

Gwinnett County Comprehensive Transportation Plan Update

Visioning Meeting (Technical Committee and Partner Agency Stakeholder Group)

November 12, 2015; 2:00 – 4:00 PM

Attendees

Joe Allen, Gwinnett Place CID
Marty Allen, City of Suwanee
Troy Besseche, City of Sugar Hill
Jim Brooks, Evermore CID
Pat Chapman, City of Berkeley Lake
Kim Coley, GDOT District 1
Jamie Cramer, Gwinnett County Senior Services
Alyssa Davis, Gwinnett Village CID
Jennifer Dees, Town of Braselton
Chris Garner, Evermore CID
David Haynes, Atlanta Regional Commission
John Hodgson, Gwinnett County Public Schools
Bill Johnsa, City of Lilburn
Bill Jones, City of Loganville
Bryan Kerlin, City of Buford
Randy Meacham, Gwinnett Municipal Association
Kaycee Mertz, GDOT Office of Planning
Alex Mitchem, City of Auburn
Marcie Moore, Gwinnett Community Services
Joey Murphy, City of Dacula
Dionne Pittman, Georgia Regional Transportation Authority
Margie Pozin, City of Duluth
Bessie Reina, GDOT Office of Planning
Tyler Richards, Gwinnett Department of Water Resources
Butch Sanders, City of Snellville
Melissa Schwartz, City of Peachtree Corners
Rudolph Smith, City of Norcross
Joe Sorenson, Gwinnett County Communications Division
Charles Wells, Gwinnett County Fire and Emergency Services

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 provide information on a future potential 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?

- Maintain job quality (don't let NCR-type companies leave the county)
- Urban Density along 85 corridor
- Technology infrastructure

- Pocket parks replacing surface parking
- Revitalization/ redevelopment
- Safe routes

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.

- Giving up the car – Uber-type services may transition future driving to non-personal vehicles
- For elderly – not “door-to-door”, but “door-THROUGH-door” services needed
- Emerging technologies – need to plan for automated vehicles
- Safe & secure

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

- Unknown aspects of emerging technologies
- Transition to walkability
- Thought processes not always making cars the 1st choice for transportation
- Investing in job centers
 - Consider long-term investment, not just short-term gains
- Messaging/ changing perceptions

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?

- Aging in Place
- Economic Growth – Jobs (Quality of jobs was not discussed)
- More options for transportation
- A community serving the needs of residents of all ages and backgrounds
- More urbane
- Urban Neighborhood Parks

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.

- Autonomous Cars
- Zipcars
- Bike Sharing
- More sidewalks
- Sidepaths
- Circulator systems in downtown areas (trolleys, streetcars, etc.)

- Discussion: What does traffic control look like with more balanced transportation system?
- There needs to be an option to increase ped walk time at large intersections as population ages

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

- Diversity can be an obstacle because there can be so many inconsistent viewpoints
- Lack of innovation/creativity (need “big bold moves”)
- A need for a clear vision
- \$\$\$
- Acceptance of change

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?

- A digital and technologically advanced future with:
 - Smarter commuting
 - Driverless cars
 - Smart traffic signals
 - Superconductive/frictionless movements and rail
- Flexible work options
- More spaces for youth recreation
- Schools that are not over populated
- Students take bus to school, reducing carpool traffic and parents on the road which contributes to congestion

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.

- Need trains (local and commuter)
- Public transit!
- Reconnecting transportation routes that used to exist, like the train from Gwinnett to Atlanta
- Re-think the model for schools to include more online learning opportunities

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

- Resources
- Tax credits for electric cars
- Keep people in Gwinnett

- Attract people from outside of the county to shop instead of finding ways to pass them through quickly
- Revitalization
- Increased density is needed but the obstacle is re: the perception of what apartments are and who lives in them

Table Facilitator: Mallory Scates & Mark Eatman

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?

- Improved Economic Development, keep jobs here
- Diversity
- Business-oriented
- Well-planned/thoughtful
- Connected (cities, hubs, employment centers)
- Redevelopment – incentivize, make more efficient, mixed-use, stop tearing down trees
- Stop reducing greenspace
- MARTA/transit expansion
- Regional perspective → live/work dynamics
- Better connection between Atlanta and Athens
- Walkable and bike-able places
- Sustainable
- Freight
- Active legislative delegation (proactive)
- Progressive (think outside the box)
- Chattahoochee conservation
- Buses - more service, reduce headways, more hours (especially on the weekend)
- Different types of transit needed
- Circulator transit service/shuttles between key points (especially during holiday shopping seasons)
- Improved connections to schools (manage demand better)
- Safety
- I-85 corridor/316 - prioritize mixed use, multimodal

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 Oriented Development
- Connectivity
- Affordability (housing)
 - Reduced need on vehicles
 - Commuting

- Serve underserved with more mobility choices
- Consider environmental impacts
- Complete Streets
- Self-contained
- Live/work/Play
- Transit
- Improve transportation around key activity centers
- Improve the I-85 corridor (spine of the County)
 - Start with the I-85 and then go out into the County
 - Include transit (rail and bus) expansion
- Express BRT between activity centers
- Shuttle Service (dependable and reasonably priced)
- Encourage autonomous vehicles
- Leverage technology for transportation

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

- Funding
- Density (size of the county is a challenge, population is spread out)
 - Investments not focused on activity centers
 - Autonomy – disparities with age groups
- Public perception
- Age groups want different things
 - Millennials want more development and older populations want little to no development
- More local solutions needed
- Regional Cooperation
 - Different areas need different solutions
- Infrastructure to support density, activity centers, and cities
- Maintenance
- More walkable places needed (consider stages of life)
- Age vs. location – people live in different types of areas at different stages of life
- Keeping up with technology
- Serving everyone

Table Facilitator: 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?

- Additional jobs within the county – both white collar and service
- More industry in Gwinnett

- More activities and activity centers within the county, don't have to leave the county to do things
- Safety – maintain livability and safety – all kinds of safety: transportation, crime, etc.
- There is a danger of only attracting limited demographics – no millennials
- Want expansion of Airport - long term
- Long term change in communities because of Technology like autonomous vehicles. Could significantly change the demand on transportation facilities
- Higher density

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.

- Additional transit
- More pedestrian and bicycle facilities
- More mode choices
- Midblock crossings
- Need to maintain existing infrastructure
- Need to connect livable centers
- More job hubs
- Need a balance of suburban and urban development

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

- Funds \$
- Mindset – anti transit
- Need to educate citizens
- Acceptance of alternative transportation modes
- Safety
- Unknowns regarding where to spend limited transportation funds
- Land Use – transportation coordination

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

Destination2040

Gwinnett's Comprehensive Transportation Plan

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 |
|--|-----------------|------------------|
| Regional connectivity | 13 | 5 |
| Transit options (1) | 11 | 10 |
| Multi-modal options | 11 | 9 |
| Smart spending/investment for the future (technology, autonomous vehicles, etc.) (1) | 10 | 1 |
| Efficient connections within Gwinnett (north, south, east, west) | 9 | 6 |
| Technology (1) | 9 | 9 |
| Big, bold moves in vision/planning | 9 | 3 |
| Live/work/play community (mixed use developments) | 8 | 7 |
| Smart redevelopment/development (1) | 7 | 8 |
| Funding | 7 | 9 |
| Invest in activity centers and connecting them | 6 | 6 |
| Safety (County, community) (2) | 5 | 13 |
| Cost/available resources (1) | 4 | 7 |
| Better land use/transportation coordination (1) | 4 | 7 |
| Maintenance (implications of future plans) | 4 | 4 |
| Self-contained | 4 | 0 |
| Educate citizens to be open minded | 2 | 7 |
| Embrace multi-culturalism | 2 | 3 |
| Balance of housing options for residents of different ages (1) | 1 | 2 |
| Live/work balance (1) | 1 | 4 |
| Education | 1 | 10 |
| Gwinnett CTP ties into regional plans | 1 | 3 |

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