



SCOPING INFORMATION BOOKLET

Northwest Corridor (I-75/I-575) HOV/BRT Project Draft Environmental Impact Statement

Summer 2004

The proposed Northwest Corridor HOV/BRT project represents a continuation of two previous efforts in the study area: the GDOT I-75/I-575 HOV Lanes Extension Project and GRTA's Northwest Connectivity Study.

Introduction

Georgia's Fast Forward transportation plan identified the Northwest Corridor (I-75/I-575) High-Occupancy Vehicle/Bus Rapid Transit (HOV/BRT) project as a top priority for the Atlanta region. The Fast Forward program, established by Governor Sonny Perdue in April 2004, seeks to promote safety, improve the mobility of people and goods, improve air quality, spend funds in a cost effective manner, and allocate funds equitably across the state. The Northwest Corridor HOV/BRT project seeks to address mobility and congestion related issues by improving the ability of the transportation system to meet travel demand by providing transportation alternatives other than the single-occupancy vehicle. The project also seeks to improve access to and connectivity between major activity centers including downtown Atlanta, Midtown Atlanta, Cumberland Galleria, Marietta, and Town Center.

The proposed project consists of the extension of HOV lanes on I-75 and I-575 in the Northwest Corridor and construction of HOV ramps and interchanges for access to the system. The proposed HOV lanes would accommodate the implementation of express bus or BRT services supported by transit stations, park-and-ride lots, and various bus priority improvements. The project is currently proposed for inclusion in the Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC) Mobility 2030 Regional Transportation Plan.

The proposed Northwest Corridor HOV/BRT project represents a continuation of two previous efforts in the northwest portion of Metropolitan Atlanta led by the Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) and the Georgia Regional Transportation Authority (GRTA): the GDOT I-75/I-575 HOV Lanes Extension Project and GRTA's Northwest Connectivity Study. Combination of the highway and transit elements of these projects presented an opportunity for the agencies to maximize resources and more efficiently advance through the federally required environmental and design processes to implementation. GDOT has assumed the role of lead state agency in the preparation of environmental studies, in cooperation with GRTA and the corresponding federal agencies, the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA).

The Northwest Corridor HOV/BRT Alternatives Analysis/Draft Environmental Impact Statement (AA/DEIS) will identify and examine the potential environmental impacts of extending the HOV lanes and implementing transit service improvements in the corridor. Specifically, the document will address potential environmental, social, and economic impacts, as well as the costs and benefits of the proposed alternatives. The AA/DEIS will build upon the initial stages of environmental work conducted as part of the I-75/I-575 HOV Lanes Extension Project and the AA conducted for the Northwest Connectivity Study. The Northwest Connectivity Study included a detailed study of transit improvements within or adjacent to the I-75 corridor. The AA public involvement process included 16 public meetings with 678 participants and 40 additional stakeholder meetings. Based on comments from the public as well as the results of the technical analysis, the GRTA Board adopted a resolution on February 11, 2004 selecting BRT operating in HOV lanes on I-75 as the Locally Preferred Alternative (LPA).





Meeting Dates and Locations

Public Information Open House
Wednesday, August 4, 2004
5PM to 8PM
Kennesaw State University Center
3333 Busbee Drive
Kennesaw, GA 30144

Agency Scoping Meeting
Wednesday, August 4, 2004
10AM to Noon

Cobb Chamber of Commerce
240 Interstate North Parkway
Atlanta, GA 30339

Targeted Community Briefing
Tuesday, July 27, 2004
6PM to 8PM
Cobb Chamber of Commerce
240 Interstate North Parkway
Atlanta, GA 30339

These locations are accessible to persons with disabilities. Any individual requiring special assistance should contact Claudia Bilotto, Sycamore Consulting, at 404-377-9147 or TDD/TTY via 711 by July 30, 2004.

This scoping information booklet is intended to introduce the AA/DEIS for the Northwest Corridor HOV/BRT project and invite interested citizens and agency representatives to participate in the scoping process. Scoping is a federally required process that provides an opportunity for all interested parties to participate in the development and refinement of reasonable alternatives and to help identify potential issues associated with the alternatives. GDOT will host a series of meetings as part of the scoping process in cooperation with GRTA, FHWA, and FTA. These meetings serve as the kickoff for ongoing public involvement efforts related to the Northwest Corridor AA/DEIS.

Scoping and Public Involvement

What is Scoping?

The purpose of the scoping phase of the Northwest Corridor HOV/BRT project is to inform the public and government agencies that an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) is going to be prepared and to allow opportunity for comment and feedback as the study gets underway. Scoping is designed to encourage the active participation of citizen groups and agency representatives early in the environmental decision-making process. It provides the public with a chance to identify issues and concerns, and to provide feedback on the alternatives under consideration in the environmental document. Input received from members of the public, elected officials, and government agencies during the scoping process helps to shape the course and direction of the EIS as it moves forward.

Who are the Project Participants?

The study area encompasses a number of agencies responsible for formulation and implementation of policies associated with transportation projects. Coordinating efforts with these agencies is a key element of the scoping process and is structured to encourage feedback and recommendations to the lead agencies based on first-hand knowledge of related issues within the study area. Agencies participating in the Northwest Corridor HOV/BRT process include FHWA, FTA, GDOT, GRTA, and affected federal, state, and local agencies.

Citizens and community leaders are encouraged to participate in the Northwest Corridor HOV/BRT project during the scoping process and for the duration of the two-year study. In addition to the scoping meetings, the study will include leadership briefings designed to provide updates to community leaders at key points in the study process. An extensive station area planning effort will take place in the area surrounding each proposed station site. Community participants including residents, employees, and business and property owners are a key factor in the success of these planning efforts. In addition to project-sponsored meetings, the Northwest Corridor HOV/BRT team members will be attending meetings held by neighborhood groups, business owners, and employers to provide updates and gather feedback.

How can I get involved?

Participating in the scoping process by attending the public open house, sending comments, and visiting the project website is the first way to get involved in the Northwest Corridor HOV/BRT project. During the scoping process, you will help to do the following:

- Determine the appropriate study goals and objectives and which alternatives should be studied;
- Determine the significant issues to be analyzed in depth in the environmental impact statement;



- Identify and eliminate from detailed study the issues which are not significant;
- Define and agree upon the roles of agency representatives and the public involvement process as the study moves forward.

An agency meeting and leadership briefing will also take place to discuss these topics in detail with agency representatives and community leaders. If you cannot attend the August 4th public information open house, you can send your written comments to the project team by August 19, 2004 (see contact information on page 12 of this booklet).

Additional opportunities for involvement

Following the scoping period, there will be additional opportunities to get involved and stay informed about the project. A project website will be up and running in the fall and updated periodically with project information. The website (www.nwhovbrt.com) will also include a feedback mechanism so that citizens may provide comments directly to the project team and join the project mailing list. Beginning in the fall of 2004, the station area planning process will provide an opportunity for citizens to participate in the process of station design and land use planning for each potential station location. This process will take place in each of the seven proposed station areas. Additional leadership briefings and public information open houses will be held at key milestones to provide updates on the findings of the environmental study, estimated in the spring of 2005. When the AA/DEIS is approved by FHWA and FTA, it will be made available to the public and a public hearing open house will be held to present the document for official comment. Make sure to join the study mailing list by signing up at an event, visiting the website, or communicating with one of the study contacts via mail, email, telephone, or fax. You may also request a speaker to provide your organization with an update.

Project Schedule

The Northwest Corridor HOV/BRT project EIS is a two-year process that began in May of 2004. The submittal of the draft AA/DEIS is scheduled for the fall of 2005. Key milestones in the schedule include public information open houses in August of 2004 and spring of 2005, station area workshops in the fall of 2004 and winter of 2005, and the AA/DEIS Public Hearing Open House in the fall of 2005. Ongoing public involvement activities include a project website and updates to organizations and interest groups throughout the two-year period.

It is estimated that the FHWA and FTA will issue a Record of Decision (ROD) on the Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) by June 2006. If the project is approved, the project will advance into the final design

	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Begin DEIS	▼		▼						
Preliminary Engineering/FEIS	▼		▼						
Final Design				▼					
Construction Begins						▼			
Service Begins								▼	

Public Involvement Activities	2004						2005									
	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT
Station Area Planning Workshops			▼		▼		▼									
Public Involvement Open Houses	▼							▼								
Targeted Community Briefings	▼							▼								▼
DEIS Public Hearing Open House																▼



The proposed Northwest Corridor HOV/BRT Project extends 14.5 miles along I-75 from Akers Mill Road to Wade Green Road and includes associated transit stations. HOV Lanes on I-575 will extend 11.5 miles from the I-75 interchange to Sixes Road.

phase and construction on the project could begin in mid-2009. The project would be constructed in a series of phased sections.

Purpose and Need

The preparation of a statement of the purpose and need for a project is a mandatory requirement for an EIS. The Purpose and Need Statement addresses two questions: What is the purpose of the project? And why is it needed? The project's need may be thought of as the transportation problems, while the purpose of the project may be thought of as the intention to solve the problem. The Purpose and Need Statement establishes why the agency is proposing a specific transportation project. The Purpose and Need Statement also establishes the basis for selecting alternatives, and the ultimate selection of a project.

What are the transportation problems?

The Northwest Corridor has long been recognized as one of the Atlanta region's most congested travel corridors. The corridor extends from Midtown Atlanta in Fulton County northwest into Cobb and Cherokee Counties. With a population of over 400,000 residents, the Northwest Corridor is home to a substantial portion of the region's population. It is also one of the most economically important areas in the region. The corridor contains several of the region's major activity and employment centers, including Midtown Atlanta, Cumberland-Galleria, Marietta, and Town Center. As in the past, rapid growth in population and employment in the Northwest Corridor is expected to continue through 2030.

The principal highway serving the Northwest Corridor is I-75, an important link in the interstate system in Georgia and the Southeast United States. It also is the primary route for commuters and other traffic traveling between Midtown Atlanta and the suburban areas of Cobb County and Cherokee County. I-75 connects with I-575 in Cobb County for travel into Cherokee County. Both I-75 and I-575, as well as the major arterials in the corridor, currently operate with congestion, and the congestion is expected to increase with the projected growth in population and employment because the planned capacity improvements in the Mobility 2030 Regional Transportation Plan (ARC) cannot keep pace with future traffic demands.



Public feedback helps identify study area problems and needs.

Furthermore, the corridor's activity centers are all clustered along I-75 and there is a lack of mobility between the activity centers due to congestion. The continued growth of these centers is dependent on the ability to travel efficiently between the centers. Travel options other than travel by single-occupant auto on I-75 and I-575 are limited because of the lack of travel time savings incentives such as HOV lanes and transit connections.

Without additional transportation choices that are competitive with single occupancy vehicles and increase capacity, congestion will worsen, and the mobility of corridor residents and employees will continue to decline.

The specific transportation problems in the corridor that contribute to the need for transportation improvements can be summarized as follows.



- Growth in population and employment and continuation of urban sprawl into outlying areas of the Northwest Corridor has resulted in substantial increases in corridor travel and congestion, with a loss of mobility for corridor residents and employees. These trends are expected to continue in the future and result in an even further loss in mobility without coordinated transportation improvements and land use planning.
- The existing roadway system in the corridor does not have the capacity to accommodate current traffic. Furthermore, the existing transit services operated in the corridor by the Metropolitan Atlanta Transit Authority (MARTA) and Cobb Community Transit (CCT) do not offer the frequency, reliability, and travel time needed to attract a major portion of existing or future travel demand. Without additional transportation choices that are competitive with single occupancy autos, congestion will worsen, and mobility will continue to decline.
- Several major activity and employment centers are located along I-75, including Midtown Atlanta, Cumberland-Galleria, Marietta, and Town Center. The continued growth of these centers is dependent on the ability to travel efficiently between the centers. Travel options other than travel by single-occupant auto on I-75 and I-575 are limited because of the lack of travel time savings incentives such as HOV lanes and transit connections.
- The Atlanta region has been designated by the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) as a severe nonattainment area for ozone. Emissions from cars and trucks are the primary contributor. To improve air quality, it is important that the solutions developed promote reductions in auto travel.

What are the transportation needs?

Transportation needs to be addressed by the project are based on the transportation problems. They can be summarized as follows:

- Coordinate transportation and land use solutions so that growth can be accommodated without overburdening the transportation system.
- Improve the ability of the transportation system to meet growing travel demand by offering additional transportation choices that increase capacity and enhance mobility.
- Improve the competitiveness of transit by providing a reliable travel time alternative to single-occupant autos so that it can attract a greater share of travel demand.
- Improve access to and connectivity between activity centers in the corridor, including Midtown Atlanta, Cumberland-Galleria, Marietta, and Town Center, and ensure access to downtown Atlanta.
- Improve air quality by providing alternatives that reduce auto emissions.

What is the purpose of the project?

In light of the identified transportation problems and needs, the purpose of the proposed project is to provide for transportation improvements in the Northwest Corridor that respond to growth concerns, address transportation capacity deficiencies, improve access to and connectivity between activity centers, and reduce single-occupancy vehicle travel while avoiding or minimizing adverse environmental impacts.

Process and Implementation

The Northwest Corridor HOV/BRT project AA/DEIS is being implemented in accordance with the planning and project development process by which federal, state, and local officials plan and make decisions regarding major transportation investments, and in accordance with FHWA and FTA rules and regulations specified under the National Environmental Policy Act

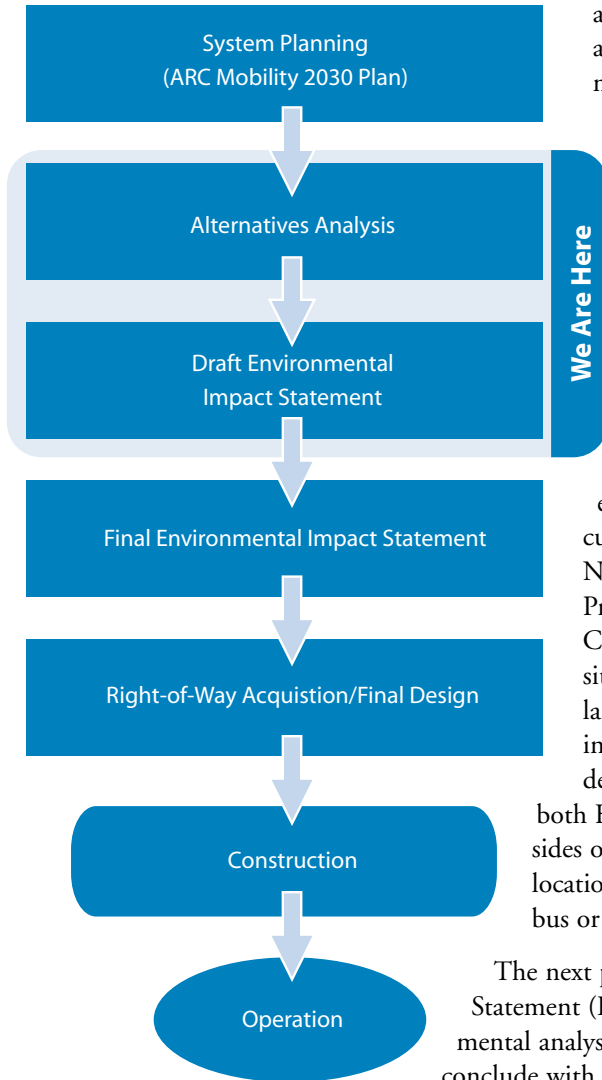
The Northwest Corridor is home to over 400,000 residents and several of the region's major activity and employment centers. Further population and employment growth is expected to continue through 2030.



(NEPA). The process contains five phases: (1) System Planning, (2) Alternatives Analysis/Draft Environmental Impact Statement, (3) Preliminary Engineering/Final

Environmental Impact Statement, (4) Right-of-Way Acquisition/Final Design, (5) Construction. As projects are advanced through the first three phases, their design, costs, benefits, and potential environmental impacts and mitigation measures are more clearly defined and alternatives are successfully eliminated until the alternative that is the most cost effective and provides the greatest benefit with the fewest adverse impacts remains.

Planning and Project Development Process



The Systems Planning phase of the process has been completed with the inclusion of the proposed HOV lanes in the Transportation Solutions for a New Century, Volume 1, 2025 Regional Transportation Plan (ARC). Although it has not been adopted, the Mobility 2030, Regional Transportation Plan (ARC) provides for BRT services operating in HOV lanes on I-75 from Midtown Atlanta to Town Center in Cobb County.

The proposed project is currently in the AA/DEIS phase of project development. The preparation of the AA/DEIS represents the culmination of the two previous planning efforts conducted for the Northwest Corridor - the GDOT I-75/I-575 HOV Lanes Extension Project and the AA conducted by GRTA as part of the Northwest Connectivity Study. These two efforts resulted in decisions on transit mode and route, with express bus operating in extended HOV lanes on I-75 and I-575, or BRT operating on I-75. The BRT option includes transit stations. The DEIS phase of project development will determine the location of the HOV lanes along I-75 and I-575 (i.e., both HOV lanes located in the center median or along the east or west sides of the roadway or split between both sides), as well as the type and location of transit facilities, and operational characteristics of the express bus or BRT services.

The next phase will involve preparation of the Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS), which will involve refinements to the project and environmental analysis based on comments received on the AA/DEIS. This phase will conclude with the issuance of a Record of Decision (ROD) by FHWA. Receipt of the ROD completes the environmental review of the project. Advancement to Right-of-Way Acquisition/Final Design and Construction depends on available funding.

Alternatives Considered

NEPA requires that the DEIS include an evaluation of all reasonable alternatives. The alternatives to be evaluated consist of a No-Build Alternative, a HOV/Transportation System Management Alternative (TSM), and a HOV/Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) Alternative, as well as other reasonable alternatives suggested during the scoping process.

The No-Build Alternative is required by NEPA. It provides for no extension of the HOV lanes on I-75 and I-575. The No Build Alternative examines what happens if you do not build the project and serves as a basis for the evaluation of the transportation and environmental impacts of the build alternatives. The HOV/TSM and HOV/BRT Alternatives both



provide for the extension of the HOV lanes on I-75 and I-575; hence, they are considered “build alternatives.” The difference between the two build alternatives is the transit element. The HOV/BRT Alternative provides for BRT, or express bus, services operating in the HOV lanes with supporting transit stations along the corridor and multi-level park-and-ride lots at HOV-only interchanges. The Northwest Connectivity Study AA was the process used to select the BRT alternative from among several alternatives considered, but eliminated. The HOV/TSM Alternative includes express bus service operating in the HOV lanes with supporting transit facility improvements, such as surface park-and-ride lots and bus transfer facilities, but no transit stations. FTA requires the TSM Alternative for evaluation in an AA/DEIS, such as the AA/DEIS for the Northwest Corridor HOV/BRT project. These three alternatives, and the alternatives previously considered but eliminated, are described below.

Alternatives Previously Considered and Eliminated

NEPA also requires for all alternatives considered, but eliminated, that the DEIS discuss the reasons for their elimination. The HOV/BRT Alternative to be considered in the AA/DEIS has been narrowed down from a larger number of alternatives considered during the AA conducted by GRTA as part of the Northwest Connectivity Study. The data collection, analyses, and results of the AA process will be incorporated by reference into the AA/DEIS for the Northwest Corridor HOV/BRT project.

The AA identified and evaluated alternatives through a three-step process. The first step consisted of the identification and screening of a long list of potential alignment segments. The results of the screening were then reviewed in meetings with the public. Based on comment from the public, and through coordination with affected agencies, a list of alignment segments was selected to carry forward to detailed evaluation. The AA also screened a long list of transit technologies, and through input from the public, narrowed the list to consideration of HOV/express bus, light rail transit, BRT, heavy rail transit, automated guideway transit, and commuter rail for detailed evaluation with the corridor alignment alternatives.

The second step involved the development of 11 full-length corridor alternatives from the list of alignment segments and through combination with the selected transit modes. The 11 conceptual alternatives were then subjected to more detailed evaluation of the benefits and the environmental, transportation, and economic impacts against the stated goals and objectives for the project as set forth in the purpose and need for the project. Capital and operating and maintenance cost estimates and ridership data were also developed for use in the evaluation.

The alternatives and results of the evaluation were presented to the public in a series of meetings and comments were solicited. The public expressed a clear preference for either BRT or LRT. Following the meetings, comments from the general public and agencies were assessed and the 11 alternatives were narrowed down to three candidate alternatives:

- Alternative A: Express Bus/HOV Alternative - Express buses operating in the HOV lanes from Arts Center Station north
- Alternative B: Light Rail Transit - North Avenue Station north along Northside Drive, I-285, and I-75 to North Loop Road in Marietta
- Alternative C: Bus Rapid Transit/HOV - Arts Center Station north along Northside Drive, I-285, and I-75

After further evaluation of the alternatives based on costs, ridership, and achievement of the project goals and objectives, it was determined that Alternative B was unaffordable based on costs and projected funding, and that Alternative C experienced diminished marginal costs

GRTA's Northwest Connectivity Study Alternatives Analysis (AA) process involved 16 public meetings with 678 participants and 40 additional stakeholder meetings. Public feedback collected during this process was a vital part of the screening process.



The scoping process invites public and agency comment on the alternatives to be considered and the issues to be addressed.

versus benefits when evaluated against most goals. With the elimination of Alternatives B and C based on financial feasibility and cost effectiveness, the only remaining alternative was express bus or BRT using the HOV lanes under an enhanced Alternative A. This alternative also was determined to provide for better connectivity between the activity centers along I-75, which was an important need for the project. Although Alternatives B and C would connect the activity centers, travel times would be longer because of the lower operating speeds and more frequent stops of LRT or BRT located within or adjacent to arterial rights-of-way. However, prior to completion of the DEIS, GRTA determined that the appropriate course of action was to jointly develop a transportation project in the Northwest Corridor with GDOT. The GRTA Board adopted express buses or BRT using HOV lanes as the LPA in February 2004. Although it has not been adopted, the Mobility 2030, Regional Transportation Plan (ARC) provides for BRT services operating in HOV lanes on I-75 from Midtown Atlanta to Town Center in Cobb County.

Alternatives to be Considered in the AA/DEIS

Following is a brief description of the No-Build Alternative, HOV/TSM Alternative, and HOV/BRT Alternative to be evaluated in the AA/DEIS. The alternatives considered may change through input received by the public and local officials during scoping and as the definitions of the alternatives are refined throughout the course of the study.

No-Build Alternative

The No-Build Alternative serves as a basis for the evaluation of transportation and environmental impacts of the build alternatives. It provides no extension of the HOV lanes on I-75 and I-575. Transit services in the Northwest Corridor would continue to be provided by buses operating in mixed traffic in general purpose lanes on I-75 and I-575 north of Akers Mill Road where the existing HOV lanes terminate.

The No-Build Alternative includes all existing highway, transit services, and transit facilities plus the improvements included in the Mobility 2030, Regional Transportation Plan (ARC). The highway-related improvements consist of new interchanges and ramps, new roadways, new HOV lanes, roadway widening, intersection turn lanes, and intelligent transportation system improvements. Transit improvements in the plan consist of purchase of new buses and vanpool vehicles, new and expanded park-and-ride facilities, new transit centers, and new transit services. It should be noted that all improvements in the No-Build Alternative are also included in the build alternatives.

HOV/Transportation System Management Alternative (TSM)

This alternative would provide for the extension of the existing HOV lanes on I-75 north of Akers Mill Road to Wade Green Road in Cobb County and on I-575 north to Sixes Road in Cherokee County. The alternative also includes new express bus services connecting residential areas and activity centers within the Northwest Corridor. This new express bus service would operate in the existing HOV lanes on I-75 south of Akers Mill Road and the proposed new lanes to the north on I-75 and I-575.

The existing HOV lanes on I-75 terminate at Akers Mill Road south of I-285. Under this alternative, two new barrier separated HOV lanes would be provided in each direction on I-75 between Akers Mill Road and the I-575 interchange, and one lane in each direction on I-75 and I-575 north of the I-75/I-575 interchange to the terminal points at Wade Green Road on I-75 and Sixes Road on I-575.

Comments?

Telephone Voice Mail Hotline:
(404) 377-4012

Email:
hov_brt_comments@projectsolve2.com

Website:
www.nwhovbrt.com



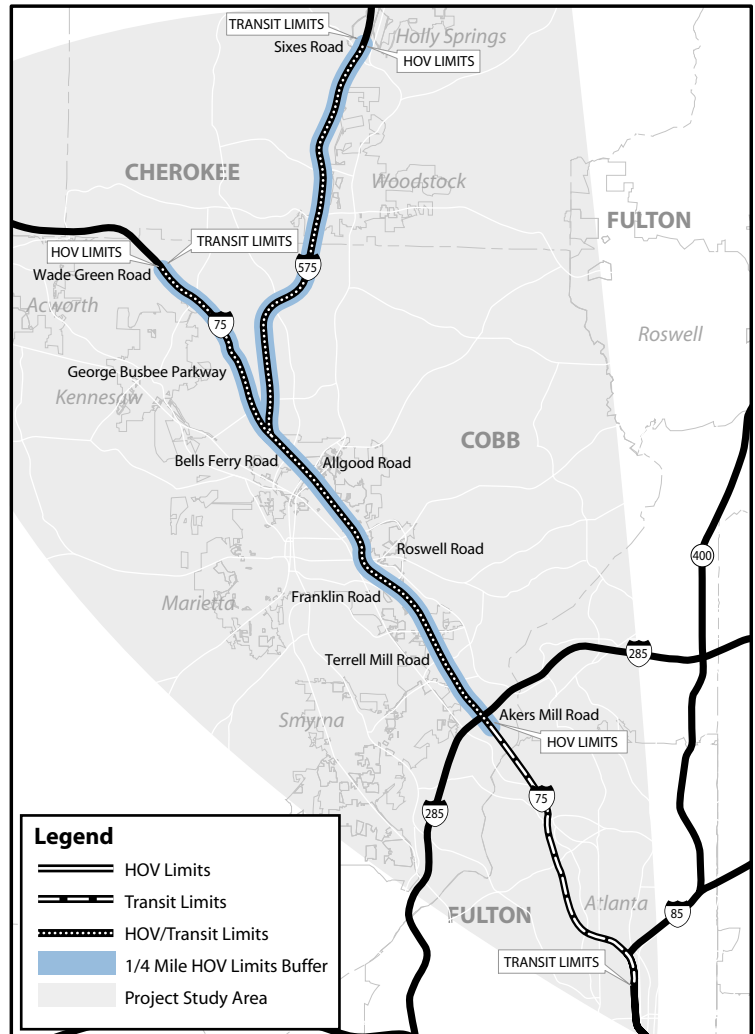
South of the I-75/I-575 interchange, the existing median on I-75 is not wide enough to accommodate two HOV lanes in each direction. Thus, the median would have to be widened by shifting the existing general-purpose lanes to the outside and constructing the HOV lanes in the center, or the HOV lanes would have to be constructed to the outside of the existing roadway. If the new HOV lanes are constructed to the outside, there are three additional options under consideration, which consist of splitting the northbound and southbound HOV lanes to each side of the roadway, or constructing the HOV lanes in both directions on either the west side or east side of the roadway. These options for location of the HOV lanes on I-75 south of I-575 were designated in the GDOT I-75/I-575 HOV Lanes Extension Project as alternatives U1 through U4:

- U1 – HOV in the median, two lanes in each direction
- U2 – HOV on each side, two lanes in each direction
- U3 – HOV on the west side, two lanes in each direction
- U4 – HOV on the east side, two lanes in each direction

These four options are under consideration on I-75 south of the I-575 interchange. On I-75 north of the I-575 interchange, and on I-575 north of I-75, only one HOV lane would be constructed in each direction and the existing median is wide enough to accommodate the new facilities.

Access to the proposed HOV lanes would be provided by modifying the Akers Mill Road interchange and developing new HOV-only interchanges. On I-75, access to the HOV lanes would be provided at Akers Mill Road, Terrell Mill Road, Franklin Road, Roswell Road, Allgood Road, and Busbee Parkway, and on I-575 at Big Shanty Road, Shallowford Road, and Dupree Road. A system-to-system interchange would be provided at the I-75/I-575 interchange for northbound to northbound and southbound to southbound movements between I-75 and I-575. No southbound to northbound movements would be included on either facility.

Buses operating express services would use the HOV lanes. The buses would circulate in residential areas or activity centers and then enter the HOV lanes. The buses would then operate express service via existing HOV lanes on I-75 south of I-285, and via the proposed new HOV lanes north of I-285. Buses would access the HOV lanes from the proposed new HOV-only access ramps at 15th Street in Midtown Atlanta and from the HOV-only interchanges on I-75 and I-575. New park-and-ride surface lots would be located within the corridor to support the express bus services. Buses would make stops at the park-and-ride lots prior to entering the HOV lanes. The park-and-ride lots could be located at the HOV lane access interchanges or some distance away from the interchanges along the route, depending on land availability.





HOV/Bus Rapid Transit Alternative

Like the HOV/TSM Alternative, this alternative would provide for the extension of the existing HOV lanes on I-75 north of Akers Mill Road to Wade Green Road in Cobb County and on I-575, north to Sixes Road in Cherokee County and introduction of new express coach BRT services connecting residential areas and activity centers within the Northwest Corridor. The vehicles used in the operation of the service would be specially built coaches similar to the type used in the operation of intercity bus services. The coaches would be equipped with special amenities for passenger comfort such as high-back, padded seats, individual air controls, and luggage racks. This new coach service would operate in the existing HOV lanes on I-75 south of Akers Mill Road and the proposed new lanes to the north on I-75 and I-575.



Example of a BRT Vehicle

The HOV/BRT Alternative would provide for construction of BRT stations for passenger access. The stations would be located at Akers Mill Road, Terrell Mill Road, Franklin Road, Roswell Road, Allgood Road, Bells Ferry Road, and George Busbee Parkway. The stations would have direct access ramps for buses accessing the HOV lanes. Access to the HOV lanes for other HOV traffic would be the same as under the HOV/TSM Alternative. The options under consideration for location of the HOV lanes on I-575 south of the I-575 interchange also are the same as under the HOV/TSM Alternative (i.e., both HOV lanes located in the center median or along the east or west sides of the roadway or split between both sides).

The BRT services would operate in the HOV lanes, stop at the stations, and then access the HOV lanes from the direct-access ramps. The stations would include platforms for passenger loading/unloading with overhead canopies for weather protection and shading and would be equipped with such amenities as benches, fare machines, information kiosks, and security devices. The stations would also include multi-level park-and-ride garages and bus transfer facilities for local buses providing connecting service at the stations. No BRT stations would be located on I-575. Passenger access to routes operating in the HOV lanes on I-575 would be from stops located on street prior to entering the HOV lanes.

Analysis of Environmental Impacts

The AA/DEIS will identify and evaluate potential social, economic and environmental impacts associated with the build alternatives in comparison to the No-Build Alternative. Measures to minimize or mitigate potential adverse impacts identified during the analysis will also be documented.

Land Use Plans, Zoning and Economic Development - The AA/DEIS will indicate if the build alternatives are consistent with state, county and local land use and zoning plans. Economic and joint development opportunities at station locations will be identified. In addition, the AA/DEIS will identify any properties that would be displaced or impacted by the project.

Transportation Impacts - The build alternatives will be evaluated with respect to effects on traffic, parking and existing bus service.

Neighborhoods and Environmental Justice - The AA/DEIS will assess project benefits and impacts on study area neighborhoods, with specific attention to minority and low-income

Seven BRT Stations are proposed for construction as part of the HOV/BRT Alternative.



communities. Any adverse or disproportionately high impact, affecting minority or low-income neighborhoods, will be documented.

Air Quality - The potential impact on air quality, as well as a discussion of compliance with the Clean Air Act Amendments of 1990 and an evaluation of conformity with the State Implementation Plan will be documented.

Visual and Aesthetic Impacts - The build alternatives will be evaluated based on views from surrounding communities of the alignments and views of the communities from the alignments.

Noise and Vibration - The study will include an analysis of potential impacts of noise and vibration associated with the build alternatives.

Endangered Species - The AA/DEIS will identify and document federally-listed threatened and endangered species (both fauna and flora) and all ecologically sensitive areas within the study area.

Surface Waters - Surface waters include all waters on the surface of the earth found in rivers, streams, lakes, ponds, marshes, and wetlands. This study will indicate the location, delineation, classification and type of surface waters that may be impacted by the alternatives. Measures to avoid or minimize potential impacts will be identified.

Floodplains - A determination will be made as to whether properties in the study area are located within a 100-year floodplain. Floodplain protection standards will be adhered to. Design elements will be recommended to mitigate potential impacts.

Historic and Archeological Resources and Parklands - Historic properties, archeological sites, parklands, and other cultural resources will be identified and best efforts will be made to minimize or avoid potential impacts.

Contamination/Hazardous Materials - The AA/DEIS will document any known hazardous materials or contamination within the study area. Sites requiring further analysis will be identified.

Energy - A determination of energy consumption associated with the build alternatives will be documented. Energy consumption measures the net impact on energy savings as a result of changes in automobile travel in the region, offset, in part by the energy requirements for operation of the proposed service.

Soils - An assessment of the existing geological resources, soil types and topography of the study area will be conducted, in addition to a description of the potential consequences of the build alternatives.

Construction Impacts - A description of how project construction may create potential impacts on the socioeconomic, physical and natural environments will be prepared.

Secondary and Cumulative Impacts - The assessment will identify development that is dependent on the proposed project and could result in secondary and cumulative effects. For secondary effects, the assessment will identify zoning impacts and changes in land use and level of development that may only occur as a result of the project. The cumulative effects assessment will identify other development that is expected to occur regardless of whether the project is built. Impacts to resources from the secondary effects of the project and other actions, including past, present, and future, will be identified and added to the direct impacts of the project to arrive at the total cumulative impact.

Meeting Dates and Locations

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Kennesaw State University Center
3333 Busbee Drive
Kennesaw, GA 30144

Agency Scoping Meeting
Wednesday, August 4, 2004
10AM to Noon
Cobb Chamber of Commerce
240 Interstate North Parkway
Atlanta, GA 30339

Targeted Community Briefing
Tuesday, July 27, 2004
6PM to 8PM
Cobb Chamber of Commerce
240 Interstate North Parkway
Atlanta, GA 30339

These locations are accessible to persons with disabilities. Any individual requiring special assistance should contact Claudia Bilotto, Sycamore Consulting, at 404-377-9147 or TDD/TTY via 711 by July 30, 2004.



Contact Information

For project updates and to join the mailing list or provide feedback, call the Telephone Voice Mail Hotline at (404) 377-4012, send an email to hov_brt_comments@projectsolve2.com or visit the Northwest Corridor HOV/BRT Website at: www.nwhovbrt.com

For more information regarding the scoping meetings or to provide written comment, contact:

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The scoping period for the project is scheduled to end on August 19, 2004.

Please submit your written comments by this date. Additional information may be obtained from:

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Northwest Corridor (I-75/I-575) HOV/BRT Project

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Address Correction Requested

