

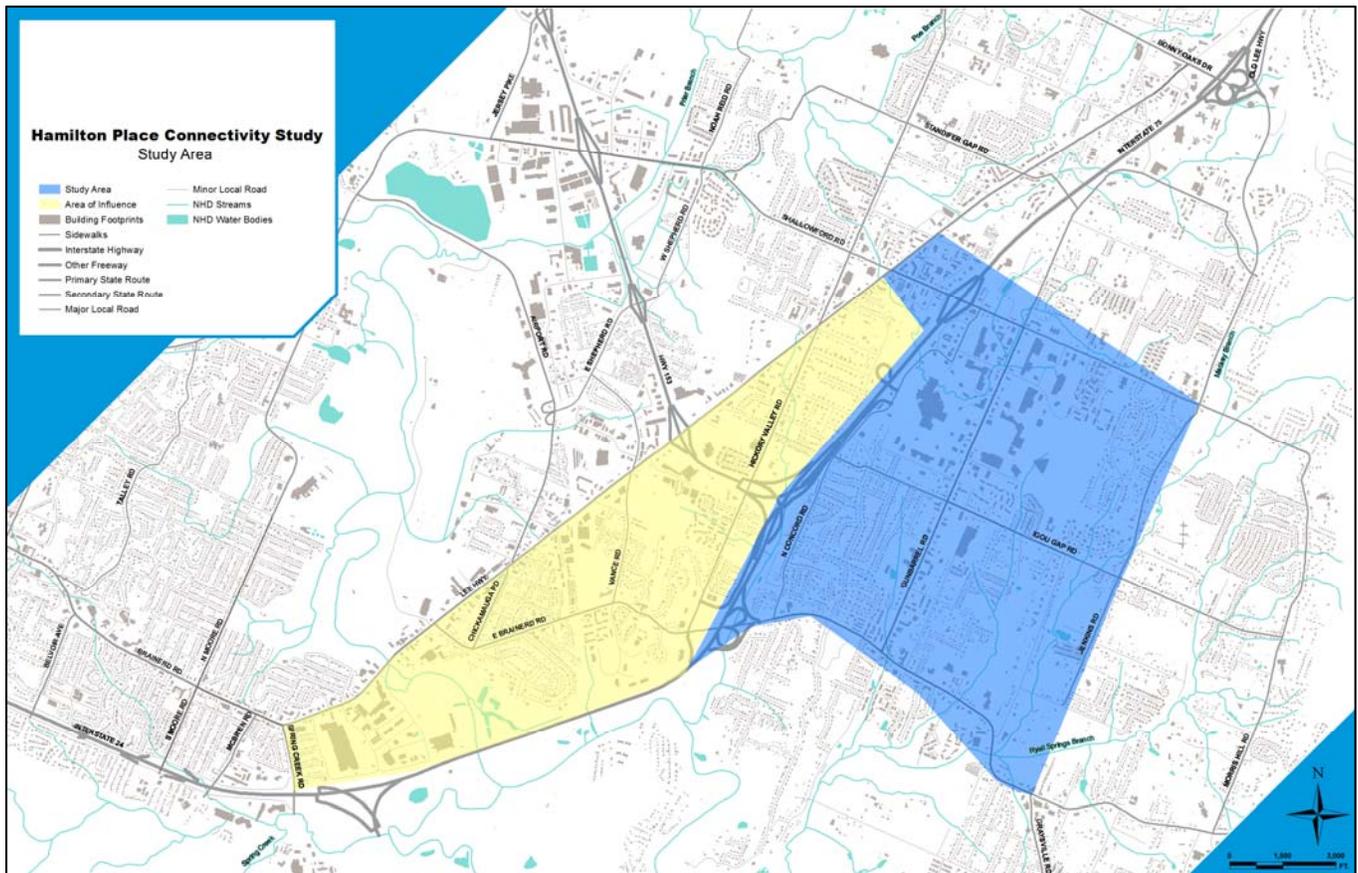
Background

Federal law requires Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) to maintain and periodically update a 20-year Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP), whereby the community assesses needs associated with the transportation system and establishes strategic solutions to meet those needs. The 2040 Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) recommended and fiscally constrained a number of new transit projects, including a transit circulator in the Hamilton Mall area. To ensure a thorough understanding of how these new transit projects will connect to and function in concert with other proposed roadway improvements and result in benefits to the surrounding land uses, a comprehensive subarea study was developed by RPA staff and a consultant team from WSP - Parsons Brinckerhoff .

Study Area

The Hamilton Place Connectivity Study includes the Hamilton Place mall and its surrounding area to the east of I-75, and is bound by East Brainerd Road to the south, Jenkins Road to the east, I-75 to the west, and Shallowford Road to the north, as shown in the map below in blue. An additional “Area of Influence” shown in yellow along Shallowford Road between Lee Highway and I-75 was included in the analysis due to its proximity to the study area, similarity in land use and development, connectivity to the study area by means of CARTA Route 4, and the need to travel through this area to access the study area from the Greater Chattanooga area.

Study Area



Study Overview

The Hamilton Place Connectivity Study examined previous plans for the area, existing and planned transit services, roadways and traffic conditions, conditions for pedestrians and bicyclists, and also land use and zoning. Four main study goals were created through discussion and cooperation among the project steering committee, Chattanooga-Hamilton County Regional Planning Agency (RPA), and WSP Parsons Brinckerhoff. These goals, outlined below, guided the development of the project recommendations and the measures by which these recommendations were evaluated for inclusion in the final plan.

1. Improved Connectivity
 - a. Improve travel times for all modes
 - b. Improve transit connections within the study area
 - c. Improve connections to the regional transit network
 - d. Improve pedestrian and bicycle connection in the study area
2. Promote Transportation Safety
 - a. Reduce vehicle and pedestrian/bicycle crashes in the study area
 - b. Provide safe pedestrian crossings and walkways
 - c. Provide safe bicycle facilities
 - d. Improve safety, comfort, and visibility of transit waiting environments
3. Improve Traffic Conditions
 - a. Reduce traffic and improve level of service on study area roadways to benefit automobile and transit vehicles
 - b. Identify low-cost traffic improvements to improve capacity and safety of the roadway network
 - c. Reduce the number of vehicle movements by providing enhanced transit, pedestrian, and bicycle systems
4. Promote Public Transit Use
 - a. Identify improvements and priority treatments that improve transit operating speed and on-time performance
 - b. Make transit a more visible part of the study area transportation network
 - c. Develop a circulator concept to expand footprint and to serve new and underserved markets in the study area

Recommendations and Conclusions

The Hamilton Place area is one of the fastest growing areas of a growing region, with a thriving regional shopping mall, proximity to the region's airport and fastest growing employment areas, and connections to the region's most important interstate highway. Transportation assets are among the keys to the region's popularity and success. However, transportation problems, in the form of traffic congestion and a lack of feasible alternative modes of transportation could limit the area's future growth and its long-term success. Recommendations for the area were divided into sections for Transit, Roadway, Pedestrian & Bicycle, and Land Use & Zoning.

Transit

Existing transit services in the area suggest the potential for a circulator route to provide transit connections among the retail, hotel, medical and residential uses in the Hamilton Place area and to add capacity to relieve a congested road network. Examples of successful transit circulators provide a service that would be:

- Frequent: with no more than 15 minutes between trips
- Fast: makes an efficient trip between destinations and runs no longer than a 30 minute loop
- Subsidized: the service is subsidized by local businesses, institutions, advertising revenue or other sources that pay the user's fare
- Direct: Operates a route that is logical and understandable for users, with few diversions
- Convenient: Takes passengers to within a few steps of their destination
- Distinct and Branded: Uses a branding scheme that differentiates it from other bus routes and identifies it as a special, circulator service, with different buses, paint scheme, signage, brochures, web identity, etc.

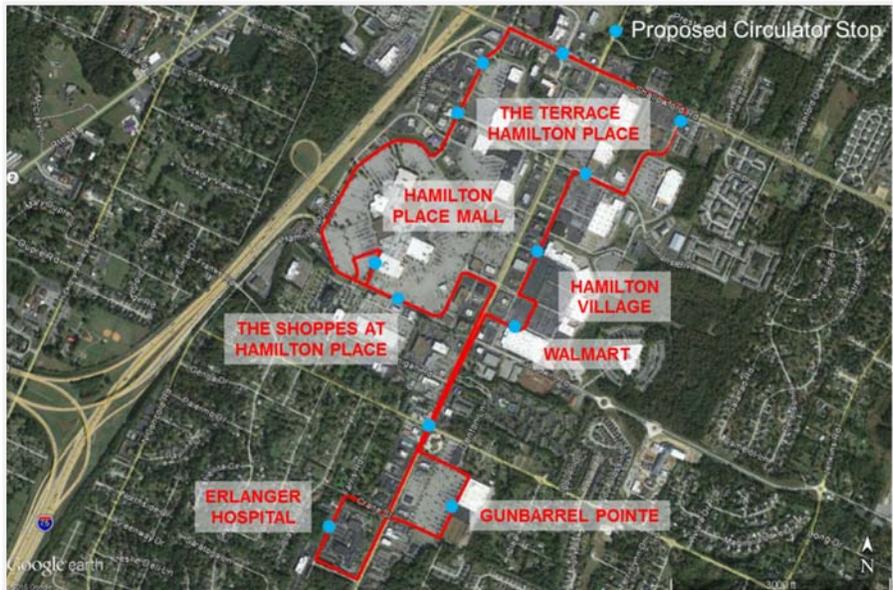
Transit (cont'd)

Seven route configurations were drawn up and evaluated to determine the optimal coverage for the area within two likely budgetary constraints. The preferred alternatives are highlighted in blue in the chart below:

Summary of Route Alternatives

Alternative	Route Length (miles)	Cycle Time (including layover)	Number of Vehicles Required	Proposed Number of Stops	Projected Annual Operations Cost (million)
1	4.3	30	2	11	\$1.23
2	5.9	45	3	14	\$1.82
3	5.9	45	3	14	\$1.82
4	5.3	30	2	13	\$1.23
5	7.1	45	3	17	\$1.82
6	8.7	45	3+	23	\$1.82+
7	6.9	45	3	19	\$1.82

Map of Alternative 4



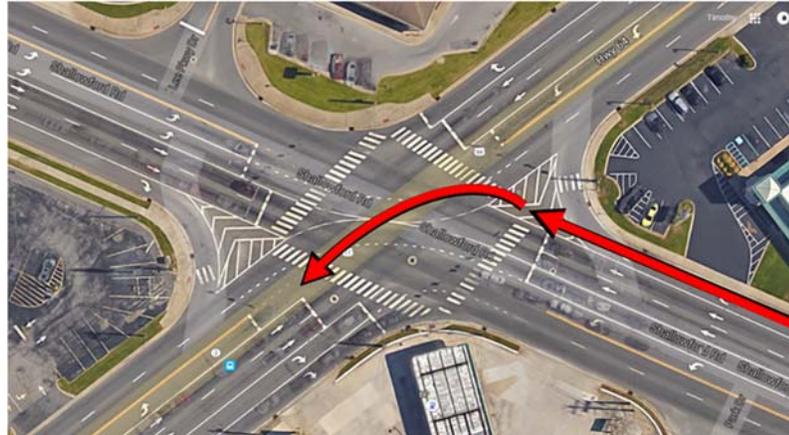
Map of Alternative 5



Roadways

One of the most significant transportation issues in the Hamilton Place area is traffic congestion, which is regularly severe during peak periods on all of the major arterial roadways. This congestion not only affects those who drive to, from and through the area, but is a significant challenge for public transit, pedestrians, and bicyclists moving along the same roads. A number of possible measures to address road congestion are discussed in the study, including a traffic intersection configuration that makes use of existing Right-Of-Way and gives priority to Transit vehicles making left turns at Shallowford Road and Lee Highway. A

Proposed Transit Queue Jump Configuration at Intersection of Shallowford Road and Lee Highway



Other recommendations for roadway improvements include:

- Access management to address the high number of driveways intersecting with arterial roads
- Improving street connectivity in the area to create relief for overly congested arterial roads
- Potential for Right-Of-Way in the interior of parking areas to provide additional north-south capacity along Gunbarrel Road

Pedestrian and Bicycle Recommendations

Other transportation challenges in the Hamilton Place area include an incomplete pedestrian network that particularly lacks safe and convenient connections between adjacent private developments, and a bicycle network that makes it difficult for bicycles to be a realistic and safe alternative to driving. The study calls for completion of the pedestrian and bicycle connections identified in the 2010 Regional Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan as well as additional routes to improve connectivity among the existing commercial buildings in the Hamilton Place shopping node and connections that continue into the adjacent residential areas. Enhanced pedestrian and bicycle facilities are integral to achieving a multimodal network that provides a welcoming streetscape for alternative modes and is able to support additional transit use.

Land Use and Zoning

The region should consider zoning changes to the area that will create a higher density, more walkable environment with a greater mix of land uses within the area. New development should favor infill that creates a more balanced mix of residential, retail and office space at a walkable scale. This would take advantage of the proposed improvements to bicycle and pedestrian facilities and a more connective roadway network to promote walking and bicycling as a viable form of transportation. These improvements will support, and will be supported by, additional mass transit service.

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