

Response to FTA Comments on Northwest Atlanta Corridor Alternatives Analysis Initiation Package, dated December 30, 2011

FTA comment	Response
1. How do they plan to disseminate information to the community and stakeholders	A robust Public Involvement Plan (PIP) has been established for the AA, which builds upon extensive outreach performed for Cobb County’s recently completed Transit Market Study. Since initiation of the AA, a series of roundtables have been held on a range of topics. Moving forward, Cobb County intends to engage more closely with university populations given that they will be a major market for future transit services in the Northwest Atlanta Corridor. A copy of the PIP is attached. The PIP is identified as draft, and is frequently updated to incorporate modifications to the outreach approach, as needed (e.g., focus on university populations as noted above).
2. How they plan to engage the public	See response to Comment 1.
3. How they selected these options and headways – some background	The conceptual alternatives identified in Section 4.0 of the AA Initiation Package reflect work performed during previous studies of the corridor. Those studies were summarized in Section 1.1. As also noted in the Initiation Package, the compilation of additional data, conduct of technical analyses and public outreach will all inform the final set of alternatives that will be assessed in the AA. The AA will fully describe the evolution of alternatives, including prior studies.
4. What existing ridership and services serve each of these options	The transit services operated by CCT, GRTA, and MARTA in the corridor are identified in Section 2.1 of the Initiation Package. A more detailed description of the CCT and GRTA routes serving the corridor will be included as input to the P&N statement.
5. What is current capacity and level of service for existing modes	As noted above, bus services are provided by three operators in the corridor, CCT, GRTA, and MARTA, and carry over 2 million riders each year. Nearly half of that annual ridership is provided by CCT Route 10, the primary route serving the corridor. Route 10 has the highest ridership in the CCT system, carrying 3,800 ridership on weekdays, and has some standing loads throughout the day on weekdays. It operates at 15 minute peak headways (30 minutes base). More details about corridor services will be provided in the AA.
6. What type of coordination is being done with adjacent communities and service providers	See response to Comment 1 regarding outreach to corridor communities and stakeholders. Coordination is also underway with service providers. As documented in the PIP, both GRTA and MARTA are engaged through their participation in the Partners Committee and Technical Committee established for the AA. Cobb County, GRTA and MARTA are also members of the Regional Transit Committee established as a policy committee by ARC to coordinate on regional transit planning, governance, and finance. A presentation on the Northwest Atlanta Corridor AA will be made by Cobb County to that committee in April 2012.
7. What is the anticipated schedule for the	The AA is scheduled to be completed by late 2012. An initial tiered screening of alternatives is

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<p>project</p>	<p>scheduled by late spring 2012. This short list will be introduced into the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) scheduled to begin in the summer for further environmental screening and scoping of potential concerns/issues already identified. An LPA will be identified at the conclusion of the AA in the fall of 2012. The LPA will then move into the DEIS and completing the NEPA process expected sometime in 2014.</p>
<p>8. Purpose and Need and problem statement – Needs to be clearly defined/developed with land use, pedestrian connectivity, and other measures considered. P&N might address numerous problems and goals – esp. In a long complex corridor. P&N should help screen alternatives for advancement and/or elimination and might form the basis for further evaluating/weighting of goals and how the various alternatives meet the goals later in the study.</p>	<p>Cobb County agrees with FTA’s comments on the Purpose and Need Statement including how it will be structured and used. As explained in Section 2.3 of the Initiation Package, more detailed technical work on corridor problems combined with input from stakeholder groups is currently in progress. That work will inform the P&N for the Northwest Atlanta Corridor, which in turn will serve as the basis for refining, evaluating, and screening alternatives. Upon completion, a P&N statement will be submitted to the FTA for their review. A draft of the P&N statement is under development, including refined goals and objectives. This information will be presented to the AA stakeholders group in early February.</p>
<p>9. Station area analysis and local redevelopment plan analysis need to highlight opportunities in the corridors.</p>	<p>Agreed. This work will be performed as the alternatives are developed in more detail. Currently, studies and other data are being compiled on development opportunities and plans in the corridor.</p>
<p>10. How important is the economic development, connectivity and mobility vs. congestion relief and travel times?</p>	<p>Each of these issues are identified in the preliminary set of evaluation measures contained in Table 3.1 As explained in Section 3.0, these measures are being discussed with corridor stakeholders to gauge the importance of each in establishing the P&N and refining the evaluation framework.</p>
<p>11. Are tools available to help transform land uses, special tax districts, zoning overlays, exemptions from parking minimums, etc.; especially in and around stations areas.</p>	<p>Section 2.2 identified the efforts underway in the corridor to manage growth and encourage transit-supportive development. A full detailing of such tools is in the process of being compiled and will be fully documented in the AA.</p>
<p>12. Are there obvious phases and points of logical termini that might be considered in light of the area characteristics, cost/feasibility, financial plan, constructability and P&N?</p>	<p>Analyses now underway will identify logical termini or phases that address the P&N. The need to consider phases was identified in the introduction to Section 4.0, consistent with the pace of available funding and/or new and redevelopment.</p>
<p>13. What are existing densities along the corridor?</p>	<p>Socioeconomic data, including employment and population densities along the corridor, are in the process of being compiled. These data will inform the P&N statement, and will be fully documented in the AA.</p>

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<p>14. Bus load factors and ridership on existing premium bus routes along with route LOS and intersection delay might be considered.</p>	<p>See the response to Comments 4 and 5. Current data on traffic LOS is currently being developed and will be fully documented in support of the P&N, as well as in the AA.</p>
<p>15. Where will vehicles be maintained? Are such areas available and accessible?</p>	<p>Maintenance facility site selection will be performed as alternatives as developed and fleet requirements are established. However, recognizing the importance of this issue, Cobb County has initiated discussions with MARTA on potential sites that might be shared by both agencies.</p>
<p>16. Rail crossing issues on the various alignments might be noted as appropriate.</p>	<p>Rail crossing conditions (both at-grade and grade separate) as well as any potential issues will be documented for all alternative alignments as part of the technical work performed for the AA.</p>
<p>17. Are there “fatal flaws” or safety, environmental, lack of right of way, freight conflicts, or major constructability issues which might render an option less than feasible?</p>	<p>The outreach now being conducted with stakeholders, as well as the collection of technical data and analysis will determine potential fatal flaws. It is expected that such flaws will be considered during the screening of conceptual alternatives as well as in the Tier I EIS.</p>