



## **Northwest Corridor Project Station Area Development Planning Phase Two, Meeting Two**

March 2, 2006  
6:30PM-8:30PM  
Cobb Central Library

### **Welcome and Introduction**

1. Upon arrival to the meeting, citizens were greeted by project staff, asked to sign in, and provided with handouts. Attendees were given an opportunity to view project boards and speak one on one with project staff. The meeting was called to order at 7:00 PM. Approximately 73 members of the public were present.
2. Roger Henze, GRTA, welcomed the attendees and thanked everyone for coming. He introduced himself as the manager of the Station Area Planning program and explained that the evening's meeting was the second meeting in Phase 2 of the program. He then introduced Mike Dover of GDOT and asked him to say a few words. Mr. Dover stated he was impressed with the turnout and expressed his appreciation for the attendees' involvement in the project. He explained that he worked closely with the GDOT Project Manager Darryl Van Meter, who was in Washington, DC at the time of the meeting discussing project funding.
3. Mr. Henze reviewed the handouts including the meeting agenda, spring charrettes flyer, and copy of the presentation. He stated that copies of the presentation would be available on the project website. He then reviewed the meeting's objectives and introduced Mr. Ed Womack, SADP Manager, Project Consultant Team.

### **Review of Where We've Been**

4. Mr. Womack briefly reviewed Phase 1 SADP activities and stated that the station facility plans would be frozen during the DEIS, while planning for the station areas would continue. He added that the facility plans can be altered in the drafting of the Final EIS.
5. Mr. Womack continued the presentation explaining the short and long range aspirations of the SADP process. In the short range, he stated that the project team will be conducting a series of workshops, or charrettes, from March to April. Each meeting will focus on a particular station. In addition, the project team will continue to work with the local City and County planning staff in developing the community plans. Implementation of the plans is expected to take place over time, in the long range. He stated that the transit infrastructure should be in place by 2015.

### **Discussion of Proposed Station Area Community Design Charettes – Their Organization and Dates**

6. Mr. Womack described in detail the format of the upcoming charrettes, explaining that all meetings would be from 4:00 to 8:00pm with a short introductory presentation at 4:00pm. From 4:20 – 7:20pm, attendees would have an opportunity to visit three technical areas - land



use, circulation, and station facility design – and provide their input. At 7:20pm, there would be a recap of the comments heard. The information obtained at the charrettes would be used to inform the City and the County in the development of the community plans.

7. Mr. Womack stated that after the series of charrettes was complete, workshops with local planning staff would be conducted as well as additional summer public meetings scheduled.

### **Breakout Groups to Review Foundation Plans for Station Areas**

8. Mr. Womack then reviewed the process for the evening's breakout group sessions. He explained that each station was assigned a table with background material, a foundation plan, and a station facility plan. Attendees would have an opportunity to view the material and provide their comments via "sticky notes" on the plans. Before dismissing the attendees to the breakouts, he asked if there were any questions or comments.

### **Questions and Answers**

9. **Why don't you start the charrettes at 5:30pm instead of 4:00pm?**

Mr. Henze responded that attendees are welcome to drop in at any time. Staff will be available to brief those who come after 4:00pm. The intent of starting the charrettes at 4:00pm is to maximize the opportunity for participation. The charrettes are focused more on the individual instead of being a group exercise.

10. **I would like to see at the next meeting a map of I-75 and I-575 with the stations plotted. We need to see the big picture of where the stations are located.**

Mr. Henze agreed to provide the map.

11. **On the project website, I have a hard time getting information on the HOV aspects of the project. There is not the same level of detail that exists for the station area planning efforts.**

Mr. Henze replied the project team will review the site and see what can be done to add more detail.

12. **From beginning to end, what is timeframe for completion of the project?**

Mr. Dover responded that the timeframe depends on the type of implementation chosen for the project. If the project is built with a design-build approach, then the timeframe is anticipated at 6-7 years. If the traditional approach is taken, then it looks more like 15-20.

13. **You mentioned that you are now trying to secure funding for the project?**

Mr. Dover responded that Mr. VanMeter was in Washington to pursue funding for the transit portion only. The project will apply to the Federal Transit Administration for funds competing with projects from all over the country. A decision on whether the funds will be granted will be made after the Final EIS is submitted and Record of Decision (ROD) is issued.

14. **If you do receive the money, will the project timeline be accelerated?**

Mr. Dover responded that no, the current published schedule assumes the funding will be granted. The transit portion of the project is dependent on the funding; if there is no funding, there will be no transit.



**15. Do you start work on the transit before the highway improvements?**

Mr. Henze responded that the HOV lanes are critical to the transit, as the BRT operates in the lanes. The HOV lanes must be put in place first.

**16. At this point, you don't know when the HOV lanes will be constructed?**

Mr. Dover responded that at this time, the project team was uncertain of a completion date. Potentially, it could be 2015.

**17. When you talk about transit, you are referring to BRT?**

Mr. Henze replied, yes, we are talking about BRT. There are other improvements to feeder routes from CCT included as well.

**18. Is any of the transit funding going towards the construction of the HOV lanes?**

Mr. Henze replied that the HOV lanes are being constructed by GDOT. The transit funding just covers the acquisition of vehicles and the construction of the facilities. Keisha Jackson, GDOT added that the HOV and the BRT projects were combined because of their complimentary nature. Both GRTA and GDOT felt the best work could be done by looking at the projects as a whole.

**19. The highway, once complete, will sit on top of my house. It's important for me to know when you are coming for my house.**

Mr. Dover replied that he understood her position. Unfortunately the project team can only provide an estimate as to the schedule. A ROD must be issued before definitive dates can be assigned.

**20. Has there been any survey work done on the public's willingness to pay for tolls? I was told with the PPI, the price could be as much as \$4.00. Who can afford \$160 a month?**

Mr. Dover responded no set toll amount had been decided or published. Carrie Hamblin added that only a toll would exist for those single occupancy drivers who wanted to use the HOV lanes. All the general purpose lanes would remain free. In addition, the HOV lanes would be free for vanpools and carpools.

**21. Concerning our vision for the station areas, what year are we supposed to be planning for? Five years from now? 2030? Half of us will be dead by then!**

Mr. Womack responded that 2030 is the long range target date, but some of the planning mechanisms to realize the vision can be put in place now.

**22. Are the truck-only lanes a done deal?**

Mr. Dover responded that no, the lanes are not definite until the ROD is issued. Currently, there are two or three studies to validate the use of the lanes in the corridor and the region as a whole. In addition, the Regional Transportation Plan does not include the truck-only lanes; the project team would have to work with the ARC to incorporate them.

**23. What about truck-to-rail, any chance of getting that concept into a study?**

Mr. Dover responded there are currently several studies investigating freight options, including the ARC's Regional Freight Study.



24. The meeting attendees were dismissed into breakout groups.

### Summary of Breakout Group Exercise and Comments

Attendees were asked to inspect foundation plans for the five station areas and plans for the five stations. Participants were encouraged to write comments, ask questions and raise issues concerning the plans on display. The intent of the foundation plans are to record those land uses within a one half mile radius of the BRT station that are stable and should be preserved into the future. Similarly, the plan identifies those areas where future changes in land use may be expected to occur; for such areas comments regarding future uses were solicited. The station plans on display depicted a conceptual level design of the stations and their support parking facilities. The public, again, was asked to comment on their understanding of the facility plans, ask questions and raise issues.

The following documents the comments made for each of the stations and station areas. Comments are grouped by “general comments” and those relating to “station comments”. Where the intent of the comment was implied or where the geographic location of the comment’s topic is unclear from the written words, additional words in italics were inserted between parentheses to clarify the respondent’s meaning. Other non-italicized words between parentheses were provided by the respondent in their written comment.

#### Cumberland Station Area:

##### General Comments:

- This looks realistic. (*It is assumed this comment was directed at the overall information contained in the Foundation Plan.*)
- You can use existing rail right-of-way to provide passenger rail service. (*This note was placed adjacent to the existing railroad line near the intersection of Cumberland Boulevard and Akers Mill Road west of I-75.*)
- Gwinnett Place Mall will add a residential component to their space. Please encourage Cumberland (*Mall*) to do the same. Existing transit would serve this development very well.
- Enhance the streetscape for pedestrian use. (*Comment placed adjacent to Cobb Parkway, US 41.*)
- To make this an “Activity” Center there should be infrastructure that encourages “activity”. Please replace the parking lots with mixed-use residential/retail/office (live-work-play). I grew up in this area and still think it’s ugly after 25+ years. (*The comment was placed on the single story strip center on the east side of Cobb Parkway at Akers Mill Road.*)
- Have you all considered offering pleasant, safe pedestrian access from the station to LA Fitness (across the street), the Performing Arts Center and the Cumberland Mall as well?
- I saw the plans for this so-called “mixed-use” development. (*The comment was placed on the existing office building on Cumberland Boulevard, east of I-75.*) The plans I saw were not mixed use. Please encourage better pedestrian connectivity between this development and the station.
- This could have better connectivity with transit. (*The comment was placed on the office enclave adjacent to the Galleria Conference Center, across Akers Mill Road from the Performing Arts Center.*) There is more room for more uses, more buildings, but the parking investment is extremely expensive!
- (*A comment with the phrase “Thank you!” was placed on the mixed-density mixed-use notation shown on property in the northeast quadrant of the interchange between I-75 and I-285 with access provided by Cumberland Boulevard and Akers Mill Road.*)



- This would be great as mixed-use development with pedestrian connections to Akers Mill, Cumberland, etc, especially since it is so close to the station. (*The comment was placed on the existing two-story office complex on Cobb Galleria Parkway south of the proposed transit parking garage and the Performing Arts Center.*)

Station Comments:

- Room for expansion of parking facilities?
- Some new infrastructure above the highway would be good to cover the highway attract development close to the station. The new tax revenue would help the project pay for itself.
- Very uninviting for the pedestrian:
  - Air/heat
  - Moving sidewalk
  - Lighting
  - Security(*The comment was placed adjacent to the pedestrian bridge connecting the garage and station platform. It is assumed the itemized list refers to the desirable characteristics needed to make the pedestrian bridge inviting.*)
- This is going to be a major CCT transfer point. We need to address coordination of how all users will access station & transfer from one bus to another & integrate Cumberland Shuttle & park-and-ride vehicles.
- Charge for parking and the surrounding land values will soar, encouraging higher-quality development near the station. Provide a minimum number of stations and quality transit service – the market will respond positively.

**Terrell Mill Station Area:**

General Comments:

- (*The comment of "Good" was attached to the plan's notation to convert the former AT&T property to a mixed-use transit village.*)
- Do not believe Bentley Road will redevelop, (*referring to the plan's notation for a change in land use to a mixed-use development at the intersection of Terrell Mill and Bentley roads*).
- Sound Barriers. (*Assumed to apply to the need to protect the buildings in the I-75 corridor from noise generated by I-75 traffic.*)
- Environmental suggestion and necessary need. 1) noise buffers - traffic can already be heard pass (ing along on the interstate on) Powers Ferry Road.

Station Comments:

- Bus station & parking should stay under state control: uniform services & fees.
- This station makes sense as it is so convenient for considerable high density population.
- Security? (*Assumed to apply to the garage proposed at the station.*)
- Why build here when (the) Franklin Station is so close?
- Sound (*Assumed to apply to the need to protect the buildings in the I-75 corridor from noise generated by I-75 traffic.*)

**Franklin Station Area:**

General Comments for the East Side of I-75:

- Move highway over (*to west*) so no houses are taken on Forest Ridge Drive.
- Do not allow possibility of high density (*residences*) in long range land use plan for the (*south*) end of Forest Ridge drive.



- Do not take houses and trees between I-75 and Powers Ferry Road.
- Eliminate proposed greenways under the expressway (I-75) to the east side (*of the highway*). They will serve as convenient conduit to allow west-side crime to travel to the east-side neighborhoods.
- Opposed to 10' wide sidewalk on Powers Ferry Road
- Remove 10' wide proposed bike paths on Powers Ferry Road because they would necessitate taking much of (*the*) front yards (*from properties facing Powers Ferry Road*).
- I do want homes so close to I-75 to go! (*It is assumed the comment favors removing homes adjacent to the interstate.*)
- Opposed to green way under/over interstate to Powers Ferry Road.
- Remove truck lanes & don't take neighborhood homes in adjacent neighborhoods.

#### East and West Side of I-75

- Truck noise will make life unbearable in neighborhoods adjacent (*to the interstate*).

#### Station Comments:

- Have issues about noise & pollution been considered regarding locating the truck-only lanes on the outside (*of the interstate*)? May possibly be better on the inside.
- The station is important to facilitate redevelopment of this area. The station location makes sense. Access seems reasonable.
- I strongly feel a station at Franklin Road is not needed. With Terrell Mill and Marietta stations, that should be plenty. Another concern – this (*station*) will move (*or relocate*) Franklin Road residents (and problems) to east side of I-75. Since Franklin Road is already scheduled for redevelopment – the uses do not need a station.
- 1) Two-lane road leading to station is too narrow & too congested, big bottleneck. 2) This station seems too small of an area. No parking deck for drivers from nearby neighborhoods. 3) This station too close to neighborhoods, should be in more commercial area. 4) This station will displace Franklin Road problems & move them to other currently stable areas of Cobb County.
- I still don't see the need for this station. There are two other, larger more accessible stations quite close by – Marietta and Terrell Mill.
- Have you considered possibly having a turn bay/extra turn lanes to go out to Franklin? (*This comment refers to the two-lane road connecting the station to Franklin Road.*)
- What plans are being made about drainage along I-75?
- Franklin Road must be studied to determine how to handle the increased traffic flow. It is already a problem, particularly when the school buses run in the AM/PM.
- With the Franklin Road residents that are displaced, they would go to the Delk/Bentley/Terrell Mill road areas and start to negatively impact the stable residential areas nearby. It would simply create a new "Franklin Road" area.
- I really don't think the Franklin Station is needed when it would be so close to the Terrell Mill and Marietta Stations. It wouldn't serve that large of a population.

#### Marietta Station Area:

##### General Comments:

- Is there a study of the number of buses/day through the US 41/Roswell intersection? Concerned about congestion on Roswell. (*It is assumed the comment is directed at identifying future bus activity and congestion in general at the US 41/Roswell intersection.*)

##### Station Comments:



- Scared of heights, scared of freeways beneath feet. (*It is assumed this comment refers to the aerial pedestrian bridge that spans the southbound lanes of the interstate to connect the transit platform and the garage.*)
- Safety and security within garage.
- Integration of different types of transit – efficient from standpoint of community using, easy experience for commuters. Meet needs of suburban commuter.
- Why isn't the BRT platform next to the CCT platform? Worried about transfer from middle of interstate.
- Need space for cabs & kiss and ride (*passengers*).
- Intimidating. (*Comment referring to the pedestrian walk over the I-75 southbound lanes.*)
- (Need) pictures and descriptions of BRT buses.
- How do local CCT buses access I-75 from the CCT platform?
- Only one entrance and exit from the garage? Should there be more?
- Crucial station – numerous neighborhoods will want to feed into Marietta Station.
- (I) like shuttle to CCT transfer center, (*the idea of a*) non-stop (*ride*) from park-and-ride to CCT then from CCT non-stop to Cumberland.

#### **Town Center Station Area:**

##### General Comments:

- Have you considered making the roadways connecting the station friendly to KSU students who wish to bike to KSU?

##### Station Comments:

- Optimize access to and from I-575 as well as access to I-75.
- Intersection control, safety? (*This comment was placed at the proposed HOV intersection in the median of I-75 and referred to as yet undefined traffic control devices that may be needed to allow safe left turns.*)
- Could you have statistics about projected ridership from each station available at the charettes?
- You need to convince me that this parking garage will be safe for me at the end of a long day. (*This refers to the Town Center garage which may have one thousand or more parking spaces.*)