Georgia Department of Transportation

ATLANTA-CHATTANOOGA
HIGH SPEED GROUND TRANSPORTATION PROJECT

TIER 1 DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT
Appendix E – Agency Coordination & Public Outreach

Prepared by:

Federal Railroad Administration (FRA)
Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT)
Tennessee Department of Transportation (TDOT)

September 2016

PTSCO - 0023-00-002
PI: No. T001684

Table of Contents

1.0 COORDINATION PLAN

Georgia Department of Transportation

Atlanta – Chattanooga High Speed Ground Transportation Study
Tier 1 Environmental Impact Statement

REVISED COORDINATION PLAN

Version (3.0): September 2016

Prepared for:
Georgia Department of Transportation
One Georgia Center, 600 West Peachtree Street, NW
Atlanta, GA 30308

Prepared by:
AECOM
1360 Peachtree Street, NE, Suite 500
Atlanta, GA 30309

PTSCO - 0023-00-002
PI No.: T001684

This Page Left Intentionally Blank

Table of Contents

List of Tables

List of Figures

This Page Left Intentionally Blank

I PURPOSE OF THE COORDINATION PLAN

In compliance with the Safe Accountable Flexible Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU), a Coordination Plan is required for all projects for which an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) will be prepared under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). The Coordination Plan is intended to make reviews more efficient and to streamline the project decision-making process. The plan's purpose is to coordinate agency and public participation and comment on the environmental review process for the project. This Coordination Plan also documents coordination that has taken place to date and describes how future coordination on the Tier 1 EIS will occur.

This Coordination Plan has been developed for the Tier 1 EIS for the Atlanta-Chattanooga High Speed Ground Transportation (HSGT) Study. This plan will be submitted to appropriate agencies for comment, and acceptance. Further coordination with cooperating and participating federal and state agencies will be required for the Tier 2 NEPA analysis, final design, and construction phases of development. This Coordination Plan will be updated periodically as project development progresses. The Coordination Plan is organized into the following sections:

- Purpose of the Coordination Plan;
- Project History and Overview;
- Roles and Responsibilities (Designation of Joint Lead Agencies as well as Participating Agencies and Tribal Governments);
- Public Participation;
- Collaborative Problem-Solving Administration; and
- Project Milestones, Review Periods, and Expectations (Schedule).

II PROJECT HISTORY AND OVERVIEW

On August 22, 2007 a Notice of Intent was published in the Federal Register to advise the public that the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) will jointly prepare a Tier 1 EIS with the Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT), with assistance from the Tennessee Department of Transportation (TDOT) to evaluate the environmental and related impacts of constructing and operating HSGT service between Atlanta and Chattanooga. The study area is presented in Figure 1. The study area extents include the area between Downtown Chattanooga and Lovell Field Airport in Hamilton County, Tennessee to the north, and the Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport area in Fulton County and Clayton County, Georgia to the south.

The concept of HSGT service between Atlanta, Georgia and Chattanooga, Tennessee has been a subject of study for over ten years. The GDOT initially studied this study area as part of an Intercity Rail Plan in 1997. The Atlanta-Chattanooga study area was first considered for high-speed rail service as part of the federal Magnetic Levitation (Maglev) Deployment Program funded by the FRA to demonstrate Maglev technology in the United States. Georgia was among several states that participated in the program. The Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC), in association with the GDOT and the Georgia Regional Transportation Authority (GRTA), analyzed the Atlanta-Chattanooga study area from 1999 to 2003. The purpose of this process was to fully explore mobility options and

determine the feasibility for a high-speed passenger service. TDOT prepared a statewide rail plan in 2003, which recommended high-speed rail connectivity with neighboring states.

The Tier 1 EIS will incorporate and build upon previous studies in the Atlanta-Chattanooga study area of Maglev and steel wheel HSGT concepts prepared by ARC and other planning partners. These studies include:

- Georgia Intercity Rail Plan Final Report (GDOT, March 1997);
- Atlanta-Chattanooga Maglev Deployment Study Environmental Assessment (ARC, February 2000);
- Concept Design Report for the Multi-Modal Passenger Terminal (GDOT, February 2002);
- Atlanta-Chattanooga Maglev Deployment Study Phase II EIS, (ARC, March 2002);
- Atlanta-Chattanooga Maglev Deployment Study Phase II Addendum, (ARC, March 2002);
- High Speed Trains Nashville-Chattanooga-Atlanta (TDOT, November 2003);
- ARC Envision6 Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) – (ARC, September 2007); and
- Chattanooga-Hamilton County/North Georgia TransPlan 2030, Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) – (Chattanooga-Hamilton County Regional Planning Agency, June 2005, amended March 2009).

The Tier 1 EIS will:

- Define the purpose and need;
- Screen corridor-level alternatives for reasonableness;
- Perform refined screening and evaluation to identify reasonable alignment, station, and technology alternatives to be carried forward into the Tier 2 NEPA process; and
- Estimate potential ridership.

The Tier 1 EIS will be prepared at a conceptual level of detail appropriate for a programmatic analysis and will provide the FRA, FHWA, TDOT, and GDOT with sufficient information to select the general alignment and general station locations, and to potentially identify a preferred HSGT technology.

In this Tier 1 EIS, alternative corridors will be evaluated at a broad scale of analysis. Proposed alternatives developed as a result of the Tier 1 EIS scoping process, a process detailed in the Scoping Summary Report (February 2008) for this study, include a No-Build Alternative, which is used as a baseline for comparison of all alternatives, and the following HSGT corridors (presented by segments in Figure 2):

- An HSGT corridor that roughly parallels Interstate 75;
- One or more HSGT corridors that utilize a portion of an existing CSX Transportation rail line; and
- An HSGT corridor that roughly parallels U.S. Route 411.

Figure 1: Map of Study Area

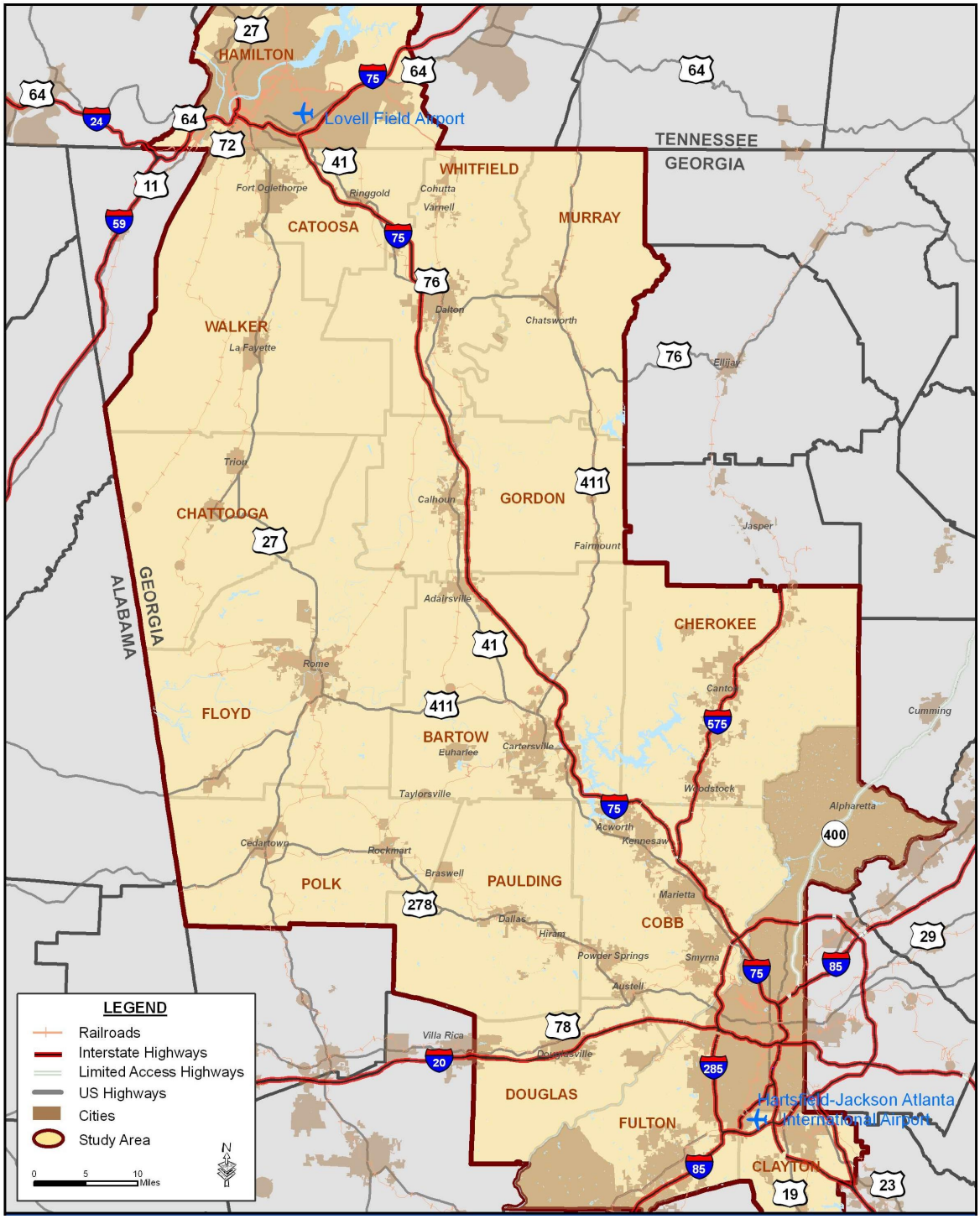
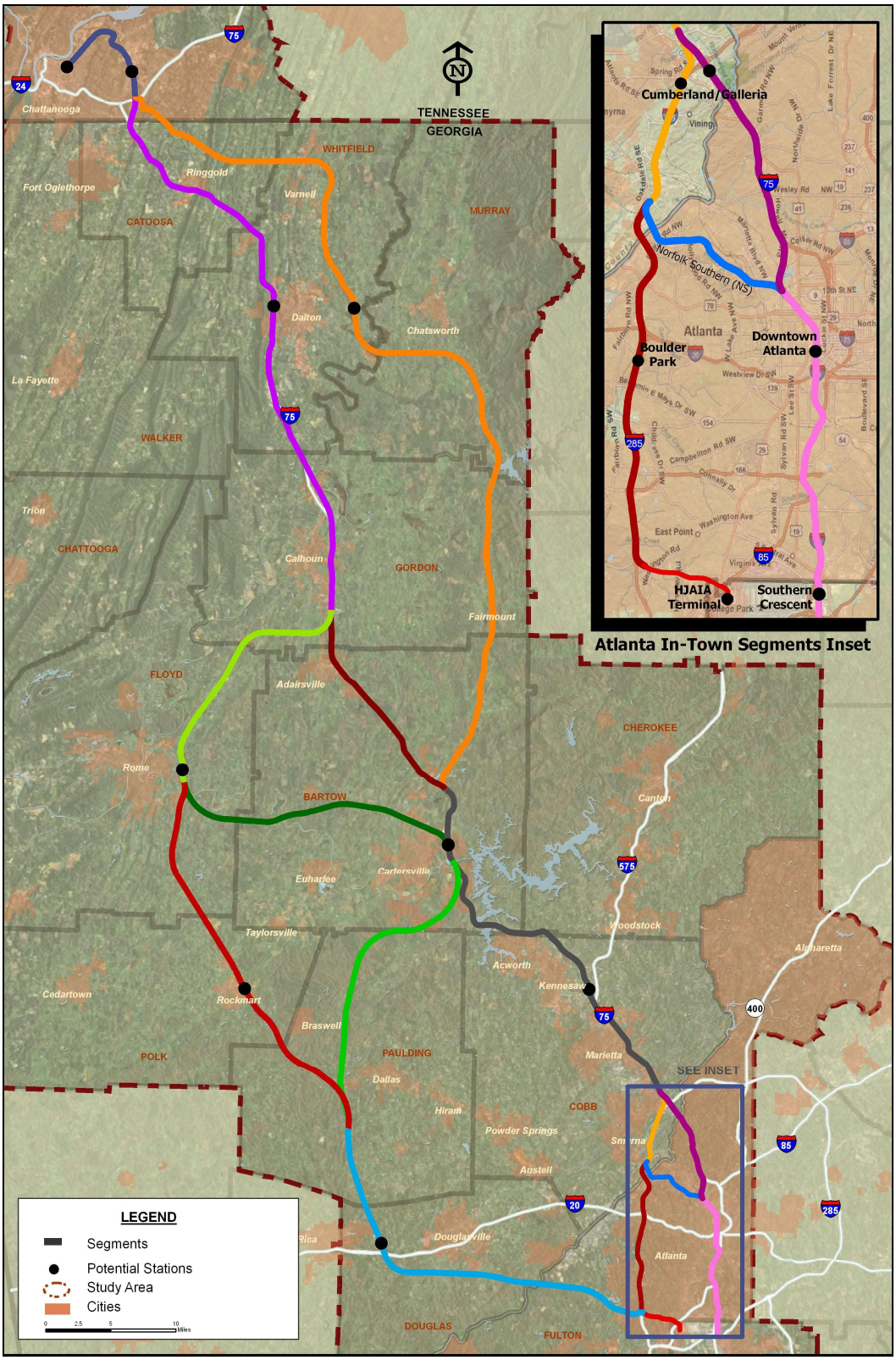


Figure 2: Corridor Segments



III ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The following agency roles and responsibilities reflect the general understanding among the parties of the project's Coordination Plan. Revisions to this plan can include updates to agency roles and responsibilities as appropriate.

A. Lead Federal Agencies

Lead agencies bear essential responsibility for preparing the EIS in accordance with federal statutes and regulations, and provide oversight and involvement in managing the environmental review and issue resolution processes. Lead agencies must:

- Identify and involve participating agencies;
- Prepare a coordination plan;
- Provide involvement opportunities for the public, and participating agencies and tribal governments, in defining purpose and need as well as determining the range of alternatives; and
- Collaborate with participating agencies and tribal governments in determining methodologies and the level of detail for the Tier 1 assessment and evaluation of alternatives.

FRA and FHWA are designated as the joint lead federal agencies for the HSGT Tier 1 EIS and are responsible for compliance with the following:

- NEPA;
- NEPA-related federal environmental statutes and regulations;
- FHWA's environmental regulations contained in 23 CFR 771 (Environmental Impact and Related Procedures);
- FRA's environmental regulations contained in FR Vol. 64, No. 101 (Procedures for Considering Environmental Impacts); and
- Section 4(f) of the DOT Act of 1966 and related regulations contained in 23 CFR 774 (Parks, Recreation Areas, Wildlife and Waterfowl Refuges, and Historic Sites).

FHWA's environmental regulations, 23 CFR 771 and 23 CFR 774, will serve as the baseline regulation for purposes of ensuring procedural compliance with NEPA and Section 4(f), respectively. Each agency's environmental requirements and technical and financial evaluation criteria will be applied as appropriate to ensure that each agency's statutory responsibilities and concerns are addressed in the environmental document.

FRA and FHWA will be responsible for coordinating the U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT) review of the Tier 1 EIS. FRA and FHWA will also coordinate the project with other non-USDOT federal agencies with jurisdiction by law or special expertise.

FRA and FHWA will review environmental documents as required and outlined in the 2008 Stewardship Agreement between FHWA and GDOT.

FRA will provide specific guidance on:

- Analysis of rail alternatives;
- Rail planning and operations;
- Rail ridership forecasting funding;
- Mobility evaluation related to FRA requirements; and
- FRA NEPA Procedures.

FHWA will review HSGT study documentation and processes for consistency with 23 CFR 771, 23 CFR 774, and SAFETEA-LU Section 6002 guidelines.[1]

B. Lead State Agencies

GDOT will be a joint lead statewide agency for the HSGT Tier 1 EIS. GDOT will be responsible for the coordination and oversight of appropriate and necessary technical analyses and for the coordination of environmental document preparation, including, but not limited to, agency and public involvement, notifications and coordination with affected agencies, tribal governments, and the public.

GDOT will identify the preferred alternative(s) for more detailed definition, assessment, and evaluation in the Tier 2 NEPA process.

TDOT will be a joint lead statewide agency for the HSGT Tier 1 EIS. TDOT will assist GDOT with the technical coordination for the project, and will assist in the review and coordination of all technical analyses and environmental documents, and public involvement activities related to the Tier 1 EIS.

C. Cooperating Agencies

FRA and FHWA have determined that Cooperating Agencies would not be designated until this project is at the Tier 2 NEPA stage.

D. Participating Agencies and Tribal Governments

Federal, state, and local agencies and tribal governments that may have an interest in the environmental process for this project were invited by lead agencies to participate in the NEPA process. These include, at minimum, public transportation providers, metropolitan planning organizations, local and county governments, Native American tribes, regional planning agencies, and federal and state environmental resource agencies. Appendix A provides the set of participating agencies for the Tier 1 EIS. GDOT provided a request for agencies to participate in the Tier I NEPA process for the Atlanta-Chattanooga HSGT study in March 2008.

Roles and responsibilities for participating agencies include:

- Participating in the scoping process, so that agencies whose interest in the project arises from initial scoping activities are invited to participate and still have an opportunity for involvement;

[1] The Georgia Division of FHWA will take primary responsibility for the joint federal agency activities. The FHWA Georgia Division will coordinate the review of the draft and final Tier 1 EIS documents with the FHWA Tennessee Division.

- Participating in the NEPA process starting at the earliest possible time, particularly with regard to the development of the purpose and need statement, range of alternatives, methodologies, and the level of detail for the analysis of alternatives;
- Identifying, as early as practicable, any issues of concern regarding the project's potential environmental or socioeconomic impacts that could substantially delay or prevent an agency from granting permits or other necessary project approvals; and
- Providing meaningful and timely input on unresolved issues.

To ensure that the concerns of each participating agency are considered in the environmental document, each party to this Coordination Plan will designate an individual, as well as an alternate, to represent that agency on all matters relating to this study. That individual will be the primary contact for transfer of project related information, and will be responsible for providing timely input into the preparation, coordination, and review of the environmental document. Each participating agency will be responsible for notifying the lead agencies of changes in points of contact.

Study deliverables will be forwarded as soon as possible to the appropriate individual(s) to allow for review and comment as set forth in the project schedule included with this plan.

An entity's acceptance of designation as a participating agency is not an indication of project support, and does not provide the agency with increased oversight or approval authority beyond statutory limits, if applicable.

Federal Resource Agencies

In addition to FRA and FHWA, other federal agencies may hold regulatory responsibility for the protection of resources, and are responsible for participation in the NEPA process in accordance with Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) and individual implementing regulations and policies. Federal agency roles in the NEPA process for this study include:

- Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) – Federal agency responsible for consultation to avoid or minimize impacts to regulatory floodways. FEMA reviews the Tier 1 EIS documentation for the discussion of avoidance or minimization actions for Tier 1 EIS alternatives, and the identification of alternative avoidance or minimization actions to be explored in the Tier 2 NEPA stage for compliance with National Flood Insurance Program standards;
- Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) – Federally owned corporation responsible for stewardship and provision of flood control, navigation, electricity generation, land management, and economic development in the Tennessee Valley. Authorization from TVA is required under Section 26(a) of the TVA Act for impacts to waters within the Tennessee River watershed. Early coordination during the Tier 1 NEPA process is necessary for the preparation of TVA permits during the subsequent Tier 2 NEPA process;
- U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) – Federal agency responsible for administering permits in accordance with Section 404 of the Clean Water Act (regulated discharge of dredged or fill material into waters of the U.S.) and Section 10 of the Rivers and Harbors Appropriation Act (protection of capacity within navigable waters of the U.S.). While Section 404 and/or Section 10 permits will not be requested during the Tier 1 EIS process, such permits and the Practical Alternatives Review process are likely to be necessary as part of the Tier 2 NEPA

process. Coordination will proceed as documented in the local NEPA/404(b)(1) Coordination Procedures between GDOT, FHWA Georgia Division, and the USACE;

- U.S. Department of Agriculture, Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) – Federal agency responsible for protection of prime, statewide-important, and unique farmland from significant conversion, in accordance with the Farmland Protection Policy Act. Coordination with NRCS to identify average farm sizes by county within the study area will occur during the Tier 1 EIS process. Further coordination and the farmland impact rating procedures will be a function of the Tier 2 NEPA process;
- U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service (USFS) – Federal agency with jurisdiction over National Forest lands potentially requiring transfers;
- U.S. Department of the Interior, Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) – Federal agency responsible for coordination to avoid, minimize, or mitigate impacts to federally listed protected species in compliance with Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act. USFWS is the federal agency with jurisdiction for compliance with the Migratory Bird Treaty Act and the Bald Eagle Protection Act. Additionally, USFWS consultation includes the review of projects posing potentially unavoidable longitudinal stream encroachments or channel straightening impacts of 50 or more feet to intermittent and perennial streams, in accordance with the Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act. USFWS coordination will include reviews of technical ecology documentation estimating overall potential jurisdictional impacts;
- U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service (NPS) – Federal agency responsible for coordination to avoid or minimize impacts to official units of the National Park System.
- U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) -– Federal agency responsible for protecting public health and the environment by improving air, land and water quality. Coordination with EPA is required under Section 102 (2) (C) of NEPA, Section 309 of the Clean Air Act and Section 404 of the Clean Water Act to avoid or minimize impacts to air, land and water quality.

Tribal Governments

Native American tribes are federally recognized self-governing entities exercising inherent sovereign powers over their territories. Federal lead agencies are responsible for coordination and consultation with tribal officials consistent with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) and federal Executive Order 13175 (Consultation and Coordination with Indian Tribal Governments). The invitation of potentially affected tribal governments to participate in the EIS process is specified in NEPA regulations (40 CFR 1501.2, 40 CFR 1501.7).

Section 101(d) (2) of the National Historic Preservation Act allows tribal governments to assume the functions of State Historic Preservation Offices with respect to tribal land. Tribal government representatives will review alternative projects occurring on, or affecting historic properties on, their tribal lands. Tribal governments will also advise of other historic properties that are of related religious or cultural significance.

GDOT has established Memoranda of Understanding (MOU) with a number of the non-resident tribes that have historical or cultural links with the state of Georgia. Such memoranda address the project planning, identification of religious or cultural properties, assessment and resolution of adverse effects, and the treatment of Native American burials in compliance with the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act.

State Resource Agencies

In addition to GDOT and TDOT, other state agencies may hold statutory responsibility for the protection of resources. State agency roles in the NEPA process for this study include:

- Georgia Department of Natural Resources (Environmental Protection Division), and Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation – In accordance with Section 401 of the Clean Water Act, these state agencies are responsible for issuing Water Quality Certifications for projects requiring an individual permit under Section 404 of the Clean Water Act. Early coordination during the Tier 1 EIS will contribute toward the preparation of such certifications, if applicable, during the Tier 2 NEPA phase;
- Georgia Department of Natural Resources (Historic Preservation Division), and Tennessee Historical Commission – State Historic Preservation Offices (SHPOs) responsible for ensuring compliance with Section 106 of the NHPA. The SHPOs contribute data identifying resources on or eligible for the National Register of Historic Places, and other historic structures and archaeological sites. The agencies also may establish agreements for assessment and coordination activities in advance of the Tier 2 NEPA process.

Municipal and Regional Agencies

Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs), regional planning agencies (and city or county planning agencies, where appropriate), and regional transportation agencies within the study area provide the latest planning assumptions, including land use assumptions, population and employment forecasts, and transportation modeling data. Such data will be the common foundation for the Tier 1 EIS socioeconomic, mobility, and land use analyses.

MPOs are established by the Governor and local officials for regional transportation planning in urbanized areas. The USDOT designates urbanized areas with populations of 50,000 or more. MPOs adopt long-range regional transportation plans meeting federal air quality standards and establish short-term programs of transportation projects. MPOs within the study area include:

- Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC) – MPO for Cherokee, Clayton, Cobb, Douglas, Fulton, and Paulding Counties and a portion of Bartow County in the Atlanta urbanized area;
- Chattanooga-Hamilton County Regional Planning Agency (CHCRPA), Transportation Planning Organization (TPO) – MPO for Hamilton County, Tennessee and portions of Catoosa County and Walker County, Georgia in the Chattanooga urbanized area;
- Floyd-Rome Urban Transportation Study (FRUTS) – MPO for the Rome urbanized area within Floyd County; and
- Greater Dalton MPO – MPO for the Dalton urbanized area within Whitfield County.

Designated under state laws, regional commissions within the study area develop, promote, and assist with the establishment of coordinated and comprehensive plans, offering technical assistance to state, federal, and local agencies in balancing quality growth and development with the conservation of resources. Regional planning agencies within the study area include:

- ARC – representing Cherokee, Clayton, Cobb, Douglas and Fulton Counties within the study area;
- Appalachian Regional Commission – federal-state partnership supporting sustainable community and economic development for 13 states in the Appalachian region, including Georgia and Tennessee;
- CHCRPA – representing Hamilton County within the study area; and
- Northwest Georgia Regional Commission – representing Bartow, Catoosa, Chattooga, Floyd, Gordon, Murray, Paulding, Polk, Walker, and Whitfield Counties within the study area.

Municipal governments within the study area (including city and county government agencies) may also be consulted during the EIS development process to provide or validate land use planning, right-of-way, or socioeconomic information. County governments within the study area include:

- Bartow County, Georgia;
- Catoosa County, Georgia;
- Clayton County, Georgia;
- Cobb County, Georgia;
- Douglas County, Georgia;
- Floyd County, Georgia;
- Fulton County, Georgia;
- Gordon County, Georgia;
- Hamilton County, Tennessee;
- Murray County, Georgia;
- Paulding County, Georgia;
- Polk County, Georgia; and
- Whitfield County, Georgia.

Regional and local transportation agencies within the study area include, but are not limited to:

- City of Atlanta, Department of Aviation;
- Chattanooga Metropolitan Airport Authority;
- Chattanooga Area Regional Transportation Authority;
- Cobb Community Transit;
- Georgia Regional Transportation Authority; and
- Metropolitan Atlanta Rapid Transit Authority.

E. Additional Stakeholder Coordination

State Transportation Board - HSGT Intermodal Sub-Committee

This sub-committee includes members of the Georgia State Transportation Board and study area stakeholders. The sub-committee provides input to GDOT project management staff at key points in the development of the HSGT study.

IV PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

A Public Involvement Plan (PIP) was developed in accordance with Section 6002 of SAFETEA-LU, which stipulates opportunity be provided for involvement by the public and agencies. The PIP, based on GDOT's Public Involvement Policy and Guidelines, was developed to guide the public involvement process for the Atlanta – Chattanooga HSGT Study. It is intended to ensure ongoing public involvement using a variety of tools and techniques to invite and encourage the public to learn about and become involved in the Atlanta – Chattanooga HSGT Study. The PIP describes a comprehensive program that engages the many diverse stakeholders at key points in the Tier I EIS development process.

Key objectives of the public involvement efforts are:

- To provide a structure and forum for interested and affected parties to provide input and comment on major issues, problems, and alternatives in the Atlanta-Chattanooga HSGT study area;
- To educate agency representatives, stakeholders, and members of the public and media about issues, opportunities, goals, and alternatives under consideration affecting the Atlanta-Chattanooga HSGT study area;
- To create general awareness of the study among highway, airport, and transit users, the business communities, residents, and local government officials;
- To clarify the decision-making process; and
- To engage all key stakeholders in the study process and results, and build consensus on future activities.

The PIP outlines the following tools, techniques, and activities to maximize participation in the study:

- Meetings
  - Agency Scoping Meetings
  - Public Scoping Meetings
  - Public Information Open Houses
  - Stakeholder Meetings
  - Charrettes
  - Public Hearing Open Houses

- Public Information Materials
  - Website
  - Fact Sheets
  - Newsletters

- Drop-in Opportunities
  - Displays at Highly Visible Locations
  - Staffed Booths
  - Speakers Bureau

- Other Public Involvement Activities
  - Outreach Meetings
  - Database
  - Media Outreach

Stakeholders and the public are engaged on an ongoing basis during the Atlanta-Chattanooga HSGT Study to provide timely and current feedback and to ensure that the EIS process is consistent with federal policy regarding public participation. To date, there has been one major decision point in the process where significant involvement from participating agencies, stakeholders, and the public was solicited. This decision point came during the September 2007 scoping process when GDOT conducted a number of agency and public scoping meetings.

The scoping process for the Atlanta-Chattanooga HSGT study area was conducted in accordance with 23 CFR 771.123 and 40 CFR 1501.7 to solicit participation from agencies, counties, municipalities, and the public as part of the NEPA process. The scoping process was used to identify the range of alternatives to be studied, the potential impacts to the human and natural environments, and the key issues and concerns to be addressed during the EIS.

Two agency scoping meetings and three public scoping open houses were held for the project. Details of the scoping meetings are outlined in the table below.

Table 1: Scoping Meetings - Locations, Dates, and Attendance

Target Audience	Location	Date/Time
Agency	GDOT Office of Environment/Location 3993 Aviation Circle, Atlanta, Georgia	September 18, 2007, 10:30 am - 12:00 pm
Agency	Chattanooga Hamilton County Bicentennial Library. 1001 Broad Street, Chattanooga, Tennessee	September 20, 2007, 10:30 am - 12:00 pm
Public	McEachern High School, 2400 New Macland Road, Powder Springs, Georgia	September 18,2007, 5:00 – 7:30 pm
Public	Rome Civic Center, 400 Civic Center Drive, Rome , Georgia	September 19,2007, 5:00 – 7:30 pm
Public	Chattanooga Hamilton County Bicentennial Library, 1001 Broad Street, Chattanooga, Tennessee	September 20,2007, 5:00 – 7:30 pm

The scoping meetings were announced in a Notice of Intent (NOI) that appeared in the Federal Register on August 22, 2007. The NOI also announced the public comment period from August 22, 2007 through October 4, 2007. The public scoping meetings were also advertised in local newspapers such as the Atlanta Journal Constitution and the Chattanooga Times-Free Press. Other means of advertising included direct mailings to federal and state environmental regulatory and review agencies and local government

officials, which also initiated the Early Coordination Process. All public meetings locations were compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

Each agency scoping meeting opened with GDOT providing an overview of the project, followed by a presentation outlining the scope of the project. After the presentation, agency representatives could ask questions, provide input, or specify analysis that should be considered as part of the EIS process. A total of 17 people representing various agencies attended the agency scoping meetings.

Each of the formal public scoping meetings followed the same format. At each meeting location, attendees signed-in upon arrival and each received a Scoping Information Package. Each meeting location included an “open house” area with a series of 30 information boards displayed. GDOT staff and the consultant team were available to answer questions. The information boards illustrated the corridors and alignments under consideration and provided an overview of the EIS process. A total of 75 people attended the public scoping meetings.

The information gathered during the scoping process will contribute to the assessment of HSGT study alternatives best meeting the project purpose and need while minimizing impacts to the social, cultural, and natural environments. Input gathered also assisted in identification of specific environmental impacts to be assessed and in shaping future study efforts to involve stakeholders and the public. A project website has been established at http://www.atl-chatt.org to provide updated study information throughout the EIS process. The project website will be updated at key project milestones: Alternatives Screening, Draft Environmental Impact Statement and Final Environmental Impact Statement. A study newsletter was also produced in Spring 2008 and distributed to stakeholders and the public. Newsletter publications will coincide with the release of the Alternatives Screening Report and the Draft Environmental Impact Statement to share information on these study documents and encourage public input.

The following provides a comprehensive list of methods that will be used during the Tier 1 EIS process to encourage participation and input:

- Two Participating/Resource Agency Meetings
- Two rounds of three Stakeholder Meetings;
- Three Public Information Meetings (Alternatives Screening)/Public Hearings (DEIS);
- Small Group Meetings;
- Two Newsletters; and
- Website Updates.

The project schedule shown in Figure 3 indicates anticipated timeframes.

V COLLABORATIVE PROBLEM-SOLVING ADMINISTRATION

The following decision making approach will be taken among the lead agencies and the study team as required.

If an impasse has been reached between the lead agencies and the direct project management team cannot make a decision within a two-week period of the issue being identified, each party agrees to involve relevant agency management as detailed below.

Final decisions of any continuing issues will be a matter for determination by the GDOT Commissioner, the TDOT Commissioner, the FHWA Georgia Division Administrator, and the FRA Associate Administrator or their respective designees.

If a decision is stalled, the management hierarchy for these organizations is shown in Table 2 below. When the representatives at the lowest level for each party have reached an impasse and have agreed to elevate the decision, a meeting will be held within a one-week period. At that time, representatives from both levels will meet to discuss the issues related to the impasse and attempt resolution.

If an agreement cannot be reached within a week, the issue will be elevated to the next level and a meeting will be held within a one-week period. At that time, representatives from all three levels will meet to discuss the issues related to the impasse and attempt resolution.

If an agreement cannot be reached within a week, the issue will be elevated to the highest organizational level and a meeting date will be established within a one-week period. At that time, all parties at all levels will meet to resolve the issue. The parties hereto agree that any resolution to an impasse secured through the decision-making process set forth in this section will be communicated in writing to all parties.

Table 2: Management Hierarchy

Level	FHWA	FRA	GDOT	TDOT
1	Environmental Team Leader	Project Manager	Project Manager	Project Manager
2	Director of Program Development	Director, Planning and Environment Division	Intermodal Division Director	Asst. Chief of Environment and Planning
3	Assistant Division Administrator	Associate Administrator for Railroad Development	Chief Engineer	Chief of Environment and Planning
4	Division Administrator	Administrator	Commissioner	Commissioner

VI PROJECT MILESTONES, REVIEW PERIODS, AND EXPECTATIONS

SAFETEA-LU establishes milestones at which project efforts must be reviewed by the joint lead agencies, participating agencies, and the public prior to moving forward in the Tier 1 EIS process. These milestones include:

A. Project Need and Purpose (by public, participating agencies and tribal governments during scoping)

B. Identification of the Range of Alternatives (by public, participating agencies and tribal governments during scoping)

C. Methodologies for Alternative Evaluation (by participating agencies and tribal governments during scoping and alternatives screening stages)

D. Tier 1 Draft EIS (by lead agencies, prior to Notice of Availability)

E. Identification of Preferred Alternative (by lead agencies)

F. Tier 1 Final EIS (by lead agencies, prior to Notice of Availability)

G. Tier 1 Record of Decision (by lead federal agencies and U.S. Environmental Protection Agency only)

These activities are identified in the overall anticipated project schedule, as shown in Figure 3. The schedule includes anticipated timeframes for document reviews by participating agencies.

Pre-DEIS Document Reviews

Documents received to date by the participating agencies include the Purpose and Need statement and the initial Coordination Plan. Additional documents to be provided for review, prior to the DEIS, will include:

- Revised Coordination Plan
- Screening and Evaluation Criteria Technical Memorandum
- Alternatives Screening Report
- DEIS Resource Technical Memoranda (for review by appropriate resource agencies)

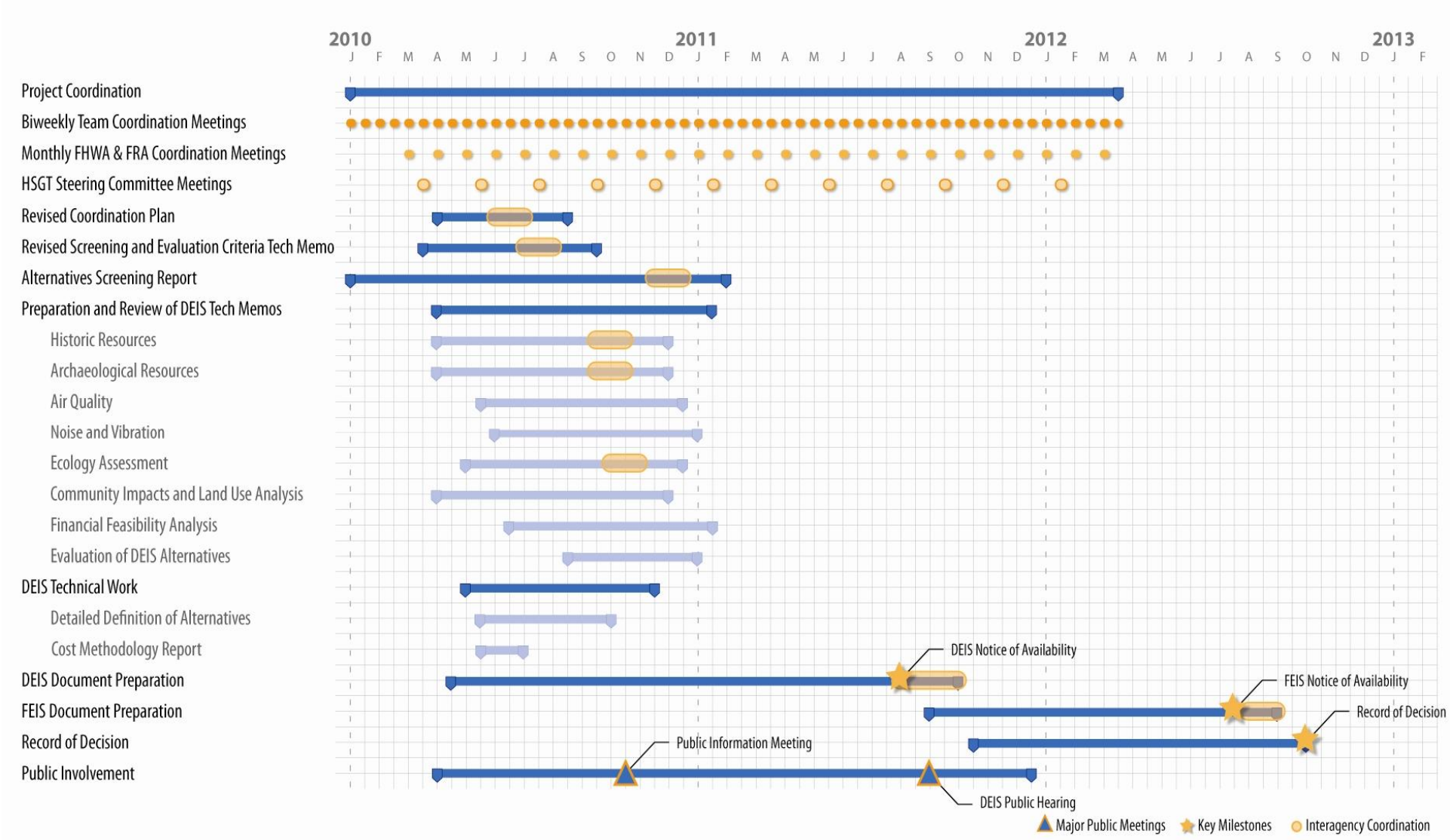
Participating agencies are strongly encouraged to participate to the maximum extent throughout the Tier 1 EIS development process. At each of the project milestones A through C, documentation of the particular item would be submitted to all participating agencies for review and comment. Agencies should comment within 30 calendar days unless a written request for an extension of the review periods has been requested by the participating agency from the lead agencies. Failure of an agency to respond with either comments or a request for a review extension within 30 calendar days shall be considered concurrence with the documentation.

DEIS and FEIS Reviews

The Tier 1 Draft EIS shall be made available to the public and transmitted to participating agencies and tribal governments for comment. Beginning with the public notice of availability on the Tier 1 Draft EIS, a 60-day period shall be provided for the return of comments from the public, participating agencies, and tribal governments. The Tier 1 Draft EIS shall also be available at the Tier 1 Draft EIS public hearing and for a minimum of 30 days in advance of the public hearing. A minimum 30-day review period for the public, participating agencies, and tribal governments will follow the notice of availability for the Tier 1 Final EIS.

A separate Public Involvement Plan (PIP) has been developed, which provides for a variety of public participation opportunities during the EIS including Public Information Open Houses, stakeholder meetings, and Public Hearing Open Houses. Project Fact Sheets, newsletters and a website will also provide information to keep the public informed about the project. The lead agencies would review and consider all comments received. The Final EIS shall discuss substantive comments received on the Draft EIS and responses thereto and summarize public involvement.

Figure 3: Project Schedule



Appendix A – Lists of Participating Agencies and Tribal Governments

Participating Agencies – Accepted Agencies	
Federal	Tennessee Valley Authority
	U.S. Department of Agriculture – Natural Resources Conservation Service
	U.S. Department of the Interior – National Park Service
	U.S. Department of Transportation – Federal Transit Administration (Region IV)
	U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (Region IV)
State	Georgia Department of Natural Resources (DNR)
	Georgia DNR – Environmental Protection Division
	Georgia DNR – Wildlife Resources Division
	Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation – Tennessee Historical Commission
Municipal/Regional	Appalachian Regional Commission
	Atlanta Regional Commission
	Bartow County Board of Commissioners
	Chattanooga Metropolitan Airport Authority
	Cherokee County Board of Commissioners
	City of Adairsville
	City of Atlanta, Department of Aviation
	City of Cartersville
	City of Chattanooga
	City of Dalton
	City of Ringgold
	City of Rome
	Clayton County Department of Transportation and Development
	Cobb County Department of Transportation (for Cobb County Board of Commissioners)
	Floyd County Board of Commissioners
	Georgia Regional Transportation Authority
	Metropolitan Atlanta Rapid Transit Authority
	Northwest Georgia Regional Commission (former Coosa Valley Regional Development Center and North Georgia Regional Development Center)
	Whitfield County Board of Commissioners

Participating Agencies – Other Invited Agencies	
Federal	Federal Emergency Management Administration – Mitigation Division
	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (North Area Section – Regulatory Branch)
	U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (Regional Office of Community Planning and Development
	U.S. Department of the Interior - Fish and Wildlife Service (Southeast Region)
	U.S. Department of Agriculture - Forest Service
State	Georgia Department of Natural Resources – Historic Preservation Division (Georgia SHPO)
	Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation
Municipal/Regional	Catoosa County
	Chattanooga Area Regional Council of Governments/Southeast Tennessee Development District
	Chattanooga Area Regional Transportation Authority
	City of Aragon
	City of Atlanta
	City of Calhoun
	City of Cohutta
	City of College Park
	City of East Point
	City of Emerson
	City of Fairmount
	City of Hapeville
	City of Kennesaw
	City of Marietta
	City of Plainville
	City of Ranger
	City of Resaca
	City of Rockmart
	Clayton County Board of Commissioners
	Douglas County Board of Commissioners
	Fulton County Board of Commissioners
	Gordon County Board of Commissioners
	Hamilton County Board of Commissioners
	Murray County Board of Commissioners
	Paulding County Board of Commissioners
	Polk County Board of Commissioners

Tribal Governments
Alabama-Coushatta Tribe of Texas
Alabama-Quassarte Tribal Town
Cherokee Nation
Chickasaw Nation
Coushatta Tribe of Louisiana
Creek Nation of Oklahoma
Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians
Eastern Shawnee of Oklahoma
Muscogee (Creek) Nation
Muscogee (Creek) National Council
Poarch Band of Creek Indians
Seminole Nation of Oklahoma
Seminole Tribe of Florida
Shawnee Tribe
Thlopthlocco Tribal Town
United Keetoowah Band

2.0 PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT PLAN

Georgia Department of Transportation

Tier I Environmental Impact Study
High-Speed Ground Transportation Study
Atlanta to Chattanooga Corridor

Project PTSC0-0023-00-002
PI #T001684

Public Involvement Plan

Prepared for:

Georgia Department of Transportation
Office of Environment/Location
3993 Aviation Circle
Atlanta, Georgia 30336

Prepared by:

Earth Tech, Inc.
1455 Old Alabama Road, Suite 170
Roswell, GA 30076

June 2007

Table of Contents

Public Involvement Plan

1.1 Description of the Study

The proposed project involves planning for the deployment of a High-Speed Ground Transportation (HSGT) system in the 110-mile corridor between Hartsfield-Jackson International Airport in Atlanta, Georgia, and Chattanooga, Tennessee, that can provide competitive travel times with other travel modes. Preliminary engineering and environmental analysis for the deployment of a full 110-mile project is the subject of the Scope of Services, which includes completion of a Tier I Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the corridor. Should implementation funding become available in the future, a completed Tier I EIS, with a Record of Decision (ROD) could allow for advancement of selected shorter sections in the Atlanta–Chattanooga corridor, as well as potentially advanced acquisition within the selected corridor. This Atlanta-Chattanooga High-Speed Ground Transportation Study will include analyses of HSGT alternatives, including magnetic levitation (maglev) and steel wheel technology. The Tier I EIS will be prepared under the direction of the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) and Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) as the co-lead federal agencies, and the Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) as the state lead agency.

The Tier I EIS will incorporate and build upon previous studies of maglev and steel wheel HSGT concepts prepared by the Atlanta Regional Commission. The Tier I EIS will define the purpose and need, identify logical termini, analyze reasonable alternatives, estimate potential ridership, and identify possible implementation phasing. The Tier I EIS will be prepared at a conceptual level of detail appropriate for a programmatic analysis and will provide the FRA, FHWA and GDOT with sufficient information to select the HSGT technology, general corridor location, general station locations, and potential identification of an initial operating segment. The study is expected to be complete at the end of 2009.

1.2 Public Involvement Overview

A study of this nature, scope and size requires the design and implementation of a public involvement program characterized by three general goals: a) a comprehensive program that maximizes participation of the many diverse stakeholders at key points in the planning process; b) creation of effective dialogue on project issues and alternatives, which assists in the development of solutions; and c) a proactive approach to addressing public concerns. A study of this magnitude requires careful and consistent coordination, as well as flexibility to provide responsiveness in the face of new events or changing perceptions. The GDOT Public Involvement Policy (attached) will be closely followed at all times.

Assisting GDOT in this program is a team of consultants lead by Earth Tech, which will organize and manage subconsultants and ensure that public input is incorporated into the study as appropriate. Howard/Stein-Hudson Associates (HSH) is responsible for developing the Public Involvement Plan and will oversee its implementation in association with Earth Tech. HSH will be assisted primarily by Malvada Consulting and Dovetail Consulting. Technical support and manpower assistance will be provided by Earth Tech and Moreland Altobelli on an as needed basis.

1.3 Public Involvement Principles

Public involvement is not a stand-alone discreet task. It is integrated into the technical work through a transparent process with a continuous feedback loop so that the public can see how their input has been incorporated into the technical work. This ensures that at the end of the project, while everyone may not be in agreement with the final recommendations, they have had

an opportunity to provide input at all major milestones. Specific public involvement principles are stated below:

- Create an environment in which decisions are based on an objective, transparent, and inclusive planning process that actively seeks input from a variety of stakeholders.
- The public and stakeholders will provide valuable information to the overall decision-making process. GDOT will consider all public information and technical input and will ultimately make decisions about alternatives, the preferred alternative, station locations, and next steps for corridor planning.
- Ensure open and clear communications.
- Facilitate two-way education.
- Meet and exceed state and federal public involvement requirements.

1.4 Public Involvement Goals

The specific Public Involvement goals for this project are as follows:

- To provide a structure and forum for interested and affected parties to provide input and comment on major issues, problems, and alternatives along the Atlanta-Chattanooga HSGT corridor.
- To educate agency representatives, stakeholders, and members of the public and media about issues, opportunities, goals, and alternatives affecting the Atlanta-Chattanooga HSGT corridor.
- To create general awareness of the study among highway, airport, and transit users, the business communities, residents, and local government officials.
- To clarify the decision-making process.
- To engage all key stakeholders in the study process and results, and build consensus on future activities.

1.5 Public Involvement Activities

People receive information and provide feedback in many different ways. This study will provide a variety of tools, techniques, and activities to maximize participation in the study.

- Meetings
- Public Information Materials
- Drop-in Opportunities
- Other Public Involvement Activities

1.6 Meetings

There will be several formal and informal meetings held throughout the life of this study. These are summarized in the following paragraphs.

1.6.1 Agency Scoping Meetings:

To kick off the study, two (2) formal agency scoping meetings will be held for the project, one in Atlanta and one in Chattanooga. While not necessarily a citizen-oriented meeting, these Agency Scoping meetings will provide valuable information to federal,

state and local governmental officials, who in turn, can provide information to the public, staff and policy makers within their respective jurisdictions. The Agency Scoping meeting will be held in accordance with Titles VI and VIII of the US Civil Rights Act and the Americans with Disabilities Act.

1.6.2 Public Scoping Meetings:

In addition, three (3) public scoping meetings will be held, one in Atlanta, one in the middle of the project study area, and another in Chattanooga. The scoping meeting will have a presentation outlining the project's history, the tiered environmental process and its differences to the traditional environmental impact statement, and will discuss evaluation techniques within the context of tiering. In addition, there will be generalized information about the study process, the project's purpose and need, evaluation techniques, and other corridor information. Comments from the attending public will be invited and documented. The Public Scoping meeting will be held in accordance with Titles VI and VIII of the US Civil Rights Act and the Americans with Disabilities Act.

1.6.3 Public Information Open Houses:

To encourage two-way exchange of information, two rounds of three drop-in style open house meetings will be held in the Atlanta and Chattanooga metropolitan areas and a third meeting mid-way along the corridor at key milestones: The meetings will occur following the above mentioned Scoping sessions and during the development of the DEIS. Open Houses will be widely advertised in all appropriate media, on the GDOT Website, and through partner agencies and organizations such as MPOs, cities and towns, and state agencies. Unlike a public hearing, open houses are informal and provide opportunities for participants to ask questions in a friendly and non-confrontational manner. Maps and graphics will be on display with study team members available to answer questions and record comments. Handouts and comment sheets will be distributed to all participants. The public information open houses will be held in accordance with Titles VI and VIII of the US Civil Rights Act and the Americans with Disabilities Act.

1.6.4 Stakeholder Meetings:

Meetings will be held with local officials, community and civic leaders, elected officials, and others to find out about their issues, concerns and ideas for the corridor. These meetings will give people a chance to communicate specific issues and concerns in addition to learning about the study as a whole. Earth Tech will identify stakeholders in consultation with GDOT.

1.6.5 Charrettes:

A charrette is a meeting set up to address challenges or specific issues with a specified time limit and scope. Charrettes to resolve issues around the possible locations of stations in municipalities will be held to resolve issues of location and urban design, and to identify other possible concerns that should be addressed in subsequent Tier II documents. Up to four charrettes will be held.

1.6.6 Public Hearing Open Houses:

These public hearing open houses will be opportunities to learn about the study and provide testimony on the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS), as required by law. The hearings will be widely advertised in all appropriate media; on the GDOT Website, through partner agencies and organizations such as MPOs, cities, towns, and state agencies. The first part of the hearing will be an open houses format to provide the public with opportunities to ask questions of staff. Maps and graphics will be on display with study team members available to answer questions. Following a presentation of the DEIS findings, participants will be given a chance to testify for the public record. The public hearing open houses will be held in accordance with Titles VI and VIII of the US Civil Rights Act and the Americans with Disabilities Act.

1.7 Public Information Materials

Providing stakeholders and the public with clear and easy-to-understand information about the study in general and specific elements of the study is critical to keeping them engaged over the course of the three-year study. Meetings are only one way to communicate with people and will be supplemented with public information that not only educates and informs, but also provides a way to give feedback.

1.7.1 Website:

A Web page for the study will be set up as a link from the GDOT Website. Information will be updated periodically and will be in downloadable formats. The goal of the Web page is to enable the public to keep up to date on the progress of the study in between meetings and events. Information that will be available will include:

- Public Involvement Plan
- Project schedule
- Meeting calendar
- Corridor photos and plans
- Documents including GDOT approved technical memoranda, Scoping report, and final documents
- Fact sheets and newsletters
- Handouts from meetings, workshops, scoping sessions, charrettes, etc.
- Meeting summaries

In addition, a link to an e-mail box will allow people to give feedback on any aspect of the study and on review documents as they are posted. Comments received in the e-mail box will be responded to in a maximum of 72 business hours by GDOT. The team will keep a complete record of all e-mail and responses.

1.7.2 Fact Sheets:

Fact Sheets will be prepared to answer the most frequently asked questions about the study. Up to 10 Fact Sheets will be prepared over the course of the study. Possible topics include a discussion of mode options, noise impacts, need and purpose, environmental impacts, and service options. Fact Sheets will be concise and easy-to-

read, two-sided sheets with color. Fact Sheets will be posted on the Web page and a small quantity printed for distribution at public meetings and other events in the study area.

1.7.3 Newsletters:

Newsletters are an excellent way to provide information about the study in a clear and concise way. The team will prepare three newsletters that will be timed with key aspects of the study: kickoff, during the alternatives analysis, and at the end of the study when the DEIS is available. Newsletters will be distributed by e-mail and to a mailing list of key stakeholders, citizens who specifically request a newsletter, and citizens who provide address information at a public information open house. The newsletters will also be posted on the Website in a downloadable format.

1.8 Drop-in Opportunities

Less formal than public meetings, open houses, and hearings that frequently interest a relatively small group of people, special events and non-traditional meeting locations can capture the attention of a larger, more representative group who might not make a special effort to go to a meeting.

1.8.1 Displays at High-Visibility Locations:

Two displays describing the goals of the study and the alternatives under investigation will be prepared with the ability to be located at high-visibility locations such as the airports in Atlanta and Chattanooga, MARTA stations, etc. The displays will provide contact information and direct viewers to other sources for additional information. The displays will be bi-lingual and will be designed to be understandable without being staffed.

1.8.2 Staffed Booths:

The Consultant will set up and staff booths at special events within the project study area to informally distribute information about the project. Possible events include county fairs, street festivals, etc. Fact Sheets will be made available, as well other summary information that can be easily updated, reproduced, and distributed throughout the duration of the study. Up to 12 special events booths will be staffed throughout the course of the study. All questions and comments received from the public will be recorded and logged.

1.8.3 Speakers Bureau:

Speakers Bureaus are groups of trained representatives who can knowledgeably speak about the study to groups and organizations. For this study, the team will train staff for the Speakers Bureau. These people will be available to make presentations, upon request, to local and regional civic and community organizations. General handouts about the study will be prepared as a “leave behind.” The handout will provide a description of the study, schedule, and contact information, including the Web page address.

1.9 Other Public Involvement Activities

1.9.1 Outreach Meetings:

To encourage participation from people and groups who do not typically participate in studies like this and may not be able to attend the Public Information Open Houses, other venues will be identified that would be appropriate alternatives. These could include minority churches, senior centers, and other community resources. Environmental justice communities along the corridor will be included in this outreach. Letters will be sent to church pastors, business groups, and other community leaders introducing the study. Follow-up telephone calls will be made to encourage their membership to attend the upcoming event.

1.9.2 Database:

Organizing all of the activities listed above requires identifying interested and affected persons and groups and knowing a variety of ways to be in contact with them on a regular or periodic basis. A comprehensive database for the study will be created and maintained and will include names and addresses, organizations and affiliations, telephone numbers, e-mail addresses, and fax numbers. The database will also provide information on areas of interest or concern, how people got involved in the study, what events or meetings they participated in, and more.

Categories of stakeholders will include:

- Residents
- Abutters
- Property owners
- Elected officials
- Agency representatives
- Neighborhood organizations
- Business groups
- Interest groups

The database will be one of the primary ways of organizing stakeholders. At key points in the study, the team will telephone key stakeholders to inform them of upcoming milestones, call their attention to review documents on the Website, and check in with them before decisions are made.

1.10 Environmental Justice

Special attention will be paid to ensure that all populations in the study area, including those that are historically under-represented in the transportation decision-making process, have a role in the study. The goal of the Environmental Justice Executive Order 12898 (February 11, 1994) and the Department of Transportation Order on Environmental Justice (DOT Order 5610.2) dated April 15, 1997, is to ensure the full and fair participation by all potentially affected communities in the transportation decision-making process, and this study will meet and exceed that goal. The goal will be achieved through outreach activities such as meeting

with local community leaders, church leaders, special mailings and targeted advertising, as required.

1.11 Documenting the Process, Feedback and Public Participation Impact

Documenting all public involvement activities, attendance, materials presented, and handouts is a critical component of this plan. A log of activities by date will be maintained and posted on the Website.

A comprehensive database of comments, issues, questions, and corrections will be maintained and updated as needed. The goal of this database is to ensure that issues are addressed in the process and those asking questions get an answer in a timely fashion.

A brief update on the status of the study will be written and posted on the Website at key milestones. Unlike the newsletter, which will provide more details on the status of the study, this update will answer the question, "What's changed?" and will include where applicable issues are raised by the public and others and how they have been addressed.

1.12 Media

Project updates and announcements will be disseminated to the local media via regular media outlets. All media contact will be coordinated through GDOT, and all materials disseminated will require GDOT approval prior to distribution.

1.13 Study Schedule

The Project Baseline Schedule provides a general sense of the study tasks and their approximate timeframes. The dates shown for completion of specific tasks may shift during the study.

3.0 AGENCY & STAKEHOLDER INVOLVEMENT PLAN (ASIP)

Georgia Department of Transportation

A T L A N T A - C H A T T A N O O G A
HIGH SPEED GROUND TRANSPORTATION PROJECT

TIER 1 DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT

Agency and Stakeholder Involvement Plan
2014 UPDATE

Prepared by:

Federal Railroad Administration (FRA)
Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT)
Tennessee Department of Transportation (TDOT)

September 2016

PTSCO - 0023-00-002

PI: No. T001684

Table of Contents

List of Figures

List of Tables

APPENDIX – Distribution Lists

I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This document provides an outline for the Agency and Stakeholder Involvement Plan (ASIP) for the Atlanta-Chattanooga High Speed Ground Transportation (HSGT) Tier 1 Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), (the proposed project). The ASIP is the 2014 Update of the Public Involvement Plan (PIP), completed June 2007, and the Coordination Plan, completed February 2008 and revised through July 2010. This document will carry these previous documents forward for the completion of the proposed project when the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) issues a Record of Decision (ROD).

The Atlanta-Chattanooga HSGT Tier 1 EIS process was initiated in August 2007 by FRA and FHWA, in cooperation with the Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) and Tennessee Department of Transportation (TDOT). An administrative Draft EIS was prepared in December 2010, with subsequent revisions in August 2011 and February 2012. The FRA is re-obligating its initial grant to allow GDOT to complete the Tier 1 EIS under a new Grant/Cooperative agreement (March 2013). This ASIP combines and updates the original PIP and Coordination Plan, but includes revisions to address the terms under the new agreement. The ASIP will also conform to requirements from the Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century (MAP-21), which is the nation's surface transportation authorization legislation, and it includes updated agency/stakeholder lists, contact information, and a summary of previous coordination activities during the environmental review process.

The tasks to be performed by GDOT under the new agreement include the following:

1. Complete a revised administrative draft EIS for FRA and submit for review and approval;
2. Complete a draft EIS incorporating FRA and FHWA[1]'s comments and after securing FRA's approval publish the draft EIS for agency and public comment;
3. Hold appropriate public meetings on the draft EIS;
4. Develop an administrative draft Final EIS (including responses to all substantive comments received on the draft EIS) and submit for FRA review and approval;
5. Complete and publish a final EIS incorporating FRA's comments (after securing FRA's approval);
6. Develop a draft Record of Decision (ROD) for FRA's review and approval; and
7. Conduct appropriate public outreach activities during the term of this cooperative agreement informing the public of the environmental review process.

[1] *Following GDOT's receipt of FHWA's comments, FHWA's role was changed to a Participating agency as of July 31, 2014.*

II. INTRODUCTION

A. Purpose of the Agency and Stakeholder Involvement Plan (ASIP)

The Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) prepared this ASIP for the Tier 1 Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the proposed Atlanta – Chattanooga High Speed Ground Transportation (HSGT) project.

The Atlanta-Chattanooga HSGT Tier 1 EIS process began in August 2007, and GDOT completed an administrative Tier 1 Draft EIS in December 2010, with subsequent revisions in August 2011 and February 2012. The ASIP updates and combines the previously completed Public Involvement Plan (PIP), completed June 2007, and the Coordination Plan, completed February 2008 and revised July 2010. The PIP created a framework for interested and affected parties to provide input on the proposed project; to educate and engage stakeholders and the public about the environmental review process, issues, goals, and alternatives; and to create general awareness of the study. The Coordination Plan facilitates agency coordination and participation and their review and comment process during the environmental review process for the proposed project. This document will carry these previous documents forward for the completion of the project when the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) issues a Record of Decision (ROD).

FRA is re-obligating its initial grant to allow GDOT to complete the Tier 1 EIS under a new Grant/Cooperative agreement (March 2013). This ASIP will combine and update the original PIP and Coordination Plan, and include revisions to address the terms under the new agreement.

The ASIP is considered a “living document” until a Record of Decision (ROD) is issued by FRA, the Federal agency leading the development of the Tier 1 EIS. As the project development progresses, GDOT may update the ASIP periodically, especially in response to reviews from participating agencies. The ASIP includes the following information:

- Project History and Overview;
- Stakeholder Involvement Overview;
- Stakeholder Involvement Activities;
- Other Public Involvement Activities;
- Environmental Justice Outreach;
- Agency Involvement Plan;
- Agency Roles and Responsibilities;
- Additional Stakeholder Coordination (HSGT Intermodal Sub-committee);
- Collaborative Problem-Solving Administration;
- Project Milestones, Review Periods and Expectations; and
- Milestones to Project Completion.

The project sponsors will move forward with the agency and stakeholder involvement program outlined in this document. GDOT will hold at least three public meetings within the study area; it previously created a project website. In tandem with the project website, fact sheets and newsletters will be distributed to resource agencies, stakeholders and the general public. A stakeholder listing is provided in Appendix A of this document. A 45 to 60-day public review period will be held wherein agencies and the public can review and submit comments on the Tier 1 Draft EIS.

The ASIP is prepared in accordance with Section 6002 of the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU) and amended by Section 1305 of Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act (MAP-21).Section 6002 of the SAFETEA-LU created Section 139 of Title 23 of the United States Code (U.S.C.) that mandates, among other requirements, that the lead agency must establish a plan for coordinating public and agency participation in and comment on the environmental review process for a Federally-funded project. As part of the ASIP, and after consulting with participating agencies and stakeholders, the lead agencies may establish a schedule for completion of the environmental review process for the proposed project.

This ASIP outlines the public and agency involvement program and identifies key contacts between Federal and State agencies, public officials, local communities, affected Native American Tribes, and other key stakeholder groups and the public. The ASIP also identifies key contacts with civic and business groups, relevant interest groups, present and potential riders/users, and private service providers/shippers. The ASIP identifies how involvement activities will be linked to key milestones in the planning/engineering and environmental analytic process, including public meetings on the Tier 1 Draft EIS. This process includes Tribal coordination to fulfill FRA's responsibilities under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA).

B. Project Overview

Study Area Description

The project sponsors defined a broad geographic area for study comprised exclusively or in part, of the following counties: Clayton, Fulton, Cobb, Cherokee, Floyd, Bartow, Murray, Whitfield, Gordon, Chattooga, Catoosa, Douglas, Paulding, Polk, and Walker counties of Georgia; and Hamilton County, in Tennessee. See **Figure 1** below for a depiction of the project study area.

Project Background

The concept of HSGT service between Atlanta and Chattanooga has been a subject of study for over a decade. Initially, GDOT studied this corridor as part of a 1997 Intercity Rail Plan. The Atlanta to Chattanooga corridor was first considered for high speed rail service as part of the Federal Magnetic Levitation (Maglev) Deployment Program funded by the FRA to demonstrate Maglev technology capabilities in the United States. Georgia was among several states that participated in the program. The Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC) in cooperation with GDOT and the Georgia Regional Transportation Authority (GRTA), analyzed the 110-mile corridor between Atlanta and Chattanooga over a four-year period, from 1999 to 2003. The purpose of this analysis was to explore mobility options to determine the feasibility for a high speed passenger service. TDOT prepared a statewide rail plan in 2003, which recommended high speed rail connectivity with neighboring states.

The overall goal of the Atlanta to Chattanooga HSGT project is to enhance intercity passenger mobility in northwest Georgia, and part of Tennessee, by expanding passenger transportation capacity, increasing overall personal and business mobility and providing an alternative to highway

and air travel in a manner that is safe, reliable, and cost-effective while avoiding, minimizing, and/or mitigating effects on the human and natural environments.

Currently, the state and interstate highway systems within the corridor are operating at or near capacity, especially within and adjacent to the Atlanta, Rome, Dalton and Chattanooga areas. Although capacity improvements to the state and interstate roadway system along the corridor are either currently underway or planned for the near future, they will not address all of the future capacity or mobility needs for the region. The increased traffic volumes and accident rates in the study corridor further emphasize the need for alternative transportation. Social and economic demands will continue to call for a provision of alternative transportation choices for those individuals, who cannot or choose not to drive, as well as those travelers and commuters looking for alternatives to congested highways.

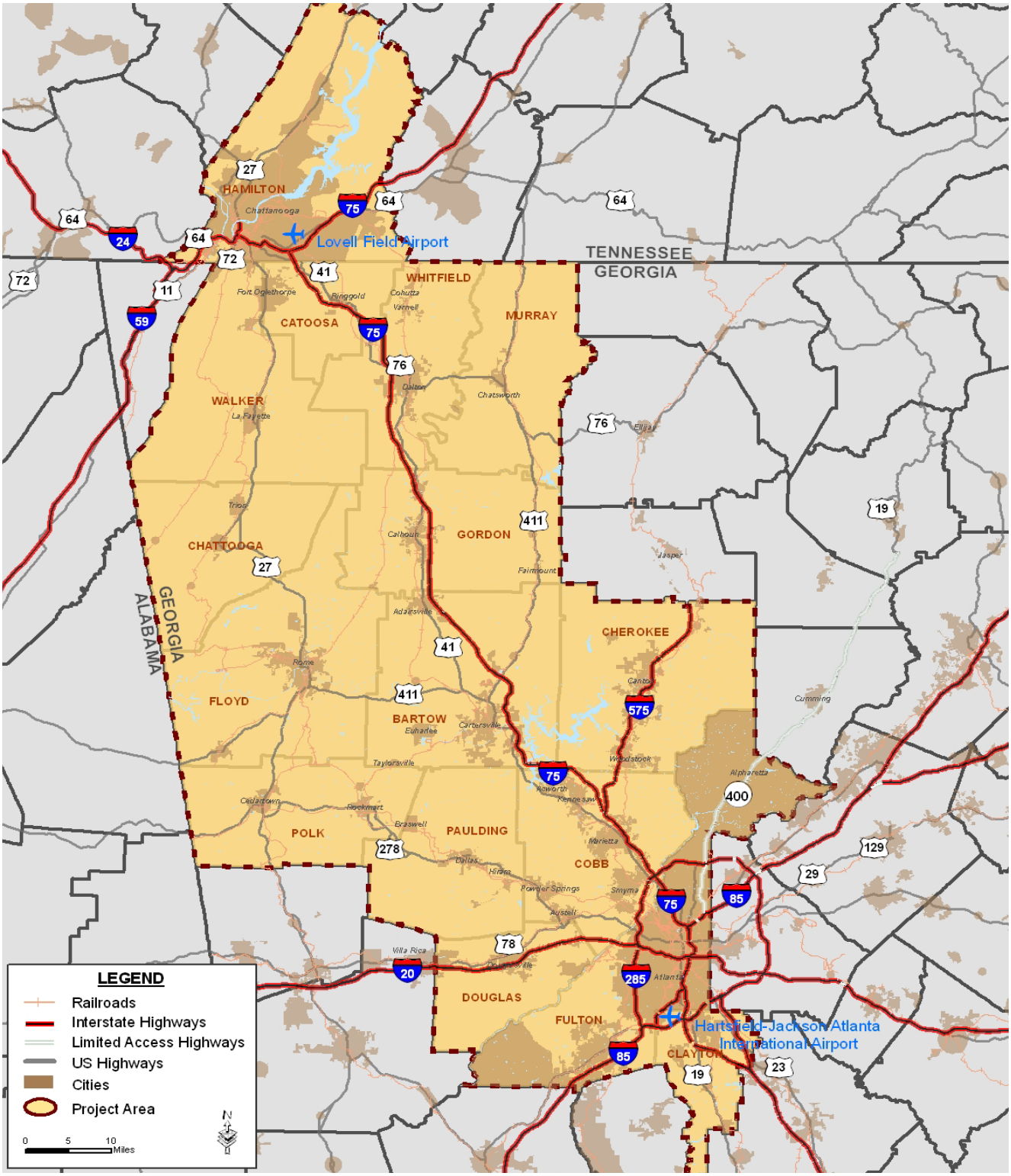
Corridor Screening Process and Tier 1 EIS Build Alternatives

During the screening process, 15 unique corridors from Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport (HJAIA) to downtown Chattanooga were identified. From these 15 corridors, 3 corridors advanced to become Build Alternatives for analysis in the Tier 1 Draft EIS. The three corridors that advanced as Build Alternatives are:

- I-75 Southern Crescent;
- East Southern Crescent; and
- I-75/Rome Southern Crescent.

The Tier 1 Draft EIS will evaluate four alternatives: a No-Build Alternative and the three Build Alternatives. The No-Build Alternative represents the project area's transportation system as it was forecast to be in the year 2030 with implementation of programs or projects that were already identified in local, regional, and state transportation plans and had identified funds for implementation by 2030. The No-Build Alternative assumes that an HSGT system would not be built between Atlanta and Chattanooga and is the basis for comparison of the alternatives under consideration in the Tier 1 EIS. Transportation options between Atlanta and Chattanooga consists of automobile travel, primarily along Interstate 75 (I-75), Interstate 285 (I-285), US Route 411 (US 411), US Route 41 (US 41), and Interstate 24 (I-24), existing local, regional, and intercity rail and bus services, and air travel between HJAIA Lovell Field Airport in Chattanooga.

Figure 1 – Project Study Area



Prior Coordination with Agencies, Stakeholders, and the Public

The Scoping Process for the Tier 1 Draft EIS began in 2007, during which GDOT established a comprehensive program for agency coordination as well as stakeholder and public outreach that allowed for dialogue on issues and alternatives that assisted in the development of solutions. Two Agency Scoping Meetings were conducted during the scoping process, which began in August 2007 and ended in October 2007. The meetings were held in Atlanta and Chattanooga, and included comments pertaining to the capacity of existing freight corridors, potential effects on water and biological resources, the number and location of stations, and the potential location of the proposed service. Additionally, Lead Agency coordination meetings between Federal and state lead agencies continue to take place on a regular basis during the development of the Tier 1 Draft EIS. More information about the Agency Scoping Meetings can be found in the Coordination Plan.

The stakeholder and public outreach program also includes a framework for stakeholder meetings, which occurred from January to June of 2008. These 19 meetings occurred in various locations along the potential alignment, and included the participation of more than 60 local government representatives. The stakeholder meetings included comments pertaining to county zoning ordinances, land development activities, and conflicts between areas designated for industrial-related economic development. More information about the 2008 stakeholder meetings can be found in the PIP and the Tier 1 Draft EIS document.

Specifically related to the general public, there were two types of meetings designed to solicit public involvement. These meetings included the 2007 Public Scoping Meetings, which were held to develop the Purpose and Need, and the 2010 Public Information Open House (PIOH) meetings, which reviewed the screening and alternative development process and results.

III. AGENCY INVOLVEMENT PLAN

A. Roles and Responsibilities for Lead Agencies and Participating Agencies

The following agency roles and responsibilities reflect the general understanding among the parties of the proposed project's ASIP. Future revisions to the ASIP may include updates to agency roles and responsibilities as appropriate.

Federal Lead Agencies

Federal lead agencies have an important responsibility for preparing the Tier 1 EIS in accordance with Federal statutes and regulations. Federal lead agencies provide oversight and involvement in managing the environmental review process and issue resolution processes. Federal lead agencies must:

- Identify and involve participating agencies[2];
- Prepare a coordination plan;

[2] *Per FRA, in conjunction with FHWA, cooperating agencies will not be identified for this Tier 1 EIS.*

- Provide involvement opportunities for the public, and participating agencies and tribal governments, in defining purpose and need as well as determining the range of alternatives; and

- Collaborate with participating agencies and tribal governments in determining methodologies and the level of detail for the Tier 1 EIS assessment and evaluation of alternatives.

FRA has been designated as the Federal lead agency for the Atlanta-Chattanooga HSGT Tier 1 EIS and is responsible for compliance with the following:

- National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA);

- NEPA-related Federal environmental statutes and regulations;

- FRA's environmental regulations as published in 64 Federal Register 28545; and

- Section 4(f) of the DOT Act of 1966 and related regulations contained in 23 CFR 774 (Parks, Recreation Areas, Wildlife and Waterfowl Refuges, and Historic Sites).

FRA's environmental guidance will serve as the baseline for purposes of ensuring procedural compliance with NEPA and Section 4(f), respectively. FHWA's environmental regulations, 23 CFR 771 and 23 CFR 774, will serve as guidance for areas not covered by FRA's regulations. Each agency's environmental requirements and technical and financial evaluation criteria will be applied as appropriate to ensure that each agency's statutory responsibilities and concerns are addressed in the environmental document.

As the Federal lead agency, FRA may provide specific guidance for GDOT on:

- Analysis of HSGT alternatives;

- HSGT planning and operations;

- Ridership demand and revenue forecasting;

- Capital and operating funding;

- Mobility evaluation related to FRA requirements; and

- FRA NEPA procedures.

Section 6002 of SAFETEA-LU, as amended by MAP-21 and 23 CFR Part 771, specify that Federal lead agencies must provide participating and cooperating agencies and the public the opportunity for involvement in the development of the need and purpose statement and the identification of the range of alternatives to be considered. As the Federal lead agency for this project, FRA will review HSGT study documentation and processes for consistency with SAFETEA-LU Section 6002, as amended by MAP-21, 23 CFR Part 771 and 23 CFR Part 774.

State Lead Agencies

GDOT will be a state joint-lead agency with TDOT for the HSGT Tier 1 EIS. GDOT will be responsible for the coordination and oversight of appropriate and necessary technical analyses and for the coordination of environmental document preparation, including, but not limited to, agency and

public involvement, notifications and coordination with affected agencies, tribal governments, and the public.

GDOT will recommend the preferred alternative(s) for more detailed definition, assessment, and evaluation in the Tier 2 NEPA process.

TDOT will be a state joint-lead agency for the HSGT Tier 1 EIS. TDOT will assist GDOT with the technical coordination for the proposed project, and will assist in the review and coordination of all technical analyses and environmental documents, and public involvement activities related to the Tier 1 EIS.

Participating Agencies

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) will serve as a participating agency in the development of the Tier 1 EIS. FHWA is the Federal agency responsible for consultation for the development of the range of alternatives, methodologies, and the level of detail for the analysis of the alternatives for the Tier 1 EIS. FHWA reviews the Tier 1 EIS documentation for the Tier 1 EIS range of alternatives and the identification of avoidance or minimization actions to be explored in the Tier 2 NEPA stage for site-specific impacts that may result from these alternatives.

B. Roles and Responsibilities for Cooperating Agencies, Tribal Governments, Resource Agencies, and Local Governments

The current lists of contact information for all local, state, and Federal participating agencies and tribal governments that are involved have been updated and may be found in Appendix A of this document. GDOT will send a newsletter to all listed agencies involved to provide a project update and to inform them of the intent and process for carrying the Tier 1 EIS forward to completion.

Roles and Responsibilities

To ensure that the concerns of each participating agency are considered in the environmental document, each party to this Plan will designate an individual, as well as an alternate, to represent that agency on all matters relating to this study. That individual will be the primary contact for transfer of project related information, and will be responsible for providing timely input into the preparation, coordination, and review of the environmental document. Each participating agency will be responsible for notifying the lead agencies of changes in points of contact.

Study deliverables will be forwarded as soon as possible to the appropriate individual(s) to allow for review and comment as set forth in the project schedule included with this plan.

An entity's acceptance of designation as a participating agency is not an indication of project support, and does not provide the agency with increased oversight or approval authority beyond statutory limits, if applicable.

Cooperating Agencies

FRA, in consultation with FHWA, has determined that cooperating agencies would not be designated until Tier 2 NEPA analyses are performed for this project.

Tribal Governments

Native American tribes are federally recognized self-governing entities exercising inherent sovereign powers over their territories. Federal lead agencies are responsible for coordination and consultation with tribal officials consistent with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) and Federal Executive Order 13175 (Consultation and Coordination with Indian Tribal Governments). The invitation of potentially affected tribal governments to participate in the EIS process is specified in the Council on Environmental Quality's (CEQ) regulations implementing the procedural provisions of NEPA (40 CFR 1501.2, 40 CFR 1501.7).

Section 101(d) (2) of the National Historic Preservation Act allows tribal governments to assume the functions of State Historic Preservation Offices with respect to tribal land. Tribal government representatives will review projects occurring on, or affecting historic properties on, their tribal lands. Tribal governments will also advise of other historic properties that are of related religious or cultural significance.

GDOT established Memoranda of Understanding (MOU) with a number of the non-resident tribes that have historical or cultural links with the state of Georgia. Such memoranda address the project planning, identification of religious or cultural properties, assessment and resolution of adverse effects, and the treatment of Native American burials in compliance with the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act.

Federal Resource Agencies

In addition to FRA and FHWA, other Federal agencies may hold regulatory responsibility for the protection of resources and are responsible for participation in the NEPA process in accordance with CEQ and individual implementing regulations and policies. Federal resource agency roles in the NEPA process for this study include:

- Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) – Federal agency responsible for consultation to avoid or minimize impacts to regulatory floodways. FEMA reviews the Tier 1 EIS documentation for the discussion of avoidance or minimization actions for Tier 1 EIS alternatives and the identification of alternative avoidance or minimization actions to be explored in the Tier 2 NEPA stage for compliance with National Flood Insurance Program standards;

- Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) – Federally owned corporation responsible for stewardship and provision of flood control, navigation, electricity generation, land management, and economic development in the Tennessee Valley. Authorization from TVA is required under Section 26(a) of the TVA Act for impacts to waters within the Tennessee River watershed. Early coordination during the Tier 1 NEPA process is necessary for the preparation of TVA permits during the subsequent Tier 2 NEPA process;

- U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) – Federal agency responsible for administering permits in accordance with Section 404 of the Clean Water Act (regulated discharge of dredged or fill material into waters of the U.S.) and Section 10 of the Rivers and Harbors Appropriation Act (protection of capacity within navigable waters of the U.S.). While Section 404 and/or Section 10 permits will not be requested during the Tier 1 EIS process, such permits and the Practicable Alternatives Review process are likely to be necessary as part of the Tier 2 NEPA process. Coordination will proceed as documented in the Local

NEPA/404(b)(1) Coordination Procedures between GDOT, FHWA Georgia Division, and the USACE;

- U.S. Department of Agriculture, Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) – Federal agency responsible for protection of prime, statewide-important, and unique farmland from significant conversion, in accordance with the Farmland Protection Policy Act. Coordination with NRCS to identify average farm sizes by county within the study area will occur during the Tier 1 EIS process. Further coordination and the farmland impact rating procedures will be a function of the Tier 2 NEPA process;

- U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service (USFS) – Federal agency with jurisdiction over National Forest lands potentially requiring transfers;

- Department of Housing and Urban Development (USHUD) - Federal agency responsible for implementation of programs and projects in accordance with the Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act of 1970 (Uniform Act). The Uniform Act provides important protections and assistance for people affected by the acquisition, rehabilitation, or demolition of real property for Federal or federally funded projects. HUD works closely with FHWA, the designated Federal Lead Agency for the Uniform Act.

- U.S. Department of the Interior, Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) – Federal agency responsible for coordination to avoid, minimize, or mitigate impacts to Federally-listed protected species in compliance with Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act. USFWS is the federal agency with jurisdiction for compliance with the Migratory Bird Treaty Act and the Bald Eagle Protection Act. Additionally, USFWS consultation includes the review of projects posing potentially unavoidable longitudinal stream encroachments or channel straightening impacts of 50 or more feet to intermittent and perennial streams, in accordance with the Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act. USFWS coordination will include reviews of technical ecology documentation estimating overall potential jurisdictional impacts;

- U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service (NPS) – Federal agency responsible for coordination to avoid or minimize impacts to official units of the NPS; and

- U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) -– Federal agency responsible for protecting public health and the environment by improving air, land and water quality. Coordination with EPA is required under Section 102 (2) (C) of NEPA, Section 309 of the Clean Air Act and Section 404 of the Clean Water Act to avoid or minimize impacts to air, land and water quality.

State Resource Agencies

In addition to GDOT and TDOT, other state agencies may hold statutory responsibility for the protection of resources. State resource agency roles in the NEPA process for this study include:

- Georgia Department of Natural Resources (GADNR) Environmental Protection Division, and Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation – In accordance with Section 401 of the Clean Water Act, these state agencies are responsible for issuing Water Quality Certifications for projects requiring an individual permit under Section 404 of the Clean Water Act. Early coordination during the Tier 1 EIS will contribute toward the preparation of such certifications, if applicable, during the Tier 2 NEPA phase;

- GADNR Historic Preservation Division, and Tennessee Historical Commission – both State Historic Preservation Officers (SHPOs) responsible for ensuring compliance with Section 106 of the NHPA. The SHPOs contribute data identifying resources on or eligible for the National Register of Historic Places, and other historic structures and archaeological sites. The agencies also may establish agreements for assessment and coordination activities in advance of the Tier 2 NEPA process; and

- GADNR Wildlife Resources Division is responsible for, conserving, enhancing, and promoting Georgia's wildlife resources, including game and nongame animals, fish and protected plants. The Division is comprised of three sections – Game Management, Fisheries Management, and Nongame Conservation.

Municipal and Regional Agencies

Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs), regional planning agencies (and city or county planning agencies, where appropriate), and regional transportation agencies within the study area provide the latest planning assumptions, including land use assumptions, population and employment forecasts, and transportation modeling data. Such data will be the common foundation for the Tier 1 EIS socioeconomic, mobility and land use analyses.

MPOs are established by the Governor and local officials for regional transportation planning in urbanized areas. The USDOT designates urbanized areas with populations of 50,000 or more. MPOs adopt long-range regional transportation plans meeting Federal air quality standards and establish short-term programs of transportation projects. The pertinent MPOs, and their respective counties that fall within the study area, include:

- Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC) – MPO for Cherokee, Clayton, Cobb, Douglas, Fulton, and Paulding Counties;

- Chattanooga-Hamilton County Regional Planning Agency (CHCRPA), Transportation Planning Organization (TPO) – MPO for Hamilton County, Tennessee and portions of Catoosa County and Walker County, Georgia in the Chattanooga urbanized area;

- Cartersville-Bartow MPO – Formed in 2013; an intergovernmental transportation planning body for Bartow County, Georgia;

- Floyd-Rome Urban Transportation Study (FRUTS) – MPO for the Rome urbanized area within Floyd County; and

- Greater Dalton MPO – MPO for the Dalton urbanized area within Whitfield County.

Designated under state laws, regional commissions within the study area develop, promote, and assist with the establishment of coordinated and comprehensive plans, offering technical assistance to state, Federal, and local agencies in balancing quality growth and development with the conservation of resources. Regional planning agencies within the study area include:

- Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC) – representing Cherokee, Clayton, Cobb, Douglas and Fulton Counties within the study area;

- Appalachian Regional Commission (also known as the ARC) – Federal-state partnership supporting sustainable community and economic development for 13 states in the

Appalachian region, including Georgia and Tennessee. To avoid confusion with the Atlanta Regional Commission, the "ARC" acronym will not be used to make reference to the Appalachian Regional Commission and will only be used to refer to the Atlanta Regional Commission;

- CHCRPA – representing Hamilton County within the study area; and
- Northwest Georgia Regional Commission – representing Bartow, Catoosa, Chattooga, Floyd, Gordon, Murray, Paulding, Polk, Walker, and Whitfield Counties within the study area.

Municipal governments within the study area (including city and county government agencies) may also be consulted during the Tier 1 EIS development process to provide or validate land use planning, right-of-way, or socioeconomic information. County governments within the study area include:

- Bartow County, Georgia;
- Catoosa County, Georgia;
- Clayton County, Georgia;
- Cobb County, Georgia;
- Douglas County, Georgia;
- Floyd County, Georgia;
- Fulton County, Georgia;
- Gordon County, Georgia;
- Hamilton County, Tennessee;
- Murray County, Georgia;
- Paulding County, Georgia;
- Polk County, Georgia; and
- Whitfield County, Georgia.

Several regional and local transportation agencies are located within the study area. These include, but are not limited to:

- Chattanooga Area Regional Transportation Authority (CARTA);
- Cobb Community Transit;
- Georgia Regional Transportation Authority (GRTA); and
- Metropolitan Atlanta Rapid Transit Authority (MARTA).

C. Additional Stakeholder Coordination (HSGT Intermodal Sub-committee)

HSGT Intermodal Sub-Committee

This sub-committee includes members of the Georgia State Transportation Board and study area stakeholders[3]. The sub-committee provides input to GDOT project management staff at key points in the development of the HSGT study.

D. Collaborative Problem-Solving Administration

The lead agency and the study team will use the following decision-making approach, as required. If an impasse occurs between the lead agency and the direct project management team cannot make a decision within a two-week period of the issue being identified, each party agrees to involve relevant agency management as outlined in **Table 1**. Final decisions of any continuing issues will be a matter for determination by the GDOT Commissioner, the TDOT Commissioner, and the FRA Associate Administrator or their respective designees.

If a decision is stalled, the management hierarchy for these organizations is shown in Table 1 below. When the representatives at the lowest level for each party have reached an impasse and have agreed to elevate the decision, a meeting will be held within a one-week period. At that time, representatives from both levels will meet to discuss the issues related to the impasse and attempt resolution.

If an agreement cannot be reached within a week, the issue will be elevated to the next level and a meeting will be held within a one-week period. At that time, representatives from all three levels will meet to discuss the issues related to the impasse and attempt resolution.

If an agreement cannot be reached within a week, the issue will be elevated to the highest organizational level and a meeting date will be established within a one-week period. At that time, all parties at all levels will meet to resolve the issue. The parties hereto agree that any resolution to an impasse secured through the decision-making process set forth in this section will be communicated in writing to all parties.

[3] *Stakeholders generally include County Commissioners, City Council members, and planning managers/staff of jurisdictions within the project study area.*

Table 1 – Management Hierarchy

Level	FRA	GDOT	TDOT
1	Environmental Protection Specialist	Project Manager	Project Manager
2	Division Office of Program Delivery	Intermodal Division Director	Assistant Chief of Environment and Planning
3	Associate Administrator for Railroad Development	Chief Engineer	Chief of Environment and Planning
4	Administrator	Commissioner	Commissioner

E. Project Milestones, Review Periods & Expectations

As stated in the Introduction, SAFETEA-LU 6002 established the milestones at which proposed project efforts must be reviewed by the joint lead agencies, participating agencies, and the public prior to moving forward in the Tier 1 EIS process. These milestones include:

- Project Need and Purpose (by public, participating agencies and tribal governments during scoping);
- Identification of the Range of Alternatives (by public, participating agencies and tribal governments during scoping);
- Methodologies to be used and level of detail required in the analysis of each alternative (by participating agencies and tribal governments during scoping and alternatives screening stages);
- Tier 1 Draft EIS (by lead agency, prior to Notice of Availability);
- Identification of Preferred Alternative (by lead agency);
- Tier 1 Final EIS (by lead agency, prior to Notice of Availability); and
- Tier 1 ROD (by Federal lead agency and U.S. Environmental Protection Agency only).

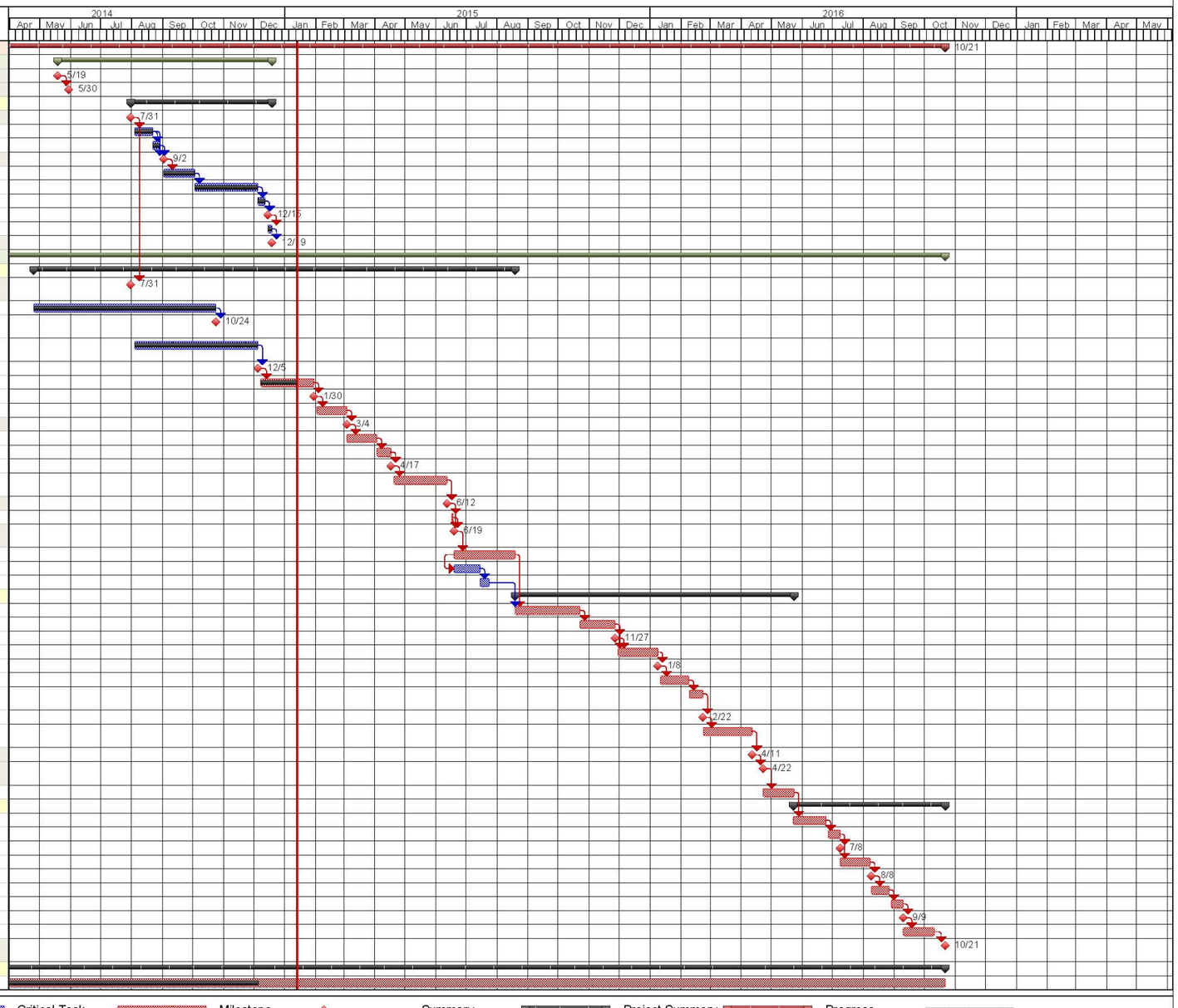
Section 1319(b) of MAP-21 directs the lead agencies, to the maximum extent possible, to expeditiously develop a single document that consists of a Final EIS and ROD in order to streamline the environmental review process. Traditionally, Final EIS and ROD documents are issued as separate documents with a minimum 30-day period between the Final EIS and the ROD. The current project schedule, as seen below, does not reflect this new guidance. Further coordination between the project sponsors and lead agencies will determine the proper course of action.

The activities shown above are identified in the overall anticipated project schedule. The project schedule includes anticipated timeframes for document reviews by participating agencies. See **Figure 2: Project Schedule**.

Figure 2 – Project Schedule

Atlanta to Chattanooga HSGT Tier 1 EIS Schedule
Gantt Chart: As of Tue 1/13/15

ID	Task Name	Approx Calendar Days	Working Days	Start	Finish
0	**Atlanta to Chattanooga HSGT Tier 1 EIS Schedule**	**1164**	**809 dys**	**Wed 8/14/13**	**Fri 10/21/16**
1	**Task 1 NEPA Public Outreach**	**214**	**149 dys**	**Mon 5/19/14**	**Fri 12/19/14**
2	*Submit Agency & Stakeholder Involvement Plan (ASIP) to GDOT*	*0*	*0 dys*	*Mon 5/19/14*	*Mon 5/19/14*
3	*Submit ASIP to FRA*	*0*	*0 dys*	*Fri 5/30/14*	*Fri 5/30/14*
4	**Agency and Stakeholder Involvement Plan**	**141**	**98 dys**	**Thu 7/31/14**	**Fri 12/19/14**
5	*GDOT receives comments from FRA*	*0*	*0 dys*	*Thu 7/31/14*	*Thu 7/31/14*
6	Address FRA comments	18	14 dys	Mon 8/4/14	Fri 8/22/14
7	GDOT reviews revised document	7	5 dys	Fri 8/22/14	Fri 8/29/14
8	*GDOT submits revised document to FRA*	*0*	*0 dys*	*Tue 9/2/14*	*Tue 9/2/14*
9	FRA reviews revised document	31	23 dys	Tue 9/2/14	Fri 10/3/14
10	Address FRA comments	63	43 dys	Fri 10/3/14	Fri 12/5/14
11	GDOT reviews revised document	7	5 dys	Fri 12/5/14	Fri 12/12/14
12	*GDOT submits revised document to FRA*	*0*	*0 dys*	*Mon 12/15/14*	*Mon 12/15/14*
13	FRA reviews revised document	4	4 dys	Mon 12/15/14	Fri 12/19/14
14	*FRA approves revised document*	*0*	*0 dys*	*Fri 12/19/14*	*Fri 12/19/14*
15	**Task 2 Tier 1 EIS Document & Section 4(f) Analysis**	**1164**	**809 dys**	**Wed 8/14/13**	**Fri 10/21/16**
16	**Draft EIS**	**481**	**334 dys**	**Fri 4/25/14**	**Wed 8/19/15**
17	*Receive concurrence from FRA for Corrective Actions Memorandum for agency comments on Administrative Draft EIS*	*0*	*0 dys*	*Thu 7/31/14*	*Thu 7/31/14*
18	Update Ridership Model	182	127 dys	Fri 4/25/14	Fri 10/24/14
19	*GDOT receives Ridership Model Technical Memorandum (for environmental review files)*	*0*	*0 dys*	*Fri 10/24/14*	*Fri 10/24/14*
20	Revise DEIS based on approved Corrective Actions Memorandum	123	86 dys	Mon 8/4/14	Fri 12/5/14
21	*GDOT receives revised Draft EIS*	*0*	*0 dys*	*Fri 12/5/14*	*Fri 12/5/14*
22	GDOT/TDOT review Draft EIS (iterative process)	53	36 dys	Mon 12/8/14	Fri 1/30/15
23	*GDOT submits revised Draft EIS to FRA*	*0*	*0 dys*	*Fri 1/30/15*	*Fri 1/30/15*
24	Address FRA comments	30	30 edys	Mon 2/2/15	Wed 3/4/15
25	*GDOT receives comments from FRA*	*0*	*0 dys*	*Wed 3/4/15*	*Wed 3/4/15*
26	Address FRA comments	30	30 edys	Wed 3/4/15	Fri 4/3/15
27	GDOT/TDOT review revised Draft EIS (iterative process)	14	10 dys	Fri 4/3/15	Fri 4/17/15
28	*GDOT submits revised Draft EIS to FRA*	*0*	*0 dys*	*Fri 4/17/15*	*Fri 4/17/15*
29	FRA reviews revised Draft EIS (15 day staff review + 30 day legal sufficiency review)	53	38 dys	Mon 4/20/15	Fri 6/12/15
30	*FRA approves Draft EIS*	*0*	*0 dys*	*Fri 6/12/15*	*Fri 6/12/15*
31	Agency Summit	1	1 dy	Wed 6/17/15	Thu 6/18/15
32	*EPA publishes NOA in Federal Register and GDOT/TDOT advertise within corridor*	*0*	*0 dys*	*Fri 6/19/15*	*Fri 6/19/15*
33	Distribute Draft EIS and Public and Agency Review Period	61	61 edys	Fri 6/19/15	Wed 8/19/15
34	Prepare materials for Public Hearings	26	18 dys	Fri 6/19/15	Wed 7/15/15
35	Public Hearings	9	7 dys	Wed 7/15/15	Fri 7/24/15
36	**Final EIS**	**278**	**192.88 dys**	**Wed 8/19/15**	**Mon 5/23/16**
37	Prepare Administrative Final EIS	65	65 edys	Wed 8/19/15	Fri 10/23/15
38	GDOT/TDOT review Administrative Final EIS (iterative process)	35	35 edys	Fri 10/23/15	Fri 11/27/15
39	*GDOT submits Administrative Final EIS to FRA*	*0*	*0 dys*	*Fri 11/27/15*	*Fri 11/27/15*
40	FRA reviews Administrative Final EIS	39	27 dys	Mon 11/30/15	Fri 1/8/16
41	*GDOT receives comments from FRA*	*0*	*0 dys*	*Fri 1/8/16*	*Fri 1/8/16*
42	Address FRA comments	28	21 dys	Mon 1/11/16	Mon 2/8/16
43	GDOT/TDOT review revised Administrative Final EIS (iterative process)	13	10 dys	Tue 2/9/16	Mon 2/22/16
44	*GDOT submits Final EIS to FRA*	*0*	*0 dys*	*Mon 2/22/16*	*Mon 2/22/16*
45	FRA reviews Final EIS (15 day staff review + 30 day legal sufficiency review)	48	35 dys	Tue 2/23/16	Mon 4/11/16
46	***FRA approves Final EIS***	***0***	***0 dys***	***Mon 4/11/16***	***Mon 4/11/16***
47	***FRA publishes NOA in Federal Register and GDOT/TDOT advertise within corridor***	***0***	***0 dys***	***Fri 4/22/16***	***Fri 4/22/16***
48	Distribute Final EIS and public and agency review	31	31 edys	Fri 4/22/16	Mon 5/23/16
49	**ROD**	**151**	**107 dys**	**Mon 5/23/16**	**Fri 10/21/16**
50	Prepare ROD	32	24 dys	Mon 5/23/16	Fri 6/24/16
51	GDOT/TDOT review ROD (iterative process)	11	9 dys	Mon 6/27/16	Fri 7/8/16
52	*GDOT submits ROD*	*0*	*0 dys*	*Fri 7/8/16*	*Fri 7/8/16*
53	FRA reviews ROD	30	30 edys	Fri 7/8/16	Sun 8/7/16
54	*GDOT receives comments from FRA*	*0*	*0 dys*	*Mon 8/8/16*	*Mon 8/8/16*
55	Address FRA comments	17	14 dys	Tue 8/9/16	Fri 8/26/16
56	GDOT/TDOT review revised ROD (iterative process)	11	9 dys	Mon 8/29/16	Fri 9/9/16
57	*GDOT submits revised ROD to FRA*	*0*	*0 dys*	*Fri 9/9/16*	*Fri 9/9/16*
58	FRA reviews and approves ROD	31	31 edys	Fri 9/9/16	Mon 10/10/16
59	*EPA publishes NOA in Federal Register and GDOT/TDOT advertise within corridor*	*0*	*0 edys*	*Fri 10/21/16*	*Fri 10/21/16*
60	**Administration and Management**	**1164**	**809 dys**	**Wed 8/14/13**	**Fri 10/21/16**
61	Project Management & Reporting	1164	809 dys	Wed 8/14/13	Fri 10/21/16



1. Yellow shaded tasks denote major sub-tasks
2. Grey shaded tasks denote FRA deliverables
3. Red italics font reflect key milestones tasks

Task | Critical Task | Milestone | Summary | Project Summary | Progress

F. Milestones to Project Completion

The project milestones include all work required to complete the Tier 1 EIS, supporting technical reports and studies, and ROD. This work includes:

- A revised administrative Tier 1 Draft EIS for FRA review and approval;
- A Revised Administrative Tier 1 Draft EIS that includes responses to all substantive comments received on the Tier 1 Draft EIS;
- An Agency Summit, which includes an invitation for local, state, and Federal agencies to identify any outstanding issues prior to the formal review period;
- Tier 1 Draft EIS Notice of Availability (NOA), which notifies agencies and the public of the public meetings and public/agency review period;
- Public meetings and minimum 45 to 60-day comment period;
- An Administrative Tier 1 Final EIS, which will be prepared based on agency and public review comments, as well as those received at public meetings;
- Tier 1 Final EIS and NOA, based on comments from FRA review; and
- Record of Decision (ROD), prepared for FRA.

IV. PUBLIC AND STAKEHOLDER INVOLVEMENT PLAN

A. Public and Stakeholder Involvement Overview

Public involvement is integrated into the environmental review process through a transparent process. During the environmental review process, stakeholders who may be affected by the proposed project can see how their input has been taken into account and incorporated into the technical work. This ensures that at the end of the project, stakeholders in the project have had an opportunity to provide input at all major milestones. The public involvement process enables the project sponsors to:

- Create an environment in which decisions are based on an objective, transparent, and inclusive planning process that actively seeks input from a variety of stakeholders;
- Consider all public information and technical input, which aids the planning process and decision-making;
- Ensure open and clear communications;
- Facilitate two-way education; and
- Meet and exceed state and Federal public involvement requirements.

The specific public involvement goals for this project are:

- Provide a structure and forum for interested and affected parties to provide input and comment on major issues, problems, and alternatives along the proposed Atlanta-Chattanooga HSGT corridor;
- Educate agency representatives, stakeholders, and members of the public and media about issues, opportunities, goals, and alternatives affecting the proposed Atlanta-Chattanooga HSGT corridor;
- Create general awareness of the study among highway, airport, and transit users, the business communities, residents, and local government officials;
- Clarify the decision-making process; and
- Engage all key stakeholders in the study process and results, and build consensus on future activities.

B. Public and Stakeholder Involvement Activities

Public Meetings

Public meetings will be held once FRA has approved the Tier 1 Draft EIS and released if for public and agency review. The public meetings will be held in three locations in the proposed project study area, providing opportunities at the south (Atlanta Region) and north termini (Chattanooga Region) of the study area, and at least one location in between Atlanta and Chattanooga such as Cartersville, Georgia.

Public Information Materials

The previously-created project website will be maintained through the completion of the Tier 1 Final EIS and ROD. This site will include project documents, project newsletters and announcements (including locations/dates) of public meetings. The website is accessible via the following link: http://www.dot.ga.gov/travelingingeorgia/rail/Pages/Atl-Chatt.aspx.

Fact Sheets and Newsletters

The project sponsors will prepare project fact sheets and newsletters to answer the most frequently asked questions about the study. Possible topics include a discussion of mode options, noise impacts, need and purpose, environmental impacts, and service options. Fact sheets will be concise and easy-to-read, two-sided sheets with color. Both fact sheets and newsletters will be posted on the Web page and a small quantity printed for distribution at public meetings and other events in the study area.

Outreach Database

The outreach database, which includes a list of stakeholder contact information, will be updated for the ASIP and maintained through the completion of the Tier 1 EIS.

C. Environmental Justice Outreach

In accordance with Executive Order 12898 (Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low Income Populations), there will be particular emphasis on involving underserved populations, including minority, low-income, transit-dependent, and non-English speaking communities. Executive Order 12898 requires each Federal agency to achieve environmental justice as part of its mission by identifying and addressing, as appropriate, disproportionately high and adverse human health or environmental effects, including interrelated social and economic effects of its programs, policies and activities on minority populations and low-income populations in the United States.

Outreach: A key aspect of an Environmental Justice (EJ) analysis is to ensure the involvement of affected communities/populations in our transportation decision-making processes. Early and continuous public involvement is critical to identifying needs and developing solutions to our transportation problems. The efforts to engage minority and low-income populations/communities must be genuine in order to develop trusting relationships with these communities. They need to know that their input is valued and given serious consideration in project decisions. EJ communities of concern within the proposed project study area may be targeted for additional public engagement before a ROD is issued. Special outreach will be conducted for minority and low-income populations in these communities. The project team will identify the languages spoken by the communities in the project study area and will provide language services for greater participation from these communities. For instance, it is already known that Spanish-language publicizing of meetings and public meetings, availability of Spanish-language versions of presentation materials, and availability of Spanish interpreters at public meetings will be needed.

Maintaining some consistency among those involved through the life of a project, and engaging the public frequently, helps to build trust in the project sponsors. Additional measures such as inviting local elected officials and other known community leaders and communicating project updates with these individuals will be maintained throughout the environmental review process.

Accessibility: Public meetings and public meetings will take place in Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)-accessible locations to ensure disabled persons may attend. Public meetings will also take place in transit-accessible locations when possible, so that transit-dependent persons are able to attend.

Appendix A – Distribution Lists

Stakeholders

Prefix	First Name	Last Name	Title	Organization	Phone #	Email
County and City						
Mr.	Steve	Taylor	County Commissioner	Bartow County	770-387-5030	taylors@bartowga.org
Mr.	Keith	Greene	Chairman	Catoosa County	706-965-2500	keith.greene@catoosa.com
Mr	L.B. "Buzz"	Ahrens, Jr.	Commission Chairman	Cherokee County	678-493-6000	lbahrens@cherokeega.com
Mr.	Brian	Bulthuis	City Manager	City of Acworth	770-974-3112	bbulthuis@acworth.org
Ms.	Duriya	Farooqui	Chief Operating Officer, Office of the COO	City of Atlanta	404.330.6004	dfarooqui@atlantaga.gov
Mr.	Eddie	Peterson	City Administrator	City of Calhoun	706-629-0151	fepeterson@calnet-ga.net
Mr.	Sam	Grove	City Manager	City of Cartersville	770-387-5616	sgrove@cityofcartersville.org
Mr.	Ty	Ross	City Administrator	City of Dalton	706-278-9500	tross@cityofdalton-ga.gov
Ms.	Freida	Wheeler	City Manager	City of East Ridge	423-867-7711	fwheeler@eastridgetn.org
Mr.	Al	Pallone	Mayor	City of Emerson	770-382-9819	apallone@emersoncityhall.com
Mr.	Dan	Wright	City Manager	City of Ringgold	706-935-3061	danwright@catt.com
Ms.	Carol	Berz	Councilwoman	City of Chattanooga	423-757-5198	berz_c@mail.chattanooga.gov
Mr.	Mark	Matthews	Mayor	City of Kennesaw	770-424-8274	mmathews@kennesaw-ga.gov
Mr.	Jeffrey	Turner	Chairman	Clayton County Board of Commissioners	770-477-3208	beverly.mcmichen@claytoncountaga.gov
Mr.	Tim	Lee	Chairman	Cobb County	770-528-1000	tlee@cobbcounty.org
Mr.	Tom	Wortham	Chairman	Douglas County	770-920-7269	tworthan@co.douglas.ga.us
Mr	John	Eaves	Chairman	Fulton County	404-730-8200	john.eaves@fultoncountyga.gov
Mr	Gary	Burkhalter	County Manager	Floyd County	706-291-5110	burkhalterg@floydcountyga.org
Mr.	Becky	Hood	Chair-Person	Gordon County	706-629-379	bhood@gordoncounty.org
Mr.	Jim	Coppinger	Mayor	Hamilton County	423-209-6100	countymayor@mail.hamiltontn.gov
Mr.	Larry L	Henry	Chairman	Hamilton County	423-209-7200	district7@mail.hamiltontn.gov

Prefix	First Name	Last Name	Title	Organization	Phone #	Email
Mr.	James	Welch	Chairman	Murray County	706-695-2413	
Mr.	David	Austin	Chairman	Paulding County	770-443-7550	commissioners@paulding.gov
Ms.	Bebe	Haskell	Commissioner	Walker County	706-638-1437	commissioner@walkerga.us
Mr.	Mike	Babb	Chairman	Whitfield County	706-275-7500	mbabb@whitfieldcountyga.com
Ms.	Ceasar	Mitchell	City Council President	City of Atlanta	404- 330-6030	ccmitchell@atlantaga.gov
Mr.	Kwanza	Hall	City Council Member	City of Atlanta	404-330-6038	khall@atlantaga.gov
Business Organizations						
Mr.	Mason	Zimmerman	Chairman	Town Center CID	770-980-0808	hmzimmerman@popeandland.com
Mr.	Tad	Leithead	Chairman	Cumberland CID	770.859.2347	rplummer@cumberlandcid.org
Mr.	Don	Cope	President & CEO	Dalton Utilities	706-278-1313	dcope@dutil.com
Mr.	Paul	Bowers	President & CEO	Georgia Power		
Mr.	Kevin	Green	President & CEO	Midtown Alliance	404-892-0050	kevin@midtownATL.com
Mr	A.J.	Robinson	President	Central Atlanta Progress	404-658-1877	aj@atlantadowntown.com
Prefix	**First Name**	**Last Name**	**Title**	**Organization**	**Phone #**	**Email**
Ms.	Bari	Love	Senior Vice President of Communications and Marketing	Metro Atlanta Chamber of Commerce	404-586-8466	blove@macoc.com
Planning Organizations						
Ms.	Susan	Paredes	GDMPO Coordinator	Greater Dalton MPO	706-876-2559	sparedes@whitfieldcountyga.com
Mr.	Lamont	Kiser	Director	Cartersville-Bartow Metropolitan Planning Organization	770-607-6253	kiserl@bartowga.org
Mr	John	Bridger	Secretary to Commission	Chattanooga-Hamilton County Regional Planning Agency	423-757-5216	bennett_b@mail.chattanooga.gov
Mr.	Mike	Babb	Executive Director	Northwest Georgia Regional Commission	706-295-6485	
Mr.	James	Thompson	Program Manager	Appalachian Regional Commission	404-679-1584	james.thompson@dca.ga.gov
Mr.	Walter "Sonny"	Deriso	Chairman of the Board of Directors	GRTA	404-463-3000	comments@grta.org
Mr	Douglas	Hooker	Director	Atlanta Regional Commission		

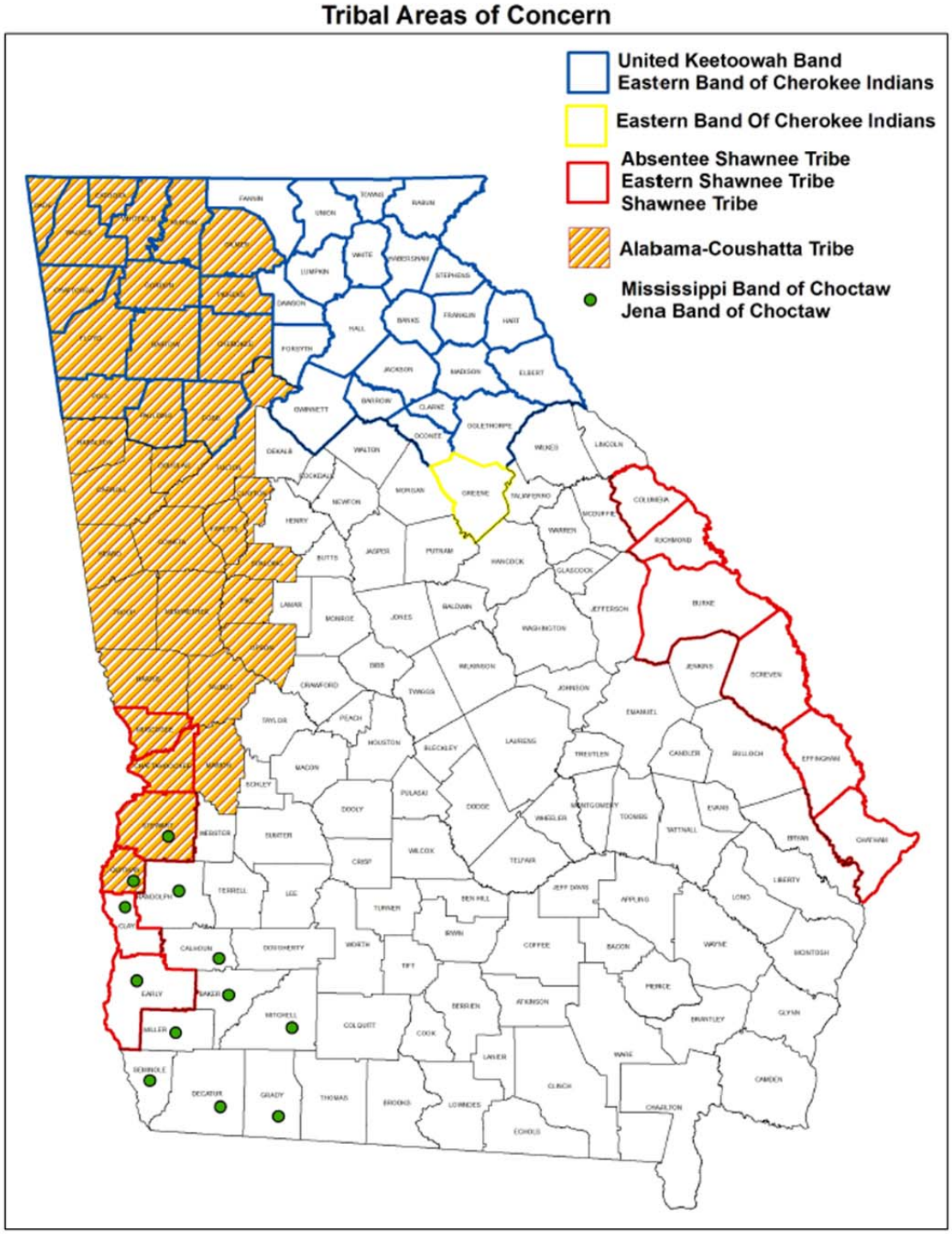
Prefix	First Name	Last Name	Title	Organization	Phone #	Email
Transportation Agencies						
Mr.	Jeff	Lewis	State Transportation Board Member, Congressional District 11	GDOT	770-382-4411	jeflewis@dot.ga.gov
Mr.	Roger	Williams	State Transportation Board Member, Congressional District 14	GDOT	706-618-6029	rogwilliams@dot.ga.gov
Ms.	Stacey	Key	State Transportation Board Member, Congressional District 5	GDOT	404-310-5040	skey@dot.ga.gov
Mr.	John	Schroer	DOT Commissioner	TDOT	615-741-2848	
Mr.	Steve	Vogel	President	Georgia Association of Railroad Passengers		president@garprail.org
Mr.	Gordon	Kenna	Chief Executive Officer	Georgians for Passenger Rail		gkenna@georgiarail.org
Ms.	Jannine	Miller	Executive Director	GRTA	404-463-3000	jmiller@grta.org
Mr.	Tom	Nissalke	Director of Environmental and Technical Services, City of Atlanta-Department of Aviation	Hartsfield Jackson Atlanta International Airport	404-530-5500	tom.nissalke@atlanta-airport.com
Mr.	Terry	Hart	President & CEO	Chattanooga Airport	423-855-2201	thart@Chattairport.com
Mr.	Robert	Ashe III	Board Member	MARTA	404-881-4169	ashe@bmelaw.com
Mr.	Rodney	Barry	Division Administrator	FHWA-GA	404-562-3630	Rodney.barry@dot.gov
State Senators						
Mr.	Judson	Hill	Senator	Marietta	404-656-0150	judson.hill@senate.ga.gov
Mr.	Steve	Thompson	Senator	Marietta	404-656-0083	steve.thompson@senate.ga.gov
Mr.	Jeff	Mullis	Senator	Chickamauga	404-656-0057	jeff.mullis@senate.ga.gov
Mr.	Hunter	Hill	Senator	Atlanta	404-463-2518	hunter.hill@senate.ga.gov
Ms.	Nan	Orrock	Senator	Atlanta	404-463-8054	nan.orrock@senate.ga.gov
Mr.	Charlie	Bethel	Senator	Dalton	404-651-7738	charlie.bethel@senate.ga.gov

Prefix	First Name	Last Name	Title	Organization	Phone #	Email
US Senators & Representatives						
The Honorable	Lamar	Alexander	US Senaor	State of Tennessee	423-752-5337	
The Honorable	Bob	Corker	US Senator	State of Tennessee	423-756-2757	
The Honorable	Phil	Gingrey	Congressman 11th District	US House of Representatives	770-429-1776	gingrey.ga@mail.house.gov
The Honorable	Johnny	Isakson	US Senator	State of Georgia	770-661-0999	
The Honorable	John	Lewis	Congressman 5th District	US House of Representatives	404-659-0116	
The Honorable	Rob	Woodall	Congressman 7th District	US House of Representatives	770-232-3005	
The Honorable	Tom	Price	Congressman 6th District	US House of Representatives	770-998-0049	
The Honorable	Chuck	Fleischmann	Congressman District 3	US House of Representatives	423-756-2342	
The Honorable	Saxby	Chambliss	US Senator	State of Georgia	770-763-9090	

Tribes

Figure 3 illustrates the Native American tribes within the project study area.

Figure 3 – Affected Native-American Tribes



For reference purposes, Federally-recognized tribes are listed below:

Alabama-Coushatta Tribe of Texas
571 State Park Road, 56
Livingston, TX 77351
Web: www.alabama-coushatta.com/
Oscola Clayton Sylestine, Principal Chief
Carlos Bullock, Tribal Council Chairman
Bryant Celestine, THPO
936.563.1181

936.563.1183 fax

celestine.bryant@actribe.org

Absentee-Shawnee Tribe of Oklahoma
2025 S. Gordon Cooper Drive
Shawnee, OK 74801
405.275.4030
405.878.4711 fax
Web: www.astribe.com

Edwina Butler-Wolfe, Governor
Mr. Joseph H. Blanchard, THPO
joseph.blanchard@astribe.com
405.275.4030 ext. 203

Cherokee Nation PO Box 948
Tahlequah, OK 74465
Physical address: 17675 S. Muskogee
Web: www.cherokee.org

Mr. Bill John Baker, Principal Chief
Mr. S. Joe Crittenden, Deputy Chief
RICHARD Allen, THPO
Richard-Allen@cherokee.org
918.453.5466

Chickasaw Nation
PO Box 1548 Ada, OK 74281-1548
Web: www.chickasaw.net
Mr. Bill Anoatubby, Governor
Mr. Jefferson Keel, Lt. Governor
Ms. LaDonna Brown, Historic Preservation Officer
580.272.5593
580.272.5327 fax
ladonna.brown@chickasaw.net
***2020 Arlington, Suite 4 (for packages)

Coushatta Tribe of Louisiana
Phone (337) 584-1545
Fax (337) 584-2998
www.coushattatribela.org
Kevin Sickey, Chairman
Mr. Michael Tarpley, Deputy THPO
kokua.aina57@gmail.com
PO BOX 10
Elton, LA 70532
337.584.1560
C: 318.709.8488

Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians
P.O. Box 455
Cherokee, NC 28719
Web: http://www.cherokee-nc.com/
Michell Hicks, Principal Chief

828.497.2771
Mr. Russell Townsend, THPO
RussellT@nc-cherokee.com
828.554.6851
Mr. Tyler Howe, Tribal Hist. Pres. Specialist
tylehowe@nc-cherokee.com 554.6852

Eastern Shawnee Tribe of Oklahoma
P.O. Box 350
(127 West Oneida Street Seneca)
Seneca, MO 64865
918-666-2435
http://estoo-nsn.gov/

Ms. Glenna J. Walace, Chief
Robin Dushane, Cultural Preservation Director
918.666.2435 ex. 247
Cell 918.533.4104
rdushane@estoo.net

Jena Band of Choctaw Indians
PO Box 14
Jena, LA 71342
Web: http://www.jenachoctaw.org/

B. Sheryl Smith, Chief
Dana Masters, THPO
danammasters@aol.com

318.992.1205

Kialegee Tribal Town
PO Box 332
Wetumka, OK 74883
405.452.3262
405.452.3413 fax

Web:
http://www.kialegeetribaltown.net/
Mekko Jeremiah Hobia, Town King
Mary Givens, THPO
maryj.givens61@yahoo.com

Miccosukee Tribe of Indians of Florida
Tamiami Station
P.O. Box 440021
Miami, FL 33144
http://www.miccosukeeresort.com
Billy Cypress, Chairman
Mr. Fred Dayhoff
NAGPRA/106 Coordinator
Real Estate Services
Mile Marker 70
US 41 at Admin. Bldg.
Miami, FL 33194
239.695.4360

Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians
P.O. Box 6257/ 101 Industrial Road
Choctaw, MS 39350
601.656.5251
601.650.7333 fax

Web: www.choctaw.org
Phyliss J. Anderson, Chief
Mr. Ken Carleton, THPO
kcarleton@choctaw.org

Muscogee (Creek) Nation P.O. Box 580
Okmulgee, OK 74447
Web: www.muscogeenation-nsn.gov
Mr. George Tiger, Principal Chief

gtiger@muscogeenation-nsn.gov
office: 918.732.7731
Emman Spain, Deputy THPO
espain@muscogeenation-nsn.gov
**1008 East Eufaula (for packages)

Poarch Band of Creek Indians
5811 Jack Springs Road
Atmore, Alabama 36502
Web: www.poarchcreekindians-nsn.gov/xhtml/index.htm
Buford Rolin, Chairman
Mr. Robert Thrower, THPO
rthrower@pci-nsn.gov
251.368.9136, ext. 2052
251.253.5620 iphone
251.368.4502 fax

Seminole Nation of Oklahoma
12555 NS 3540
Seminole, OK 74868
405.257.7200
405.257.7209 fax
Web: www.seminolenation.com
Mr. Leonard M. Harjo, Principal Chief

principalchief@seminolenation.com
Natalie Harjo, THPO
harjo.n@sno-nsn.gov
405.303.2683

Seminole Tribe of Florida
Tribal Historic Preservation Office
30290 Josie Billie Highway PMB 1004
Clewiston, FL 33440
Web: www.seminoletribe.com
Mitchell Cypress, Chairman

Dr. Paul N. Blackhouse, THPO
863.983.6549 x12244
863.902.1117 fax
863.228.3793 cell
Bradley Mueller
Compliance Review Supervisor
(863) 983-6549 ext. 12245
bradleymueller@semtribe.com

Shawnee Tribe
Ron Sparkman, Chief
Ben Barnes, Second Chief
Shawnee Tribe
29 S. Highway 69A
Miami, OK 74354
(918) 542-2441
ben.barnes@gmail.com

Thlopthlocco Tribal Town
PO Box 188
Okemah, OK 74859 918.560.6198
918.560.6195 fax
Mr. Vernon Yarholar, Town King

vyarholar@tttown.org
Mr. Bill Fife, Tribal Administrator
bfife@tttown.org
Mr. Charles Coleman, THPO/NAGPRA
chascoleman75@yahoo.com Cell: 405.220.2185

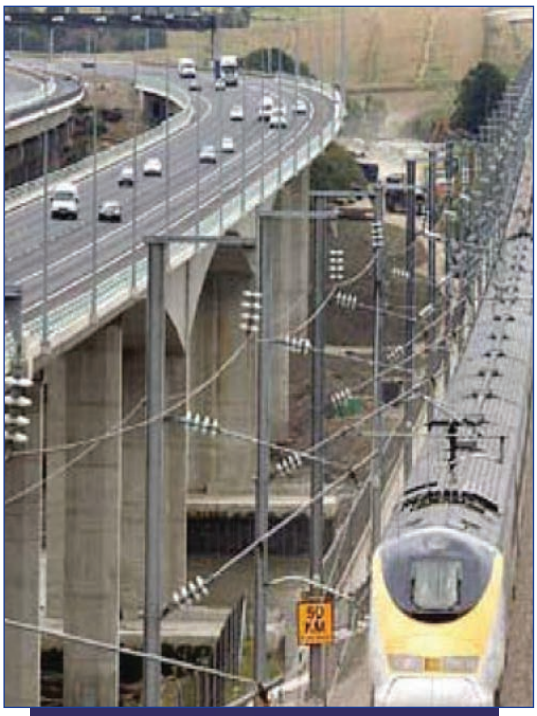
United Keetoowah Band
PO Box 746
Tahlequah, OK 74465
918.456.6533
Web: www.unitedkeetoowahband.org
Mr. Georgia Wickliffe, Chief

Mr. Charles Locust, Assisant Chief
Ms. Lisa Larue-Baker, THPO
918.431.9998
Cell 918.822.1952
918.458.6889 fax
UKBTHPO-ARUE@YAHOO.COM

4.0 PROJECT NEWSLETTERS

Georgia on the Move

Atlanta to Chattanooga High Speed Ground Transportation Study



GDOT HSGT Study

High Speed Ground Transportation Underway

The Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT), with the Tennessee Department of Transportation (TDOT), Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) and the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), has begun study of high speed ground transportation alternatives between Atlanta and Chattanooga. The 110-mile corridor between the two cities is currently congested on I-75, and few alternatives are available.

Visit Our New Web Site! www.atl-chatt.org

The primary goals of this study are to develop and evaluate viable alternatives; assess all substantial transportation and environmental impacts; and solicit input from agencies and the public to help GDOT make decisions. The outcome of the two-year study—a Tier I Environmental Impact Statement (EIS)—will be analysis that provides the sponsoring agencies with enough information to select a transportation technology, general corridor, and general station locations.

GDOT

Keeping Georgia on the Move

High speed ground transportation from Atlanta to Chattanooga!

Highway congestion, growing population and jobs in the region, and lack of alternative modes are reasons to study high speed ground transportation options. The Georgia Department of Transportation with the Tennessee Department of Transportation and the Federal Railroad Administration and the Federal Highway Administration are beginning a comprehensive, two-year study that will lead to selection of a preferred strategy for the Atlanta-Chattanooga corridor.

Input from the public is needed! Keep up to date with the study—read newsletter updates, attend meetings, and send you comments.

Sign up for the mailing list! Contact Susan Knudson at susan.knudson@dot.state.ga.us

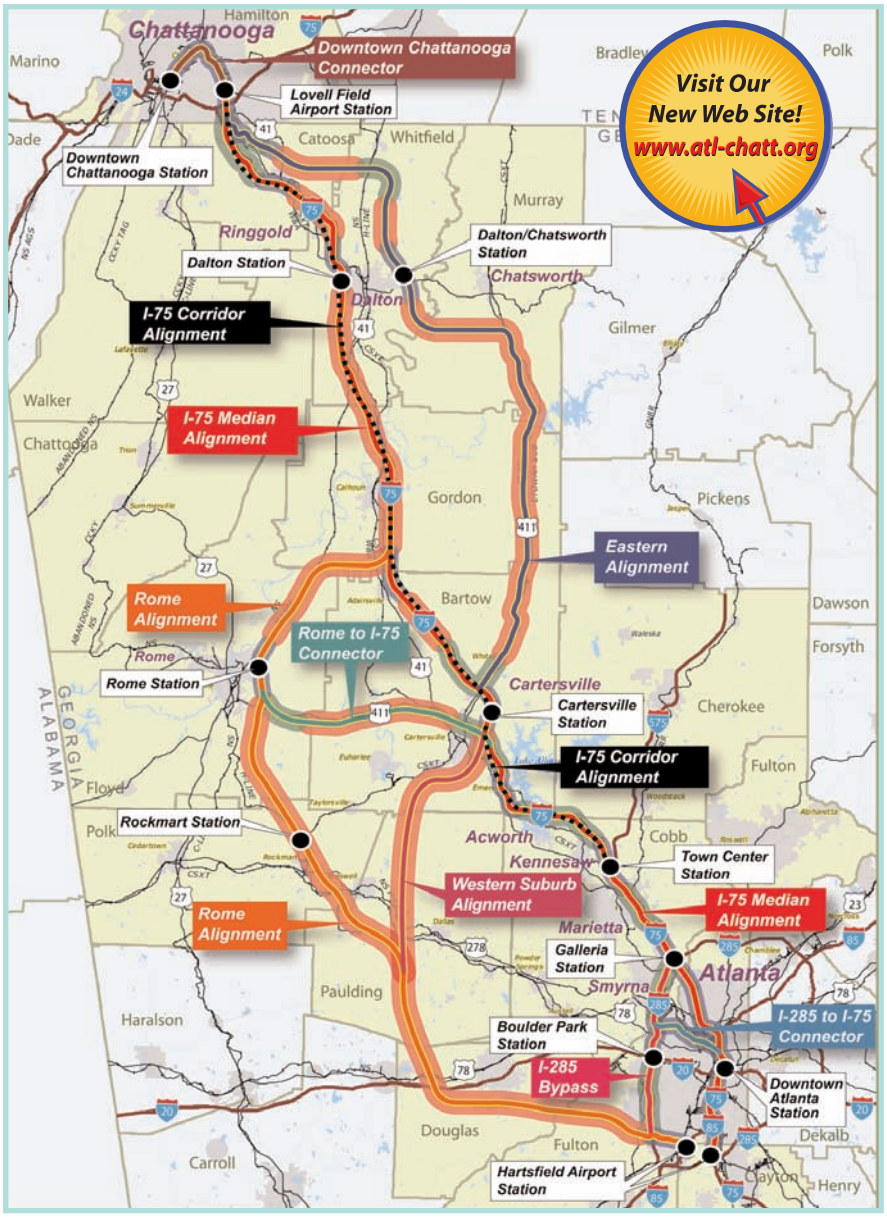
Why High Speed Ground Transportation?

- **Population growth and economic development growth** are straining the highway system between Atlanta and Chattanooga. Transportation demand is outpacing existing and planned roadway capacity. Georgia is the country's sixth fastest growing state. The Atlanta Metropolitan Area represents two-thirds of the state's economy. In metropolitan Atlanta, population is projected to increase from 3.9 million to 7.8 million by 2030. Employment is estimated to double from 2.3 million to 4.6 million. Three major highways serve the corridor: I-75, US 41 and US 27. These highways are projected to operate at or above capacity in 2025. There is a need for additional capacity, but increasing vehicular capacity alone is not an appropriate strategy.
- **HSGT would enhance airport access.** Atlanta's Hartsfield-Jackson International Airport is approaching capacity and vehicular access from the north is becoming congested and unreliable: alternatives to driving are needed.
- **Regional air quality issues must be addressed.** Under the 1990 Clean Air Act Amendments, 13 counties (several of which are in the corridor) in the Atlanta Metropolitan area are designated non-attainment area for ozone and particulate matter. Hamilton County Tennessee is non-attainment for the 8-hour ozone standards. A variety of solutions, including alternatives to cars will need to be implemented to address air quality issues.
- **HSGT would help remove barriers to economic development within the region.** Economic development at existing centers is hampered by inefficient access. For years, the area has been hampered by a surface transportation system adapted to hilly terrain area and an inadequate system of regional freeways.

Continued

GDOT HSGT Study

- Providing an alternative to driving in the corridor could result in **potential energy savings from reduced vehicle travel.** HSGT offers an alternative mode that could reduce congestion and **increase regional mobility and intermodal connectivity**. By diverting travelers from cars, HSGT would not only help reduce roadway congestion in the corridor, but would also connect to existing and planned transit systems within the corridor, including MARTA, Cobb Transit and the Chattanooga transit systems.
- **HSGT would help meet the transportation needs of transit-dependent** populations, including low-income, elderly, youth, persons with disabilities, and car-free residents and workers. Alternatives to driving would *support comprehensive land use planning* and smart growth initiatives by promoting intermodal connectivity, improved mobility, and economic activity.
- HSGT in this corridor would provide a **southeast US link to a future system** of high-speed train service. There is a need to advance HSGT as a network and to comprehensively plan and design the ultimate regional and national system.



What is this Study About?

This study, a Tier I EIS, will investigate and assess transportation, environmental, and planning issues for the HSGT alternatives developed for the study. The alternatives will include two technologies, eight alignments along 110 miles, a variety of station locations, alternative operating plans, and phased implementation. The study will estimate ridership, capital and operating costs, revenue projections, and economic impacts. Agencies and the public are encouraged to participate in the study through meetings, public information materials such as this newsletter, public information open houses, and public hearings.

Potential Alignments and Stations

Initial conceptual alignments begin at Hartsfield-Jackson International Airport and end in Downtown Chattanooga. Two types of mainline alignments were developed: alignments that serve various city centers along the I-75 corridor or alignments through rural areas.

I-75 Median Alignment: The shortest route in the most densely developed corridor. Stays within the I-75 median for most of its length to minimize right-of-way impacts.
Stations: Hartsfield Airport (Southern Crescent Transportation Center), Downtown Atlanta, Galleria Station, Town Center Station, Cartersville, Dalton, Lovell Field Airport Station, and Downtown Chattanooga.

Continued

What is this Study About?

I-75 Corridor Alignment: Leaves the median on aerial structure after the dense urban Atlanta area to obtain a potentially higher travel speed.
Stations: Hartsfield Airport (Southern Crescent Transportation Center), Downtown Atlanta, Galleria Station, Town Center Station, Cartersville, Dalton, Lovell Field Airport Station and Downtown Chattanooga.

Rome Alignment: Serves Rome with a potentially higher-speed alignment bypassing the dense I-75 corridor and activity centers in the southern section. Follows Camp Creek Parkway to I-285 and utility corridors in rural areas.
Stations: Hartsfield Airport, Downtown Atlanta, Rome, Dalton, Lovell Field Airport Station and Downtown Chattanooga.

Eastern Alignment: A potentially higher-speed alignment in the northern half of the corridor which uses an existing rail corridor. Leaves I-75 north of Cartersville and generally follows the CSX corridor.
Stations: Hartsfield Airport (Southern Crescent Transportation Center), Downtown Atlanta, Galleria Station, Town Center Station, Cartersville, Dalton-Chatsworth, Lovell Field Airport Station and Downtown Chattanooga.

Western Suburban Alignment: A potentially higher-speed alignment in the southern half of the corridor.

CONNECTORS

I-285 By-Pass: A potential lower cost, higher-speed alignment in the Atlanta urban area, starting at Hartsfield Airport and continuing on Camp Creek Parkway to I-285. No additional stations.

I-285 to I-75 Connector: A lower-cost alignment in the Atlanta urban area with potentially fewer impacts. Reduces the amount of aerial structure needed. No additional stations.

Rome to I-75 Connector: Provides a connection to Rome from the I-75 alignment, departing I-75 south of Cartersville.

High Speed Ground Transportation Technologies

Two technologies are under study for the Atlanta to Chattanooga corridor. Several years ago, this corridor was studied as part of GDOT's Intercity Rail Plan which looked at commuter rail service. The corridor was first considered for high-speed rail service as part of a federal initiative to demonstrate magnetic levitation (Maglev) technology in the United States; the Atlanta Regional Commission conducted the study.

Magnetic Levitation (MAGLEV)

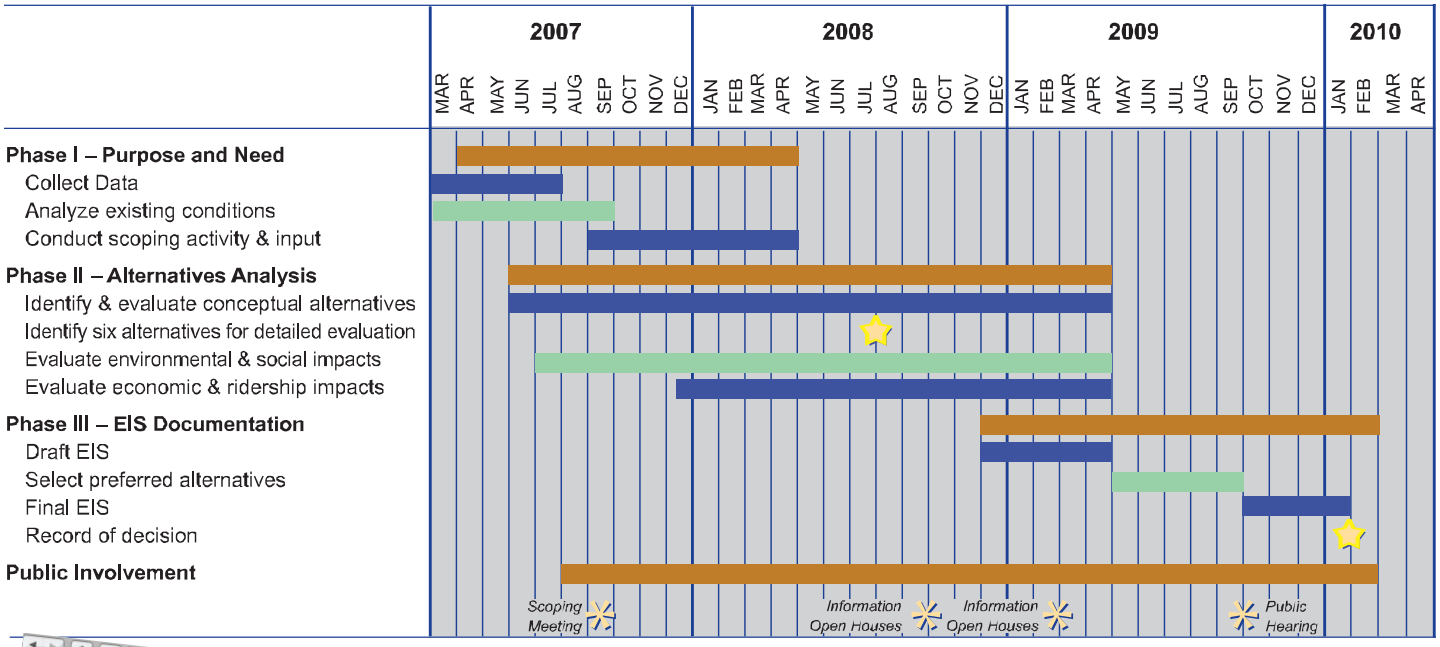
- Potential speeds over 300 mph.
- Average operating speed 185 mph.
- Station spacing 30+ miles.
- Grade separated right-of-way.
- Electric power to magnets from track.
- Magnetic force lifts and propels on guideway.

Very High Speed Rail (VHS)

- Potential speeds near 220 mph.
- Average operating speed 155 mph.
- Station spacing 30+ miles.
- Grade separated right-of-way.
- Electric power from overhead wires to vehicle.
- Steel wheel on steel rail.

Project Schedule

The study is expected to take two years to complete. A series of scoping meetings in September 2007 provided initial input on key issues and concerns. Alternatives will be prepared and reviewed by the public in the spring 2008, and the preferred alternative will be identified in fall 2009.



Scoping Meetings in September 2007

HSGT in the Chattanooga News!

Chattanooga residents reviewed and commented on station location and alignment options at the Public Scoping meeting.

Atlanta residents reviewed alignment options.

The Public Scoping meeting in Rome provided residents with an overview of the HSGT project goals and options.

PROJECT TEAM

Georgia Department of Transportation

Mike Thomas
Director of Planning, Data, and Intermodal Development
(404) 656-0610
mike.thomas@dot.state.ga.us

Glenn Bowman, P.E.
State Environmental/Location Engineer
(404) 699-4401
glenn.bowman@dot.state.ga.us

Susan Knudson
Project Manager
(404) 699-4407
susan.knudson@dot.state.ga.us

Earth Tech Consulting Inc.
David Gorden, P.E.
david.gorden@earthtech.com

Georgia on the Move

Atlanta to Chattanooga High Speed Ground Transportation Study

Introduction

The Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT), with the Tennessee Department of Transportation (TDOT), the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA), and the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), is continuing a study of high speed ground transportation (HSGT) between Atlanta and Chattanooga. This is the second in a series of newsletters to inform stakeholders and the public about this study as it progresses. In this newsletter you will find information about the four alternative alignments that are proposed for further study in a Tier 1 Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), and the process by which those alignments were selected.

GDOT
Keeping Georgia on the Move

Project Overview

The introduction of high speed ground transportation (HSGT) along the 110-mile corridor between Atlanta and Chattanooga is intended to provide a high capacity alternative to roadway and air travelers. The study involves the development of a Tier 1 Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) to ensure that alternatives for the proposed action are evaluated, including a no-build alternative; that transportation, social, economic, and environmental impacts are assessed; and that public involvement and comments are solicited to assist the decision-making process.

The Tier 1 EIS will evaluate potential HSGT alternatives, which include general station locations, and storage and maintenance facilities. The Tier 1 EIS will build upon previous Atlanta – Chattanooga HSGT studies. The Tier 1 EIS will be at a conceptual level of engineering and environmental detail. It will provide the FRA, FHWA, GDOT, and TDOT with sufficient information to determine a general alignment, general station locations, and define the requirements to build and operate an Atlanta – Chattanooga HSGT system.

Scoping Meetings Update

One of the first steps in preparing an EIS is Scoping where the public, stakeholders, and government agencies provide input on the following:

- The study's purpose and need (see page 2);
- Suggested alignment alternatives for further study;
- The technical evaluations to be undertaken to determine how environmental impacts will be assessed;
- How the alternatives will be selected for further study; and
- The opportunities for public involvement.

Agency Scoping meetings were held with federal, state, and local agencies in Atlanta and Chattanooga in September 2007. Public Scoping open houses were also held in Powder Springs, Rome, and Chattanooga. Both sets of Scoping meetings provided an overview of the study and opportunities for input. The study team received numerous comments, questions, and suggestions during these meetings, and throughout the formal 30-day comment period.

After the close of the comment period, GDOT evaluated all the input received from agencies and the public regarding the purpose and need, methodology for the study, station locations, alignments, technology, and environmentally sensitive issues and made changes to the study as a result. These changes included the addition of new concept alignments to be considered as part of the analysis and enhancements to future public and agency coordination efforts.

IN THIS NEWSLETTER

Project Purpose and Need

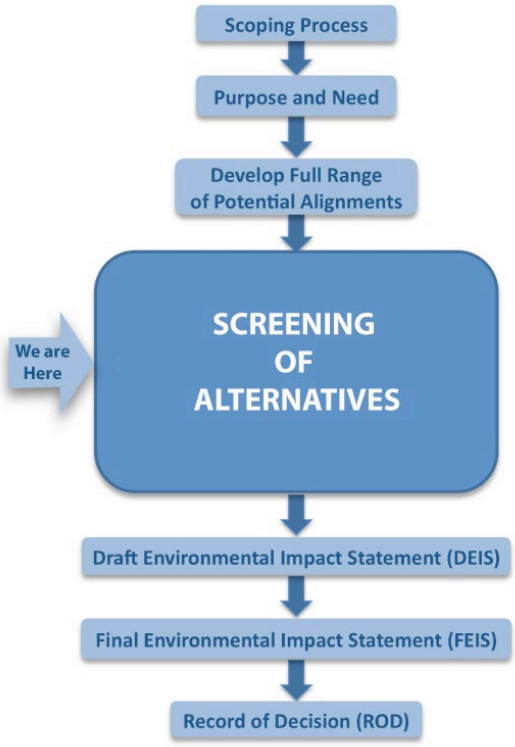
According to the U.S. Department of Transportation, a Purpose and Need Statement is one of the most important parts of an EIS. They explain, "It establishes why the agency is proposing to spend large amounts of taxpayers' money while at the same time causing significant environmental impacts. [It] explains to the public and decisionmakers that the expenditure of funds is necessary and worthwhile… and should justify why impacts are acceptable based on the project's importance."

Based on analysis of previous studies and through feedback from the public and agencies during the Scoping Process, the study team finalized the Purpose and Need Statement for the project.

The purpose of the Atlanta – Chattanooga High Speed Ground Transportation (HSGT) project is to enhance intercity passenger mobility in northwest Georgia and part of Tennessee, by expanding passenger transportation capacity, increasing mobility, and providing an alternative to highway and air travel that is safe, reliable, and cost-effective while avoiding, minimizing, and/or mitigating impacts on neighborhoods and the environment.

The needs for the HSGT project are summarized as follows:

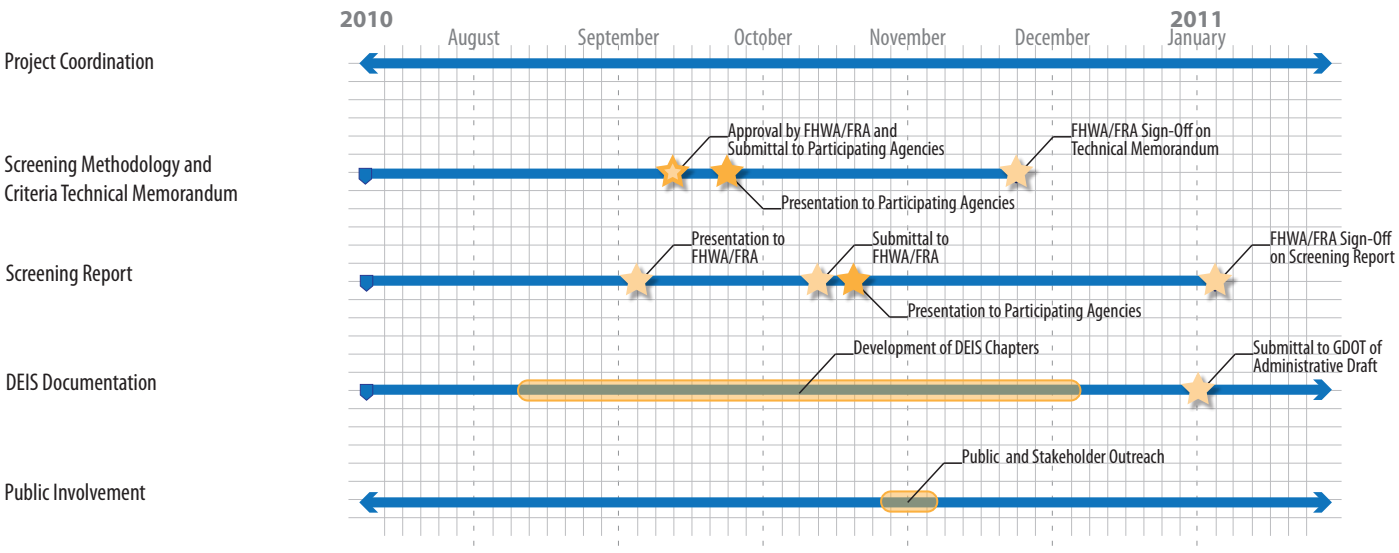
- Address travel demand and population growth
- Provide high capacity versus highway capacity
- Enhance airport access
- Maintain or improve air quality
- Address safety deficiencies in the study area
- Support economic development
- Reduce energy consumption
- Enhance intermodal connections
- Address social demands of various population groups
- Support comprehensive land use planning and smart growth initiatives
- Provide a link in the southeast U.S. region HSGT system



Tier 1 EIS Process

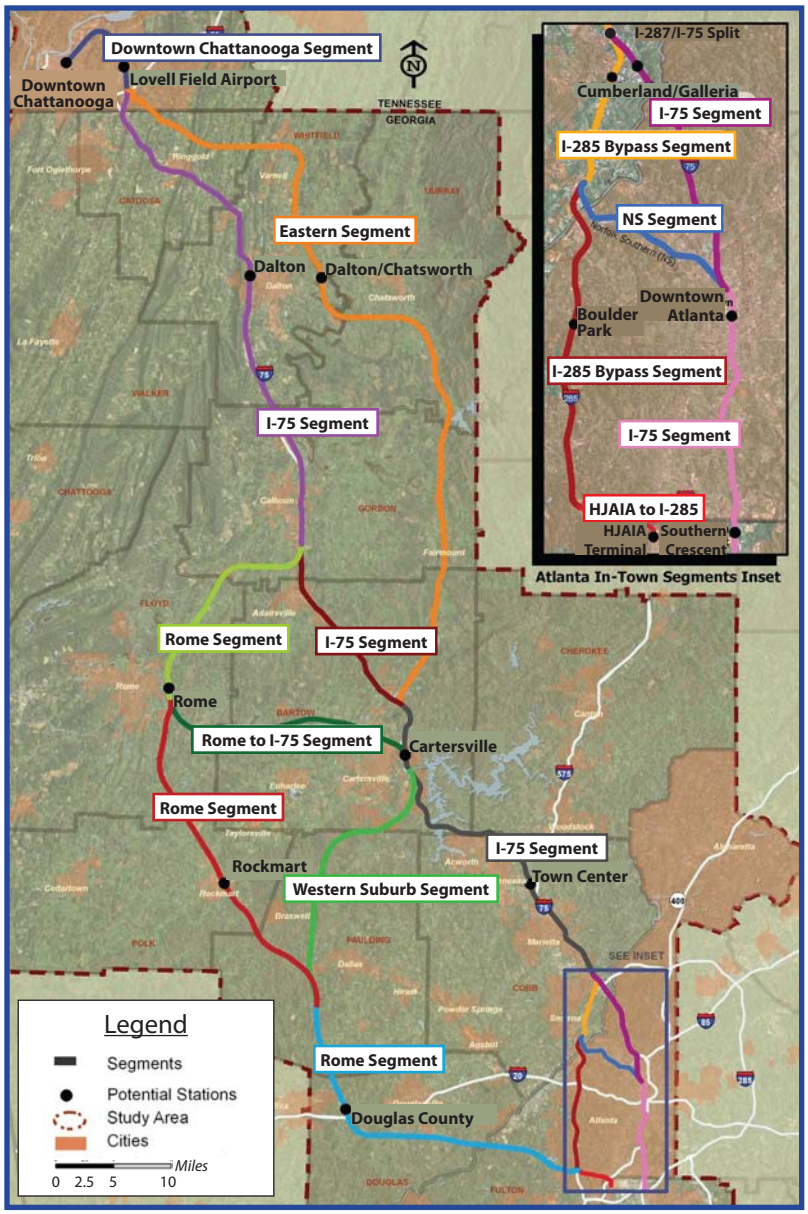
The remaining steps in the Tier 1 EIS process include the environmental impact evaluation, preparation of a Tier 1 Draft EIS (DEIS), presentation of findings to the public and agencies, preparation of the Tier 1 Final EIS (FEIS), and finally release of a Record of Decision (ROD) by FRA and FHWA.

Project Schedule



Alignment Alternatives Evaluated in the Scoping Process

Prior to the Scoping Process, the study team developed a series of potential HSGT "segments" that could be combined in various configurations to connect Downtown Atlanta and Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport (HJAIA) to Downtown Chattanooga. Each segment represents a potential connection that could be made between key destinations in Georgia and Tennessee. The segments are shown in the map below. These segments were reviewed, analyzed and developed into full-length alignments during the Scoping Process.



Map of Alternatives Evaluated in the Scoping Process

The Scoping Process also gave the public and agencies an opportunity to review and comment on the method by which the long list of alternatives would be reduced. This process is called "screening" where suggested alternatives are evaluated against a series of agreed upon criteria. This study utilized a two-step screening process to eliminate certain suggested alternatives, and identify those that warrant further consideration in the Tier 1 EIS. The two-step approach to screening consisted of the following:

- **Step 1:** An initial corridor screen to advance the best performing corridor(s) based on transportation mobility and consistency with the project's Purpose and Need Statement, and
- **Step 2:** A second screen of alignment(s) within the remaining corridor(s) that provided a more detailed assessment relative to ridership, mobility, environmental, and financial/economic criteria.

Based on the results of the screening process the alignments discussed had the best overall performance.

Four Alignment Alternatives to be Advanced in the Draft Tier 1 EIS

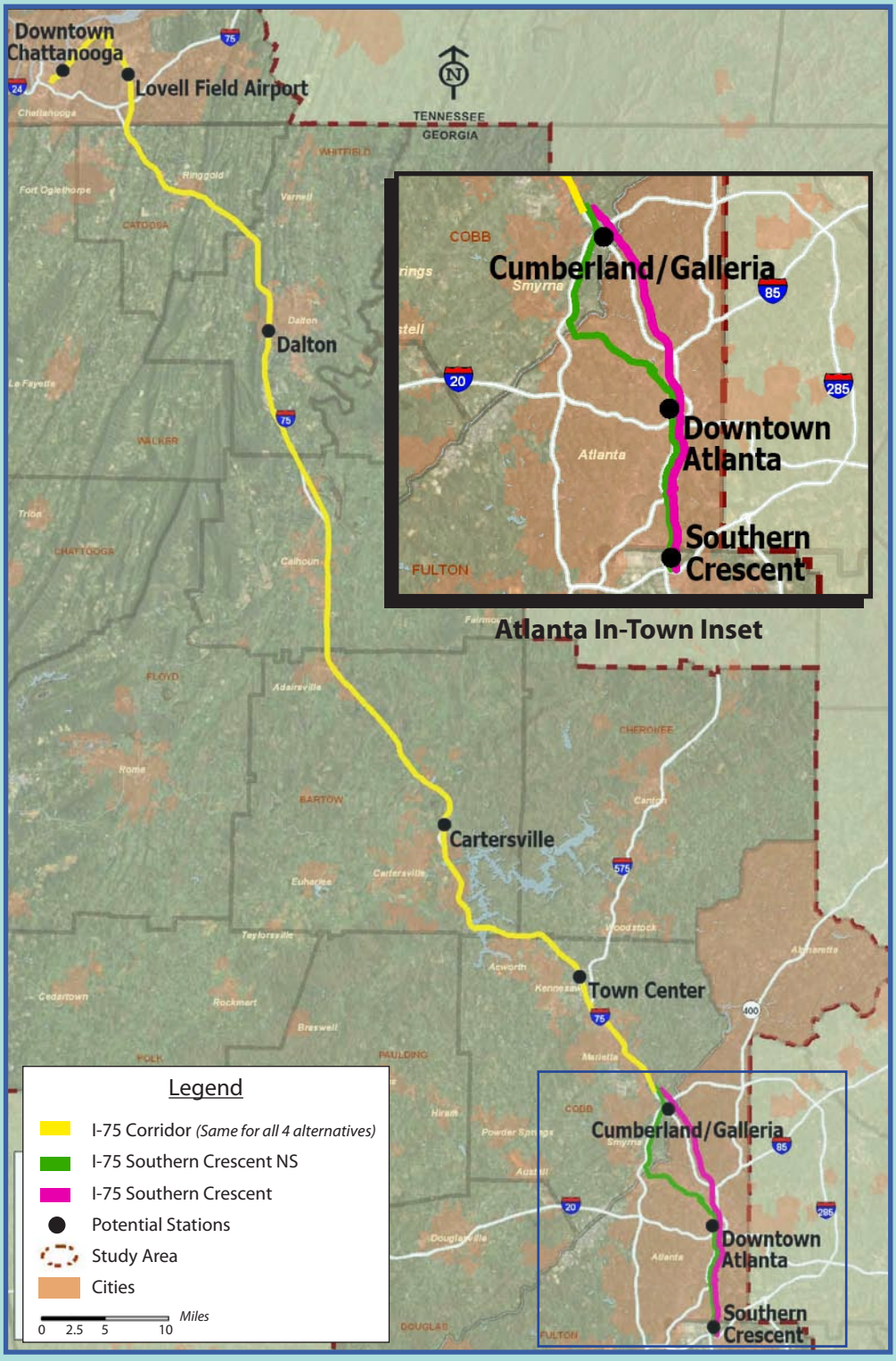
Four alignment alternatives, all generally following I-75, are proposed to advance in the Tier 1 DEIS analysis. South of the I-285/I-75 split, two alignments follow the Norfolk Southern (NS) railroad corridor and two continue along I-75 to Downtown Atlanta.

The four alignment alternatives (shown on the next page) are as follows:

- I-75 Median Southern Crescent NS
- I-75 Non-Median Southern Crescent NS
- I-75 Median Southern Crescent
- I-75 Non-Median Southern Crescent

These alignments are being presented to the public and stakeholders through this newsletter and at public information meetings to be held in November 2010 (see page 6). It is important that the public understand how these selections were made and have an opportunity to review and comment.

Alignment Alternative Map



I-75 Median and Non-Median Southern Crescent Norfolk Southern (NS) Alignment

The two I-75 Southern Crescent NS Alignments begin on the east side of HJAIA at the proposed Southern Crescent station immediately adjacent to I-75, and follow I-75 to a point south of the proposed Downtown Atlanta station. Using the existing NS rail corridor northwest to I-285 into Cobb County, the alignment continues along I-285 to the propose Cumberland/Galleria station. Heading north, the alignment occupies the right-of-way of I-75 north of the I-285/I-75 junction utilizing the interstate's median (Median Alignment), or the broader I-75 corridor area (Non-Median Alignment), to continue to the Town Center, Cartersville, Dalton, and Lovell Field (Chattanooga Metropolitan Airport) stations, and terminating at the Downtown Chattanooga station.

I-75 Median and Non-Median Southern Crescent Alignment

Like the previous alignments, the two I-75 Southern Crescent Alignments begin on the east side of HJAIA at the proposed Southern Crescent station immediately adjacent to I-75, and follow I-75 to a point south of the proposed Downtown Atlanta station. The alignment continues northeast to I-75 turning northwest into the median of I-75 to the proposed Cumberland/Galleria station. Heading north, the alignment occupies the right-of-way of I-75 and utilizes the interstate's median (Median Alignment), or the broader I-75 corridor area (Non-Median Alignment) to continue to the Town Center, Cartersville, Dalton, and Lovell Field stations, and terminating at the Downtown Chattanooga station.

High Speed Ground Transportation Technologies

Steel-Wheeled

- Steel-wheel vehicles on steel rail.
- Electric-powered locomotives receive energy from overhead wires.
- Operates on a grade-separated right-of-way, which eliminates potential points of conflict with pedestrians or other non-rail vehicles.
- Technically capable of operating in a shared use environment with freight and passenger trains.
- Station spacing can be as short as 30 miles, but averages 50-75 miles.
- Average operating speed of 180 mph, but capable of 220 mph average speed. Operating speeds in excess of 320 mph are possible.
- Currently utilized throughout Europe and Asia.
- Appropriate for intercity use, and can provide a travel time competitive with automobile travel within the Atlanta-Chattanooga corridor.

Canadian Steel-Wheeled

Japanese Steel-Wheeled

Spanish Steel-Wheeled

Maglev (Magnetic Levitation)

- Uses "attractive" or "repulsive" electromagnetic forces to lift and propel a train along a guideway, with power supplied to the magnets through the track.
- Allows vehicles to hover or float a small distance above the guideway, eliminating friction and rolling resistance.
- Operates on a grade-separated right-of-way, which eliminates potential points of conflict with pedestrians or other non-rail vehicles.
- Systems in operation are designed for maximum operating speeds of 310 mph. A Japanese Maglev train has reached speeds of 360 mph.
- No Maglev intercity systems are currently in service, but a commercial track in China and a test track in Germany are in operation.
- Appropriate for intercity use, and can provide a travel time competitive with automobile and air travel within the Atlanta-Chattanooga corridor.

German Maglev

Japanese Maglev

Project Team

Georgia DOT

Erik Steavens
Director of Intermodal Programs
T: 404-347-0573
esteavens@dot.ga.gov

Glen Bowman, P.E.
State Environmental Administrator
T: 404-631-1101
gbowman@dot.ga.gov

Alan Ware
Project Manager
T: 404-631-1226
alware@dot.ga.gov

AECOM

Sheldon Fialkoff
Consultant Project Manager
T: 404-946-9536
shelly.fialkoff@aecom.com

High Speed Ground Transportation Public Information Meetings

You are invited to attend a public information meeting to better understand the travel opportunities for the corridor, and provide your opinion on potential high speed rail alternatives to connect Atlanta to Chattanooga. With your help GDOT and its partners hope to create a long-term plan that will increase travel choices and access in this critical part of the southeast region. Please attend one of the three meetings planned in November.

Chattanooga, TN

Thursday, November 4
Regional Planning Agency
1250 Market Street
Chattanooga, TN 37402
First Floor, Room 1A
6:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m.
(presentation at 6:30 p.m.)

Dalton, GA

Monday, November 8
Dalton State College
650 College Drive
Dalton, GA 30720
James Brown Center, Room 105
6:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m.
(presentation at 6:30 p.m.)

Atlanta, GA

Tuesday, November 9
St. Mark United Methodist Church
781 Peachtree Street NE
Atlanta, GA 30308
Fellowship Hall
6:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m.
(presentation at 6:30 p.m.)

Can't attend a meeting?

Submit your comments online at **www.atl-chatt.org/CommentForwardAdd.do**

Contact Us

Georgia Department of Transportation

One Georgia Center
600 West Peachtree Street NW
Atlanta, Georgia 30308
P: (404) 631-1990
F: (404) 631-1844
HSGT@dot.ga.gov
www.atl-chatt.org

5.0 SCOPING WORKBOOK

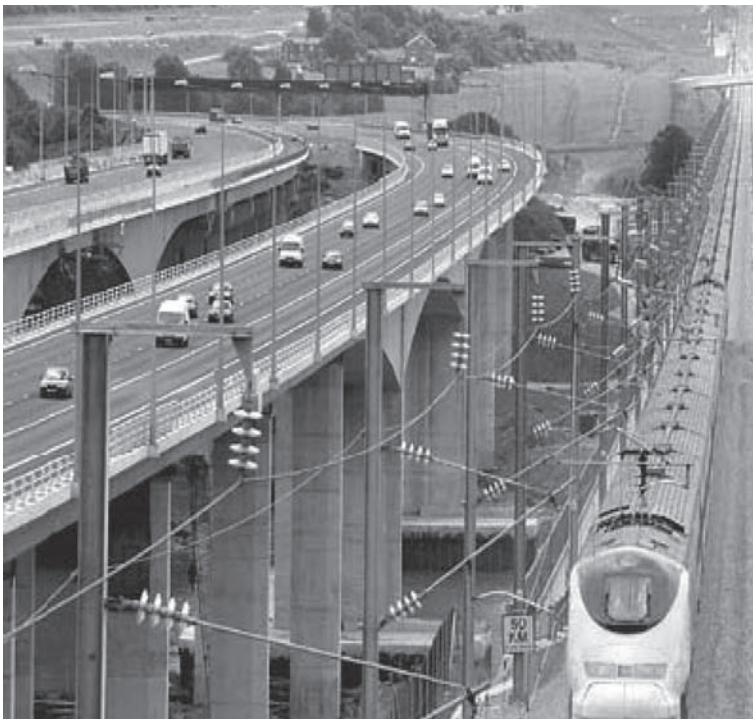
Scoping Meeting

Keeping Georgia on the Move

Tier I Environmental Impact Statement
Atlanta to Chattanooga High Speed Ground Transportation Study

WORKBOOK

January 21, 2008



Introduction

The Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) is preparing a Tier I Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the Atlanta to Chattanooga High Speed Ground Transportation (HSGT) corridor, with the assistance of the Tennessee Department of Transportation (TDOT). The Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) and the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) are the federal co-lead agencies. The FRA and FHWA are operating administrations within the United States Department of Transportation (USDOT). The study, to be completed by 2009, involves the planning and environmental analysis of a potential High Speed Ground Transportation system in the 110-mile corridor between Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport (HJAIA) in Atlanta, Georgia, and Chattanooga, Tennessee.

Background

The concept of High Speed Ground Transportation (HSGT) service between Atlanta, Georgia and Chattanooga, Tennessee has been a subject of study for approximately ten years. Initially, the Georgia Department of Transportation studied this corridor as part of a 1997 Intercity Rail Plan. The Atlanta to Chattanooga Corridor was first considered for high-speed rail service as part of the federal Maglev Deployment Program funded by the Federal Railroad Administration to demonstrate Maglev technology in the United States. Georgia was among several states that participated in the program. The Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC), in association with GDOT and the Georgia Regional Transportation Authority (GRTA), analyzed the 110-mile Atlanta to Chattanooga corridor over a four-year period from 1999 to 2003, exploring mobility options and the opportunity for high-speed passenger service. TDOT prepared a statewide rail plan in 2003, which recommended high-speed rail connectivity with neighboring states

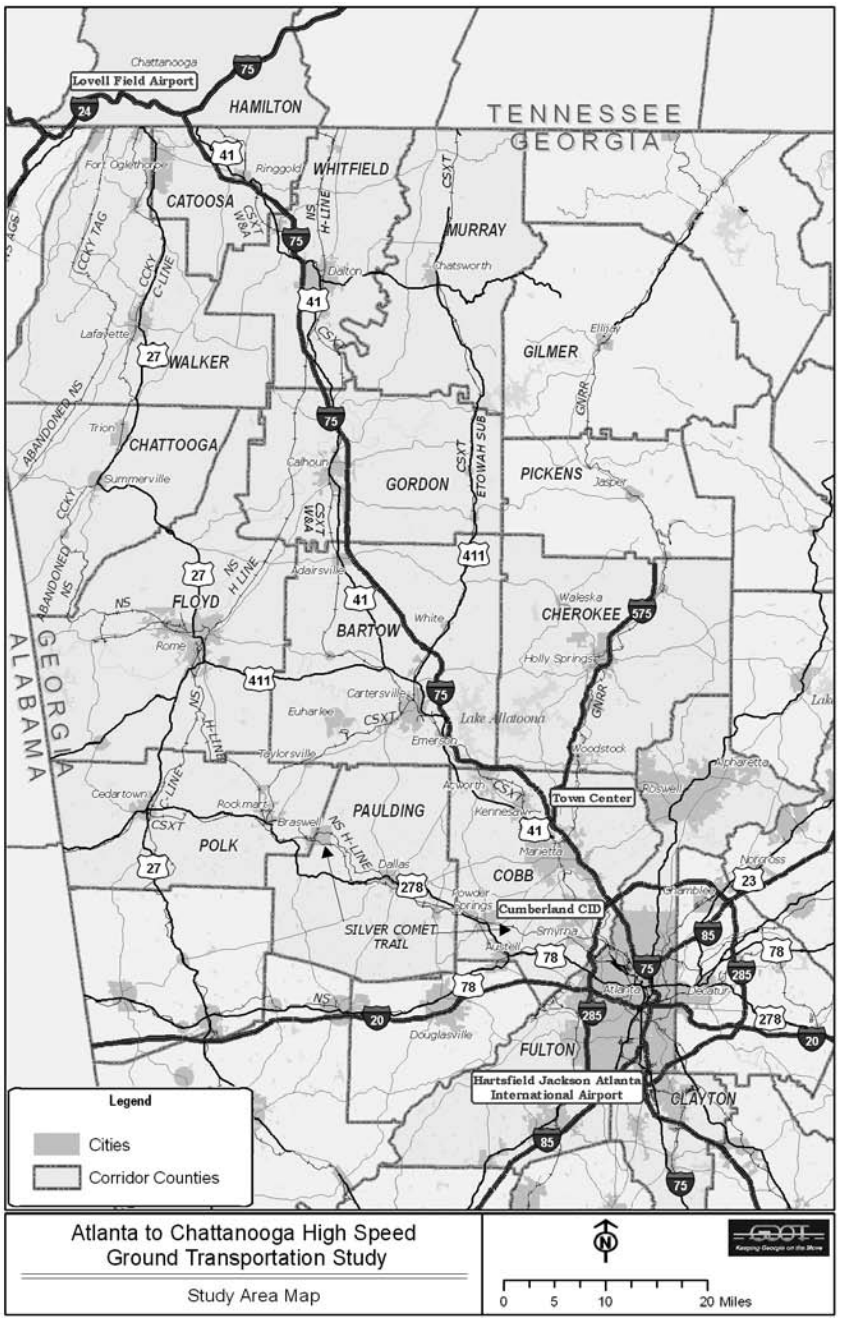
On The Inside...

Project Description

The National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA) requires that the potential environmental impacts of an action be assessed for every federal action that could "significantly affect the quality of the human environment." The law applies to any project where there is major federal involvement, including federal financial assistance, the issuance of a permit, or a requirement for federal approval. An environmental impact statement is required when it is apparent from the beginning of the project, or through subsequent analysis, that the proposed project is likely to have a significant impact on the human environment.

The Tier I Environmental Impact Statement for the Atlanta-Chattanooga High Speed Ground Transportation corridor will:

- Address appropriate environmental and related planning and impact analyses of the High Speed Ground Transportation alternatives to be identified in the study, including maglev and steel wheel technology, in compliance with applicable requirements of both state and federal law, including, but not limited to the National Environmental Policy Act.
- Analyze reasonable location and technology alternatives, estimate potential ridership, identify general station locations, and identify possible implementation phasing.
- Analyze potential feasibility to include projected ridership revenue, operations and maintenance costs, capital costs and economic impact.



Corridor Study Map

Preparation of this Tier I Environmental Impact Statement is designed to ensure that all viable alternatives for the project are evaluated, including a No-Build Alternative; that all substantial transportation, social, economic, and environmental impacts are assessed; and that public involvement and comments are solicited to assist the decision-making process. The evaluation of alternatives helps to ensure that the environmental impacts, benefits, costs, and trade-offs among alternatives are in compliance with federal and state requirements.

The Tier I Environmental Impact Statement will be prepared at a conceptual level of detail appropriate for a programmatic analysis and will provide the FRA, FHWA and GDOT with sufficient information to select the High Speed Ground Transportation technology, general corridor location, general station locations, and potential identification of an initial operating segment. The study is expected to be completed at the end of 2009.

Project Purpose and Need

The growth in both population and employment in the Atlanta to Chattanooga corridor is projected to continue, resulting in increased travel demand for both goods and people. The transportation infrastructure that will serve this demand, including highways, transit and aviation, are all projected to be at or above capacity, despite proposed improvement programmed to expand these facilities.

The purpose of the Atlanta to Chattanooga High Speed Ground Transportation system is to *enhance intercity passenger mobility in northwest Georgia and part of Tennessee by expanding passenger transportation capacity, increasing mobility and providing an alternative to highway and air travel in a manner that is safe, reliable, and cost-effective while avoiding, minimizing and/or mitigating impacts on neighborhoods and the environment.*

In addition, Atlanta to Chattanooga High Speed Ground Transportation system is intended to address the following objectives:

- The project addresses concerns of increasing vehicular congestion on the I-75 and parallel highway facilities within and between Atlanta and Chattanooga.
- The project supports other modes of transportation, especially modes such as transit.
- The project provides rapid, convenient and reliable transportation, which extends the existing highway and aviation infrastructure beyond current expected usefulness.
- The project assists in improving regional air quality.
- The project promotes regional economic development and joint development opportunities at station areas.
- The project addresses Federal and congressional transportation initiatives.

Transportation demand and travel growth, as prompted by social changes, population growth and economic development, is outpacing existing and planned roadway capacity. Currently, the state and interstate highway system within the corridor is operating at or near capacity, especially within and adjacent to the major metropolitan areas of Atlanta, Rome, Dalton and Chattanooga. Although capacity improvements to the state and interstate system along the corridor are either currently underway or planned for the near future, they are considered interim, that is, they will not address all of the future capacity or mobility needs. Although not

currently funded or programmed, ultimate capacity improvements are needed to accommodate future travel demand. This need is further emphasized by increased traffic volumes, congestion, and accident rates in the study corridor. Social and economic demands will continue to call for provision of alternative transportation choices for those individuals who cannot or choose not to drive, as well as those travelers looking for alternatives to congested highways.

The project addresses the following needs in the corridor.

- Existing and future transportation demand and travel growth
- Provision of total throughput versus just highway capacity
- Enhancement of airport access
- Maintenance or improvement of regional air quality
- Safety deficiencies in corridor
- Promotion of economic development
- Reduction of energy consumption
- Enhancement of intermodal connections and relationships
- Social demands of various population groups
- Support of comprehensive land use planning and smart growth initiatives
- Provision of a critical link in a future Southeast US Region High Speed Ground Transportation System

Long Distance Ground Transportation Technologies

MAGNETIC LEVITATION (MAGLEV)

- Potential Speeds over 300 mph
- Average Operating Speed 185 mph
- Station Spacing 30+ miles
- Grade Separated Right-of-Way
- Electric Power to Magnets from Track
- Magnetic Force Lifts and Propels on Guideway

VERY HIGH SPEED RAIL (VHS)

- Potential Speeds near 220 mph
- Average Operating Speed 155 mph
- Station Spacing 30+ miles
- Grade Separated Right-of-Way
- Electric Power from Overhead Wires to Vehicle
- Steel Wheel on Steel Rail

INTERCITY RAIL (AMTRAK)

- Potential Speeds 79 to 110 mph
- Average Operating Speed 69 mph
- Station Spacing 30+ miles
- Shared Right-of-Way with Freight Rail Traffic
- Diesel Powered Locomotive
- Steel Wheel on Steel Rail

COMMUTER RAIL

- Potential Speeds 79 to 110 mph
- Average Operating Speed 59 mph
- Station Spacing 7 to 10 miles
- Shared Right-of-Way with Freight Rail Traffic
- Diesel Powered Locomotive
- Steel Wheel on Steel Rail

Existing Conditions

The study corridor runs from Hartsfield–Jackson Atlanta International Airport in the Atlanta metropolitan area, to Chattanooga, Tennessee, and is approximately 110 miles in length. The study area consists of hilly topography dissected by numerous rivers and streams. This area is heavily urbanized, primarily within and around the City of Atlanta and the City of Chattanooga, but also includes suburban and rural areas within the corridor. The study area is contained wholly or in part in the following counties: Hamilton County, Tennessee; and Fulton, Cobb, Cherokee, Floyd, Bartow, Murray, Whitfield, Gordon, Chattooga, Paulding, Polk, Catoosa, Douglas, Clayton and Walker Counties, Georgia.

Population and Income. According to data from the U.S. Census, the population in the study corridor has grown from 2,608,619 in 1990 to 3,752,037 in 2006, which is a 43.83% increase over the 16-year period. The project corridor average income of $41,547 falls in-between the Georgia ($42,433) and Tennessee ($36,360) average income. The percentage of households living below the poverty level in the project corridor is 10.73%, which is slightly above Georgia at 9.90% and Tennessee at 10.30%.

Visitors. The Atlanta and Chattanooga areas combined have over 23 million visitors to their cities each year. According to the Atlanta Convention and Visitor's Bureau, 20 million visitors come to the Atlanta area annually. The Chattanooga area draws 3.3 million visitors each year.

Major Highway Network. Three major highways connect the metropolitan Atlanta area with the northwest Georgia and Chattanooga metropolitan areas. These three routes are Interstate 75, US 41 and US 27. Interstate 75 is one of the most heavily traveled interstates in Georgia as well as in the entire nation. Traffic volumes north of Atlanta on I-75 for 2005 ranged from the low to mid 100,000s in Bartow County to mid 80,000s near the Tennessee border. According to the Georgia Interstate System Plan, completed in 2004, most of I-75 north of Atlanta is projected to exceed available capacity. By 2035, volumes on I-75 will continue to exceed capacity, even assuming that the additional lanes have been implemented.

Portions of US 41 are four lanes from Atlanta to Chattanooga, with two lanes in more rural sections. North of Atlanta, the daily traffic volumes in 2005 ranged from a low of 5,000 to a high of 40,000. While not as heavily traveled as I-75, US 41 is also expected to equal or exceed capacity within the next 20 years, despite several proposed multi-lane improvements. Traffic volumes along the US 27 corridor range from a low of approximately 5,000 AADT to a high of around 40,000 AADT in Rome in 2005. The future (2025) Level of Service (LOS) for the corridor is approaching or exceeding capacity.

Presently, there are 83 roadway improvements or expansions planned or currently in progress along the 110-mile corridor. Many of these improvements are along I-75. However, even with these improvements, many of these facilities are projected to operate at or above capacity. In addition, analysis of accident data on I-75 shows a trend for increasing numbers of accidents and injuries over time as this facility grows more congested.

Aviation. HJAIA bears the distinction of being the world's busiest passenger airport with five runways, 29,550 public parking spaces, 76.3 million domestic passengers and eight million international passengers in 2006. Lovell Field currently serves ten major airports via six different airlines. Atlanta's HJAIA is Lovell Field's number one connecting hub, accounting for 28% of Chattanooga's local outbound travel. A total of 503,468 passengers enplaned and deplaned in Chattanooga in 2006. Lovell Field has a current parking capacity of 1,226.

Railroads. There are two main railroad lines (W&A, and NS "H" Line) connecting Atlanta and Chattanooga. A third line (NS C-Line) connects Rome and Chattanooga and the northern portion of a fourth line (TAG Line) originally connected Chattanooga, Tennessee, and Gadsden, Alabama.

Transit. The major transit systems operating along or near the corridor include, but are not limited to, MARTA, CCT, GRTA, C-Tran, RTD, and CARTA. MARTA operates 464 buses, 812 rail cars and 98 demand response vehicles for 142,385,899 trips annually. CCT operates 54 buses and 12 demand response vehicles offering an estimated 3,854,413 annual trips to its riders. GRTA operates 58 buses, 55 vanpools and four demand response vehicles offering 2,231,859 trips for its passengers annually. C-Tran operates 24 buses and five routes within the limits of Clayton County, Georgia. RTD operates 24 buses, and four demand response vehicles providing 830,502 annual trips to its riders. CARTA operates 49 buses, 12 demand response vehicles, and two sky-rail trains providing 2,529,157 annual trips to its passengers. In addition to these systems, Greyhound operates bus service between Atlanta and Chattanooga, with eight daily departures from Atlanta Monday through Saturday and six departures on Sundays.

Air Quality. The following counties and or cities located within the study corridor are considered non-attainment areas for air quality:

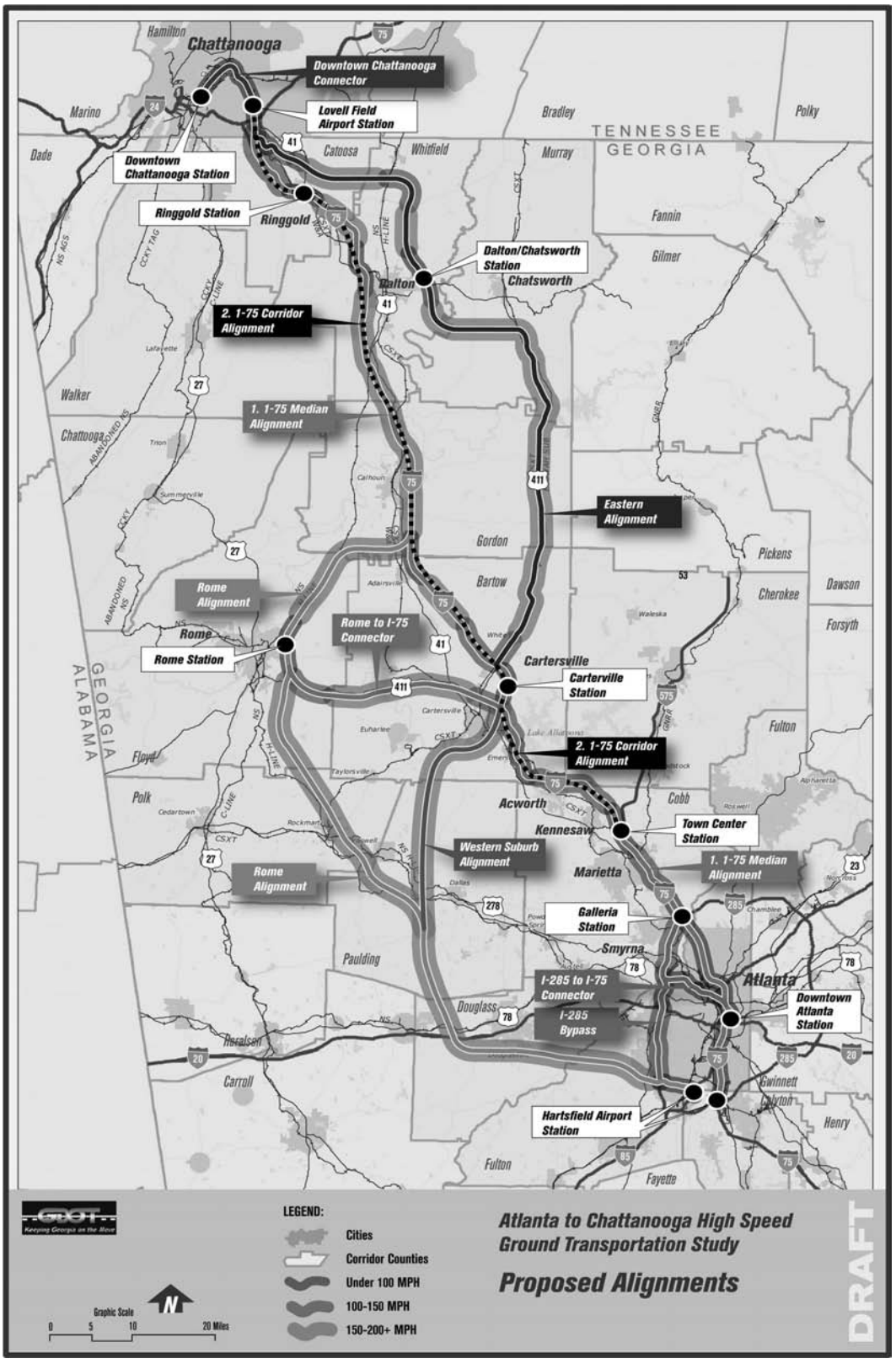
Clayton County • City of Atlanta • Fulton County • City of Rome • Cobb County • City of Chattanooga • Cherokee County • Bartow County • Floyd County • Catoosa County • Hamilton County

Potential Alignments

The initial conceptual alignments that have been developed for the study begin at the Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport in Atlanta and end in downtown Chattanooga, Tennessee, after stopping at Lovell Field Airport on the outskirts of Chattanooga. Several alignments have been developed along a variety of corridors to serve the purpose and need of the project. The alignments can either serve the various city centers along the I-75 corridor or pass through the more rural areas at potentially higher speed or a combination of each.

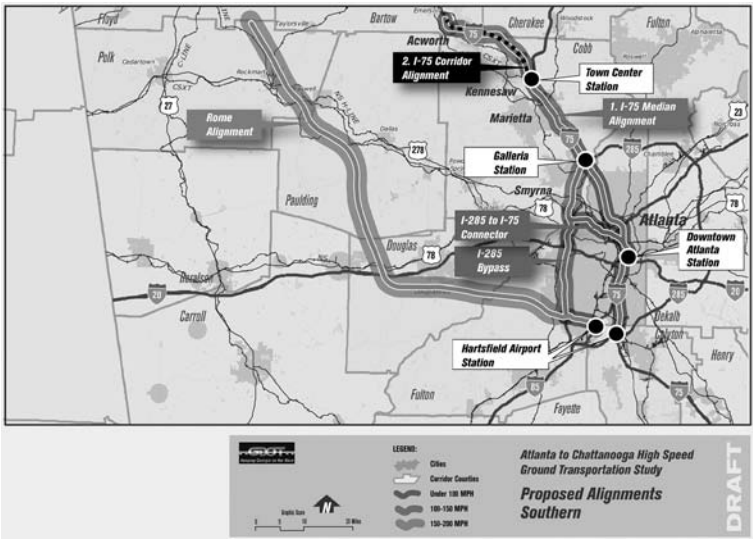
The potential corridors and the major reason behind their development along this approximately 125-mile long route are:

- **I-75 Median Alignment** – The shortest route in the highest developed corridor which stays within the median of I-75 for most of its length to minimize the right-of-way impact.
- **I-75 Corridor Alignment** – Leaves the median after the dense urban Atlanta area to obtain a potentially higher travel speed.
- **Rome Alignment** – Serves Rome with a potentially higher speed alignment, by-passing the densely developed I-75 corridor and activity centers in the southern section.
- **Eastern Alignment** – A potentially higher speed alignment in the northern half of the corridor, which utilizes an existing rail corridor.
- **Western Suburban Alignment** – A potentially higher-speed alignment in the southern half of the corridor.
- **I-285 By-Pass** – A potentially lower cost, higher speed alignment in the Atlanta urban area.
- **I-285 to I-75 Connector** – A lower cost, less impact alignment in the Atlanta urban area.
- **Rome to I-75 Connector** – Serves Rome from the I-75 Alignment.



Southern Corridor

This corridor extends from the Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport to south of the Cobb/Cherokee and Polk/ Floyd county lines.



Southern Corridor Map

I-75 Median Alignment was developed to serve the most densely developed corridor and has these significant features:

- Four stations; Hartsfield Airport (Southern Crescent Transportation Center), Downtown Atlanta (Five Points area), Galleria Station, and Town Center Station
- Aerial structure in the median of I-75 from the Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport to one mile south of I-20
- Tunnel through downtown Atlanta with a deep underground station near Forsyth and Alabama Streets with the tunnel ending north of Bankhead highway
- Aerial structure in Howell Mill Road and back into the I-75 median
- Aerial Station in the median of I-75 near the Galleria with patron access from either side of the highway
- At-grade section in the median from north of I-575 junction to the Town Center Station with patron access from above and either side of the highway

I-75 Corridor Alignment is similar to the I-75 median alignment from the airport to approximately two miles north of the I-75 / I-285 junction where it weaves in and out of the median on aerial structure to obtain higher speeds.

- Aerial structure from Delk Road to Town Center Station
- Requires right-of-way outside of and adjacent to the I-75 corridor
- Aerial Station at Town Center spanning I-75

I-285 By-Pass starts out at the existing Hartsfield-Jackson Terminal and MARTA station and continues on Camp Creek Parkway to I-285.

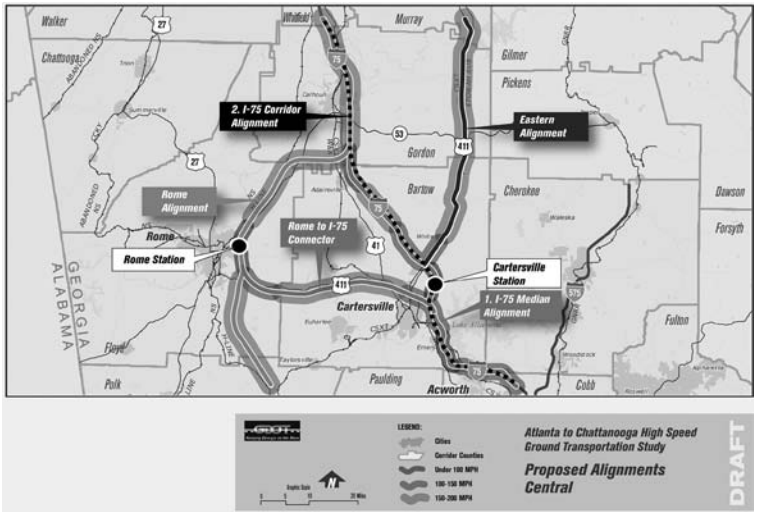
- At-grade along the west shoulder of I-285
- Grade-separated alignment with the local highway interchanges
- An Intermodal Station with MARTA near Martin Luther King Jr. Highway
- A Galleria Station on the west side of I-75

I-285 to I-75 Connector attempts to alleviate the aerial structure along Howell Mill Road with a mostly at-grade section along the railroad corridor to I-285 and back to I-75.

Rome Alignment provides a potentially higher speed route from the Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport to I-75. The alignment by-passes downtown Atlanta and the highly developed I-75 corridor and activity centers north of Atlanta. The line follows Camp Creek Parkway to I-285 and utility corridors through the rural areas.

Central Corridor

This corridor extends from the Southern Corridor to approximately Calhoun along the I-75 corridor.



Central Corridor Map

I-75 Median Alignment stays in the median of I-75 in an at-grade configuration. At some narrow sections, the highway

would be shifted slightly to either side to create sufficient space in the median. It has one station in the median of I-75 near Cartersville.

I-75 Corridor Alignment weaves in and out of the highway corridor to obtain higher speeds.

- It crosses Lake Altoona with a high-speed curve passing through some residential areas
- It requires new right-of-way outside I-75
- It is a mix of at-grade, aerial structure and tunnel sections
- It has one station on the east side of I-75 near Cartersville

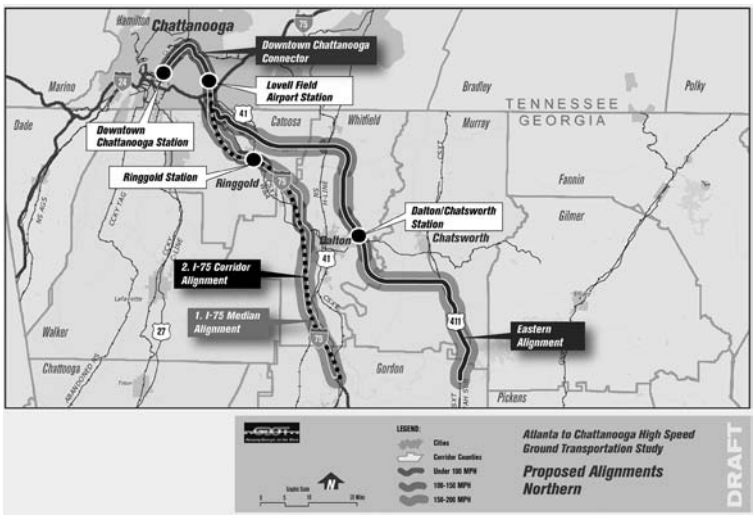
Rome Alignment passes through rural areas with a high-speed alignment and serves Rome with a station. It is at-grade and re-joins the I-75 alignment near Calhoun.

Rome to I-75 Connector provides a connection from the I-75 alignment to Rome. It is at-grade with short sections of aerial and tunnel sections.

Eastern Alignment departs from the I-75 corridor north of Cartersville and generally follows the CSX corridor with a higher speed alignment. The alignment is generally at-grade with short sections of aerial structure.

Northern Corridor

This corridor extends from Calhoun to downtown Chattanooga.



Northern Corridor Map

I-75 Median Alignment stays in the median of I-75 in an at-grade configuration.

- At some narrow sections, the highway is envisioned to be shifted slightly to either side to create sufficient space in the median.
- The alignment passes to the west of the I-75 corridor south of the Dalton area to avoid the developed area with a mix of aerial and at-grade configuration.
- Dalton has a Station in the median with access from either side.
- It diverts from the I-75 median south of the I-24 corridor passing through residential and commercial areas to the Lovell Field Airport Station along Airport Road.

I-75 Corridor Alignment weaves in and out of the highway corridor to obtain higher speeds.

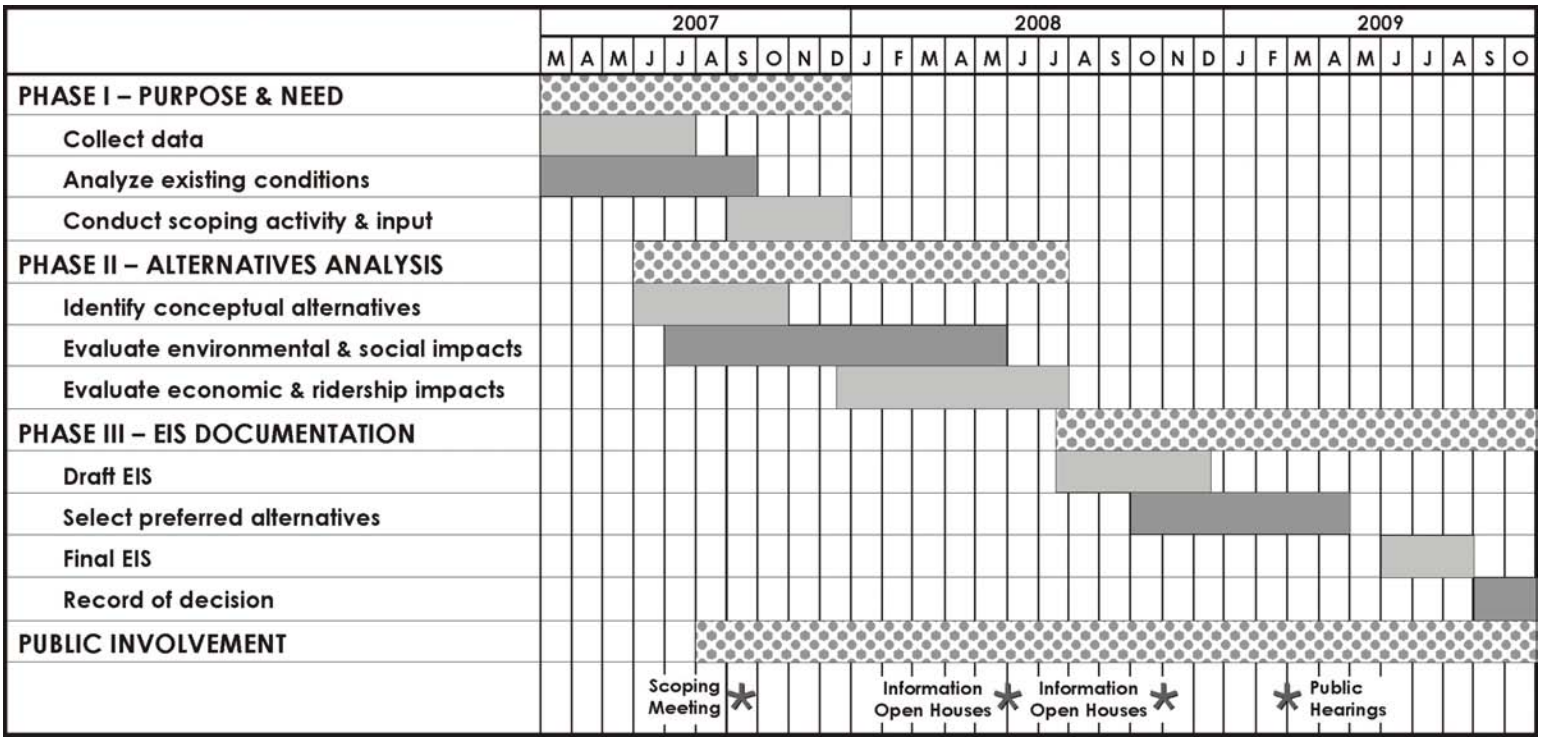
- The alignment is typically on the side of the highway corridor in aerial structure with significant at grade sections and some tunnels.
- A Dalton Station is proposed on the east side of I-75.
- It diverts from the I-75 median south of the I-24 corridor passing through residential and commercial areas to the Lovell Field Airport Station along Airport Road.

Eastern Alignment continues in the CSX corridor in an at-grade configuration with some aerial structure sections.

- The alignment diverts from the CSX corridor south of Chatsworth through the rural areas.
- A Dalton-Chatsworth Station is proposed near Chatsworth Road.
- North of the Dalton-Chatsworth Station, the alignment is mostly at-grade with some significant tunnels and aerial structure sections.
- The alignment section ends at the Lovell Field Airport Station along Airport Road.

Downtown Chattanooga Connector continues from the Lovell Field Airport Station to downtown Chattanooga following an existing railroad corridor in an at-grade configuration. A station is proposed near the railroad corridor and downtown.

Project Schedule



The project is a 30-month study, which is structured in three phases, as follows:

Phase 1

This phase includes initial data collection activities, including stakeholder coordination; development of preliminary conceptual alternatives; initial environmental baseline activities in the corridor; and preparation of the travel demand model. During this phase, the general location and technology alternatives that will be carried forward for additional study in the Tier I Environmental Impact Statement will be identified.

Phase 2

The second phase is initiated by formal project Scoping as well as the completion of a draft purpose and need statement. Environmental analysis of the study alternatives will be initiated, including an assessment of community, social and land use impacts. The economic impact analysis of the study alternatives will take place, as well as completion of ridership forecasts. Cost estimates for construction, operation and maintenance will be developed. A maximum of three alternatives will be produced for the final analysis. Public involvement activities will continue throughout this phase.

Phase 3

This phase is comprised of the preparation, review, and distribution of the Draft and Final Environmental Impact Statements. The preferred alternative will be recommended to the project sponsors. Public hearings will be held and public comments addressed. The Record of Decision will be prepared based on the study results, public comment and policy input from the sponsoring agencies.

It should be noted that the project has an extensive Public Information Program to exchange information, analysis and opinions regarding high-speed ground transportation in the corridor. The Scoping meetings being held September 18th through the 20th are the public's first exposure to this study. Subsequent formal public involvement activities will include public information open houses, stakeholder meetings, charettes, and public hearings/open houses. In addition, public information materials will include the GDOT web materials, fact sheets, newsletters and displays. Finally, other public involvement activities will include outreach meetings, a speaker's bureau and project booths at major events. Interested parties are invited to contact the persons listed at the end of this package for additional information.

Contact Information

This scoping session is the first of many opportunities to participate in the Tier I EIS study of alternatives for high-speed ground transportation between Atlanta and Chattanooga. Public meetings will be held during the alternatives phase and after the Draft Environmental Impact Statement is published to get input to help guide the next phases of the study.

Project Team:

Georgia Department of Transportation

Mike Thomas
Director of Planning, Data & Intermodal Development
No. 2 Capitol Square
Atlanta, GA 30334
(404) 656-0610
mike.thomas@dot.state.ga.us

Glenn Bowman, P.E.
State Environmental/Location Engineer
3993 Aviation Circle
Atlanta, GA 30336
(404) 699-4401
glenn.bowman@dot.state.ga.us

Christa Wilkinson
Project Manager
Office of Environment/Location (OEL)
3993 Aviation Circle
Atlanta, GA 30336
(404) 699-4437
christa.wilkinson@dot.state.ga.us

Earth Tech Consulting, Inc. — Prime Consultant

David Gorden, P.E.
david.gorden@earthtech.com

Eddie McFalls
eddie.mcfalls@earthtech.com

Subconsultants

Moreland Altobelli Associates, Inc.
Charles River Associates
Commonwealth Research Associates
Dovetail Consulting
Economic Development Research Group
HNTB, Inc.
Howard/Stein-Hudson Associates
JJ&G, Inc.
Kennedy Engineering & Associates
Malvada Consulting
PB Americas
Planning Innovations

6.0 SCOPING SUMMARY REPORT

Georgia Department of Transportation

Tier I Environmental Impact Statement
Atlanta-Chattanooga High Speed Ground Transportation (HSGT) Study

PTSCO- 0023-00-002
PI: No. T001684

SCOPING SUMMARY REPORT

FINAL REPORT

Prepared for:

Georgia Department of Transportation
Office of Environment/Location
3993 Aviation Circle
Atlanta, Georgia 30336

Prepared by:

Earth Tech, Inc.
1455 Old Alabama Road, Suite 170
Roswell, GA 30076

Table of Contents

Figures

Tables

1. Introduction

The National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA) requires that the potential environmental impacts of an action be assessed for every federal action that could "significantly affect the quality of the human environment." The law applies to any project where there is federal action, including federal financial assistance, the issuance of a permit, or a requirement for federal approval. Following the enactment of NEPA, regulations issued by the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) noted that Environmental Impact Statements (EISs) shall "provide full and fair discussion of significant environmental impacts and shall inform decision-makers and the public of the reasonable alternatives which would avoid or minimize adverse impacts or enhance the quality of the human environment" (40 Code of Federal Regulations [CFR] Parts 1500-1508). An EIS is required when it is apparent from the beginning of the project, or through subsequent analysis, that the proposed project is likely to have a major effect on the human environment.

The Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) is preparing a Tier 1 EIS for the Atlanta to Chattanooga High Speed Ground Transportation (HSGT) corridor with the assistance of the Tennessee Department of Transportation (TDOT) and with the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) and the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) as the federal co-lead agencies. The FRA and FHWA are operating administrations within the United States Department of Transportation (USDOT). FRA has oversight responsibility for the safety of railroad operations nationwide. The FHWA administers the highway transportation programs of the USDOT in accordance with the Department of Transportation Act (49 U.S. Code (USC) §104 and USC §101 et. seq.). As such, it also coordinates the development of highway programs with other modes of transportation. At this time, cooperating federal agencies include, but are not limited to the United States Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), FRA and FHWA, who have determined that an EIS is appropriate to satisfy the NEPA requirements.

Preparation of the Tier I EIS, together with its eventual circulation and review and comment, is designed to ensure that all viable alternatives for the project are evaluated, including a "No-Build Alternative." Additionally, all substantial transportation, social, economic, and environmental impacts are assessed; and public involvement and comments are solicited to assist the decision-making process. The evaluation of alternatives helps to ensure that the environmental impacts, benefits, costs, and trade-offs among alternatives are in compliance with federal and state requirements and addressed according to FRA and FHWA procedures and CEQ NEPA regulations.

When preparing an EIS, Scoping is one of the first steps of the process. The Scoping Phase is used to identify reasonable and feasible concepts to be evaluated in the EIS, to determine environmental impacts to be assessed, and to gain insight on how stakeholders would like to be involved throughout the study. Scoping includes outreach to both the agencies and the public to identify possible issues at the outset of the project and also typically coincides with the agency Early Coordination process. The FHWA and FRA published a Notice of Intent (NOI) on August 22, 2007, to prepare a Tier I EIS. A copy of the NOI is included in ***Appendix A***.

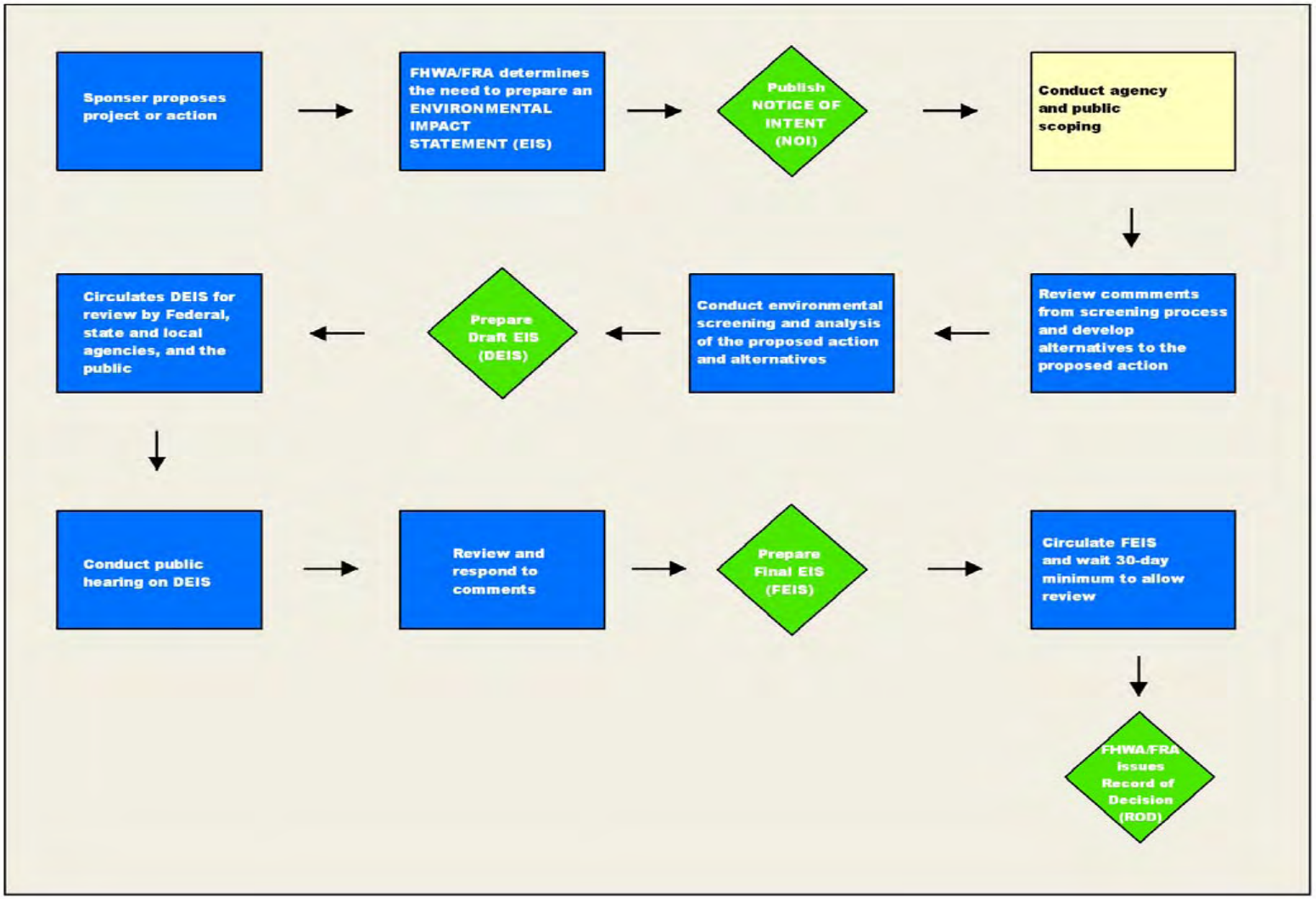
A copy of the legal advertisement published prior to the scoping meetings is included in ***Appendix B***. Three comments were received regarding the NOI, two from the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), dated October 4, 2007 and September 25, 2007; and one from the City of Atlanta Department of Aviation dated October 3, 2007. Copies of the comments are included in ***Appendix C.*** The USFWS (Tennessee Office) comment noted the various federally endangered or threatened species that are known to occur in the region including the snail darter and the large-flowered skullcap, and requested that these species be considered as the project is being planned. The comment from the Department of Aviation noted plans to expand the Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport (HJAIA) terminal to the west and requested to meet with the project team to ensure that they are aware of these specific plans and other proposed improvements to the airport**.**

The Tier I EIS will be prepared at a level of detail appropriate for a programmatic analysis with the main goal being determination of a preferred HSGT technology, a general corridor location, general station locations, potential environmental impacts of the preferred alternative, and identification of a phased implementation plan. A Tier II EIS would be required prior to advancing the project to the design and construction phases.

The 30-day scoping comment period formally closed October 4, 2007. This date marks the completion of the scoping process. This Scoping Summary Report formalizes this step in the EIS process. The remaining steps in the EIS process include Alternatives Analysis and environmental impact evaluation, preparation of a Draft EIS (DEIS), presentation of findings to the public and agencies, preparation of the Final EIS (FEIS) summarizing comments on the DEIS, and finally FRA and FHWA would issue a decision on the FEIS as part of a Record of Decision (ROD). See ***Figure 1*** for a graphical representation of this Planning and Project Development Process.

This scoping summary report also provides a brief project background, and a review of transportation networks and HSGT-related studies, economic data and federal air quality requirements for the Atlanta to Chattanooga corridor. These baseline data combined with an explanation of the HSGT project need and purpose, and the HSGT conceptual alternatives serve to inform and prepare stakeholders for participation in the scoping process. The last two sections of the report detail the stakeholder outreach and participation activities, and the results of these processes.

Figure 1: Tier I EIS Planning and Project Development Process



1.1 Project Background / History

The concept of HSGT service between Atlanta, Georgia and Chattanooga, Tennessee has been a subject of study for approximately ten years. Initially, the GDOT studied this corridor as part of a 1997 Intercity Rail Plan. The Atlanta to Chattanooga Corridor was first considered for high-speed rail service as part of the federal Magnetic Levitation (Maglev) Deployment Program funded by the FRA to demonstrate Maglev technology in the United States. Georgia was among several states that participated in the program. The Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC), in association with GDOT and the Georgia Regional Transportation Authority (GRTA), analyzed the 110- mile Atlanta to Chattanooga corridor over a four-year period, from 1999 to 2003. The purpose of this process was to explore mobility options and determine the feasibility for a high-speed passenger service. TDOT prepared a statewide rail plan in 2003, which recommended high-speed rail connectivity with neighboring states.

A search for existing studies related to the I-75 corridor between Atlanta and Chattanooga revealed nearly one hundred studies, maps and documents related to transportation and land use. Of those studies, eight were determined to be highly relevant background information for the Atlanta to Chattanooga study. The documents that are listed below, as well as the various Federal state and regional studies, and city and county comprehensive plans, will be utilized for existing and future conditions analysis throughout this study. The key initial documents include:

- Georgia Intercity Rail Plan Final Report, March 1997
- Atlanta to Chattanooga Maglev Deployment Study Environmental Assessment, February 2000
- Atlanta to Chattanooga Maglev Deployment Study Phase II EIS, March 2002
- Concept Design Report for the Multi-Modal Passenger Terminal, February 2002
- Atlanta to Chattanooga Maglev Deployment Study Phase II Addendum, March 2002
- High Speed Trains Nashville – Chattanooga – Atlanta, November 2003
- Chattanooga Hamilton County/North Georgia Trans Plan 2030, Long Range Transportation Study (LRTP) – June 2005
- ARC Envision 6/Mobility 2030 Regional Transportation Plan (RTP), May 2006

1.2 Key Initial Document Summaries

The following provides a brief summary of these key studies.

1.2.1 Georgia Intercity Rail Plan Final Report

This study was commissioned by the GDOT in June of 1994 to assess the potential for serving longer distance rail passenger trips using existing rail lines. The study focused on “intercity” rail passenger trips, defined as those greater than 60 miles long in Georgia and adjacent states. Intercity travel characteristics were determined from over 17,000 traveler surveys at key locations for Amtrak, air, auto and bus locations.

After identifying potential core and extended rail networks, the study goes on to assess each line's potential for carrying high-speed trains, their ridership and revenue potential, as well as benefits and costs to the regional economy. The Atlanta to Chattanooga rail line was identified early in the study as a possible intercity corridor for an extended network, but was eliminated from further analysis because it did not meet the thresholds.

Conclusions and recommendations from this study emphasize the need for high-speed service (such as the 180 mph typical of high-speed rail) in order to attract large numbers of auto users.

1.2.2 Atlanta to Chattanooga Maglev Deployment Study Environmental Assessment (EA)

An EA of Maglev high-speed passenger service was initiated in the 110-mile Atlanta to Chattanooga corridor in August of 1999. FRA initiated the Maglev Transportation Technology Deployment Program in an effort to demonstrate the feasibility of Maglev technology in the United States. The study was administered by the ARC who was selected in a national competition by the FRA to be one of seven areas in the United States to demonstrate the feasibility of maglev technology.

Alignments Studied

The study examined potential alignments for high-speed passenger service in the corridor for engineering, environmental, and economic feasibility as well as local support for particular connections and destinations. The seven alignment segments studied include:

Segment A: Begins at the proposed Atlanta Multi-Modal Passenger Terminal (MMPT) and extends northward to the Cartersville area, along I-75.

Segment B: Continues from Cartersville to Lovell Field Airport in Chattanooga, generally following I-75.

Segment C: Begins at the west end of the HJAIA paralleling the Metropolitan Atlanta Rapid Transit Authority (MARTA) rail line, then west to Camp Creek Parkway and north to I-285, then joins the Segment A and B routes at I-75.

Segment D: Begins at the proposed Southern Crescent Transportation Service on the east side of HJAIA, then heads south and west to follow I-285 along the perimeter of the airport to Camp Creek Parkway where it extends northward joining Segment B.

Segment E: An alternative to Alignment B, departing from the I-75 corridor in Cartersville and follows the CSX Railroad corridor north. Near Chatsworth, the alignment turns northward toward I-75, then connects to and follows Segment B to Lovell Field in Chattanooga.

Segment F: An alternative to the southern portion of Segment A, beginning at the Southern Crescent Transportation Service Center and heading north along I-75. Just north of University

Avenue, this alignment heads northwest, following the Norfolk Southern (NS) rail line to the vicinity of the proposed MMPT.

Segment G: Segment G represents a shift of the downtown portions of segments A and F westward to follow a segment of Northside Drive in the area of World Congress Center, Phillips Arena and the Georgia Dome.

EA Preferred Alignment

Discussion of choosing the preferred alignment mentions a preference to serve downtown Atlanta instead of following I-285. Segments A, B, E, F and G met this criterion. The preferred alignment follows Segment F from the east side of the HJAIA and heads north until it reaches Interstate 20, where the recommended alignment transitions to Segment G. At the north end of Segment G, the recommended alignment follows Segment A, northward to Town Center (the terminus of the project in the EA Alignment). If the project were constructed, the Maglev System would continue northward on Segment A, and then follow Segment B to Chattanooga.

Station Locations

Four potential station locations were identified for Maglev trains at HJAIA, Vine City, Galleria, and Town Center. The EA document did not explore station locations north of Town Center.

1.2.3 Atlanta to Chattanooga Maglev Deployment Study Phase II EIS

The ARC received funding for the additional environmental and planning work and began the study in mid 2001. The additional work studied alternative alignments and train technologies in greater detail between Town Center and Lovell Field in Chattanooga, using Maglev technology as the baseline. Other technologies studied were Accelerail 90, 110, 125 and 150, and New High-Speed Rail (HSR). This study did not examine environmental impacts by alignment and did not screen environmental impacts for the preferred alignment.

Alignments Studied

Five alignments were reviewed and recommended for further study. Options included the I-75 alignment (the June 2002 Project Description alignment), the CSX Railroad alignment, two western alignment options (Alignment WA and WB) which connect to Rome, Georgia and an eastern alignment (Alignment EA) through Chatsworth, Georgia. These alignments were assessed based on their capital costs and financial performance relative to ridership projections and cost recovery abilities relative to the capabilities of the various technologies.

Preferred Alignment

A preferred alignment, which generally follows the I-75 highway alignment (the Project Description alignment) was selected due to several factors, including optimal grades necessary to achieve top Maglev design speeds, while maximizing potential ridership and revenue. Because significant ridership would relate to HJAIA, the study concluded that a corridor route must offer

direct service to Hartsfield Airport. Use of existing railroad corridors in the study area was not recommended.

Station Locations

More detailed station-area plans were developed in this study at four locations: Town Center, Cartersville/Cassville, Dalton/Carbondale, and Lovell Field. It appears that a station at Ringgold was discussed, but not explored in any detail.

The Preferred Technology

Maglev technology was selected as the "Preferred Technology" due to its ability to attract a higher number of passengers (because of theoretical faster travel times) and a greater ability to self-fund, including capital leases and potential for joint development. However, it was surmised that the relatively close performance of new HSR technology compared with Maglev warranted further consideration, especially if it allowed a connection with a larger regional network of train service. Accelerail 150 was also identified as an alternate technology.

A major finding that led to a narrowing of the alternatives was that travel times on the train between Town Center and Chattanooga could not exceed 65 minutes without losing riders to an alternate travel mode. That study concluded that significantly higher capital cost of Maglev was offset by the higher ridership and revenue forecasts for the faster technology. However, detailed investment level capital costs, operations and maintenance costs and patronage forecasting were not completed for this study.

Travel time comparisons between Atlanta and Chattanooga airports by technology and by alignment varied from a low of 29.2 minutes for Maglev on the I-75 alignment to a high of 113.1 minutes with New HSR on one of the western alignments, the WA alignment. All technologies performed well with higher speeds on the I-75 alignment compared with other alignments

1.2.4 Atlanta to Chattanooga Maglev Deployment Study Phase II Addendum

This document summarizes the findings of the Phase II planning and environmental study and provided detailed alignment maps and station plans as well as operating and cost comparisons between alternatives. A possible timeline for Maglev implementation was also presented as part of this study.

1.2.5 Concept Design Report for the Multi-Modal Passenger Terminal

An oversight committee comprised of board members for the GDOT, the Georgia Regional Transportation Authority (GRTA), and the Georgia Rail Passenger Authority (GRPA), formed the state's Rail Passenger Program Management Team (PMT). The PMT members adopted Concept 6 of the MMPT project as the official Concept Design of the MMPT project.

Five component parts of the MMPT include:

1. A main terminal for trains of both the Georgia Rail Passenger Program and Amtrak with a regional Commuter Bus Terminal A-North, consisting of 10 stalls above the tracks and train terminal concourse.
2. Commuter Regional Bus Terminal B-South consisting of 10 stalls on top of the MMPT parking deck providing 700 parking spaces.
3. An Intercity Bus Terminal on top of the Replacement Parking Deck, (replaces the existing 1850 space CNN deck to accommodate the new commuter rail track layout).
4. Direct pedestrian connections to MARTA's Five Points Station fare gate level, MARTA's Philips Arena Station plaza level, and between the Regional Bus Terminal B and the Main Train Terminal.
5. Two additional roadways – Alabama Street Extension (between Forsyth Street and Centennial Olympic Park Drive) and the new North-South Street (between Martin Luther King (MLK) Drive and Alabama Street extension) to accommodate increased bus and other vehicular traffic in the immediate MMPT area.

The net square feet programmed for the MMPT is 1,118,168 for two buildings and site structures (train and bus platforms, new roadways, etc.) including the two parking decks. Order-of-magnitude cost estimate for the full-build design is $309 million. A potential "Phase I" operational segment to accommodate the first two commuter rail lines could be built for about $25 million dollars. The MMPT is planned for the years 2010 to 2025 with a phased construction during that period.

1.2.6 High Speed Trains Nashville-Chattanooga -Atlanta

In December 2000, TDOT developed the Rail Plan for Tennessee. The Intercity Passenger Rail component of the Rail Plan was completed in early 2003. A key conclusion of that study was the recommendation that the Federally designated high-speed rail corridor from Atlanta to Chattanooga be extended to include Nashville, with an eventual connection to Louisville, Kentucky.

Technology alternatives for high-speed ground transportation were not explored in this study. An assumption of steel wheel technology was used as the basis for travel time estimates, ridership forecasts and public benefits. A goal for the project was to meet the FRA's criteria of sustained running speeds of 90 miles per hour or greater in the corridor. Alternatives were not evaluated for the Chattanooga to Atlanta segment because this portion was covered in the earlier Maglev study.

1.2.7 Chattanooga, Hamilton County / North Georgia Trans Plan 2030 LRTP

The Chattanooga Urban Area's transportation planning boundary includes the municipalities of Chattanooga, Collegedale, East Ridge, Lookout Mountain, Red Bank, Ridgeside, Signal Mountain, Soddy-Daisy and Walden and unincorporated Hamilton County in Tennessee. It also includes the north Georgia counties of Dade, Walker and Catoosa Counties. The cities of Rossville, Fort Oglethorpe, Lookout Mountain, Chickamauga, and Ringgold fall within this north Georgia boundary.

Adopted in June of 2005, the Chattanooga Hamilton County North Georgia "TransPlan 2030", includes 380 roadway, pedestrian and bicycle projects totaling $1.316 billion. Additional safety, bridge, Intelligent Transportation System and transit projects and planning studies total $543 million. The Atlanta to Chattanooga Maglev passenger rail project is mentioned as a possibility in this plan; however no specific funding is identified for this effort. Rail safety funding of $1.2 million per year is set aside to improve about 20 crossings per year. Public Transportation 5307, 5309 and 5311 monies continue to be funded at historic levels for existing public transit needs. New road construction projects receive the bulk of funding at $1.347 billion for the Tennessee and Georgia portions combined.

1.2.8 ARC Envision 6 Needs Assessment Report

The RTP is a long-range plan which includes a balanced mix of projects, such as bridges, bicycle paths, sidewalks, transit services, new and upgraded roadways, safety improvements, transportation demand management initiatives and emission reduction strategies. The Envision 6 Transportation Plan covers the years through 2030 and is slated for adoption by the ARC Board in 2007.

The corridors portion of the Needs Assessment Report focuses on eleven freeway corridors within the Atlanta region, representing 20 of the top 25 congested facility segments identified in the "2004 Congestion Management System". Mobility 2030 is the planning process developed by the ARC to focus on specific investment strategies for these transportation corridors in the creation of the RTP.

In 2005, the I-75 north corridor had the second highest total population and employment of all corridors. It also featured the highest densities of all radial interstate corridors in the region. The I-75 corridor is projected to experience a 41% increase in households and a 25% increase in employment between 2005 and 2030. The I-75 north corridor has the second highest daily truck vehicle miles traveled (VMT) of all corridors as well as the second highest percent of daily truck VMT (23.2%). I-75 north between South Marietta Parkway and I-285 has the highest truck volumes of any freeway segment in the region. By the year 2030, over 100,000 daily trucks are expected.

The planned Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) system in the corridor is expected to more than double daily corridor transit ridership from 15,000 in 2005 to 37,000 in 2030. New transit service and High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) lanes in the corridor increase home based work trip transit mode share from 4% to 6% and HOV mode share from 13% to 15%. In 2005, 49% of I-75 lane miles outside of I-285 experience more than 4 hours of daily congestion. In 2030, the number of lane miles with greater than 4 hours of congestion increases to 68%.

After the extension of the HOV system and the BRT corridor are complete, I-75 will be effectively built-out. An additional 24 projects are identified in the 2030 Aspirations Plan that is not funded within "Mobility 2030". Six of these projects are related to improvements to US41/Cobb Parkway from Bartow County to the Cumberland/Galleria area. These projects include 16 miles of widening and some grade separation at major intersections, improvements along US41 will act to draw some traffic away from I-75 north and serve as an alternate route in

the event of major delays. Other projects within the "Aspirations Plan" include improvements along arterials accessing I-75 north, such as Barrett Parkway and Bells Ferry Road; and transit, including the potential for rail transit in the corridor and transit along the Marietta Boulevard corridor from Cumberland/Galleria to the Cumberland business district.

2. Existing Conditions

The study corridor generally parallels Interstate 75 from HJAIA in the Atlanta metropolitan area, to Chattanooga, Tennessee. The study area consists of rolling topography dissected by numerous rivers and streams. This area is heavily urbanized, primarily within and around the City of Atlanta and the City of Chattanooga, but also includes suburban and rural areas within the corridor. The study area is contained partially or entirely in the following counties: Hamilton County, Tennessee; and Clayton, Fulton, Cobb, Cherokee, Floyd, Bartow, Douglas, Paulding, Polk, Murray, Whitfield, Gordon, Chattooga, Walker, and Catoosa Counties, Georgia. A map of the study area is provided as *Figure 2*.

2.1 Population and Income

According to data from the U.S. Census, the population in the project corridor has increased from 2,766,800 in 1990 to 4,603,08 in 2006. It is projected that the project corridor population will reach 5,222,153 between the years 2015 to 2030. That increase translates into an 88.87% growth from the year 1990. The project corridor's average income of $41,875 falls in-between the Georgia ($42,433) and Tennessee ($36,360) average incomes. The percentage of households living below the poverty level in the project corridor is 13.48%, which is above Georgia at 9.90% and Tennessee at 10.30%. Population data is provided as *Tables 1 and 2*.

2.2 Visitors

The Atlanta and Chattanooga areas combined have over 23 million visitors to their cities each year. According to the Atlanta Convention and Visitor's Bureau, 20 million visitors come to the Atlanta area annually. The Chattanooga area draws 3.3 million visitors each year.

2.3 Major Highway Network

Three major highways connect the metropolitan Atlanta area with the northwest Georgia and Chattanooga metropolitan areas. These three routes are Interstate 75, US 41 and US 27. Interstate 75 is one of the most heavily traveled interstates in Georgia as well as in the entire nation. Traffic volumes north of Atlanta on I-75 for 2005 ranged from the low to mid 100,000s in Bartow County to the mid 80,000s near the Tennessee border. According to the Georgia Interstate System Plan, completed in 2004, most of I-75 north of Atlanta is projected to exceed available capacity. By 2035, volumes on I-75 will continue to exceed capacity, even assuming that the additional lanes have been implemented.

Figure 2 Map of Study Area

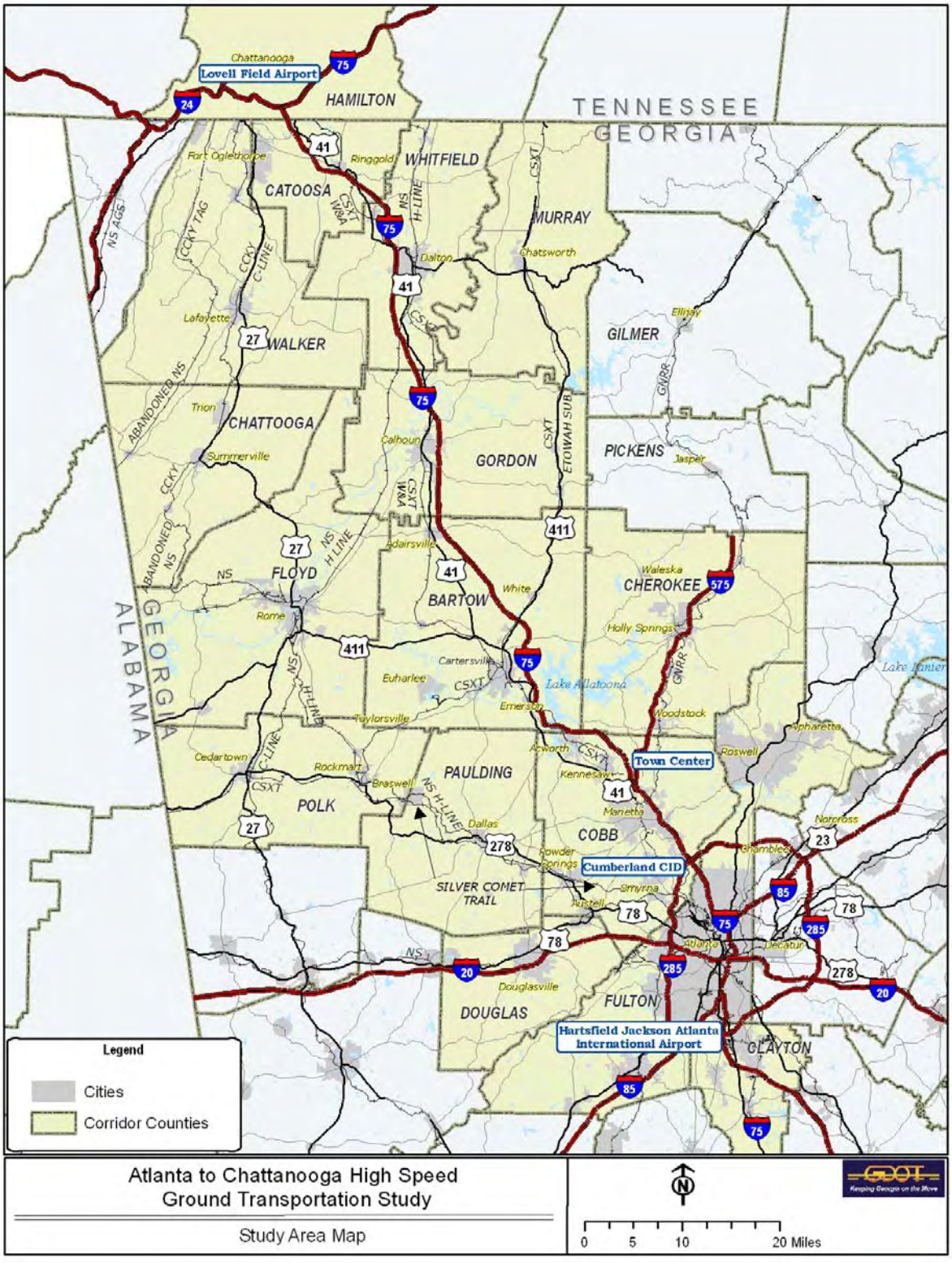


Table 1: Corridor Population Growth by County

County	1990 Census	2000 Census	Estimated 2006 Population	2025/2030 Projected Population (See Note)	Population Change Since 1990	Percentage Population Change
Bartow	55,915	76,019	91,266	134,409 (2)	78,494	140.38%
Catoosa	42,464	53,282	62,016	101,319 (1)	58,855	138.59%
Chattooga	22,242	25,470	26,442	34,114 (1)	11,872	53.37%
Cherokee	90,204	141,903	195,327	213,951 (2)	123,747	137.18%
Clayton	181,436	236,517	271,240	299,916 (2)	118,480	65.30%
Cobb	447,745	607,751	679,325	763,889 (2)	316,144	70.60%
Douglas	71,120	92,174	119,557	218,551 (2)	147,431	207.29%
Fulton	648,776	816,006	960,009	1,145,902 (2)	497,126	76.62%
Floyd	81,251	90,565	95,322	157,090 (1)	75,839	93.33%
Gordon	35,067	44,104	51,419	85,435 (1)	50,368	143.63%
Hamilton	211,000	307,896	312,905	352,285 (1)	151,334	66.95%
Murray	26,147	36,506	41,398	83,246 (2)	57,099	218.37%
Paulding	41,611	81,678	121,530	221,839 (2)	180,228	433.12%
Polk	33,815	38,127	41,091	72,735 (1)	38,920	115.09%
Walker	41,398	61,053	64,606	89,032 (1)	47,634	115.06%
Whitfield	72,462	83,525	92,999	126,185 (2)	53,723	74.13%
County Total	**2,104,643**	**2,794,576**	**3,226,452**	**4,099,898**	**1,993,017**	**94.80%**
Georgia Total	6,478,149	8,186,453	9,363,941	12,017,838 (2)	5,539,689	85.51%
TN Total	4,877,185	5,689,283	6,038,803	7,380,634 (2)	2,503,449	51.32%
Sources: 2000 U.S. Census and American Community Survey 2006 Update; Chattanooga-Hamilton County Regional Planning Council; North Georgia Regional Development Center; Catoosa Regional Development Authority; Atlanta Regional Commission						
Note: Projection Years: (1) 2025; (2) 2030						

Table 2: Corridor Overall Population Growth by City

City	Census 1990	Census 2000	Estimate 7/1/2006	Projection * Year*	Actual Change * 1990 to Projection Year	% Change * 1990 to Projection Year
Atlanta, GA	394,017	416,474	486,411	602,783 (3)	208,766	52.98%
Chattanooga,TN	152,466	155,554	155,190	175,755 (2)	23,289	15.27%
Cartersville, GA	12,035	15,925	17,407	44,121 (3)	32,086	266.60%
Dalton, GA	21,761	27,912	33,045	117,400 (2)	95,639	439.49%
Douglasville, GA	11,635	20,065	28,870	28,870	17,235	148.13%
Kennesaw, GA	8,936	21,675	30,936	48,487 (2)	39,551	442.60%
Rome, GA	30,326	34,980	36,142	36,000 (1)	5,674	18.71%
Smryna, GA	30,981	40,999	48,632	69,039 (2)	38,058	122.84%
City Total	662,157	733,584	836,633	1,122,255	460,098	69.48%
County Total	2,104,643	2,794,576	3,226,452	4,099,898	1,993,017	94.80%
Study Corridor Total	**2,766,800**	**3,528,160**	**4,063,085**	**5,222,153**	**2,455,353**	**88.87%**
Georgia Total:	6,478,149	8,186,453	9,363,941	(3) 12,017, 838	5,539,689	85.51%
Tennessee Total:	4,877,185	5,689,283	6,038,803	(3) 7,380,634	2,503,449	51.32%
Sources: 2000 US Census and American Community Survey 2006 Update						
Chattanooga Hamilton County RPC						
North Georgia Regional Development Center						
Cartersville Comprehensive Plan update						
Dalton Comprehensive Plan						
Atlanta Regional Commission						
ProjectionYear 1 = 2015, 2 = 2025, 3 = 2030						

Presently, there are 83 roadway improvements or expansions planned or currently in progress along the 110-mile corridor. Many of these improvements are along I-75. However, even with these improvements, many of these facilities are projected to operate at or above capacity. In addition, analysis of accident data on I-75 shows a trend for increasing numbers of accidents and injuries over time as this facility grows more congested

Portions of US 41 are four lanes from Atlanta to Chattanooga, with two lanes in more rural sections. North of Atlanta, the daily traffic volumes in 2005 ranged from a low of 5,000 to a high of 40,000. While not as heavily traveled as I-75, US 41 is also expected to equal or exceed capacity within the next 20 years, despite several proposed multi-lane improvements.

Traffic volumes along the US 27 corridor range from a low of approximately 5,000 Average Annual Daily Traffic (AADT) to a high of around 40,000 AADT in Rome in 2005. The future (2025) Level of Service (LOS) for the corridor is approaching or exceeding capacity.

2.4 Aviation

HJAIA bears the distinction of being the world's busiest passenger airport with five runways, 29,550 public parking spaces, 76.3 million domestic passengers and eight million international passengers in 2006. Lovell Field currently serves ten major airports via six different airlines. Atlanta's Hartsfield is Lovell Field's number one connecting hub, accounting for 28% of Chattanooga's local outbound travel. A total of 503,468 passengers enplaned and deplaned in Chattanooga in 2006. Lovell Field has a current parking capacity of 1,226.

2.5 Railroads

There are three main railroad lines (W&A, CSX and NS "H" Line) connecting Atlanta and Chattanooga. A third line (NS C-Line) connects Rome and Chattanooga and the northern portion of a fourth line (TAG Line) originally connected Chattanooga, Tennessee, and Gadsden, Alabama.

2.6 Transit

The major transit systems operating along or near the corridor include, but are not limited to, MARTA, Cobb County Transit (CCT), GRTA, C-Tran (Clayton County), Rome Transit Department (RTD), and Chattanooga Area Rapid Transit Authority (CARTA). MARTA operates 464 buses, 812 rail cars and 98 demand response vehicles for 142,385,899 trips annually. CCT operates 54 buses and 12 demand response vehicles offering an estimated 3,854,413 trips to its riders annually.

GRTA operates 58 buses, 55 vanpools and four demand response vehicles offering 2,231,859 trips for its passengers annually. C-Tran operates 24 buses and five routes within Clayton County, Georgia. RTD operates 24 buses, and four demand response vehicles providing 830,502 trips to its riders annually. CARTA operates 49 buses, 12 demand response vehicles, and two sky-rail trains providing 2,529,157 trips to its passengers annually.

In addition to these more urban transit systems, Greyhound operates bus service between Atlanta and Chattanooga, with eight daily departures from Atlanta Monday through Saturday and six departures on Sundays. The most recent passenger data, which was collected from October 1, 2006 to September 30, 2007, reports over 149,805 passengers and 3,639 buses have traveled between Atlanta and Chattanooga.

2.7 Air Quality

Ten counties in the project study area have been designated as nonattainment areas for not meeting National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) under the Clean Air Act (CAA). Bartow, Cherokee, Clayton, Cobb, Douglas, Fulton and Paulding Counties are all part of the Atlanta Nonattainment Area for ozone and $PM_{2.5}$ (particulate matter with an aerodynamic diameter of 2.5 microns or less). Floyd County constitutes the Rome Nonattainment Area for $PM_{2.5.}$ Catoosa and Hamilton Counties are part of the Chattanooga Nonattainment Area for $PM_{2.5}$ and are part of the Chattanooga Early Action Compact (EAC) area for ozone. This EAC requires the development of a comprehensive air quality plan to implement control strategies to achieve and maintain the 8-hour ozone NAAQS. EAC areas must meet all terms and milestones in their EACs to defer the effective date of a nonattainment designation. To date all EAC milestones have been met and as long as this continues, the nonattainment designation for this EAC will be deferred until April 15, 2008.

Until October 16, 2007 a portion of Murray County was a nonattainment area for ozone. The designated portion included the portion of the county included in the Chattahoochee National Forest. This 8-hour nonattainment area was re-designated by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) as a maintenance area on October 16th. EPA also approved a revision to the Georgia State Implementation Plan including the 8-hour maintenance plan for the Murray County area on this date.

3. Project Need and Purpose

The growth in both population, employment and tourism in the Atlanta to Chattanooga corridor is projected to increase significantly resulting in increased travel demand for both goods and people. The transportation infrastructure that will serve this demand, including highways, transit and aviation are all projected to be at or above capacity, despite proposed improvements programmed to expand these facilities.

The overall purpose of the Atlanta to Chattanooga HSGT system is *to enhance intercity passenger mobility in northwest Georgia, and part of Tennessee, by expanding passenger transportation capacity, increasing overall personal and business mobility and providing an alternative to highway and air travel in a manner that is safe, reliable, and cost-effective while avoiding, minimizing, and/or mitigating effects on affected neighborhoods and the environment.*

Currently, the state and interstate highway systems within the corridor are operating at or near capacity, especially within and adjacent to Atlanta, Rome, Dalton and Chattanooga areas. Although capacity improvements to the state and interstate roadway system along the corridor are either currently underway or planned for the near future, they will not address all of the future capacity or mobility needs for the region. The increased traffic volumes and accident rates in the study corridor further emphasize the need for alternative transportation. Social and economic demands will continue to call for a provision of alternative transportation choices for those individuals, who cannot or choose not to drive, as well as those travelers and commuters looking for alternatives to congested highways.

The following paragraphs outline the deficiencies and transportation issues that define the need for the Atlanta to Chattanooga HSGT.

3.1 Existing and Future Transportation Demand and Travel Growth

There is a need to provide mobility options to address existing and future transportation demand and travel growth in the corridor. The corresponding increase in the number of automobiles will far exceed the states' ability to provide enough safe, efficient, and environmentally acceptable solutions with the existing highway and airport infrastructure.

The Atlanta area is the ninth-largest metropolitan area in the United States and consists of up to 28 counties in Georgia. According to the US Census 2006 population estimates, the 28-county Atlanta metropolitan area is currently the fastest-growing metropolitan area in the United States based on numerical gains. The Georgia job market is one of the ten strongest in the nation. The Atlanta area is the economic engine for the State of Georgia, representing two thirds of the state's economy.

Chattanooga is the fourth largest city in Tennessee and the county seat of Hamilton County. The City of Chattanooga is located at the crossroads of three states: Alabama, Georgia, and Tennessee. Chattanooga is home to several Fortune 500 companies, such as Blue Cross/Blue

Shield of Tennessee, Brach & Brock Confections, Chattem Inc., Dixie Yarns, The Krystal Company, McKee Banking Company, North American Royalties, Olan Mills and the headquarters for the Division of Power of the Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA), which is the largest utility in the United States. The US Census 2006 population estimates show that Chattanooga/Hamilton County is the fifth fastest growing county the State.

Level of service (LOS) is a measure of traffic density (or a measure of congestion). The transportation LOS system uses the letters A through F, with A being best and F being worst to measure congestion on roadways. The peak hour volume (PHV) is the volume of traffic that uses the approach, lane, or lane group in question during the hour of the day that observes the highest traffic volumes for that intersection. See *Figures 3 and 4*, which identify LOS and PHV for I-75. The majority of the corridor operates, or will operate, at LOS E or F.

3.2 Provision of Person Trip Capacity versus Highway Capacity

A HSGT system cannot meet all of the future capacity needs of the major travel corridors within the study area and will not eliminate congestion, but will relieve some of the traffic problems, and may delay the need for future improvements, freeing funds for other network capacity improvements. In addition, HSGT service would provide mobility options to the traveling public.

Interstate 75 is one of the most heavily traveled interstates in the entire nation, typically second only to the I-95 corridor. Most of I-75 north of Atlanta is projected to exceed available capacity. Projects are currently planned to widen I-75. However, by 2030, volumes on I-75 will continue to exceed capacity. US Highway 41 is also expected to equal or exceed capacity within the next 20 years, despite several proposed multi-lane improvements. The US 27 corridor is also approaching or exceeding capacity.

3.3 Enhance Airport Access

HJAIA is consistently ranked as one of the world's busiest airports. About 250,000 passengers use HJAIA on an average day. As roads to HJAIA approach capacity, and the vehicular access from the north becomes congested and unreliable, a HSGT system, in conjunction with MARTA and other available transit modes, would provide an additional non-vehicular mode of airport access.

The six flights per day between HJAIA and Chattanooga's Airport, Lovell Field, account for 28% of its traffic. Lovell Field captures only 55% of the region's perspective enplanements. Since 80% of local passengers flying in and out of HJAIA live north of Interstate 20, Lovell Field may become a more desirable option for those in northwestern Georgia and far North Atlanta due to improved access provided by HSGT.

3.4 Maintain or Improve Regional Air Quality

There is a need to maintain or improve regional air quality. The *CAA of 1970* and the *CAA Amendments of 1990* require regional long-range transportation plans to support the achievement

and maintenance of air quality standards. These areas must demonstrate that proposed transportation improvements do not negatively impact the quality of the air.

The use of new technologies being considered for the HSGT and other approaches aimed at reducing the demand for trips in single occupancy vehicles, must be an integral part of all transportation plans and programs to ensure that these areas conform to federal air quality standards. Multi-purpose transportation corridors, such as high-speed rail lines in medians and designated lanes for high occupancy vehicles and local travel, are transportation strategies that can achieve a reduction in pollution levels.

3.5 Address Safety Deficiencies in Corridor

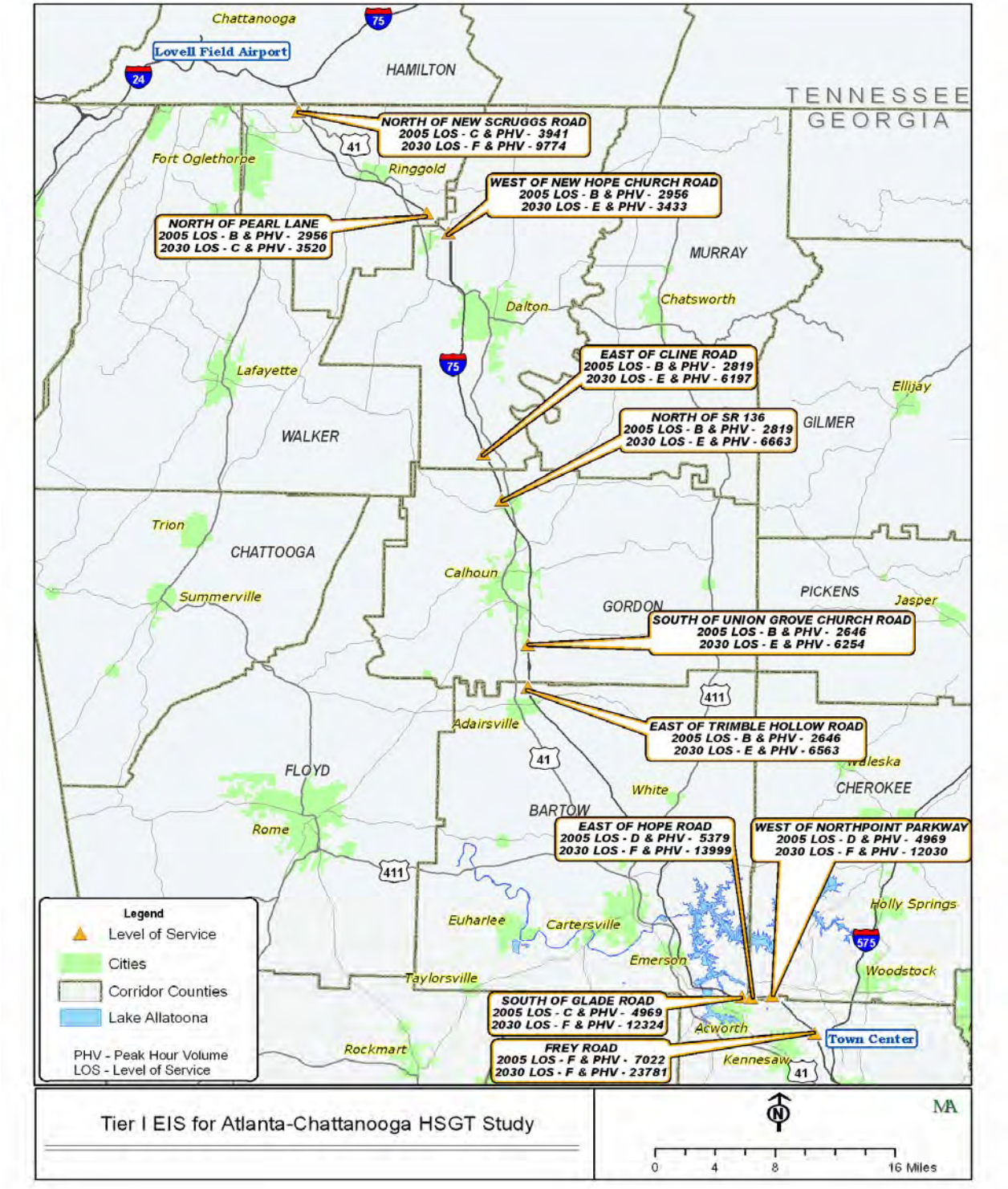
Safety is a paramount consideration in providing transportation capacity. Recent statistics indicate that passenger rail travel is one of the safest modes of transportation, while motor vehicle fatalities account for more than 90 percent of all transportation-related fatalities. Analysis of accident data on I-75 shows increasing numbers of accidents and injuries over time, as the study corridor becomes more congested.

In order to minimize the possibility of train-vehicular or pedestrian collisions and maximize safety, this HSGT project will incorporate grade-separated crossings and barrier intrusion systems. The HSGT system may contribute to a reduction in the accident rate as automobile and some truck trips (freight) are diverted from parallel highway facilities to the HSGT facility. Thus, accident rates are anticipated to decrease as a result of fewer vehicles on the roadway and a reduction in the number of vehicle miles traveled by the public.

3.6 Promote Economic Development

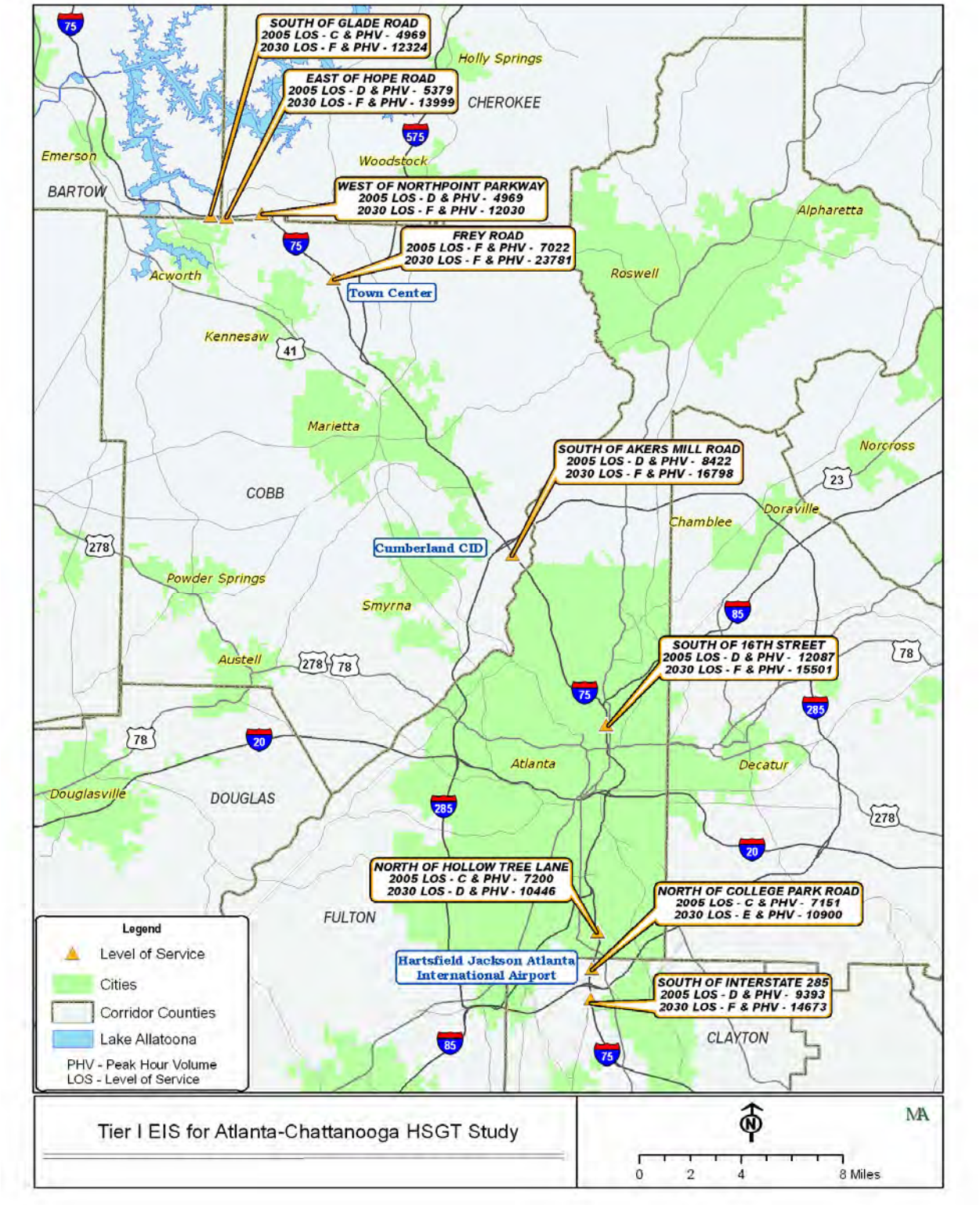
There is a need to promote economic development in the region within and between Atlanta and Chattanooga. The existing transportation system is one of the critical factors hindering economic development in the corridor. For years, the area has been hampered by an inadequate system of regional freeways that do not meet the demand of all users. Although there is potential for economic development at existing activity areas, efficient transportation access to these sites is not always present.

Figure 3 Levels of Service North



LOS calculated by Moreland Altobelli Associates, Inc- Staff

Figure 4 Levels of Service South



LOS calculated by Moreland Altobelli Associates, Inc- Staff

Construction and eventual operation of the HSGT system will create jobs and associated economic development. With the proper placement of HSGT stations, there could be an impetus to redevelop any nearby undeveloped and underdeveloped sites, which creates employment opportunities. In addition, the development of an alternative transportation system in the region could help revitalize local industries, which in turn will create new employment opportunities and job markets.

3.7 Reduce Energy Consumption

Transportation energy consumption is expected to grow by 30 percent within the next 15 years. Americans consume disproportionate shares of the world's energy, perhaps as much as 34 percent. Nearly half of the oil Americans use is imported from other countries, creating a heavy dependence on foreign oil. Traffic congestion resulted in a total annual average cost of $69.5 billion, 3.5 billion hours of delay, and 5.6 billion additional gallons of fuel.

There is a need to reduce energy consumption, both nationally and locally. Transportation accounts for approximately two-thirds of all oil consumed in this country. Implementation of a HSGT system could result in potential energy savings from reduced vehicle travel, and consequently, could reduce some of the demand for oil. As compared to other potential modal improvements within the corridor, HSGT has the potential to utilize less energy per passenger.

3.8 Enhance Intermodal Connections/Relationships

HSGT offers an alternative transportation mode that could reduce congestion and increase regional mobility and intermodal connectivity. By diverting travelers from single-occupant automobile trips, HSGT would not only help reduce roadway congestion in the corridor, but connect to existing and planned transit systems within the corridor, including, but not limited to MARTA, CCT and CARTA. These connections will provide relief for local and sub-regional highway facilities, and provide additional access, through non-automotive means, to the corridor's airports.

The provision of HSGT service will create momentum for the development of a multi-modal, intermodal transportation system by assisting in servicing longer distant trips, by non-automotive means, that local transit cannot serve.

3.9 Address Social Demands of Various Population Groups

Senior citizens and those with disabilities depend on access to user-friendly transportation facilities and services for mobility between major urban centers and visitor attractions. Bus service is provided sporadically along the corridor, which offers senior citizens and the disabled no alternative transportation means other than vehicle travel.

Business travelers lose productive working hours and tourists lose valuable recreation time because of delays on congested roadways and in congested airports. In order to ensure efficient

and cost effective travel for business and tourist travelers, more than one mode of transportation is desirable.

3.10 Support Comprehensive Land Use Planning and Smart Growth Initiatives

The opportunities of intermodal connectivity, improved mobility, and economic activity offered by a HSGT system support local land use planning goals and smart growth initiatives.

Integrating land use choices with transportation choices is the best approach to addressing the corridor's challenges and to promoting healthy, sustainable regional economic development and quality communities. Communities across the country are attempting to provide a range of mobility options to increase travel by non-automotive means, which would result in higher quality and increased development at activity centers, and encourage compact urban growth and transit-oriented development. The HSGT would connect major regional activity centers and encourage compact urban growth.

A HSGT system provides for more effective linkages to important regional activity centers and major business development areas, provides for worker access to jobs, business access to markets, and resident access to services. In addition, the fixed-guideway element of HSGT has the potential to influence and support denser development patterns. This occurs directly by presenting joint development opportunities and indirectly by enhancing land values around transit centers and fixed-guideway stations.

3.11 Provide Link in Southeast US Region HSGT system

TDOT is currently evaluating the Nashville to Chattanooga corridor, and has studied in the past the Louisville to Nashville corridor for HSGT. The existing Norfolk Southern freight right-of-way to operate new high-speed passenger train service between Macon and Atlanta, Greenville, Spartanburg and Charlotte, North Carolina, with continuing service into Virginia and the Washington-New York-Boston Northeast Corridor is also being evaluated. Other nearby HSGT corridors that have been analyzed include, but are not limited to, Charlotte to Washington DC, Atlanta to Savannah, Savannah to Jacksonville, and Jacksonville to Miami.

With high-speed rail corridors in the planning stages to the east, west, and south of Atlanta-Chattanooga corridor, this corridor is a major piece in a future hub system of high-speed train service from Atlanta throughout the Southeast. There is a need to advance HSGT as a network.

4. Conceptual HSGT Alternatives

The alternatives to be evaluated in the Atlanta to Chattanooga HSGT project would include implementing the current transportation plans for the corridor, and would also evaluate alternatives that would construct a new very HSGT project. The alternatives presented during scoping included the No-Build Alternative and various Build Alternatives, which are described in more detail in the following section. This discussion is broken into two distinct categories, alignment and technology. A graphic depicting the conceptual alignments and the station locations is provided as *Figure 5*.

4.1 No-Build Alternative

For the purposes of this project the Baseline Alternative or the No Action as per CEQ will be the same as the No-Build Alternative. This alternative includes the existing network highway and transit system projects. In addition, projects programmed in the adopted plans, which also includes low-cost, operationally oriented transit improvements are assumed in the No Build Alternative.

4.2 Build Alternative(s)

Several alignments have been developed along a variety of corridors to serve the purpose and need of the project. All conceptual alignments that have been developed begin at the HJAIA and end in downtown Chattanooga, Tennessee, after stopping at Lovell Field Airport on the outskirts of Chattanooga. Potential project alignments for the build alternative will be evaluated and narrowed down through the Alternatives Analysis process. Because of the size of the corridor and the multiple connection points that could be made the corridor has been divided into three sections, South, Central, and North. The alternatives presented during the scoping process are described below by segment within each corridor section.

4.2.1 Southern Corridor

This corridor extends from the Atlanta Airport to south of the Cobb/Cherokee and Polk/Floyd county lines. A map of the Southern corridor is provided as *Figure 6*.

I-75 MEDIAN ALIGNMENT - This alignment was developed to serve the most densely developed portion of the corridor and can briefly be described with the following defining features:

- Four stations; Hartsfield Airport (Southern Crescent Transportation Center), Downtown Atlanta (Five Points area) Galleria Station, and Town Center Station
- Aerial structure in the median of I-75 from the Hartsfield Airport to one mile south of I-20
- Tunnel through downtown Atlanta with a deep underground station near Forsyth and Alabama Streets with the tunnel ending north of Bankhead highway

Figure 5. Conceptual Alignments and Station Location Map

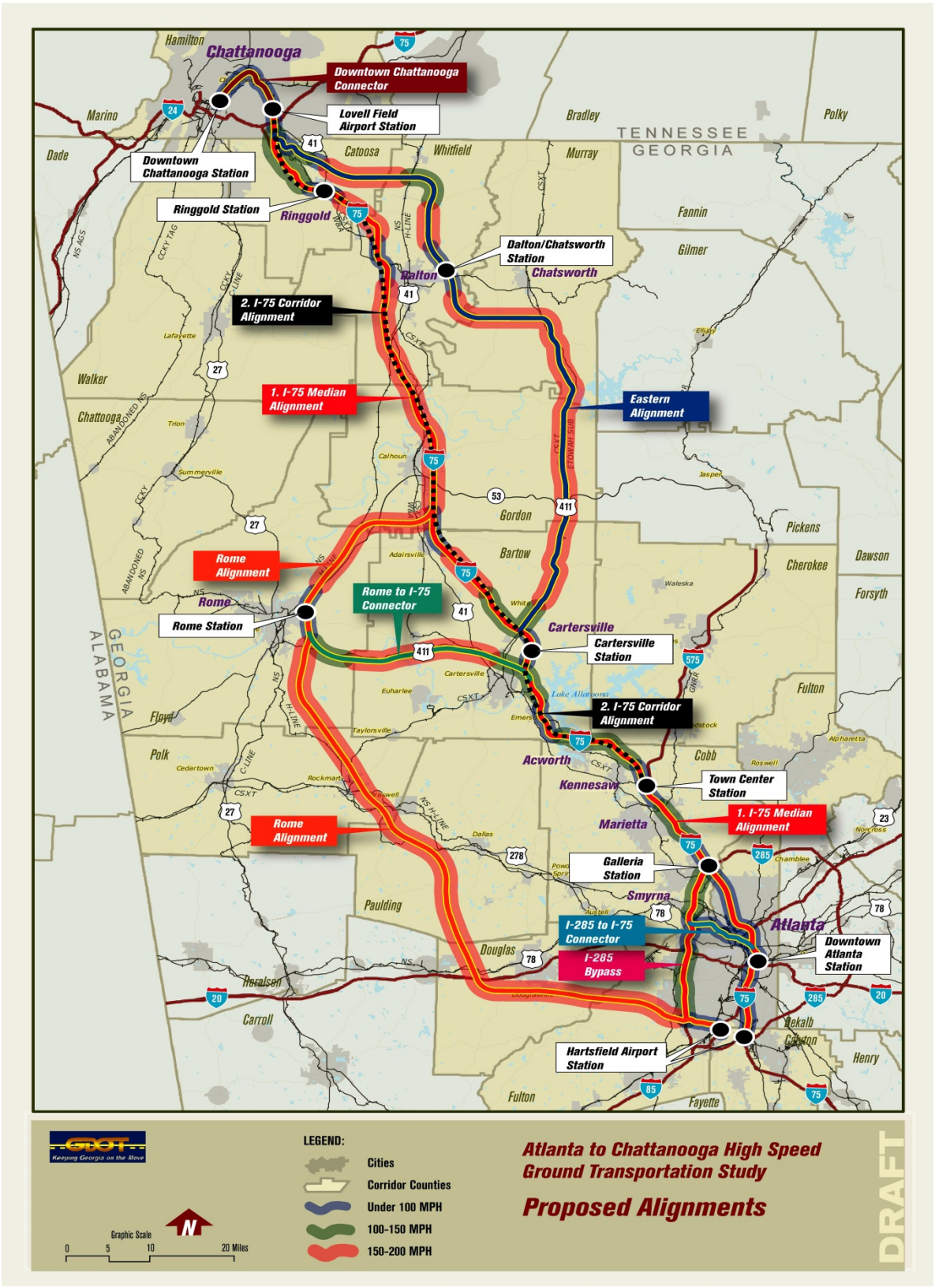
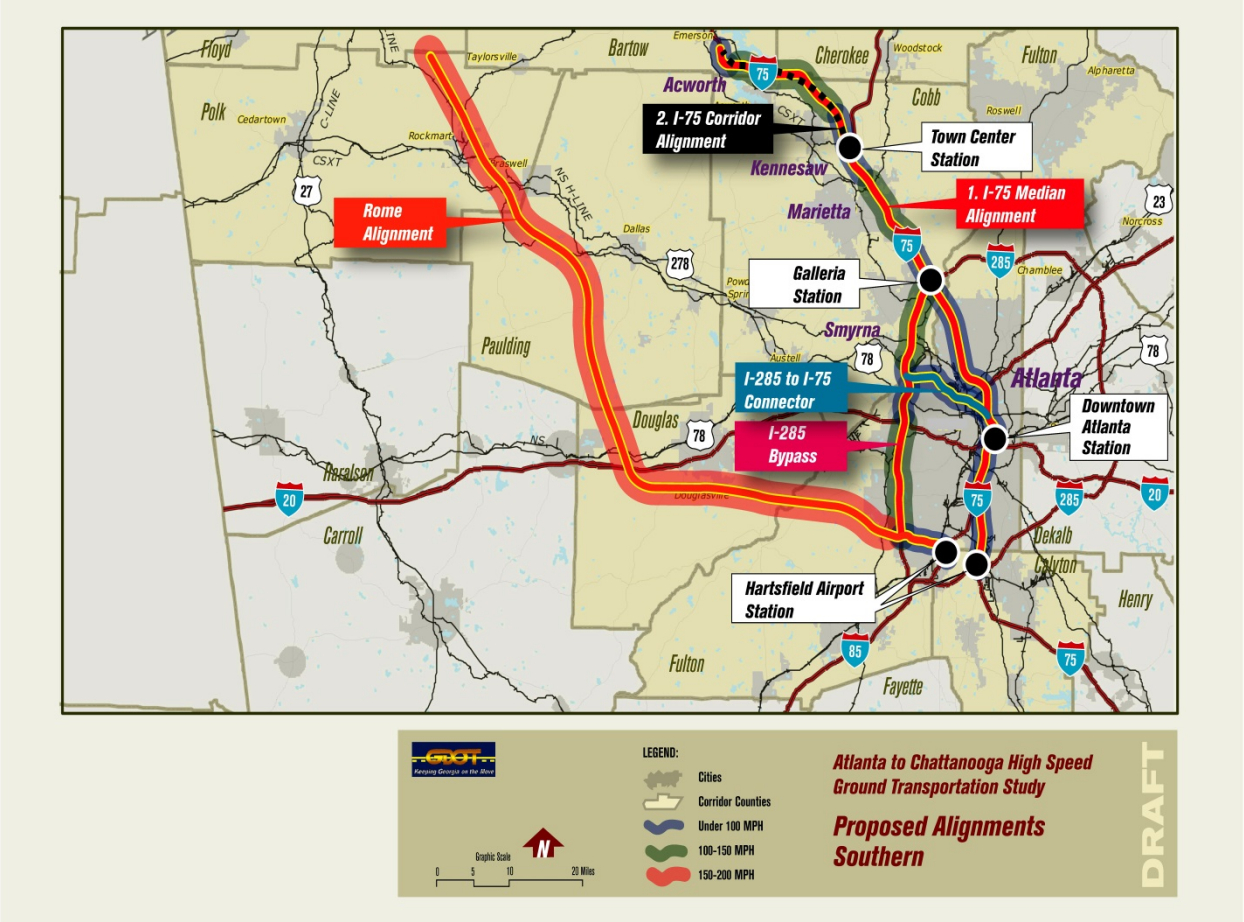


Figure 6. Southern Corridor Map



- Aerial structure in Howell Mill Road and back into the I-75 median
- Aerial Station in the median of I-75 near the Galleria with patron access from either side of the highway
- At-grade section in the median from north of I-575 junction to the Town Center Station with patron access from above and either side of the highway

I-75 CORRIDOR ALIGNMENT - This alignment is similar to the I-75 median alignment from the Atlanta Airport to approximately two miles north of the I-75 / I-285 junction where it begins to weave in and out of the median on aerial structure in order to allow for higher speeds. Other differences include the following:

- Aerial structure from Delk Road to Town Center Station
- Requires right-of-way outside of and adjacent to the I-75 corridor
- Aerial Station at Town center spanning the I-75 highway

I-285 BY-PASS - This segment starts out at the existing Hartsfield Terminal and MARTA station and continues on Camp Creek Parkway to I-285, and includes the following features:

- At-grade along the west shoulder of I-285
- Grade-separated alignment with the local highway interchanges
- An Intermodal Station with MARTA near MLK Highway
- A Galleria Station on the west side of I-75

I-285 TO I-75 CONNECTOR - This segment attempts to alleviate the aerial structure along Howell Mill Road with a mostly at-grade section along the railroad corridor to I-285 and back to I-75.

ROME ALIGNMENT – This segment provides a potentially higher speed route from the Atlanta Airport to I-75. The alignment bypasses downtown Atlanta and the highly developed I-75 corridor north of Atlanta. The alignment follows Camp Creek Parkway to I-285 and utility corridors through rural areas.

4.2.2 Central Corridor

This corridor extends from the Southern Corridor past Calhoun along the I-75 corridor. A map of the Central Corridor is provided as *Figure 7*.

I-75 MEDIAN ALIGNMENT- This alignment stays in the median of I-75 in a mostly at-grade configuration. This alignment would require that some narrow sections of the existing median be widened by shifting the mainline of I-75 to the outside. This segment proposes one station in the median of I-75 near Cartersville.

I-75 CORRIDOR ALIGNMENT- This alignment is similar to the I-75 median alignment, but proposes to weave in and out of the highway corridor to obtain higher speeds. Other features are noted as follows:

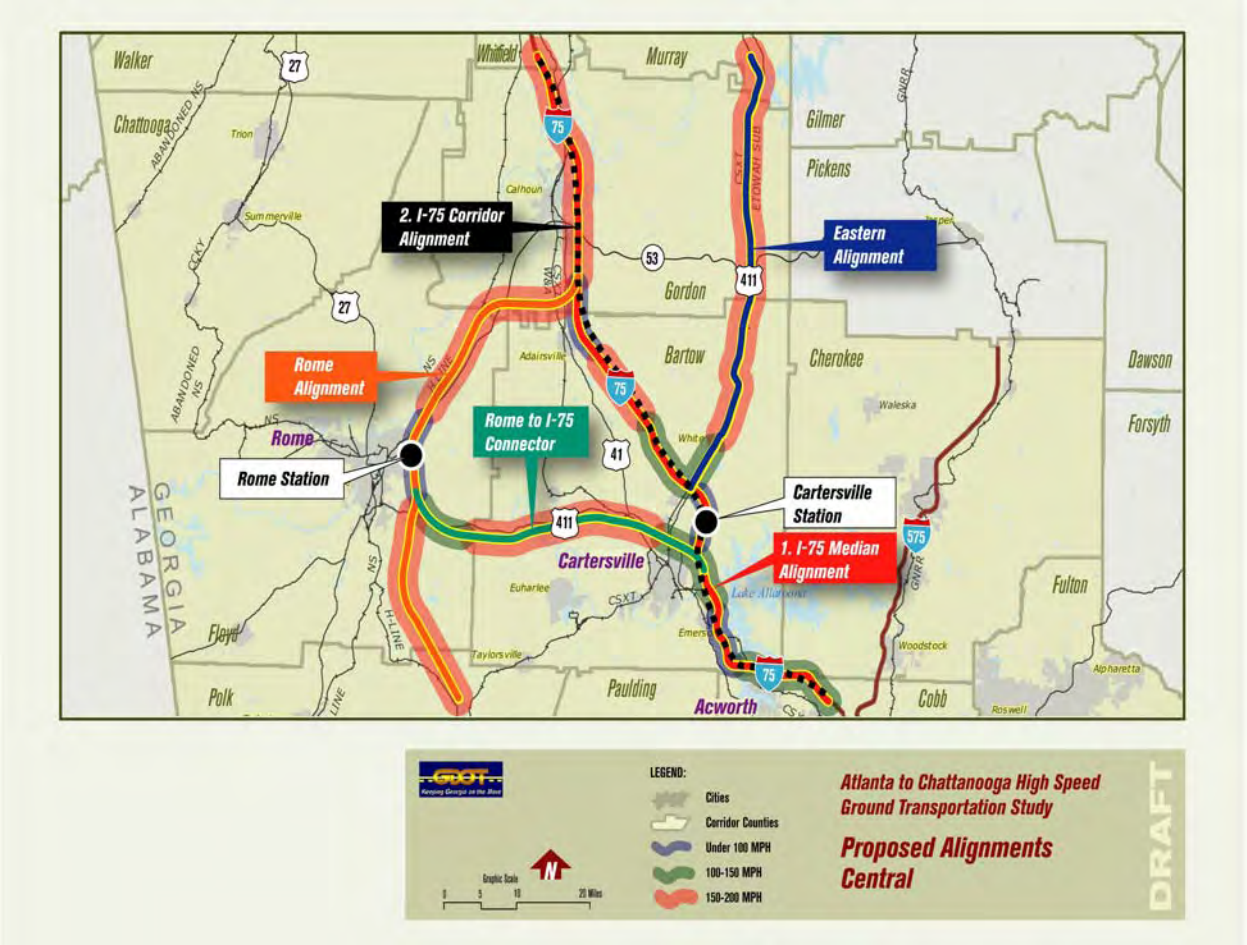
- It crosses Lake Alatoona with a high-speed curve passing through some residential areas
- It requires new right-of-way outside the I-75 highway
- It is a mix of at-grade, aerial structure and tunnel sections
- It has one station on the east side of I-75 near Cartersville

ROME ALIGNMENT - This alignment passes through rural areas with a high-speed alignment and serves Rome with a station. It is mostly at-grade and re-joins the I-75 alignment south of Calhoun.

ROME TO I-75 CONNECTOR - This segment provides a connection from the I-75 alignment to Rome. It is mostly at-grade with short sections of aerial and tunnel sections.

EASTERN ALIGNMENT - This alignment departs from the I-75 corridor north of Cartersville and generally follows the CSX corridor with a higher speed alignment. The alignment is generally at-grade with short sections of aerial structure. Please see *Figure 7*, which illustrates all of the alignment segments in the Central Corridor.

Figure 7. Central Corridor Map



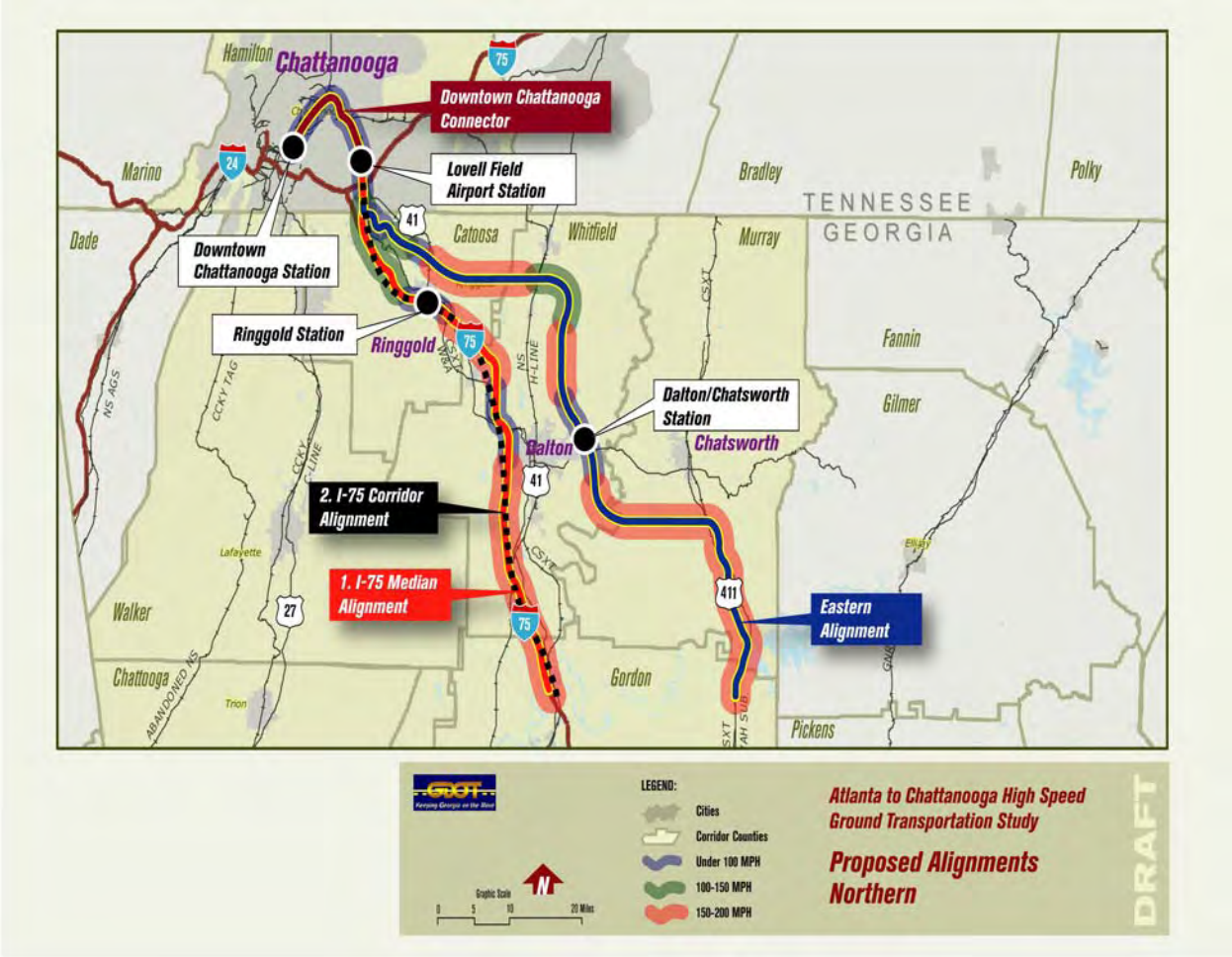
4.2.3 Northern Corridor

This corridor extends from Gordon County to downtown Chattanooga. A map of the Northern Corridor is provided as *Figure8*.

I-75 MEDIAN ALIGNMENT - This alignment mainly follows the median of I-75 and generally utilizes an at-grade configuration. Other features of this alignment include the following:

- This alignment would require that some narrow sections of the existing median be widened by shifting the mainline of I-75 to the outside.
- The alignment passes to the west of the I-75 corridor south of the Dalton area to avoid the more developed area, which would be accomplished with a mix of aerial and at-grade configurations.
- The Station is proposed to be located in the median with access from either side.
- It diverts from the I-75 median south of the I-24 corridor passing through residential and commercial areas to the Lovell Field Airport Station along Airport Road.

Figure 8. Northern Corridor Map



I-75 CORRIDOR ALIGNMENT - This alignment is similar to the I-75 median alignment, but proposes to weave in and out of the highway corridor to obtain higher speeds. Other features are noted as follows:

- The alignment is usually on the side of the highway corridor mostly aerial structure with long at grade sections and some tunnels.
- A Dalton Station is proposed on the east side of I-75.
- It diverts from the I-75 median south of the I-24 corridor passing through residential and commercial areas to the Lovell Field Airport Station along Airport Road.

EASTERN ALIGNMENT - This alignment continues in the CSX corridor in a mostly at-grade configuration, but would include some aerial structure sections.

- The alignment diverts from the CSX corridor south of Chatsworth through the rural areas.
- A Dalton Chatsworth Station is proposed near Chatsworth Road.

- North of the Station, the alignment is mostly at-grade with some significant tunnels and aerial structure sections.
- The alignment section ends at the Lovell Field Airport Station along Airport Road.

DOWNTOWN CHATTANOOGA CONNECTOR - This segment continues from the Airport Station to downtown Chattanooga following the railroad corridor in a mostly at-grade configuration. This segment includes a station located downtown near the railroad corridor.

4.3 Technology Alternatives

As described above the growth in both population and employment in the Atlanta to Chattanooga corridor is projected to continue resulting in increased travel demand for both goods and people. The transportation infrastructure that will serve this demand, including highways, transit and aviation are all projected to be at or above capacity within the next 20+ years, despite proposed improvements programmed to expand these facilities.

As indicated in the Draft Project Purpose and Need Statement in Section 3, the purpose of an Atlanta to Chattanooga HSGT system is to *enhance intercity passenger mobility in northwest Georgia, and part of Tennessee, by expanding passenger transportation capacity, increasing mobility and providing an alternative to highway and air travel in a manner that is safe, reliable, and cost-effective while avoiding, minimizing, and/or mitigating impacts on neighborhoods and the environment.*

Intercity passenger mobility has the potential to be provided by several modes. Based on past studies in this corridor it has been determined that HSGT is an excellent alternative mode when compared to highway (personal automobile, intercity bus) and air travel. HSGT can be provided by several different transportation technology options, ranging from diesel multiple units and commuter rail to Maglev. The various technology options and their applicability to this study are briefly discussed below.

4.3.1 Diesel Multiple Units (DMU)

DMU refers to a steel wheel on steel rail transit vehicle that is self-propelled, with the capacity to pull non-powered cars. Typically, these are European-style vehicles, which are utilized for regional and sub-regional passenger service, and are intended for low density, non-electrified lines up to 30 to 35 miles in length. Heavy duty DMU's have been in service in Europe for several decades, and were utilized in the past in this country for intracity rail and intercity rail. However, in this country, these cars were discontinued in the late 1940's, early 1950's, coinciding with the demise of intraurbans and trolleys. Recently, there has been renewed interest in DMU's, typically in cities that have old railroad spur lines, abandoned main lines or underutilized short lines that appear attractive for commuter rail. Some cities that have major rail lines, have found that DMU's have the potential to be a less costly alternative to Light Rail Transit or traditional push-pull commuter rail (see below). The issue until recently has been the crash strength of the DMU vehicles. The DMU's produced to date have been non-FRA compliant, and thus could not operate on the same track with freight or AMTRAK trains. However, recently advances in technology have allowed the development of FRA-compliant

vehicles. DMU technology has a maximum speed of approximately 70 miles per hour (mph), with an average operating speed of approximately 35 mph and is appropriate for regional and sub-regional intercity travel from suburb to urban core, but not for higher speed interstate, intercity travel. DMUs will not be evaluated in this study.

4.3.2 Commuter Rail

Commuter rail typically serves medium to high passenger volumes over medium to longer distances. The technology is steel wheel on steel rail. Commuter rail most often shares right-of-way with freight rail traffic. The traction power is provided by a diesel-powered locomotive, which pushes or pulls one or several passenger coach cars. Although the potential speed of this technology is 79 to 110 mph, because the general station spacing is approximately seven to 10 miles, the average operating speed is well under 59 mph**.** Typically, the distance between stops is greater than other forms of fixed guideway transit (heavy rail, light rail), and the number of stops at the destination (the urban core) is limited. Commuter rail is currently utilized throughout the United States as a regional transportation alternative to the automobile or intercity and express bus to access the urban core from outlying suburban communities. Recent commuter rail projects cover distances ranging from 31 miles in Nashville to 75 miles in South Florida and in Seattle. The State of Georgia is currently planning for commuter rail from Atlanta to locations such as Athens (72 miles, 11 stops), Gainesville (53 miles, 11 stops), Canton (43 miles, 8 stops), Bremen (52 miles, 6 stops), Senoia (38 miles, 7 stops), Madison (68 miles, 9 stops) and Lovejoy (26 miles, 7 stops) with an extension to Macon (103 miles, 13 stops). As with the DMU, this technology is appropriate for regional and sub-regional intercity travel from outlying areas to the urban core, but is not ideal for higher speed interstate intercity travel. Commuter rail will not be evaluated in this study.

4.3.3 Intercity Rail

Intercity Rail is provided in this country by AMTRAK, which serves medium to higher passenger volumes over long distances. This technology utilizes diesel-powered locomotives that are steel wheel on steel rail, with coach, first class, sleeper, dining and club cars. As with commuter rail technology, intercity rail as provided by AMTRAK shares the right-of-way with freight rail traffic. With commuter rail, this sharing of the track is not overly problematic, as commuter rail schedules are typically peak hour oriented and freight service can be scheduled around passenger service. With intercity rail, this is not the case. Intercity rail runs on daily scheduled service, and often crosses several state lines as well as railroad territories. Thus, because of freight service on the same track, intercity rail is often several hours off schedule. The average station spacing for intercity rail is typically 30 miles or more. While the potential speeds are limited to the class of the railroad, approximately 79 to 110 mph, the average operating speeds are 69 mph and below in order to comply with municipal speed restrictions, avoid conflict with freight traffic, and be compatible with unprotected corridors with multiple grade crossings and vehicular points of conflict, and alignment characteristics of the track. While this technology is appropriate for intercity travel, the slow average operating speeds, the shared track utilization, the multiple grade crossings and corresponding safety issues, and the

inability to provide a travel time competitive with automobile travel within the corridor, eliminates the consideration of this technology in this study.

4.3.4 "Low" High Speed Intercity Rail

"Low" High Speed Intercity Rail is provided in this country by AMTRAK, which serves the Northeast corridor between Boston, New York, Philadelphia and Washington D.C.. This technology utilizes both diesel and electric powered locomotives that are steel wheel on steel rail, with coach, first class, and club cars. Unlike commuter rail and intercity rail technology, high-speed intercity rail as provided by AMTRAK, when it operates at high speeds, is on exclusive track in a sealed corridor. The average station spacing for high-speed intercity rail is typically 75 miles or more. While the potential speeds are limited to the class of the railroad, approximately 79 to 110 mph, the potential speeds on the Northeast corridor can be as high as 150 mph, with the average operating speeds of 90 mph While this technology is appropriate for intercity travel, previous studies conducted in the Atlanta to Chattanooga corridor documented the inability of this "low" high-speed technology to provide a travel time competitive with automobile travel within the corridor. Pending a reaffirmation of the previous study's conclusion through patronage forecasting, it is anticipated that this technology would be eliminated from consideration in this study.

4.3.5 Very High Speed Rail (VHS)

VHS Rail serves higher passenger volumes over long distances. This technology utilizes electric-powered locomotives that receive energy from overhead wires to the vehicle. The vehicles themselves are steel wheel on steel rail, with coach, first class, sleeper, dining and club cars. Unlike commuter and intercity rail, this technology is on totally grade separated right of way, which eliminates potential points of conflict with pedestrians or other non rail vehicles. In addition, there is no shared use of the track with freight, so higher speeds and passenger schedules can be met. The station spacing can be as low as 30 miles, and average 50 to 75 miles in order to take advantage of the speed of the technology. Speeds of this technology are approximately 220 mph, although recent advances allow this technology to travel at speeds in excess of 320 mph. While the average operating speed of this technology is approximately 180 mph, there are several lines operating in Europe at average speeds of 200 mph Although this technology does not currently operate in the U.S., it is utilized throughout Europe and Asia including the TGV in France, the ICE in Germany, and the Shinkansen in Japan. This technology is well suited for intercity travel, and previous studies conducted in the Atlanta to Chattanooga corridor documented the ability of this high-speed technology to provide a travel time competitive with automobile travel within the corridor. The application of VHS technology within the corridor will be evaluated.

4.3.6. Maglev

Maglev serves higher passenger volumes over long distances. This technology utilizes either attractive or repulsive magnetic forces to lift and propel the train along a guideway. Maglev allows the vehicles to hover or float a small distance above the guideway, thereby eliminating

friction and rolling resistance. The power is supplied to the magnets through the track. Maglev uses a unique guideway and could also operate in a shared right-of-way similar to VHS systems. Like VHS, this technology is on totally grade separated right of way, which eliminates potential points of conflict with pedestrians or other non rail vehicles, and higher speeds and passenger schedules can be met. The station spacing can be as low as 30 miles, and average 50 to 75 miles in order to take advantage of the speed of the technology. Current systems under development are designed for maximum operating speeds above that of VHS technology, 310 mph and beyond. A Japanese maglev train has reached speeds of 360 mph While there are currently no Maglev systems in intercity revenue service, the German Transrapid system is currently in commercial operation in China on a track over 20 miles long between downtown Shanghai and the airport. In addition, the 25 mile closed loop test track in Elmsland, Germany had been in operation for over 20 years. This system has also been certified for use in Germany for a Hamburg-Berlin line, and a 23-mile line running from Munich Airport to the city center is approved for construction. This technology is appropriate for intercity travel, and previous studies conducted in the Atlanta to Chattanooga corridor documented the ability of this high-speed technology to provide a travel time competitive with automobile travel within the corridor. This technology will be considered in this study.

5. Scoping Process

The scoping process for the Atlanta to Chattanooga HSGT corridor is being conducted in accordance with 23 CFR 771.123 and 40 CFR 1501.7 to solicit participation from agencies, counties, municipalities, and the public under the NEPA process. The scoping process is used to identify the range of alternatives to be studied, the potential impacts to the human and natural environments, and the key issues and concerns to be addressed in the EIS. This section of the report documents the scoping efforts conducted for the Atlanta to Chattanooga HSGT Study and the results of those efforts.

The scoping open houses were announced using newspaper advertisements and news releases. The advertisement appeared in the Atlanta Journal Constitution on September 2 and September 16. In addition, a report by the Associated Press was published and aired by most area media outlets. There were relevant individual news stories on the scoping open houses in at least three northwest Georgia newspapers: the Rome-News Tribune, The Daily Tribune-News of Cartersville, and the Chattanooga Times-Free Press. Some of these stories and reports were generated by pre-event news releases and others were coverage of the open houses themselves and the public's input.

5.1 Stakeholder Participation

Two agency scoping meetings and three public scoping open houses were held for the project. The agency scoping meetings were held in Atlanta and Chattanooga on September 18th and September 20th, respectively. The September 18th meeting was held at 10:00 A.M. at the GDOT Office of Environment/Location, in Atlanta. The September 20th meeting was held at 10:00 A.M. at the Hamilton County Public Library in Chattanooga.

The scoping meetings were announced in a Notice of Intent (NOI) that appeared in the Federal Register on August 22, 2007. A copy of the NOI and the legal advertisement is included as *Appendix A and Appendix B.* Other means of advertising included direct mailings to federal and state environmental regulatory and review agencies and local government officials, which also initiated the Early Coordination Process. Public Scoping open houses were held between 5:00 P.M and 7:30 P.M in Powder Springs, Rome, and Chattanooga on September 18th, 19th, and 20th, respectively. The invitations to stakeholders to participate in the scoping process are summarized in the following sections.

5.1.1 Public and Agency Open House/Meeting Format

<u>Public</u>

A series of three open houses for public input were held along the project corridor. A series of thirty exhibit graphic boards were displayed to help explain the project. There were individuals from the consultants available to answer questions of the attendees. A Scoping Booklet handout was given out to each of the attendees. A total of 75 people attended the three public

information open houses. Copies of the Public Meeting Summaries are provided as *Appendix D* and a copy of the Scoping Booklet is provided as *Appendix H.*

Agency

There were two meetings for agency input held in the corridor. The meetings started with GDOT giving an overview of the project, after which the various consultants gave a presentation explaining the scope of the project. After the presentation, there was a question and answer portion, where the agencies could ask questions, provide their input, or specify analysis that should be considered as part of the EIS process. A total of 17 people representing various agencies attended. Copies of the Agency Meeting Minutes are provided as Appendix E.

5.2 Mailings

State and federal environmental regulatory and review agencies, Native American tribal councils, municipalities, counties, floodplain administrators, and other government organizations and officials were notified of the scoping meetings and scoping process through a mailing. Copies of example letters and mailing lists are included in *Appendix F and G*. Federal and state agencies, regional government planning organizations, Native American tribes and associated agencies, counties and municipalities, and members of Congress contacted are listed below.

5.2.1 Federal and State Agencies

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
U.S. Center for Disease Control - National Center for Environmental Health
U.S. Department of Agriculture, Natural Resources Conservation Service
U.S. Department of Homeland Security
  Federal Emergency Management Agency
U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development
U.S. Department of the Interior
  Fish and Wildlife Service
  Geological Survey - Environmental Affairs Program
  National Park Service
U.S. Department of Transportation
  Federal Highway Administration
  Federal Railroad Administration
  Federal Transit Administration
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency – Region IV
Georgia Department of Natural Resources (GDNR)
  Division of Floodplain Management
  Environmental Protection Division
  Georgia Natural Heritage Program
  Historic Preservation Division - State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO)
Georgia Forestry Commission

Tennessee Department of Economic and Community Development – Community Development Division
Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation
Tennessee Historical Commission – State Archaeologist and SHPO

5.2.2 Regional Government Planning Organizations

Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC)
Chattanooga - Hamilton County Regional Planning Council
Coosa Valley Regional Development Center (RDC_
North Georgia RDC

5.2.3 Native American Tribes and Associated Agencies

Absentee-Shawnee Tribe of Oklahoma
Alabama-Coushatta Tribe of Texas
Alabama-Quassarte Tribal Town of the Creek
Cherokee Nation of Oklahoma
The Chickasaw Nation
Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma
Coushatta Tribe of Louisiana
Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians of North Carolina
Eastern Shawnee Tribe of Oklahoma
Kialegee Tribal Town of the Creek Nation
Loyal Shawnee Tribe of Oklahoma
Miccosukee Tribe of Indians of Florida
Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians
Muscogee (Creek) Nation of Oklahoma
Poarch Band of Creek Indians
Seminole Tribe of Florida
Seminole Nation of Oklahoma
Thlopthlocco Tribal Town
United Keetoowah Band of Cherokee Indians
Yuchi Tribe of Oklahoma
Advisory Council on Tennessee Indian Affairs
Bureau of Indian Affairs Eastern Agency
Tennessee Commission of Indian Affairs
Tennessee Native American Convention

5.2.4 Counties

Bartow County	Gordon County
Catoosa County	Gwinnett County
Chattooga County	Hamilton County
Cherokee County	Murray County
Clayton County	Polk County

Cobb County
Douglas County
Floyd County
Paulding County
Walker County
Whitfield

5.2.5 Municipalities

Acworth
Atlanta
Austell
Ball Ground
Canton
Cartersville
Cave Spring
Chattanooga
College Park
Dalton
East Point
Fairmont
Forest Park
Fort Oglethorpe
Hapeville
Holly Springs
Jonesboro
Kennesaw
Lafayette
Lawrenceville
Marietta
Nelson
Powder Springs
Rex
Ringgold
Riverdale
Sandy Springs
Smyrna
Varnell
Waleska
Woodstock

5.2.6 Chambers of Commerce

Atlanta Chamber of Commerce
Chattanooga Chamber of Commerce

5.2.7 United States Congress

Senator Saxby Chambliss
Senator Johnny Isakson
Representative Phil Gingrey

Representative John Lewis
Representative John Linder
Representative Tom Price

6. Scoping Meeting Results

Public Meetings

Three public meeting were held on September the 18th, 19th and 20th between 5:30 to 7: 00 PM. The following is a brief synopsis of the results of each of the open houses:

Powder Springs Public Scoping Public Information Open House, September 19, 2007-

A total of 13 people attended . From those attending, 10 comment forms, no letters and 2 verbal statements were received. An additional letter from the City of Atlanta's Department of Aviation was received during the ten-day comment period following the open house, totaling thirteen comments. They are summarized as follows:

No. Opposed	No. In Support	Uncommitted	Conditional
1	4	1	4

Rome Scoping Public Information Open House, September 19, 2007-

A total of 14 people attended. From those attending, 3 comment forms, no letters and 2 verbal statements were received. No additional comments were received during the ten-day comment period following the open house, for a total of 5 comments. They are summarized as follows:

No. Opposed	No. In Support	Uncommitted	Conditional
0	3	0	2

Chattanooga Scoping Public Information Open House, September 20, 2007-

A total of 49 people attended. From those attending, 24 comment forms, no letters and 1 verbal statement were received. No additional comments were received during the ten-day comment period following the open house, for a total of 25 comments. They are summarized as follows:

No. Opposed	No. In Support	Uncommitted	Conditional
0	20	3	2

Copies of the Public Meeting Summaries are provided as ***Appendix D.***

Government Agency Meeting

The Atlanta government agency meeting was attended by a total of 17 participants representing the following agencies and organizations; ARC, Chattanooga Enterprise Zone, Coosa Valley RDC, USACE Savannah District, US EPA Region IV, FHWA, GDNR-Historic Preservation Division, GDOT Planning Data and Intermodal Development and GDOT Office of Environment/Location

The topics that were raised at the Atlanta Agency meeting are as follows:

- Greyhound bus travel times and stops along the project corridor
- Concerns about available capacity along the CSX and Norfolk Southern rail lines
- Clarification on the freight component of the HSGT system
- Concerns over HSR using existing freight lines
- Concerns whether the project would meet the standards of the Etowah Conservation Habitat Plan
- Request to review the methodology and the level of detail proposed in the Tier I EIS
- Concerns over whether any reservoirs were located in the vicinity of the proposed corridor
- If the project would comply with Section 6002 of the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient, Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users regarding new obligations for a public comment process
- If other corridors were being considered other than rail corridors
- If the number and locations of stations limits potential speed
- If origin destination data would be incorporated into ridership projections
- Were there any preliminary cost figures and what those figures were
- How wide typical support columns would be in elevated sections
- Whether monorail systems had or would be considered
- How the project would be integrated with the Bus Rapid Transit Plans along I-75
- Where VHS or Maglev has been implemented in the US
- How high the elevated sections would have to be above ground
- If another alternative could be considered that served Cartersville instead of Rome
- If quickest route between Atlanta and Chattanooga is desired, then the Rome Alignment makes sense
- If a reduction in landings is expected at HJAIA was anticipated as result of the project
- Comparison of the energy usage of VHS and Maglev
- Was HSGT included in any municipality/county transportation plans?
- The projects effect on the State Implementation Plan
- The width of the anticipated or recommended corridor

The topics raised at the Chattanooga Agency meeting are as follows:

- The proposed station locations were questioned and it was thought that Dalton should have a station closer to town rather than the Chatsworth/Dalton station shown

- Additional GIS data was available and should be used as appropriate

Copies of the minutes from the agency meetings are provided as ***Appendix E*****.**

6.1 Scope Changes

One of the changes that came out of the scoping process is the inclusion of a Western Suburb Alignment, which would be located in the Southern Corridor. This Alignment has a potentially higher speed alignment from the Atlanta Airport to I-75. The alignment bypasses downtown Atlanta and the highly developed I-75 corridor north of Atlanta. The line follows Camp Creek Parkway and utility corridors through rural areas joining the I-75 corridor near Lake Altoona south of Cartersville. This alignment was added to the list of potential alternatives for consideration and analysis as part of the Tier I EIS along with the other alternatives identified in Section 4.2 of this report.

6.2 Next Steps

The purpose of the Scoping Phase for the Tier I EIS is to identify potential project alternatives that will be screened to determine if they are reasonable and feasible. The alternatives that are determined to best meet the project purpose and need while minimizing impacts to the social, cultural, and natural environments would then be evaluated further and in greater detail in the EIS. Another desired outcome of the scoping process is to identify the specific environmental impacts to be assessed, and to identify how the public would like to be involved throughout the study. After the close of the scoping period, GDOT evaluated the comments and input received from the agencies and the public regarding the project purpose and need, methodology to complete the study, station locations, alignments, technology, and sensitive ecological issues and made applicable changes to the study, which includes the ongoing development of an Agency Coordination Plan, and the addition of a new concept alignment to be considered as part of the analysis..

6.2.1 Evaluation Methodology

Based on a review of existing conditions, previous transportation studies, local land use and transportation plans, and input from the public, this study identified a wide range of potential alternatives for the implementation of a HSGT solution for the Atlanta to Chattanooga corridor. This “universe of alternatives” included both possible alignments (broken down into segments) and a range of transportation technologies. Potential alignment segments, station locations and different technologies would be evaluated further through a modeling process that compares factors including travel time, patronage, and operation and maintenance costs to name a few of the evaluation criteria. The various conceptual alternatives alignments would also undergo an environmental screening to identify potential environmental impacts associated with each alignment. Ongoing public involvement and stakeholder coordination would also be an important feature of the alternatives screening and development process.

6.2.2 Methodology for Narrowing Alternatives

In developing a methodology for the screening of alternatives for the project, the following general approach would be followed:

1. **Prepare a Universe of Alternatives –** A series of conceptual alternatives that represents all feasible connections between Atlanta and Chattanooga has been developed, on which the initial screening would be completed.
2. **Develop Measures of Effectiveness –** Measures of Effectiveness (MOEs) are used to compare the differences between the various alternatives and determine the extent that each meets the project purpose and need.
3. **Complete Preliminary Screening-** Alternatives would be evaluated based on the MOEs.
4. **Identify Environmental Areas of Concern –** Each of the alternative alignments would be evaluated to identify potential areas of environmental concern.
5. **Narrow Alternatives** – Those alternative that perform the best when compared against the MOEs, and are determined to have the least impact to areas of environmental concern would be advanced for further evaluation until a preferred alternative is defined. The preferred alternative will identify the corridor and the technology.
6. **Keep Stakeholders Involved** – Continued public outreach on this project will be an important part of the alternatives development and decision making process as they are narrowed. An upcoming round of public outreach is currently being planned to begin meeting with affected municipalities in the corridor to begin discussions regarding potential alignment and station locations. Outreach to environmental justice populations is also planned in the early phases of the Public Involvement Plan.

7.0 TECHNICAL MEETING MINUTES (SEPTEMBER 2008)

Georgia Department of Transportation

Tier I Environmental Impact Statement
High-Speed Ground Transportation in the Atlanta to Chattanooga Corridor

Project PTSC0-0023-00-002
PI #T001684

FINAL TECHNICAL MEETING MINUTES

Prepared for:

Georgia Department of Transportation
Office of Environment/Location
3993 Aviation Circle
Atlanta, Georgia 30336

Prepared by:

Earth Tech, Inc.
1455 Old Alabama Road, Suite 170
Roswell, GA 30076

September 2008

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Atlanta - Chattanooga
High-Speed Ground Transportation (HSGT) Study

Project PTSC0-0023-00-002; PI # T001684
January 23, 2008, Meeting with Douglas County

MEETING MINUTES

Attendees: Mark Hardgrove (PI), Jere Burruss (MA), Mark Lunsford (MA)
Amy Brumelow, Director of Planning & Zoning, Douglas County
Eric McDonald, Assistant Director, Development Authority of Douglas County

Location: Douglas County Courthouse
1st Floor - Development Services Office
8700 Hospital Drive
Douglasville, GA

1.0 Introductions

- Exchange of business cards
- Explained the purpose of the meeting

2.0 Provided the following project meeting materials

- Scoping Meeting Workbook
- Purpose & Need Statement
- 2 CDs with Plan and Profile Sheets for all HSGT corridors, Typical Sections and a Corridor Study Map (all in PDF format)
- A Display board with a 24 x 36 Proposed Alignment Map showing station locations was used at this meeting

3.0 General Discussion of HSGT Alignments and Potential Station Areas

- The portion of the corridor near Chapel Hill and Mason Creek Roads could affect a residential area, private school, fire station and a golf club.
- Areas north of Interstate 20 would be suitable for high-speed ground transportation, but these areas have been targeted for industrial type economic development.
- The portion of the corridor along South Fulton Parkway up to Caps Ferry Road and Route 161 would be less congested if it were shifted to Post Road, which is a more "open" route.

- The Post Road/I-20 interchange would be a logical location for a station.
- In general, Douglas County does not support high-density development that could occur in proximity to a station. Comprehensive Plan only allows 3 acres lots in the Post Road interchange location. County does not allow PD zoning.

4.0 Explanation of Next Steps in the EIS Process and for the Project

- Alternatives Analysis (AA) is in progress for initial screening of alignments for "fatal flaws" (Phase II of EIS).
- Detailed environmental analyses will proceed after AA is completed in late Spring/early Summer of 2008.
- Public meetings and workshops for the project will be scheduled.

5.0 Points of Contact for Follow-Up Questions and Requests

- Attendees were requested to provide input on the corridor through Douglas County directly to Mark Lunsford.
- The EIS team directed attendees to the GDOT website for project data and stated that a project-specific website should be operational in the next couple of months.
- Speakers' Bureau and stakeholder meetings will be conducted in the near future to provide project briefings to local organizations (business and civic) in the corridor.

Atlanta - Chattanooga
High-Speed Ground Transportation (HSGT) Study

Project PTSC0-0023-00-002; PI # T001684
January 23, 2008, Meeting with City of Cartersville

MEETING MINUTES

Attendees: Mark Hardgrove (PI), Jere Burruss (MA), Mark Lunsford (MA)
Randy Mannino, Planning & Development Director, City of Cartersville
Jerry Milam, Assistant City Manager, City of Cartersville
Thomas Sanders, City Engineer, City of Cartersville
Richard Osborne, City Planner, City of Cartersville
Melinda Lemmon, Executive Director, Cartersville-Bartow County Economic Development
Kay Read, President and CEO, Cartersville-Bartow County Chamber of Commerce
Bill McMullen, Transportation Committee, Cartersville-Bartow County Chamber of Commerce

Location: City of Cartersville Planning & Development Department
City Hall, 10 North Public Square, 2nd Floor
Cartersville, GA

1.0 Introductions

- Exchange of business cards
- Explained the purpose of the meeting

2.0 Provided the following project meeting materials

- Scoping Meeting Workbook
- Purpose & Need Statement
- 2 CDs with Plan and Profile Sheets for all HSGT corridors, Typical Sections and a Corridor Study Map (all in PDF format)
- A Display board with a 24 x 36 Proposed Alignment Map showing station locations was used at this meeting

3.0 General Discussion of HSGT Alignments and Potential Station Areas

- The current City of Cartersville land use plan (2007) does not support a station location at the I-75/U.S. Route 411 interchange. The plan designates this

interchange for the relocation and expansion of the Weinman Mineral Museum, and as the 100,000 square foot Tellus Science Museum.

- The City openly supports a high speed ground transportation system and station.
- The City's preference for a high-speed ground transportation station along I-75 is, in descending order: Main Street exit, Red Top Mountain exit, US Route 411 and the State Route 20 exit.
- The City's future land use plan supports a station at Main Street.

4.0 Explanation of Next Steps in the EIS Process and for the Project

- Alternatives Analysis (AA) is in progress for initial screening of alignments for "fatal flaws" (Phase II of EIS).
- Detailed environmental analyses will proceed after AA is completed in late Spring/early Summer of 2008.
- Public meetings and workshops for the project will be scheduled.

5.0 Points of Contact for Follow-Up Questions and Requests

- Attendees were requested to provide input on the corridor through and potential station location adjacent to the City of Cartersville directly to Mark Lunsford.
- The EIS team directed attendees to the GDOT website for project data and stated that a project-specific website should be operational in the next couple of months.
- Speakers' Bureau and stakeholder meetings will be conducted in the near future to provide project briefings to local organizations (business and civic) in the corridor. Melinda Lemmon and Kay Read will help facilitate these meetings.

Atlanta - Chattanooga

High-Speed Ground Transportation (HSGT) Study

Project PTSC0-0023-00-002; PI # T001684

January 24, 2008, Meeting with Floyd County and City of Rome

MEETING MINUTES

Attendees: Mark Hardgrove (PI), L.N. Manchi (MA), Mark Lunsford (MA)
Sue Hiller, Planner/Director, Rome-Floyd County Planning Department
Joseph Davidson, Planner, Rome-Floyd County Planning Department
Kevin Poe, County Manager, Floyd County
Blaine Williams, Assistant County Manager, Floyd County
Ron Sitterding, Director of Community Development and Special Projects, City of Rome
Sammy Rich, Assistant City Manager, City of Rome
Sam Freeman, Director of Business & Industry Services, Greater Rome Chamber of Commerce

Location: Floyd County/City of Rome Planning Department
City of Rome Offices
601 Broad Street
Rome, GA

1.0 Introductions

- Exchange of business cards
- Explained the purpose of the meeting

2.0 Provided the following project meeting materials

- Scoping Meeting Workbook
- Purpose & Need Statement
- 2 CDs with Plan and Profile Sheets for all HSGT corridors, Typical Sections and a Corridor Study Map (all in PDF format)
- A Display board with a 24 x 36 Proposed Alignment Map showing station locations was used at this meeting

3.0 General Discussion of HSGT Alignments and Potential Station Areas

- Access/Frontage roads built as part of the 411 by-pass project south to the county line could interfere with the alignments. As part of the Rome Bypass

project, 200-foot wide right-of-way (ROW) will be acquired along either side. Need to coordinate with GDOT and City/County regarding highway cross section.

- The City/County generally supports the preliminary location of the station as shown. There was discussion as to why the alignment does not go further into downtown Rome, which was agreed upon. Station could be slid up or down along the bypass, but must have tangent track.
- Station location should be preferably along the Rome Transit Department's (RTD) transit route. Current station as shown may be located near an Environmental Justice (EJ) area. Extra ROW was purchased to the northeast of the proposed HSGT station along the Kingston Highway as a protective measure for a low-income community adjacent to this location. Zoning doesn't preclude the station location proposed at Kingston Highway.
- Near or at the junction of the Rome to I-75 Connector and Rome Alignment is a municipal ground water supply well.
- Comprehensive Plan/Land Development Code allows for overlay zoning
- City/County to provide input to station location preferences, i.e., possibly closer to Ga. 53. or along 411 corridor.

4.0 Explanation of Next Steps in the EIS Process and for the Project

- Alternatives Analysis (AA) is in progress for initial screening of alignments for "fatal flaws" (Phase II of EIS).
- Detailed environmental analyses will proceed after AA is completed in late Spring/early Summer of 2008.
- Public meetings and workshops for the project will be scheduled.

5.0 Points of Contact for Follow-Up Questions and Requests

- Attendees were requested to provide input on the alignments through Floyd County and the potential station location adjacent to the City of Rome directly to Mark Lunsford.
- The EIS team directed attendees to the GDOT website for project data and stated that a project-specific website should be operational in the next couple of months.
- Speakers' Bureau and stakeholder meetings will be conducted in the near future to provide project briefings to local organizations (business and civic) in the corridor.

Atlanta - Chattanooga

High-Speed Ground Transportation (HSGT) Study

Project PTSC0-0023-00-002; PI # T001684

January 24, 2008, Meeting with City of Marietta

MEETING MINUTES

Attendees: Mark Hardgrove (PI), L.N. Manchi (MA), Mark Lunsford (MA)
Daniel Conn, Assistant Public Works Director/City Engineer
Rusty Roth, Planning & Zoning Manager, Department of Development Services, City of Marietta
Beth Sessoms, Manager of Economic Development, Department of Development Services, City of Marietta

Location: City of Marietta Development Services Department
205 Lawrence Street, 2nd Floor Conference Room
Marietta, GA

1.0 Introductions

- Exchange of business cards
- Explained the purpose of the meeting

2.0 Provided the following project meeting materials

- Scoping Meeting Workbook
- Purpose & Need Statement
- 2 CDs with Plan and Profile Sheets for all HSGT corridors, Typical Sections and a Corridor Study Map (all in PDF format)
- A Display board with a 24 x 36 Proposed Alignment Map showing station locations was used at this meeting

3.0 General Discussion of HSGT Alignments and Potential Station Areas

- There was much discussion as to the justification for a station in Marietta versus Town Center or Cumberland.
- In the event HSGT stations cannot be located in the Cumberland or Town Center Area CIDs, the City of Marietta would advocate for stations along I-75 at the following exit locations in order of descending preference: Route 120 South Loop, Route 120 North Loop, Canton Road.
- The Route 120/I-75location would not be a suitable HSGT station because of congestion.

- An LCI/TOD study was conducted for the Delk Road corridor.
- A proposed BRT station site at Franklin Road was also suggested as a good location for a HSGT station.
- It was suggested that the station location avoid the Roswell Road area.
- It was strongly suggested that given the industries in Marietta such, as Lockheed, it would be a shame for the HSGT system to pass by the City.
- Latest socioeconomic projections are available and are included in the recently concluded Cobb CTP.
- City staff indicated the willingness to provide any necessary GIS data and also mentioned that the web site is a good resource for necessary information.

4.0 Explanation of Next Steps in the EIS Process and for the Project

- Alternatives Analysis (AA) is in progress for initial screening of alignments for "fatal flaws" (Phase II of EIS).
- Detailed environmental analyses will proceed after AA is completed in late Spring/early Summer of 2008.
- Public meetings and workshops for the project will be scheduled.

5.0 Points of Contact for Follow-Up Questions and Requests

- Attendees were requested to provide input on the Interstate 75 corridor through the City of Marietta directly to Mark Lunsford.
- The EIS team directed attendees to the GDOT website for project data and stated that a project-specific website should be operational in the next couple of months.
- Speakers' Bureau and stakeholder meetings will be conducted in the near future to provide project briefings to local organizations (business and civic) in the corridor.

Atlanta - Chattanooga
High-Speed Ground Transportation (HSGT) Study

Project PTSC0-0023-00-002; PI # T001684
January 25, 2008, Meeting with Murray County

MEETING MINUTES

Attendees: Mark Hardgrove (PI), Jere Burruss (MA)
Dickey Barnes, Director of Land Development, Murray County
Jim Welch, County Commissioner, Murray County
Tom Starnes, Murray County Manager

Location: Murray County Land Development Office
121 North 4th Avenue
Chatsworth, GA

1.0 Introductions

- Exchange of business cards
- Explained the purpose of the meeting

2.0 Provided the following project meeting materials

- Scoping Meeting Workbook
- Purpose & Need Statement
- 2 CDs with Plan and Profile Sheets for all HSGT corridors, Typical Sections and a Corridor Study Map (all in PDF format)
- A Display board with a 24 x 36 Proposed Alignment Map showing station locations was used at this meeting

3.0 General Discussion of HSGT Alignments and Potential Station Areas

- Dickey Barnes will work on getting updated land use information to MA.
- Murray County concurs that the general Dalton station area, near the Whitfield/Murray County line in Whitfield County, would be the proper location for a station if the CSX alignment were chosen.
- There was much discussion regarding the economic impact of a HSGT system to a government tax base, even if there was no station within that government's jurisdiction. The County generally supports the proposed HSGT system.

4.0 Explanation of Next Steps in the EIS Process and for the Project

- Alternatives Analysis (AA) is in progress for initial screening of alignments for "fatal flaws" (Phase II of EIS).
- Detailed environmental analyses will proceed after AA is completed in late Spring/early Summer of 2008.
- Public meetings and workshops for the project will be scheduled.

5.0 Points of Contact for Follow-Up Questions and Requests

- Attendees were requested to provide input on the corridor through Murray County directly to Mark Lunsford.
- The EIS team directed attendees to the GDOT website for project data and stated that a project-specific website should be operational in the next couple of months.
- Speakers' Bureau and stakeholder meetings will be conducted in the near future to provide project briefings to local organizations (business and civic) in the corridor. Jim Welch will help facilitate these meetings.

Atlanta - Chattanooga
High-Speed Ground Transportation (HSGT) Study

Project PTSC0-0023-00-002; PI # T001684
January 25, 2008, Meeting with City of Atlanta

MEETING MINUTES

Attendees: Mark Hardgrove (PI), L.N. Manchi (MA), Mark Lunsford (MA)
Heather Alhadeff, Assistant Director of Transportation Planning, Bureau of Planning (BOP), City of Atlanta
Jessica Lavandier, Land Use Planner, BOP, City of Atlanta

Location: Atlanta City Hall
55 Trinity Avenue, Suite 1450, 1st Floor
Atlanta, GA

1.0 Introductions

- Exchange of business cards
- Explained the purpose of the meeting

2.0 Provided the following project meeting materials

- Scoping Meeting Workbook
- Purpose & Need Statement
- 2 CDs with Plan and Profile Sheets for all HSGT corridors, Typical Sections and a Corridor Study Map (all in PDF format)
- A Display board with a 24 x 36 Proposed Alignment Map showing station locations was used at this meeting

3.0 General Discussion of HSGT Alignments and Potential Station Areas

- BOP does not know if the I-285 Connector alignment is feasible with the adjacent industrial railroad uses (CSX and Norfolk Southern).
- Aerial segments of the I-285 alignment as well as the I-75 alignment south of the downtown Atlanta area could present environmental justice and visual resource impacts.
- As a general position, the City would strongly suggest tunnel sections versus aerial sections.

- The I-75 alignments in the vicinity of Howell Mill and Huff Roads "sandwich" a City of Atlanta reservoir. The proposed Belt Line also crosses the corridor in this vicinity.
- City of Atlanta staff felt that the Multi-Modal Passenger Terminal (MMPT) station location in the Downtown Atlanta area was preferred over the Vine City station, but understand the difficulty in accessing that location.
- The City expresses concern regarding the potential negative economic impact of a HSGT system.
- City staff also expressed concern that the Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC) model was undercounting population and employment for the City of Atlanta area, and wanted to review modeling methodology and model results.
- City staff agreed to work with the consultant team regarding fatal flaws in the alignments and station locations, and committed to alert the team about policy issues concerning a potential HSGT system.

4.0 Explanation of Next Steps in the EIS Process and for the Project

- Alternatives Analysis (AA) is in progress for initial screening of alignments for "fatal flaws" (Phase II of EIS).
- City of Atlanta staff requested the draft measures of effectiveness (MOE's) to be used in the alignment evaluation process. It was indicated that these were forthcoming, but required GDOT, FRA and FHWA approval prior to release.
- Detailed environmental analyses will proceed after AA is completed in late Spring/early Summer of 2008.
- Public meetings and workshops for the project will be scheduled.

5.0 Points of Contact for Follow-Up Questions and Requests

- Attendees were requested to provide input on the alignments through the City of Atlanta and on the potential station locations directly to Mark Lunsford.
- City of Atlanta staff indicated that they would be providing comments on the station locations, alignment options, and also the draft need and purpose document in the next month or so.
- City staff wanted to know more about the steering committee meetings, i.e., the frequency of the meetings and also when the last meeting was held. They would like to participate in these steering committee meetings. Phil Harris was identified as the point of contact at the City of Atlanta for this study. (G. Ross was contacted regarding this item).
- The EIS team directed attendees to the GDOT website for project data and stated that a project-specific website should be operational in the next couple of months.
- Speakers' Bureau and stakeholder meetings will be conducted in the near future to provide project briefings to local organizations (business and civic) in the corridor.

Atlanta - Chattanooga

High-Speed Ground Transportation (HSGT) Study

Project PTSC0-0023-00-002; PI # T001684

January 28, 2008, Meeting with Polk County

MEETING MINUTES

Attendees: Mark Hardgrove (PI), Mark Lunsford (MA)
Clinton Lester, County Manager, Polk County
Kim Graham, Planning & Zoning Administrator, Polk County
Randall Brazier, Ordinance Enforcement Officer, Polk County
Policy Department

Location: Polk County Planning & Zoning Office
Commissioner's Office, Suite A
144 West Avenue
Cedartown, GA

1.0 Introductions

- Exchange of business cards
- Explained the purpose of the meeting

2.0 Provided the following project meeting materials

- Scoping Meeting Workbook
- Purpose & Need Statement
- 2 CDs with Plan and Profile Sheets for all HSGT corridors, Typical Sections and a Corridor Study Map (all in PDF format)
- A Display board with a 24 x 36 Proposed Alignment Map showing station locations was used at this meeting

3.0 General Discussion of HSGT Alignments and Potential Station Areas

- Polk County does not foresee any obvious constraints to the proposed corridor, except for potential encroachment on an industrial park in Rockmart if the corridor was shifted.
- The alignments were discussed regarding potential residential impact but were generally acceptable.
- The Study team was encouraged to contact Rockmart regarding station locations. Staff indicated that development was rapidly occurring in the area

near the alignment and station location, and that the longer it took to implement the HSGT system, the less available right-of-way would be.

4.0 Explanation of Next Steps in the EIS Process and for the Project

- Alternatives Analysis (AA) is in progress for initial screening of alignments for "fatal flaws" (Phase II of EIS).
- Detailed environmental analyses will proceed after AA is completed in late Spring/early Summer of 2008.
- Public meetings and workshops for the project will be scheduled.

5.0 Points of Contact for Follow-Up Questions and Requests

- Attendees were requested to provide input on the corridor through Polk County directly to Mark Lunsford.
- The EIS team directed attendees to the GDOT website for project data and stated that a project-specific website should be operational in the next couple of months.
- Speakers' Bureau and stakeholder meetings will be conducted in the near future to provide project briefings to local organizations (business and civic) in the corridor.

Atlanta - Chattanooga
High-Speed Ground Transportation (HSGT) Study

Project PTSC0-0023-00-002; PI # T001684
January 28, 2008, Meeting with Catoosa County & City of Ringgold

MEETING MINUTES

Attendees: Mark Hardgrove (PI), Mark Lunsford (MA)
Donald Brown, Planning & Zoning Administrator, Catoosa County
Olney Meadows, Catoosa County Public Works
Jason Hall, Code Enforcement Officer, City of Ringgold
Bob Peck, Chairman, Catoosa County Development Authority

Location: City of Ringgold Administrative Offices
150 Tennessee Street
Ringgold, GA

1.0 Introductions

- Exchange of business cards
- Explained the purpose of the meeting

2.0 Provided the following project meeting materials

- Scoping Meeting Workbook
- Purpose & Need Statement
- 2 CDs with Plan and Profile Sheets for all HSGT corridors, Typical Sections and a Corridor Study Map (all in PDF format)
- A Display board with a 24 x 36 Proposed Alignment Map showing station locations was used at this meeting

3.0 General Discussion of HSGT Alignments and Potential Station Areas

- Public Works urged the EIS team to look at the Final Long Range Transportation Plan for the Hamilton County-North Georgia TPO.
- There was support regarding the station location indicated on the maps, but no strong preference for any general location.
- All participants were very supportive of the benefits of a potential HSGT system.

4.0 Explanation of Next Steps in the EIS Process and for the Project

- Alternatives Analysis (AA) is in progress for initial screening of alignments for "fatal flaws" (Phase II of EIS).
- Detailed environmental analyses will proceed after AA is completed in late Spring/early Summer of 2008.
- Public meetings and workshops for the project will be scheduled.

5.0 Points of Contact for Follow-Up Questions and Requests

- Attendees were requested to provide input on the alignments through Catoosa County and the potential station location in Ringgold directly to Mark Lunsford.
- The EIS team directed attendees to the GDOT website for project data and stated that a project-specific website should be operational in the next couple of months.
- Speakers' Bureau and stakeholder meetings will be conducted in the near future to provide project briefings to local organizations (business and civic) in the corridor.

Atlanta - Chattanooga
High-Speed Ground Transportation (HSGT) Study

Project PTSC0-0023-00-002; PI # T001684
January 29, 2008, Meeting with Gordon County

MEETING MINUTES

Attendees: L.N. Manchi (MA), Jere Burruss (MA), Mark Lunsford (MA)
Randy Darling, County Administrator, Gordon County
Greg Frisbee, Director, Planning and Development Department, Gordon County
Barry Hice, Gordon County Public Works
Jimmy Phillips, President, Gordon County Chamber of Commerce Development Authority

Location: Gordon County Chamber of Commerce Room
300 South Wall Street
Calhoun, GA

1.0 Introductions

- Exchange of business cards
- Explained the purpose of the meeting

2.0 Provided the following project meeting materials

- Scoping Meeting Workbook
- Purpose & Need Statement
- 2 CDs with Plan and Profile Sheets for all HSGT corridors, Typical Sections and a Corridor Study Map (all in PDF format)
- A Display board with a 24 x 36 Proposed Alignment Map showing station locations was used at this meeting

3.0 General Discussion of HSGT Alignments and Potential Station Areas

- The portions of the I-75 alignments south of Union Grove Road include large Mohawk distribution facilities (660,000 square feet), a 35-acre LG Chemical property south of the Mohawk facilities, and the 750-acre King I-75 Industrial Park for which the development authority is actively recruiting industrial tenants.
- Areas between I-75 and U.S. Route 41 are slated for future industrial development, including a planned 300,000 SF space for a floor covering company.

- Adjacent to or within the corridor, along Plainview Road, is a 110-acre property that is being considered for a 1.75 million SF regional distribution facility. A confidential client is negotiating with the State of Georgia before making final site selection. Project Tiger is the code word for this project. Within the next 30 days the client should make their final site selection decision.
- The Rome alignment should be moved south to the county line because the State of Georgia has acquired 500 acres along Nicholsville Road for a new battlefield park that was historically part of the Resaca Battlefield. The Taylor Ridge historic site is north of this new park.
- The US Route 411 corridor is "quiet" from a development standpoint and should not present any development conflicts for the project.

4.0 Explanation of Next Steps in the EIS Process and for the Project

- Alternatives Analysis (AA) is in progress for initial screening of alignments for "fatal flaws" (Phase II of EIS).
- Detailed environmental analyses will proceed after AA is completed in late Spring/early Summer of 2008.
- Public meetings and workshops for the project will be scheduled.

5.0 Points of Contact for Follow-Up Questions and Requests

- Attendees were requested to provide input on the alignments through Gordon County directly to Mark Lunsford.
- The EIS team directed attendees to the GDOT website for project data and stated that a project-specific website should be operational in the next couple of months.
- Speakers' Bureau and stakeholder meetings will be conducted in the near future to provide project briefings to local organizations (business and civic) in the corridor. Jimmy Phillips expressed interest to help facilitate these meetings.

Atlanta - Chattanooga
High-Speed Ground Transportation (HSGT) Study
Project PTSC0-0023-00-002; PI # T001684
January 29, 2008, Meeting with Bartow County

MEETING MINUTES

Attendees: L.N. Manchi (MA), Jere Burruss (MA), Mark Lunsford (MA)
Steve Bradley, County Administrator, Bartow County
Ray Sullivan, Planning Director, Bartow County

Location: Bartow County Commissioner's Conference Room
135 West Cherokee Avenue, Suite 135
Cartersville, GA

1.0 Introductions

- Exchange of business cards
- Explained the purpose of the meeting

2.0 Provided the following project meeting materials

- Scoping Meeting Workbook
- Purpose & Need Statement
- 2 CDs with Plan and Profile Sheets for all HSGT corridors, Typical Sections and a Corridor Study Map (all in PDF format)
- A Display board with a 24 x 36 Proposed Alignment Map showing station locations was used at this meeting

3.0 General Discussion of HSGT Alignments and Potential Station Areas

- The West Suburban Maglev alignment goes through the 40,000-acre Etowah National Historic District. The Etowah River and Pumpkinvine Creek drainages have lots of archaeological sites.
- Bartow County gave the EIS team a "heads up" on transportation studies that are about to begin for the widening of Route 113, from Taylorsville to Emerson & I-75; Highway 140 from Alpharetta to Adairsville & Canton (see the Bartow County LRTP); and the new Old Alabama Road corridor from Red Top Mountain to Route 41 & 293.
- Bartow County would be receptive to a station location anywhere in the county along the I-75 corridor.

4.0 Explanation of Next Steps in the EIS Process and for the Project

- Alternatives Analysis (AA) is in progress for initial screening of alignments for "fatal flaws" (Phase II of EIS).
- Detailed environmental analyses will proceed after AA is completed in late Spring/early Summer of 2008.
- Public meetings and workshops for the project will be scheduled.
- Steve Bradley expressed a desire to serve on the Project Steering Committee.

5.0 Points of Contact for Follow-Up Questions and Requests

- Attendees were requested to provide input on the alignments through Bartow County directly to Mark Lunsford.
- The EIS team directed attendees to the GDOT website for project data and stated that a project-specific website should be operational in the next couple of months.
- Speakers' Bureau and stakeholder meetings will be conducted in the near future to provide project briefings to local organizations (business and civic) in the corridor.

Atlanta – Chattanooga
High-Speed Ground Transportation (HSGT) Study

Project PTSC0-0023-00-002; PI #T001684
April 23, 2008, Meeting with Cumberland Community Improvement District

MEETING MINUTES

Attendees: Mark Hardgrove (PI); Jere Burruss (MA); Chris Kingsbury (MA); Linda Hamrick (CRA); Malaika Rivers, Executive Director, Cumberland Community Improvement District

Location: Cumberland Community Improvement District
240 Interstate North Parkway
Marietta, Georgia 30006

1.0 Introductions

- Exchange of business cards
- Explained the purpose of the meeting

2.0 Provided the following project meeting materials

- Scoping Meeting Workbook
- Purpose & Need Statement
- Plan and Profile Sheets for HSGT Corridors in the CID Area
- 2 CDs with Plan and Profile Sheets for all HSGT corridors, typical sections and a Corridor Study Map (all in PDF format)
- A display board with a 24" x 36" Proposed Alignment Map showing station locations was used at this meeting

3.0 General Discussion of HSGT Alignments and Potential Stations

- CID strongly supports the I-75 alignments.
- The Galleria Station south of I-285 is satisfactory for the I-75 median and I-75 corridor alignments.
- The station for the I-285 Bypass alignment should be changed from south of Windy Hill Road along I-75 to a location along I-285 between Cumberland Boulevard and Cobb Parkway.

4.0 Explanation of Next Steps in the EIS Process and for the Project

- Alternatives Analysis (AA) is in progress for initial screening of alignments for "fatal flaws" (Phase II of EIS).

- Detailed environmental analyses will proceed after AA is completed in late Spring/early Summer of 2008.
- Public meetings and workshops for the project will be scheduled.

5.0 Points of Contact for Follow-Up Questions and Requests

- Attendees were requested to provide input on the corridors directly to Chris Kingsbury.
- The EIS team directed attendees to the GDOT website for project data and stated that a project-specific website should be operational in the next couple of months.
- Speakers' Bureau and stakeholder meetings will be conducted in the near future to provide project briefings to local organizations (business and civic) in the corridor.

Atlanta – Chattanooga
High-Speed Ground Transportation (HSGT) Study

Project PTSC0-0023-00-002; PI #T001684
April 23, 2008, Meeting with Town Center Community Improvement District

MEETING MINUTES

Attendees: Mark Hardgrove (PI); Jere Burruss (MA);
Chris Kingsbury (MA); Linda Hamrick (CRA)
Lanie Shipp, Executive Director, Town Center Community Improvement District

Location: Town Center Community Improvement District
Town Park Commons
Bldg. 125, Town Park Drive, Room 270
Marietta, Georgia 30066

1.0 Introductions

- Exchange of business cards
- Explained the purpose of the meeting

2.0 Provided the following project meeting materials

- Scoping Meeting Workbook
- Purpose & Need Statement
- Plan and Profile Sheets for HSGT Corridors in the CID Area
- 2 CDs with Plan and Profile Sheets for all HSGT corridors, typical sections and a Corridor Study Map (all in PDF format)
- A display board with a 24" x 36" Proposed Alignment Map showing station locations was used at this meeting

3.0 General Discussion of HSGT Alignments and Potential Stations

- The station for both the I-75 median and I-75 corridor alignment should be south of Chastain Road, where a new roadway (Big Shanty Road) is projected to pass under I-75.
- The CID supports the I-75 alignment.

4.0 Explanation of Next Steps in the EIS Process and for the Project

- Alternatives Analysis (AA) is in progress for initial screening of alignments for "fatal flaws" (Phase II of EIS).

- Detailed environmental analyses will proceed after AA is completed in late Spring/early Summer of 2008.
- Public meetings and workshops for the project will be scheduled.

5.0 Points of Contact for Follow-Up Questions and Requests

- Attendees were requested to provide input on the corridors directly to Chris Kingsbury.
- The EIS team directed attendees to the GDOT website for project data and stated that a project-specific website should be operational in the next couple of months.
- Speakers' Bureau and stakeholder meetings will be conducted in the near future to provide project briefings to local organizations (business and civic) in the corridor.

Atlanta - Chattanooga

High-Speed Ground Transportation (HSGT) Study

Project PTSC0-0023-00-002; PI # T001684

May 21, 2008, Meeting with Hamilton County, City of Chattanooga, Chattanooga-Hamilton County Regional Planning & Chattanooga-Hamilton County/North Georgia TPO

MEETING MINUTES

Attendees: L.N. Manchi (MA), Linda Hamrick (CRA), Harry West (GA Tech)
Steve Leach, City of Chattanooga Public Works
Gary Hilbert, City of Chattanooga Land Development
Barry Bennett, Hamilton County Administration
Melissa Taylor, Chattanooga Hamilton County Regional Planning Agency

Location: 1250 Market Street, Conference Room
Chattanooga, TN 37402-4440

1.0 Introductions

- Exchange of business cards
- Explained the purpose of the meeting

2.0 Provided the following project meeting materials

- Scoping Meeting Workbook
- Purpose & Need Statement
- 2 CDs with Plan and Profile Sheets for all HSGT corridors, Typical Sections and a Corridor Study Map (all in PDF format)
- A Display board with a 24 x 36 Proposed Alignment Map showing station locations was used at this meeting

3.0 General Discussion of HSGT Alignments and Potential Station Areas

- Strong preference for I-75 Corridor & Maglev technology, as well as alignments related to Maglev.
- Trains should operate non-stop from Lovell Field to Dalton.
- Downtown station should be moved further west near the Chattanooga Choo-Choo in the vicinity of Market Street and Main Street. Generally, follow the existing rail line from the current station location.
- Bridge structures near the creek could be a potential issue.

- CSX yard area, on the alignment between Lovell Field and Downtown, could be a potential NIMBY issue.
- Connectivity to Nashville is very important.
- Steve Leach, City Public Works Administrator, felt that Lovell Field airport station was more important than the Downtown station.
- Airport has some options for acquisition of additional land, and suggested that may be underway.
- Group had many questions regarding the project process, specifically, more on background, previous study findings, and NEPA process.
- The feasibility study between Nashville and Chattanooga is now complete, and it was recommended that we review the findings from that study.
- During the stakeholder and speakers bureau meetings, we were urged to reach out to the EJ groups and several Environmental groups.

4.0 Explanation of Next Steps in the EIS Process and for the Project

- Alternatives Analysis (AA) is in progress for initial screening of alignments for "fatal flaws" (Phase II of EIS).
- Detailed environmental analyses will proceed after AA is completed in late Spring/early Summer of 2008.
- Public meetings and workshops for the project will be scheduled.

5.0 Points of Contact for Follow-Up Questions and Requests

- Melissa Taylor indicated that she would prepare a consensus memo summarizing their position on the alignments as well as the station locations.
- Speakers' Bureau and stakeholder meetings will be conducted in the near future to provide project briefings to local organizations (business and civic) in the corridor.

Atlanta - Chattanooga

High-Speed Ground Transportation (HSGT) Study

Project PTSC0-0023-00-002; PI # T001684

May 21, 2008, Meeting with Chattanooga Metropolitan Airport Authority

MEETING MINUTES

Attendees: L.N. Manchi (MA), Linda Hamrick (CRA), Harry West (GA Tech)
Michael Landguth, Lovell Field CEO

Location: 101 Airport Road
Chattanooga, TN 37421

1.0 Introductions

- Exchange of business cards
- Explained the purpose of the meeting

2.0 Provided the following project meeting materials

- Scoping Meeting Workbook
- Purpose & Need Statement
- 2 CDs with Plan and Profile Sheets for all HSGT corridors, Typical Sections and a Corridor Study Map (all in PDF format)
- A Display board with a 24 x 36 Proposed Alignment Map showing station locations was used at this meeting

3.0 General Discussion of HSGT Alignments and Potential Station Areas

- Suggested a possible new alignment into the airport property, shifting the current alignment in a northwesterly direction. This is to accommodate a potential second runway being considered in the long-term vision for Lovell Field. Considering that there will be a 3200-4500' of separation between runways, the new alignment should come somewhere in between the two runways.
- The current station location for Lovell Field as was shown in the plans and profiles was considered appropriate
- Michael Landguth is very supportive of the project, sees Lovell Field as a major multi-modal center, and the project supports his long-term vision for the airport.
- He sees the need for coherent national policy on transportation and energy, and he talks to Congressmen and Senators in support of this.

4.0 Explanation of Next Steps in the EIS Process and for the Project

- Alternatives Analysis (AA) is in progress for initial screening of alignments for "fatal flaws" (Phase II of EIS).
- Detailed environmental analyses will proceed after AA is completed in late Spring/early Summer of 2008.
- Public meetings and workshops for the project will be scheduled.

5.0 Points of Contact for Follow-Up Questions and Requests

- Speakers' Bureau and stakeholder meetings will be conducted in the near future to provide project briefings to local organizations (business and civic) in the corridor.

Atlanta - Chattanooga

High-Speed Ground Transportation (HSGT) Study

Project PTSC0-0023-00-002; PI # T001684

May 22, 2008, Meeting with City of Rockmart

MEETING MINUTES

Attendees: L.N. Manchi (MA), Linda Hamrick (CRA)
Jeff Ellis, City Manager
Stacey Smith, Planner, Community Development Department

Location: City of Rockmart
200 S Marble Street
Rockmart, GA 30153

1.0 Introductions

- Exchange of business cards
- Explained the purpose of the meeting

2.0 Provided the following project meeting materials

- Scoping Meeting Workbook
- Purpose & Need Statement
- 2 CDs with Plan and Profile Sheets for all HSGT corridors, Typical Sections and a Corridor Study Map (all in PDF format)
- A Display board with a 24 x 36 Proposed Alignment Map showing station locations was used at this meeting

3.0 General Discussion of HSGT Alignments and Potential Station Areas

- City is very supportive of the HSGT project, which they heard about from Polk County since we already met with Polk in January of this year.
- Both Maglev and Very High Speed Rail alignments were considered acceptable to the City officials.
- The alignment is going through the Coosa Valley Technical College and other important destinations and that seemed like a good idea to the City officials.
- The City of Rockmart officials were told at the meeting to plan on having a 20 to 30 acre station site available since they are working on the Comprehensive plan.

- City officials indicated that they shouldn't have a problem in dedicating a site of that size since they have several land parcels along the alignment. However, the City Manager wanted to run this issue by the Council members and other key elected officials. They will be in contact about the exact location later.

4.0 Explanation of Next Steps in the EIS Process and for the Project

- Alternatives Analysis (AA) is in progress for initial screening of alignments for "fatal flaws" (Phase II of EIS).
- Detailed environmental analyses will proceed after AA is completed in late Spring/early Summer of 2008.
- Public meetings and workshops for the project will be scheduled.

5.0 Points of Contact for Follow-Up Questions and Requests

- Speakers' Bureau and stakeholder meetings will be conducted in the near future to provide project briefings to local organizations (business and civic) in the corridor.

Atlanta - Chattanooga

High-Speed Ground Transportation (HSGT) Study

Project PTSC0-0023-00-002; PI # T001684

May 23, 2008, Meeting with Whitfield County, City of Dalton, North Georgia Regional Development Center (NGRDC)

MEETING MINUTES

Attendees: L.N. Manchi (MA), Linda Hamrick (CRA), and Harry West (GA Tech)
Robert McLeod, Whitfield County Administrator
Kevin Herritt, Planner, Whitfield County
Benny Dunn, City of Dalton
Barry Tarter, Bill Allen, Larry Van den Bosch, Barnett Chitwood, Matt Tucher, NGRDC

Location: Administrative Building #1
301 West Crawford Street
Dalton, GA 30720-4286

1.0 Introductions

- Exchange of business cards
- Explained the purpose of the meeting

2.0 Provided the following project meeting materials

- Scoping Meeting Workbook
- Purpose & Need Statement
- 2 CDs with Plan and Profile Sheets for all HSGT corridors, Typical Sections and a Corridor Study Map (all in PDF format)
- A Display board with a 24 x 36 Proposed Alignment Map showing station locations was used at this meeting

3.0 General Discussion of HSGT Alignments and Potential Station Areas

- Support for I-75 alignment—eliminate Eastern Corridor from further consideration
- More time and discussion needed on station location since Whitfield County is currently involved in the Comprehensive Plan update process. Both the county and city officials felt that a firm location cannot be given at this meeting and that elected officials need to be approached on this issue.

- Study needs to be accelerated and not be a 30 or 36-month study as shown on the schedule in the newsletter.
- Alignments need to consider civil war sites on sheet C367. A sewer plant is located north of Willowdale Road and the final alignment option needs to consider that.
- Attendees felt that money was being wasted on alignments that don't make much sense and also that don't capture the ridership along the corridor.
- No agreement between Whitfield County and NGRDC on the proposed HSGT station location – Whitfield County seemed to prefer Walnut Avenue @ I-75 near the Trade Center area as they see future re-development along Walnut Avenue and also because Walnut Avenue is the heart of Dalton for activity centers and businesses. North Georgia Regional Development Center (NGRDC) suggested Connector 3 interchange with I-75 (4-5 miles south of I-75 & Walnut Avenue) as the potential station location area for the I-75 alignment as they think it would be the least expensive option.
- County Administrator said Whitfield County is prepared to make a financial commitment for local matching funds in case a Tier II EIS is being pursued.

4.0 Explanation of Next Steps in the EIS Process and for the Project

- Alternatives Analysis (AA) is in progress for initial screening of alignments for "fatal flaws" (Phase II of EIS).
- Detailed environmental analyses will proceed after AA is completed in late Spring/early Summer of 2008.
- Public meetings and workshops for the project will be scheduled.

5.0 Points of Contact for Follow-Up Questions and Requests

- Speakers' Bureau and stakeholder meetings will be conducted in the near future to provide project briefings to local organizations (business and civic) in the corridor.

Atlanta - Chattanooga
High-Speed Ground Transportation (HSGT) Study

Project PTSC0-0023-00-002; PI # T001684
June 13, 2008, Meeting with Clayton County

MEETING MINUTES

Attendees: Jere Burruss (MA), Chris Brady (CRA)
Linda Hamrick (CRA), Harry West (GA Tech)
Robin Roberts, Director, Clayton County Economic Development
Jeff Metarko, Interim Director, Clayton County DOT
Beverly Ramsey, Interim Clayton County Zoning Administrator

Location: Clayton County DOT
7960 N. McDonough Street
Jonesboro, GA 30236

6.0 Introductions

- Exchange of business cards
- Explained the purpose of the meeting
- Discussed previous studies

2.0 Provided the following project meeting materials

- Scoping Meeting Workbook
- Purpose & Need Statement
- Project Newsletter
- 2 CDs with Plan and Profile Sheets for all HSGT corridors, Typical Sections and a Corridor Study Map (all in PDF format)
- A Display board with a 24 x 36 Proposed Alignment Map showing station locations was used at this meeting

3.0 General Discussion of HSGT Alignments and Potential Station Areas

- Clayton County favored the I-75 route alignment, which would pass through the County.
- Clayton County explained their Mountain View Redevelopment Plan, which has been studied and refined over a twenty-year period. This property is generally bound by I-75 on the West and I-285 on the South, and was formerly the site of the City of Mountain View. This was acquired by the City of Atlanta as part of the

Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport's Noise Abatement and Land Use Compatibility Program. The Plan includes mixed-use development and parking associated with needs generated by the Airport operations.

- A central component of the Plan is a multi-modal transportation facility (Southern Crescent Transportation Center). The transportation center is envisioned to accommodate the following elements and would be located along the NS Railroad tracks.
    - Parking
    - People Mover to the Airport
    - Commuter Rail Service as per Georgia DOT's Rail Passenger Program
    - MARTA Service Extension through the City of Hapeville
    - Local Transit Operations (Clayton Community Transit)

- Clayton County requested that the HSGT I-75 route alignment include a station at the Southern Crescent Transportation Center in lieu of a station at other locations that may be under consideration.

4.0 Explanation of Next Steps in the EIS Process and for the Project

- Alternatives Analysis (AA) is in progress for initial screening of alignments for "fatal flaws" (Phase II of EIS).
- Detailed environmental analyses will proceed after AA is completed in late Summer of 2008.
- Public meetings and workshops for the project will be scheduled.

5.0 Points of Contact for Follow-Up Questions and Requests

- Attendees were requested to provide input on the corridor through Clayton County directly to Jere Burruss.
- The EIS team directed attendees to the project website www.atl-chatt.org for project data and periodic updates.
- Speakers' Bureau and stakeholder meetings will be conducted in the near future to provide project briefings to local organizations (business and civic) in the corridor.

Atlanta - Chattanooga
High-Speed Ground Transportation (HSGT) Study

Project PTSC0-0023-00-002; PI # T001684
June 19, 2008, Meeting with Cobb County

MEETING MINUTES

Attendees: L.N. Manchi (MA), Jere Burruss (MA)
Linda Hamrick (CRA), Harry West (GA Tech)
Dana Johnson, Planning Division Manager, Cobb County Community Development
Marc Dixon, Planner, Cobb County Community Development
Phillip Westbrook, Planner, Cobb County Community Development
Cathy Brown, Cobb County Economic Development
Lorraine Vance, Cobb County DOT

Location: Cobb County's Managers Meeting Room
100 Cherokee Street
Marietta, GA

1.0 Introductions

- Exchange of business cards
- Explained the purpose of the meeting
- Discussed previous studies

2.0 Provided the following project meeting materials

- Scoping Meeting Workbook
- Purpose & Need Statement
- Project Newsletter
- 2 CDs with Plan and Profile Sheets for all HSGT corridors, Typical Sections and a Corridor Study Map (all in PDF format)
- A Display board with a 24 x 36 Proposed Alignment Map showing station locations was used at this meeting

3.0 General Discussion of HSGT Alignments and Potential Station Areas

- Cobb County favors the I-75 alignments and thought Maglev technology was preferable to VHSR due to visual and noise concerns for VHSR.

- Cobb County favors the I-75 alignments.
- Previous coordination meetings with the Cumberland and Town Center Community Improvement Districts were discussed. For the Town Center CID input, the Cobb staff agreed with a recommendation to locate stations on I-75 at the proposed Big Shanty Road underpass which is consistent with a proposed Bus Rapid Transit Station at this same location.
- For the Cumberland input, the Cobb staff agreed to I-75 stations at Akers Mill Road in conjunction with a purposed Bus Rapid Transit Station of this same location. They questioned an I-285 Bypass Station at Cumberland Blvd./Cobb Parkway and preferred an I-75 location for the I-285 Bypass Alignment, but did not rule out the CID's recommended site on Cumberland Blvd.

4.0 Explanation of Next Steps in the EIS Process and for the Project

- Alternatives Analysis (AA) is in progress for initial screening of alignments for "fatal flaws" (Phase II of EIS).
- Detailed environmental analyses will proceed after AA is completed in late Summer of 2008.
- Public meetings and workshops for the project will be scheduled.

5.0 Points of Contact for Follow-Up Questions and Requests

- Attendees were requested to provide input on the corridor through Cobb County directly to L.N. Manchi
- The EIS team directed attendees to the project website www.atl-chatt.org for project data and periodic updates.
- Speakers' Bureau and stakeholder meetings will be conducted in the near future to provide project briefings to local organizations (business and civic) in the corridor.

Atlanta - Chattanooga
High-Speed Ground Transportation (HSGT) Study

Project PTSC0-0023-00-002; PI # T001684
June 19, 2008, Meeting with Paulding County

MEETING MINUTES

Attendees: L.N. Manchi (MA), Jere Burruss (MA)
Linda Hamrick (CRA), Harry West (GA Tech)
Chris Robinson, Paulding County Assistant Community Development Director
Scott Greene, Paulding County DOT Director

Location: Henry Winn Building
120 East Memorial Drive
Dallas, GA 30132

1.0 Introductions

- Exchange of business cards
- Explained the purpose of the meeting
- Discussed previous studies

2.0 Provided the following project meeting materials

- Scoping Meeting Workbook
- Purpose & Need Statement
- Project Newsletter
- 2 CDs with Plan and Profile Sheets for all HSGT corridors, Typical Sections and a Corridor Study Map (all in PDF format)
- A Display board with a 24 x 36 Proposed Alignment Map showing station locations was used at this meeting

3.0 General Discussion of HSGT Alignments and Potential Station Areas

- Paulding County supports the HSGT concept even if a station is not planned in the County. They felt that potential stations in either Rockmart (on the Rome alignment) or Cartersville (on the I-75 alignment) would be accessible.
- Paulding County was interested in potential stations being considered in the County on the Rome and Western suburb alignments. These alignments lent themselves to a common station location in the County near SR 120. (VHSR-

Sheet C187, near Sta. 1948+93.41 and Maglev – Sheet C217, near Sta. 1950+00). Paulding County understood these locations are only for preliminary planning and evaluation purposes.

- A new Paulding County Airport is under construction on the south side of US 278 about 5.5 miles west of Dallas. This facility will accommodate general aviation operations and is expected to be a catalyst for an adjacent business/technology park development. Paulding County will provide the HSGT Team more information on the new airport.
- Both the VHSR and Maglev alignments looked good to the County staff.

4.0 Explanation of Next Steps in the EIS Process and for the Project

- Alternatives Analysis (AA) is in progress for initial screening of alignments for "fatal flaws" (Phase II of EIS).
- Detailed environmental analyses will proceed after AA is completed in late Summer of 2008.
- Public meetings and workshops for the project will be scheduled.

5.0 Points of Contact for Follow-Up Questions and Requests

- Attendees were requested to provide input on the corridor through Paulding County directly to L.N. Manchi
- The EIS team directed attendees to the project website www.atl-chatt.org for project data and periodic updates.
- Speakers' Bureau and stakeholder meetings will be conducted in the near future to provide project briefings to local organizations (business and civic) in the corridor.

8.0 2010 PARTICIPATING AGENCY MEETINGS MINUTES

Atlanta-Chattanooga Corridor
High Speed Ground Transportation Project
Participating Agency Meeting

October 19, 2010 10:00 AM – 12:00 Noon
Georgia Department of Transportation
600 West Peachtree Street, Atlanta, Georgia

Attendees: (*Participated via phone)

Georgia Department of Transportation

Glenn Bowman, Office of Environmental Services
Gail D'Avino, Office of Environmental Services
Lillian Jackson, Government & Community Relations Manager
Lisa Safstrom, Scenic Byways Coordinator
Bryan Holloway

Lead Agencies

Katy Allen, Federal Highway Administration
Catherine Dobbs-Kauffman*, Federal Railroad Administration

Participating Agencies

Kelly Laycock, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
Jamie Higgins, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Region IV
Pete Patavina *, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Services – Athens, GA
Mary Dills, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Savannah District, Regulatory Division, Piedmont Branch
Paul Burkhalter*, Georgia Department of Natural Resources
Paul Archambault*, Southeast TN Development District
Gary Sexton*, Southeast TN Development District
Bob McCord*, Atlanta Regional Commission
Kenneth Parr*, T ennessee Valley Authority
Kenneth Wester*, Appalachian Regional Commission
John Crocker, Metropolitan Atlanta Rapid Transit Authority (MARTA)
Luz Borrerro*, City of Atlanta
Richard Osborne, City of Cartersville
Randy Mannino, City of Cartersville
Jackson Myers, City of College Park
Tommy Parker*, Murray County Commissioners Office
Mike Jolley*, Dalton Utilities
Robert Todd*, Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency
Joe Ferguson, The Enterprise Center
Roussan Francois, Fulton County
Delmos Stone, Rome Floyd County Planning Department
Sue Hiller, Rome Floyd County Planning Department
Crew Heimer, Georgia Regional Transportation Authority (GRTA)
Matt Denton*, Polk County

Consultant Team

Sheldon Fialkoff, AECOM
Harry Boxler, AECOM
Samantha Castro, AECOM
Todd Hill, Moreland Altobelli
L.N. Manchi, Moreland Altobelli
Brian Smart, Moreland Altobelli
Chris Brady, Commonwealth Research

DRAFT MEETING MINUTES

I. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

Glenn Bowman, State Environmental Administrator for the Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) welcomed participants and initiated introduction of meeting participants both on the phone and present. He then outlined the following meeting agenda:

1. Review of Participating Agency comments on the *Screening Criteria and Methodology Report* and the September 23, 2010 meeting
2. Presentation of results of the Screening Process
3. Next steps

II. REVIEW OF PARTICPATING AGENCY COMMENTS

Sheldon Fialkoff, Consultant Team Project Manager, confirmed that all participants had received a copy of the presentation either in hard copy form at the meeting, or emailed out ahead of time to those joining by phone.

There were approximately 25 comments received from the Participating Agencies that could be grouped into five general categories. The five categories and the response to the comments are summarized as follows:

1. Links to Local Transit
   Comment: There should be some acknowledgment in the *Screening Report* as to the linkages to local transit.
   Response: While links to local transit it would not be a discriminator among the alternatives at this level, it is important and will be evaluated in subsequent analyses. In recognition of its importance, a discussion of linkages to local transit will be included in a section of the *Screening Report*, although it will not become a measure of effectiveness (MOE) at this time.
2. Forest Habitats
   Comment: There was concern that forest habitats were not included as an evaluation criteria or MOE.
   Response: Forest habitats are evaluated by examining the amount of built environment within the ROW and by utilizing the parkland MOE. The parkland MOE includes forest habitats. In combination, the two MOEs give a view of the potential use of forest habitat. Forest habitats would also be examined in greater detail in the DEIS assessment.
3. Environmental Justice (EJ) Communities
   Comment: Why not acknowledge EJ communities in the Screening Process?
   Response: We felt we could not do justice at this level of screening to the positives and negatives on the impact to EJ communities. It will be part of the DEIS. It will also be acknowledged in the *Screening Report*, but not as an MOE.

4. Farmland – will be considered in the DEIS, and not as an MOE in the *Screening Report*.
5. Scoring system – the *Screening Report* uses a five-point system rather than a four-point system to show greater differentiation between alternatives.

The full list of comments will be documented in a Disposition of Comments Report, and circulated to everyone after it has been reviewed by GDOT, FHWA, and FRA.

III. SCREENING RESULTS PRESENTATION

Sheldon Fialkoff went on to provide an overview of the project and the screening methodology, criteria, and results. It was noted that these are preliminary results, since this is all subject to review. Below is an outline of the presentation.

- Alignments/Corridors
- Screening Process and Results
- Alignments Advancing in DEIS
- Next Steps

IV. NEXT STEPS

A similar slideshow will be presented to stakeholder groups starting the week of October 25th through November 8th, 2010. All comments from Participating Agencies and stakeholders will be documented and addressed. The *Screening Report* is currently under review by GDOT, FHWA and FRA. Once these agencies complete their review, the document will be distributed to Participating Agencies and the study will proceed into the development of an administrative draft of the DEIS.

V. QUESTION & ANSWER SESSION

The following resulted from the Q&A session held after the presentation of the screening results.

Q1: (Mary Dills, USACE Savannah) – You talk about use of the median on I-75. How does that work with the current proposal for high-occupancy travel (HOT) lanes?

A1: (Sheldon Fialkoff) – We will be addressing that as part of the DEIS. We will look at whether the system should be elevated or the road widened if it is at-grade. This would appear in the potential impacts section of the DEIS.

(Glenn Bowman): It is important to note that these are separate and independent projects. The HOT project is pretty far along so it may eventually influence more decisions as it moves ahead. We are not setting the exact alignment in this Tier 1, but instead using a buffer of approximately 1,000 feet.

Q2: (Pete Patavina, USFWS) – How did you weigh alignments within corridors? All of the criteria appear to be weighed equally. It does not seem like the environmental criteria capture the benefits of the project completely. For instance, in terms of air quality being directly proportional to ridership. Shouldn't ridership have a higher weighting? There does not seem to be a good measure yet of how the HGST would be relieving pressures on the interstate system in that corridor. Maybe more alignments should be carried into the DEIS. The benefits to the environment (i.e. air quality) of high ridership should be taken more heavily into account. We want to make sure that the most efficient alignments make it into the DEIS stage.

A2: (Todd Hill) – We tried not to weight anything at this level since we do not have detailed engineering for the alignments under consideration. At this broader level of study, there is not enough detail to assess those types of impacts. This will be looked at further in the DEIS.

(Glenn Bowman) – The screening process attempts to look at the alignments resulting from the Scoping Process objectively to determine which alignments best meet the Purpose and Need of the project. All of the criteria are Purpose and Need based, and assessed on a pass/fail basis.

(Sheldon Fialkoff) – Ridership was considered, and several alignments were eliminated because of low ridership numbers. If you look at the majority of the alignments that were eliminated, it was actually due to environmental considerations. Environmental considerations eliminated almost half of the alignments. The screening criteria remained unweighted so that alignments could be assessed equally across the board. At this point, if an alignment is not doing well in one criterion, it is unlikely that it will do better as it moves further in the analysis. We will look at air quality at a Tier 1 level.

(Glenn Bowman) – We are looking for the Participating Agencies to challenge the numbers that they do not feel comfortable with to make sure we have applied the criteria correctly. It is not just about what we are moving forward with, but what we are not moving forward with.

Q3: (Bryan Hollaway, GDOT) – Under the MOEs of the Environmental Criteria why does the I-75 corridor get a “1” when it is an existing corridor that has already been developed?

A3: (Sheldon Fialkoff) – It is not just the right-of-ways that are being considered, but a 500-foot buffer to either side of the highway centerline. This allows us to identify any potential resources that might be affected if widening or another use outside of the existing right-of-way is necessary.

(Todd Hill) – The data has only been taken at a GIS level at this point. Field surveys have not yet been completed. They will be completed as part of the DEIS. You have to remember that part of the reason that I-75 is where it is has to do with the fact that there was development present prior to the interstate system, which is why there is a higher number of impacts along the I-75 corridor than some of the more rural corridors.

(Glenn Bowman) – At the same time, it is a better-studied corridor, with more GIS data available.

Q4: (Kelly Laycock, EPA) – Under the Environmental Criteria MOEs are the stream indicators just calculated as the number of crossings? Is there a way to get an indication of linear feet at the GIS level?

A4: (Todd Hill) – When we get to the more detailed analysis level and have a better feel for the alignment, we will have to do more in depth assessments.

(Sheldon Fialkoff) – We calculated the number of crossings for streams, and the area for lakes. This was as specific as we could get at this level without further engineering. We feel they represented the potential effects well enough for this level. The engineering will deal with how we cross the stream or lake, or how we work around it.

Q5: (Pete Patavina, USFWS) – Are the ridership numbers encouraging versus the capital and operational costs?

A5: (Sheldon Fialkoff) – It is a little premature to be looking at that. There is no one barometer to determine cost of rail. The ridership is around 10-11,000 riders annually and the capital cost is estimated to be in the multiple billions.

VI. CLOSING REMARKS AND ADJOURN

Comments on the results of the Screening Report are requested by November 18, 2010 to Alan Ware. The next steps include stakeholder meetings and three public meetings to present the surviving alignments in Chattanooga, Dalton, and Atlanta in the first two weeks of November to present essentially the same information as this meeting. The exact dates are as follows:

Chattanooga, TN
Thursday, November 4, 6:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m. (presentation at 6:30 PM)
Regional Planning Agency, First Floor, Room 1A, 1250 Market Street, Chattanooga, TN 37402

Dalton, GA
Monday, November 8, 6:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m. (presentation at 6:30 PM)
Dalton State College. James Brown Center, Room 105, 650 College Drive, Dalton, GA 30720

Atlanta, GA
Tuesday, November 9, 6:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m. (presentation at 6:30 PM)
St. Mark United, Fellowship Hall, Methodist Church, 781 Peachtree Street, NE, Atlanta, GA 30308

Assuming no major delays as a result of public and stakeholder review or coordination with the lead federal agencies review of the DEIS, we are hoping the Participating Agencies will get back together sometime next spring to go over the details of the draft.