Riverside Apts.	50	53	60	53	Complies
Multifamily residence at Ashley Riverside Apts.	50	53	60	53	Complies
Multifamily residence at Ashley Riverside Apts.	50	53	60	52	Complies
Multifamily residence at Ashley Riverside Apts.	50	53	60	51	Complies
Multifamily residence at Ashley Riverside Apts.	50	53	60	51	Complies
Multifamily residence at Ashley Riverside Apts.	50	53	60	50	Complies

Notes: All noise levels rounded to nearest full decibel per FTA procedures.
Receptors highlighted in blue are those that would exceed the moderate threshold for a noise impact as a result of the project.

Construction Noise

The project would require site preparation and clearing involving demolition of an abandoned building, construction of a new one-story bus station building, and finish work involving paving and landscaping. The construction may require the use of excavators, dozers, small cranes, dump trucks, graders and pavers. Particularly loud construction equipment, such as pile drivers and hoe rams, are not expected to be necessary for this project.

FTA's recommended construction noise limits are shown in **Table 4-3** and are based on the sensitive receptor's land use and the time of day or night. The relevant noise metric is the energy-averaged Equivalent Sound Level (Leq) measure, evaluated over an 8-hour timeframe on the exterior of the receptor closest to the project.

Table 4-3: Construction Noise Criteria

Receptor Land-Use	FTA Noise Limit dBA Leq (8-hr)	
	Daytime	Nighttime
Residential	80	70
Commercial	85	85
Industrial	90	90

Source: New Bus Facility - Noise Assessment, 2014

Methods to mitigate and control construction noise could include: (1) time and equipment restrictions, (2) use of alternative quieter equipment and techniques, (3) proper maintenance of equipment and mufflers, (4) selective use of noise barriers and enclosures, (5) development of a construction noise mitigation plan, (6) laborer training and awareness, (7) communications with the affected community to keep them informed, and (8) implementing a construction noise monitoring program. To this end, the noise limits, time and equipment restrictions, noise monitoring requirements, and enforcement actions to be taken are typically included in a project's *Construction Noise Control Specification*.

4.9.3 Summary

Project-generated noise levels are expected to mildly exceed FTA's "moderate" noise impact criteria limit by one to three decibels for several residential receptors south and southwest of the project site. However, project noise is not expected to exceed FTA's "severe" noise impact criteria limit at any receptor location. Consequently, since this area is already a developed neighborhood with exposure to similar bus activity noise, and whereas ATS buses are not expected to operate throughout the night, noise mitigation measures are therefore not recommended for this project.

4.10 Environmental Justice

This section incorporates the principles of environmental justice (Executive Order 12898) and Title VI of the *Civil Rights Act of 1964*, which prohibit discrimination by recipients of federal financial assistance on the basis of race, color, and national origin. Documentation has been prepared in accordance with *Environmental Justice Policy, Guidance for Federal Transit Administration Recipients*, FTA Circular 4703.1. This section assesses project benefits and adverse impacts on study area, with specific attention paid to minority and low-income populations.

Environmental Justice (EJ) considerations have an essential role in the decision-making process for federally-funded projects in communities with minority or low-income populations. The authority for incorporating EJ principles into the proposed project is determined by Executive Order 12898 (*Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-Income Populations*), USDOT Environmental Justice Order (USDOT Order 5610.2(a), (*Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-Income Populations*), and FTA Circular 4701.3 (*Environmental Justice Policy Guidance for Federal Transit Administration Recipients*). The basis of these guidance documents is that an EJ evaluation should address the issues of whether minority and/or low-income populations are present in a project study area and whether

disproportionately high and adverse impacts to minorities and/or low-income groups from federally-funded projects may occur with project implementation.

An EJ analysis must first identify the presence of minority and low-income populations in the project study area. In accordance with USDOT Order 5610.2(a), FTA Circular 4701.3 defines a minority as a person who is Black or African American, Hispanic or Latino, Asian, American Indian or Alaskan Native, and Native Hawaiian, or Other Pacific Islander. The FTA circular identifies low-income as a person whose income is at or below the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) poverty guidelines. The poverty guidelines are updated annually and are based on median household income and household size. Income data for the 2010 Census is estimated annually through the American Community Survey (ACS) in 1-, 3-, and 5-year rolling periods at the Census Tract level and above. The ACS data is compared to the HHS poverty guidelines to help determine where low-income populations may be located. The analysis used the latest available ACS 5-year data at that time (2011 through 2015). HHS poverty guidelines released in January 2015 correlate to the ACS median household income data reported through 2015. Refer to **Table 4-4,** below for the HHS poverty guidelines for 2015.

Table 4-4: HHS 2015 Poverty Guidelines

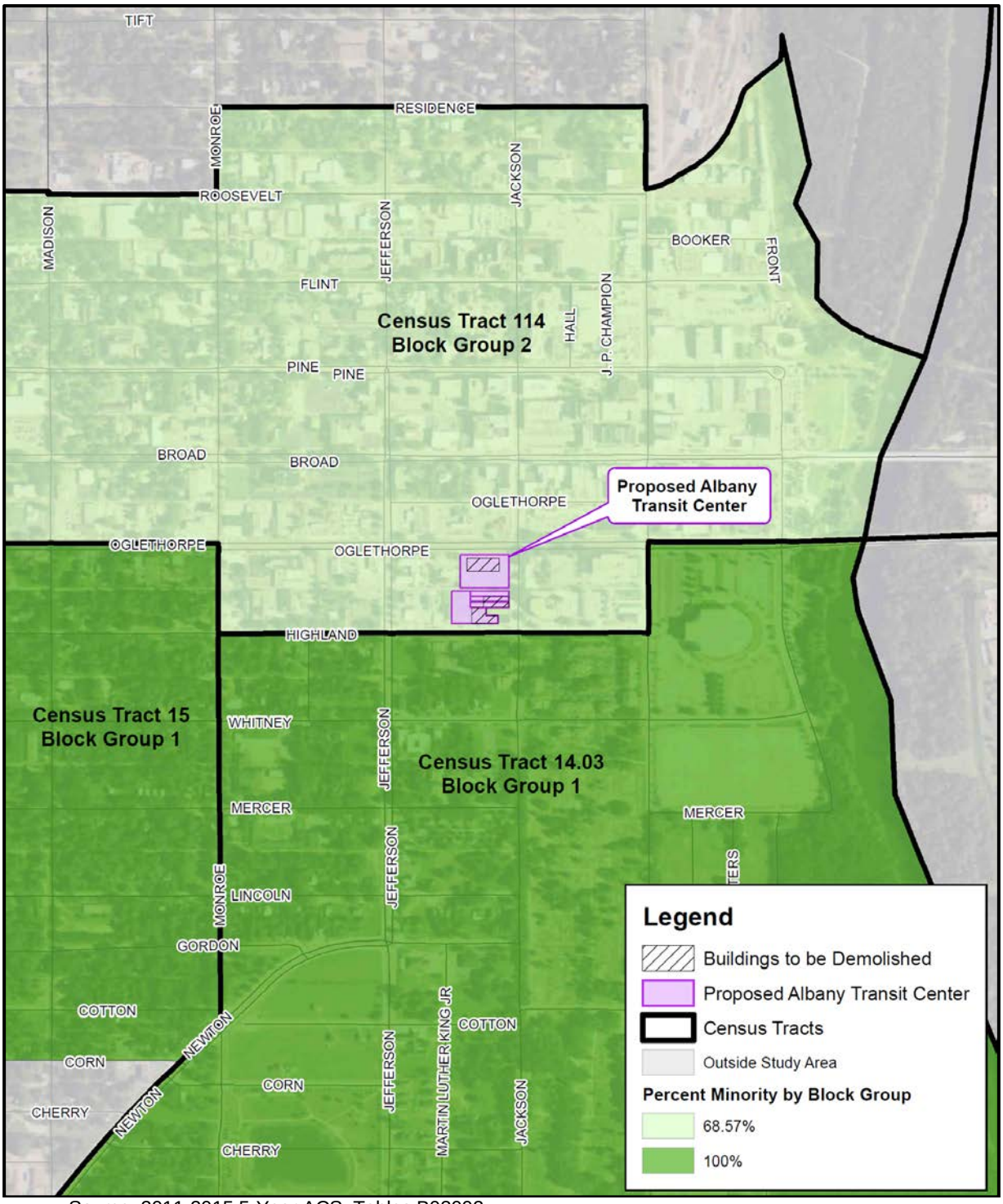
Persons in Household	Poverty Guideline
1	$11,170
2	15,930
3	20,090
4	24,250
5	28,410
6	32,570
7	36,730
8	40,890

Source: *Federal Register*, Vol. 80, No. 14, January 22, 2015, pp. 3236-3237 as reported by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

4.10.1 Existing Conditions

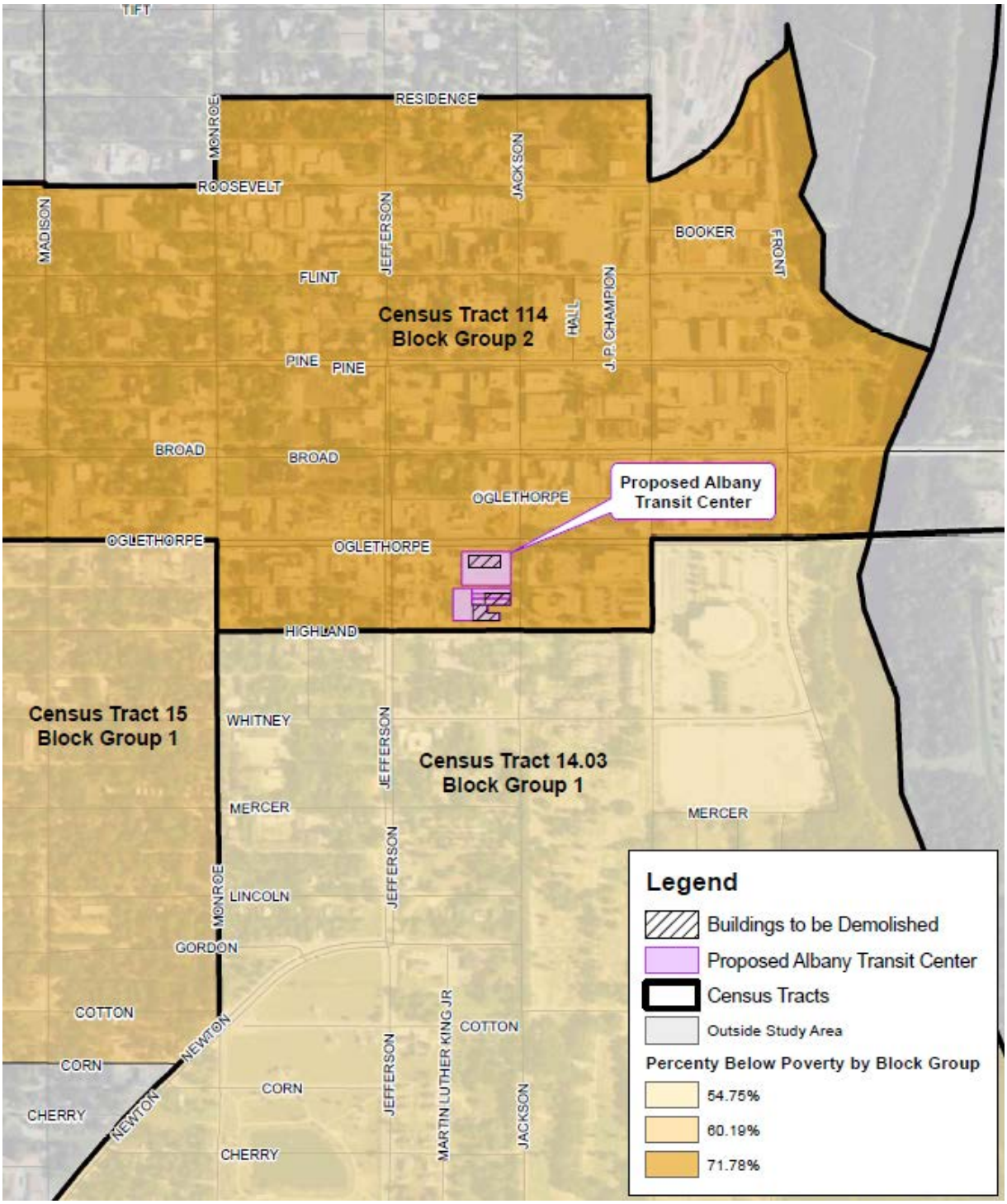
The EJ analysis for this project uses U.S. Census data from the 2011-2015 American ACS to evaluate concentrations of low-income and/or minority persons within a half-mile radius of the proposed MTC. The proposed MTC project area encompasses three Census tracts (CT) and three Census block groups (BG). The proposed MTC is in CT 114 BG 2. Most of this block group consists of the downtown government and commercial area. The proposed project site borders CT 14.03 BG 1 to the south; this block group represents a combination of single-family and multi-family residential, commercial, and institutional uses, an urban park, and a large cemetery. Several blocks west of the project site is CT 15 BG 1, which consists of residential and commercial uses. **Figure 4-5** and **Figure 4-6** illustrate the Census tracts and block groups in the project vicinity.

Figure 4-5: Project Area Census Bocks and Tracts – Minority Populations



Source: 2011-2015 5-Year ACS; Tables B03002

Figure 4-6: Project Area Census Bocks and Tracts – Low-Income



Source: 2011-2015 5-Year ACS; Table C17002

A review of city, county and state level data from the 2011-2015 ACS was conducted as a component of this analysis. This review included the City of Albany, Dougherty County,

and the State of Georgia. **Table 4-5** displays the 2015 population and income data for the three block groups, comparing their respective shares of low-income and minority populations to that of Albany, Dougherty County, and Georgia.

Table 4-5: Comparison Areas for Minority and Low-Income, 2015

Geography	Total Population	Minority Population (%)	Median Household Income	% Below Poverty Level
CT 14.03 BG 1	1,081	1,081 (100%)	$14,932	54.75%
CT 15, BG 1	711	708 (99.57%)	$25,385	60.19%
CT 114 BG 2 (project location)	471	323 (68.57%)	$9,410*	71.78%
Albany City	76,466	58,175 (76.07%)	$29,676	37.45%
Dougherty County	93,319	67,683 (72.54%)	$32,084	32.94%
Georgia	9,737,146	3,875,506 (40.0%)	$49,620	23.58%

Source: 2011-2015 5-Year ACS; Tables B03002, B19013, C17002
* Source: 2009-2014 5-Year ACS. The 2011-2015 5-Year ACS does not provide a median household income for CT 114 BG 2. To compare, median income for CT 14.03, BG 1 in the 2009-2014 5-Year ACS was $14,932 (same income shown in 2011-2015 5-Year ACS).

Minority Population

Based on the data provided through the 2011-2015 ACS, more than 72 percent of the population throughout the city and the county is minority (primarily Black). The block group CT 114 BG 2 has the lowest minority population of the local geographies shown on **Table 4-5**, at 68.6 percent. The other two block groups are almost exclusively minority (Black).

A review of the data did not demonstrate that persons with Limited English Proficiency were in the project vicinity.

Low-Income Populations

The county average for those persons living below the poverty line is 32.94 percent, while in the city of Albany, 37.45 percent of persons live in poverty as defined by HHS. The three Census tract block groups within the study area satisfy the EJ criteria for low-income populations, with more than half of the population living below the HHS poverty guidelines, substantially higher than the city or county percentages.

The proposed project site is in CT 114 BG 2, but is adjacent to CT 14.03 BG 1 to the south. The median household income in CT 114 BG 2 ($9,410) is substantially lower than the other block groups, and its poverty level is the highest of the local geographies (at 71.78 percent). The block group immediately south of the site, CT 14.02 BG 1, has the lowest share of persons below the poverty level (54.75 percent) among the three study area block groups. Compared to the HHS poverty guidelines, all three block groups are identified as low-income areas.

Businesses

The project team identified active businesses in proximity to the existing ATS transfer station on Oglethorpe Avenue. Several vacant commercial sites were observed within the

same area. The existing transfer station operations facility is also used as a terminal for intercity bus and the SWGRDC's rural transit operations. The project team recently observed these local businesses over several days at different times of the day to determine the potential interactions between these businesses and the operations of the transfer station. During these observations the project team noted three generalities: 1) the majority of the customers at these businesses arrived by private automobile, especially the businesses along Jackson Avenue and Jefferson Avenue; 2) several of these businesses had very limited hours of operation and were not observed to be open for business during the observation periods; 3) very few pedestrians were observed accessing the businesses; and 4) none of the pedestrians disembarking at the transfer station were observed going between the transfer station and the adjacent businesses.

The project team observed pedestrians accessing one of the busier restaurants and a local convenience store from the surrounding community, but the pedestrians did not appear to be either going to or coming from the transfer station. Based upon a conversation with the ATS Director, the typical transit passenger transferring between buses at the transfer facility would not have time to patronize the adjacent businesses in the amount of time allotted between bus transfers and connections.

Based upon the observations of the project team and recognition by the project team of the business types and typical customers or patrons of the businesses at and around the existing transfer station, the businesses along Oglethorpe Avenue benefit from the existing heavy traffic volume of vehicles traveling on Oglethorpe Avenue, which would not permanently change due to the proposed project. Some construction-related traffic delays could temporarily affect the movement and volume of vehicular traffic. The businesses along the other three sides of the transfer station (Jackson and Jefferson Avenues and West Highland Street) would be classified generally as community businesses whose patronage is typically from the local community.

4.10.2 Effects

Most residents in the project vicinity are either low-income or minority, or both, and may be reliant on public transportation for work, medical, educational or other type trips. Public involvement during the 2013 public meetings indicated that the current site was the preferred site for many residents who currently use ATS services. The proposed project will retain transit services at this site, and would improve the transit riders' experiences in accessing the site and making transportation connections. No disproportionally high and adverse effects are anticipated for area residents and transit riders

With the proposed location of the MTC on the site of the existing transit center, the minority-owned businesses surrounding the existing transit center site should not experience long-term negative economic effects. These businesses may in fact benefit because of the anticipated increase in vehicular and pedestrian traffic in the proposed facility. Therefore, construction of the proposed project at the proposed site would not result in a disproportionately high and adverse impact for minority or low-income populations who patronize the existing businesses adjacent to the existing transit center site, nor would the minority-owned businesses near the existing transit center site suffer a disproportionately high and adverse impact because of the proposed expansion. Further, the proposed site is directly adjacent to Albany's historic downtown with excellent pedestrian activity in the area, is adjacent to residential areas, and is at a traffic light on a high-volume roadway, which are all features that would support existing and possible future commercial development at the site.

4.10.3 Conclusion

The proposed project would not result in negative effects to the identified environmental justice populations or minority-owned businesses. The proposed site is the existing site of the existing bus transfer station. The site is in an urban area with a high minority population, and the primary economic indicators of median household income and poverty levels suggest a modest local economy. In lower-income areas, it is not uncommon to find populations who are dependent upon, or who choose due to economic reasons, to rely on public transportation systems for mobility.

Businesses near the existing transit site facility would not be adversely affected by the facility's expansion and construction of the proposed project at the proposed site. The MTC would benefit the minority and low-income populations, as well as all members of the local and regional populations who wish to use public transportation. The new facility would be a modern, attractive structure and may serve to generate additional revitalization of the area in the future, which would benefit the community and provide economic opportunity for local businesses.

Implementation of the proposed project would not result in the displacement of any minority or low-income residents or businesses and would include direct mobility benefits that would be equitably shared across the community by various demographic groups. Therefore, disproportionately high and adverse impacts to minority and low-income communities would not result from project implementation.

4.11 Natural Resources

This section assesses the project's impact on natural resources including wildlife and habitats within the project study area with a focus on ecologically-sensitive areas and contiguous expanses of undisturbed lands. Under the *Endangered Species Act of 1973*, any federally funded or authorized action must be evaluated for its potential to jeopardize the continued existence of listed endangered species. Coordination with Federal and State resource agencies is noted. The results of this analysis are described in the *Summary of Ecological and Natural Conditions* memorandum (September 28, 2016), included in **Appendix F** and summarized below.

4.11.1 Existing Conditions

An environmental screening and analysis was prepared for the project in August 2014 to determine the presence of any threatened or endangered species on and within the vicinity of the proposed project site. The analysis was based off a desktop review and subsequent field inspection, which took place in July 2014. In addition, the project team coordinated with the GDNR Natural Heritage Program (GNHP) regarding the potential presence of threatened and endangered species and their habitat within a 3-mile radius of the project site.

The proposed project is in a heavily urbanized area consisting primarily of developed land. During the July 2014 field surveys, team members observed that various brick and wood structure buildings with paved parking lots on the developed lots are being used by a mix of commercial and retail businesses. At one time a building and/or some type of structure was on the lot that is now vacant; at the time of the field survey, the vacant lot was covered by grass with a few large trees scattered throughout the property.

Based on correspondence from the GDNR/GNHP on June 25, 2014 (in **Attachment A**), several Federal and State protected species that are known to, or potentially, occur within a three-mile radius of the project. Additional species were identified in the USFWS Information, Planning, and Consultation (IPaC) System database search. The IPaC database was again reviewed on September 28, 2016, to check for any changes to species listings since the 2014 review; no changes in species listing for Dougherty County have occurred since the initial review.

No protected species were identified during the July 2014 field survey. In addition, no potentially suitable habitat for the protected species exists within the project area.

Critical habitat for endangered species within the project area was also reviewed. The closest location for the designated habitat is the Flint River, approximately 2,000 feet east of the project area. In their June 25, 2014 correspondence, GDNR Wildlife Resources Division indicated that they have no records of high priority species or habitats within the project area. Additionally, the Division stated that due to the project's urban setting and the distance from the Flint River, the project is not likely to negatively impact rare species or habitats. The Wildlife Resources Division also requested the use Best Management Practices (BMPs)during construction and stated there should be minimal impact on the surrounding environment.

4.11.2 Effects

Based upon the survey results, it has been determined that the project would have "no effect" to these listed species or to their critical habitat.

Based on the distance of the project site to the designated critical habitat, no impact to the Flint River or its tributaries that would discharge into the Flint River, and the nature of the project and associated construction activities, the proposed project would have "no effect" on the critical habitat designated within the Flint River for the federally protected species.

No indirect or cumulative environmental impacts to natural resources are anticipated.

4.12 Hazardous Materials

This section assesses the potential presence for known hazardous and contaminated materials within the study area. In addition, this section presents the results of a field review and a search of local, state, and federal databases for known hazardous, contaminated, or regulated materials sites for the Build Alternative.

4.12.1 Existing Conditions

A Phase I Environmental Site Assessment (ESA) was previously completed for the proposed project site to identify recognized environmental conditions (RECs), as defined by the American Society for Testing and Materials (ASTM) *Standard Practice E 1527-05*, associated with the proposed project site. The term "REC" is defined as "the presence or likely presence of any hazardous substances or petroleum products on a property under conditions that indicate an existing release, a past release, or a material threat of a release of any hazardous substances or petroleum products into structures on the property or into the ground, groundwater, or surface water of the property."

A Phase I ESA also satisfies the "appropriate inquiry" requirements established under the 1980 Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act (CERCLA). The Phase I Environmental Site Assessment for Albany Multimodal Site B (300 W Oglethorpe Boulevard, Albany, Georgia (for the Build Alternative site) was completed in September 2013; a copy of the report is contained in **Appendix H**.

In the past, the area has been used for various commercial purposes. Currently, the northern portion of the proposed site contains both the intercity bus terminal and the ATS city bus operations. Historical records and aerial photography confirm prior commercial use of the site and the adjacent lands. According to a previously-completed Phase I ESA (conducted in 1998 for the Greyhound Bus Terminal) and discussions with current and prior owners, a former underground storage tank (UST) was removed from the bus terminal property at 300 West Oglethorpe Boulevard. There are currently no USTs on the proposed site, and no hazardous waste is generated at the site under the current owner/operations.

4.12.2 Effects

Based upon the findings of the 2013 ESA, no RECs are associated with the subject property. The investigations completed to date are sufficient to characterize, remediate, and subsequently confirm the effectiveness of past removal of former UST associated with the bus terminal at the north area of the project site.

In recognition of the likely age of the current commercial buildings, it is possible that asbestos-containing materials and lead-based paint coated surfaces are associated with those buildings. A pre-demolition asbestos survey will be performed by a duly licensed USEPA asbestos inspector prior to initiation of any demolition activities.

No indirect or cumulative environmental impacts associated with hazardous materials are anticipated.

4.13 Section 4(f) Applicability

This section addresses the applicability of Section 4(f), pursuant to Section 4(f) of the *U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) Act of 1966*. Section 4(f) permits the USDOT to approve a project that requires the use of publicly owned land from a park, recreation area, wildlife refuge, or any land from a historic site of national, state, or local significance only if the following determinations have been made:

- There is no feasible and prudent alternative to the use of such land, and
- All possible planning has been undertaken to minimize harm to the Section 4(f) lands resulting from such use; or
- The use will have a *de minimis* impact on the property.

Section 4(f) refers to the "use" or "constructive use" of land from a significant publicly owned public park, recreation area, or wildlife and waterfowl refuge, or any (both public and privately owned) significant historic site and some archaeological sites, pursuant to the implementing regulation at 23 CFR Part 774.

Investigation of the Build Alternative has determined that no Section 4(f) evaluation is necessary for this project because of the following:

- The Build Alternative would not take land from any publicly owned park, recreation area, or wildlife or waterfowl refuge.
- The Build Alternative would not require property from or adversely affect the NRHP-eligible Albany Freedom Historic district or any contributing resources of the historic district. Based on the conditions imposed on the proposed project through stipulations included in the Assessment of Effects, a finding of No Adverse Effect has been determined in a Section 106 Assessment of Effects document, which the SHPO concurred with on XXXXX XX, XXXX (see Correspondence in **Attachment B, Section 106 Coordination**).
- The Build Alternative would take property from within Site 9DU238, but it has been determined that this site is important chiefly for what can be learned from data recovery and has minimal value for preservation in place.

[UPDATE AS NEEDED ONCE SECTION 106 IS DETERMINED]

5.0 MITIGATION MEASURES

This chapter identifies the mitigation efforts to minimize impacts to the built and natural environment presented in the previous chapter. The project is not anticipated to result in a substantial impact to the affected environment that was analyzed.

Mitigation measures are anticipated for cultural resources, water quality, and asbestos-containing materials.

5.1 Cultural Resources (Historic Architecture and Archaeology)

A MOA being developed in coordination with FTA, SHPO, GDOT and the City of Albany to address impacts to the Ritz Theater, a contributing resource to the NRHP-eligible Albany Freedom Historic District, and to Archaeological Site 9DU238. The MOA will be executed prior to the approval of the final environmental decision document.

5.1.1 Ritz Theater

The removal of the non-historic addition from the Ritz Theater will result in a finding of no adverse effect as long as measures to minimize harm are followed. To ensure the removal, demolition, and reconstruction will not adversely affect the theater, FTA will coordinate with the SHPO to review and comment on preliminary construction plans prior to proceeding with the proposed project. Such coordination would include the following, as determined by the SHPO:

- Review of plan details that pertain to the demolition of the addition and the rehabilitation of the theater;
- Site visits prior to, during, and after demolition, as determined by the SHPO; and
- Site visits linked to specific milestones in the rehabilitation, such as at the 50 percent completion mark and the 100 percent completion mark, or as otherwise determined by the SHPO.

5.1.2 Archaeological Site 9DU286

The FTA will ensure the effects to Archaeological Site 9DU286 will be mitigated through a program of archaeological data recovery, to be outlined in the *Archaeological Data Recovery Plan for Site 9DU286, Albany Multimodal Transportation Center, Dougherty County, Georgia*, as appended. The data recovery will focus on residential and industrial/workplace activities that occurred at Archaeological Site 9DU286, with a concentration on Albany's African American community during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Fieldwork will focus on the most productive areas and would involve machine-removal of topsoil and overburden with a backhoe or grade-all to expose the tops of cultural features; then hand clearing to identify and delineate cultural features or artifact deposits; mapping; and excavation. The results of the data recovery will be presented in a report submitted for review by FTA and the SHPO.

[To be completed when the AOE, MOA and Data Recovery Plan are completed.]

5.2 Water Quality

This section includes effective stormwater management and quality control measures that will be incorporated into the plans as feasible to minimize run-off. Effective stormwater management reduces or eliminates the negative impacts of stormwater runoff by controlling flooding, reducing erosion and improving water quality through the implementation of BMPs. BMPs can be structural, vegetative or managerial practices used to treat, prevent or reduce water pollution.

The proposed project site provides ample opportunity to incorporate a number of the fundamental BMPs of "Better Site Design" into the site layout and site amenities as a means to promote sustainability. "Better Site Design" is an approach to site development that utilizes design principles that reduce impervious coverage, better integrate stormwater treatment in the site development and strive to protect and preserve natural areas. Given the urban nature of the proposed project site, the primary components that will be incorporated into the site design are 1) the reduction of impervious surfaces, 2) the promotion of stormwater runoff diffusion, and 3) the encouragement of effective stormwater management and treatment.

Reduction in pervious areas would be applied to both the site and to the actual building. Within the site, it is proposed to use alternative paving materials including permeable pavements in the forms of pervious concrete, and porous asphalt. Replacement of non-essential hardscape areas with grassed or low maintenance vegetated areas supplemented with high durability ground cover plantings is also proposed, which will diffuse surface runoff as well as allow for infiltration of stormwater.

For the buildings, stormwater runoff would be minimized through gutter collection systems. The typical gutter system along the roof edge line is a collection system which is intended to concentrate flows to the gutter downspouts. By eliminating the gutter system, rooftop run-off can be diffused along the entire building perimeter as opposed to concentrated at the gutter downspouts. This approach would also be implemented in the design of the parking area where notches or openings in the curb lines outletting to grass swales would be provided to diffuse sheet flow surface run-off and increase on-site infiltration of stormwater runoff.

As part of the ongoing project design plan development, the water quality control measures described above would be evaluated and incorporated into the plans where feasible to ensure that stormwater runoff is treated on-site to the greatest extent possible.

5.3 Asbestos-containing Material

A pre-demolition asbestos survey will be performed by a duly licensed USEPA asbestos inspector prior to initiation of any demolition activities.

6.0 PUBLIC AND AGENCY INVOLVEMENT

This chapter summarizes public and agency coordination for the project, and summarizes major themes that emerged through the public and agency involvement process.

6.1 Public Involvement

ATS held a public forum on February 12, 2013 to review the findings of the site selection process and seek public input on the four alternative sites, identified in **Section 2.1.3**. Approximately 40 people attended the session. Among the comments received were requests to use the interim transit center site that is convenient to so many services that riders need.

The City held a second public meeting on April 9, 2013 to solicit additional comments on the site selection process. Comments received included the following as transcribed by the Assistant City Manager:

- The multimodal site needs to be safe and secure. The current site (300 West Oglethorpe Boulevard) is across from the City Police Department while the other sites are more isolated.
- The current site has historic significance to Albany and the bus service.
- Crime rates are low at the current site, while the former Heritage House site (732 West Oglethorpe Boulevard) is in a high crime area.
- The current site is close to downtown, centrally located services.
- The Carmike 8 site (1121 Gillionville Road) is too close to an existing neighborhood; it is also an island and isolated.
- One participant does not like the current site because the property owner harasses riders.
- The owner of a restaurant on the corner of Jefferson Street and Highland Avenue is concerned about losing customers if the transfer site is moved from the current location.

In addition, a petition with 750 signatures of “concerned transit customers” was submitted at the meeting, asking that the current location of the bus station be retained, with updated renovations.

Attachment C contains the public comments and petition related to the second public meeting.

6.2 Transit Provider Stakeholder Outreach

As part of the ongoing project coordination with the local transit providers, who are likely use the facility, GDOT and the City of Albany have coordinated with Greyhound Bus Lines and the Destiny Transportation Group. Greyhound Bus Lines, which provides regional bus service to and from Albany, has indicated its interest in continuing operations at the new multimodal facility. The Destiny Transportation Group provides the rural transit service for Dougherty County through the SWGRDC and operates the facility where the current temporary ATS transfer facility is located.

6.3 Agency Coordination

At the beginning of the preparation of the EA in 2014, the City of Albany send letters to 22 local, state, and federal officials and agency representatives to inform them that ATS was investigating the environmental impacts of a multimodal transportation center on the site at 300 West Oglethorpe Boulevard, and requesting assistance in identifying known project area conditions of special concern. The persons/agencies to whom the coordination letters were sent are listed below:

- U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, Regional Environmental Officer
- National Center for Environmental Health
- U.S. Geological Survey, Environmental Affairs Program
- U.S. Department of Agriculture, Natural Resources Conservation Service
- National Park Service, Planning and Compliance Division
- USEPA, Region 4
- USFWS
- Georgia Forestry Commission
- GDNR Historic Preservation Division
- State Senator, District 13
- State Representative, District 149
- State Representative, District 152
- State Representative, District 153
- State Representative, District 154
- Albany Mayor
- Albany Mayor Pro Tempore
- Dougherty Area Regional Transportation Study, Planning Director
- Historic Preservation Commission
- Albany City Council Commissioners

None of the agencies provided an official response to the early coordination.

Subsequently, project ecologists corresponded with GDNR's Wildlife Division, and in a letter dated June 25, 2014, GDNR provided information on known occurrences of natural communities, plans and animal of highest priority conservation status near the project site.

6.3.1 Section 106 Coordination

GDOT initiated the Section 106 process for the current evaluation by sending out early coordination requests to potential consulting parties, including the GDNR Historic Preservation Division, which serves as the Georgia SHPO in 2014.

FTA provided copies of the historic architecture and archaeology survey reports to the SHPO for review and concurrence. Responses by the SHPO were used to finalize the reports.

The SHPO responded in a letter dated April 10, 2017 regarding the *Archaeological Survey and Evaluation* report and the *Historic Resources Survey* report. At that time, the SHPO concurred with the finding that Site 9DU286 was eligible or the NRHP and with the findings for several contributing resources to the NRHP-eligible Albany Freedom Historic District. However, at that time, the SHPO did not concur with the eligibility determination for one resource and requested assessment of additional resources within the APE.

Following additional surveys of historic resources and submittal of a revised *Historic Resources Survey* report, the SHPO responded in a letter dated August 17, 2017 with concurrence of FTA's determinations of eligibility.

In a letter dated XX XX, 2018, the SHPO concurred with the assessment of effects.

Copies of Georgia SHPO concurrence are included in **Attachment B** of this EA.

6.3.2 Tribal Consultation

On November 21, 2014, FTA sent initial coordination letters to the 12 tribal governments with an interest in Georgia and invited them to be consulting parties to the project. **Table 6-1** identifies the Tribes that were invited, and responses received. A copy of the sample letter and the distribution list are included in **Attachment B**. Two tribal governments (Muscogee (Creek) Nation and United Keetoowah Band) accepted the invitation to be consulting parties, while the Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians stated that they did not consult concerning sites in the Albany area.

Table 6-1: Tribal Governments Invited to Consult

Tribal Government	Accepted Invitation to Consult
Absentee-Shawanee Tribe of Oklahoma	No response
Alabama-Coushatta Tribe of Texas	No response
Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians	No response
Eastern Shawnee Tribe of Oklahoma	No response
Jena Band of Choctaw Indians	No response
Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians	Do not consult concerning sites in Albany area
Muscogee (Creek) Nation National Council	No response
Muscogee (Creek) Nation	Yes
Poarch Band of Creek Indians	No response
Shawnee Tribe	No response
Thlopthlocco Tribal Town	No response
United Keetoowah Band	Yes

6.4 Circulation of the Approved EA

Once FTA approves the EA for circulation, the City of Albany will upload a digital copy of the approved EA on the ATS website, place hard copies in the public library and other locations, and send CDs to agencies, organizations, and individuals who request a copy. ATS will place a notice in the local paper advertising the availability of the EA and requesting comment on the EA. Comments will be received through the 30-day comment period starting with the notice of availability of the approved EA.

Any comments concerning this EA should be addressed to the following:

Mr. David Hamilton
Transit Director, Albany Transit Systems
712 Flint Avenue
Albany, Georgia 31703

or

Ms. Jamie Cochran
Director of Intermodal Programs
Georgia Department of Transportation
One Peachtree Center, 600 West Peachtree Street, NW
First Floor
Atlanta GA 30308

7.0 SUMMARY OF IMPACTS

Table 7-1, Summary of Environmental Impacts, summarizes the results of the analysis presented in **Chapter 3**.

Table 7-1: Summary of Environmental Impacts

SUMMARY OF ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS	
Area of Evaluation	**Impact Analysis or Mitigation/Commitments**
Land Use and Zoning	No adverse impacts. The project is consistent with current zoning and local plans. No mitigation required.
Farmland	No impacts since no farmlands are present in the project area. No mitigation required.
Parking, Traffic and Transit Service	No adverse impacts to parking or traffic; overall improvement to transit services. No mitigation required.
Cultural Resources	One archaeological site (9DU286) will be affected by the project; data recovery will be conducted, as stipulated in a MOA that is being developed. Removal of the non-historic addition from the Ritz Theater will result in a finding of no adverse effect as long as measures to minimize harm are followed; these measures will be stipulated in a MOA.
Water Quality	Negligible impact to water quality. Implementation of standard construction specifications and best management practices will be carried out during construction. NPDES permit will be required.
Floodplains	No impact since the site is not within designated floodways or floodplains. No mitigation required.
Water Resources	No impact since no wetlands or streams are on or adjacent to the project site. No mitigation required.
Air Quality	The region is in attainment for all NAAQS criteria pollutants. No impacts during operation; minor temporary impacts may occur during construction. Rules and Regulations of GDNR's Environmental Protection Division (Chapter 391-3-D) will be followed.
Noise	Project-generated noise levels will mildly exceed FTA's moderate noise criteria limit at six residences; however, noise will not exceed severe noise criteria. Based on location and operation of facility, no mitigation measures are required for operation. Temporary construction impacts will be mitigated by following the project's Construction Noise Control specifications.

SUMMARY OF ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS	
Area of Evaluation	**Impact Analysis or Mitigation/Commitments**
Environmental Justice	No Disproportionately High and Adverse Impacts to low-income and minority persons or businesses. The project will have a positive impact to residents and business owners/occupants. No mitigation required.
Natural Resources	No impacts to listed species or their critical habitat. No mitigation required.
Hazardous Materials	No impacts anticipated. A pre-demolition asbestos survey will be performed by a duly licensed USEPA asbestos inspector prior to initiation of any demolition activities.
Section 4(f) Applicability	No impacts to Section 4(f) resources. Update after SHPO coordination completed

8.0 CONSTRUCTION COST ESTIMATES

An order of magnitude estimate of construction of the project was prepared based on the schematic plans prepared in October 2014 and updated in November 2017. The estimated construction contract award cost for building demolition, constructing the new one-story building, site work, covered bus bays, drives and open parking areas, and contingencies is $7,236,000 (2017 dollars). The estimate does not include property acquisition, a temporary bus facility during construction, hazardous materials removal, and archaeological data recovery.