The City of Columbus, Georgia is located along the eastern banks of the Chattahoochee River separating Georgia from Alabama. With a U.S. Census-estimated 2012 population of 196,413 people (189,885 people in the 2010 Census), it is the second largest city in the state of Georgia. To the south of the city, Fort Benning is a major United States Army post and serves a major employer and economic generator for the surrounding region.

As can be seen in the study area map, provided in Figure 1, the City of Columbus is largely contained to the south and east by Fort Benning and to the west by the Chattahoochee River (the urban area stretches westward into Alabama beyond the river) and has sprawled northward where there is no geographical barrier to development. The city is connected to the surrounding region by several state roads and freeways, particularly notable of which is I-185 which connects to I-85 towards Atlanta, US 80 which connects Columbus east and west to regional centers such as Macon, Georgia and Montgomery, Alabama; and US 27 which connects southward to Albany, Georgia. Studying the roadway network, there is a clear change from the grid system based roadway network in the downtown (colloquially known as Uptown) Columbus area into a more suburbanized cul-de-sac pattern in the outer reaches of the urban area.

As with many other American cities, this is evidence of the significant growth and suburbanization that took place in the years following World War II and an over-reliance on automobile centric land use development. With the new patterns of development, the core areas of Columbus suffered economically and from disinvestment, and made traveling within the Columbus area challenging without a personal automobile.

Through strategic efforts with community partners, core areas of Columbus have revitalized in recent years by adding several civic amenities to the community (the National Infantry Museum, the RiverCenter for the Performing Arts and the whitewater rafting on the Chattahoochee River). This has been coupled with two specific multi-use transportation investments (the Fall Line Trace and the Riverwalk) that have transformed the communities’ attitude to alternative transportation, namely pedestrians, bicyclists, and transit users. The existing alternative transportation network is shown in Figure 2.

**Purpose**

The Columbus Alternative Transportation Study began in the summer of 2012 in response to the implementation of the majority of the projects proposed in the previous Alternative Transportation Study for the City, created in 1993. The study was developed to satisfy a number of functions including:

- Document the community’s desire for continued investment in alternative transportation opportunities
- Prepare technical analyses to determine the areas where alternative transportation investment is most critical
- Consider policies that Columbus can pursue to encourage more use of alternative transportation
- Develop project recommendations that leverage and expand the existing alternative transportation system

As such, this study defines alternative transportation users as pedestrians, bicyclists, and transit riders.

On that last point, it should be noted that the focus of the previous 1993 Alternative Transportation Study recommendations were on large scale projects, namely the Fall Line Trace, Riverwalk, and the soon to be constructed South Lumpkin Trail. Recommendations were made for a variety of ‘neighborhood connectors’ across the community, but specific corridors and treatments were not developed at that time. Therefore, in addition to large scale projects, this 2013 study also focused on the types of ‘neighborhood connectors’ that can potentially be implemented.

**Methods**

Several different methods were utilized to develop the Alternative Transportation Study and are documented throughout this report.

**Community Engagement:** A variety of activities were developed to engage members of the community. Primarily, three rounds of public meetings were held at strategic points in the study’s process to directly engage the community. Likewise, a stakeholder group representing a variety of community interests was established and met throughout the study to discuss the study’s progress. Outside of these formal meetings, the study team (combinations of both Columbus Consolidated Government staff and URS) met with, presented to, and communicated (by phone, e-mail, etc.) with various members of the community on alternative transportation issues both specific and general.

**Data Collection & Existing Conditions:** A significant amount of data was collected to describe all elements related to alternative transportation. This included collecting everything from U.S. Census data to inventorying a variety of community assets to performing field visits and reviews throughout the Columbus in order to thoroughly understand the physical and geographical context to the transportation system.

**Alternative Transportation Needs Analysis:** Working hand in hand with the public engagement efforts, the study team developed a combination of both qualitative and quantitative (data-driven) assessments of where alternative transportation needs are most critical. This in turn was utilized to develop conceptual and abstract ideas about what a future alternative transportation network could look like.

**Alternative Transportation Facility & Design Guidance:** A guide to different alternative transportation treatments and respective design elements was prepared.

**Corridor & Policy Recommendations:** Combining elements of the Existing Conditions Inventory with the conceptual and abstract alternative transportation ideas developed in the Needs Analysis, corridor and policy recommendations were developed and analyzed to determine their general level of feasibility and ability to meet the expressed alternative transportation goals of the community.
I – INTRODUCTION

Figure 2 - Alternative Transportation Network

Legend
- Bus Stops
- Sidewalks
- Route 1 - East Wynton
- Route 2 - Cusseta Rd/Oakland Park
- Route 3 - St. Mary’s/Buena Vista/Schultiga
- Route 4 - Fort Benning
- Route 5 - North Highland/Peachtree Mall
- Route 6 - Warm Springs Rd
- Route 7 - Columbus South
- Route 8 - Uptown/Riverwalk/Civic Center
- Route 9 - Rose Hill
- Multi-Use Trail