

A SUPPLEMENT TO WALK.BIKE.THRIVE!

REGIONAL TRAIL VISION

2020 limited update to
“Envisioning a Regional Trail Network”



ATLANTA REGIONAL COMMISSION

REGIONAL TRAIL PLAN

2020 UPDATE

The Atlanta region is an ideal setting for a connected system of trails to serve both citizens and visitors for transportation and recreation. Over the past 20 years, local governments and private organizations have constructed trails that attract thousands of visitors and millions of trips per year. However, the disconnected nature of the region's trails limit their ability to serve as daily transportation and does not provide access for much of the region.

In 2016, the Atlanta Regional Commission adopted a comprehensive regional vision for improving walking and bicycling titled *Walk. Bike. Thrive!* The plan gauged that only 70 miles of trails were necessary to build a connected regional trail network and estimated the benefits of a regional trail network.

2020 LIMITED UPDATE

In 2019 and 2020, ARC completed a new Regional Bikeway Inventory and a Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) funding cycle. Many local groups continued to advance greenway planning efforts. The changes necessitated an update to the Regional Trail Vision's geographic analyses and regional funding policy map. These updates will guide regional funding decisions over the next several years.

Future updates to regional trail benefits may be warranted when substantial new corridors are completed.

POLICY GOALS

"Walk. Bike. Thrive!" identified three regional needs for assessing and prioritizing active transportation investments.

Trails and paths support safe, convenient, and comfortable transportation as well as help focus regional growth throughout the region.

- **Safety** - paths can provide opportunities for travel away from busy roads and traffic.
- **Mobility** - paths can provide convenient routes to access destinations or bridge regional barriers, if they are direct.
- **Economic Competitiveness** - communities are increasingly investing in paths as destinations and amenities for residents.

POLICY UPDATES

This Regional Trail Plan highlights **connectivity** as a critical factor in building a robust and convenient bikeway network.

Connectivity should be prioritized when allocating regional funding.

Connectivity can be measured several ways, which are integrated into regional funding priorities:

- Closing gaps between existing regional trail segments.
- Providing access to urban neighborhoods, small towns, regional job centers, and transit.
- Connecting between high-demand centers through suburban or lower-demand areas.
- Providing access to parks, natural areas, or scenic destinations.

REGIONAL CONNECTIVITY

Multi-use paths, bikeways, and greenways should be connected across the metro region. Multi-use paths can form "active superhighways" of safe and comfortable routes.

By implementing this plan, the region will be more connected with more opportunities to walk and bicycle between regional destinations.

REGIONAL FACILITIES & NETWORKS

Metropolitan Atlanta has a wide variety of walkways, bikeways, multi-use paths, greenways, and trails.

REGIONAL SIGNIFICANCE

Connections between jurisdictions or across boundaries are critical for ensuring travel throughout the metropolitan region. ARC recognizes **Regionally Significant Trails** that are key links for connecting the regional trail network; crossing jurisdictional boundaries; connecting cities, regional activity centers, or parks; or serve as destinations for residents and visitors the region. This 2020 update also identifies **Regional Trail Confluences** for areas where several regional trails converge.

TRAILS, PATHS, & BIKEWAY FACILITIES

Trails or paths are dedicated facilities that serve non-automobile, active transportation. For transportation purposes, trails or paths are typically hard-surfaced and 10-14 feet wide. Sidewalks and walkways are fundamental for safe travel by foot while Multi-Use Paths serve people on foot, bike, or other active transportation methods.

Paths - whether Multi-Use Paths, Shared-Use Paths, Greenways, or Trails - share the same objective to provide comfortable routes for a wide range of people who are walking, bicycling, using wheelchairs or assistive devices, riding scooters, pushing strollers, or otherwise traveling outside of an automobile. Paths and greenways may vary by specific design or location but work better as part of a regional network of walkways, bikeways, and mass transit.

TRAILS & CONTEXT-SENSITIVE DESIGNS

Design is an important consideration for paths, trails, and bikeways. All transportation facilities should support safe, comfortable travel and be considered in the surrounding community context. Paths and greenways can be viewed as "bicycle superhighways" to provide connectivity between jurisdictions, over natural or man-made barriers, or to scenic areas. On-street bikeways (i.e. bike lanes) are better suited to busier urban areas, while still providing connections along regional "trail" routes.



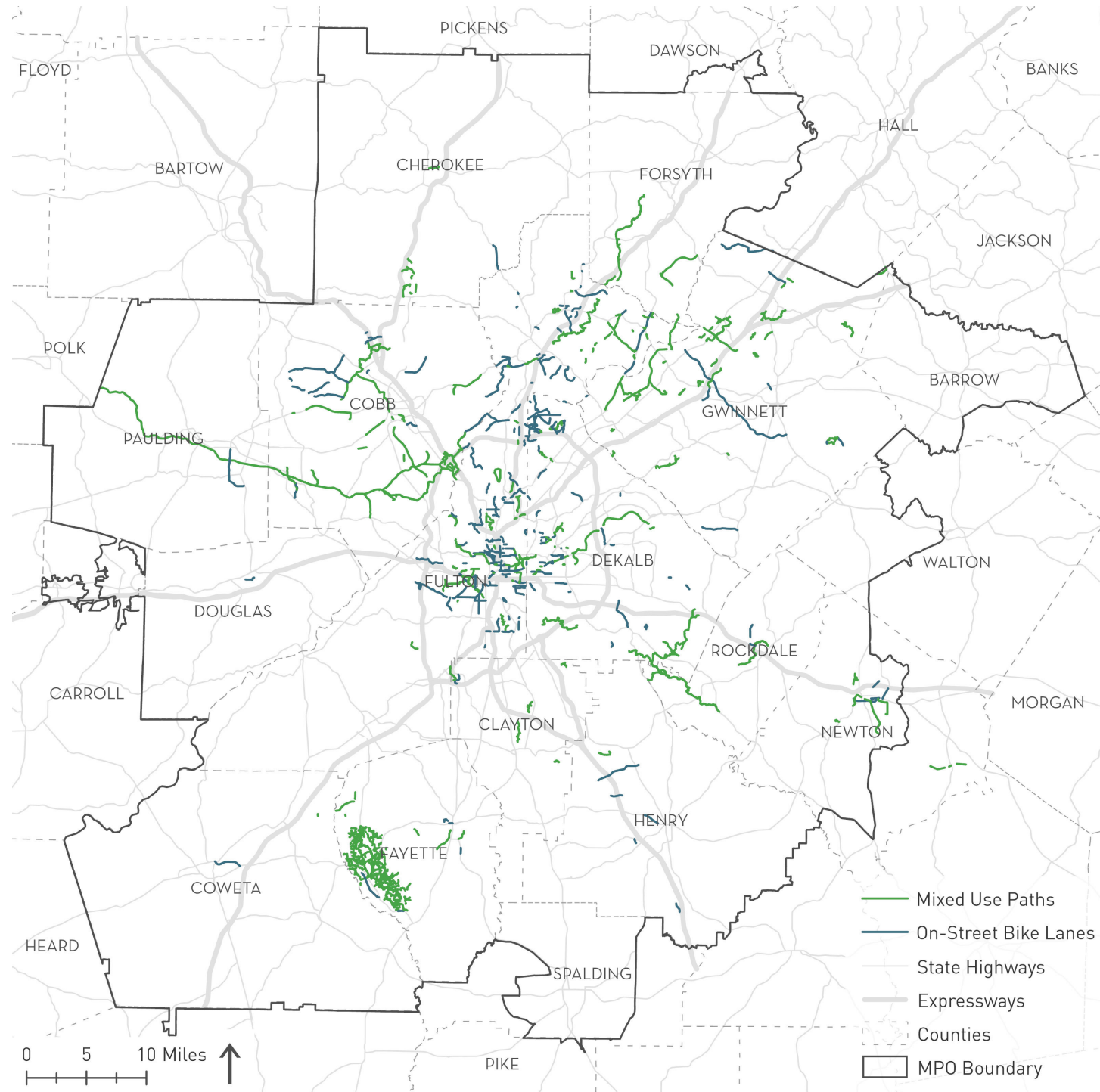
Bikeway facility types vary widely across the metro Atlanta region. ARC's 2019 bicycle facility inventory includes three broad categories: multi-use paths; separated (or protected) bike lanes; and painted bike lanes. From left to right: Barclay Dr, Dunwoody; Abernathy Blvd, Sandy Springs; McDonough St, Decatur. Source: ARC.

EXISTING BIKEWAYS

Metropolitan Atlanta has seen an increase in bikeway, path, and trail mileage over the past several years but many locations remain inaccessible by comfortable and convenient facilities. Multi-Use Paths remain the most common type of bikeway and provide mobility options for people walking, bicycling, or using other mobility devices. The map below shows the distribution of bikeways, paths, and trails around the metropolitan region.

A regional focus should be increasing the miles and distribution of multi-use paths and bikeways across the metropolitan region.

FACILITY TYPE	REGIONAL MILEAGE	REGIONAL PERCENT
Multi-Use Paths	411	66%
Bicycle Lanes	210	33%
TOTAL	621	100%

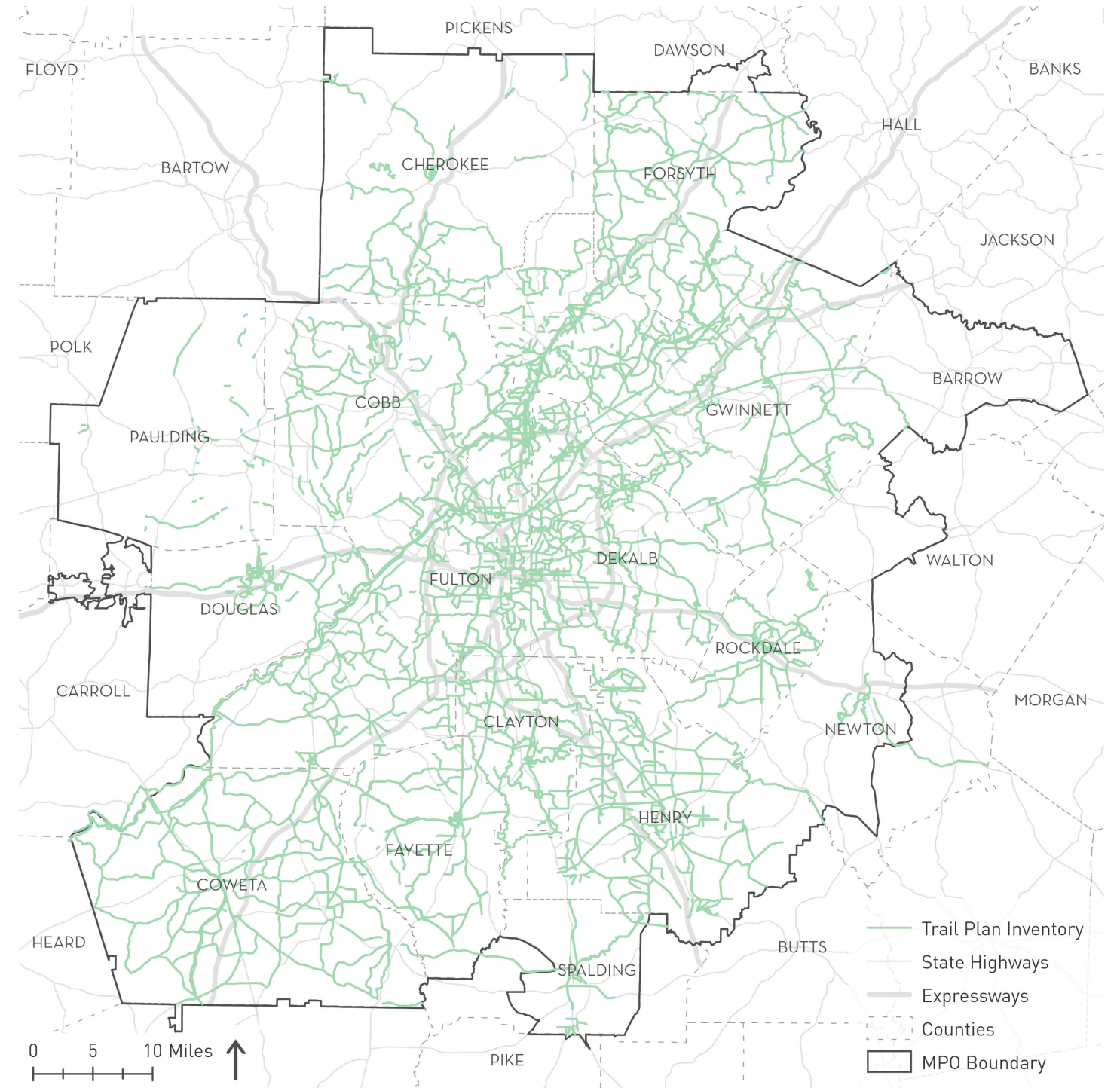


PLANNED TRAILS

Most counties in metro Atlanta have either a trail-specific plan or integrated paths into a [Comprehensive Transportation Plan](#). While many trail plans have been adopted since the 1970s, implementation still lags behind visionary planning. Planned corridors provide information for filling regional gaps and ensuring that trail corridors connect at jurisdiction boundaries. The map below shows most recent trail plans or relevant projects from comprehensive transportation plans from around the region.

A regional focus should be ensuring that local trail plans remain current and that planned trails are shepherded to implementation.

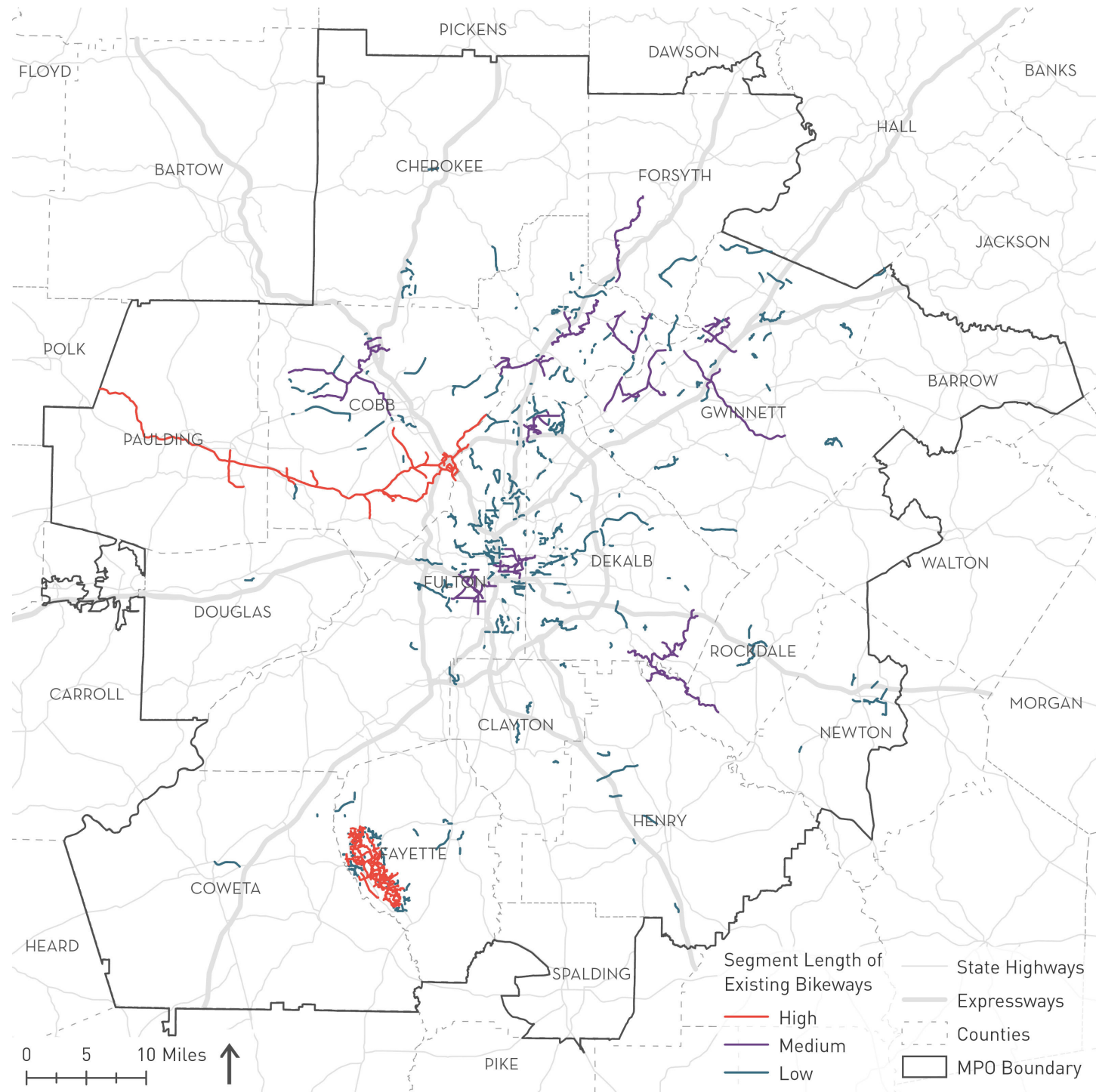
METROPOLITAN ATLANTA CURRENTLY HAS
OVER 3,000 MILES
OF PLANNED TRAILS LOCATED IN ALMOST EVERY COUNTY



REGIONAL CONNECTIVITY

ARC has estimated the length of connected segments in the metropolitan region. The longest trail cluster in the region covers 81 miles while the shortest covers only 74 feet. However, the median bikeway length in the region is just over a half-mile, which limits the distance that people can bike or walk on multi-use pathways. The map below shows existing bikeways by connected segment lengths.

A regional focus should be increasing connections between trails in order to create a single connected regional network.

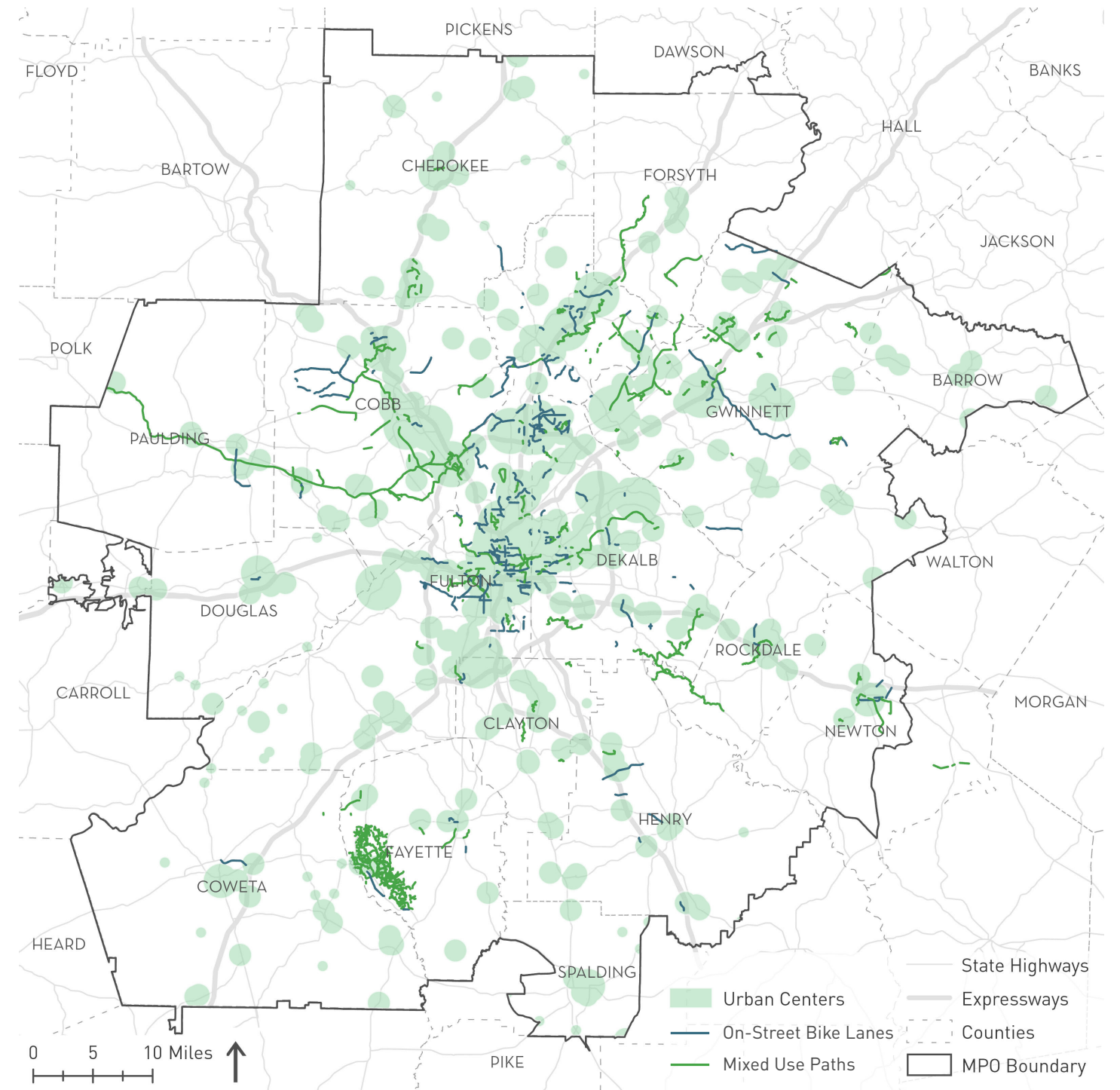


REGIONAL ACCESS

Metropolitan Atlanta has a wide variety of urban neighborhoods, small towns, and regional activity centers. There are many benefits trails bring to users when connected to or within activity centers. Trails that connect to activity centers from surrounding neighborhoods provide an opportunity to access jobs and other daily destinations by walking or biking. Within activity centers, trails provide workers, visitors, and residents a place to visit, socialize, travel, and be active.

A regional focus should be increasing access to urban centers and towns throughout the region.

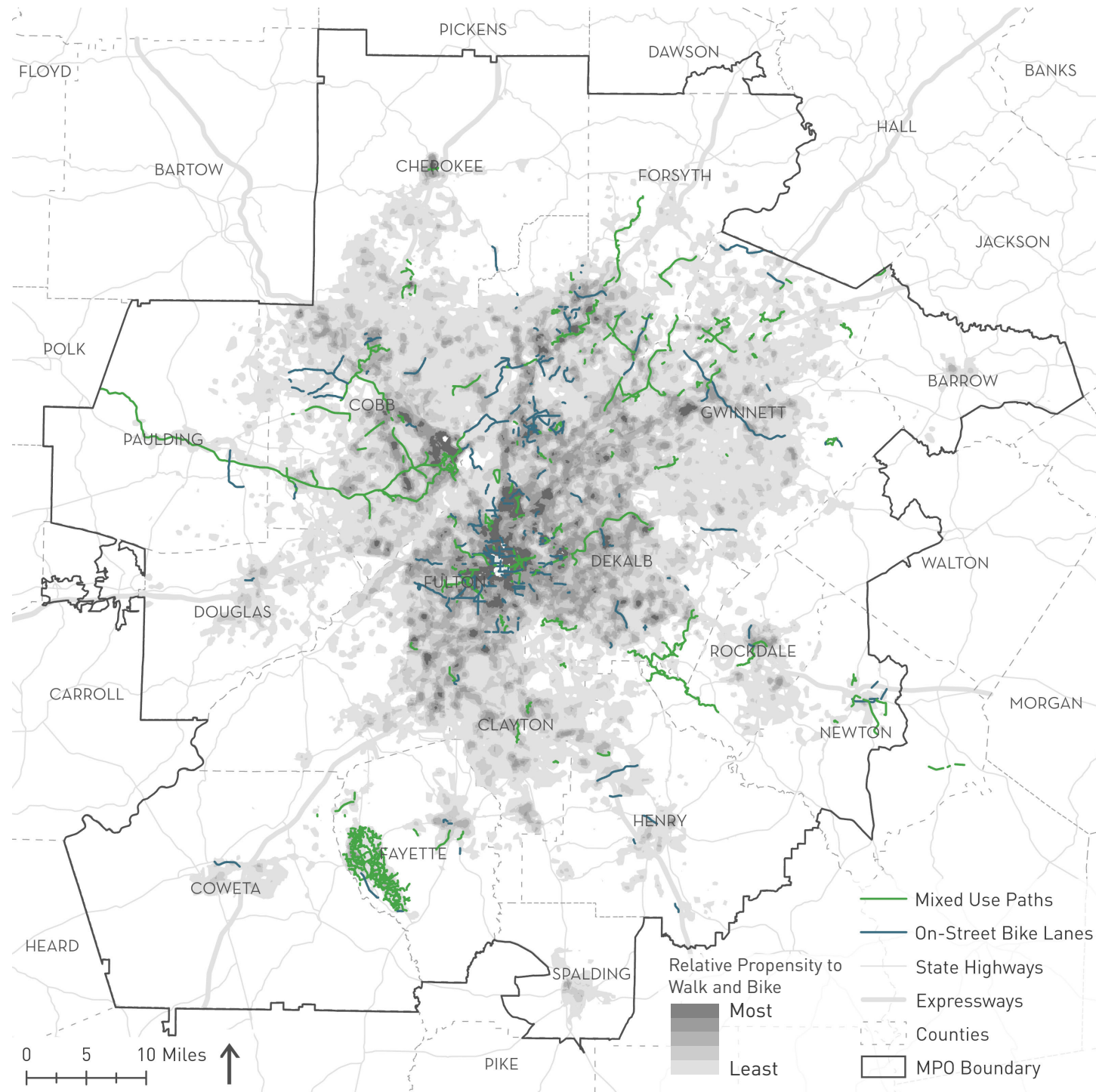
CURRENTLY ONLY 1 IN 3 URBAN CENTERS CONTAIN A BIKEWAY OR PATH



REGIONAL PROPENSITY

ARC's regional walking and bicycling trail - "Walk. Bike. Thrive!" - estimated propensity for walking and biking using a destination-based composite model. Many trails are located in areas of higher demand, though some pockets of higher demand currently do not have access to regional trails. The map below highlights locations where existing bikeways and paths overlap with areas of higher and lower propensity for walking and bicycling.

A regional focus should be increasing access to areas of higher demand for walking and bicycling as well as increasing connections between areas of higher demand.



ACROSS METROPOLITAN ATLANTA

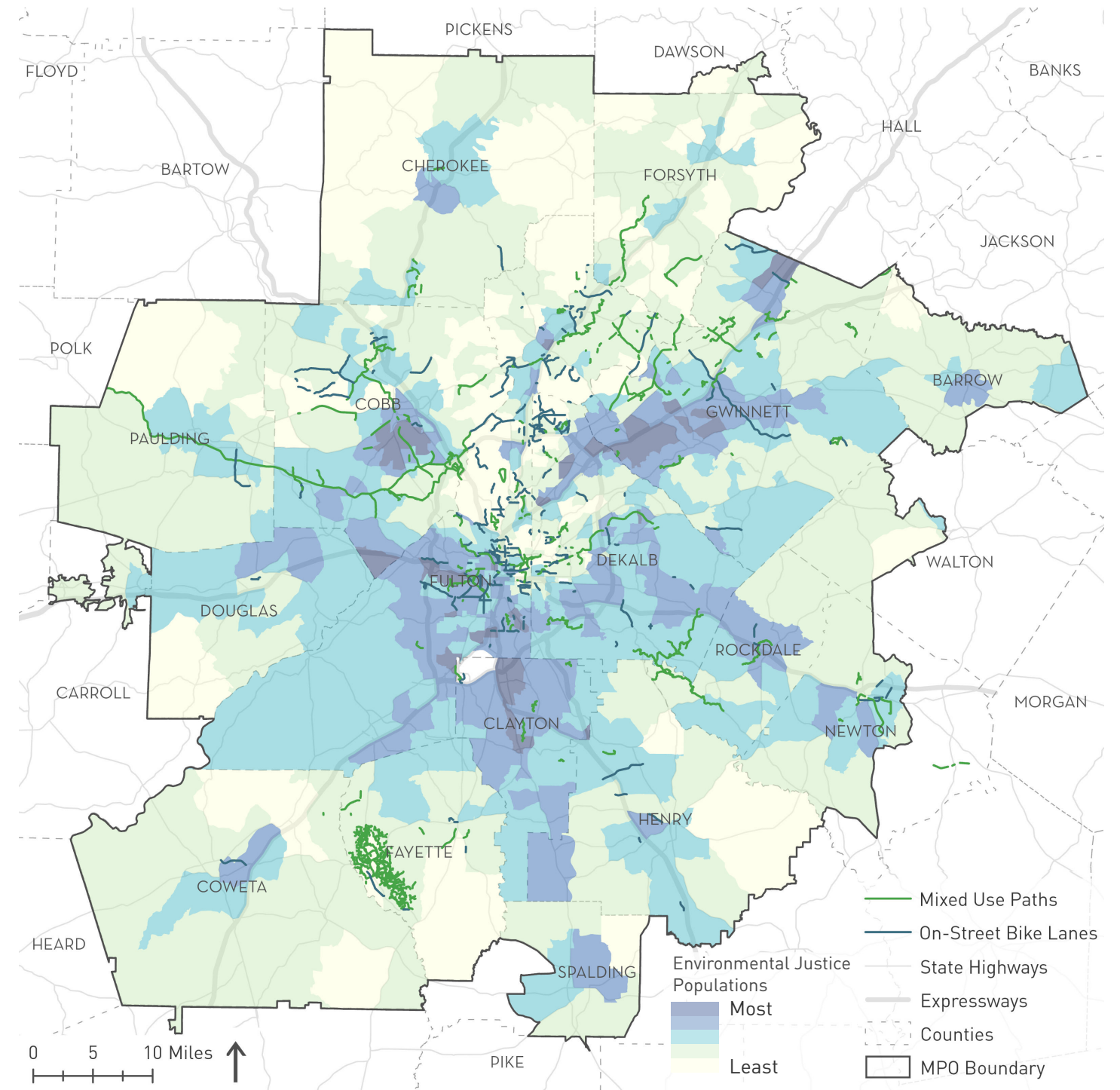
4 IN 10 PEOPLE

LIVE WITHIN A 5 MINUTE BICYCLE RIDE OF A BIKE FACILITY

REGIONAL EQUITY

Trails are not distributed evenly across the region. Many are located in communities with lower concentrations of racial minorities, ethnic minorities, and low-income populations, shown by ARC's [Environmental Justice Map](#). As trails provide many benefits for safety, health, and quality-of-life, regional efforts should foster trails in every community equally and in complete coordination with community members.

A regional focus should be planning and building trails in southern portions of the region that currently have fewer bikeways and multi-use paths.



EXPANDING THE REGIONAL TRAIL NETWORK CAN CREATE

MORE OPPORTUNITIES to WALK, BIKE, AND BE ACTIVE

FOR RECREATION AND TRANSPORTATION

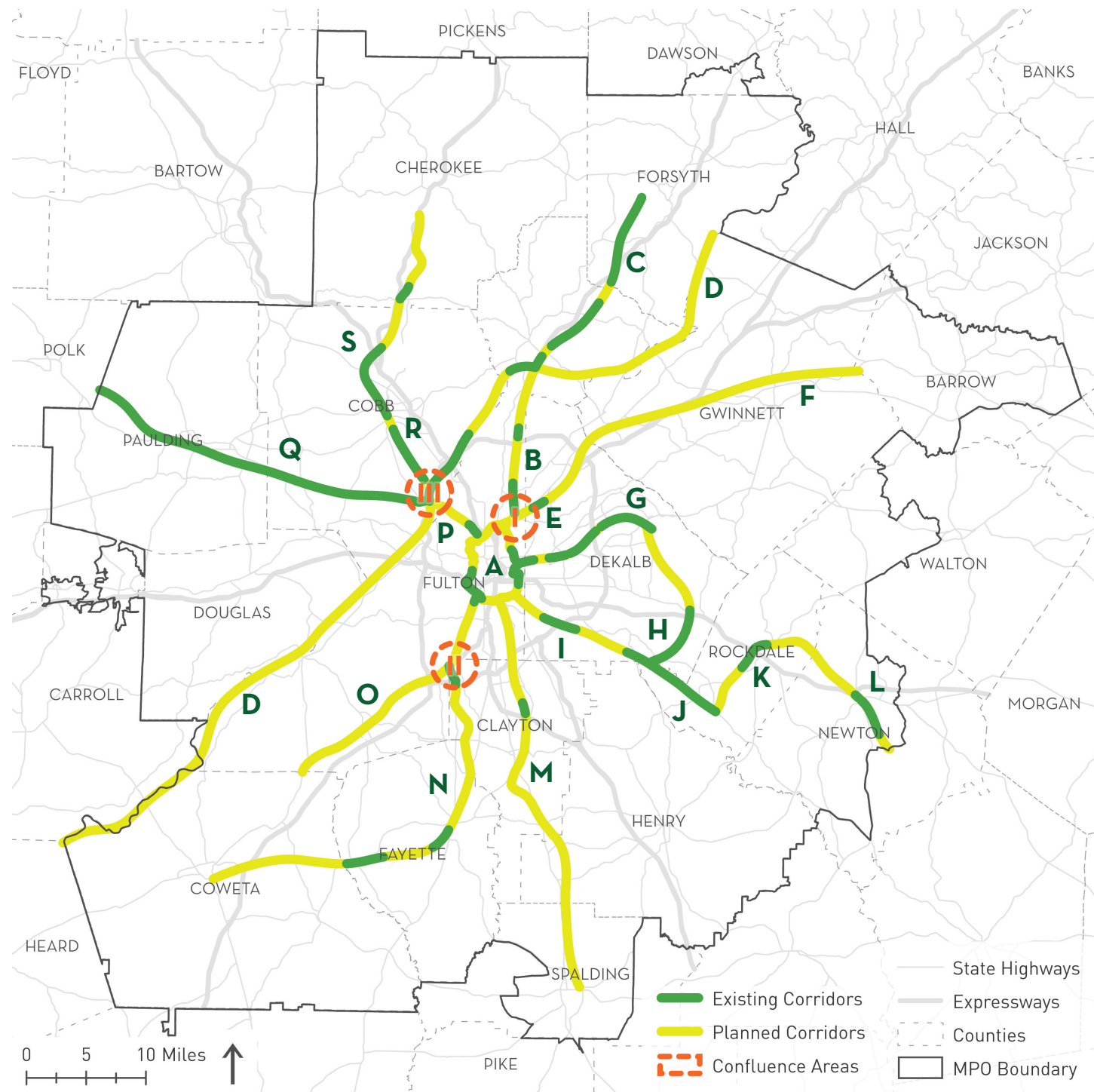
REGIONAL TRAIL VISION

Connections between jurisdictions or across boundaries are critical for ensuring travel throughout the metropolitan region. ARC recognizes trails that improve regional mobility, safety, and connectivity:

Regionally Significant Trails are key links for connecting the regional trail network; crossing jurisdictional boundaries; connecting cities, regional activity centers, or parks; or serving as destinations for residents and visitors the region. Regionally significant trails are shown on the **Regional Trail Vision Map** (below).

Regional Trail Confluences are locations where several regional trails converge. These areas may need extra coordination, collaboration, or funding to build a connected regional trail network.

The Regional Trail Vision map identifies corridors for priority funding with MPO and regional funds.



REGIONALLY SIGNIFICANT TRAILS

Regionally Significant Trails are priorities for regional and federal funding. These corridors and confluence areas are the primary focus for metropolitan Atlanta's Transportation Alternatives Program funding but may also be considered for ARC's Surface Transportation Block Grants or other Transportation Improvement Program funding. Other trails may be considered but they should provide similar regional benefits for connecting the regional trail network or providing increased access around the region. The following table tracks regionally significant trails along with their most recent planning documentation.

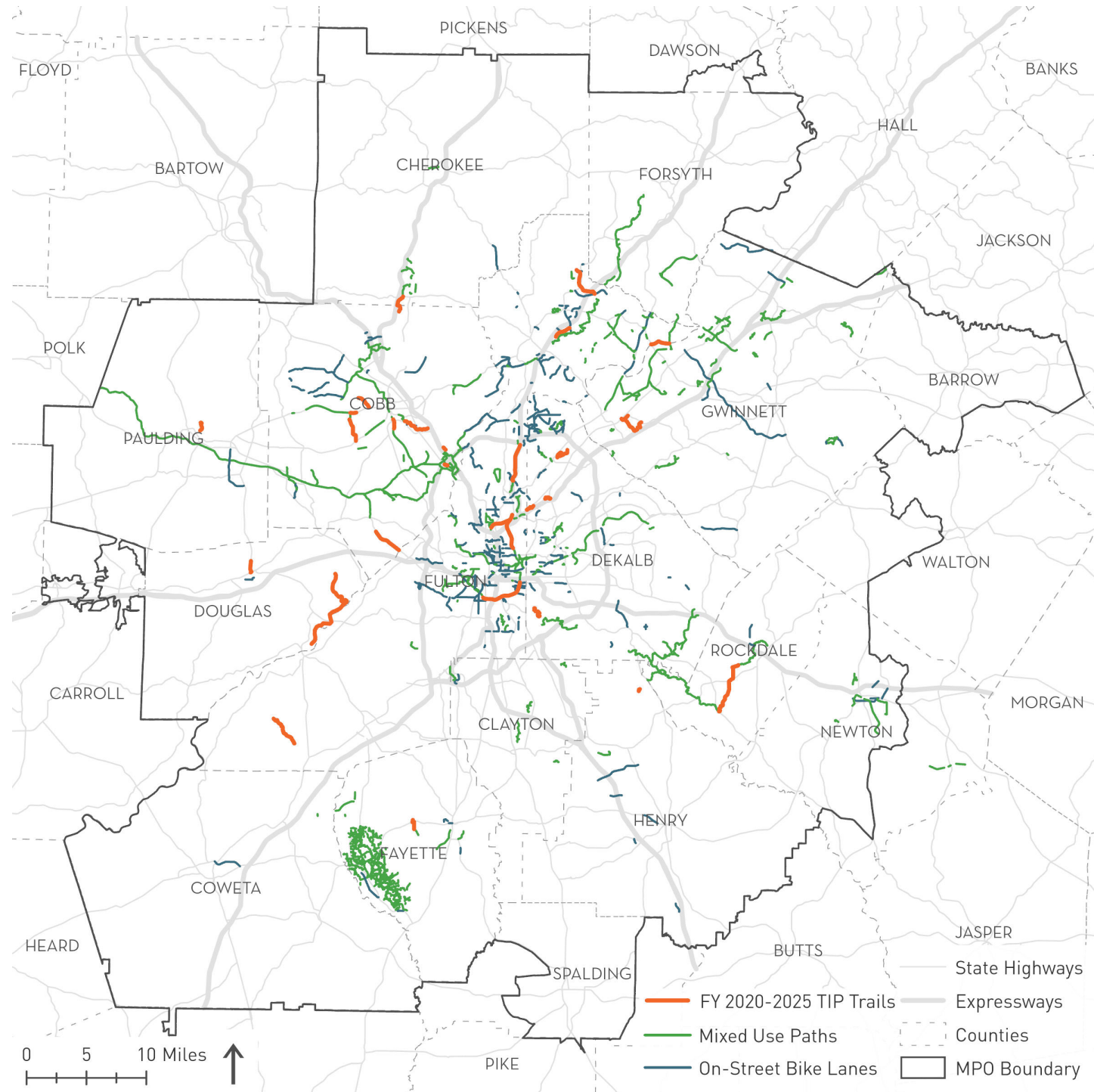
ID	Corridor Name	Jurisdictions	Source Documentation
A	Atlanta BeltLine	City of Atlanta	Atlanta Beltline Trail Map
B	PATH 400	Atlanta, Sandy Springs	Atlanta Transportation Plan North Fulton CTP
C	Big Creek Greenway	Alpharetta; Fulton and Forsyth Counties	Big Creek Greenway Map
D	Chattahoochee RiverLands	Forsyth, Gwinnett, Fulton, Cobb, Douglas, Coweta	Chattahoochee River Greenway Study
E	Peachtree Creek Greenway	Atlanta, Brookhaven, Chamblee; DeKalb County	Atlanta Transportation Plan DeKalb County CTP
F	Piedmont Pathway	Gwinnett County	Gwinnett County Trails Plan
G	Stone Mtn Trail	Decatur; DeKalb County	DeKalb County CTP
H	Arabia & Panola Trails	DeKalb County	DeKalb County CTP
I	South River	DeKalb County	DeKalb County CTP
J	Rockdale River Trail	Rockdale County	Rockdale County CTP
K	Conyers Trail	Conyers; Rockdale County	Rockdale County CTP
L	Cricket Frog Trail	Rockdale, Newton Counties	Rockdale County CTP Newton County CTP
M	Clayton-Henry-Spalding Corridor	Clayton, Henry, Spalding Counties	Clayton County Trails Master Plan Henry County CTP Spalding-Griffin CTP
N	Clayton-Fayette-Coweta Corridor	Clayton, Fayette, Coweta Counties	Fayette County Transportation Plan Coweta County Greenway Master Plan
O	Roosevelt Highway	Atlanta; Fulton County	Atlanta Transportation Plan South Fulton CTP
P	Connect the Comet	Atlanta; Cobb County	Atlanta Transportation Plan Cobb Trails Master Plan
Q	Silver Comet Trail	Cobb, Paulding Counties	Silver Comet Trail Map
R	Mountain to River Trail	Cobb County	Cobb Trails Master Plan
S	Noonday Creek Trail	Cobb, Cherokee Counties	Cobb Trails Master Plan

ID	Confluence Areas	Jurisdictions	Source Documentation
I	Lindbergh Area	Atlanta, Brookhaven	Plan in development
II	Aerotropolis Area	Clayton, Fulton Counties	AeroATL Greenway Plan
III	Cumberland Area	Cobb County	Cobb Trails Master Plan

PROGRAMMED TRAILS & COSTS

The map below shows sidepath and trail projects in ARC's 2020-2025 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), current at the time of writing this report. The TIP illustrates the regional distribution of trail investments, progress towards connecting trail corridors, and a snapshot of current project costs. Estimating future costs is difficult as a variety of factors - including topography, environmentally or historically sensitive areas, and construction markets - can impact the cost of building trails.

ARC should prioritize projects that provide the greatest benefits for the region, even if costs are higher.



BEYOND METRO ATLANTA

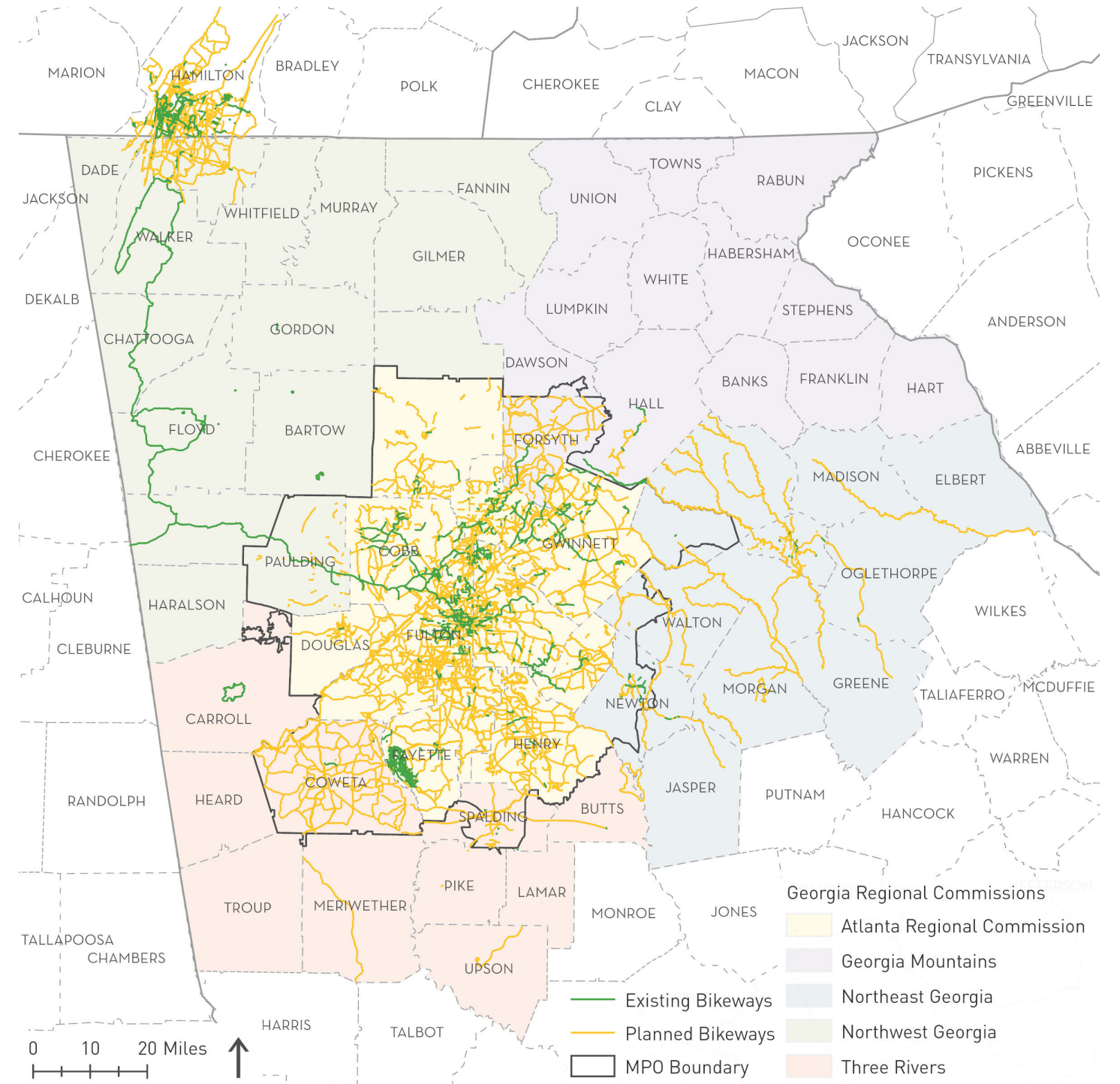
Just as it is vital for neighboring jurisdictions within metro Atlanta to coordinate trail planning efforts to ensure connectivity, regional and state agencies should do the same. There are opportunities for broader connectivity for walking and biking, providing access to cities, activity centers, and scenic areas across the state.

ARC should support statewide trail efforts and coordinate connections around jurisdictional boundaries.

EXPANDING THE STATEWIDE TRAIL NETWORK CAN CREATE

NEW CONNECTIONS TO KEY DESTINATIONS,

INCLUDING CITIES AND SCENIC AREAS



Source: ARC, Chattanooga-Hamilton County Regional Planning Agency, Gainesville-Hall MPO, Northeast Georgia Regional Commission, Northwest Georgia Regional Commission, Three Rivers Regional Commission.



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