

Gwinnett County Comprehensive Transportation Plan Update

Visioning Meeting (Community Stakeholder Group)

November 12, 2015; 6:00 – 8:00 PM

Attendees

Merri Brantley, Georgia Gwinnett College
Ricardo Broce, Center for Pan Asian Community Services
Renee Byrd-Lewis, Gwinnett County Commission District 4
Bert Collins, WestRock
Matthew Elder, Gwinnett County Community Development
Santiago Escobar, Gwinnett Student Leadership Team
Jacqueline Frazier, CPSC – Civic Representative
Carol Hassell, Georgia Piedmont Land Trust
Brian Jehle, Georgia Commute Options
Doug Joiner, Safe Routes to School National Partnership
Nick Masino, Gwinnett Chamber of Commerce
Dave McCulloch, Gwinnett Technical College
Jeff Melville, Publix Supermarkets
Sherman Merritt, Gwinnett County Commission District 3
Tom Morris, Eastside Medical
Jon Richards, Transit Advocate
Tanay Sheth, Gwinnett Student Leadership Team
Marlene Taylor-Crawford, United Ebony Society
Tanesha Tutt, Delta Sigma Theta, Gwinnett County Alumnae Chapter
Glenn Wallace, Publix Supermarkets

Summary

The meeting began with a welcome from Alan Chapman, Gwinnett County Department of Transportation Director. He introduced the project and led the Consultant Team and Committee Members through introductions asking that they identify their favorite place in Gwinnett County. Participants mentioned parks, restaurants, retail stores and other destinations as favorite places in Gwinnett County.

Consultant Team Project Manager Cristina Pastore provided a presentation that described the purpose of a Comprehensive Transportation Plan and the importance of updating it on a regular basis. She discussed how projects developed during the CTP update will provide information on a potential future capital program. Cristina explained that the CTP is multi-modal and will consider several types of transportation including vehicular, transit, pedestrian, cycling, freight and aviation. She mentioned that, while this plan will focus on transportation, there are other considerations that must be taken into account. Among these other considerations are land use and destinations, economic development and funding among other things. Ms. Pastore detailed the public engagement framework for the CTP update

which includes a multitude of options for Gwinnett County stakeholders to become involved. The planning process also includes stakeholder groups that will work closely with the Project Management and Consultant Teams throughout the CTP update process.

Next, Committee Members were engaged in a visioning exercise designed to explore the most important goals for the transportation plan. Attendees were seated at tables with a member of the Consultant Team where they were asked three different questions. The three questions asked during the three different rotations were as follows:

1. Think about Gwinnett County in 5 years and 25 years...What is your vision for the County (not necessarily related to transportation)? What words/phrases best summarize your vision?
2. What aspects of transportation will support those descriptors? Not necessarily changes, just what aspects of transportation should be present? Consider long term aspects as well as short term ones.
3. What obstacles relative to transportation do we need to overcome in order to arrive at this place?

Attendees were expected to change tables after each question and to sit with different Committee Members, while Consultant Team members remained at the tables. Attendees were given flipchart paper and markers where they were to draw and write group ideas; sticky notes to leave notes for the next group; and notecards for writing notes to themselves if needed.

Notes from this visioning exercise are summarized by table below.

Table Facilitator: Ana Eisenman

Question 1: Think about Gwinnett County in 5 years and 25 years...What is your vision for the County (not necessarily related to transportation)? What words/phrases best summarize your vision?

- Low speed vehicle options
- Permanent protection of greenspace
- Creating sidewalks
- Quality job centers
- Attract millennials
 - Encourage alternative work arrangements
- Connect job centers with city centers (Connectivity)
- Maintain good educational institutions (at all levels of education)
- Diversity
- East-West connections
- MARTA/ augment transit

Question 2: What aspects of transportation will support those descriptors? Not necessarily changes, just what aspects of transportation should be present? Consider long term aspects as well as short term ones.

- Transit options:
 - Light rail
 - Heavy rail
 - BRT
 - Express Bus
- More roads/ bridges/ sidewalks
- Make sure transit is affordable
- Connect elderly to medical facilities
- Residential growth
- “Don’t be afraid of growth/change”

Question 3: What obstacles relative to transportation do we need to overcome in order to arrive at this place?

- Health
- Youth
- Jurisdictional silos
- Enforcement
- Smart growth – cities vs. unincorporated county
- Language access for minority populations
- Will to tackle the big projects
- Small bus system for transportation-challenged (shorter)
- Stigma of Public Transportation
- Northern Arc

Table Facilitator: Eric Lusher

Question 1: Think about Gwinnett County in 5 years and 25 years...What is your vision for the County (not necessarily related to transportation)? What words/phrases best summarize your vision?

- Strong education system
- Live/work/play
- Walkability/Bikeability
- Consideration of school siting
- Regional connectivity
- Transit
- Transportation options
- Diversity (with equity)
- Economic Development
- Land Use decisions to support transportation

Destination2040

Gwinnett's Comprehensive Transportation Plan

- Support for small businesses
- Communities accessible to all ages
- Public safety
- “Community”

Question 2: What aspects of transportation will support those descriptors? Not necessarily changes, just what aspects of transportation should be present? Consider long term aspects as well as short term ones.

- Build transportation networks for schools
- Low Speed Vehicle Lanes (PTVs/bike lanes/multi-use paths)
- Accessibility for freight
- Retrofitting sidewalks
- Circulator systems
- Coordinate transportation + land use

Question 3: What obstacles relative to transportation do we need to overcome in order to arrive at this place?

- “Leadership and money”
- Focus
- Need for heavy rail
- Lack of redevelopment/activity centers
- Lack of equity within county

Table Facilitator: Jen Price

Question 1: Think about Gwinnett County in 5 years and 25 years...What is your vision for the County (not necessarily related to transportation)? What words/phrases best summarize your vision?

- Accessibility by different modes
- Better connections within the county
- Better planned neighborhoods
- Transit options such as LRT and HRT
- A norther arc or highway to give better access to I-75 for Gwinnett County residents
- Better through connections to move goods
- Dedicated lanes on I-85 for rail and freight
- High population centers connected by transit
- Live/work/play, mixed use communities that are walkable
- Better connections outside of the County

Question 2: What aspects of transportation will support those descriptors? Not necessarily changes, just what aspects of transportation should be present? Consider long term aspects as well as short term ones.

Destination2040

Gwinnett's Comprehensive Transportation Plan

- Less congestion (10 – 15% of AM traffic is parents taking children to school)
- Demand management; controlling when trucks can be on the road
- Policies to keep trucks/freight off the road
- Better east/west connections
- Well planned and improved transit that connects jobs to home and other destinations
- Shuttle through GC transit to activity centers
- Improved roadway operations (merging, etc.)

Question 3: What obstacles relative to transportation do we need to overcome in order to arrive at this place?

- Gwinnett Place Mall is an obstacle
- Affordability
- Leadership
- Unified planning among the cities in Gwinnett
- Limited regional connectivity
- Negative perception about density

Table Facilitator: Mark Eatman & Pat Smeeton

Question 1: Think about Gwinnett County in 5 years and 25 years...What is your vision for the County (not necessarily related to transportation)? What words/phrases best summarize your vision?

- Inclusive
- Families
- MARTA
- East-West connectivity throughout the County
- Connectivity to the rest of the Atlanta region
- Balancing land-use
- Diversity (age, race, ethnicity, etc.)
- Cultural events, entertainment, sporting events
- Safety
- Adequate services
- No strip malls
- More speed bumps
- Good place for families/raising families
- Walkability for everyone, especially young and elderly
- Live/work/play
- Encouraging urban areas
- Access to healthcare
- Collaboration

Question 2: What aspects of transportation will support those descriptors? Not necessarily changes, just what aspects of transportation should be present? Consider long term aspects as well as short term ones.

- Sidewalks
- Bike lanes
- Access to transit
- Design new roads/infrastructure to be transit friendly
- Biking and bike safety
- Bridge in downtown Norcross over railroad tracks (CSX/Norfolk Southern)
- New roadways (especially north-south on the east side of the County)
- Radial bands of roads
- Rail/trains connecting Gwinnett to the rest of the region
- Bus rapid transit/upgrade transit technologies
- More limited access facilities
- Sustainable infrastructure reaching the “4 corners” of the County
- Better roadways/super roadways

Question 3: What obstacles relative to transportation do we need to overcome in order to arrive at this place?

- Money/Funding
- Safer bike facilities
- Fear of growth
- Accessibility
- No access to mass transit
- County's lack of seeing transportation needs
- Growth
- Staggered commuting and telecommuting
- Transportation education
- Maintenance
- Upgrading roads

Top 5 Goals

At the conclusion of the visioning exercise, each table was asked to report what was heard by summarizing the input into the top five goals for the CTP. The Consultant Team facilitator from each table provided this brief summary while the top five goals were transcribed on a flipchart at the front of the room. In some cases, goals were repeated among tables. The number of times a goal was repeated is shown in parenthesis at the end of each goal. Commonality in goals was also noted.

Next Steps/Wrap Up

To conclude the meeting Cristina discussed the next steps of the CTP Update process. The Project Management Team will use the feedback collected at the meeting to develop a draft Vision and Goals which will be presented at Public meetings for comment. Data collection, GIS and field inventory are underway and will result in a Draft and Final Technical Memorandum. Public Meetings and community events are expected to begin in 2016 and will run throughout the project schedule.

Before leaving the meeting venue, Committee Members were asked to review the top five goals and to use dots to select their top short term and long term needs. A summary of the top five goals and how Committee Members selected their priority short and long term needs is as follows:

Top Goals*	Long Term Votes	Short Term Votes
Mass transit including rail (1)	13	13
Regional connectivity	11	11
Live/work/play around medical access (shared/alternative spaces – work in community vs leaving) (3)	9	12
Greenspace	8	5
Remove jurisdictional silos for smart growth	7	8
East/west connectivity (northern arc) (2)	7	13
Dedication to funding (follow through; divert/create revenue to support plan)	6	9
Density: create more urban environments	6	2
Equitable and affordable transportation system	5	6
Preserve community livability and attractiveness	5	1
Connect jobs to people	5	4
Multi-modal transportation options	5	4
Education: all levels connected to further economy; continued investment	3	4
Take advantage of existing underutilized assets (redevelopment)	2	3
Educate community on transportation options	0	5

**The number of times a goal was repeated is shown in parenthesis at the end of each goal*