



**NORTHWEST I-75/I-575 CORRIDOR**

# **CHAPTER 6**

# **CONSULTATION AND COORDINATION**





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## **6. CONSULTATION AND COORDINATION**

This chapter provides an overview of the public involvement program and agency coordination efforts that have been conducted for the Northwest I-75/I-575 Corridor Alternatives Analysis/Draft Environmental Impact Statement (AA/DEIS). Good communication between affected parties, the public, and agencies involved is of paramount importance in the overall success of any transportation project. Public involvement and agency coordination are especially important in the AA/DEIS process, with oversight and interest from numerous federal, state, and local agencies and jurisdictions, as well as the general public who will be served by the project.

The Northwest I-75/I-575 Corridor study area extends from downtown Atlanta in Fulton County northwest into Cobb and Cherokee Counties. With a population of over 600,000 residents, the project corridor is home to a substantial portion of the region's population, including a large number of low-income, minority, and Hispanic communities. (Please refer to Chapter 3, Affected Environment, for more details on the study area population demographics.) The study area is also one of the most economically important areas in the region. It contains several of the region's major activity and employment centers, including downtown Atlanta, Midtown, Cumberland-Galleria, Marietta, and Town Center.

Because of the size and scope of the Northwest I-75/I-575 Corridor Project and the study area, numerous stakeholders have been identified. Stakeholders include, but are not limited to the cities of Atlanta and Marietta, Cobb County, MARTA, Cobb Chamber of Commerce, Midtown Alliance, Latin American Association, Town Center and Cumberland Community Improvement Districts, educational institutions, military installations, major employers and business owners, numerous homeowners groups, property owners, environmental interest groups, minority and low-income communities, and members of the general public.

The following sections detail the various public involvement activities associated with the Northwest I-75/I-575 Corridor Project, such as the public involvement program, public involvement associated with project scoping and station area planning, coordination with special affected groups, Environmental Justice public outreach, and the comment solicitation/collection and response activities.

Copies of the minutes of meetings with agencies and summaries of the meetings with other project stakeholders are contained in the project files. These documents are considered part of the environmental compliance record and can be requested for review at the offices of the Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT).

### **6.1 Public Involvement Program**

Generating public awareness, and ultimately public acceptance and support, are key objectives of the public involvement effort. Proactive solicitation of community comments ensures the public's concerns and desires are both identified and addressed.

The public involvement program was designed to involve agencies and the public as participants, and enable them to provide meaningful input to the outcomes of the AA/DEIS. The plan established new forums for information exchange, while also taking advantage of existing groups and organizations. Outreach efforts have educated, informed, and involved the public of the purpose and progress of the project by highlighting local issues, technical considerations, and potential impacts.



As the stakeholders were numerous and varied, so were the techniques developed to meet their individual needs. Techniques employed have included public meetings in the form of public information open houses, workshops, and small group meetings. Project staff have participated in speakers bureau engagements with study area organizations. Supporting collateral materials, such as a scoping information booklet and newsletters, have been developed to help explain the complex project development process. A website and a project telephone hotline have been available to provide project information and to record public comments.

In addition to involvement of the public, interagency consultation and coordination has been used to facilitate open communication and information sharing. The study area encompasses a number of federal, state, and local agencies responsible for formulation and implementation of policies affecting transportation projects. Agencies invited to participate in the project are listed in Section 6.2.3 Interagency Scoping Meetings. Coordination efforts with these agencies has included review of technical memoranda, identification of key concerns and priorities, and solicitation of agency perspectives on the project. The agency involvement process has been structured to facilitate information sharing and to develop joint agency recommendations regarding issues important in subsequent stages of the project development process.

Various tools and techniques have been used in the public involvement program and have been used at multiple points in the project development process. The uses of these tools and techniques are described in the *Public Involvement Plan* (Sycamore Consulting, 2005) developed for the Northwest I-75/I-575 Corridor Project. The project mailing list, hotline, website, newsletter, and speakers bureau have been ongoing throughout the process and have been used to notify members of the public of upcoming events, solicit comments from interested citizens, and to keep residents informed as the project has developed. Public information meetings, agency and community briefings, and the scoping information booklet have been used at key milestones during the project, such as during the two project scoping periods, the refinement of alternatives, and the environmental assessment phase. The station area planning process, a facet of alternatives development and refinement, used public workshops and small group meetings as its primary outreach approach.

The sections below describe the tools and techniques of the public involvement program.

### **6.1.1 Project Mailing List**

In order to promote a discourse between the project staff and those affected by the proposed transportation project, the project team has compiled a mailing list of elected officials, agency representatives, and affected parties. This list includes citizens who live and/or work in the corridor, elected government officials, local government staff, state and federal environmental resource and regulatory agency staff, homeowner or neighborhood associations, and other special interest groups. The list has continually been updated and expanded. It has been used to mail notification letters and supplemental materials throughout the public involvement program. As of April 2007, the mailing list totaled more than 1,500 addressees.

### **6.1.2 Project Hotline**

The project team established a project-specific telephone hotline at (404) 377-4012 to provide project information about upcoming events and to respond to frequently expressed public concerns. In particular, the hotline has been used to announce the dates, times, and locations of public meetings. Recorded messages also have been posted to answer general questions from the public. The project hotline number has published in the scoping information booklet, newsletters, project flyers, and on the Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) website.



### **6.1.3 Project Website**

An ongoing source of project information has been posted on the project website at [www.nwhovbrt.com](http://www.nwhovbrt.com). It provides information on project history, background, process, schedule, alternatives considered, and transit station area planning activities. Information developed for public meetings, the project newsletters, and the scoping information booklet have been posted. The website also allows website visitors to directly submit comments electronically via a project email address – [HOV\\_BRT\\_comments@projectsolvemail.com](mailto:HOV_BRT_comments@projectsolvemail.com). As of April 2007, a total of 298 comments have been received.

### **6.1.4 Newsletters**

Newsletters have been an integral piece of the public involvement program. Through spring 2007, four newsletters have been distributed.

The first two Northwest I-75/I-575 Corridor Project newsletters highlighted the station area planning efforts for the proposed bus rapid transit system. The first was distributed in March 2005. This issue featured articles explaining the background of the project, the planning process, the project schedule, and the alternatives under consideration. The newsletter identified project information resources available to stakeholders and listed ways to provide comments at the station area planning kick-off meeting and through the hotline, project email address, and the website. This newsletter also listed contact information for the project managers at GDOT and the Georgia Regional Transportation Authority (GRTA).

The second newsletter was issued in June 2005. This issue summarized station area planning comments, the role of public input in the planning process, basic information about the bus rapid transit (BRT) system, and the study's next steps. In particular, it advertised upcoming public meetings. As in the previous newsletter, it listed the project hotline, email address, website, and project managers' contact information.

The third newsletter was published in November 2005. This issue highlighted changes to the Northwest I-75/I-575 Corridor Project. Of particular note, it described the addition of the truck-only lanes and other revisions to the alternatives. It included an update on the station area planning process and advertised the November 15, 2005 public information open house.

In August 2006, the fourth newsletter was published with a date of Fall 2006. It provided updates on the environmental impact analysis, ongoing revisions to the alternatives, station area planning efforts, and public involvement activities with area stakeholders and the trucking industry.

For all issues, paper copies of the newsletters were mailed to those listed on the project mailing list and electronic copies were posted on the project website. Additional copies have been available to the public at the Cobb County and City of Marietta government offices and at subsequent public meetings.

### **6.1.5 Speakers Bureau**

Representatives of GDOT, GRTA, and the project team have comprised the project speakers bureau. Upon request, these individuals have been available to address civic, business, community, and/or special interest organizations. They have provided information about the project, listened to community concerns, answered questions, and distributed up-to-date project



information materials. A PowerPoint presentation highlighting the project and its objectives was prepared for use at speakers bureau events.

Table 6-1 lists groups that have hosted a speakers bureau event as part of their regularly scheduled meetings. These speakers bureau events reached more than 350 people who may not have participated in the public involvement process otherwise.

**Table 6-1. Speakers Bureau Events**

Date	Organization
August 24, 2004	Cobb Family Resources Board of Director's Meeting
October 27, 2004	Cobb Community Collaborative
April 25, 2005	Vinings Homeowners Association
June 20, 2005	CB Richard Ellis
June 27, 2005	Cobb Community Transit Advisory Board
July 11, 2005	Boston Community Organization
July 20, 2005	Tuxedo Estates and Sun Valley Homeowners Associations
March 8, 2006	North By Northwest Office Park Owners Association
May 16, 2006	Terrell Mill Community Association

## 6.2 Scoping

Scoping is the first of several public involvement steps required by the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). The purpose of scoping is to provide an opportunity for all interested parties to participate in the development and refinement of project alternatives. Through public dialogue, scoping meetings help identify issues associated with the alternatives.

In July 2004, the scoping process began with notification sent to federal, state, regional, and local agencies regarding the proposed project purpose and alternatives under consideration. Public meetings were announced through newspaper display advertisements. A flyer was distributed to area residents to notify them of the project and invite them to the scoping meetings. A community leadership briefing and interagency meetings also were held. Input received from members of the public, elected officials, and government agencies during scoping has been used to shape the course and direction of the AA/DEIS study effort, particularly the alternatives and issues under study.

With the addition of the truck-only lanes to the project alternatives in August 2005, an additional round of scoping meetings was held in early 2006. These meetings consisted of interagency meetings and two public meetings. Sections 2.3.2, 2.3.3, and 2.3.4 of Chapter 2, Alternatives Considered discuss the comments received from the public on the alternatives and how the comments were used to shape the alternatives.

The following sections describe scoping materials and events that have been held.

### 6.2.1 Scoping Information Booklet

A scoping information booklet was developed for use at the scoping meetings and a variety of other public outreach events. The purpose of the booklet was to spread awareness of the project. The booklet introduced the public to the scoping process and provided background





information on the project. It also included information regarding the transportation needs in the corridor and the alternatives under consideration.

## 6.2.2 Community Leadership Briefing

A targeted community leadership briefing was held on July 27, 2004 at the Cobb Chamber of Commerce. The purpose of this briefing was to begin dialogue with community leaders and to identify issues that needed to be addressed during the AA/DEIS study process. Representatives of 59 interest groups were invited to attend this briefing, including:

- AT&T
- Atlanta Bicycle Campaign
- BellSouth Telecommunications
- Brentwood Park Homeowners Association
- Briarwood Homeowners Association
- Cameron Glen Homeowners Association
- Chastain Lakes Homeowners Association
- Cherokee County Board of Education
- Cherokee County Chamber of Commerce
- Clean Air Campaign
- Cobb Chamber of Commerce
- Cobb Community Transit
- Cobb County NAACP
- Cobb County Schools
- Cobb Preservation Foundation
- Cobb Transit Accessibility Advisory Board
- Cobb Transit Advisory Board
- Concerned Taxpayers in Cobb County
- Cumberland CID
- Eagle Ridge Property Owners Association
- East Cobb Civic Association
- East Park Homeowners Association
- East Worthington Homeowners Association
- Franklin Road Community Association
- Georgia Sierra Club
- Georgia Conservancy
- Georgia Trust for Historic Preservation
- Georgians for Transportation Alternatives
- Glenlake Homeowners Association
- Greater Atlanta Home Builders Association
- Hamby Acres Neighborhood Association
- Involved Mariettans Planning Actively for the City of Tomorrow (IMPACT)
- Interfinancial Properties, Inc.
- Ivey Green Homeowners Association
- J.A. Morris Associates, Inc.
- Keep Cobb Beautiful
- Lake Allatoona Preservation Authority
- Life University
- Loop Group
- Marietta City Schools
- McLaughlin, Hendon, Miller & Croy
- Northeast Cobb Community Group
- Metropolitan Atlanta Equity Coalition (MATEC)
- Metropolitan Atlanta Rapid Transit Authority (MARTA)
- Northwest Connectivity Coalition
- Pedestrians Educating Drivers on Safety (PEDS)
- People Looking After Neighborhoods
- Pope and Land Enterprises, Inc.
- Ridgewood Park Homeowners Association
- Town Center CID
- Towne Lake Business Association
- Twin Brooks Homeowners Association
- Upper Chattahoochee Riverkeeper
- Venture Homes
- Waterford Place Homeowners Association
- Wellstar Health System
- Woodstream Blackjack Homeowners Association



In total, 26 citizens representing one or more of the groups listed above attended the community leadership briefing meeting. Citizens were provided with a package of project information including: a welcome letter, a purpose and need handout, the scoping information booklet, a project comment form, a station area planning handout, and a handout on the Section 106 review process required by the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA).

### **6.2.3 Interagency Scoping Meetings**

Early coordination with agencies is a critical step in identifying known project area conditions and/or special concerns. The following agencies and organizations were invited to participate in a series of agency scoping meetings:

- Atlanta Chamber of Commerce
- Cherokee County Board of Commissioners
- Cherokee County Emergency Management Agency
- Cherokee County Sheriff's Office
- City of Acworth
- City of Atlanta
- City of Atlanta Department of Fire
- City of Atlanta Department of Police
- City of Canton
- City of Kennesaw
- City of Kennesaw Fire Department
- City of Kennesaw Police Department
- City of Marietta
- City of Marietta Fire Department
- City of Marietta Police Department
- City of Powder Springs
- City of Smyrna
- City of Smyrna Fire Rescue Department
- City of Smyrna Police Department
- City of Woodstock
- City of Woodstock Fire Department
- City of Woodstock Police Department
- Clean Air Campaign
- Clean Cities – Atlanta
- Cobb Chamber of Commerce
- Cobb County
- Cobb County Board of Commissioners
- Cobb County Department of Transportation
- Cobb County Fire and Emergency Services
- Cobb County Planning Commission
- Cobb County Police Department
- CobbRides
- FEMA, Mitigation Division
- FHWA, Georgia Division
- Georgia Department of Agriculture
- Georgia Department of Community Affairs
- Georgia Department of Natural Resources
- Georgia Environmental Protection Division
- Georgia Forestry Commission
- Georgia Natural Heritage Program
- Georgia State Transportation Board
- Governor Perdue's Office
- Lieutenant Governor Taylor's Office
- National Center for Environmental Health
- Savannah District Corps of Engineers
- US Army Corps of Engineers
- US Army Corps of Engineers, North Area Section
- US Congress members and US Senators representing the Atlanta metropolitan area
- US Department of Housing and Urban Development
- US Department of the Interior
- US Environmental Protection Agency - Region IV
- US Fish & Wildlife Service
- US Geological Survey - Environmental Affairs
- US Natural Resources Conservation Service



The first agency scoping meeting was held on Wednesday, August 4, 2004 from 10:00 a.m. until noon. The meeting was held at the Cobb Chamber of Commerce. Thirty-two representatives of 20 agencies attended. The meeting agenda included a discussion of project coordination, an overview of the project, NEPA requirements, environmental issues to be addressed, and the public involvement program.

A follow-on meeting was held on August 19, 2004 for federal resource agency representatives who were unable to attend the first agency scoping meeting. Notification was sent on August 6, 2004. The meeting agenda mirrored the August 4 meeting, but also included discussion of alternatives under consideration. Two representatives from two federal agencies attended this meeting.

A third agency scoping meeting was held on January 19, 2005 as part of the GDOT Office of Environment/Location's quarterly interagency meeting. The objective of the meeting was to discuss environmental screening activities associated with alternatives analysis and to obtain comments on the possibility of reducing the number of alternatives. The agencies commented that none of the alternatives could be eliminated and that further analysis would be required.

Two additional interagency scoping meetings were held in January 2006. The first was held on January 18 at the City of Marietta. A total of 35 people representing 17 agencies were attended. The purpose of the meeting was to describe changes in the project alternatives and to solicit additional input. A second meeting was held on January 25 in conjunction with the GDOT Office of Environment/Location's quarterly interagency meeting. Again, the purpose was to describe changes to the project and record agency comments. A total of 16 people representing seven state and federal agencies attended.

## 6.2.4 Public Information Open Houses

Four public information open house (PIOH) meetings were held in the study area as a part of the scoping process. The first meeting took place on Wednesday, August 4, 2004 from 5:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. at Kennesaw State University Center, near the northern limits of the study area. A second meeting took place on Monday, November 15, 2004 from 5:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. at the Renaissance Waverly Hotel, near the southern limits of the study area. The third and fourth meetings were held in the central portion of the study area at the Cobb County Civic Center on November 15, 2005 and April 25, 2006 from 5:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. Table 6-2 highlights meeting attendance by date and location. The following sections describe each of these public meetings.

**Table 6-2. Public Information Open House Attendance**

Date	Location	Attendees
August 4, 2004	Kennesaw State University Center	111
November 15, 2004	Renaissance Waverly Hotel	116
November 15, 2005	Cobb County Civic Center	269
April 25, 2006	Cobb County Civic Center	145

### 6.2.4.1 Public Information Open House #1 – August 4, 2004

The August 4, 2004 public information open house provided information on NEPA, the station area planning process, the alternatives under consideration, and future opportunities for public



involvement. Additionally, a GRTA Xpress Bus was stationed outside of the meeting facility so attendees could see and sit in an express bus vehicle. A court reporter was available for those attendees who preferred to submit oral comments. A total of 24 comments (written and oral) were submitted.

The following handouts were provided to each attendee: a welcome letter, a purpose and need handout, the scoping information booklet, a project comment form, a station area planning handout, and the Section 106 handout.

Notification letters were sent to elected officials and agency staff explaining the project and inviting them to participate in the meeting. Flyers were sent to affected parties including citizens, civic organizations, businesses and local agency staff. Table 6-3 highlights the notification efforts.

**Table 6-3. Open House #1 Notification (July 2004)**

Type of Notification	No. of Recipients	Date Sent
Elected Officials Letter	121	July 14, 2004
Agency Scoping Invitation	50	July 15, 2004
Affected Parties Flyer	650	July 15, 2004

Newspaper display advertisements announcing the public information open houses were published according to GDOT guidelines. Publications and advertisement dates are shown in Table 6-4.

**Table 6-4. Display Advertisement Summary (July 2004)**

Publication	Date of Advertisement
Atlanta Journal and Constitution - East Cobb Extra	July 18 & 29, 2004
Marietta Daily Journal	July 14 & 28, 2004
Cherokee Tribune	July 14 & 28, 2004

Additionally, both Cobb County and the City of Marietta included a meeting announcement in their E-newsletters, both of which have large subscriber lists. The project flyers were distributed at several public locations within the study area, and an electronic version of the flyer was sent to an email distribution list that had been assembled during the GRTA Northwest Connectivity Study and GDOT’s early planning efforts in the study area. Flyers also were distributed on Cobb Community Transit buses. Finally, 52 GDOT roadway signs advertising the meeting were placed at strategic interchange locations along the I-75 corridor.

**6.2.4.2 Public Information Open House #2 – November 15, 2004**

The November 15, 2004 public information open house provided information on NEPA, the station area planning process, the alternatives under consideration, and future opportunities for public involvement. Additionally, a map was placed near the sign-in table to solicit input on where attendees lived and worked relative to the project corridor. A court reporter was available for those attendees who preferred to submit oral comments. A total of 25 comments (oral and written) were collected.



The following handouts were provided to each attendee: a welcome letter, the scoping information booklet, a project comment form, a handout on the alternatives under consideration, and the Section 106 handout.

Notification letters were sent to elected officials (including newly elected officials from the November 2004 election), agency representatives, and other parties affected by the Northwest I-75/I-575 Corridor Project. Notification letters included an explanation of the project and an invitation to participate in the upcoming scoping meeting. Table 6-5 highlights the notification efforts.

**Table 6-5. Open House #2 Notification (October 2004)**

Type of Notification	No. of Recipients	Date Sent
Agency Scoping Invitation	50	October 28, 2004
Elected Officials Letter	121	October 28, 2004
Affected Parties Flyer	650	October 28, 2004

Newspaper display advertisements announcing the second public information open house were published according to GDOT guidelines. Publications and advertisement dates are noted in Table 6-6.

**Table 6-6. Display Advertisement Summary (October 2004)**

Publication	Date of Advertisement
Atlanta Journal and Constitution - East Cobb Extra	October 21 & November 4, 2004
Marietta Daily Journal	October 24 and November 17, 2004
Cherokee Tribune	October 24 and November 7, 2004

Like the previous meeting, both Cobb County and the City of Marietta included a meeting announcement in their E-newsletters. An electronic version of the flyer was sent to the project email distribution list on October 29, 2004. In addition, 52 GDOT roadway signs advertising the meeting were placed at strategic interchange locations along the I-75 and I-575 corridor on November 5, 2004. Project flyers were available at several public locations within the study area, including:

- Cobb Central Library
- East Marietta Library
- Kennesaw Library
- East Cobb Service Center
- Marietta City Hall
- Cobb County Building
- Kennesaw State University
- Southern Polytechnic University

**6.2.4.3 Public Information Open House #3 – November 15, 2005**

The purpose of the November 15, 2005 public information open house was to present the truck-only lanes concept and explain its associated impact on project development. Information on NEPA, the station area planning process, environmental constraints, and the alternatives under consideration was provided. Display booths provided information on the public-private initiative and the State Road and Tollway Authority’s high-occupancy toll/truck-only toll (HOT/TOT) study.



A court reporter was available for those attendees who preferred to submit oral comments. A total of 49 comments (written and oral) were received at this meeting.

The following handouts were provided to each attendee: a welcome letter, a project location map, a project comment form, a summary of the purpose and need statement, and a copy of the Winter 2005 newsletter.

Notification letters were sent to elected officials (including newly elected officials from the November 2005 election). Flyers were sent to agency representatives and affected parties. An invitation letter was sent to members of the Georgia Motor Trucking Association, which had participated in the State Road and Tollway Authority’s HOT/TOT advisory committee. Table 6-7 highlights the notification efforts.

**Table 6-7. Open House #3 Notification (October 2005)**

Type of Notification	No. of Recipients	Date Sent
Elected Officials Letter	139	October 24, 2005
Trucking Industry Letter	7	October 27, 2005
Affected Parties Flyer	1000	October 28, 2005

Newspaper display advertisements announcing the public information open house were published according to GDOT guidelines. Publications and advertisement dates are noted in Table 6-8.

**Table 6-8. Display Advertisement Summary (October 2005)**

Publication	Date of Advertisement
Atlanta Journal and Constitution - East Cobb Extra	October 27 & November 10, 2005
Marietta Daily Journal	October 25 & November 8, 2005
Cherokee Tribune	October 26 & November 9, 2005

Cobb County and the City of Marietta included a meeting announcement in their E-newsletters. An electronic version of the flyer was sent to the project email distribution list on October 25, 2005. In addition, 54 GDOT roadway signs advertising the meeting were placed at strategic interchange locations along the I-75 and I-575 corridor during the week of November 8, 2005. Project flyers were available at several public locations within the study area, including:

- Cobb Central Library
- East Marietta Library
- Kennesaw Library
- East Cobb Service Center
- Marietta City Hall
- Cobb County Building
- Kennesaw State University
- Southern Polytechnic University

**6.2.4.4 Public Information Open House #4 – April 25, 2006**

The April 25, 2006 public information open house presented information on the status of alternatives under consideration. As in earlier open house meetings, attendees were given information on NEPA, project environmental constraints, and the station area planning efforts. A





court reporter was available for those attendees who preferred to submit oral comments. A total of 16 (written and oral) were submitted.

The following handouts were provided to each attendee: a welcome letter, a project location map, a project comment form, and a handout addressing frequently asked questions.

Notification letters were sent to elected officials. Flyers were sent to agency representatives and others potentially affected by the Northwest I-75/I-575 Corridor Project. Flyers were distributed in Spanish to the Franklin Road, Lassiter Mobile Home Park, and other areas along the corridor where it appeared that there was a high concentration of Hispanic residents. Table 6-9 highlights the notification efforts.

**Table 6-9. Open House #4 Notification (April 2006)**

Type of Notification	No. of Recipients	Date Sent
Elected Officials Letter	139	4/11/2006
Spanish Flyers	500	4/13/2006
Affected Parties Flyer	1500	4/11/2006

Newspaper display advertisements announcing this fourth public information open house were published according to GDOT guidelines. Publications and advertisement dates are noted in Table 6-10.

**Table 6-10. Display Advertisement Summary (April 2006)**

Publication	Date of Advertisement
Atlanta Journal and Constitution – Northside – East Cobb Edition	4/6/2006, 4/20/2006
Marietta Daily Journal	4/4/2006, 4/18/2006
Cherokee Tribune	4/2/2006, 4/16/2006

Additionally, both Cobb County and the City of Marietta included a meeting announcement in their E-newsletters. An electronic version of the flyer was sent to an email distribution list on April 20, 2006. In addition, 52 GDOT roadway signs advertising the meeting were placed at strategic interchange locations along the I-75 corridor during the week of April 18, 2006. Project flyers were available at several locations within the study area, including:

- Cobb Central Library
- East Marietta Library
- Kennesaw Library
- East Cobb Service Center
- Marietta City Hall
- Cobb County Building
- Kennesaw State University
- Southern Polytechnic University

### 6.3 Station Area Planning

The station area planning efforts were designed to involve the community in the development of land use and circulation plans for each of the proposed BRT stations. The objective was to solicit public comment for the proposed BRT stations so they would fit into the neighborhood context. The project team included this step to ensure successful operations, while supporting the desires



and needs of the adjacent neighborhood. The outcome of the station area planning process was the preparation of a station area development plan for each of the proposed BRT stations. These planning efforts included regular meetings with a coordination team, public meetings, community charrettes, and workshops with local government staff.

The station area planning process included two phases. Phase I extended from March to June 2005 and served as an introduction to the planning process. This phase was used to solicit general input from the community on existing and planned land uses surrounding the proposed BRT station sites. Phase II began in February 2006 and continued through the fall. It focused on the development of specific plan details concerning the proposed station sites, including station types and land use controls.

### **6.3.1 Coordination Team Meetings**

To ensure station area plans would be compatible with existing land use and future development plans, close coordination occurred between representatives of GRTA and representatives of local governments. To that end, a coordination team with regularly scheduled meetings was formed. Agencies represented on the coordination team were Cobb County, City of Marietta, Atlanta Regional Council (ARC), Cumberland Community Improvement District (CID), Town Center Community Improvement District (CID), GRTA, and GDOT.

Coordination team meetings were held to update team members on the project and to seek input about issues and concerns for proposed BRT station locations. The meetings were a forum for open dialogue about the project and the station area planning process. The coordination team met prior to scheduled public meetings and at key project milestones. The following is a list of the coordination team meetings held through April 2007.

- September 2, 2004
- January 18, 2005
- February 23, 2005
- April 18, 2005
- May 16, 2005
- June 21, 2005
- November 7, 2005
- January 30, 2006
- February 27, 2006
- March 27, 2006
- April 13, 2006
- June 5, 2006
- July 17, 2006
- October 16, 2006

### **6.3.2 Phase I Station Area Planning Public Meetings**

A kick-off meeting and three rounds of public workshops were held during Phase I of the station area planning in the spring and summer of 2005. These are described below in detail.

On March 15, 2005, a station area planning public kick-off meeting was held for the entire corridor. The purpose of this meeting was to update participants on the project, give an overview of bus rapid transit, and outline the purpose of the station area planning process. This meeting was held from 6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. at the Southern Polytechnic State University. Thirty-seven citizens attended.

Prior to the meeting, a newsletter was developed and distributed to the project mailing list of 650 individuals. This newsletter announced the upcoming meeting, described the Northwest Corridor I-75/I-575 Project, and explained the station area planning process. In addition, flyers were available at the following locations:





- Cobb County Government
- City of Marietta
- Cobb County Central Library
- East Cobb Service Center
- Kennesaw State University Center
- Kennesaw Library
- East Marietta Library

Additionally, several project area churches were contacted, provided an electronic version of the flyer and asked to announce the kick-off meeting during their Wednesday night or Sunday morning services. Churches contacted included:

- Shady Grove Baptist Church – Marietta
- First Baptist of Kennesaw – Kennesaw
- Eastside Baptist – Marietta
- Destiny Metropolitan Workshop – Marietta
- Covenant Presbyterian – Marietta
- First United Lutheran Church – Marietta

A series of six meetings were held in the project corridor to focus public input on planning efforts for specific station locations. The three northern corridor meetings were held at Kennesaw State University Center and focused on the proposed Allgood, Bells Ferry, and Town Center BRT station areas. The three southern corridor meetings were held at Cobb Galleria Centre and focused on the proposed Akers Mill, Terrell Mill, Franklin, and Marietta BRT station areas. The meeting format was the same for each meeting, and included presentations as well as facilitated breakout groups to discuss station-specific issues. Table 6-11 outlines the three rounds of meetings with dates and number of attendees.

**Table 6-11. Phase I Station Area Planning Meetings**

Round	Dates	Attendees
One	April 26 & 27, 2005	52
Two	May 24 & 26, 2005	69
Three	June 28 & 30, 2005	163

For each round of meetings, flyers announcing the station area planning workshops were mailed to the project mailing list of 650 individuals and were available at the following locations:

- Cobb County Government
- City of Marietta
- Cobb County Central Library
- Kennesaw State University Center
- Kennesaw Library
- East Marietta Library

In addition, electronic versions of the flyer were emailed to the following churches:

- Shady Grove Baptist Church - Marietta
- First Baptist of Kennesaw – Kennesaw
- Eastside Baptist – Marietta
- Destiny Metropolitan Workshop – Marietta
- Covenant Presbyterian – Marietta
- First United Lutheran Church – Marietta



### 6.3.3 Phase II Station Area Planning Public Meetings

Phase II of the station area planning process commenced in February 2006 with a kick-off meeting. This meeting was followed by an interactive public meeting and a series of five charrettes, each of which focused on one of the proposed BRT stations. Two additional public meetings were held in the summer. The focus of these meetings and charrettes was to solicit specific public input on the types of land uses and development the public envisioned around the BRT station sites and to get comments on specific design features for the stations.

Public notification for these meetings included distribution of flyers to 1,500 individuals on the project mailing list and sending email notices to over 400 persons. Letters of invitation were sent to over 620 property owners and stakeholders, who had been identified by City and County staff. Flyers were also prepared in Spanish and distributed to residents of the Hispanic community located near Franklin Road and the Lassiter Mobile Home Park. In addition, the City and County announced the meetings in their E-newsletters. Table 6-12 lists the dates, locations, and attendees for each meeting.

**Table 6-12. Phase II Station Area Planning Meetings**

Date	Meeting Type	Location	Attendees
February 2, 2006	Kick-Off Meeting	Cobb Central Library	50
March 2, 2006	Public Meeting	Cobb Central Library	73
March 29, 2006	Station Charrette (Cumberland)	Cobb Galleria	22
March 30, 2006	Station Charrette (Terrell Mill)	InfoMart	15
April 5, 2006	Station Charrette (Franklin)	Southern Polytech University	36
April 6, 2006	Station Charrette (Marietta)	Cobb Family Resources	36
April 11, 2006	Station Charrette (Town Center)	Kennesaw State University	21
June 8, 2006	Public Meeting	The Center for Family Resources	58
July 20, 2006	Public Meeting	The Center for Family Resources	75

### 6.3.4 City and County Workshops

In addition to the public meetings, two rounds of station area planning workshops were specifically held with technical staff of the City of Marietta and Cobb County. The purpose of these meetings was to discuss market conditions, land use, and design issues for the proposed BRT stations. The project team met with staff of the City of Marietta on May 17 and August 30, 2006. They met with staff of Cobb County on May 16 and August 30, 2006. In addition, the project team made a presentation to the Marietta City Council on July 26, 2006.

### 6.3.5 Coordination with Other Station Area Planning Stakeholders

Recognizing that the effects of the proposed BRT routes also extended outside of the immediate project area, additional public outreach took place. In particular, public outreach was extended to anticipated project stakeholders in the Perimeter Center and Midtown areas.



### 6.3.5.1 Perimeter Area Stakeholders

A letter was sent to the Perimeter Community Improvement District to explain the proposed project and potential impacts to the Perimeter area due to increased frequency of transit service. A copy of the letter also was sent to MARTA and the Fulton and DeKalb County public works departments on April 6, 2006. The letter requested the Perimeter Community Improvement District contact GDOT if the District had any issues or concerns regarding the project. The letter also announced the April 25, 2006 public information open house meeting and encouraged attendance.

### 6.3.5.2 Midtown Stakeholders

Table 6-13 presents a list of meeting dates conducted with Midtown area stakeholders. The purpose of these meetings was to address stakeholder concerns about the additional bus routes and bus frequencies into the Midtown area and the proposed changes to the existing MARTA Arts Center Station. At the meetings, the project team presented the draft concept for the downtown Atlanta transit station. Based on the input received, the project team determined that additional outreach would be necessary. One of the public hearings during the public comment period for the AA/DEIS is planned to be located in Midtown.

**Table 6-13. Midtown Stakeholder Meetings**

Dates	Organization
February 28, 2006	City of Atlanta
February 22, 2006	MARTA
February 28, 2006	Woodruff Arts Center
April 12, 2006	Midtown Alliance

## 6.4 Coordination with Affected Parties

To broaden the public outreach efforts and gain a more comprehensive understanding of the project's potential impacts on specific affected parties, additional coordination meetings were held with a number of special interest groups. In particular, meetings were held with minority and low-income communities, the trucking industry, emergency response agencies, and adjacent property owners.

### 6.4.1 Minority and Low-Income Community Outreach

Several techniques were used to reach out to low-income and minority communities in the project study area. The main components of this outreach effort are described below. Additional information can be found in Chapter 5 Environmental Consequences.

Stakeholder interviews were conducted with key organizations operating in low-income and minority communities. The purpose of these interviews was to determine appropriate and effective avenues for outreach to minority and low-income constituencies residing within the project area; to gain insight about perceived impacts to these populations and to gather input on how the project could incorporate strategies to best meet the needs of these constituencies. A total of eleven interviews were held with the following organizations:



- Franklin Road Community Association
- The Center for Family Resources
- Cobb County Branch, NAACP
- Marietta Housing Authority
- Cobb County Community Development Block Grant Program
- Marietta Police Department
- Cobb Community Transit (CCT) Accessibility Advisory Committee
- Canton City Council
- Cobb Community Transit (CCT) Advisory Board
- ARC, Environmental Justice Task Force

Hispanic leaders within the study area were identified and invited to an Hispanic leadership briefing that was held on October 31, 2005 at the Cobb Chamber of Commerce. Specifically, invitations were sent to area churches, the Latin American Association, and Hispanic newspapers. The objectives of the meeting were to introduce the project to Hispanic leaders, present an overview of potential environmental effects, and obtain recommendations on the best way to conduct public outreach to the Hispanic residents of Cobb County. Fifteen individuals representing a number of organizations were invited.

On October 26, 2006, a staffed project information kiosk was set up at the Las Colinas Apartment complex on Franklin Road. This apartment complex is located in the heart of the Hispanic community and has a high percentage of residents who are Hispanic. The kiosk was advertised by the property manager who distributed flyers to both residents and other area apartment complex property managers for distribution to residents. Flyers were posted at nearby commercial businesses and at CCT transit shelters on Franklin Road between Delk Road and Twin Brooks Drive, just south of South Marietta Parkway. A flyer also was sent to Viva 105.7 Radio, the dominant Latino radio station in Atlanta to provide background for a public service announcement. All notification and handout materials were in English and Spanish. Handouts included a copy of the Fall 2006 newsletter and a flyer advertising the October 26, 2006 station area development plan meeting. Project team members and their interpreters explained the project, the planning process, design alternatives, and potential impacts to the community. A total of 13 people attended the staffed kiosk event.

### **6.4.2 Trucking Industry**

Two information forums were arranged with trucking industry representatives to specifically brief them on the project and obtain their input on the truck-only lanes and tolling concepts. The meetings were organized through the Georgia Motor Trucking Association, which is an umbrella organization representing numerous truck-related industries throughout the state. The meetings were held on December 21, 2005 and May 19, 2006. A total of 16 members of the organization attended these two meetings.

### **6.4.3 Incident Management Workshops**

Two workshops were held on February 28, 2006 and March 2, 2006 with emergency response agencies. State and local government agencies were invited to discuss incident management issues for the Northwest I-75/I-575 Corridor Project. Agenda topics included an overview of the project facility design. The objective was to identify concerns related to incident management, location identification system for first responders (911 system), and potential logistics for incident response using the proposed freeway improvements. The *Traffic Incident Management Report* (PB, 2006) was prepared in conjunction with these two workshops.



#### 6.4.4 Early Coordination with Affected Property Owners

Upon request, the project team also met with property owners who could potentially be affected by project construction or long-term operation. The purpose of the meetings was to explain the project's preliminary design concept and identify property owners' specific concerns. Attendees particularly wanted to know the project development process and the expected timeline for planning, engineering, and the start of construction. Five community meetings with potentially affected property owners have been held to date as listed in Table 6-14.

**Table 6-14. Meetings with Potentially Affected Property Owners**

Dates	Organization
June 29, 2006	Gospel Light Community Church
July 23, 2006	Whole Foods Market
August 1, 2006	KMART
August 16, 2006	Century Office Park
August 29, 2006	Six Flags/White Water

#### 6.5 Comment Solicitation, Collection, and Response

Public comments on the Northwest I-75/I-575 Corridor Project could be submitted several ways. Both comment forms and court reporters were available at all of the public information open houses. The project email address has been advertised widely. People could send personal emails directly or could use an email form on the project website. They could call and leave questions or comments on the project telephone hotline. They also could contact project managers directly at both GRTA and GDOT. In total, 478 public comments have been received through April 2007. Table 6-15 lists the number of comments received by type.

**Table 6-15. Response by Comment Type**

Comment Type	Number of Responses
Written Comment Form	81
Court Reporter	33
Project Email	298
Project Hotline	48
Letter Mail	18
<b>Total number of Responses</b>	<b>478</b>

Comments have been received on an on-going basis. They have been reviewed and have been instrumental in guiding the project concept development. In general, the comments submitted have expressed support for the project. Specifically, comments focused on suggestions for refining the alternatives and concern over specific environmental impacts. Chapter 2, Alternatives Considered summarizes how the project alternatives evolved and the influence of public input. The following list outlines the major themes raised in the comments.

- Support for the HOV/BRT alternative and U2 Concept
- Support for the elimination of the Bells Ferry and Allgood Road BRT stations



- Support for truck-only lanes
- Support for the center alignment for the HOV and truck-only lanes
- Opposition to HOT lanes and mandatory use and tolling for the truck-only lanes
- Opposition to HOV access at Allgood Road
- Concern over traffic impacts during construction
- Concern over noise impacts of the truck-only lanes
- Concern over air quality and increased air pollution
- Concern over project costs and funding
- Questions concerning property acquisitions and timing of the needed property

Every comment submitted to date regarding the Northwest I-75/I-575 Corridor Project has received a response. In general, the type of comment determined the method of response. Written comments received a letter response, email comments received an email, etc. Oral comments to the court reporter were treated as written comments. Calls to the project hotline were responded to orally and recorded in a phone log.

Responses to comments have been prepared individually or prepared to address a common issue raised by a number of people. Comments submitted at public information open house meetings and additional ones submitted within two weeks prior to or following one of these meetings received group responses. These comments were summarized, grouped into issue categories, and a response was prepared to generally address the common concerns of each issue. Each commenter received a form letter with responses to each of the comment issues. In contrast, comments received outside of the open house comment periods have been responded to individually. These responses have contained as much depth and detail as necessary to fully address each comment.

## **6.6 Future Consultation and Coordination**

Consultation and coordination with government agencies, stakeholders, and members of the public will continue. When requested, the project team or members of the speakers bureau will continue to meet with government agencies, community organizations, stakeholders from within the project study area, those in the region and potentially affected property owners.

A number of public involvement activities also have occurred prior to and will follow the publication of this AA/DEIS. A newsletter was sent to persons, agencies, and organizations listed on the project mailing list. Display notices were sent to both English and Spanish language media to publicize the public hearings. Three public hearings will be held in the project area to explain the purpose, content, and objective in preparing the AA/DEIS. If determined appropriate, Spanish language translators may be present at one or more of the public hearings to facilitate submittal of comments from individuals with limited English proficiency. The dates, location, and time of these meetings are found on the page following the title page of Volume 1 of this document.

During the 45-day comment period following the publication of the AA/DEIS, there will be a number of ways that agencies, organizations, stakeholders, and members of the public may submit comments on the AA/DEIS document. In particular, comments will be solicited on the proposed project alternatives evaluated in the document as well as the environmental impact analysis conducted for these alternatives. Telephone numbers are also listed in the front of this volume where persons with disabilities, hearing impairment, and limited English proficiency may call for assistance in either attending the public hearings or making comments on the AA/DEIS.