

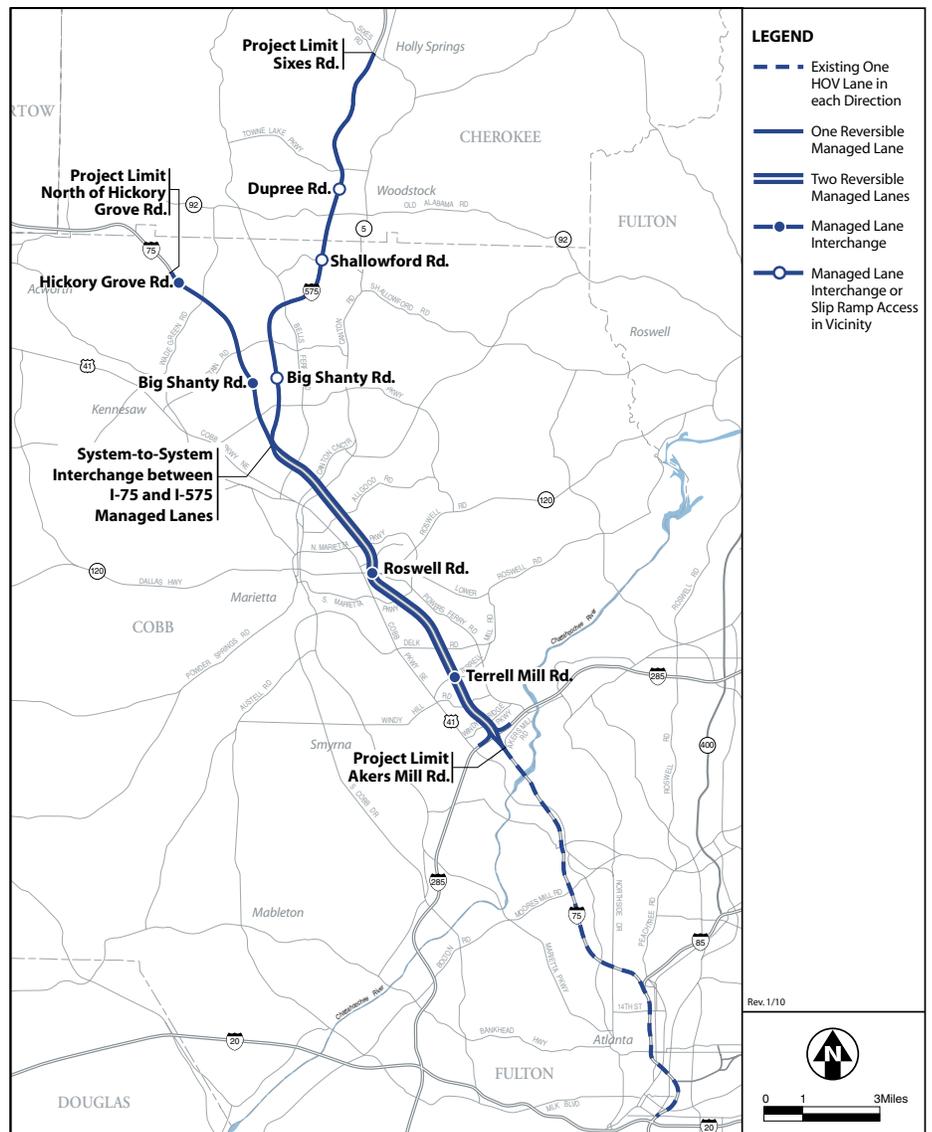
NORTHWEST CORRIDOR PROJECT NEWS

Northwest Corridor (I-75/I-575) Project Newsletter

Northwest Corridor Project Continues!

The Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT), in cooperation with the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) is continuing its efforts for the completion of the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the Northwest Corridor Project (I-75/I-575). The Draft EIS (DEIS) was completed in April 2007, and presented to the public at a series of public hearings. In the public comment period that followed the publication of the DEIS, a number of comments were received expressing concern about the size and scope of the project, its potential impacts and financial feasibility. The DEIS, as well as a complete catalog of the comments, is available on the project website www.nwcpoject.com, under the Archival tab.

In response to these comments, as well the realization of a shrinking transportation funding environment, GDOT decided in early 2009 to refocus and develop a reduced cost alternative that is better aligned with stakeholder opinion and budgetary constraints. Moving forward, GDOT will continue analysis of the addition of a managed



lane system on I-75 and I-575. The Bus Rapid Transit system with supporting facilities and the Truck Only Lanes are no longer included as part of the project. These changes result in a reduced project footprint with reduced costs and less severe environmental impacts, while still addressing the original Purpose and Need for the project.



A managed lane is a lane that utilizes a design or operational factor to increase efficiency, for example a High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) lane. Analysis will examine the addition of either a two or three managed lane reversible system on I-75 and the addition of a single managed lane on I-575. A complete description of the alternatives is included in this newsletter. The project limits will remain the same, from Akers Mill to Hickory Grove Road on I-75, and from I-75 to Sixes Road on I-575.

Following guidance from FHWA, GDOT and the project team will continue analysis on the revised project concepts through a Supplemental Draft Environmental Impact Statement (SDEIS). The SDEIS is required due to the extent of the revisions of the project alternatives. A public hearing on the SDEIS, explaining the changes and evolution of the project, is tentatively planned for late summer 2010. Completion of the document is anticipated in late 2010, with a Record of Decision anticipated by the end of the year. After this, the project can be prepared for construction.

The Revised Alternatives Under Consideration

In accordance with the federal environmental process, the Northwest Corridor Project EIS must evaluate a set of alternatives and their associated impacts in order to reach a consensus on a Locally Preferred Alternative (LPA). The refined alternatives based on the reduced managed lane system footprint currently under consideration are:

- **No-Build Alternative:** This alternative depicts what would happen if the project is not built. It also serves as a comparative baseline for the evaluation of impacts.
- **Concept A** – This is the refined system that results from the elimination of the truck only lanes and BRT system originally proposed. It would be a facility with two lanes in each direction in the heart of the system on I-75 from I-285 to I-575. North of the I-75/I-575 Interchange the alternative will consist of one managed lane in each direction in the median on both I-75 and I-575.
- **Concept B-1** – This system would provide two reversible managed lanes on I-75 between I-285 and I-575. North of the I-75/I-575 Interchange, one managed lane would be provided on both I-75 and I-575. The Managed Lane Interchanges on I-75 and I-575 would be reduced to seven and five respectively.
- **Concept B-2** - This system would also provide two reversible managed lanes on I-75 between I-285 and I-575. However, north of the I-75/I-575 Interchange one managed lane would be provided on both I-75 and I-575 but the Managed Lane Interchanges on I-575 would be replaced by a system of slip ramps to provide access to and from the managed lane in the median. Three access points would be provided in each direction on I-575.
- **Concept C** – This system would provide three reversible managed lanes on I-75 between I-285 and I-575. North of the I-75/I-575 Interchange one managed lane would be provided on I-75 and on I-575 two managed lanes would be provided from I-75 to Big Shanty Road and one managed lane from Big Shanty Road to Sixes Road. The Managed Lane Interchanges on I-75 and I-575 would remain essentially the same as the system proposed in the DEIS.

As part of the four alternatives under evaluation, the project will require tolling options for the managed lanes. There are several variations of High Occupancy Toll (HOT) lanes that are being explored, including varying occupancy requirements with congestion-pricing options. The tolls will be utilized as a means to manage the number of users utilizing the facility at certain times of the day, to continually provide a high level of service in the managed lanes. The price of the toll will vary by the congestion level of the roadway. For example, the toll would be higher at peak rush hour times than at off-peak times. Additionally, use of the toll revenues will help leverage other benefits, such as supplementing highway capital costs, operating and maintaining the facilities, customer service, etc.

It is envisioned that tolls for both the managed lanes would be collected electronically without the use of toll booths; however, specific details of tolling technology have not been determined at this time.

Stakeholder and Public Involvement

An important focus of the SDEIS process is the continuation of coordination with potentially affected parties. During the development of the DEIS, GDOT and the project team made special efforts to get input from numerous constituency groups. Moving forward, these efforts will continue as we strive to communicate the changes to the project and gather feedback.



Citizens and staff at community meeting at Los Colinas Apartments.

To that end we have developed a new website to host information on the revised project, www.nwcpproject.com. A link to the previous site is still available, so all historical documents and project materials are accessible. Electronic comments and questions may be submitted via a form on the website and also by directly emailing nwcpcomments@projectsolvemail.com. Comments and questions can also be submitted by telephoning the project hotline at (404) 377-4012.

Look for newsletters like this one, and project kiosks set up at public places along the corridor. The project team will also be making a concerted effort to reach out to those populations that are often underrepresented, such as low-income, minority, and non-English speaking populations. Working through faith-based, public, social service,

and advocacy organizations, project materials will be made available in to a wide variety of groups and in appropriate languages. If you or your organization would like copies of this newsletter in another language than what is presented here, please contact the project hotline.

The Public Private Partnerships (P3) Program

In 2009, the Georgia legislature put in place a new framework empowering GDOT to identify transportation projects and solicit proposals from private companies for their construction and delivery. This framework, known as the Public Private Partnership, or P3, program allows GDOT to better leverage its limited resources by utilizing private sector innovation and capital. Some projects, due to their magnitude and associated costs would likely be beyond GDOT's financial ability to pursue on its own. The P3 program enables the accelerated delivery of much needed mobility improvements that otherwise would take years, or even be impossible, to implement.

Under previous legislation that allowed unsolicited proposals, Georgia Transportation Partners (GTP) submitted a proposal that was accepted by GDOT for the Northwest Corridor. That agreement with GTP has since been terminated, but a significant portion of the work conducted under that agreement will be used to advance the project under the current concept.

The Northwest Corridor has been identified as a priority project for the P3 program. GDOT anticipates initiating the procurement process with the advertising for qualifications of a bidding P3 team in early 2010, with contracting expected to be finalized by the spring of the following year. It is anticipated that construction and Right of Way acquisition may begin by August 2011. ▀



Get Involved!

For project updates and to join the mailing list or provide feedback:

Voice Mail Hotline: (404) 377-4012

Email: nwcpcomments@projectsolvemail.com

Website: www.nwcpproject.com

To submit written comments, or for more information please contact:

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GLOSSARY

DEIS: Draft Environmental Impact Statement

FEIS: Final Environmental Impact Statement

FHWA: Federal Highway Administration

GDOT: Georgia Department of Transportation

HOT Lanes: High Occupancy Toll Lanes

HOV Lanes: High Occupancy Vehicle Lanes

LPA: Locally Preferred Alternative

PPP: Public Private Partnership

SDEIS: Supplemental Draft Environmental Impact Statement

TOL: Truck Only Lanes



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