



# NORTHWEST CORRIDOR NEWS

## Northwest Corridor I-75/I-575 Project Project Newsletter

Spring 2007

### Draft Environmental Impact Statement is Complete!

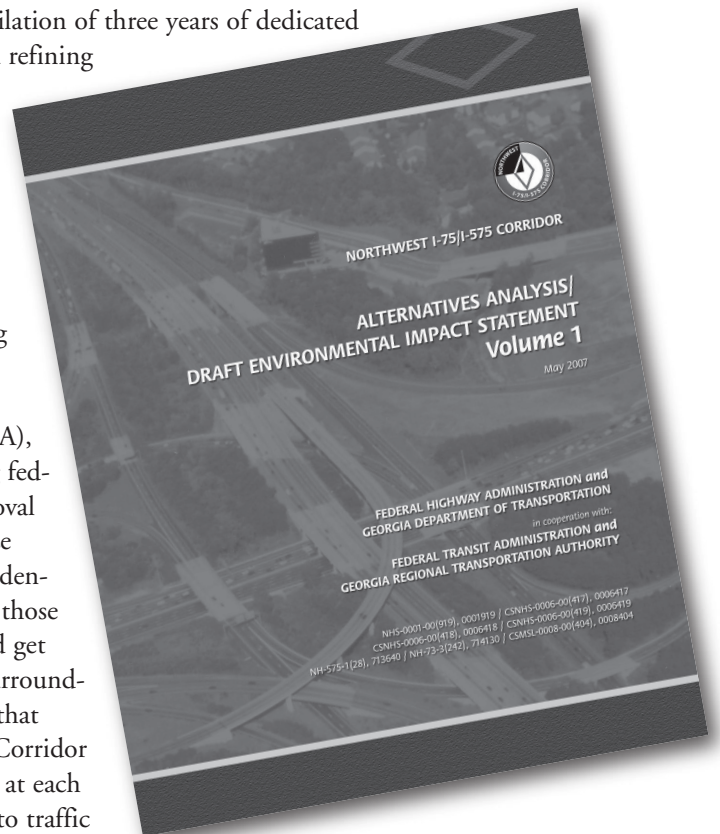
This April, the Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) and Georgia Regional Transportation Authority (GRTA), in collaboration with the Federal Highway Administration and Federal Transit Administration completed the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) for the Northwest Corridor Project.

The DEIS is a compilation of three years of dedicated work identifying and refining project alternatives and closely examining their potential impacts through both technical analyses and extensive public outreach. According to the National Environmental Protection Act (NEPA), any project requiring federal funding or approval must carefully analyze the project's effects, identify ways to mitigate those that are negative, and get feedback from the surrounding community. To that end, the Northwest Corridor Project DEIS looked at each alternative's impacts to traffic patterns and operations, noise,

air quality, wetlands, low income and minority populations, and other social and economic factors as well as hosted numerous meetings with local stakeholders and the public.

The DEIS is both a document and a decision-making process. Although the DEIS document is complete, our process is still continuing with a public comment phase. Three public hearings are scheduled as opportunities for the public to review the document, view study maps and displays, speak with the project team one-on-one, and most importantly submit any comments. The findings of the technical analysis and the comment period will be used to inform both the public and the project team in the selection of preferred alternative.

*The Draft Environmental Impact Statement is available for review on the project website at [www.nwhovbrt.com](http://www.nwhovbrt.com) and at selected libraries and government offices. Please see the website for a complete listing or call the project hotline at 404-377-4012.*





## Alternatives Under Consideration

### 1) No-Build

Evaluates what happens without building the project.

### 2) HOV/TOL

HOV and Truck Only Lanes with transit services expanded to account for increased demand for transit due to HOV lanes.

### 3) HOV/TOL/TSM

HOV, TOL and expanded bus services without transit stations.

### 4) HOV/TOL/BRT

HOV, TOL and expanded bus services with transit stations.

### 5) HOV/TOL/Reduced BRT

HOV, TOL and expanded bus service with a station at Roswell Rd.

Please plan to attend one of these important Public Hearing Open Houses! All meetings are from 5:00pm to 8:00pm.

#### May 29, 2007

Cobb Civic Center  
548 S. Marietta Pkwy  
Marietta, GA 30060

#### May 31, 2007

Woodstock High School Cafeteria  
2010 Towne Lake Hills South Dr.  
Woodstock, GA 30189

#### June 5, 2007

Atlanta Civic Center  
395 Piedmont Ave.  
Atlanta, GA 30308

## How We Got Here: History of the Northwest Corridor Project

The completion of the DEIS is an important milestone in the development of the Northwest Corridor Project. For the benefit of those who are new to the project, or for those who would like a review, here is history of how the current project has come about. This timeline chronicles how decisions were made as to the inclusion of specific project elements.

The Northwest Corridor Project is a combination of two projects that were initially undertaken separately by Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) and Georgia Regional Transportation Authority (GRTA).

GDOT’s project to improve the I-75 corridor began in November 2001 as a roadway improvement project to extend the existing HOV system from its current terminus at Akers Mill Road to Wade Green Road. It also included adding HOV lanes on I-575 from the I-75 Interchange to Sixes Road.

Concurrently, GRTA was exploring transit related improvements in the same general area in the northwestern portion of the metropolitan Atlanta area with the Northwest Connectivity Study. The study concluded that the selection of Bus Rapid Transit operating in the HOV lanes along I-75 was the most cost-effective and beneficial for congestion relief.

In May 2004, realizing that there were many common goals associated with the two projects, the decision was made by GDOT and GRTA to combine the projects from a design and environmental documentation standpoint.

In November 2004 Georgia Transportation Partners (GTP), a team of national and local private transportation builders, submitted an unsolicited Public Private Initiatives (PPI) proposal to GDOT for the improvements on the Northwest Corridor.

Under its proposal, GTP offered to partner with GDOT to design, build and bring alternative means to finance the project. The proposal includes implementing managed lanes which may be “congested priced” with electronic tolls collected by the State Road and Tollway Authority to give motorists more options and improve mobility for all users in the corridor with financing coming from a mix of federal funds, toll-backed revenue bonds and state sources.

As the combined project was being developed, the State Road and Tollway Authority published draft reports on two studies in the Atlanta region in April 2005. They were entitled “High Occupancy Toll Lanes Potential for Implementation in the Atlanta Region” and “Truck Only Toll Facilities Potential for Implementation in the Atlanta Region”. Together, these reports are known as the HOT/TOT Study. The study concluded that the addition of truck only lanes to certain interstate corridors could result in improved mobility, safety and efficiency for freight and automobiles. In August 2005, GDOT made the decision to add truck



only lanes to the study on the I-75 corridor. At the same time the project limit on I-75 was extended approximately 6000 feet from Wade Green Road to north of Hickory Grove Road. Work began immediately on adding truck only lanes to the roadway and BRT station concepts and modifying the already completed chapters of the DEIS.

In May 2006, GDOT and Georgia Transportation Partners signed a Developer Services Agreement. The agreement allows GTP to provide some aspects of preliminary engineering to support the environmental process for the Northwest Corridor Project.

It is important to note that while aspects of the project have changed through the concept design years the project team has always adhered strictly to the regulations of federal environmental process. The process mandates all project information must be fully disclosed to the public and that an impartial and objective alternatives' analysis is conducted. Through this process, the project team is committed to bringing the traveling public and the surrounding community the best possible solution for the Northwest Corridor.

For more information on the studies mentioned in this article, please visit the project website at [www.nwhovbrt.com](http://www.nwhovbrt.com). For more information on the PPI process, please visit the Department's PPI website, [www.dot.state.ga.us/ppi](http://www.dot.state.ga.us/ppi).

The comment period for the DEIS officially ends July 13, 2007. The project team will then begin to incorporate all the comments from the public and state and federal agencies into the preparation of the Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS).

Completion of the FEIS is estimated to be in April 2008. After the FEIS is submitted to the federal agencies, a Record of Decision on the project is issued. If the project is approved, right of way and construction could begin as early as 2009.

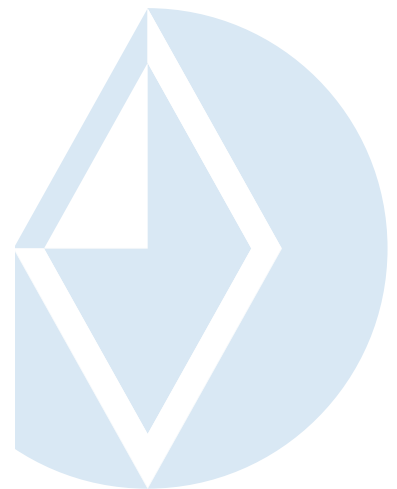
## Station Area Development Planning (SADP)



The project team presents station area concepts to the public.

Throughout the course of the DEIS process, the project team has brought increasingly more refined information to the public about the proposed Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) stations and the land uses and development types that would best compliment them. In 2005, Phase I of the SADP process began the discussion with community members about station location and potential surrounding land use. As a result of the public input, two stations were eliminated from the proposed BRT alternative. In addition, community preservation and impacts to neighborhoods were identified as major concerns.

Phase II began in 2006, continuing the dialogue with the community over land use, detailing more specific information and resulting in draft land use concept plans for each of the five stations. The draft plans were presented at a final Phase II meeting in October 2006.





Also that month, a staffed kiosk was hosted at the Las Colinas Apartments, located on Franklin Road. The kiosk provided the Franklin Road community with an exclusive opportunity to learn more about the project alternatives and how the project could potentially impacts their homes. Project materials were in English and Spanish and interpreters assisted project team members.

Public involvement for the SADP process and the DEIS has occurred simultaneously, informing each other's results. It is important to note that the SADP process and the DEIS are separate. The DEIS document only includes SADP results up until March 2006. All SADP meetings and refinement of the draft land use plans conducted after March 2006 will be included in the FEIS. All SADP materials will be available for review and comment online and at the public hearings.

For complete summaries of Phase I and Phase II of the SADP process, please visit the project website at [www.nwhovbrt.com](http://www.nwhovbrt.com).

### Get Involved!

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

Voice Mail Hotline: (404) 377-4012

Email: [hov\\_brt\\_comments@projectsolvemail.com](mailto:hov_brt_comments@projectsolvemail.com)

Website: [www.nwhovbrt.com](http://www.nwhovbrt.com)

For more information, contact:

**John Hancock, P.E.**

Northwest Corridor Project Manager  
Georgia Department of Transportation  
No. 2 Capitol Square SW  
Atlanta, GA 30334  
(404) 656-5436  
[john.hancock@dot.state.ga.us](mailto:john.hancock@dot.state.ga.us)

**Crew Heimer**

Northwest Corridor Transit Project Manager  
Georgia Regional Transportation Authority  
245 Peachtree Center Ave Suite 900  
Atlanta, GA 30303  
(404) 463-3054  
[crew@grta.org](mailto:crew@grta.org)

### Lexicon

- AA:** Alternatives Analysis
- BRT:** Bus Rapid Transit
- DEIS:** Draft Environmental Impact Statement
- FEIS:** Final Environmental Impact Statement
- FHWA:** Federal Highway Administration
- FTA:** Federal Transit Administration
- GDOT:** Georgia Department of Transportation
- GRTA:** Georgia Regional Transportation Authority
- HOT Lanes:** High Occupancy Toll Lanes
- HOV Lanes:** High Occupancy Vehicle Lanes
- LPA:** Locally Preferred Alternative
- PPI:** Public Private Initiative
- TOL:** Truck Only Lanes
- TSM:** Transportation Systems Management