

Cobb Comprehensive Transportation Plan Update



Stakeholder and Technical Committee Meeting- SUMMARY

October 21, 2013 5pm to 7pm
Cobb County DOT Squad Room
1890 County Services Parkway
Marietta, GA 30008

Attendees:

Phyllis Silverman, Cobb County Senior Council	Mike McNabb, Citizen Transit Advisory Board	Sally Flocks, PEDS
Mandy Elliott, Cobb County Planning & Community Development	Daneeza Badio-McCray, Marietta Police Department	Steve Byrne, Mauldin & Jenkins
Phillip Westbrook, Cobb County Development	Jung Pyun, The Weather Channel	Sam Heaton, Cobb Fire Department
Larry Savage	Tim Hourigan, Home Depot	Julia Billings, GDOT
Wayne Bennett, Chattahoochee Technical College	Larry King, Cobb TAB	Ron Storey, Cobb County School District
Lee Rudisail	Andy Ramsden, Six Flags	Steve Kitchen, SPSU
Galt Porter, Planning Commission	Nicole Faulk, Georgia Power	Brantley Day, Cumberland CID
John Robinson, Georgia Tea Party	Helen Poyer, Cobb Library System	David Weldon
Joe Brywczyński, Wellstar	Michael Kray, ARC	Eric Randell, City of Smyrna
Jim Wilgus, City of Marietta	Walter Kiley, Cobb Marietta Exhibit Hall Authority	Kevin Ergle, Kimley-Horn
Marc Schneider, Life University	Ian Samson, PEDS	Kaycee Mertz, GDOT
Nadine Bennett, Cobb DOT	Karl Van Hagel, Cobb DOT	Jack Kennedy, Cobb Public Health
Steve Covert, Georgia Tea Party	David Maske, Georgia Power	Brian Bober, Bike Cobb

Project Team Staff

Faye DiMassimo, Cobb County DOT	Eric Meyer, Cobb County DOT	Marty Sewell, Cobb County DOT
Tim Preece, ARCADIS	Olen Daelhousen, ARCADIS	Walker Marshall, ARCADIS
James Hudgins, ARCADIS	Pat Smeeton, Jacobs	Richard Fangmann, Pond & Company
Haley Berry, ARCADIS	Maggie Carragher, Metro Planners & Engineers	

Welcome and Introductions

Faye DiMassimo with Cobb County DOT and Tim Preece with ARCADIS opened the meeting. Each committee member and the CTP project team introduced themselves and the organization they are representing.

Cobb in Motion video

Tim Preece introduced the CTP video, Cobb in Motion. The video was shown to the committee.

Presentation

Tim Preece introduced the CTP process to the committee. The CTP is the guiding document for transportation improvements for Cobb County and the cities of Acworth, Austell, Kennesaw, Marietta, Powder Springs, and Smyrna. The CTP will include an inventory of existing transportation conditions, future development and mobility needs. It will include a specific list of prioritized actions, policies, and projects through a short range Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) for projects that will be completed in the

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near term and a Long Term Transportation Plan that will include projects through the year 2040. The CTP will also identify potential funding sources and partners.

Mr. Preece discussed the success that Cobb County has had leveraging federal and state transportation funding in the past through the CTP and SPLOST programs.

The CTP process can be summarized into three phases: READY, SET GO. All phases include technical and public engagement components. Phase I is underway and will be wrapping up as the project team transitions into Phase II.

The project team is approaching public engagement proactively and has identified several grass roots efforts to undertake. To date scientific polling, community partnerships, social media, project website, attendance at community events, and many listening sessions throughout the county have all taken place.

Finally, Mr. Preece reviewed the role of the stakeholder committee: provide input and feedback on needs and project recommendations. The Stakeholder Committee is advisory to the Project Management Team (PMT). Mr. Preece also preliminarily outlined the meetings over the next year:

- Meeting 1 (October 21)- provide input on the transportation needs and guiding principles
- Meeting 2 (November/December 2013)- affirm guiding principles and provide input on goals and objectives
- Meeting 3 (February 2014)- provide feedback on the TIP project recommendations
- Meeting 4 (summer 2014)- provide feedback on the LRTP project recommendations

Break-out Table Discussions

- Transportation Needs
- Guiding Principles Themes

Tim Preece and Haley Berry introduced the table discussion topics to the committee. Each table was given sheets of paper to record top transportation needs based on four categories: roadway, bicycle, pedestrian, and transit. Each table was asked to discuss and record their top transportation needs in each category.

The second part of the discussion was to identify broad themes that the guiding principles should be based upon. The sheet of paper identified several themes and each table was asked to discuss, write in their own, and choose three as their top themes for guiding principles.

Identified Transportation Needs:

Roadway:

- Better paving quality
- Minimize road closures to what is needed- off hour construction
- Provide better access to industrial area south of I-20, as well as other employment centers
- Through trucks contribute to Atlanta congestion (more freight on rail)
- More limited access roadways
- Weakness- congestion on
- Coordination with utilities, businesses, and property owners
- Lighting at high traffic intersections with bus stops
- I-75
- Paulding Co. residents accessing I-75 causing back-up- Macland, Dallas, Windy Hill, Cedar Crest
- Preserve right-of-way
- Reimagine Cobb Parkway/South
- Moving emergency vehicles
- Variable signal timing/synchronization
- I-20 at I-285
- East-West Connector needs some kind of access management to improve through traffic (see Dupont Circle)
- Manage existing system better to utilize limited funding
- Community travel- morning and

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- interstates
- Incident management needs emphasis
- Need for walkable urban places/proximity of uses
- East-west travel within Cobb County
- Sustained signal timing/synchronization
- Signal timing and synchronization
- Median for pedestrian safety

- Cobb- not good for pedestrians/transit
- Need for educations regarding safety: cell phones and texting
- Improved use of truck technology- expand ITS, per PLAN B on GPPF.org
- Improved intersection control
- Broad ITS usage (PLAN B)
- Increase road capacity and improve traffic flow with thought of overall impact
- Transportation projects need to be functional. Invest wisely

- night
- Lack of parallel corridors
- Seek most cost effective solutions
- Drivers from outside the county using Cobb roads
- Grade separation at major bottlenecked intersections
- Program HAWK to maximize flow at peak

Transit:

- Fill up empty busses
- School traffic happens with general morning commute
- Keeping the buses moving, ways to avoid slow down when no riders are at the stop
- Train or BRT connection from H.E. Holmes to Six Flags area
- Partnership for circulator service on Fulton Industrial area
- Perception of safety problem (or reality?)
- Is there any opportunity for private transit like Buford Highway
- Need to make leap to other solutions like transit
- Circulators- trams (maybe funded by developers/employers)
- Cost effective plans for O&M
- Better connections to MARTA
- Add 'circulators' to high density areas to make it easier to move around once you arrive in an area
- Consider environment/light rail

- School bus/CCT coordination
- CCT bus loading zone/lane – congestion/back-up caused by
- Lack of funding for transit
- Train or BRT to Cumberland
- Grow organically, based on proven demand, include flexibility
- Safety at stops and on bus
- Think about more than commuters-seniors
- Changes for increased density- more transit viability, more congestion
- Sidewalk considerations
- Access to all necessities/recreation
- Queue jumper lanes at intersections/signal preemption
- Park and ride hubs
- HAWK signals

- Addressing traffic at schools/SOV
- No transit provided to MHS area
- Pedestrian safety (ex: median barriers, mid-block crossings, Cumberland)
- Connect the entire county with transit
- Local circulation
- Express Routes for target needs
- Limitations of transit: regular service = money. Low ridership is noticed
- Good transit- cost effective- convenient access
- Access to schools
- Increase transit options to destinations outside of the county
- Flex bus for underserved areas
- Many areas with no service- determine how to expand to areas that make sense

Bicycle:

- Improve bike lanes
- Marketing/promotion

- Improve connectivity
- Development of full system

- Transit connections
- Vision for comprehensive system

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- Bicycles- are they transportation?
- Many hills- facilities not used
- Safe crossings
- Access to employment standard
- Signs educating bicyclists to be safer
- Off-street facilities/multi-use trails with lighting
- Attention to user group- not expert users
- Focus on smaller connections- not regional trails
- Safe routes to school
- Increase bike storage
- Parking at trailheads
- Any new arterials need lanes for commuter biking at time of original construction
- On street-cycle tracks, etc
- Bicycle and sidewalk is nice to have, but they need to connect to transit, schools, and other destinations
- Safe routes to transit
- Headlights and tail lights required on bicycles
- Security (lighting, security officers) at trailheads
- Evaluate other rights of way for bike/ped paths

Pedestrian:

- Put sidewalks where they matter most
- Safe crossing at bus stops
- Pedestrian refuge islands- also access management
- Fill sidewalk gaps
- Safety tips on advertisements at bus stops
- Focus on commercial and high foot traffic areas
- Comprehensive sidewalk plan
- Ped facilities- local/collectors- access to homes
- Breaking large blocks
- Safe crossings at bus stops
- Crosswalks/pedestrian bridges to bus stops (with lights?) (timed with intersection)
- Sidewalks around transit
- Ped facilities on major routes- street crossings
- Address current pedestrian needs (ie cow paths)
- Midblock crossings
- Sidewalks- intelligent connectivity

Guiding Principles Themes:

Below is the list of guiding principles themes that rose to the top from all the tables. They are listed in no particular order.

- Safety and security (noted by two tables)
- Expand need-based infrastructure
- Seek cost effective strategies that reinvest where there is a clear economic benefit and enrich quality of life
- Prioritize without politics
- Seek cost effective, high return strategies that optimize access
- Preserve and enhance existing community character with area appropriate development
- Connectivity and access
- Preserve, reinvest, innovate
- Relieve congestion throughout the day
- Seek cost effective solutions/fiscal responsibility
- Optimize existing infrastructure
- Enrich quality of life by reducing time we spend with commuting
- Seek cost effective strategies/maintain and preserve existing infrastructure first
- Health, safety, and security

Below are other themes on guiding principles that were identified by committee members but did not rise to the top of the list:

- Access for most benefit

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- Openness and competitiveness/enhance employment
- Cost effectively solve transportation problems and provide as much mobility as possible, not to provide development opportunities
- Reduce taxes
- Support the business community
- Serve all ages
- Health impacts
- Quality public education about transportation
- Health impacts
- Bang for the buck
- Input from stakeholders/those impacted soon and often

Summary and Discussion

Each group presented their top three themes on guiding principles.

Next Steps

Tim Preece reminded the groups we would be meeting again in early December and to look for the next meeting notice. Mr. Preece noted that the project team and county staff would be drafting the guiding principles over the next several weeks based on the committee's input, listening sessions and stakeholder interviews, scientific polling, and public input received through the website.

The next meeting has been schedule for Thursday, December 12th from 5 to 7pm at the Cobb County DOT Offices Squad Room.

Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned.