Project Purpose and Need

The Northwest Corridor is one of the most severely congested highway corridors in the Atlanta metropolitan region and improvements are needed to reduce congestion. Urban development, both population and employment growth, in Cobb and Cherokee Counties over the past decades has substantially increased traffic congestion on both I-75 and I-575. The amount of time required to travel to and from destinations has increased and the ability to accurately estimate the time it will take to reach a destination has declined. Moreover, the severe congestion in the Northwest Corridor affects all types of vehicles – private passenger vehicles, carpools and van pool vehicles, public transit buses, delivery and freight trucks.

Based on these transportation problems, the purpose of the project is to make improvements to the highways in the Northwest Corridor that:

- Improve the transportation effectiveness of I-75 and I-575 to accommodate additional travel and to contribute to the improved performance of the regional highway system;
- Provide additional transportation choices or options that increase the capacity of I-75 and I-575 and improve connectivity between regional activity centers;
- Improve the quality of life by improving mobility and minimizing effects to both natural resources and the built environment;
- Improve transportation equity by providing an equitable distribution of benefits and impacts to all populations; and
- Provide cost-effective and affordable transportation improvements.

In addition, the Atlanta metropolitan area currently does not meet all of the National Ambient Air Quality Standards for regulated air pollutants. The metropolitan area does not meet federal standards for ozone (the 8-hour standard) and small particulates in the atmosphere (the annual standard). These air quality concerns are related to the substantial traffic congestion in the Northwest Corridor. And, the forecast increase in traffic congestion would be expected to reduce air quality in the Atlanta metropolitan area in the future. Improvements to the highway system could help to prevent further decline in air quality.

Project Description

The Proposed improvements would be made on I-75 from just south of the I-285 interchange at Akers Mill Road northwesterly to a point north of Hickory Grove Road and on I-575 from I-75 northeasterly to Sixes Road. The total length of highway corridor improvements is about 27 miles. Two new managed lanes would be constructed on the west side of I-75 between Akers Mill Road and I-575. These lanes would also connect to proposed managed lanes on I-285 to the south. Rather than HOV lanes, however, these new managed lanes on I-75 would be reversible lanes. During the morning peak commute period, both lanes would accommodate southbound traffic. During the evening peak commute period, the directional flow of the traffic would reverse to accommodate the northbound traffic. A single reversible-lane would continue north in the median of I-75 to north of Hickory Grove Road. Similarly, a single reversible-lane would continue north in the median of I-575 from the I-75 interchange to a point south of Sixes Road. Like the two reversible lanes on I-75, these additional reversible lanes would accommodate peak period directional flows.

Project Location Map