SOUTHWEST CORRIDOR STUDY

PART 4: Implementation Strategies Report

March 2015

Prepared for:
Regional Planning Commission of Greater Birmingham

Prepared by:
ATKINS
and its team members
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8.0 IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

8.1 OVERVIEW

8.1.1 Essential Ingredients of a Corridor Redevelopment Strategy

Situated as a regional gateway to downtown Birmingham, with several potential redevelopment catalysts and extensive areas of underutilized and obsolete “greyfield” properties, the Southwest Corridor is ripe for redevelopment. This effort focused on land use should be complemented by companion efforts to intensify economic development and advance the transportation improvements including the Bus Rapid Transit (BRT)-Arterial project, express routes, park-and-ride lots and Super Stops, as well as the regional trail system. Once BRT is implemented, it should have a synergistic effect around key station locations, reinforcing redevelopment at those nodes. As described below, redevelopment activity should occur at multiple scales and locations; including station areas, distressed and transitional neighborhoods, and underutilized commercial and industrial properties. However, due to continuing declines in the resident population within the corridor, as well as the continuing erosion of some of the corridor’s neighborhoods and commercial areas, market support for redevelopment is limited at best.

Consequently, the redevelopment strategy must be to “induce” a market, particularly by reversing population loss with new “rooftops”, which in turn, will increase demand for commercial activity. In several key areas along the corridor, adjacent major activities attractions and employers, a “captive market” may be leveraged to support the redevelopment of residential and commercial development. Examples include the opportunity to leverage support for commercial land uses (retail, restaurants, hotel and commercial recreation) adjacent to the CrossPlex and the thousands of spectators and participants at sporting events. Likewise, employees at Princeton Baptist Hospital could become a captive market for close-by workforce housing, particularly if the hospital were to provide financial incentives.

In areas of the corridor without such potential catalysts, redevelopment must be induced by logistical and financial incentives to development interests. These include land acquisition, and assembly of development sites for transfer to for-profit as well as non-profit development interests at below market rates, as well as the provision of infrastructure improvements and tax exemptions.

Key components of any long-range redevelopment strategy include the following:

- **Essential Redevelopment Actions** – what must be done to clear blight, assemble redevelopment sites, and guide new development.
- **Redevelopment Implementation Entities** – what entities can manage the redevelopment process and make use of financial, legal and administrative tools.
- **Short Term Opportunities** – what can be done in the short range at minimal cost, to set the stage for long term redevelopment.
8.1.2 Study Corridor Profile and Transit Project Purpose and Need

The cities comprising the Southwest Corridor are challenged to meet mobility, housing, and economic development needs by the continuing loss of population and employment, the below-average economic standing of many corridor households due to unemployment or lack of education, retail and commercial districts that are aging or in obsolescence, declining condition of the housing stock, poor transportation connectivity across all modes, reductions in public services and public infrastructure maintenance, underutilization of existing transportation resources, and limited transit, bicycle, and pedestrian options.

Mobility and access in the study area are hampered in part by the reduced level of auto availability and economic resources of many corridor residents, coupled with insufficient transit, bicycle, and pedestrian options. The limitations of the non-auto transportation resources are particularly evident when travel between communities and neighborhoods within the corridor is attempted. These shorter, local trips are the dominant type of travel. Transportation-related problems caused by these deficiencies include limitations in travel and lengthier travel times as compared to travel by auto as summarized below:

- Auto travel time through the corridor is 38% to 60% (peak and off-peak respectively) more via the surface street route of US 11 compared to the slightly longer distance path via I-20/59.
- Transit travel time is longer than the freeway route by auto by a ratio of 2-1/2 to over 3 times, and by a ratio of 1.8 to 2 longer than the US 11 route by auto. These ratios exclude any access and wait time for transit.
- Bicycling and walking are not practical options for such a long trip.
- The auto trip via freeway takes up to 30% more time in the peak hour compared to the off-peak, but is still a relatively time-efficient trip. The auto trip via US 11 takes up to 18% more time in the peak hour compared to the off-peak, requiring 10-12 minutes more travel time than the freeway route.
- Travel by transit is not competitive in terms of travel time compared to auto travel, especially when transit access and wait time are considered.

The corridor problems discussed above also contribute to a lack of economic opportunity at the individual, communitywide, and regional levels. Examples are access to regional jobs by corridor workers, and access to corridor resources such as colleges and health care facilities by corridor and regional residents alike. Individually, each of these issues contributes to reduced quality of life, mobility, and economic competitiveness. Collectively, they are a significant obstacle to creating sustainable growth and a more vibrant and livable community into the future. Reversing these fortunes will require a comprehensive and progressive solution is required to integrate land use, economic development, social, and transportation needs holistically.

The primary transportation purpose of this project is to improve access and mobility for existing and future Southwest Corridor residents and workers by improving transit options, with interconnections to the rest of the BJCTA transit system and bicycle/pedestrian network elements. These improvements should be consistent with the previous planning efforts relating to transit in this corridor, including the 2004 Regional Alternatives Analysis, the 2012 BJCTA Short Range Transit Plan and the prior 2008 BJCTA Comprehensive Transit Development Plan, and the 2035 Regional Transportation Plan. In addition to its transportation purpose, the Southwest Corridor Study has land use and economic development components that can be supported by addressing the transportation purpose to stimulate economic growth.
The project purpose for the Southwest Corridor responds to several significant identified needs, discussed below.

The significant needs for this corridor have been identified as follows:

- **Need to improve limited regional connectivity.**
  The existing transit service in the study area does not have sufficient quality of service in terms of frequency, schedule speed and reliability to properly serve the non-auto travel demand within the study corridor and region. Providing access and improving mobility to, through, and in the study corridor is critical to enhancing regional connectivity. Improved transit service will also enhance regional accessibility to jobs in the study corridor as well for residents of the study corridor to access jobs in downtown and outside the study corridor.

- **Need to strengthen reliable alternate modes of travel.**
  Transportation options in the project area are currently limited to automobile travel and the existing fixed-route bus service. The Birmingham region is lacking in basic and premium transit service compared to its peer cities. Interviews with stakeholders at the beginning of the study revealed that prospective employers are prone to ask job applicants if they have access to a car, because the transit service is not considered reliable enough to ensure that employees can be at work on time. Also, for service trades with odd hours, transit service may not be available. A region’s vitality has been shown to be in part dependent upon its investment in alternative modes of travel, transit as well as bicycling, ridesharing, and walking. Improved transit service in the Southwest Corridor would give both those traveling outside the corridor and those traveling into the corridor a reliable alternative means to reach key destinations for a variety of trip purposes, and to quickly access the new downtown intermodal transportation center.

- **Need to support community vitality and economic development.**
  Much of the Southwest Corridor is an older, mature urban and suburban corridor with declining housing stocks and diminishing retail and employment resources for its residents and visitors. The corridor has undergone population and employment decline and regional forecasts to 2035 anticipate further decline of about 20% in the part of the corridor between I-65 and I-495, and small increases in downtown Birmingham and the McCalla area, for an overall loss of 14%. In recent decades, the region’s land development patterns have been skewed to the suburban fringes and dominated by low-density, auto-centric development. Meanwhile, older, more mature urban districts have experienced little to no redevelopment and signs of decline over the same period. Market and demographic analyses show that without intervention these trends are set to continue into the future. Study data highlight a need to provide public transit improvements to accommodate growing population in the Center City and Five Points South while encouraging redevelopment in the study area. A more integrated system of non-highway travel options can also contribute to improved air quality, which is another regional goal.
• Need to address the limited transportation options for underserved populations.

Existing transit service is infrequent, slower in speed, and somewhat unreliable, with few amenities for its patrons, to the point that even the transit captive are reluctant to use the service, but usually have no other good choice. Despite these issues, some of the higher ridership routes lie within the study area.

Better transit service would provide access for users in the corridor and workers in the region. These users include employees, corridor residents, and other metropolitan area travelers traveling to key activity centers within the corridor for educational, medical, government, shopping, recreational, and other purposes.

Improved transit service is also important for individuals without limited or no access to vehicles and minority, low-income, disabled, and elderly populations throughout the corridor. The study area has disproportionate representation among these transportation-disadvantaged, environmental justice population groups as compared to the overall region.

8.1.3 Moving Forward

The Southwest Corridor Study has inventoried existing and future conditions, diagnosed issues and needs, and formulated improvement strategies for transportation, land use, and economic development. The next essential step in the process is the “baton pass” from study to implementation. To accomplish this, it is useful to craft initial answers to several basic questions relating to the particulars of putting ideas into action, namely these questions:

- **Who?** – Who should be involved in the leadership of undertaking and executing the mission of corridor betterment?
  **Answer:** In this section of the report, the study recommends the formation of the US 11 Southwest Corridor Coalition to spearhead the prioritization and execution of corridor improvement initiatives, and serve as the focal point and clearinghouse for dialogue, strategy definition, execution, and tracking of corridor initiatives. With the proactive support of the RPCGB, the first steps of mobilization and organization of this coalition have begun already.

- **What?** – What corridor needs should be that group’s priorities in establishing the first and subsequent pursuits?
  **Answer:** It is the task of the corridor coalition and its supporters to translate the broad strokes of the corridor study into specific plans of action. This ownership of priorities will lend commitment and initiative to jumpstart the process and give it continuing life.

- **Where?** – Where should specific emphasis first be placed across the large list of “to do” items within the priority categories of engagement in the answer to “What priorities first” question?
  **Answer:** The prioritization process should initially focus on “low hanging fruit” – those specific efforts that are lower in cost, already have some ongoing momentum, provide opportunities for completion, are near-term in their results, serve as a catalyst for actions to follow, engage many corridor interests, or involve a combination of these attributes. From this foundation, the next priorities will likely emerge naturally.

- **How?** – How should the corridor interests be engaged, how should their collective energy for change be captured, and how should specific priority initiatives be advanced?
Answer: The corridor coalition is expected to serve as an effective mechanism for engagement of all corridor interests: the municipalities, involved government agencies (transportation, housing, economic development, land use, social services, health care, education, and others). The coalition can develop subcommittees focused on transportation, land use, and economic development as a simple “divide and conquer” strategy that covers all basic needs areas, and which can serve as conduit for capturing the energy and resources of all participants. Finally, the study has provided general guidance for the pursuit of corridor needs; collaboration with stakeholders and interested parties will capture their experience, best practices, and creative ideas, and which along with the support of agency advisors should form a critical mass of thoughtful strategies to steer the collective efforts along the path of progress and results, step by step.

- When? – When should specific action items be pursued?
  Answer: This study provides a generalized schedule of priorities based on developmental work required, coordination with other agencies, identification of “seed” and implementation funding, collaboration with partners, target identification, and other such parameters. Within this framework, the coalition should collectively schedule efforts based on their potentials for impact and progress.

The answers to these questions, as given and as they are refined, based on the skills, knowledge and advice of all the participants in the implementation process, should provide a solid foundation to embark on the process of betterment of the Southwest Corridor.

### 8.2 DESCRIPTIONS OF SOUTHWEST CORRIDOR ACTION STRATEGIES

#### 8.2.1 Plan Components and Responsibilities

The Southwest Corridor planning study has focused on three components – Transportation, Land Use and Economic Development – as contributing elements to tackle corridor challenges and reinvigorate the corridor as a place of opportunity and redevelopment. It is considered that this triple-pronged approach addresses three core areas critical to the reinvention of the Southwest Corridor. Each of these components has a series of action strategies that are recommended to be undertaken to continue addressing long-standing trends of decline and deterioration. Desirably, there would be synergism between actions undertaken in the three categories of components, such that the whole is greater than the sum of the parts.

This section contains a high-level summary of these action strategies, including proposed project sponsors, and potential funding sources. The intent is that the implementation of these action strategies would be coordinated through and driven by the Southwest Corridor Coalition organization. In each area list the recommended projects, project sponsors, and potential funding sources.

#### 8.2.1.1 Transportation Action Strategies

This study has identified specific transit-related improvements to improve corridor mobility and respond to the travel needs of strong transit-supportive market potentials in the study corridor. Those proposed improvements are summarized in Table 8.1.
<table>
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<th>Action Category</th>
<th>Item No.</th>
<th>Action Strategy</th>
<th>Lead Entity(ies) and/or Project Sponsors</th>
<th>Other Key Partners</th>
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<th>Funding Sources</th>
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<td>$65,251,000</td>
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<td></td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>Combine Routes 8 and 41</td>
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<td>$2,875,000</td>
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<td>1.2</td>
<td>Combine Routes 5 and 45</td>
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<td>BCCTA</td>
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<td>1.4</td>
<td>Develop Bessemer Super Stop</td>
<td>BCCTA</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>$2,875,000</td>
<td>STP or CMAQ</td>
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<td>2.1</td>
<td>Combine Ph. 1 SW Corridor BRT with US 11 East Ph. 1 BRT.</td>
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<td>Reuse ridership projections.</td>
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<td>Revise project cost estimates (total cost under $50 M).</td>
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<td>N/A</td>
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<td>Complete Financial Plan (Birmingham, BCCTA, MPO).</td>
<td>City of Birmingham, BCCTA, RRPCGB, ALDOT</td>
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<td>Cities, RRPCGB, grants</td>
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<td>Prepare FTA Small Starts Grant Application.</td>
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<td>Plan for removal of combined Routes 8 and 41.</td>
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<td>Develop service branding and station design.</td>
<td>City of Birmingham, BCCTA, RRPCGB, ALDOT</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Cities, RRPCGB, grants</td>
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<td>Construct Five Points West Super Stop.</td>
<td>City of Birmingham, BCCTA</td>
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<td>$1,500,000</td>
<td>STP Grant, STP or CMAQ</td>
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<td>3.4</td>
<td>Construct BRT stations.</td>
<td>City of Birmingham, BCCTA</td>
<td>ALDOT</td>
<td>$3,600,000</td>
<td>STP Grant, STP or CMAQ</td>
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<td>Install Traffic Signal Priority System.</td>
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<td>ALDOT</td>
<td>$1,620,000</td>
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<td>Implement balance of BRT improvements, including vehicles.</td>
<td>City of Birmingham, BCCTA, RRPCGB</td>
<td>ALDOT</td>
<td>$8,812,500</td>
<td>STP Grant, STP or CMAQ</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>Partner with ALDOT to construct Bessemer PhR lot, construct Academy Dr. PhR lot, and lease/construct the Promenade Tannehill Shopping Center Park-and-Ride lot.</td>
<td>BCCTA, RRPCGB, ALDOT, Cities, County</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>$12,533,500</td>
<td>ALDOT, STP or CMAQ</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>Implement Express Bus routes, including vehicles.</td>
<td>BCCTA, RRPCGB, ALDOT, Cities, County</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>$10,016,875</td>
<td>ALDOT, STP or CMAQ</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>Develop pick-up service plan to Downtown and UAB.</td>
<td>BCCTA, RRPCGB, Cities, ALDOT</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>Develop off-peak service plan serving Bessemer sites.</td>
<td>BCCTA, RRPCGB, Cities, ALDOT</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TT- 5</td>
<td>Step 5 - Phase 2 Southwest Corridor BRT</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.1</td>
<td>Plan for extension of SW Corridor BRT to Bessemer, including removal of Route 45 (with Route 5 remaining).</td>
<td>BCCTA, RRPCGB, Cities</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.2</td>
<td>Prepare FTA Small Starts Grant through SW Corridor Coalition.</td>
<td>Corridor Coalition, Cities, RRPCGB, BCCTA</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>Cities, RRPCGB, grants</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.3</td>
<td>Install Traffic Signal Priority system along US 11.</td>
<td>Cities, BCCTA</td>
<td>ALDOT, RRPCGB</td>
<td>$2,070,000</td>
<td>STP Grant, STP or CMAQ</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.4</td>
<td>Construct BRT stations.</td>
<td>City of Birmingham, BCCTA</td>
<td>ALDOT, RRPCGB</td>
<td>$5,606,250</td>
<td>STP Grant, STP or CMAQ</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.5</td>
<td>Implement balance of BRT improvements, including vehicles.</td>
<td>City of Birmingham, BCCTA, RRPCGB</td>
<td>ALDOT, RRPCGB</td>
<td>$13,690,250</td>
<td>STP Grant, STP or CMAQ</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TT- 6</td>
<td>Complete Street treatments around the primary proposed transit station areas for Phase 1 BRT (Five Points West and Princeton Baptist Hospital).</td>
<td>ALDOT, RRPCGB, Cities</td>
<td>BCCTA, Freshwater Land Trust</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>$2,875,000</td>
<td>US EPA, HUD, HLT, FTA, other grants, STP or CMAQ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TT- 7</td>
<td>Complete Street treatments around the primary proposed transit station areas for Phase 1 BRT (five locations).</td>
<td>ALDOT, RRPCGB, Cities</td>
<td>BCCTA, Freshwater Land Trust</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>$7,187,500</td>
<td>US EPA, HUD, HLT, FTA, other grants, STP or CMAQ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TT- 8</td>
<td>Investigation of potential reuse of excess right-of-way along US 11 as a linear park or for new development.</td>
<td>ALDOT, RRPCGB, Cities</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TT- 9</td>
<td>Continued development of the Red Rock Ridge and Valley Trail System (RRRVTSS) in the Southwest Corridor, with focus on the Jones Valley Railroad Greenway, the US 11 street-based trail, and other connecting feeder routes.</td>
<td>Cities, RRPCGB, Freshwater Land Trust (FLT)</td>
<td>ALDOT</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>US EPA, HUD, HLT, grants, STP or CMAQ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TT- 10</td>
<td>Exclusive bus lanes on railroad right-of-way between Lomb Ave. and Ave. W to be coordinated with the RRRVTS.</td>
<td>RRPCGB, Freshwater Land Trust</td>
<td>City of Birmingham, ALDOT</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>$2,875,000</td>
<td>STP or CMAQ</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
8.2.1.2 Land Use

This study has identified specific land-use related recommendations in the Part 3 document to enhance land use revitalization and recapture elements of a more vibrant urban fabric within the study corridor. Those recommendations are summarized in Table 8.2.
### Table 8.2. Land Use Recommendations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action Category</th>
<th>Action Strategy</th>
<th>Lead Entity(s) and/or Project Sponsors</th>
<th>Other Key Partners</th>
<th>Capital Budget</th>
<th>Funding Sources</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>LUC: LAND USE</strong></td>
<td><strong>TRANSIT ORIENTED DEVELOPMENT</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LU-1</td>
<td>Collaborate with anchor corridor land uses and property owners to identify</td>
<td>Cities, property owners, developers</td>
<td>RPCGB, BCTA</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Cities, RPCGB, CICO, federal grants, foundations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>opportunities for land assembly and redevelopment.</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>LU-2</td>
<td>Utilize land development regulations and policies to incentivize station area</td>
<td>Cities, property owners, developers,</td>
<td>BCTA</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Ditto</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>redevelopment, including tax abatement, development density bonuses, TOD</td>
<td>RPCGB</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>overlay districts, form-based code amendments, and other strategies.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>LU-3</td>
<td>Encourage TOD development in advance of transit improvements that is “transit-</td>
<td>Cities, property owners, developers,</td>
<td>BCTA</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Ditto</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ready”, that is compatible with TOD principles and improvements, while capturing</td>
<td>RPCGB</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>near-term market opportunities for the project.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>LU-4</td>
<td>Advance station area street improvements to including Complete Streets and</td>
<td>DOT, RPCGB, Cities</td>
<td>BCTA, Freshwater Land Trust</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Ditto</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>walkability improvements to incentivize development through the public</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>investment lead.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>LU-5</td>
<td>Identify TOD partners and funding resources to support early station area</td>
<td>Cities, RPCGB, property owners,</td>
<td>BCTA</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Ditto</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>redevelopment.</td>
<td>developers</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>LU-6</td>
<td>Capitalize on development initiatives such as Princeton Baptist Hospital, the</td>
<td>Cities, RPCGB, property owners,</td>
<td>BCTA</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Ditto</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>CrossPlex, and Lawson State Community College.</td>
<td>developers</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>LU-7</td>
<td>Coordinate efforts with recommendations in the Birmingham Comprehensive Plan and</td>
<td>Cities, RPCGB, property owners,</td>
<td>BCTA</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Ditto</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>neighborhood framework plans for Titusville and Western Area of Birmingham.</td>
<td>developers</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LU-8</td>
<td>Develop and implement form-based code for five Points West and Titusville.</td>
<td>Cities, RPCGB, property owners,</td>
<td>BCTA</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Ditto</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>developers</td>
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<tr>
<td>LU-9</td>
<td>Coordinate efforts with recommendations in the plans for Bessemer, Fairfield,</td>
<td>Cities, RPCGB, property owners,</td>
<td>BCTA</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Ditto</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>and Midfield.</td>
<td>developers</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>LU-10</td>
<td>Investigate and pursue appropriate grant programs for funding to support initial</td>
<td>Cities, RPCGB, property owners,</td>
<td>BCTA</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Ditto</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>land use project priorities.</td>
<td>developers</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>LU-11</td>
<td>Investigate and implement CICO or other suitable Alabama district at initial</td>
<td>Cities, RPCGB, property owners,</td>
<td>BCTA</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Ditto</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>target sites as financing tool.</td>
<td>developers</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LU-12</td>
<td>Continue with land use redevelopment funding initiatives.</td>
<td>Cities, RPCGB, property owners,</td>
<td>BCTA</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Ditto</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>developers</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>LUC: NEIGHBORHOOD REVITALIZATION</strong></td>
<td><strong>REINVIGORATION</strong></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>LU-13</td>
<td>Refine neighborhood status designations and formulate detailed action templates</td>
<td>Cities, RPCGB</td>
<td>Property owners, developers, other partners</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Ditto</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>for each category.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>LU-14</td>
<td>Identify and engage neighborhood preservation staffing, funding and execution</td>
<td>Cities, RPCGB</td>
<td>Property owners, developers, other partners</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Ditto</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>partners.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>LU-15</td>
<td>Utilize the City of Birmingham Land Bank as a toll to complement transit station</td>
<td>Cities, RPCGB</td>
<td>Property owners, developers, other partners</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Ditto</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>development and neighborhood revitalization.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>LU-16</td>
<td>Capitalize on the Lowman Village Choice Neighborhoods grant to optimize the</td>
<td>Cities, RPCGB</td>
<td>Property owners, developers, other partners</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Ditto</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>proposed transit station on Martin Luther King, Jr. Dr.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>LU-17</td>
<td>Undertake prototype neighborhood plans and report on progress.</td>
<td>Cities, RPCGB</td>
<td>Property owners, developers, other partners</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Ditto</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LU-18</td>
<td>Incorporate targeted code enforcement.</td>
<td>Cities, RPCGB</td>
<td>Property owners, developers, other partners</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Ditto</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LU-19</td>
<td>Utilize land assembly strategies, and identify re-use strategies from green</td>
<td>Cities, RPCGB</td>
<td>Property owners, developers, other partners</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Ditto</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>spaces, community farms, and redevelopment.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>LU-20</td>
<td>Employ land banking as an approach for land clearance and holding.</td>
<td>Cities, RPCGB</td>
<td>Property owners, developers, other partners</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Ditto</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Table 8.2. Land Use Recommendations (Continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action Category</th>
<th>Item No.</th>
<th>Action Strategy</th>
<th>Lead Entity(ies) and/or Project Sponsors</th>
<th>Other Key Partners</th>
<th>Capital Budget</th>
<th>Funding Sources</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>LU-21</td>
<td></td>
<td>Identify, organize and utilize partner resources to repair, renovate, and renew existing housing stock and community assets such as parks.</td>
<td>Cities, RPCGB</td>
<td>Property owners, developers, other partners</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Ditto</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LU-22</td>
<td></td>
<td>Employ revitalization strategies for distressed (foreclosed, tax delinquent, blighted) properties defined in reports prepared by RPCGB for Bessemer, Pipe Shop, Fairfield and North Titusville.</td>
<td>Cities, RPCGB</td>
<td>Property owners, developers, other partners</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Ditto</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LU-23</td>
<td></td>
<td>Coordinate efforts with recommendations in the Birmingham Comprehensive Plan and plans for Bessemer, Fairfield, and Midfield</td>
<td>Cities, RPCGB</td>
<td>Property owners, developers, other partners</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Ditto</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Cargo Oriented and Industrial Land Development

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action Category</th>
<th>Item No.</th>
<th>Action Strategy</th>
<th>Lead Entity(ies) and/or Project Sponsors</th>
<th>Other Key Partners</th>
<th>Capital Budget</th>
<th>Funding Sources</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>LU-24</td>
<td></td>
<td>Address opportunities to make prime sites, both primary and secondary as identified in this study, “development ready” more marketable by addressing brownfield conditions, remnant structures, utility issues, etc.</td>
<td>BBA, Jeff Co. Industrial Board, Bessemer and Fairfield Industrial Boards, RPCGB Economic Dev. Dept., cities</td>
<td>Property owners, developers, other partners</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Ditto</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LU-25</td>
<td></td>
<td>Collaborate with the two corridor Class 1 railroad industrial development departments to identify and advance potential large and small industrial sites.</td>
<td>Railroads, BBA, Jeff Co. Industrial Board, Bessemer and Fairfield Industrial Boards, RPCGB Economic Dev. Dept., cities</td>
<td>Property owners, developers, other partners</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Ditto</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LU-26</td>
<td></td>
<td>Identify funding sources to augment local and regional resources to address priority site improvement and remediation needs to make more sites “show ready” for industrial redevelopment opportunities.</td>
<td>BBA, Jeff Co. Industrial Board, Bessemer and Fairfield Industrial Boards, RPCGB Economic Dev. Dept., cities</td>
<td>Property owners, developers, other partners</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Ditto</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
8.1.2.3 Economic Development

This study has also identified in the Part 3 document a set of specific recommendations relating to economic development within the corridor to complement land use and transit actions and to contribute to restoring economic vitality. Those recommendations are summarized in Table 8.3.
### Table 8.3. Economic Development Recommendations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action Category</th>
<th>Item No.</th>
<th>Action Strategy</th>
<th>Lead Entity(ies) and/or Project Sponsors</th>
<th>Other Key Partners</th>
<th>Capital Budget</th>
<th>Funding Sources</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>General Economic Development</td>
<td>ED-1</td>
<td>Coordinate with BBA and capitalize on opportunities through Blueprint Birmingham initiatives that relate to the Southwest Corridor, including workforce training, industrial marketing, business marketing and retention, and small business development.</td>
<td>BBA, Jeff Co. Industrial Board, Bessemer and Fairfield Industrial Boards, RPCGB Economic Dev. Dept., corridor colleges and UAB</td>
<td>Other interested partners</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Cities, RPCGB, CICC, federal grants, BBA foundations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Economic Development</td>
<td>ED-2</td>
<td>Promote expansion of existing firms, attraction of new firms and promotion of diverse manufacturing and green manufacturing.</td>
<td>BBA, Jeff Co. Industrial Board, Bessemer and Fairfield Industrial Boards, RPCGB Economic Dev. Dept.</td>
<td>Business partners</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Ditto</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Economic Development</td>
<td>ED-3</td>
<td>Seek opportunities for corridor healthcare institutions to partner with UAB.</td>
<td>BBA, UAB, Providence Baptist Hospital, Medical West Center, Jefferson County Health Dept.</td>
<td>Other health and wellness partners</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Ditto</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Economic Development</td>
<td>ED-4</td>
<td>Pursue opportunities to expand corridor incubators as in Bessemer, and investigate opportunities for an entrepreneurial district possibly associated with economic development institutions in medical centers, leveraging programs at UAB.</td>
<td>BBA, Jeff Co. Industrial Board, Bessemer and Fairfield Industrial Boards, RPCGB Economic Dev. Dept., corridor colleges and UAB</td>
<td>Other economic development partners</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Ditto</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Economic Development</td>
<td>ED-5</td>
<td>Segment regional small business and entrepreneurial assistance programs, including a seed capital fund.</td>
<td>Same as above.</td>
<td>Same as above.</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Ditto</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Economic Development</td>
<td>ED-6</td>
<td>Continue to support and develop the RMBVS and Red Mountain Park as part of corridor tourism attractions.</td>
<td>BBA, RPCGB, Freshwater Land Trust, Jefferson County Health Dept.</td>
<td>Other recreation and tourism partners</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Ditto</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Economic Development</td>
<td>ED-7</td>
<td>Support the BBA initiative to create a brownfield and greenfield redevelopment authority, with a loan fund and grant support, to apply to candidate Southwest Corridor sites.</td>
<td>BBA, Jeff Co. Industrial Board, Bessemer and Fairfield Industrial Boards, RPCGB Economic Dev. Dept.</td>
<td>Other economic development partners</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Ditto</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Economic Development</td>
<td>ED-8</td>
<td>Support initiatives in the RPCGB Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy.</td>
<td>RPCGB Economic Dev. Dept., BBA</td>
<td>Other economic development partners</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Ditto</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Corridor Marketing</strong></td>
<td>ED-9</td>
<td>Strengthen alliances and collaboration between corridor and regional industrial marketing resources.</td>
<td>BBA, Jeff Co. Industrial Board, Bessemer and Fairfield Industrial Boards, RPCGB Economic Dev. Dept., cities</td>
<td>Business partners</td>
<td>Ditto</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corridor Marketing</td>
<td>ED-10</td>
<td>Inventory and capture corridor assets in a corridor marketing piece, to include recreational, tourism, historical, shopping, educational, healthcare, sports tourism, and other assets.</td>
<td>RPCGB</td>
<td>Corridor institutions and attractions</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Ditto</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corridor Marketing</td>
<td>ED-11</td>
<td>Promote the logistics resources of the Southwest Corridor.</td>
<td>BBA</td>
<td>Private transportation partners, railroads, ALDOT, RPCGB</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Ditto</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corridor Marketing</td>
<td>ED-12</td>
<td>Actively promote Southwest Corridor resources tied to sports tourism as part of regional marketing, and strengthen assets at corridor sports attractions.</td>
<td>BBA</td>
<td>Sports tourism business partners</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Ditto</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corridor Marketing</td>
<td>ED-13</td>
<td>Develop a corridor “mile post” wayfinding referencing system for the corridor.</td>
<td>RPCGB, ALDOT</td>
<td>Cities</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Ditto</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corridor Marketing</td>
<td>ED-14</td>
<td>Piggyback on regional marketing initiatives to publicize corridor assets and resources for business development.</td>
<td>BBA, Jeff Co. Industrial Board, Bessemer and Fairfield Industrial Boards, RPCGB Economic Dev. Dept., cities</td>
<td>Business partners</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Ditto</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corridor Marketing</td>
<td>ED-15</td>
<td>Develop a corridor map and brochure that depict key activity centers and attractions.</td>
<td>Corridor Coalition, RPCGB</td>
<td>Economic development partners, business and institutional partners</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Ditto</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corridor Marketing</td>
<td>ED-16</td>
<td>Pursue corridor designation as an All-American Highway through the National Scenic Byways Program under the Federal Highway Administration.</td>
<td>Corridor Coalition, RPCGB, ALDOT</td>
<td>Economic development partners, business and institutional partners</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Ditto</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corridor Marketing</td>
<td>ED-17</td>
<td>Collaborate with BBA and others on an internal-to-the-region program to elevate and improve community pride and perceptions.</td>
<td>BBA, RPCGB</td>
<td>Economic development partners, business and institutional partners</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>Ditto</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
8.2.2 Southwest Corridor Bus Rapid Transit

The approach to implementing the first BRT project in the Birmingham has evolved to the current proposal to link portions of the proposed US 11 West and US 11 East BRT corridors as the first phase of implementation. While the basic elements of this combined 16-mile BRT are defined by the two relevant transit corridor studies, a joint tabulation of the primary corridor features and performance aspects may need to be further assessed. Some of this work is being performed under the US 11 East transit corridor study.

The effect of this combined corridor definition through downtown Birmingham capitalizes on the higher ridership segments of the east and west corridors, and defines project limits which lie entirely within the City of Birmingham, which is tied to the Phase 1 implementation strategy involving the city as the lead local project sponsor. The intent is that other segments of BRT – Arterial projects would be implemented at a later phase, including the Southwest Corridor BRT – Arterial segment from Five Points West southwest along US 11 to Academy Drive. As a result of this approach, the US 11 West BRT-Arterial service would be implemented in two phases, with the Five Points West Super Stop station dividing the two.

For planning purposes, the US 11 West and US 11 East BRT-Arterial corridors have been defined as lying on either side of the BJCTA Central Transit Terminal station. The combined BRT-Arterial corridor would be very supportive of the City of Birmingham’s recently adopted Comprehensive Plan, would be 16 miles long, and would provide these features:

- Substantial Transit Stations: Distinctive and substantial in design, at every stop location as part of the branding, and including lighting, real-time travel information panels, and other amenities.
  - 12 primary Activity Center stations
    - BJCTA Central Terminal
    - Existing UAB Transit Center/Parking Garage at the UAB Medical Center
    - Five Points West Super Stop
    - Nine other major stations
  - Numerous other Neighborhood and Hub stations
- Service Quality: providing very frequent transit service proposed as 10 minutes between buses in peak periods and 15 minutes in off-peak periods, for at least a 14-hour service day, significantly reducing the wait times for customers,
- Bus Vehicles: utilizing vehicles that are modern in look and passenger features,
- Branding: refers to a distinctive and unified look and image for the BRT service including the name, design, logo and color which are carried across vehicles, stations, and supporting literature and website pages,
- Technology: initial technology applications will include “next bus” messaging at stations, solar – powered nighttime lighting of stations, alternative fuel BRT vehicles, and traffic signal priority treatments at existing and proposed traffic signals,
- Running Ways: developing a specific pathway for the operation of the BRT vehicles currently proposed as curb lane/mixed traffic flow, with traffic signal priority at traffic signals.

The resulting Central Birmingham Arterial Bus Rapid Transit corridor project is further described as follows:

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12
US 11 West Corridor:
- From Five Points West to Downtown Birmingham Central Transit Station at 18th St. N and 1st Ave. N: 6.3 miles
- Stations (the major activity stations are highlighted in **bold**; the others are neighborhood and hub stations):
  - **Five Points West Super Stop**
  - Lomb Ave. at 12th St. SW
  - **Princeton Baptist Hospital**
  - Loveman Village
  - 6th Ave. S at Goldwire St.
  - 6th Ave. S at 1st St. S
  - 6th Ave. S at 6th St. S
  - **UAB Campus – University Drive and 14th St. S**
  - **Veterans Administration Medical Center – University Drive at 18th St. S**
  - **UAB Medical Campus – 18th St. S at 5th Ave. S** (existing UAB parking garage with 1st floor transit center)
  - **Central Transit Station – 18th St. N at 1st Ave. N**

US 11 East Corridor
- From Downtown Birmingham Station at 3rd Ave. N at 20th St. N to Parkway East Station: 9.7 miles
- Stations (only the major activity stations are listed below; there are additional neighborhood and hub stations as well):
  - **Central Transit Station – 18th St. N at 1st Ave. N**
  - **Downtown Birmingham – 3rd Ave. N at 20th St. N**
  - **Tom Brown Station – 1st Ave. N at 42nd St. N**
  - **Woodlawn – 1st Ave. N at Georgia Rd.**
  - **East Lake – 2nd Ave. S at 77th St. N**
  - **Parkway East – Roebuck Plaza Dr. at Red Lane Rd.**

Figure 8.1 shows the configuration of the proposed Central Birmingham Arterial Bus Rapid Transit Route. Figure 8.2 illustrates the phasing of the Southwest Corridor/US 11 West into Phase 1 between Downtown Birmingham and Five Points West, and Phase 2 from Five Points West to Academy Drive.
Figure 8.1. Proposed Central Birmingham Arterial Bus Rapid Transit Route
Figure 8.2. Phases for Southwest Corridor BRT-Arterial Route
As noted, part of the Southwest Corridor BRT project are transit Super Stop locations which would serve the new BRT operation as well as existing BJCTA routes and other planned express bus routes or community shuttles. Figure 8.3 illustrates the configuration of the proposed Five Points West Super Stop located on Ave. W adjacent to the Crossplex, and Figure 8.4 shows the layout of the proposed Bessemer Super Stop in downtown Bessemer.

**Figure 8.3. Proposed Five Points West Super Stop**
8.2.3 Corridor Express Bus Routes

Step 4 of the implementation plan calls for the development of express bus services along I-20/I-59 along with park-and-ride lots in the southwestern end of the corridor. These lots would support commuters utilizing the Express Bus services to be implemented as part of this implementation step. Section 5.7 of the Part 2-Transit Alternatives Report document identified the following park-and-ride lot locations that would be served by two express bus routes operating along I-20/I-59 from downtown Birmingham:

- Bessemer Park-and-Ride Lot: to be located at the interchange of I-20/I-59 and the 18th St. N/19th St. N one-way pair.
- Academy Drive Park-and-Ride Lot: to be located east of the I-20/I-59 interchange with Academy Drive on Alabama DOT right-of-way.
- Promenade Tannehill Shopping Center at the interchange of I-459 at Eastern Valley Drive, on spaces leased from the shopping center.

It is envisioned that ALDOT would be a partner in the implementation of these park-and-ride lots through use of its right-of-way and the application of CMAQ or STP funding to underwrite the capital costs.

The second component of this implementation step would be the institution of peak-hour express bus service as described in Section 5.7 of the Part 2-Transit Alternatives Report document. The Bessemer Express Bus service would connect from downtown Birmingham via I-20/I-59 to the Bessemer park-and-ride lot and the downtown Bessemer Super Stop. The McCalla Express Bus service would begin in downtown Birmingham and follow the same route except only stopping at the Academy Drive and Promenade Tannehill Shopping Center park-and-ride lots. The routing of the express buses would connect to key downtown destinations including the Central Terminal and the UAB campus.

The third component of this implementation step is the provision of off-peak transit service along the express bus routes. It is conceived that the Bessemer Express bus route would operate via I-20/I-59 to the Bessemer park-and-ride lot and the downtown Bessemer Super Stop, and then continue down US 11 to the Lawson State Community College – Bessemer Campus/Medical West Center station location, continuing to the Academy Drive park-and-ride lot and back to downtown Birmingham.

The development of park-and-ride lots in the southwestern end of the corridor is planned in Step 4 of the implementation program. These lots would support commuters utilizing the Express Bus services to be implemented as part of this implementation step. Section 5.7 of the Part 2-Transit Alternatives Report document identified the following park-and-ride lot locations that would be served by two express bus routes operating along I-20/I-59 from downtown Birmingham:

- Bessemer Park-and-Ride Lot: to be located at the interchange of I-20/I-59 and the 18th St. N/19th St. N one-way pair.
- Academy Drive Park-and-Ride Lot: to be located east of the I-20/I-59 interchange with Academy Drive on Alabama DOT right-of-way.
- Promenade Tannehill Shopping Center at the interchange of I-459 at Eastern Valley Drive, on spaces leased from the shopping center.
It is envisioned that ALDOT would be a partner in the implementation of these park-and-ride lots through use of its right-of-way and the application of CMAQ or STP funding to underwrite the capital costs. Figure 8.5 shows the two Express Bus routes, as well as related park-and-ride lots and transit Super Stops. Figure 8.6 shows all proposed Southwest Corridor premium transit features. Figures 8.7, 8.8, and 8.9 illustrate these proposed facilities.
Figure 8.6. Proposed Southwest Corridor Premium Transit Features

- **Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) Route**
- **Primary BRT Station**
- **Super Stop**
- **Park-and-Ride Lot**
- **McCalla Express Bus Route**
- **Bessemer Express Bus Route**
Figure 8.7. Bessemer Park-and-Ride Lot
Figure 8.8. Academy Drive Park-and-Ride Lot

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8.2.4 Local Transit Services

As a precursor to implementing the premium corridor transit service in the form of BRT – Arterial service, opportunities to improve the operational efficiency of existing BJCTA fixed route services were identified. Earlier in the study, it was proposed to link Route 3 serving the Birmingham West End south of the CSX railroad and Route 41 serving the Birmingham West End north of US 11. Linking these two routes could be done with essentially no additional route length by reconfiguring each route’s end loop and connecting the two routes along Aronov Drive and Avenue W with bidirectional bus operations. This would directly link Lawson State Community College – Birmingham Campus and Miles College.

However, more recently RPCGB has explored other route refinements with BJCTA in the Southwest Corridor. These revisions would improve the efficiency of transit coverage in terms of required bus revenue hours while affording some improvement in route frequency.

The Part 2 study document also addressed the potential of a Hwy. 150 transit route connecting between downtown Bessemer and the Galleria Mall. This is considered a separate transit investment to be explored on its own merits outside of Southwest Corridor transit improvements. There was also consideration of a Bessemer Shuttle connecting between downtown, Alabama Adventures, Promenade Tannehill Shopping Center, and transit nodes including all three park-and-ride lots and the Bessemer Super Stop. Prior planning for this route showed relatively low transit ridership, and is deferred for further analysis and refinement prior to further consideration for future implementation. The following elements summarize the proposed BJCTA route improvements for implementation as part of Step 1.

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• **Combine Routes 41 and 8**

Route 8 currently connects from downtown Birmingham to the Titusville area, and is relatively short. Route 41 extends from downtown Birmingham along 2nd Ave. N, Woodland Ave. SW and Ave. W past Five Points West, and on into West Birmingham and Fairfield. By connecting these two routes, their combined length will be shortened by over a third, saving bus revenue hours and related costs.

• **Combine Routes 5 and 45**

Route 5 extends from downtown Birmingham along US 11 to Five Points West where it traverses to the north and west with a branch into the Ensley and Wylam districts and another out Hwy. 269 to the Oak Ridge, Minor, and McDonald Chapel districts. Route 45 runs from downtown Birmingham along US 11 to Five Points West, and then along Vinesville Road and Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Blvd. to Western Hills Mall at Aronov Drive, and thence along US 11 to downtown Bessemer, ending in a loop in the residential district just south of the downtown. Route 45 would be unchanged south of Aronov Drive. The two routes are identical between downtown Birmingham and Five Points West, so the route would be operated from Five Points West outward with an integrated schedule and multiple legs on the branches. This will allow continuation of the increased frequency along the Route 45 alignment north of Aronov Drive, and coverage of the Route 5 branches.

• **Combine Routes 1 and 3**

Route 1 extends from downtown Birmingham along the CSX Railroad corridor south of US 11 to downtown Bessemer where it jogs over to US 11 and continues down to the Academy Drive area. Route 3 runs from downtown Birmingham duplicating the path of Route 1, then following Jefferson Ave., local streets, and 31st St. SW to an ending loop in the Wenonah district. The two routes are identical between downtown Birmingham and 14th St. SW at Tuscaloosa Ave., so the route would be operated from this point outward with an integrated schedule and multiple legs on the branches.

**8.2.5 Complete Streets**

Under this heading of projects, the recommendations contemplated the inclusion of Complete Streets improvement in the vicinity of the seven major BRT stations in Phase 1 and 2 of the implementation process. Phase 1 stations would include Princeton Baptist Hospital and Five Points West. Phase 2 stations would include Aronov Drive (Western Hills), the Health Clinic (Midfield), the Tri-City Station (Lipscomb, Brighton, north Bessemer), downtown Bessemer, south Bessemer (Lawson State Community College – Bessemer Campus/Medical West Center). The intent is that elements of a Complete Street design treatment would be customized for vicinity of each station location including wide sidewalks, pedestrian crossings, bicycle lanes, landscaping, lighting, and selective hardscaping elements to complement the transit station installation. These project elements would be closely coordinated with the planned Red Rock Ridge and Valley trail system components. These installations would serve as a template for further extension of the treatments along the major roadways, as appropriate. The cost estimates allowed a construction budget of $1 million for this work at each of the seven major transit stations.
8.3 POTENTIAL FUNDING SOURCES

8.3.1 Federal Transit Administration New Starts Program

While transit capital projects could be funded entirely by local and regional resources, more typically project sponsors pursue Federal Transit Administration (FTA) capital grant funding which can be typically in the order of 45-60% of project cost, depending upon size and the competitiveness of the proposed project in its FTA project evaluation ratings. The FTA process is the presumed avenue for potential funding of the proposed BRT project for the Southwest Corridor, and for the companion US 11 East BRT corridor east of downtown Birmingham.

The current FTA Section 5309 New Starts capital grant program includes three categories of eligible projects under the Capital Investment Grant Program, Program, referred to as New Starts, Core Capacity, and Small Starts projects. These project categories are described as follows:

- New Starts projects are defined as those whose sponsors request $75 million or more in Capital Investment Grant Program funds or have an anticipated total capital cost of $250 million or more.
- Core Capacity projects are defined as substantial corridor based investments in an existing fixed-guideway system that will increase capacity in the corridor by not less than 10 percent.
- Small Starts projects are defined as those whose sponsors request less than $75 million in Capital Investment Program funds and have an anticipated total capital cost of less than $250 million (49 USC 5309(h)).

Under MAP-21 federal legislation, New Starts and Core Capacity projects go through three phases - Project Development, Engineering, and Construction. Small Starts projects go through two phases - Project Development and Construction. New Starts projects are those whose sponsors request $75 million or more in Capital Investment Grant Program funds or have an anticipated total capital cost of $250 million or more. Core Capacity projects are substantial investments in an existing fixed-guideway corridor that is at capacity today or will be in five years, where the proposed project will increase capacity by not less than 10 percent. Small Starts projects are defined as those whose sponsors request less than $75 million in Capital Investment Grant Program funds and have an anticipated total capital cost of less than $250 million.

The process for local identification of worthy transit projects has now been left to local or regional transportation agencies or the responsible MPO, without specific direction on the conduct of these studies. However, the candidate project, identified as the locally preferred alternative (LPA) by the MPO, will need to demonstrate good performance in relation to the FTA project evaluation criteria in order to be selected for entry into the Project Development phase of FTA oversight, if the project will seek federal New Starts funding.

The identified LPA must be included in the region’s financially constrained Long Range Transportation Plan as a project programmed for more detailed planning and engineering analysis and for the preparation of the required level of NEPA study and documentation. In addition, the project must be adopted in the next Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) as a fully funded planning and environmental study with the appropriate levels of local, state and federal funding to carry out the analysis.
All projects must be evaluated and rated on a set of statutorily defined project justification and local financial commitment criteria and receive and maintain at least a “Medium” overall rating to advance through the various phases and be eligible for funding. The rules and guidelines governing the New Starts process are periodically updated as policies are revised. Annex 1 at the end of this document provides more detail on the FTA capital grant process, project evaluation criteria and rating methodology, and project financial analysis.

Candidate projects for FTA grant funding are evaluated through a competitive project in consideration of the amount and share of federal funding requested and the performance of the project in relation to FTA project evaluation criteria. The funding available for a well-performing project is a function of FTA commitments to projects with adopted multi-year grant agreements and the number of projects in the pipeline. A summary of the FY 2016 FTA budget recommendations to Congress listed below provides a reasonable representation of the level of funds available and how they are proposed for distribution to various categories of grants:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Funding Category</th>
<th>FY2016 Amount</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Existing New Starts Construction Grant Agreements:</td>
<td>$1,385 M</td>
<td>42.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recommended New Starts Projects Not Yet Under Agreement:</td>
<td>$792 M</td>
<td>24.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recommended Core Capacity Funding:</td>
<td>$351 M</td>
<td>10.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recommended Small Starts Projects Not Yet Under Agreement:</td>
<td>$353 M</td>
<td>10.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accelerated Project Delivery and Development:</td>
<td>$320 M</td>
<td>9.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oversight Activities:</td>
<td>$49 M</td>
<td>1.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL:</td>
<td>$3,250 M</td>
<td>100.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It is seen that $353 million is proposed for Small Starts projects not already included in the program. This amount is spread over nine projects, with a total project cost ranging from $11 to $75 million. While the project specific share varies somewhat, collectively these projects are receiving 50% federal funding. In addition, eight other projects are proposed for admission into the Small Starts program for project development, and there are about 30 projects in the Small Starts pipeline presently in some stage of development or construction.

8.3.2 Surface Transportation Program

Federal Surface Transportation Program (STP) funds provide flexible funding that may be used for just about any type of transportation-related project. MAP-21 continues the regulation that 50 percent of a state’s STP apportionment is suballocated to areas based on their relative share of the total state population with the other 50 percent available for use in any area of the State. These suballocations to the urban areas are called attributable funds. For the Birmingham MPO these funds are referred to as STPBH (for Birmingham) funds. The Birmingham Regional Long Range Transportation Plan identifies $15,775,690 in STPBH funding annually.

The Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) is similar to the previous Transportation Enhancement (TE) program. The most significant difference to the older TE program is that TAP funding can be used for projects defined as transportation alternatives, including on- and off-road pedestrian and bicycle facilities such as sidewalks and trails. Each state’s TAP funds are suballocated using a formula similar to
STP funds. The Birmingham Regional Long Range Transportation Plan identifies $1,197,911 in annual regional TAP funding.

8.3.3 Congestion Management Air Quality Funding

Historically, Birmingham metropolitan planning area projects and programs funded with Congestion Management Air Quality Funding (CMAQ) monies have proven to be innovative in the types of solutions provided to common mobility problems. Additionally, this innovation has largely been driven by the Birmingham metropolitan planning area’s desire to attain national ambient air quality standards mandated by the federal Clean Air Act. Programs and projects are funded in air quality non-attainment and maintenance areas for ozone, carbon monoxide (CO), and small particulate matter that reduce transportation-related emissions.

Generally, projects eligible under the CMAQ program prior to enactment of MAP-21 remain eligible with the new authorization. All CMAQ projects must demonstrate the three primary elements of eligibility: transportation identity, emissions reduction, and location in or benefitting a nonattainment or maintenance area. While project eligibilities are continued, there is some modification with new language placing considerable emphasis on select project types including electric and natural gas vehicle infrastructure and diesel retrofits. The Birmingham Regional Long Range Transportation Plan identifies $10,902,559 in annual regional CMAQ funding.

8.3.4 Other Local Funding

The implementation of new premium transit projects typically involves some measure of local or regional funding outside of FTA grant funding. Some states have a specific funding commitment to transit capital projects, but this is not the case in Alabama. However, it is proposed to use the STP funds flowing to Alabama as another source of project funding. On the local front, as discussed in Annex 1 of this report in greater detail, local funding from a dedicated sales or property tax is used in many successful transit programs around the country. In lieu of that, many communities utilize general revenues from sales or property taxes to provide a local match to FTA capital grants, and for providing funding for ongoing transit operations which is essentially a local funding responsibility.
8.4 TRANSIT PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY

This section of the report presents the proposed transit project implementation strategy over five major steps, each of which has more detailed steps.

8.4.1 Step 1: BJCTA Bus Route Improvements

This step entails the implementation of several BJCTA bus route improvements within the Southwest Corridor, as discussed in Section 8.2.4.

8.4.1.1 Combine Routes 41 and 8

As noted previously, by connecting these two routes, their combined length will be shortened by over a third, saving bus revenue hours of service coverage and the related costs.

8.4.1.2 Combine Routes 5 and 45

The connection of these two routes would be operated from Five Points West outward with an integrated schedule and multiple legs on the branches. This will allow continuation of the increased frequency along the Route 45 alignment north of Aronov Drive, and coverage of the Route 5 branches.

8.4.1.3 Combine Routes 1 and 3

The two routes are identical between downtown Birmingham and 14th St. SW at Tuscaloosa Ave., so the route would be operated from this point outward with an integrated schedule and multiple legs on the branches.

8.4.1.4 Develop Bessemer Super Stop

In Section 5.7.4 of Part 2 of this study, the Bessemer Super Stop was presented as a major transit node in downtown Bessemer. Ultimately, this node would serve the BRT – Arterial corridor, Routes 1 and 45, the proposed Hwy. 150 Connector route to the Galleria Mall in Hoover, the proposed Bessemer Shuttle, and one of the express bus routes proposed for the I-20/I-59 corridor. A proposed site and configuration for this Super Stop was shown in Part 2. The RPCGB has undertaken a closer look at this proposed facility to refine its location and configuration; those results are not yet available.

As part of Step 1 of the transit project implementation process, it is proposed to implement the Bessemer Super Stop. Its implementation will support downtown Bessemer redevelopment initiatives. It is anticipated that the land acquisition and site improvements for the Super Stop facility would be funded by STP and/or CMAQ funding available to the Birmingham region as discussed in Section 8.3 of this report.

8.4.2 Step 2: Small Starts Grant Application

Step 2 of the transit project implementation process begins to advance the proposed BRT – Arterial transit project.
8.4.2.1 Combine Phase 1 Southwest Corridor BRT with US 11 East – Phase 1 BRT

As discussed in Section 8.2.2, the approach to implementing the first BRT project in the Birmingham has evolved to the current proposal to link portions of the US 11 West and US 11 East corridors as the first phase of implementation. This will capture and reward high ridership districts, strengthen transportation access to and across downtown Birmingham, and facility implementation with a project lying entirely within the City of Birmingham.

8.4.2.2 Revise Ridership Projections

Ridership forecasts for the US 11 West corridor were developed for the entire length of the proposed BRT-Arterial line from downtown Birmingham to Academy Drive in Bessemer. This forecast also assumed that downtown Birmingham would be served by the proposed Downtown ITP Connector. According to ridership forecasts under this study, the portion of the proposed US 11 West BRT-Arterial corridor from Five Points West to downtown Birmingham generated approximately 600 daily boardings for its planned seven BRT stations out of the total daily US 11 West BRT corridor boardings of 3,387. The Downtown ITP connection had estimated daily boarding figure of 484. Ridership forecasts for the US 11 East corridor BRT are currently under development.

With the linkage of the Phase 1 section of the US 11 West corridor from Five Points West to downtown Birmingham, and the US 11 East corridor from downtown Birmingham east to Parkway East, updated ridership estimates will need to be developed. Other background transit service assumptions will also need to be taken into consideration.

8.4.2.3 Revise Project Cost Estimates

The evolution of the proposed combined east-west BRT corridor will require some refinement of prior project cost estimates for capital requirements (BRT vehicles, bus maintenance facility accommodations, BRT stations, other roadway improvements (signing, pavement markings, geometric adjustments, bus bays, etc.), and other supporting actions), as well as refined estimates the bus operations costs. The target for the combined corridor capital improvements is a project with a cost of $50 million or less, which would be approximately $3 million per mile, including vehicles.

8.4.2.4 Complete City of Birmingham / BJCTA / MPO Financial Plan

As part of Step 2 activities, the financial plan for the capital and operating costs for the Phase 1 combined US 11 East and US 11 West corridor BRT service will need to be refined and solidified. The financial plan is a critical element of the FTA Small Starts project development process. Appropriate financial commitments and agreements along with corresponding public body actions as needed will need to be accomplished to underpin the financial plan for the project.

8.4.2.5 Locally Preferred Alternative Adoption

As part of Step 2, the participating public agencies (anticipated to be the City of Birmingham, BJCTA, and the RPCGB acting as the MPO) would be requested to endorse and adopt the combined BRT project as the Locally Preferred Alternative. These actions signify the consensus of the public bodies on the

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alternative as defined as well as the commitment of the agencies to cooperatively undertake the implementation of this project.

8.4.2.6 FTA Small Starts Grant Application

The final and culminating action in Step 2 is to complete the FTA Small Starts Grant Application and request to enter the Project Development phase. This is a 2-year period in which any required project refinement and environmental documentation is prepared and approved. Also during this period, development of transportation improvement plans would be developed to at least a preliminary level.

There are a variety of challenges confronting near-term implementation of the proposed BRT-Arterial transit project. These include improving the financial standing of the presumed project sponsor BJCTA relative to FTA project rating criteria, and improving ratings for Land Use and Economic Development criteria which under FTA rating criteria reward advance implementation of transit-supportive land use regulatory and zoning policies and even seek evidence of positive results of such policies in advance of actual project implementation. While the project itself performs well in terms of ridership attracted for its cost, the anticipated rating of other FTA project rating factors need to be boosted for the project to be competitive in the arena of FTA New Starts funding.

8.4.3 Step 3: Phase 1 Southwest Corridor BRT

Step 3 constitutes the initial implementation of Phase 1 of the BRT corridor extending from Five Points West to Parkway East. The Southwest Corridor portion of this implementation phase is discussed as follows:

8.4.3.1 Replace Combined Routes 8 and 41

As was discussed under Step 1 above, Routes 8 and 41 are to be combined to provide a combination of service delivery efficiency and improved service for transit riders. Under Phase 1 of the BRT implementation in the Southwest Corridor, the portion of this combined route between downtown Birmingham and Five Points West, would be essentially duplicated by the proposed Phase 1 Southwest Corridor BRT. This requires eliminating existing local bus stops, with this section being served by seven BRT stations. The average spacing of these stations would be 3,700 feet, with an average maximum walking distance between stations of 1,850 feet, or about 4.5 blocks. This is mid-range in desirable maximum walking distance of ¼ to ½ miles, or 3-6 blocks. Southwest of Five Points West, it is presumed this route would maintain a branch configuration to continue service along the original Route 8 corridor through Fairfield and the original Route 41 alignment along US 11 to Bessemer.

8.4.3.2 Service Branding and Station Design

Another important component of the BRT service planning is to develop a branding identity for the distinctive, quality transit service to be provided. The design of the BRT stations would also be an integral aspect of branding, with features of the station tied into the branding and with the design providing a look unique to the BRT service. Stations would be designed in a 3-tier hierarchy, depending on anticipated ridership at the stations as Neighborhood, Hub, and Activity Center stations, with varying degrees of size and amenities, but all sharing a common architectural appearance. Several potential designs and service branding options were examined in Section 5.7 of the Part 2- Transit Alternatives.
Report document. Proposed branding and station design will need to be integrated with concepts being examined for the US 11 East BRT service corridor. As noted in Part 2, one approach would be to conduct a community-wide contest to invite names to brand the service and even sketches of potential station configurations, with prizes going to the finalists and/or the winners of the contest.

8.4.3.3 Build Five Points West Super Stop

A transit Super Stop has long been planned at Five Points West in western Birmingham, near the city’s Crossplex sports and arena complex. Section 5.7 of the Part 2- Transit Alternatives Report document discussed this project further and provided a conceptual site plan for the facility location that emerged from options considered in this study. The proposed location is on Ave. W just east of US 11 between the Five Points West library site on the south side of the street and the Harris Arena on the north side. This location utilizes public street right-of-way and land on both sides of the street controlled by the City of Birmingham. The configuration was defined to accommodate both existing BJCTA routes passing through the area, the new Southwest Corridor BRT service, and perhaps an activity center shuttle bus in the future. The layout facilitates the looping of buses if needed to reverse their direction as well. The configuration is scalable with subcomponents that could be implemented in phases if desired. Figure 8.X below provides the conceptual layout of this facility, which would be the Phase 1 terminus of the Southwest Corridor BRT-Arterial service.

8.4.3.4 Construct BRT Stations

The principal cost components of the proposed BRT service are the BRT vehicles and the BRT stations. A final determination will need to be made as to the level of features to be installed as part of the hierarchy of three station sizes. For the largest Activity Center stations, the amenities and advanced technology elements could include: so called Next Bus technology featuring audio and text message panels announcing the time remaining for the next BRT bus to arrive at the station, transit service information panels, emergency call buttons and/or video camera monitoring, nighttime lighting by way of solar panels, overhead canopy, seating, trash receptacles, and bicycle racks if needed.

8.4.3.5 Traffic Signal Priority System

Also discussed in Section 5.7 of the Part 2- Transit Alternatives Report document, a traffic signal priority (TSP) system is an important element of the BRT service strategy, given that buses will operate in mixed traffic flow. TSP facilitates the movement of BRT vehicles by extending a green light at traffic signal or by initializing a green light as a bus approaches. This system requires modification of the traffic controller equipment at each programmed traffic signal as well as a transponder onboard each transit vehicle. In Phase 1, TSP would be installed at traffic signals along the proposed BRT alignment between Five Points West and downtown Birmingham on segments of 6th Ave. S, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Drive, and Lomb Ave. SW.

8.4.3.6 Implement BRT Improvements

This element covers the deployment of other BRT improvement components including vehicles and facilities needed to support BRT implementation such as storage space and maintenance capability improvements.

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8.4.4 Step 4 – Bessemer / McCalla Express Bus Services

Step 4 of implementation of proposed Southwest Corridor transit improvements as described in Section 5.7 of the Part 2- Transit Alternatives Report document includes development of park-and-ride lots and instituting peak and off-peak transit services to Bessemer area destinations via I-20/I-59, as described below:

8.4.4.1 Construct Park-and-Ride Lots

The first element of Step 4 is the development of park-and-ride lots in the southwestern end of the corridor. These lots would support commuters utilizing the Express Bus services to be implemented as part of this implementation step. Section 5.7 of the Part 2- Transit Alternatives Report document identified the following park-and-ride lot locations that would be served by two express bus routes operating along I-20/I-59 from downtown Birmingham:

- Bessemer Park-and-Ride Lot: to be located at the interchange of I-20/I-59 and the 18th St. N/19th St. N one-way pair.
- Academy Drive Park-and-Ride Lot: to be located east of the I-20/I-59 interchange with Academy Drive on Alabama DOT right-of-way.
- Promenade Tannehill Shopping Center at the interchange of I-459 at Eastern Valley Drive, on spaces leased from the shopping center.

It is envisioned that ALDOT would be a partner in the implementation of these park-and-ride lots through use of its right-of-way and the application of CMAQ or STP funding to underwrite the capital costs.

8.4.4.2 Implement Express Bus Routes

This component covers express bus vehicle purchase and other supporting activities needed to implement this service.

8.4.4.3 Peak Period Express Bus Service

This component of this implementation step would be the institution of peak hour express bus service along I-20/I-59 between downtown Birmingham and Bessemer/McCalla as described in Section 8.2.3 of this report.

8.4.4.4 Off-Peak Service Express Bus Service

This component of this implementation step would be the institution of off-peak hour express bus service along I-20/I-59 between downtown Birmingham and Bessemer/McCalla as described in Section 8.2.3 of this report.
8.4.5  Step 5 – Phase 2 Southwest Corridor BRT

Step 5 of Southwest Corridor transit implementation is focused on implementing Phase 2 of the BRT-Arterial corridor project, as follows:

8.4.5.1  Extend Southwest Corridor BRT to Bessemer

The step focuses on implementing Phase 2 of the Southwest Corridor BRT-Arterial project by extending Phase 1 from Five Points West south to Academy Drive by way of a jog into downtown Bessemer and the Bessemer transit Super Stop. Detailed information on this transit improvement is provided in Section 5.7 of the Part 2- Transit Alternatives Report document.

As part of this action, the existing BJCTA service along the Route 45 branch of the BJCTA Route 5/Route 45 combination would be removed, replaced by the new BRT-Arterial service along this corridor; the Route 5 branches would continue. Along the original Route 45 corridor, this action would eliminate the designated existing local service stops, but would yield an average maximum walking distance along US 11 to a station of 5 blocks which is acceptable. This distance varies and where there is more land development, the walking distances are shorter.

8.4.5.2  FTA Small Starts Grant Application

This element of Step 5 mirrors that in Step 2 to complete the FTA Small Starts Grant Application for the Phase 2 BRT project and request to enter the Project Development phase. It is contemplated that this is an initiative that could be undertaken by the Southwest Corridor Coalition as the organization bridging across the several corridor municipalities and partnering governmental entities. It is also presumed that BJCTA and RPCGB will be active partners in executing this element.

8.4.5.3  Traffic Signal Priority System

As for the Phase 1 implementation component, the element involves the installation of the TSP system at traffic signals mostly along US 11 from Five Points West to Academy Drive. The element entails the construction of the additional BRT stations with amenities and technology elements as described for the Phase 1 component of the project.

8.4.5.4  Construct BRT Stations

The element entails the construction of the additional BRT stations with amenities and technology elements as described for the Phase 1 component of the project.

8.4.5.5  Implement BRT Service

This element covers the deployment of other BRT improvement components including vehicles and facilities needed to support BRT implementation such as storage space and maintenance capability improvements.
8.5 SOUTHWEST CORRIDOR TRANSIT PROJECT FINANCIAL PLAN

The implementation of the proposed Central Birmingham Arterial Bus Rapid Transit Route which combines Phase 1 of the Southwest Corridor (US 11 West) BRT-Arterial transit and the US 11 East BRT-Arterial corridor east to Parkway East requires the development of a viable financial plan for both the capital and operating costs of the total project. This is a requirement to fulfill FTA Small Starts project application requirements, and, of course, for the eventuality of actual transit revenue service.

Further discussions during the US 11 study process has begun to identify a potential strategy for implementation of a Phase 1 component of a BRT-Arterial project combining elements from both the US 11 West and US 11 East corridors. This approach combines proposed premium transit service segments from both these transit corridors. This corridor – Central Birmingham Arterial Bus Rapid Transit Route – lies entirely within the City of Birmingham, captures some of the highest transit ridership available, and facilitates a Phase 1 implementation strategy by focusing on the portion of the dual corridors which are contained within the City of Birmingham, as a key funding partner for the proposed Phase 1 transit improvements. This strategy clearly needs further refinement through the balance of the US 11 East corridor study and subsequent planning.

Basic elements of this financial plan for the initial premium transit corridor through central Birmingham is understood as follows:

- **Step 1: BJCTA Bus Route Improvements**
  - Capital Costs
    - None
  - Operating Costs:
    - Expected economies of operating cost by route refinements

- **Step 2: Small Starts Grant Application**
  - Capital Costs
    - None
  - Operating Costs:
    - None

- **Step 3: Phase 1 – Southwest Corridor BRT**
  - Capital Costs
    - FTA Small Starts Grant Funding (approximately 50%)
    - Birmingham region STP and CMAQ funds
    - Other City of Birmingham contributions
  - Operating Costs:
    - Operating costs avoided by Southwest Corridor BJCTA route refinements
    - Additional City of Birmingham contributions

- **Step 4: Bessemer/McCalla Express Bus Services**
  - Capital Costs
    - Birmingham region STP and CMAQ funds
    - Other local contributions
  - Operating Costs:
    - Operating costs avoided by Southwest Corridor BJCTA route refinements
    - Additional regional contributions
• **Step 5: Phase 2 – Southwest Corridor BRT**
  - Capital Costs
    - FTA Small Starts Grant Funding (approximately 50%)
    - Birmingham region STP and CMAQ funds
    - Other local contributions
  - Operating Costs:
    - Operating costs avoided by Southwest Corridor BJCTA route refinements
    - Additional regional contributions

The target for Phase 1 BRT transit improvement costs is $50 million or less for capital costs including BRT vehicles, and approximately $6 million per year or less in annual operating costs, both in 2015 dollars. Continuing analysis of potential financial plan strategies is being conducted under the US 11 East transit corridor alternatives study. That study will capture further refinements of the integrated financial strategy for the proposed Central Birmingham Arterial Bus Rapid Transit corridor combining elements from the both the US 11 West and US 11 East transit study corridors.

### 8.6 LAND USE IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

#### 8.6.1 City of Birmingham Comprehensive Master Plan

This is the City of Birmingham's first full comprehensive plan since 1961 and the first comprehensive plan based on a community outreach process. With community consensus behind it, this plan is intended to take the city on a new strategic path for the 21st century, a path that moves it towards a renaissance of city neighborhoods, an improved economy with more jobs and opportunities, and a better quality of life for all.
The City of Birmingham Comprehensive Master Plan (Figure 8.10) was developed through a process of broad public participation by citizens, business owners, and other stakeholders. The planning included citywide forums, workshops in different parts of the city, topical workshops, and open house events. Stakeholders from all walks of life participated through the process and served on the Steering Committee that helped shape the plan.

**Figure 8.10. City of Birmingham Comprehensive Plan Summary Map**

The document includes a detailed implementation plan that sets out specific actions to achieve plan goals and its use as a guide in capital improvement planning, work plans, and land use decision making. A Comprehensive Plan Advisory Committee of citizens will serve as plan stewards, advising governmental and other partners, and monitoring progress. Partnerships with residents, businesses, medical and educational institutions, and nonprofits are also envisioned as part of implementation strategies. Annual public hearings are proposed to update citizens on plan implementation. Plan focus areas include urban infrastructure (transportation and transit, streets and circulation, and utilities), communities and neighborhoods (preservation and renewal), green systems (natural resources, parks, trails, sustainability, and green practices), and the economy (sustaining downtown, reinforcing and growing building blocks and base industries). A proactive strategy is proposed to carry the plan and its implementation forward as a living process.

Relative to the Southwest Corridor, the plan acknowledges the strategy is proposed to carry the plan and its implementation forward as a living process importance of the Five Points West district as an anchor node in the city's urban form. It incorporates the elements of improved transit service along US 11, designation of mode-specific streets, application of Complete Streets concepts, and implementation of the Red Rock Ridge and Valley trail system as important components of a well-rounded transportation system that supports community renewal and quality of life. From a land use perspective, both the Five Points West and Titusville communities were identified as significant nodes.

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warranting focus as targets for continuing renewal and redevelopment. The City is pursuing the development of community renewal plans as recommended by the comprehensive plan.

8.6.2 Framework Plans for Titusville and Western Area

The Titusville Framework Plan was adopted by Birmingham Planning Commission on February 4, 2015. The Titusville Framework Plan identified 6th Avenue South as BRT corridor, and stations at the following locations:

- 6th Avenue SW at Memorial Park (between Alpha Street South and Beta Street South)
- 6th Avenue SW at Center Street
- 6th Avenue SW at Martin Luther King, Jr. Drive

6th Avenue SW was identified as a Neighborhood Main Street and emphasized transit, bikes, and pedestrians as primary travel modes. The plan also identified that the Center Street Station was the center of a transit neighborhood typology and encouraged that the Complete Streets policy application begin in this targeted area (about 1/2 mile radius around station).

The Western Area Framework Plan is one of the first community plans developed by the City of Birmingham and the Regional Planning Commission of Greater Birmingham. Sixteen neighborhoods are covered by the plan as shown in the figure. The draft Western Area Framework Plan which addresses economic and community development was completed in February 2015 and will be reviewed by the Birmingham City Council in March 2015.

8.6.3 Form Based Code for Five Points West and Titusville

One of the key strategies for advancing progressive and innovative land use development, especially around transit oriented nodes that are focused around BRT station locations at major activity centers is “form-based code”. This code is a means of regulating land development in a manner which drives the configuration and appearance of built facilities by focusing on physical form and encouraging a mix of land uses, rather than conventional zoning codes and land use regulations which tend to separate land uses and control their density. The intended result is more vibrant, interactive urban forms that are aesthetically appealing and functional. They are in part a response to traditional land use management which has encouraged low density urban sprawl patterns of development. The land use consultants Duany Plater-Zyberk & Company have developed a version of form based code tagged as “SmartCode” which is a unified land development ordinance template that is available as freeware.

In its Vestavia Hills – US 31 Redevelopment Plan, the RPCGB endorsed a form-based code to help generate the desired reconfiguration of retail and business developments along the study corridor. The
Jefferson County Planning Department has adopted a similar code, though its potential application falls into more rural suburban fringe areas where its influence has had limited application to date.

Part 3 of this corridor study addressed form-based code as a very useful component to be applied near the major station locations along the US 11 corridor, including the Princeton-Baptist Hospital complex, Five Points West, Aronov Drive (Western Hills), the tri-city station area (Brighton, Lipscomb, north Bessemer district), downtown Bessemer, and South Bessemer.

As part of the Birmingham Comprehensive Plan Update recently completed, form-based code was recommended as an instrument for incorporation into a revised unified city land use code, supporting form-based code as an overlay for key mixed use districts. The Highland Park district is an example of this approach.

Within the City of Birmingham, this form based code approach could be applied to BRT station areas surrounding proposed transit stations in Titusville, Five Points West, and potentially the Princeton-Baptist Hospital district. As the RPCGB progresses under its agreement with the City of Birmingham to develop neighborhood district framework plans, it is expected that incorporation of form-based code provisions will be a central component, which will open up new redevelopment potentials at these key activity center nodes within Birmingham proper. Over time, this strategy could be extended to station areas in the other municipalities further southwest in the corridor.

8.6.4 Corridor Cities Master Plan Updates

The Cities of Bessemer, Fairfield and Midfield were the subject of updated city plan documents which addressed specific land use and development needs through the RPCGB. In addition, the RPCGB has provided advisory planning services to the Cities of Brighton and Lipscomb. These planning efforts are recapped in the Part 1: Corridor Framework Report document and also considered in the Part 3: Land Use and Economic Development Strategies document. The RPCGB is also contracted with the City of Birmingham to develop framework plans for the Titusville and Western Area districts of the city, as part of followup work to the recently adopted comprehensive plan update for the city; these components are discussed in the sections above.

This study has considered the analyses and findings of these plans in assessing BRT alternatives, in determining BRT station locations, and in developing community land use redevelopment and preservation strategies. As noted, the framework plans for the two districts of Birmingham are a newer planning product, and are informing the implementation of BRT along the 6th Ave. S corridor.

8.7 LAND USE REDEVELOPMENT AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES

Land use redevelopment strategies were examined and defined in Part 3 of the corridor study documentation. Since the completion of that report, other opportunities have emerged and are reported here as update documentation.

8.7.1 City of Birmingham Land Bank Authority

As reported in AL.com on May 8 and July 15, 2014, the Birmingham City Council approved the inaugural members of City of Birmingham Land Bank Authority. Under the provision that created the authority,
the city council appoints four members while Mayor William Bell appoints three members, including himself. The Land Bank is a new tool available to the city to address issues with blighted and other dilapidated or vacant real estate in the city. Some time will be required to establish the Land Bank’s processes and initial focus areas.

According to the newspaper accounts, nearly 20% of Birmingham’s housing stock lies vacant and 7% of those are uninhabitable. The Land Bank renews hope of homeownership for many families and individuals seeking safe, decent and affordable housing in Birmingham. The land bank concept has been successfully applied in many other cities. Effectively managed land bank authorities can create a discernible impact in less than 2 years, and can serve to quickly drive new economic and real estate development, according to John Florio of JFM Community Resources. This in turn helps to restore communities and restore properties to the local and regional tax base, furthering the economic benefit. Increasing the count of occupied “rooftops” also increases support to the local community’s business and economic vitality.

8.7.2 Enhanced Code Enforcement

One of the issues affecting many neighborhoods in the corridor is the decline in the appearance and maintenance of housing stock and businesses. Even when occupied, and especially as rental properties, landlords begin to avoid basic property maintenance of the building exterior and interior, as well as the grounds. Deterioration of structures, sometimes to the point of creating safety hazards, as well as dumping and abandoned vehicles, become commonplace and contribute to the decline of properties. The structures become so stressed they can no longer be occupied, and there is little economic value left to extract from the property. They become abandoned and turn into neighborhood eyesores, attracting unsavory interests including gangs, squatters, and vandals.

One tool in addressing this cycle of decline is the level of code enforcement that is conducted by the responsible municipality. While it is a challenge to apply strict code enforcement in a neighborhood of lower income owner-occupied dwellings, given their economic resources to maintain the property, some degree of enforcement can prevent the neighborhood from passing the tipping point to more rapid decline. As rental units operated by absentee landlords become more prevalent in the area, code enforcement is invaluable to reign in more rampant decline.

One challenge to municipalities on the decline is a diminishing tax base which reduces the capacity of the municipality to employ the staff needed to maintain and enforce sufficiently vigorous code enforcement to contain excessive deterioration. As discussed at length in the Part 3 – Land Use document in Sections 6.4 and 6.5, targeting of scarce resources to preserve stable neighborhoods and to manage negative trends in transitioning neighborhoods is a productive strategy to maximize return on investment. Code enforcement is a vital element in the toolkit of neighborhood preservation that needs to be applied in a targeted and focused fashion as part of a multipronged approach.

8.7.3 Loveman Village

The 500-unit Loveman Village in Titusville, located east of Martin Luther King, Jr. Drive and south of the CSX railroad on the west side of the Titusville area, and one of Birmingham’s oldest public housing developments, will be demolished and replaced with 475 units at a cost of $70 million to $90 million as reported by AL.com (Alabama Media Group) on January 29, 2015. The project will be designed to
revitalize both the site and the surrounding neighborhood and will be financed through the federal Rental Assistance Demonstration (RAD), a program that allows housing authorities to mortgage its properties and seek conventional private loans for major renovation or rebuilding.

The Housing Authority in 2014 was notified that it was not awarded a Choice Neighborhood federal grant to redevelop Loveman Village. Instead, the housing authority was granted federal RAD approval for Loveman Village, and has long-term plans to use the program at other Birmingham properties. The Housing Authority has applied for $15 million in state tax credits and will seek a private mortgage for the project. The Housing Authority will learn the status of its tax credit application in June 2015 and plans to break ground in August 2015. A general contractor for the project has been selected. The work is planned to occur in three phases.

This housing complex was identified for a BRT transit station along Martin Luther King, Jr. Drive. The site redevelopment planning creates an opportunity to optimize walking connectivity to the proposed BRT transit station area from the new housing community.

8.7.4 Economic Development Strategies

Recommendations to foster economic development in the Southwest Corridor were developed at the end of the study’s Part 3 document, and include the following:

• Enhance coordination between the Corridor Coalition and the following regional economic development driver organizations, utilizing and partnering with their resources:
  o Jefferson County Industrial and Economic Development Authority,
  o Bessemer Interstate Industrial Park Board,
  o City of Birmingham Economic Development Department, and
  o Birmingham Business Alliance.

• Economic Development Partnering with the Birmingham Business Alliance (BBA): The Corridor Coalition can work more closely with the BBA and its Blueprint Birmingham: A Growth Strategy for the Seven County Region. That document’s Target Sector Analysis focused on preserving, reinforcing and grown the region’s legacy and core business sectors. Section 7.4 extracted those strategies which relate to the Southwest Corridor and offered corridor-specific strategy actions through which the Corridor Coalition could leverage and partner with BBA efforts to capitalize on the regional initiative.

• Economic Development Partnering with the RPCGB Economic Development Department (EDD): The Corridor Coalition should coordinate closely with the EDD and its annual Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy for the region to take fullest advantage of EDD’s economic development support services as described in Section 7.4, including planning studies, grant assistance, data sharing, revolving loans, workforce development, and others.

• Corridor Map and Brochure: To improve awareness of corridor resources, a corridor resource map should be developed to catalogue and locate all prominent resources, such as hospitals, schools and colleges, civic facilities (CrossPlex, Legion Field, Bessemer Civic Center, etc.), historic sites, parks, shopping districts, major employers, and other unique corridor attractions. A good case study of the Woodward Ave. corridor in Detroit is documented in Part 3 of the study documents.
• Wayfinding and Guide Signing: To enhance orientation of both corridor residents and visitors across this lengthy corridor, it is proposed that a wayfinding and guide signing program be considered for planning and implementation across the corridor. The primary referencing spine would be the Bessemer Super Highway which extends from inside the City of Birmingham south to Academy Drive. Two elements are proposed within this initiative.

• All-American Highway Designation: Another way to bring identity to the study corridor is to seek designation under the federal National Scenic Byways Program as an All-American Road. This program is overseen by the U.S. Department of Transportation, Federal Highway Administration. The program is a grass-roots collaborative effort established to help recognize, preserve and enhance selected roads throughout the United States. The U.S. Secretary of Transportation recognizes certain roads as All-American Roads or National Scenic Byways based on one or more archeological, cultural, historic, natural, recreational and scenic qualities. Currently, these roads in Alabama are recognized under this program:
  - Alabama’s Coastal Connection
  - Natchez Trace Parkway
  - Selma to Montgomery March Byway
  - Talladega Scenic Drive

An informative case study for the designation as an All-American Highway under the National Scenic Byways program is the Woodward Ave. Automotive Heritage Trail in Detroit Michigan. This corridor heralds the legacy of this highway as the corridor along which our automotive legacy developed. What is very interesting about this case study is that a 501 (c)(3) non-profit corporation was formed around the goal of working for the betterment of the Woodward Ave. Corridor. Comprising 11 cities, numerous institutions, businesses, civic groups, and private individuals who contribute to the non-profit with funding support and sweat equity, this group has as its focus areas promoting tourism, corridor investment, and collaboration in corridor redevelopment. Working through its resources and collaborating with various planning and governmental agencies, it has developed a series of reports on marketing, redevelopment, TOD, investment, complete streets, and other corridor-specific topics. The website even has a page devoted to Woodward Ave. merchandise which is available for purchase. Books, hats, shirts, and road signs are included in the merchandise online catalogue.

For the Southwest Corridor, the historical theme could focus on the legacy steel industry, evidenced today by the ore and coal mines, the steel mills, and the railroads which were integral elements of the corridor’s national prominence and the basis for its original settlement and development.

The Woodward Ave. corridor can be an inspiration to the Southwest Corridor Coalition, as it is confronting issues associated with Detroit’s well-publicized financial crisis and urban decline, but the group is an energized focal point striving to rebuild a better future on the foundation of the corridor’s legacy and its civic assets and resources. This well-rounded initiative is considered a good template for the Southwest Corridor.
8.8 PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION SCHEDULE

The several parts of the Southwest Corridor study have identified a wide range of recommendations across transit and transportation, land use, and economic development for inclusion in ongoing efforts for betterment of the corridor. To assist in the process of advancing recommendations, the principal proposed actions have been summarized in Table 8.4 which presents the proposed actions grouped by category, with identification of the key participants, and a generalized schedule of the likely timing for execution of the proposed action, along with some explanatory comments.

It would be possible to implement some of the specified upgrades in phases or increments, outside of FTA New Starts funding. Examples would be development of the Super Stops in phases, one of the park-and-ride lots with fewer initial spaces served by express buses operating only in peak hours, and further upgrades to existing BJCTA service such as headway improvements on Routes 1 and 45 from downtown Birmingham to Aronov Drive.

Furthermore, TOD improvements around anchor transit stations could occur before actual premium transit service is implemented – this is referred to as “transit-ready” development which accommodates TOD design principles and preserves the ability to implement other transit-supportive improvements such as bus bays and Complete Streets treatments, while responding to market conditions which validate the earlier implementation of a development project.

This table should serve as roadmap to guide the work of the US 11 Southwest Corridor Coalition and all its participating partners in prioritizing, layout out specific action plans, and executing those plans with the support and commitment from as many corridor stakeholders, constituents, agencies, and other partners as possible. It is important to prioritize the work of the coalition, stay focused, utilize subcommittees as instruments of progress, and to track accomplishments and success stories.
Table 8.4. Implementation Guide for Corridor Study Recommendations
Table 8.4. Implementation Guide for Corridor Study Recommendations (Continued)
Table B.4. Implementation Guide for Corridor Study Recommendations (Continued)
8.9 REDEVELOPMENT IMPLEMENTING ENTITY: SOUTHWEST CORRIDOR COALITION

This section introduces the concept of a corridor-oriented redevelopment implementing entity to coordinate and oversee efforts to restore, replenish, reinvigorate and reinvent the Southwest Corridor. A Southwest Corridor Coalition is proposed as a clearinghouse organization to bring together corridor governments, stakeholders and other interests, marshalling their collective resources and coupling with partner agencies and organizations to tackle projects to reverse the fortunes of the corridor.

8.9.1 Membership

This section addresses the topics regarding the structure and membership of such a coalition, and how it would operate.

8.9.1.1 Background

In the report Voices from Forgotten Cities (Voices from Forgotten Cities: Innovative Revitalization Coalitions in America’s Older Small Cities, Lorlene Hoyt and Andre Leroux, MIT Dept. of Planning and Urban Studies, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Boston, MA, 2007), the authors recount the fortunes of 150 smaller American cities that have lost their former dominance in some niche category and fallen on hard times due loss of industry, economic and public revenue decline, erosion of a common community mindset, and less robust civic and institutional leadership.

It has been noted that the rise and fall of communities is the cumulative result of millions of individual decisions by businesses, residents and government about where to live, where to operate, how to function, where to invest or sell, and how to manage public policy for the community good, whether is is rampant growth or seemingly unstoppable decline. In their research, they found that cities that best tackled the challenge of revitalization were successful on several fronts, including leadership, civic infrastructure, vision and planning, social involvement, quality of life elements, access to basic opportunities, creative “mining” of resources and partners, and image, perception and attitude management. They stress the importance of partnering and coalitions to provide continuity of effort and collaboration of common interests to produce forward motion and turning the tide on the outcome of all those individual decisions made by businesses, residents, and institutions in the community. The report closes with a list of ingredients in instigating and sustaining a successful revitalization initiative, as shown in Table 8.5.
Table 8.5. Ingredients for Instigating Innovative Revitalization Coalitions

- Start small.
- Bring people together to talk about something they care about, not just something you think they should care about.
- Do one thing well. It should be concrete. It should be visible.
- Then take the next step. Be consistent, persistent, and relentlessly hopeful.
- Build trust.
- Raise expectations.
- Convene a group of committed and talented people who can support each other.
- Respect yourself and your community. Don’t act desperately or discount your future.
- Save the treasures of the past.
- Be intentional—do your work strategically and well.
- Generate enthusiasm around a long-term vision for the community.
- Outlast everyone.
- Enable a range of rooted stakeholders to brainstorm and invest in the vision.
- No zero sum games. Play a different game. Make the pie larger.
- Remember the basics: clean and safe streets, access to jobs, education, housing, and recreation.
- Attend to the internal market; it does exist.
- Focus on the needs of working-class families—if they thrive, so will your city.
- Everyone can participate. Be positive. Don’t rehash old history.
- Make it possible for people to participate—provide food and child care, and meet during off hours.
- Focus on the present and future: What can we do now?
- Recognize the importance of active organizing, creating partnerships, and coalitions.
- Create a demand environment where hundreds of people expect things to work right.
- If people aren’t excited about an initiative or project, it’s not working. Stop doing it.
- Creative failure is vital; that’s why you start small.
- Don’t get too invested in organizational structures; build a form that follows function.
- Keep it fun. If it’s not, then there will only be a few true believers.

These insights can contribute to the Southwest Corridor initiative, tailored to its different and unique circumstances, but useful nevertheless. Good leadership typically exhibits the traits that embrace these notions of how to productively and inclusively identify issues, needs, priorities and action plans. A recent article discussing how to accomplish social change (“Collective Impact”, Stanford Social Innovation Review, by John Kania and Mark Kramer, FSG Consultants, Boston, MA, 2011) notes that large-scale social changes, or “collective impact”, such as an integrated reimagining of the Southwest

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Corridor requires **broad cross-sector coordination**, rather than the **isolated intervention within individual sectors, agencies, or organizations**. They assert that greater progress can be made in alleviating challenging social problems if governments, businesses, civic and non-profit groups, educational and medical institutions, and the public were all brought together around a common cause to generate collective impact. There are five conditions identified that can lead to alignment of diverse stakeholders and to significant results. These factors are:

- **Common Agenda**: based on a shared, stated vision of change, as captured in a plan communicating a common agenda, backed by a plan of action,
- **Shared Measurement System**: defining measures of progress and success,
- **Mutually Reinforcing Activities**: with the participants contributing resources based on their capabilities, all channeled into the overarching goal for a given activity,
- **Continuous Communication**: accomplished by meetings, phone and email communications, and ultimately a website complemented by social media, and
- **Backbone Support Organization**: a central coordinating group, with backup resources for coordination and administration activities.

This organized and coordinated approach is a prerequisite for accomplishing steady and forward progress across a large geographic area such as the Southwest Corridor. Moreover, it facilitates the sharing of best practices and lessons learned, improving the efficiency of the initiative in advancing toward the execution of the identified tasks and goals.

So, in short, some form of entity should be created to unify the activities and resources of Jefferson County and the six municipalities along the corridor. Described below are several options for the creation of an entity capable of leading the pursuit of transit improvements, implementing station area, neighborhood, and cargo oriented redevelopment activities, including but not limited to land acquisition and the assembly of redevelopment sites, provision of infrastructure improvements, the financing of redevelopment activities and regulatory changes necessary to accommodate the recommended land uses, densities and development pattern and urban form.

### 8.9.1.2 Formation of a Coordinated Corridor Revitalization Initiative

After reviewing several corridor renewal programs around the country, many of them develop a corridor-focused structure whose primary mission is corridor betterment. Rather than relying on existing government entities to solve corridor problems, it appears that the more successful corridor initiatives around the country form an organization specifically organized to spearhead the pursuit of recommendations in this study, and other goals that are identified. These initiatives rely on collaboration of all the principal governmental units in a corridor, collaborating on a mission of mutual interest and benefit, and recognizing that progress in any part of the corridor is ultimately beneficial for the entire corridor. Such an approach provides structure, organization, and continuity which will enhance the prospects for meaningful actions leading to change in the corridor over time. There are different focal points for such an initiative, including:

- Municipalities and public agencies,
- Corridor activity center anchors,
- Business and civic leaders, or
- Community based non-profit organizations.
For the Southwest Corridor, it was proposed to form a US 11 Southwest Corridor Coalition to drive the identification of priorities and the pursuit of action plans for each. This approach was proposed and could be immediately formed to operate as a voluntary body composed of the six corridor municipalities and Jefferson County for the purpose of coordinating their corridor redevelopment activities, but without the time and political complexity associated with creation of a new legal entity with specific state-authorized powers. In fact, with the leadership of the RPCGB, the US 11 Southwest Corridor Coalition was initiated and has held its first organizational meeting.

The following discussion provides an overview of how such a coalition can be organized and function:

A corridor coalition can be defined as:

- A partnership of affected cities, involved public agencies, and private sector supporters that work together to:
  - Promote the advancement of the Southwest Corridor as a safe, affordable, attractive place to live, work, learn, shop, and play,
  - Stimulate economic development and job creation,
  - Strengthen neighborhoods and engage historically under-represented communities, and
  - Provide people of all backgrounds with better access to opportunities.

But is not:

- A binding contract, nor
- An obligated financial commitment.

The benefits of forming a corridor coalition includes these advantages:

- Create a platform for continuing cooperation, collaboration, and communication,
- Build a framework for collectively advocating for corridor interests,
- Speak with a louder voice about needs and solutions – strength in numbers,
- Share ideas, strategies, and lessons learned, and
- Enhance competitive position in seeking grants and awards.

Such an entity could pool resources among the participating parties in conducting the following activities:

- Collaboration to obtain grants from state or federal government or private foundations.
- Become a unified political force to seek state and federal support both for redevelopment as well as transit.
- The creation of shared GIS inventories of underutilized and abandoned structures, targets for code enforcement and opportunities for creation of parks greenways and other corridor amenities that could support corridor re-investment.
- The creation of a unified set of zoning and development standards that could be implemented through the joint adoption of a corridor overlay district.

One organizational approach that has proved effective involves developing a partnering agreement, with defined processes and procedures, like many ad hoc organizations, as follows:

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• Partnering Agreement:
  o Expression of commitment of intent,
  o Identification of focus areas for membership involvement,
  o Voluntary but not required financial contributions or commitments, and
  o Encouraged actions on the part of members.
• Membership (desirably all signatories):
  o Primary members: Corridor cities and Jefferson County
  o Ex officio members: RPCGB (MPO), ALDOT, BBA and Chambers of Commerce, legislative delegation, economic development agency representatives, and
  o Designated representatives and alternates for each.
  o Committees to engage all other interested stakeholders and parties in primary renewal initiatives.
• Structure:
  o Steering Committee: comprising primary members,
  o Chair and Co-chair/Deputy identified,
  o Subcommittees as appropriate, and
  o Administrative support from the RPCGB.
• Process:
  o Quarterly meetings with agendas, minutes, action items,
  o Roberts’ rules of order,
  o Steering Committee votes on action items, and
  o A defined work program of activities to pursue (can and should evolve over time).

For a productive and focused coalition, what is asked of participants?

• Provide a designated representative and alternate,
• Proactively participate in meetings and events,
• Advocate for issues of mutual interest,
• Identify funding and grant opportunities,
• Support land use plans, regulatory changes, and redevelopment projects,
• Share experiences, ideas, successes, and lessons learned,
• Work cooperatively to leverage resources to advance the corridor mission,
• Provide letters of support for coalition initiatives, and
• Capitalize on the collective resources as a tool for progress.

The priority pursuits of the coalition can range across any identified issue areas. Typical priorities should be well-defined and have general consensus on the most important, as follows:
• Priorities can be any and all interests that will improve quality of life, leverage corridor assets, and address challenges and needs, such as (those in bold were mentioned at the organizational meeting of the coalition):
  o Neighborhood stabilization and renewal,
  o Workforce training and development,
  o Small business retention and development,
  o Integration of transit with corridor projects and trails program,
  o Pedestrian walkability,
  o Improved transit choices,
  o Reuse of brownfields, greyfields, redfields, and vacant properties,

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- Economic development,
- Land use and commercial revitalization, and
- **Support of ongoing projects** (Red Rock Ridge and Valley Trail System, Five Points West).

- Set scope and scale of initial priorities:
  - Identify “doable deeds” and low-hanging fruit,
  - Establish a working framework and pursue small initial successes,
  - Track progress, and
  - Build on successes and tackle larger issues.

An example of a typical meeting agenda helps to convey the way in which the coalition would go about its business, as shown in this hypothetical agenda:

- Opening and introductions
- Approval of Agenda and Past Meeting Minutes
- Items Requiring Approval:
  - Schedule of meetings
  - Membership changes
  - Work program (priority activities)
  - Funding strategies
  - Grant applications
  - Requests to agencies
- Items Not Requiring Approval:
  - Project presentations
  - Invited speakers
  - Project updates or opportunities
  - Issue and strategy discussions
- New Business
- Closing

There are many examples of coalitions that have been formed around the interests of a corridor. Several are listed below, and one of these is profiled in a case study which follows in Figure 8.12 These interests can be single-item focused such as the development of a transit line as for the Maryland and Virginia examples below, or multipurpose (land use/transit/economic development) as in Detroit. The source document for the case study, by the Urban Land Institute, also profiles several others. Some such groups also constitute themselves as a 501(c)(3) corporation, so that they can apply and receive philanthropic or public grant funds. The following is a list of notable corridor improvement organizations:

- **FORT LAUDERDALE**: State Road 7 (US 441) Collaborative [http://www.sr7.htm](http://www.sr7.htm)
- **MARYLAND** (Suburban Washington, DC): Purple Line Corridor Coalition [http://www.smartgrowth.umd.edu/plcc](http://www.smartgrowth.umd.edu/plcc)

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The State Road 7/US 441 Collaborative
A successful corridor coalition initiative is the State Road 7/US 441 Collaborative outside Fort Lauderdale, FL. This initiative was profiled in the 2012 report by the Urban Land Institute, Shifting Suburbs: Reinventing Infrastructure for Compact Development. The excerpts below from that report provides a good profile of what that collaborative has undertaken and accomplished, and how they did it.

State Road 7 (SR-7) is a north–south arterial highway that runs through southeastern Florida’s Broward and Miami-Dade Counties. Also designated US Highway 441 for most of its length, the arterial is used by several popular bus routes and is frequently congested. SR-7 is lined with commercial strip development built in the 1960s and 1970s—aging businesses that are having trouble competing with newer retail areas along other roads nearby. Strong population figures, tourist activity, and a lack of available vacant land for new development indicate strong redevelopment potential for the corridor.

In 2000, local government leaders along the 32-mile route formed the State Road 7/U.S. 441 Collaborative. Now stretching to 41 miles, the collaborative is the longest revitalization effort in the country. The goal of the collaborative—which includes all 17 of the municipalities that SR-7 traverses and is supported by the South Florida Regional Planning Council—is to create a mixed-use, transit-oriented corridor with high-density activity centers located at primary intersections.
The collaborative has undertaken extensive planning and community outreach activities, funded in part by a $1.9 million grant from the U.S. Federal Highway Administration. A ULI Advisory Services panel visited the corridor in 2004 and suggested that nodal redevelopment take place at the highway’s major and minor intersections, with less intensive redevelopment between those nodes. Community input, gathered through charrettes and interviews, revealed that citizens wanted redevelopment, improved public transit facilities and services, and new housing for all income levels, among other goals. “The charrette and the planning process set the stage,” according to Gary Rogers, executive director of the Lauderdale Lakes Community Redevelopment Agency and vice chair of the SR-7 Collaborative.

SR-7 corridor investments during the last ten years have totaled more than $165 million, including $137 million in right-of-way acquisition and construction, $10 million in transit enhancements, $10 million in sewer line infrastructure updates, and $4 million in bus shelter construction. Funding has been provided by the U.S. Department of Transportation, the state, regional planning bodies, and the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, as well as through local in-kind services and funding from local governments.

The Florida Department of Transportation has made a financial commitment to supporting the state road, and the Broward County Metropolitan Planning Organization has committed to finding funds to build transit once the feasibility of light rail or BRT has been determined. Redevelopment of the land along SR-7 has proved challenging, despite the adoption of new land use and zoning standards. Challenges include land assembly and the need to extend sewer infrastructure to places where it does not currently exist, with the economic downturn stalling development of the Lauderdale Lakes Town Center and other sites along the corridor. The work of reinventing SR-7 continues.

Lessons from State Road 7

- A consensus vision and a master plan can help organize the infrastructure and development efforts of multiple municipalities along commercial corridors.
- Funding for collaborative efforts and infrastructure improvements can be drawn from federal, state, and local sources, as well as nonprofits and foundations.

8.9.1.3 Corridor Champions

Successful initiatives typically are led by champions, leaders who embrace the cause, understand its goals, marshal support amongst stakeholders, and maintain the continuity of the effort. This leadership does not have to be from a single individual – it could be a committee or group working in unison to collectively provide that same leadership and commitment. An example is shown in Figure 8.13.

Figure 8.13. A Committed Champion in Roanoke, VA

A Committed Champion in Roanoke, VA

Roanoke is working to reinvent itself for a new future considerably different from its former success as a rail hub. A major part of that effort came from local lawyer and art dealer who has emerged as a commercial developer with a civic conscience.

Ed Walker began developing in 2002 and has undertaken a number of projects, including:
- A dozen unused historic buildings, renovated as residences, and now occupied.
- A cotton gin mill and department store converted into apartments, with units at the low and high ends of the market.
- A building renovated into million dollar condominiums.
- Renovation of a former ice house into residential units.
- Major renovation of a vacant historic hotel, into 132 apartments, some leased to a nearby nursing school for students.
- Conversion of vacant storefronts into a music hall, a restaurant, a café, and a vintage goods shop.

Mr. Walker, who lives downtown with his family, is an advocate of placemaking, and has attracted other developers, and with more than 1,200 new residents, downtown has a livelier pulse. Since 2009, 25 restaurants have opened, with other new businesses following suit.

As noted by Bruce Katz of the Brookings Institution’s Metropolitan Policy Program, “What you are seeing is a group of vanguard developers and vanguard business people who basically spot a trend and then double down or triple down with their own resources on the placemaking agenda”. “This is happening across the country,” he said. “There’s a profit motive for sure, but these are people committed to place.”

8.9.1.4 Corridor Coalition Membership

In discussions during the study and in preparation for the formation of the US 11 Southwest Corridor Coalition, the organizational structure was discussed at length. After considering various options, it was decided to organize the corridor coalition stakeholders and interests into a simple structure that would focus the coalition leadership with the corridor cities and Jefferson County, and surround this group with other governmental and funding partners, civic and social organizations in the corridor, and individual citizens, businesses and other corridor interests, as shown in Figure 8.14.

In summary, the proposed structure includes the following elements:

- **Steering Committee**: Corridor cities and Jefferson County
- **Government and Funding Partners**:
  - ALDOT
  - BJCTA
  - Birmingham Business Alliance
  - Land Bank Authority
  - Jefferson County Industrial Board
  - Fairfield Industrial Board
  - Bessemer Industrial Board
  - Federal Agencies: EPA, HUD
  - CSX Railroad
  - Norfolk Southern Railroad
  - Princeton Baptist Hospital

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The steering committee of the coalition is the driving and guiding force, and consists of the six corridor cities and Jefferson County. Subcommittees can be formed as focus groups for the three primary thrusts of the study covering transportation and transit, land use, and economic development initiatives. Those subcommittees can draw their membership and participation from the pool of stakeholders, partners, civic organizations, and the public as listed above. This structure has proven effective elsewhere and works to engage all interested participants in those areas where they have interest, resources, expertise, and commitment.

8.9.2 Interlocal Agreements

It was recommended in the preceding discussion that the corridor coalition be underpinned by a partnering agreement that expresses the intent of the organization, identifies areas of organizational focus, clarifies that financial contributions are not mandatory but welcome, and frames the actions that are encouraged to occur on the part of the members collectively.

In addition to this foundational agreement, it is expected that the corridor coalition could enter into a variety of interlocal agreements with municipalities, redevelopment authorities, state and regional agencies and organizations, and civic and social service groups and organizations. As noted, incorporation as a 501 (c)(3) organization may be beneficial in the course of these agreements and in becoming an eligible recipient for grants from foundations and public agencies. These various interlocal agreements would be an effective way to formalize working relationships with entities providing assistance in accomplishing specific projects and advancing initiatives of the corridor coalition. They would not be unlike agreements between, for example, a community redevelopment authority and
businesses receiving façade improvement grants or low-interest loans. Another example would be using the interlocal agreement as a partnering mechanism for a variety of purposes, such as accepting surplus right-of-way for use as trails, or vacant parcels for reuse as neighborhood parks or gardens. It is anticipated that corridor municipalities may be co-signators to certain agreements in which they are partnering to develop or maintain certain improvements.

### 8.9.3 Implementation Work Plan

The corridor coalition is envisioned to be a clearinghouse – a focal point – for all activities oriented to the betterment of the Southwest Corridor. Its activities initially will center around organizational issues, including identification of core membership, establishing a meeting frequency and framework, and building a presence across the corridor communities and partnering organizations. After these steps are accomplished, the group can move on to more substantive activities which begin to sets its agenda of principal topics for project development and advancement. Section 8.8 of the report presents a detailed master implementation schedule with highlights general corridor coalition activities at the top, and then the range of transportation, land use, and economic development action items identified through the study that can be prioritized for advancement by the coalition. These activities are summarized for the first five years (with reference to the master implementation table), as follows:

**Year 1: Organizational Actions**

Year 1 activities focus on establishing the organizational structure and membership, supporting subcommittees, and coalition priorities and are summarized in the following table:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ID No.</th>
<th>Action Strategy</th>
<th>Discussion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CC-1</td>
<td>Form the US 11 Southwest Corridor Coalition.</td>
<td>This step has been undertaken.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CC-2</td>
<td>Raise awareness and visibility.</td>
<td>This action entails developing a formal list of partner agencies and organizations with contract representatives and email addresses; periodic email blasts to announce meetings and projects; using community and social media outlets to build awareness, interest, visibility, presence, and support.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CC-3</td>
<td>Review and establish initial pursuit priorities.</td>
<td>Review the menu of projects identified in the implementation tables of Section 8.8; conduct open discussions; prioritize pursuits; breakdown in to basic implementation steps and participants. It is proposed that key priorities (from candidate action strategies in the master implementation table) for consideration include: • Supporting transit actions Step 1 and Step 2, • Beginning pursuit of 3-5 action priorities under the Land Use action strategy category, and • Beginning pursuit of 3-4 action priorities under the Economic Development action strategy category.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CC-4</td>
<td>Establish coalition subcommittees.</td>
<td>Assess the need for subcommittees to help spearhead priority pursuits, and a progress reporting framework.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CC-7</td>
<td>Identify and pursue strategies for funding of corridor initiative priorities.</td>
<td>This is an ongoing task, drawing upon sources discussed in Reference 2, including the Cooperative Capital Improvement District concept.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Years 2-5: Implementation Actions

In Years 2-5, the focus transitions to undertaking priority project pursuits, furthering avenues for financial support of priorities, and identifying additional project priorities as the coalition gets better established and organized, and as initial priorities begin to advance.

Table 8.7. Corridor Coalition Implementation Actions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ID No.</th>
<th>Action Strategy</th>
<th>Discussion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CC-5</td>
<td>Identify &quot;second and third wave&quot; priorities.</td>
<td>Identify additional priority pursuits as per Item CC-3 above. As before, these can be drawn from the candidate action strategies in the master implementation table, and should include: • Supporting planning for transit action Step 3 to follow, • Beginning pursuit of additional action priorities under the Land Use action strategy category, and • Beginning pursuit of additional action priorities under the Economic Development action strategy category.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CC-6</td>
<td>Guide the initiatives in CC-6 by coordination with partner organizations.</td>
<td>This action includes strengthening of partnerships with other supporting and funding organizations for the identified priority pursuits underway.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CC-7</td>
<td>Identify and pursue strategies for funding of corridor initiative priorities.</td>
<td>This is an ongoing task, drawing upon sources discussed in Reference 2, including the Cooperative Capital Improvement District concept.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

8.9.4 Next Steps

While the Southwest Corridor has experienced a trend of adverse economics with declining population and employment statistics, this study has identified prospects worth pursuing that begin to address those issues. As the noted philosopher Yogi Berra once stated: “If you don’t know where you are going, you might wind up somewhere else.” And that likely will not be where you would like to be. That is to say in other words, that if we do not plan for a better future, it is unlikely to happen on its own. This study has defined an opportunity, a challenge, to create a vision of a different and better future for the corridor, one in which decline is stemmed and stabilized, and in which the fortunes of the corridor are improved. Building on existing corridor resources and assets, and working together through the US 11 Southwest Corridor Coalition to channel and coordinate positive energy for change, and despite the headwinds, a better future for the corridor can emerge.

As noted in the study, it has taken years and literally millions of individual decisions by businesses and individuals and institutions to define the place that the corridor is today, but that same process steered onto a better course forward can step by step, incrementally, improve the economic climate and quality of daily life for businesses and citizens alike.

The key first step has been undertaken: the creation of the corridor coalition to serve as clearinghouse and focal point for all things Southwest Corridor. The next key steps involve these sorts of actions:

- Raising awareness of the coalition through the city government communications outlets, the RPCGB, partners such as the chambers of commerce, institutions and agency partners, as well as media outreach when the time is right.
• Marshalling interest and participation in the corridor coalition amongst all potential stakeholders and constituents, building lasting partnerships.

• Organizing the coalition subcommittees to undertake key initiatives related to transportation and transit, land use, and economic development.

• Developing an atmosphere of common cause, sharing information and ideas, and bringing corridor and other resources together, creating synergy, focus and commitment to build a better Southwest Corridor.

• Identifying a first round of “doable deeds”, actions that can practically be accomplished in the near term, to lay a foundation for further action items to move the ball forward.

• Providing a core of leadership to champion the work of the coalition, and that maintains awareness, forward progress and commitment across a broad base of supporters and enablers.

As John F. Kennedy (and others before and since) have said: “If not us, who? If not now, when?” The time is ripe to take proactive control of the future of the Southwest Corridor.
PART 4 ANNEXES

Annex 1: Transit Improvement Funding and Development
Annex 2: Special District Tools and Funding Sources
ANNEX 1

A1.0 TRANSIT IMPROVEMENT FUNDING AND DEVELOPMENT

This section specifically addresses financial and grant considerations for the transit element of proposed corridor improvements. While this work could be funded entirely by local and regional resources, more typically project sponsor pursue Federal Transit Administration (FTA) capital grant funding which can be typically be in the order of 45-60% of project cost, depending upon size and the competitiveness of the proposed project in its FTA project evaluation ratings. The FTA process is the presumed avenue for potential funding of the proposed BRT project for the Southwest Corridor.

A1.1 OVERVIEW OF THE NEW STARTS PROCESS

This study has identified the technical feasibility of a proposed BRT-Arterial service in the Southwest Corridor. To understand what steps the Birmingham region should follow next, it is important to understand the current process necessary to advance a new transit service corridor through the project development process. Implementing a new transit service will likely require the use of federal funding sources. To use federal funds for major transit capital expenses, the FTA “New Starts” process is followed.

A1.1.1 New Starts Process

The rules and guidelines governing the New Starts process are periodically updated as policies are revised. The FTA recently updated their primary planning guidance for New Starts projects. MAP-21 changed the Capital Investment Grant Program to include three categories of eligible projects, referred to as New Starts, Core Capacity, and Small Starts. It also streamlined the number of steps in the project development and funding process. Lastly, MAP-21 eliminated the exemption from the evaluation and rating that existed for projects seeking less than $25 million in Capital Investment Grant Program funding.

With regard to streamlining, MAP-21 eliminated Alternatives Analysis as a stand-alone requirement under the Capital Investment Grant Program and instead, it relies on the evaluation of alternatives that occurs during the planning and environmental review processes. New Starts and Core Capacity projects go through three steps - Project Development, Engineering, and Construction. Small Starts projects go through two steps - Project Development and Construction. These project categories are described as follows:

- New Starts projects are defined as those whose sponsors request $75 million or more in Capital Investment Grant Program funds or have an anticipated total capital cost of $250 million or more.
- Core Capacity projects are defined as substantial corridor based investments in an existing fixed-guideway system that will increase capacity in the corridor by not less than 10 percent.
- Small Starts projects are defined as those whose sponsors request less than $75 million in Capital Investment Program funds and have an anticipated total capital cost of less than $250 million (49 USC 5309(h)). All projects must be evaluated and rated on a set of statutorily defined project justification and local financial commitment criteria and receive and maintain at least a “Medium” overall rating to advance through the various steps to be eligible for funding.
The most appropriate project category for proposed Southwest Corridor transit improvements would be the Small Starts process is depicted in Figure A1.1 which shows how the process has been modified under MAP-21 legislation.

Figure A1.1. Small Starts Project Development Process

A1.1.2 Project Identification

To begin the New Starts process, applicants should successfully complete planning study for a candidate corridor. Previously, this step happened under the process referred to as Alternatives Analysis (AA), a multimodal planning study of transportation problems and a wide range of potential solutions for a given transportation corridor, following procedures specified by the FTA. As noted, the process for local identification of worthy transit projects has now been left to local or regional transportation agencies or the responsible MPO, without specific direction on the conduct of these studies. However, the candidate project, identified as the locally preferred alternative (LPA) by the MPO, will need to demonstrate good performance in relation to the FTA project evaluation criteria in order to be selected for entry into the Project Development phase of FTA oversight, if the project will seek federal New Starts funding,
A1.1.3 TIP and LRTP Adoption

The identified LPA must be included in the region’s financially constrained Long Range Transportation Plan as a project programmed for more detailed planning and engineering analysis and for the preparation of the required level of NEPA study and documentation. In addition, the project must be adopted in the next Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) as a fully funded planning and environmental study with the appropriate levels of local, state and federal funding to carry out the analysis.

A1.1.4 Project Development

Upon acceptance of a project for entry into the Project Development phase, sufficient preliminary engineering must be conducted along with the required level of environmental review, within a 2-year period. The NEPA process concludes with either a Record of Decision (ROD) on the Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS), or it will consist of a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI), requiring no further analysis. The project should be justified based on a comprehensive review of its mobility improvements, environmental benefits, cost effectiveness, and operating efficiencies and it must be supported by an acceptable degree of local financial commitment. This includes evidence of stable and dependable financing sources to construct, maintain, and operate the system extension.

A.1.1.5 Rating of Candidate New Starts Projects

The criteria listed in Table A1.1 below are used by the FTA’s New Starts process to compare candidate projects. The criteria and their associated measures are designed to reflect the broad range of benefits and impacts which may be realized by the implementation of the proposed New Starts transit investment. The criteria are applied to projects that have entered the FTA’s New Starts process, or are applying to enter the pipeline of potential projects. New Starts is a competitive process used by the FTA to identify which candidate projects to fund for planning, design or construction phases. These criteria are submitted annually by each New Start project’s sponsoring agency based upon current data available from each study. The criteria are typically developed in detail for entry into the FTA Project Development phase and refined throughout the preliminary engineering and final design phases of project development. FTA periodically issues guidance on the calculation of these project justification measures, and issues updates regarding the use of the criteria.
In addition to the project evaluation criteria which together account for half of a projects rating, the local financial commitment accounts for the other half and will be discussed shortly. Figure A1.2 summarized the components and weights for the set of criteria used to assess projects.
Although these criteria and associated measures may change based on the next federal transportation funding legislation or as the New Starts program continues to evolve, it is important to understand the criteria. At this stage of project definition, it is possible to qualitatively discuss the criteria, and the potential results for the proposed alternative with regard to the criteria. These following sections summarize these factors and their relation to the Southwest Corridor.

Mobility Improvements

Mobility improvements describe the potential transportation benefits that would accrue from the proposed alternative. In a broad sense, this includes transit ridership, relief of roadway congestion, provision of transportation choices, and provision of services to transit-dependent populations. This criterion also captures the access to employment centers located along each transit corridor. The proposed alternative would improve mobility within the Southwest Corridor and the Birmingham region. This alternative also originates downtown, and therefore provides access to downtown Birmingham employment.

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**Cost Effectiveness**

These criteria measure efficiency and cost effectiveness of the alternative with regard to transit operations, and “transportation system user benefits”. These measures require analysis of data that has not been developed in this study although some surrogate measures have been calculated.

**Congestion Relief**

The FTA is currently in the process of determining the measures to be used to for this new criterion.

**Transit Supportive Land Use and Future Patterns**

This criterion measures the potential of the region’s land use patterns to support transit ridership. A key component is the land use planning and zoning adjacent to potential transit stations. Most New Starts candidate projects develop Transit Oriented Development (TOD) overlay districts to apply to the planned station areas. In these locations, higher density development is often permitted with a subsequent reduction in the amount of required off-street parking.

The intent of TOD planning is to create a higher density, walkable transit node with a variety of land use types (office, residential, commercial) within close proximity. Research has documented the positive effect this type of station-area land use planning can have on transit system ridership. There are presently no TODs currently planned for the Southwest Corridor and no real TOD-supportive regulations in place through the corridor jurisdictions. As regional transit planning progresses in the Birmingham region, stronger consideration of TOD-supportive regulatory practices at potential station areas will become a necessary component of the transit system planning for competitive consideration of proposed projects.

**Economic Development**

This criterion is based on a qualitative analysis of plans and policies to focus future development in the corridor. Elements of the economic development measures the potential of the region’s land use patterns to support transit ridership. As for Land Use criteria, the Economic Development criteria create reasonably high expectations of the prospective FTA grantee in terms of advance implementation of land use and other regulatory actions that are expected to generate results in terms of land development, and population and employment growth in the project corridor. A concerted effort must be undertaken with all corridor jurisdictions to create field conditions that can be rated satisfactorily against the rating criteria. These conditions don’t generally exist in the Southwest Corridor presently.

**Environmental Benefits**

The environmental benefits of transit investment in the Southwest Corridor would be determined from the region’s air quality modeling process. The proposed BRT alternative has the potential to provide environmental benefits to the region’s air quality. The amount of benefit depends on the existing and future traffic congestion, and the proposed transit project’s effect on reducing vehicular emissions based on its projected ridership.
A1.2 FINANCIAL ANALYSIS SUMMARY

As discussed previously, the rating of a proposed New Starts project is based half on the project performance as a transportation solution against six categories of benefit, and half against the local financial commitment. The evaluation is based on a package of detailed financial information including a completed FTA Financial Template, a comprehensive financial plan, including a 20-year financial cash flow, other supporting information, and a completed financial submittal checklist. The evaluation of the financial commitment is scored in three categories:

- Current Condition of Sponsoring Agency Finances (25% of score)
- Commitment of Funds (25% of score)
- Reliability and Capacity (50% of score)

This section of the report describes the local financial requirements of the Birmingham-Jefferson County Transit Authority (BJCTA), as the assumed operating entity, for the proposed Southwest Corridor BRT-Arterial project, and discusses the financial planning process used in the analysis to determine these requirements. This section presents the assumptions regarding sources and uses of funds, and it concludes with a discussion of the risks and uncertainties that could affect the financial performance of the project.

This financial plan is focused on the capital and operating costs for the Southwest Corridor BRT project. In this analysis, it is assumed BJCTA would request Section 5309 Small Starts funding from the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) for the Southwest Corridor BRT project at 50.1 percent of the total project cost. It is assumed RPCGB will coordinate with the local cities and ALDOT to identify the local match at 49.9 percent of the total project cost in local capital matching funds, and the funds needed annually to operate and maintain the Southwest Corridor BRT system.

A1.2.1 Financial Planning Process and Structure

The first objective of the financial analysis was to estimate capital costs and project annual operating expenses and revenues from a base year to the design year. The analysis of the sources and uses of funds is conducted to determine whether there are funding shortfalls in either capital or operating budgets for the project. This information is necessary to establish that enough financial resources are available for each year of the planning horizon. This planning horizon period is 22 years, from 2014 to 2035.

The major elements of the financial analysis are:

- Sources of funds including farebox receipts, local tax receipts, and federal sources,
- Operation and maintenance (O&M) costs,
- Capital costs, and
- Risk associated with revenue and cost estimates.

The calculation of costs and revenues depends on assumptions related to construction scheduling and phasing and the rate of growth in transit service expansion. This analysis is conducted in Year of Expenditure (YOE) dollars (current or inflated dollars) so debt financing can be accounted for.
A1.2.2 Sources of Funds for Operations and Maintenance

This section describes the baseline revenues available to BJCTA over the 2014–2035 time period for planning, design, construction, and O&M and the assumptions used in the cash-flow model and analysis. BJCTA receives revenues from a number of federal and local sources. These include revenues that are unrestricted as to their use, revenues that are restricted to O&M, and revenues that are restricted to use for capital projects. BJCTA typically commits its unrestricted revenues and its revenues restricted to O&M to cover its ongoing operating costs in advance of other expenditures. Any revenues beyond those needed for O&M are considered net revenues available for debt service and capital and are used for those purposes.

Sources of Local Revenues for Operations and Maintenance

The ongoing O&M costs of the existing BJCTA system and for future expansion projects are paid from revenues derived from the sources described in this section.

Bus Fares

Unrestricted operating revenues are derived from farebox receipts. As highlighted in Table 3.1, BJCTA covered about 9.0 percent of its annual operating expenses from farebox receipts in Fiscal Year (FY) 2012. Passenger fares contributed about $2.4 million to BJCTA’s operating revenues in FY 2012, while operating expenses were $26.5 million. The budgeted revenue for passenger fares in FY 2013 is $2.6 million, which is an increase of 11.0 percent from FY 2012. The farebox recovery ratio was budgeted to increase by 5.0 percent in FY 2013. For FY 2035, BJCTA’s operating expenses are projected to total $59.7 million and its farebox recovery ratio would drop to 7.9%.

Between FY 2004 and 2013, the number of BJCTA unlinked passenger trips has steadily declined annually from 4.0 million to 2.4 million unlinked passenger trips, respectively. Consistent with this trend, the number of unlinked passenger trips between FY 2013 and FY 2035 is projected to continue to decline by 1.0 to 1.3 percent annually, which in turn negatively impacts farebox revenue receipts. To offset the decline in passenger trips, lost farebox revenue, and to target a higher farebox recovery ratio, a series of proposed fare increases are programmed starting in FY2015. Adult fares increase from $1.25 in FY 2013 to $1.40 in FY 2015, to $1.62 in FY 2020, to $1.88 in FY 2025, to $2.26 in FY 2030, and to $2.71 in FY 2035.

Concurrently, BJCTA exercises internal cost controls to limit its operating expenses to approximately 3.5 percent increases annually. With the proposed fare increases and the continuation of internal budgetary controls, BJCTA is projected to be able to maintain a farebox recovery within the 7.9% range in 2035. It should be noted, the price elasticity of transit ridership with respect to fares is usually −0.2 to −0.5 in the short run (first year), and increases to −0.6 to −0.9 over the long run (five to ten years). This suggests that a 10% fare increase typically increases revenue 5-8% over the short run and 1-4% over the long-run. As a result, rising fare increases revenue, but less than proportionately (raising fares 10% provides less than 10% increased revenue), and revenue gains tend to decline over time. These impacts tend to vary depending on the types of riders and types of services. Transit dependent users and peak period travel tend to be less price-sensitive than discretionary travelers (people who could travel by automobile) and off-peak travel. Farebox data is presented in Table A1.2.
Table A1.2. Farebox Recovery for the Past 10 Years and for FY 2035

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fiscal Year</th>
<th>Fare Revenue</th>
<th>O&amp;M Costs</th>
<th>Farebox Recovery Ratio</th>
<th>Percent Change (from prior year)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>$2,073,027</td>
<td>$15,239,116</td>
<td>13.6%</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>$2,211,746</td>
<td>$14,539,856</td>
<td>15.2%</td>
<td>11.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>$2,209,981</td>
<td>$17,443,807</td>
<td>12.7%</td>
<td>-16.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>$2,453,174</td>
<td>$20,379,870</td>
<td>12.0%</td>
<td>-5.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>$2,382,523</td>
<td>$23,018,545</td>
<td>10.4%</td>
<td>-14.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>$2,708,444</td>
<td>$23,394,978</td>
<td>11.6%</td>
<td>11.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>$2,391,959</td>
<td>$23,925,764</td>
<td>10.0%</td>
<td>-13.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>$2,115,392</td>
<td>$23,528,427</td>
<td>9.0%</td>
<td>-10.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>$2,152,962</td>
<td>$23,607,398</td>
<td>9.1%</td>
<td>1.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>$2,373,966</td>
<td>$26,465,491</td>
<td>9.0%</td>
<td>-1.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>$2,636,072</td>
<td>$27,990,273</td>
<td>9.4%</td>
<td>5.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2035</td>
<td>$4,693,583</td>
<td>$59,661,591</td>
<td>7.9%</td>
<td>-16.5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Over the past 10 years, the farebox revenue per unlinked passenger trip increased from $0.55 in FY 2004 to $1.11 in FY 2013, as shown in Table A1.3 below. By FY 2035, the farebox revenue is projected to be $4.7 million. Average fare per unlinked passenger trip in FY 2035 is projected to be $0.87. Projections of farebox receipts are made by projecting the increase in fare per passenger trip and the growth in passenger trips. Projections of passenger trips are derived from the travel demand forecasts prepared for the regional long-range transportation plans and used throughout the project development process. There were more than 2.4 million annual unlinked passenger trips in FY 2013, which represents a 16.6 percent decline in passenger trips when compared to FY 2012. Including Southwest Corridor BRT passengers, about 1.9 million total system-wide unlinked passenger trips are projected for FY 2035.
The projected decline in future unlinked passenger trips and farebox receipts can be partially explained by the decline in Birmingham’s population base. The City of Birmingham experienced a 12.6 percent drop in population over the last decade, losing 30,583 residents, according to the results of the 2010 U.S. Census. A declining population base often results in a decline in general revenue to provide adequate public transportation choices to accommodate travel demand growth or job access. Studies of transit ridership have examined a wide range of factors external to transit systems thought to influence ridership. Such ridership impacts can be group under three categories:

1. Socioeconomic factors,
2. Spatial factors, and

In the first two of these categories, variables which directly or indirectly explain access to and utility of private vehicles tend to be the most important factors. Transit thus functions in most places for most trips as an "inferior good" to private vehicles, such that the demand for transit service is largely determined by the supply of private vehicles. Thus, in places like Manhattan and downtown San Francisco the relative utility of private vehicles is low, and transit service and use are high. In places like Nashville or Birmingham, private transportation use is relatively high, and transit use is relatively low.

As public transit systems in most metropolitan areas have lost market share to private vehicles, the importance of two transit submarkets has grown: travelers (children, the elderly, the disabled, and the poor) with limited access to private vehicles, and commuters to large employment centers (especially downtown with limited and/or expensive parking). So in addition to direct and indirect measures of private vehicle access (which include parking), employment variables, especially measures of central business district employment, are shown to significantly influence transit use.
Finally, public funding of transit service—which, of course, reflects demand for and popular support of public transit and economic vitality—has been shown to influence transit use. Such factors raise questions of a circular paradox—where an action is controlled or affected by its own outcome or result.

**Local Funding Sources**

The primary source of local funding for BJCTA is an ad valorem tax on property, as well as a portion of beer and racing taxation. Table 4-3 below lists BJCTA’s local revenue for the past 10 years and the estimate for 2035. BJCTA serves Jefferson County and the municipalities of Birmingham, Bessemer, Homewood, Hoover, Fairfield, Midfield, Mountain Brook, Vestavia, Tarrant, Brighton and Lipscomb. In 1987 the Alabama legislature passed a bill restructuring the way in which local governments are billed for transit service. Under Act 87-449, the City of Birmingham is required to pay an amount equal to 10 percent of the ad valorem tax collected on property within the municipality. Jefferson County is required to contribute 5.5 percent of the first $18,181,819 of ad valorem taxes collected and 2.5 percent of ad valorem taxes collected in excess of that amount within the city limits of all municipalities. In addition, a portion of the beer tax revenues and proceeds earned from the Birmingham Racing Commission are locally mandated revenues.

The participating municipalities served by the BJCTA are required to contribute funds based on a cost per hour formula times the number of service hours provided. Under this arrangement local governments may purchase fixed route bus service for their communities. This income is used to leverage Federal funds available to BJCTA.

In 1982, a statewide Levelized Beer Tax (Alabama Code - Section 28-3-190) was established in Alabama. Prior to the bill, each county had set its own beer tax; under the bill, the tax was levied at 1.625 cents for each four fluid ounces of beer. It is collected by the assessing authority of the county or municipality. Each county divides its portion of revenues from this tax differently, according to the recommendations of the county delegation to the State house and senate. In Jefferson County, three funds were established to receive different portions of the revenues. The third fund (Fund C), which represents 3/9ths of the tax received (after 2 percent is removed for county administrative costs), is distributed in part to BJCTA. BJCTA receives 50% of Fund C or $2.0 million dollars annually, whichever is greater. Revenues from the tax represent in the range of 17.8 percent of BJCTA budget in each of the years since the tax was dedicated to transit. Funds have been used for operating and/or capital expenditures.

In June 2013, the governor of Alabama signed a transportation bill that is seen as a way to assist BJCTA in providing a “more efficient public transportation system for the Birmingham and Jefferson County”. Some of the key provisions of the bill are:

- The Board is allowed to set BJCTA’s fiscal year,
- Limits were placed on the liability of the BJCTA for the recovery of damages,
- It updates the BJCTA’s governing laws, and
- The provisions for the issuance of bonds by the BJCTA were updated. The expenditure approval system was replaced by the review and revision of the BJCTA’s budget by the City of Birmingham. Previously, any expenditure by the BJCTA over $25,000 required approval by the City of Birmingham, as well as Jefferson County.
Unfortunately, the question of identifying a dedicated funding source, (e.g., like state funds) was not addressed in the final bill. BJCTA does not receive any state funds for transit. Alabama is one of five states that do not fund transit at the state level. The other four states are Arizona, Colorado, Hawaii, and Utah. A 1950s amendment to the Alabama state constitution restricts the spending of gasoline and other motor fuel taxes to support roads, bridges, and public transit. Local revenue receipts are shown in Table A1.4.

### Table A1.4. Local Revenue Receipts for the Past 10 Years and for FY 2035

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fiscal Year</th>
<th>Total Local Funds</th>
<th>Change (from prior year)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>$8,267,749</td>
<td>NA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>$9,650,237</td>
<td>16.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>$10,157,684</td>
<td>5.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>$11,623,036</td>
<td>14.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>$11,384,776</td>
<td>-2.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>$12,705,907</td>
<td>11.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>$14,659,845</td>
<td>15.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>$14,458,925</td>
<td>-1.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>$14,698,437</td>
<td>1.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>$18,067,624</td>
<td>22.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>$19,643,825</td>
<td>8.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2035</td>
<td>$67,615,146</td>
<td>150.8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


#### Federal Funding Sources

For the purpose of this analysis, BJCTA is assumed to continue receiving federal funding for maintenance-related uses through 2035 by way of Federal Preventive Maintenance Grant Funds. These funds were derived from the FTA Section 5307 Urbanized Area Formula (formerly Section 9) program and consist of formula capital grant funds used for planning, engineering design and evaluation of transit projects and other technical transportation-related studies; capital investments in bus and bus-related activities such as replacement of buses, overhaul of buses, rebuilding of buses, crime prevention and security equipment and construction of maintenance and passenger facilities; and, capital investments in new and existing fixed guideway systems including rolling stock, overhaul and rebuilding of vehicles. BJCTA primarily uses these funds for those preventive maintenance expenses which are considered capital costs.

Section 5307 funding is apportioned on the basis of legislative formulas. For areas of 50,000 to 199,999 in population, the formula is based on population and population density. For areas with populations of 200,000 and more, like Birmingham, the formula is based on a combination of bus
revenue vehicle miles, bus passenger miles, fixed guideway revenue vehicle miles, and fixed guideway route miles as well as population and population density.

Section 5307 for BJCTA are held at the current level due to a declining local population base, passenger trips and revenue vehicle service hours and miles. This implies that BJCTA’s real buying power declines between FY 2013 and FY 2045, as shown in Table 3.4.

Other Sources of Operating Funds

Other sources of unrestricted operating funds consist of revenue from advertising, rents, and leases on right-of-way and manufacturer discounts taken. These ancillary revenues are usually small.

At this time, other practical sources of revenue are not apparent that could contribute substantial sums to BJCTA’s capital program or help to defray operations and maintenance expense to a large extent. Possible other sources of revenue are discussed in the Section 9 of this document.

A1.3 SOURCES OF REVENUES FOR CAPITAL COSTS

Ongoing capital expenditures for BJCTA’s base system are projected to be financed from the existing capital revenue streams discussed in this section.

A1.3.1 FTA Capital Funds

It is assumed that BJCTA will continue to use its FTA Section 5307 formula grant program funds primarily for preventive maintenance followed by planning for O&M-related purposes, and planning for capital (the last to be funded).

For the FY 2013 period, BJCTA’s total annual Section 5307 funding was $5.7 million and assumed to remain consistent through FY 2035.

Section 5307 formula funds also would be available to be used toward BJCTA’s capital costs for bus replacement and bus fleet expansion at an 80 percent federal participation level. BJCTA will need to secure the local match (20%) to leverage the federal funds.

In December 2012, BJCTA approved the purchase of 30 new 40-foot compressed natural gas buses (CNG). BJCTA was awarded a $2.5 Clean Fuel Grant in FY 2012 to replace CNG buses that have met their useful life with new CNG buses, extending the useful life of their fleet, and creating greater capacity and reliability for their ridership.

A summary of federal capital funds is shown in Table A1.5.
A1.3.2 FTA Section 5309 Small Starts

FTA oversees both New Starts and Small Starts grant programs, with the New Starts program being targeted for larger, higher cost projects, and the Small Starts program intended for projects of lower scale and cost. The proposed Southwest Corridor BRT project is best suited for potential Small Starts funding. FTA is authorized by Congress to fund the construction of Small Starts fixed-guideway systems through the discretionary authority granted in Section 5309 of Title 49 of the United States Code (49 USC 5309). FTA has the authority to provide discretionary grants up to $75 million for Small Starts projects. However, the total project cost must be less than $250 million to qualify for a Small Starts grant.

Proposed New Starts and Small Starts projects are evaluated and rated according to criteria set forth in law. The statutory project justification criteria include: mobility improvements, environmental benefits, congestion relief, economic development effects, land use, and cost-effectiveness. The law also requires FTA to examine the following when evaluating and rating local financial commitment:

- Availability of reasonable contingency amounts,
- Availability of stable and dependable capital and operating funding sources, and
- Availability of local resources to recapitalize, maintain, and operate the overall existing and proposed public transportation system without requiring a reduction in existing services.

Each criterion is to be rated on a five point scale, from low to high. Summary project justification and local financial commitment ratings are prepared and combined to arrive at an overall project rating.
It is worth noting that Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act (MAP-21) establishes three separate definitions for BRT. The distinction between these is the source of federal monies being used for the project as indicated in Table A1.6 below. The first definition applies across the entire transit program and applies to all programs except for Section 5309 Fixed Guideway projects. The definition in Section 5302 determines if a BRT system is determined to be "fixed guideway" in Section 5302. Further, whether a project is "fixed guideway" then affects eligibility of that project for the "Fixed Guideway State of Good Repair" program in Section 5337, which receives 97.15 percent of the monies, versus inclusion in the Section 5337 "High Intensity Motorbus State of Good Repair" program, which receives 2.85 percent of the monies. Moreover, MAP-21 establishes separate definitions for BRT projects under Small Starts and New Starts grant programs.
Table A1.6. Definition of BRT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title 49, Section 5302(a)(2)</th>
<th>Small Starts Corridor-based BRT Project Section 5309(a)(3)</th>
<th>New Starts Fixed Guideway BRT Project Section 5309(a)(4)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BRT System</td>
<td>A small start project utilizing buses in which the project represents a substantial investment in a defined corridor as demonstrated by features that emulate rail fixed guideway services, including:</td>
<td>Bus capital project:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Majority of each line operates in a separated right-of-way dedicated for public transportation use during peak periods; and</td>
<td>• Majority of the project operates in a separated right-of-way dedicated for public transportation use during peak periods;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• That includes features that emulate the services provided by a rail fixed guideway public transportation systems, including:</td>
<td>• Represents a substantial investment in a single route in a defined corridor or subarea; and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Defined stations;</td>
<td>• includes features that emulate the services provided by a rail fixed guideway public transportation systems, including –</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Traffic signal priority;</td>
<td>• Defined stations;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Short headway bidirectional services for a substantial part of weekdays and weekend days; and</td>
<td>• Traffic signal priority for public transportation vehicles;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Any other features that the Secretary may determine are necessary to produce a high-quality public transportation services that emulate the services provided by rail fixed guideway public transportation systems.</td>
<td>• Short headway bidirectional services for a substantial part of weekday and weekend days; and</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Any other features the Secretary may determine are necessary to produce high-quality public transportation services that emulate the services provided by rail fixed guideway public transportation systems.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A1.3.3 Bond Proceeds

BJCTA issued bonds to provide funds for the acquisition and financing of buses. The Series 2004 bonds were secured by a special pledge of the tax and other revenues received pursuant to ACT No. 97-779 enacted at the 1987 regular session of the Alabama legislature. The bonds were issued in May 2004 and the last payment was made in May 2010. Currently, there are no bond obligations.
BJCTA’s practical capacity to bond in the near future is very limited based on an accepted ratio of current liabilities to net revenue after O&M costs. A bond rating agency will be concerned about whether or not the BJCTA can produce the revenue to repay the loan. Therefore, it will look at the viability of BJCTA as well as the specific capital facility or project that is being financed. The rating agency will want to know that BJCTA, if it is fully funded, will have more than enough funds to repay the loan after considering BJCTA’s O&M needs. This is called coverage ratio. In the past, ratios of net available funds to the debt service of the bond were about 1.5 to 3 times the debt service. These ratios are sometimes flexible. For example, a ratio of about 1.25 or lower may be assumed if the project is strong, and higher if it is a weaker project. The rating agency will require, among other information, five years of audited statements, a rate study, an engineering report, along with the overall economic information for BJCTA’s service area.

Sometimes when the issuance is a small one, or in BJCTA’s case may not have a competitive bond rating, it is helpful for an agency to contact another locality in the area which is in the midst of issuing a bond in order to tag along, and take advantage of shared overhead costs. Another option is to participate in a program operated by a regional council of government for small issuances for its member jurisdictions. Several years ago, the City of Los Angeles financed the $1.2 million construction of a bus maintenance yard through the issuance of a bond where Community Development Block Grant funds were committed over a 10 year period to pay off a bond. The actual issuance was done by the regional body which combined the City’s needs with others in the Los Angeles area into a larger issue. This reduced the overhead costs per participant and made the smaller offerings feasible from the individual cities. Sometimes states will do a large bond measure to provide low cost loans for capital facilities for local jurisdictions.

It is important to note that there is a distinction difference between special revenue bonds and local appropriation bonds. Special revenue bond is any debt obligation with a dedicated source of revenue to pay back bond owners. For example, if BJCTA needs to construct a new bus maintenance yard, the Jefferson County will add a special fee to the property tax bill of every landowner in the County. These are very different from local appropriation bonds, which involves BJCTA’s promise to pay bondholders with money not collected from a unique revenue source. Local appropriation bonds don’t carry that additional protection, so there can be a very different credit risk associated with them.

A1.4 USE OF FUNDS
The existing and projected expenditures of BJCTA consist of costs associated with operations and maintenance of its buses and facilities, and its ongoing and programmed capital expenditures. Expenditure projections are based on BJCTA’s 2013 budget; the Transportation Improvement Program adopted by RPCGB; and, the regional long range transportation plans for Jefferson and Shelby Counties as well as a portion of Walker County.

A1.4.1 Operations and Maintenance Costs

O&M costs for FY 2012 were $26.5 million and reflect actual costs incurred by BJCTA. For FY 2013, costs are based on the BJCTA budget of $28.1 million. For the 2014–2035 period, these costs are based on BJCTA’s budget and an assumption there are no changes in total revenue hours or miles in future years.
A1.4.2 Future Capital Projects

Capital costs were derived by reviewing BJCTA’s past expenditure patterns, bus acquisition and replacement schedules and the capital program proposed in the state Transportation Improvement Plan. Note that a base-level capital program was assumed. This capital program is consistent with the approved base bus scenarios in the regional long range plans prepared and adopted by the RPCGB.

A1.4.3 Bus and Other Capital

A major component of BJCTA’s capital program is bus replacement. The analysis assumes a 13-year bus replacement cycle. In addition to bus replacement and expansion, facility and miscellaneous capital projects are based on funding approved in the Transportation Improvement Plan starting in 2012.

A1.5 FINANCIAL CAPACITY ANALYSIS

BJCTA’s financial capacity to undertake an expansion projects is constrained by pressures to support current operations and to fund its investment program requirements that sustain the existing services. The most important revenue stream is derived from the local property tax levied in the BJCTA service area. Because of the current downturn in Birmingham’s population and economy base, there are no net revenues to support the Southwest Corridor BRT project capital and operating requirements.

A1.5.1 Overview of Cash Flow

The financial analysis focuses on BJCTA’s past performance from FY 2004 through FY 2013 and on the forecast period of FY 2014 to FY 2035. The financial information reflects system-wide costs and revenues for the entire BJCTA service area. Costs and revenues are assumed on an accrual basis to provide greater consistency with BJCTA’s annual financial statements. Both costs and revenues are reported in YOE dollars and include appropriate inflation rates by category.

Two factors of key interest for tracking BJCTA’s financial performance are net revenues (for possible payment of debt service) and capital costs — that is, the differential between operating costs and revenues and the annual capital reserve remaining after all costs and revenues are included. The former is of particular importance with regard to debt service coverage, while the latter is of importance with regard to financial capacity for future service expansion and major capital costs.

BJCTA has no established policy that mandates regarding the protection of restricted reserve accounts for its debt service reserve, working capital reserve, and risk reserve. A policy of this type would mandate that sufficient reserves be available annually to provide for BJCTA’s restricted reserve requirements.

A1.5.2 Financial Capacity

The cash flow model summarizes and contrasts annual O&M costs to annual O&M revenues between FY 2004 and FY 2035. The model also indicates the net revenues available for debt service and capital. Also indicated is the level of coverage that gross tax revenues would provide for the annual financing costs that BJCTA is required to pay for its outstanding bonded indebtedness.
About 7-9 percent of BJCTA’s operating revenues are attributed to farebox receipts. Ridership has steadily declined since FY 2004 and this trend is expected to continue through FY 2035. Average fare yields are presently about $0.83 per rider and are not keeping pace with inflation due to liberal pass and transfer policies without necessarily generating additional revenues.

BJCTA’s long-term fiscal capacity is based on future operating unit costs being constrained to growth levels below 3.5 percent or the assumed growth in tax receipts on an annual basis. A key factor in testing these relationships will be in the area of cost containment. BJCTA is not in a financial position to reinvest productivity gains in expanding services throughout its service area.

Tax revenues are likely to decline enough to not sustain total operating cost escalation at previous rates. Growth in unit costs, increase in the volume of service provided, and high outlay requirements for capital investment have combined to constrain use of future tax revenue for new or improved services unless more stringent constraints on total operating outlays are considered. BJCTA needs to restrain the growth in unit operating costs below the rate of inflation, especially in this emergent era of higher labor, fuel and material costs.

A.1.6 POTENTIAL FUNDING SOURCES FOR THE BRT PROJECT

A proposed Small Starts application for the Southwest Corridor BRT project would assume an FTA grant in the amount of 50.1 percent in federal funds and 49.9 percent in local matching funds. To date, no local funding has been identified to leverage the federal funds. Likewise, no specific funding source for O&M has been identified either.

The following describes a variety of Federal and other funding programs, as well as various user fee concepts and local partnerships that could help fund the proposed transit service. Federal funding programs provide the largest and most likely sources of funds for the proposed projects.

A1.6.1 Federal Capital and Operating Assistance

Federal Capital Funding

Federal capital funding is authorized for transportation projects through the MAP-21 law which expires in the fall of 2014. Although some efforts at reauthorization have begun, details of the new program will not be known until the new bill or extension of the present bill is enacted, either of which are uncertain presently.

If new legislation is not enacted by the expiration date of the current legislation, the likeliest scenario is enactment of a continuing resolution, possibly with reduced funding levels, until the new bill is passed. The program descriptions that follow are based on the existing legislation, and may or may not carry into a new bill.

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) sponsors MAP-21’s largest pot of money, called the Surface Transportation Program (STP), whose funds may be applied toward transit and highway capital projects. These funds are distributed through States, which means that the transit project would need to apply to the State of Alabama for these monies. The program also requires a 20% local/state match.
A portion of each funds in several FHWA programs are set aside specifically for the “Transportation Alternatives Program” – improvements that strengthen aesthetic, environmental, or cultural aspects of the nation’s transportation system. For example, Transportation Alternatives funds could be applied toward the landscaping of transit rail stations or to the context-sensitive design of waiting areas.

Another potential Federal funding source sponsored by FHWA is the Congestion Mitigation & Air Quality Improvement Program (CMAQ), whose funds can be used in EPA-designated air quality non-attainment and maintenance areas to fund transportation projects that would improve air quality. The Birmingham metro area is one such area, and the proposed transit service could qualify for CMAQ funds since the systems would improve air quality and reduce automobile traffic. If the transit service were to use alternative fuel vehicles, the system’s potential to qualify for CMAQ funding could improve considerably. CMAQ funds are typically used to fund operations of new transit service for up to three years. Due to this relatively short period of time, several transit operators relying on CMAQ funding for some or most of their operating expenses, attempt to transition to other operating sources during the three year period. Like STP funds, CMAQ funds are administered through the states. Projects can be identified through the statewide or local transportation planning processes or through suggestions from the public. The CMAQ program likewise requires a 20% state/local match. In recent years the Birmingham-Shelby MPO has flexed CMAQ funds to BJCTA, but it is understood that that practice will not be continuing.

The Federal Transit Administration (FTA) sponsors two Federal funding programs that the proposed bus rapid transit service could qualify for. FTA’s Urbanized Area Formula Transit Grant, which is the second largest pot of Federal transportation money, is the transit counterpart to FHWA’s Surface Transportation Program, and can be used for nearly any transit capital investment, including vehicles, stops and other facilities. The grant is allocated to urban areas and will provide 80% funding for most projects, but 95% funding for projects that provide bicycle access to mass transit. Some components of the proposed rail lines could be eligible for the 95% Federal funding category if bicycle access is incorporated. Formula funds usually are allocated for specific projects well ahead of time, and local project funding needs typically exceed available funding. Thus, the proposed project would be competing with other smaller, local projects for these funds.

If the rolling stock is purchased by a unit of local government, specialized funds for clean-fuel vehicles may be available. The FTA-sponsored Clean Fuels Formula Grant Program can be applied toward projects that use or accommodate the use of low emission or clean-fuel transit vehicles. For example, Clean Fuel funds could be used to purchase low-emissions buses to supply increased services on feeder routes, or to build alternative-fueling facilities or garages, or to purchase light and commuter rail vehicles.

The Clean Fuels program authorizes FTA to fund 80% of eligible capital costs and requires a 20% local/state match. “Clean fuels” that would qualify as eligible technologies include electricity, compressed natural gas (CNG), liquid natural gas (LNG), propane, biodiesel, and ethanol.

MAP-21 provides New Starts Program funding, the most common source of construction funds for major new transit projects. The New Starts Program funds projects through a competitive evaluation process, first appraising each project’s performance in terms of pre-determined FTA criteria, and then ranking projects to fund those that perform best. However, competition for New Starts funding is so high that in practice, FTA does not match higher than 50%.

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Applying for New Starts funding requires following FTA’s guidelines for project development and alternatives development, and working closely with the agency to insure that all methods for creating and evaluating the alternatives are conducted in a manner that yields correct comparisons among the alternatives. FTA places great importance on an evaluation of cost effectiveness and transit synergy with land use, and on there being a reasonable financial plan for the proposed project.

**Federal Operating Funding**

Over the past decade, the Federal government has pursued a policy of focusing more on capital projects and less on funding for transit operating expenses. As a result, almost all operating assistance originates from state and local sources. The only MAP-21 operating assistance for which the transit project could qualify would be funds provided by FTA through its Urbanized Area Formula Transit Grant for preventive maintenance. No other dedicated source of Federal funding exists to subsidize operations.

**A1.6.2 State and Local Capital and Operating Assistance**

**User Fees**

Passenger fares are the most common and sometimes most productive local source of operating funds. Fares typically cover anywhere from 10% to 25% of a system’s operating costs. Ridership tends to be inelastic with respect to fares, such that higher fares generally yield more revenue, while lower fares increase ridership but nonetheless yield less revenue. Also, the State or local governments have the option to charge highway tolls on local freeways, with revenues dedicated to improving transit and highway infrastructure and services.

**Cost Sharing Partnerships**

Another form of user fee subsidy could come from fees paid at local venues served by the proposed transit service. While this approach has potential in large urban areas with established, higher volume transit lines and large activity centers, it has little applicability to the Southwest Corridor.

**State and Local Support**

The Birmingham region Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) develops a five-year Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP) and a 20-year financially constrained Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) – tools that govern the selection of funding for major projects. The TIP is updated annually, while the Long-Range Plan is updated every five years. Without direct legislation for special projects, receiving most types of public transportation funding, both from the Federal government and from the State, requires attaining listed project status on the TIP. Larger projects also require a listing within the LRTP. In this way, the MPO plays a significant role in deciding whether and how much public funding the projects could receive.

State and local governments could play a role in funding through one of the following means, listed from most to least financially productive:

- Being the primary recipient of a Federal grant whose purpose is to fund the proposed project,
• Providing matching “local/state” funds for securing Federal funding,
• Providing a discretionary grant, by vote of the city, county, or state legislature elected officials, or
• Providing a discretionary grant, by decision of a City/County or State administrator.

At present, the state has not adopted policy positions that endorse and underpin special or continuing funding for transit operational or capital needs. Within the region, municipalities currently provide funding to BJCTA for operational costs of existing transit services, so additional contributions are not likely.

Taxation

Most new transit projects in the U.S. require some type of new, dedicated funding source, such as a half-penny sales tax, to provide ongoing funding for the project. The new source helps leverage Federal money as well, which requires a local match, and helps strengthen a project’s financial plan, since a dedicated funding source can be relied upon for many years into the future. Typically, a new tax is dedicated by law to fund the proposed project and other similar projects in the future. A new source of funding almost always is necessary to make a project financially viable. Thus, the public vote on the tax commonly becomes a vote of confidence (or lack thereof) in the proposed project. Voters essentially vote whether they want the project or not, making the project development process potentially very political.

There are many revenue mechanisms available that could provide the stable and dedicated source of funding for new capital and/or operating expenses incurred with a transit investment. The amount of yield for each mechanism varies based upon local conditions. Additionally, there are numerous political, legal and administrative issues pertaining to each that would need to be addressed before implementation. A listing of these sources includes:

• Local Sales Taxes
• Corporate Income Taxes
• Employer Payroll Tax
• Personal Income Tax
• Real Estate Property Tax
• Personal Property (automobile) Tax
• Motor Fuel (Gasoline) Tax
• Motor Vehicle Registration Fees
• Parking Receipt Tax
• Surface Parking Surcharge
• Rental Car Tax
• Vehicle Emissions Fee
• Vehicle Privilege Fee
• Real Estate Transfer Tax
• Mortgage Recordation Tax
• Fund Balance Transfers
• Incremental Tax Financing District
• Benefit Assessment District
• Value Capture

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A1.6.4 Summary

Securing funding is vital to ensuring that any of the proposed rail projects could be constructed and subsequently operated and maintained. To the extent that the projects can secure funding from sources other than fares, they also can offset operating costs, keeps fares affordable, and thereby carry a considerably larger portion of the market of potential riders.

Numerous funding sources are available from the Federal government, via a place in the region’s Transportation Improvement Plan. Most Federal sources will help defray capital expenses. Meanwhile, operating expenses are more challenging to cover. As identified above, there are numerous available non-federal sources of funding for transit capital and operating expenses.

A1.7 PROJECT RISK AND UNCERTAINTY

The financial analysis determined that BJCTA does not have the capacity to undertake a major investment like the Southwest Corridor BRT project. Strong fiscal discipline, restraint in expanding service and overhead, and other management measures to smooth cash flows over the next 22 years are some strategies that can provide the funding for BJCTA to support the construction, operation, and maintenance of the project. The financial analysis also assumes substantial federal participation in the construction of the Southwest Corridor BRT project—the preferred Build alternative. The magnitude of the investment requires BJCTA to ensure that the federal participation levels necessary to achieve program goals and objectives are attainable.

Although the financial analysis has defined a likely future based on previous funding trends, there are operating and capital risks associated with this project that could also affect a financial plan. Some additional risks related to BJCTA fiscal-capacity are described in the following sections.

A1.7.1 Operating Risks

The operating cost projections assume that BJCTA will continue to contain unit cost growth, particularly in the area of labor, fuel and materials. If the assumed operating efficiencies are not realized, the system-wide operating costs could be higher than those shown in the fiscal capacity analysis, and BJCTA’s long-term ability to balance its costs and revenues could be negatively affected. Changes in fares, fare policy, and fare structure affect ridership. Downtown parking costs affect ridership. Downtown employment levels affect ridership. Ridership affects fare revenue and cost recovery. Ridership also affects service levels, which in turn affect capital and operating costs. Emphasis on maximizing ridership and improving fare recovery, including minimizing fare evasion or fraud, are important elements of ensuring fiscal capacity.

A1.7.2 Capital Cost Risks

There remain potential uncertainties in the capital cost estimates for the Southwest Corridor BRT project including the scope of the project (such as number of underground utilities encountered or geotechnical conditions), right-of-way costs, and construction prices. Turner’s Building Cost Index indicated a 4.3% annual increase in the non-residential building construction market in the United States in the 2012 and 2013 timeframe. This may mean that construction costs may increase over time due to
demand for services. These uncertainties are not unusual at the conceptual level of planning. The present project cost estimate has included a 15 percent contingency in all hard and soft cost line items. A more refined cost estimate will be required during preliminary engineering as the project is advanced to the 30 percent design stage.

The rate of inflation could increase when this project is advancing to the construction phase, and this would raise all material and labor costs. Financial risks and interest rates could increase as capital markets respond to changes in the financial market and global economy. Tax receipts could fall below forecast levels if the economy slows.

A1.7.3 Risk Management Strategies

If a decision is made by the BJCTA to advance the proposed project, the following strategies can be used to address the identified risks:

- Slowing the growth in system operating costs,
- Reinvesting productivity gains in the capital improvement fund rather than in expanded services,
- Raising fares, and
- Using short-term debt to smooth cash flows.

A1.8 OVERALL FEASIBILITY

This study has described the feasibility issues related to the proposed transit services in the Southwest Corridor. Additional data collection and analysis will be required for the proposed alternative in order to fully assess its good standing as a competitive project to be considered as a candidate for FTA Small Starts funding.

A1.9 CONCLUSIONS

Given the many major potential projects that are proposed for the Birmingham region and the need for significant and limited local, state and federal financial resources, it will be necessary to prioritize investments within the long range planning process. This prioritization and planning should occur with public input, and as part of the planning process to update the Long Range Transportation Plan for the region.

In the current fiscal environment in Alabama and the United States, it would be difficult to find available funding in local budgets to pay the necessary local components of capital and operating expenses. Increasing fees or taxes is a challenging prospect that would require extensive public outreach to demonstrate the benefits of the investment. Given the early stage of planning, efforts should be made to gauge the public’s support for new transit services in Birmingham. If support is low, opportunities for public outreach regarding the benefits of transit investment should be pursued.

Project proponents should be prepared for a long project development process before any potential transit project is implemented. The Federal New Starts process is a highly competitive process with far more projects in the pipeline then there is money to build. Due to this current backlog of projects, only the top performing projects are being funded for construction. Other projects must continue planning efforts just to stay in consideration.

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High quality public transit can provide various economic, social and environmental benefits, including direct user benefits and various indirect and external benefits. Residents of communities with high quality transit tend to own fewer motor vehicles, drive less, and spend less on transportation than they would in more automobile-oriented locations. Governments and businesses can save roadway and parking facility costs. It can support economic development. Appropriate public transit investments can provide positive economic returns: under favorable conditions transit investments can provide savings and benefits that more than offset costs. As a result, public transit service improvements are an important component of many jurisdictions’ strategic transport plans.

Implementing transit improvements often requires additional funding. Although some federal, state or regional funding may be available, significant new local funding is often needed. The publication Local and Regional Funding Mechanisms for Public Transportation (Transit Cooperative Research Program Report 129, 2009) provides an extensive list of local and regional funding sources that are or could be used to support public transportation in the City of Birmingham and/or Jefferson County, plus guidance on factors to consider when evaluating and implementing these options. It evaluates various funding options based on revenue yield (adequacy and stability), cost efficiency, equity across demographic and income groups, degree to which beneficiaries pay, political and popular acceptability, and technical feasibility.

From some perspectives, it is most equitable to generate transit funding from a narrowly defined group of beneficiaries, such as users of a new transit service, employers who generate commute trips, or owners of transit station area properties. However, high quality public transit tends to provide multiple, dispersed benefits, including external benefits to people who do not currently use the service but benefit from reduced traffic and parking congestion, improved safety, reduced need to chauffeur non-drivers, energy conservation and emission reductions, and increased regional economic development. Public transit improvements tend to provide a broader scope of benefits than highway expansion, so a wider range of funding options can be justified for horizontal equity (i.e., beneficiaries pay) sake.

Widely used public transit funding sources include fares, property taxes, sales taxes, fuel taxes, advertising and transit station rents. There is potential for increasing revenues from these options, although fare increases contradict other planning objectives. Fuel tax increases and expanded parking pricing (more frequently charging motorists for using public parking facilities, particularly on-street parking in urban neighborhoods) are particularly appropriate because they also encourage fuel conservation and more efficient transport, in addition to raising revenues. However, these taxes and fees are considered burdensome and regressive and so should be implemented gradually.

The options that seem most acceptable to the public (development and transportation impact fees, station rents and advertising) tend to generate modest revenue. Economists are particularly enthusiastic about congestion pricing, but it tends to be costly and politically difficult to implement, and total revenues are often modest since tolls are only collected on a small portion of total vehicle travel.

Land value capture taxes and levies should also be considered. They should be structured to avoid discouraging transit-oriented development (they should not be too high or geographically concentrated), and it may be best to defer their implementation for a few years until station-area demand rises sufficiently. It is particularly appropriate to create local area benefit districts around transit stations where modest special levies and parking meter revenues are used primarily to finance local

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improvements such as station amenities, streetscaping and special cleaning and security services, rather than financing system-wide transit services.

Each funding option has disadvantages and constraints. As a result, the overall conclusion is that a variety of funding options should be used to help finance the local share of public transit improvements to insure stability (so total revenues are less vulnerable to fluctuations in a single economic sector or legal instrument) and distribute costs broadly. Public transit improvements often provide widely dispersed benefits that can justify widely dispersed funding sources. Even people who do not currently use public transit benefit from reduced congestion, increased public safety and health, improved mobility option for non-drivers, regional economic development, and improved environmental quality.

Additional research is recommended to better understand the impacts of these options would have in the City of Birmingham and/or Jefferson County. Revenue options that are implemented should be structured to maximize benefits and minimize problems. Taxes and levies should be designed to support other regional planning objectives, including increased transit ridership, reduced automobile traffic, economic development, energy conservation, compact development and greenspace preservation and affordability.
ANNEX 2

2.0 SPECIAL DISTRICT TOOLS AND FUNDING SOURCES

This section discusses a variety of special districts and other funding sources that can be pursued to support corridor improvement initiatives. There is a wide spectrum of grants and other funding programs that are potentially available. Pursuit of such sources will be significantly strengthened if the collaboration of the corridor coalition serves as a unifying basis, as many funding agencies and foundations are looking for an integrated, collaborative approach to problem solving that benefits a wide range of constituents. The corridor coalition is an effective vehicle for conveying this broad-based approach.

A2.1 ALABAMA DISTRICTS

Alabama Law identifies seven types of special districts or authorities specifically suited for purposes such as redevelopment, financing capital improvements, promotion of commerce and the preservation of historic districts. An Alabama Improvement District is one of several types of entities prescribed in state law that:

- Allows the use of public funds to stimulate private development,
- Is created by local public action,
- Is controlled by an appointed board, and
- Can issue bonds to finance a project.

The three such types of districts most suited to implementing corridor and station area redevelopment are:

- Title 11, Chapter 99 Alabama Statutes: Tax Increment District
- Title 11, Chapter 99A Alabama Statutes: Alabama Improvement District
- Title 11, Chapter 99B Alabama Statutes: Capital Improvement Cooperative District

These are discussed below.

A2.1.1 Alabama Improvement District (AID)

An Alabama Improvement District, authorized under Title 11, Chapter 99A Alabama Statutes, is a legal entity formed among two or more private property owners. An Alabama Improvement District has the ability to issue bonds and confer exemptions from certain state and local taxes. The primary benefit of an AID is its use as a financing vehicle to issue tax-exempt bonds to provide funds for the construction of infrastructure, but with the added benefit of significant state and local tax exemptions. An AID is limited to a specifically defined area and may not levy assessments without the consent of the landowners within the AID and the approval of the appointing government. Further, a federal income tax exemption is also available for bonds issued by the District so long as the bonds are issued in compliance with the tax-exempt bond rules contained in Internal Revenue Code. The AID may issue bonds to finance the construction of the infrastructure improvements, secured by a pledge of the assessment revenues. There is no government involvement in the assessment of levies to retire the bonds and the local
government that authorizes the AID bears no liability, financial or otherwise, for the AID’s bonds. AID’s could be useful for development interests in improving the return on real estate development in the corridor by lowering upfront costs with low, tax exempt finance rates, credit support through assessments on third party buyers of residential or other development product, as reduced tax burdens.

A2.1.2 Capital Improvement Cooperative District (CICD)

The Capital Improvement Cooperative District, authorized under Title 11, Chapter 99B Alabama Statutes, is a legal entity formed among two or more public entities, including counties, municipalities, utility districts, and development authorities. State law gives them the broad powers which may be necessary to carry out redevelopment, including the following:

- To acquire, hold, assemble, develop and dispose of property,
- To sell and issue tax-exempt bonds in order to provide funds for land acquisition or capital improvements, payable solely from revenues derived from the operation of the CICD, without creating a debt obligation of any individual member of the CICD, and
- To exercise specifically designated powers of eminent domain (condemnation) which may be necessary for the assembly of redevelopment sites.

There have been several dozen CICD projects executed over the years. An example of a CICD project is the Bass Pro Shops development in Prattville, the Academy Drive project by the City of Bessemer, and the City of Birmingham Five Points West commercial development project. Other projects can be found at [http://arc-sos.state.al.us/CGI/](http://arc-sos.state.al.us/CGI/) and searching for “Cooperative Districts”.

Some details of the Bass Pro Shops project are as follows:

- Formed to facilitate the construction of the retail development,
- The district issued $23.4 million of revenue bonds, fully guaranteed by Bass Pro Shops and enhanced by a bank letter of credit,
- The City of Prattville rebated 2.5% of its sales tax on all sales from the retail to help repay the bonds, and the district also levied an extra 1.5% sales tax on the retail, and rebated the proceeds for bond repayment,
- There was $6.7 million in general obligation warrants to purchase the site which was conveyed to the district as bond collateral, and
- Bass Pro Shops is the anchor tenant of a 1 million square foot shopping center expected to generate $5 million in sales taxes annually.

Within these districts there are a variety of options for local government to be within or outside of the chain of credit. There are various ways to structure the project in terms of pledged sales taxes, credits, self-assessment, leasing, and others.

A2.1.3 Tax Increment District (TID)

Tax Increment Districts are authorized under Title 11, Chapter 99 Alabama Statutes, provides for the use of tax increment financing districts (TIDs) to promote redevelopment of designated blighted areas, the most widely used redevelopment finance tool in the nation. TIDs “capture” increasing tax revenues within the designated TID (arising from taxes on new development) over the “base year” when the district is established, to be used to retire bonds that may fund redevelopment activity such as land

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acquisition and assembly, as well as capital improvements. While property taxes will increase within a TID; any increase will be used to finance district projects and the general revenue stream of local government, which could impact bond ratings.

While TID’s could be created in station areas that would qualify as blighted, a corridor-wide TID is unlikely for a number of reasons. Much of the corridor would not qualify as blighted, and it is unlikely that all of the governmental units within the corridor would agree to divert such a substantial portion of their tax base to a district in which rising taxes would not flow to the general fund. In Alabama, TIDs are used mostly on large projects due to the relatively low ad valorem tax base. Examples of TID projects are the Montgomery Riverwalk Amphitheatre and the Montgomery Biscuits baseball minor league stadium.

A2.1.3 Formation of Alabama Districts

The basic steps to formation of a district under these statutes are as follows:

1. Per Section 11-99B-3 of the Alabama Code, file identical written applications with the governing body of each county, municipality, and public corporation proposed to be a member of the proposed district, containing:
   a. Description of each project proposed to be undertaken by the district,
   b. A general description of the area or areas in which the district proposes to acquire or construct such project or projects, and the name of each county, municipality, and public corporation proposed to be a member of the district.
   c. A proposed total number of directors, proposed provisions for the election of each director by one of these governing bodies, and any proposal to give the directors proportional voting power, all subject to the provisions of the law.
   d. The proposed location of the principal office of the district, subject to requirements of the law.
   e. A statement that each of the applicants is a duly qualified elector as stated in the law.
   f. A request that each of such governing bodies adopt a resolution declaring that it is wise, expedient, and necessary that the proposed district be formed and authorizing the applicants to proceed to form the proposed district by the filing for record of a certificate of incorporation in accordance with the provisions of Section 11-99B-4.
   g. The application may also state a proposed plan for apportioning the properties of the district upon its dissolution among its members, and shall be accompanied by supporting documents or evidence as appropriate.

2. After the filing of the application, each governing body with which the application was filed shall review the contents of the application, and shall adopt a resolution either denying the application or authorizing the applicants to proceed to form the proposed district by the filing for record of a certificate of incorporation. Section 11-99B-4.

With the above filing of application process completed, the next step per Section 11-99B-4 of the Alabama Code is to:

1. Proceed to incorporate a district by filing for record in the office of the judge of probate of the county in which the principal office of the district is to be located, as specified in law, with the certificate of incorporation of the district shall stating:

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a. Names of the persons forming the district and the statement required above.

b. Period for the duration of the district - If the duration is to be perpetual, that fact shall be stated.

c. Name of each authorizing subdivision, together with the date on which the governing body adopted an authorizing resolution.

d. Name of the district, and the location of the principal office of the district.

e. General description and location of the project or projects proposed to be acquired or constructed.

f. Total number of directors, proposed provisions for the election of each director by one of these governing bodies, and any proposal to give the directors proportional voting power, all subject to the provisions of the law.

g. Proposed name of the district, which shall include the words "cooperative district."

h. Proposed plan for apportioning the properties of the district upon its dissolution among its members, and shall be accompanied by supporting documents or evidence as appropriate.

i. Statement that the application filed with the governing body of each of the authorizing subdivisions was identical to the copy attached to said certificate of incorporation.

j. Any other matters relating to the district that the incorporators may choose to insert and that are not inconsistent with this chapter or with the laws of the state.

2. To the extent that any matter required by the above provisions to be included in the certificate of incorporation of a district is also required or permitted to be included in the application filed with the authorizing subdivisions, the provisions of the certificate of incorporation with respect to such matter shall be in strict accordance with the corresponding provisions of the application.

3. The certificate of incorporation shall be signed and acknowledged by the incorporators before an officer authorized by the laws of the state. When the certificate of incorporation is filed for record, there shall be attached to it a copy of the application as filed with the governing body of each of the authorizing subdivisions, a certified copy of the authorizing resolution adopted by the governing body of each authorizing subdivision, and a certificate by the Secretary of State that the name proposed for the district is not identical or too similar to that of any other corporation. Upon the filing for record of the said certificate of incorporation and the required attachments, the district shall come into existence and shall constitute a public corporation under the name set forth in said certificate of incorporation. The judge of probate shall thereupon send a notice to the Secretary of State that the certificate of incorporation of the district has been filed for record.

At this point the district is enabled to conduct its business subject to applicable laws and regulations of the state regarding noticing of meetings, records keeping, and other requirements, as well as other provisions of Sections 11-99B-5 to 17 that address such aspects as amendment of the certification of incorporation, the board of directors, district powers, security for bonding, payment of principal and interest on bonds, fees and charges, loans and other obligations to the district by other entities, use of rights-of-ways, tax exemption, and other terms and conditions. Execution of the district’s infrastructure projects may require technical assistance of surveying and engineering design, permitting, legal counsel, accounting and investment banking/financial advisors for financing instruments and other revenue/disbursement/audit needs.
A2.2 INFRASTRUCTURE TRUST

A key part of the strategy to reinvigorate the Southwest Corridor is to attract private investment to assist with the funding of infrastructure and other public assets. The use of private capital to fund public projects is known as a Public Private Partnership or P3. One such model of a P3 that is considered a strong candidate for use in the study corridor is the Infrastructure Trust.

An Infrastructure Trust is a type of income trust that that exists to finance, construct won, operate and maintain different infrastructure projects. It provides a mechanism that enables private dollars to invest in major public works and infrastructure projects, earning a return while helping to finance public works that may otherwise be unaffordable to taxpayers in a given region or operating area. Implementation of this concept within this corridor would help to meet one of this project’s goals, that being the need for transformative action.

It is envisioned that within the Southwest Corridor that an infrastructure trust could be one of the tools available to the US 11 Southwest Corridor Coalition. It, along with the designation of the Corridor Coalition as an Alabama Improvement District, would provide a tool that would enable the coalition to begin reaching out to private entities in search of funds for public infrastructure projects. In addition, the coalition’s embrace of the infrastructure trust structure as a potential funding mechanism would serve to fundamentally change the traditional structure of public infrastructure funding in the region. This would demonstrate it is possible to design, build and operate more efficient transportation infrastructure and services because the risk has effectively been transferred to the private funding partner. Ultimately, the goal is to develop infrastructure and services in the corridor in a cost effective manner, saving the public a substantial percentage over traditional project delivery mechanisms with the expenditure of capital and operating funding for infrastructure. In theory, private interests would seek to minimize the amount of risk that they and their investors are exposed to by demanding that infrastructure be developed and operated in a practical and cost efficient manner.

In turning to collaborate with the private sector, coalition member cities and stakeholders will be emulating polices that are more popular around the world. Countries like Canada and Australia, as well as others throughout Europe including the United Kingdom, all have P3s that have financed major capital projects. While the idea of an infrastructure trust has yet to gain much traction in the US, its consideration by governments in Chicago and New Jersey has much to do with their recognition that their growth and economic resiliency has been limited by their traditional reliance on funding from the federal government and This reliance is symptomatic of most every local government in the US.

Critics of the P3 approach argue that governments that participate with private companies to develop public assets wind up ceding control of the public asset, and allege that the sale of the public infrastructure only serves to benefit the private companies. Examples of this include the debacles of that have plagued many city surface parking infrastructure, enforcement services, tollways, and water infrastructure. It is important to note that governments have different goals for the amount of risk undertaken and should consider carefully the outcomes of partnering with private entities. They need to understand the ultimate ownership status for the asset, how the asset will be managed, and the relationship between themselves and their investment partners.

A good case study is the Chicago Infrastructure Trust, which was created in April 2012 by executive order of the mayor and city council resolution. The following information is extracted from an article in
the December 2013 Governing magazine ([http://www.governing.com/topics/transportation-infrastructure/gov-chicago-infrastructure-trust-build-up.html](http://www.governing.com/topics/transportation-infrastructure/gov-chicago-infrastructure-trust-build-up.html)). The trust’s purpose is to assist the city government and its sister agencies in providing alternative financing and project delivery options for transformative infrastructure projects. To accomplish this, the trust hopes to structure innovative financing strategies and attract capital from diverse types of investors. The trust also hopes to achieve and demonstrate real risk transfer to third-party investors, and to stimulate cross-agency financing while creating efficient capital structures. These can include:

- **Joint ventures / private equity.** The trust may use joint ventures and private equity to launch projects. By using these resources to fund a project, the trust creates a more attractive opportunity for private investors and again secures better terms.

- **Public Private Partnership (P3) investments.** The private sector has significant interest in investing in P3 infrastructure projects. For major investors, P3 infrastructure projects are a proven model based on experience in the US, Canada and abroad. Funding from private sources can come in several forms, including direct equity investment, funding via debt and Community Reinvestment Act (CRA) funds from pension funds and major banks.

- **State, federal and private grants.** Specialized grants and loans for infrastructure are available from the federal and governments, and from the private sector. The trust continuously tracks availability of these funds and will apply for them on any project where they are available and appropriate.

Besides competition, there is a fundamental difference between prior Chicago deals like Midway Airport or parking meters (which the city leased for 75 years in 2008 for a one-time payment of almost $1.2 billion) and what the Chicago Infrastructure Trust is trying to do. Previously, the city hoped to extract a big upfront sum by leasing existing assets and/or their revenue streams to investors. The trust, on the other hand, wants to build city assets using private money instead of adding more debt to Chicago’s overburdened balance sheet.

Advocates for the trust say it holds promise for three key reasons. First, it could help shift risk from the city to the private sector for less conventional projects that might be unproven. For example, the trust’s first deal, tentatively approved last month, involves spending $25 million on upgrades to city buildings designed to reduce the city’s energy costs over time. Investors would pay for the retrofits up front, and in return, they’d get to keep a portion of those savings. If the savings don’t materialize, the investors would ostensibly take the loss, not the city.

The second reason, supporters say, is that the private sector has a better track record than the public sector at maintaining assets over the course of their lifetime. That’s because when times get tough, maintenance budgets are often the first thing cities scrap to plug budget holes. But if investors have a stake in the long-term life of a piece of infrastructure, that would be less likely to happen. Municipal bond holders generally don’t worry about the success of a project as much as a city’s ability to repay a loan, says Michael Pagano, dean of the College of Urban Planning and Public Affairs at the University of Illinois at Chicago. Because investors in CIT projects would only earn a return from the projects in which they have directly invested, then they would have a stake in facilitating successful ones.

Third, and perhaps most crucially, supporters of the plan say the city doesn’t have the borrowing capacity to rely on municipal bonds alone, given the vast amount of infrastructure work facing Chicago and the city’s sinking credit. In July 2013, Moody’s Investors Service downgraded the city’s credit rating, citing its soaring pension costs, rising public safety demands and its unwillingness to raise taxes. The

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downgrade took the city’s general obligation bond debt down three notches to “A3,” and Moody’s also gave Chicago a negative outlook. In 2015, the city faces a $1.1 billion pension bill. “We don’t have enough resources to go around,” says Lois Scott, the city’s chief financial officer. “We just don’t. Instead of complaining about the problem, we decided to do something.” The trust may also give Chicago a way to take on debt while keeping the obligations off its balance sheet – a common reason governments pursue such deals. Trust managers say they’re working to ensure that’s exactly the case with the retrofit project, though city officials say off-balance sheet debt was not their primary motivator for creating the trust.

In all likelihood, it will only be able to facilitate projects that offer up some sort of easily identifiable revenue stream to pay investors. Joseph Schwieterman, a public policy professor at DePaul University, says those opportunities may not be easy to find. “That’s where we’re all scratching our heads, to see where these revenue streams are. It’s not clear where you have unexploited revenue opportunities.”

A2.3 FEDERAL VISA PROGRAM EB-5

The United States Citizenship and Immigration Services oversees the EB-5 visa program for Immigrant Investors. The EB-5 visa was created by the Immigration Act of 1990. This visa provides a method of obtaining a green card for foreign nationals who invest money in the United States. To obtain the visa, individuals must invest $1,000,000 (or at least $500,000 in a “Targeted Employment Area” - high unemployment or rural area), creating or preserving at least 10 jobs for U.S. workers excluding the investor and their immediate family. Initially, under the first EB-5 program, the foreign investor was required to create an entirely new commercial enterprise; however, under the 1992 Pilot Program, investments can be made directly in a job-generating commercial enterprise (new, or existing - "Troubled Business", or into a "Regional Center" - a 3rd party-managed investment vehicle (private or public), which assumes the responsibility of creating the requisite jobs. Regional Centers may charge an administration fee for managing the investor’s investment.

If the foreign national investor's petition is approved, the investor and their dependents will be granted conditional permanent residence valid for two years. Within the 90-day period before the conditional permanent residence expires, the investor must submit evidence documenting that the full required investment has been made and that 10 jobs have been maintained, or 10 jobs have been created or will be created within a reasonable time period.

In 1992, Congress created a temporary pilot program designed to stimulate economic activity and job growth, while allowing eligible aliens the opportunity to become lawful permanent residents. Under this pilot program, foreign nationals may invest in a pre-approved regional center, or "economic unit, public or private, which is involved with the promotion of economic growth, including increased export sales, improved regional productivity, job creation, or increased domestic capital investment". Investments within a regional center provide foreign nationals the added benefit of allowing them to count jobs created both directly and indirectly for purposes of meeting the 10 job creation requirement.

A2.4 COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS FUND

The Community Development Financial Institutions Fund (CDFI Fund), according to the US Treasury website (http://www.cdfifund.gov/) promotes economic revitalization in distressed communities throughout the United States by providing financial assistance and information to community
development financial institutions (CDFI). An agency of the United States Department of the Treasury, it was established through the Reigle Community Development and Regulatory Improvement Act of 1994. Financial institutions, which may include banks, credit unions, loan funds, and community development venture capital funds, can apply to the CDFI Fund for formal certification as a CDFI. As of September 1, 2005, there were 747 certified CDFIs in the U.S. The CDFI Fund offers a variety of financial programs to provide capital to CDFIs, such as the Financial Assistance Program, Technical Assistance Program, Bank Enterprise Award Program, and the New Markets Tax Credit Program.

One of the largest nonprofit loan funds in the United States, Enterprise Community Loan Fund - a subsidiary of Enterprise Community Partners has loaned more than $725 million to help build or renovate 91,000 affordable homes. They also offer local funds in Atlanta, Louisiana, Los Angeles, and New York City.

The CDFI Fund achieves its purpose by promoting access to capital and local economic growth in the following ways:

1. Through its Community Development Financial Institutions Program by directly investing in, supporting and training CDFIs that provide loans, investments, financial services and technical assistance to underserved populations and communities;
2. Through its New Markets Tax Credit Program by providing an allocation of tax credits to Community Development Entities which enable them to attract investment from the private-sector and reinvest these amounts in low-income communities;
3. Through its Bank Enterprise Award Program by providing an incentive to banks to invest in their communities and in other CDFIs;
4. Through its Native Initiatives, by taking action to provide financial assistance, technical assistance, and training to Native CDFIs and other Native entities proposing to become or create Native CDFIs; and
5. Through its CDFI Bond Guarantee Program by issuing bonds to support CDFIs that make investments for eligible community or economic development purposes.

Since its creation, the CDFI Fund has awarded over $1.7 billion to community development organizations and financial institutions; it has awarded allocations of New Markets Tax Credits which will attract private-sector investments totaling $33 billion, including $1 billion of special allocation authority to be used for the recovery and redevelopment of the Gulf Opportunity Zone.

Through monetary awards and the allocation of tax credits, the CDFI Fund helps promote access to capital and local economic growth in urban and rural low-income communities across the nation. Through its various programs, the CDFI Fund enables locally based organizations to further goals such as: economic development (job creation, business development, and commercial real estate development); affordable housing (housing development and homeownership); and community development financial services (provision of basic banking services to underserved communities and financial literacy training).

The CDFI Fund accomplishes this through the following programs:

- Bank Enterprise Award (BEA) Program
- Capacity Building Initiative
- Capital Magnet Fund (CMF) Program
- CDFI Bond Guarantee Program

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- Certification – Community Development Entity (CDE)
- Certification – Community Development Financial Institution (CDFI)
- Community Development Financial Institutions (CDFI) Program
- Financial Education and Counseling (FEC) Program
- Native Initiatives, includes the Native American CDFI Assistance (NACA) Program
- New Markets Tax Credit (NMTC) Program

The Community Development Financial Institutions (CDFI) Fund was established by the Riegle Community Development and Regulatory Improvement Act of 1994 to promote economic revitalization in low-income communities. The CDFI Program is one of the primary ways that the CDFI Fund works to achieve this mission.

The purpose of the CDFI Program is to use federal resources to invest in CDFIs and to build their capacity to serve low-income people and communities that lack access to affordable financial products and services. Through the CDFI Program, the CDFI Fund provides two types of monetary awards to CDFIs – Financial Assistance awards and Technical Assistance awards. CDFIs may use the funds to pursue a variety of goals, including:

- To promote economic development, to develop businesses, to create jobs, and to develop commercial real estate;
- To develop affordable housing and to promote homeownership; and
- To provide community development financial services, such as basic banking services, financial literacy programs, and alternatives to predatory lending.

Since 1994, the CDFI Fund has awarded more than $1.3 billion in FA and TA awards through the CDFI Program, with these types of awards:

**Financial Assistance (FA) Awards:** The CDFI Fund makes awards of up to $2 million to certified CDFIs under the FA component of the CDFI Program. A CDFI may use the award for financing capital, loan loss reserves, capital reserves, or operations. FA awards are made in the form of equity investments, loans, deposits, or grants, and the CDFI is required to match its FA award dollar-for-dollar with non-federal funds of the same type as the award itself. This requirement enables CDFIs to leverage private capital to meet the demand for affordable financial products and services in economically distressed communities.

**Technical Assistance (TA) Awards:** TA grants allow certified CDFIs and established entities seeking to become certified to build their capacity to provide affordable financial products and services to low-income communities and families. Grants may be used for a wide range of purposes. For example, awardees can use TA funds to purchase equipment; for consulting or contracting services; to pay the salaries and benefits of certain personnel; and/or to train staff or board members. The CDFI Fund makes awards of up to $125,000 under the TA component of the CDFI Program.

**A2.5 NEW MARKETS TAX CREDIT**

The New Markets Tax Credit (NMTC) ([http://nmtccoalition.org/fact-sheet/](http://nmtccoalition.org/fact-sheet/)) was designed to increase the flow of capital to businesses and low income communities by providing a modest tax incentive to private investors. Over the last ten years, the NMTC has proven to be an effective, targeted and cost-efficient financing tool valued by businesses, communities and investors across the country. The American
Taxpayer Relief Act passed at the end of the 112th Congress includes a two-year extension of the New Markets Tax Credits with $3.5 billion in annual credit authority provided for 2012 and 2013. The NMTC expired at the end of 2013, but it can still be extended, and extension legislation has been introduced in the House (H.R. 4365) and Senate (S. 1133).

The NMTC was authorized in the Community Renewal Tax Relief Act of 2000 (PL 106-554) as part of a bipartisan effort to stimulate investment and economic growth in low income urban neighborhoods and rural communities that lack access to the patient capital needed to support and grow businesses, create jobs, and sustain healthy local economies.

The NMTC program attracts capital to low income communities by providing private investors with a federal tax credit for investments made in businesses or economic development projects located in some of the most distressed communities in the nation – census tracts where the individual poverty rate is at least 20 percent or where median family income does not exceed 80 percent of the area median. A NMTC investor receives a tax credit equal to 39 percent of the total Qualified Equity Investment (QEI) made in a Community Development Entity (CDE) and the Credit is realized over a seven-year period, 5 percent annually for the first three years and 6 percent in years four through seven. If an investor redeems a NMTC investment before the seven-year term has run its course, all Credits taken to date will be recaptured with interest.

The impact of New Markets Tax Credit Investments is summarized as follows:

- Between 2003 and 2012, $31 billion in direct NMTC investments were made in businesses that created approximately 550,000 jobs, at a cost to the federal government of less than $20,000 per job and these NMTC investments leveraged over $60 billion in total capital investment in businesses located in communities with high rates of poverty and unemployment.
- By law, all NMTC investments must be made in economically distressed communities. However, more than 72 percent of all NMTC investments have been in communities exhibiting severe economic distress, including unemployment rates more than 1.5 times the national average, a poverty rate of 30 percent or more, or a median income at or below 60 percent of the area median.
- The federal tax revenue generated by NMTC investments covers the cost of the NMTC as measured in terms of revenue lost to the federal government. Between 2003 and 2010, NMTC investments generated over $5.3 billion in federal tax revenue and over $3 billion in state and local tax revenue; while the revenue loss to the federal government over the same period of time was $5.4 billion.
- In 2010 alone, NMTC investments generated almost $1.1 billion in federal tax revenue, easily offsetting the estimated $720 million cost of the program for the federal government and providing a 50 percent return on investment.

A2.6 REGIONAL RESOURCES

There are several regional resources to support community redevelopment and economic development. These are described as follows:

Jefferson County Community Development

This agency oversees several programs that provides funding and grants to qualifying applicants, including:

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- Community Development Block Grant Program (Housing and Non-Housing)
- HOME Investment Partnership Program

RPCGB Economic Development Department

A key economic development resource is the Economic Development Department (EDD) of the RPCGB which provides a variety of services to support economic development. The EDD works with local governments within the region for financial assistance from state and federal agencies to fund various types of projects including planning, emergency response, energy, brownfields, business incubators, industrial parks, parks and recreation, and water and sewer utilities.

REV Birmingham

According to its website, REV Birmingham (REV) revitalizes places and energizes business to create vibrancy within the City of Birmingham. REV is an economic development organization that stimulates business growth and improves quality of life in Birmingham’s City Center and its Neighborhood Commercial Centers. REV fuels commercial vitality through proactive business recruitment and retention activities, and by encouraging private and public investments that support economic growth citywide. REV’s initiatives generate positive results for partners, enhance tax revenue, generate and sustain jobs, increase tourism and positively influence perceptions about the City of Birmingham. REV is a private-public partnership that was formed in 2012 by the strategic merger of Operation New Birmingham and Main Street Birmingham. This group is active in:

- City Center Revitalization: partnering with the business community and the City of Birmingham to create sustainable business districts in which people live, work and play throughout Birmingham’s 365-block City Center.
- Neighborhood Revitalization: working on the ground in urban commercial districts to organize merchants and spark private-public revitalization partnerships.
- Business Growth: its Business Growth and Innovation team is committed to helping small business owners define and achieve their goals, moving their plan from concept to reality.
- Catalytic Development: identifying properties that are holding a community back and revitalizing them.

A2.7 OTHER FUNDING SOURCES

A wide range of potential funding tools for corridor redevelopment is available and may have applicability to the Southwest Corridor redevelopment efforts, whether for TOD or other corridor redevelopment. The Environmental Protection Agency has recently compiled a comprehensive compendium of tools and strategies for funding TOD-related infrastructure in its recent publication (Infrastructure Financing Options for Transit Oriented Development, US EPA, Office of Sustainable Communities, Smart Growth Program, Washington, DC, 2013; http://reconnectingamerica.org/resource-center/federal-grant-opportunities/). This document is provided in the appendix of this report.

The report discusses various financing tools and sources, and also provides a set of case studies which show how various tools were packaged to accomplish projects around the country. It also includes a
discussion of the EPA Smart Growth Implementation Assistance Program which is an offshoot of the EPA-HUD-DOT Partnership for Sustainable Communities, and which offers technical assistance to communities (www.epa.gov/smartgrowth/sgia.com).

Another comprehensive source for federal grant programs is the Reconnecting America website (http://reconnectingamerica.org/resource-center/federal-grant-opportunities/) which lists a large number of programs by the sponsoring federal agency. One of its publications is a tabulation of current grant opportunities across federal agencies (http://www.reconnectingamerica.org/assets/Uploads/20131009ReconnectingAmericaFederalFundingMatrix.pdf). While not all grant sources may be applicable to Southwest Corridor needs, there are a number that would be relevant and for which corridor projects may be eligible.

A2.8 PHILANTHROPIC AND CHARITABLE FOUNDATIONS

There are a wide range of philanthropic and charitable foundations in the Birmingham region and nationally that are focused on an array of specific missions to improve cities, workforce skills, sustainability, housing, neighborhoods, cultural resources, and other aspects of quality of life and a better world. One of these listed foundations was cited in the South Florida coalition case study and you will find foundations involved with major initiatives in cities like Detroit, New York, Chicago, Atlanta and others. As for grant programs noted above, many of these groups put emphasis on collaborative, integrated, community-wide efforts, those that involve volunteer efforts, and those that are leveraging a variety of assets to tackle community needs identified and supported by a coalition of stakeholders, so again the corridor coalition would be recognized as a mechanism for bringing together diverse interests in a common cause.

The following foundations were identified through a variety of sources, including their recognition in case studies for specific cities and in general urban redevelopment references. The descriptions identify each of the charities location and mission focus. It is noted that several of these foundations are located in Birmingham or have business interests in the Southwest Corridor.

• **Ford Foundation:** Based in New York City, the foundation has a global span and many programs, one of which is Metropolitan Opportunity, through which it supports organizations that pursue integrated approaches to housing, land use and environmental planning, public transportation and community infrastructure, and aligned workforce opportunities.
  
  [http://www.fordfoundation.org/grants](http://www.fordfoundation.org/grants)

• **Surdna Foundation:** Based in New York City, this foundation has three main focus areas. The first is Sustainable Environments Program works to overhaul low performing infrastructure with “next generation infrastructure” that will foster healthier, sustainable, and just communities, to improve transit systems, make buildings more energy efficient, better manage our water systems and rebuild regional food systems. The Strong Local Economies program supports the development of robust and sustainable economies that include a diversity of businesses and access to quality jobs for low-income people, communities of color, immigrants, and women. The Thriving Cultures program supports efforts to encourage interest in the arts, involving artists in community development projects, and fostering the growth of local artists as economic engines and agents for social change.
  
• **Home Depot Foundation**: Based in Atlanta, this foundation emphasizes support to military veterans and also supports other groups, through a product donation program called Framing Hope, through grants to non-profits, and through its Team Depot employee volunteer program. [http://www.homedepotfoundation.org/page/grants]

• **The James D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation**, located in Chicago, supports creative people and effective institutions committed to building a more just, verdant, and peaceful world. In addition to selecting the MacArthur Fellows, the Foundation works to defend human rights, advance global conservation and security, make cities better places, and understand how technology is affecting children and society. Its US Programs address issues in the United States, including community and economic development; housing, with a focus on the preservation of affordable rental housing; juvenile justice reform; education, with a focus on digital media and learning; and policy research and analysis on issues such as the implications of an aging society, America's fiscal future, and the use of economic analysis in policy making. [http://www.macfound.org/]

• **US Steel Foundation**: This foundation awards grants to nonprofit organizations, primarily in the communities of U. S. Steel employment centers. Grants are awarded in three programs: Education; Safety, Health and Human Services; and Public, Cultural and Scientific Affairs. While economic development grants are excluded, there are other categories of support that are relevant. [https://www.ussteel.com/uss/portal/home/aboutus/foundation/]

• **Kresge Foundation**: This large, Detroit-based foundation supports several initiative areas, one of which is Community Development, which is active in Detroit, with a highly strategic, integrated approach to urban revitalization in. Their national community development focus is on replicable, innovative models and exemplary financial vehicles for equitable reinvestment, seeking opportunities for shared learning between their local and the national urban redevelopment community. [http://kresge.org/]

• **Walmart Foundation**: This foundation is headquartered in Bentonville, AR focuses on five areas of community giving: Hunger Relief & Healthy Eating, Sustainability, Women’s Economic Empowerment, Career Opportunities, and Special Interests (veterans welfare, disaster response). The foundation emphasizes support to its employee volunteer initiatives and also supports other worthy projects. [http://foundation.walmart.com/]

• **Community Foundation of Greater Birmingham**: This is a large local foundation with focus areas in sustainable communities, healthy living, family economic security, and educational success. [http://www.cfbham.org/]

• **BBVA Compass Foundation**: This local foundation has these six focus areas - community development, education, health and human services, arts and culture, environment and natural resources, and diversity and inclusion. [https://www.bbvacompas.com/compass/responsibility/Foundations.jsp]

• **Alabama Power Foundation**: This locally based foundation awards grants in several emphasis areas, including education, community life, health and human services, arts and culture or the

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environment, with an interest in addressing underserved segments of the population, such as racial or ethnic minorities, the impoverished and underprivileged or communities with fewer opportunities. [http://powerofgood.com/]

- **Vulcan Materials Foundation**: This locally based foundation targets its grants in the areas of working with schools, encouraging employee involvement, and supporting environmental stewardship. The latter could support the regional trails program in the corridor. [http://www.vulcanmaterials.com/social-responsibility/community/vulcan-foundation]

- **The Daniel Foundation of Alabama**: This foundation based in Birmingham directs grants to several relevant areas, including arts, culture and community assets; community needs; health; education and youth, and higher education. Specific interests within these areas include: Programs that encourage and support the growth of entrepreneurship, community revitalization initiatives, projects that meet the needs of Alabama’s veterans, efforts to promote healthy eating and active communities, community heritage and historic preservation, and preservation of green space and increased access to nature. [http://danielfoundationofalabama.com/]