

## **Stakeholder Advisory Committee – Meeting #2**

June 29, 2017 | 6:00 – 8:00 PM

Cumming- Forsyth County Chamber of Commerce  
212 Kelly Mill Road, Cumming, GA 30040

### **Attendees**

Carter Patterson, Commission District 1 Appointee  
Danny Bowman, Forsyth County Emergency Services  
James McCoy, Cumming-Forsyth County Chamber of Commerce  
Jason May, Rotary Club of Lanier Forsyth  
Jeff Neal, Siemens Energy & Automation, Inc.  
Linda Fitzpatrick, Forsyth County Dial-A-Ride  
Pam Bowman, Smart Growth Forsyth  
Robert Charles, Post Road Committee for Proper Development  
Seth Thomas, Commission District 4 Appointee  
Sreeram Royyala, Commission District 2 Appointee  
Steve Dabbs, Commission District 5 Appointee  
Todd Muller, Owner – Reality Bikes

### **Summary of Presentation**

The purpose of the second meeting of the Technical Advisory Committee was to bring the group up to date on the latest project deliverables, including the completed Existing Conditions report; feedback collected from the public via the open house sessions and the online survey; other public engagement completed to date; and to get feedback on the goals and objectives. Michael Kray, Consultant Team Project Manager, highlighted several components of the Existing Conditions Report as summarized in the sections that follow. Comments offered by the Committee members are shown as bulleted items.

The full Existing Conditions report can be found on the project website at <http://forsythtransportationplan.com/review.php> under "Reports & Maps."

### Demographics Overview

Mr. Kray discussed population growth and projections. On the spectrum of density, Forsyth is between an exurban and suburban county. The median household income is higher than the Atlanta Metropolitan Statistical Area. Low income pockets in the County were examined. There are some anomalies in the data that show low income/poverty near Lake Lanier which could be explained by retired families/individuals who do not report an income. The Team will dive deeper into the low income occurrence around the lake. The Existing Conditions data also shows most of the County's diversity in the south and in Cumming. Minority and poverty do not overlay/coincide in Forsyth as in most communities. However, high income does correspond to automobile ownership, as most have access to a car. Only 2.4% of Forsyth residents do not have access to a car at home.

- What is the projected population for Fulton County? This is a good comparison for Forsyth, though it is much denser.
- With the minority population data have an impact on what the County is doing with regards to bonding for future projects?
  - Will be used to identify environmental justice areas for federal funding
- What are the zero car ownership factors? What goes into that?
  - This includes disabled populations and older adults. Affordability is a factor, as is lifestyle choices – those who choose to not own a car.
  - This data is collected per household by the US Census.
- Statistics for people who live in senior centers and do not have access to a vehicle should also be considered.

### Travel Patterns

The County's population is dense in the areas south of SR 20, where most origins and destinations occur. Major trip generators such as large retail centers were also mapped and are proven sources of travel demand. Most commercial development is along major routes in the County. There is not heavy strip commercial development throughout Forsyth, which is beneficial to mobility as it reduces turning movements, curb cuts, etc. The County does not

have to deal with many of these issues that impact mobility. The Team recommended shared access/shared driveways for future development.

Employment density is concentrated in specific areas. Census data shows that people who live in Forsyth work along SR 400 even as far south as Perimeter, Midtown, Buckhead, and Downtown. There are also some employment centers in Cumberland and Gwinnett, however, most flows are along SR 400. Many jobs are close to the County boundary. Many people who work in Forsyth also live in Forsyth. The Regional Travel Demand model outputs show most daily flow out of Forsyth goes to Hall County and North Fulton. Trips also go to the airport, Midtown and Downtown. The majority of trips are closer to home. The same is true of daily flows entering the County. Job centers are the big draw for destinations. The Travel Demand Model also validates SR 400 as the most heavily used road in the County.

Lastly, the Team measured traffic volumes from traffic counts. The traffic counts confirm the findings of the Travel Demand Model in most areas, however there were some discrepancies. The Travel Demand Model undercounts Ronald Regan Parkway, Bethelview Road, Post Road, SR 20, and SR 369. The Team will do scenario testing within the Travel Demand Model to try to create a closer representation of what is actually happening. SR 400 was also modeled to include current and future projects including projects to add additional capacity. This scenario resulted in reduced congestion and an improved Level of Service in the AM and PM peaks.

- Majors Road – model link shows congestion, which is probably accurate.
- Model shows red crossing Majors Road. There was talk about a half diamond interchange off of SR 400. Would an exit here relieve congestion?
  - Depends on where people are trying to get to when using this road.
  - May be indicative of the need for more crossings over SR 400, not necessarily a need for a new exit.
  - Need more amenities on the west side. Many people are moving here to access services and destinations. That’s where the population from the west side will go.
  - Commercial is on one side of the County while residential is on the other.
- What is the timeline on the McGinnis Ferry interchange?
  - Right of way acquisition is occurring now.

- Projected 2020 opening date.

The data shows that major arterials – SR 400, SR 121 and SR 20 – are handling the majority of the mobility within the County. Most of the delay is on the minor arterial network and secondary roads. Travel shed analysis, which measures how far a car can travel away from the centroid of the County in 15 minutes. AM and PM travel sheds were computed. Data shows a large percentage of commuters are within a 30 minute travel shed in the AM. The PM travel shed shows that it would take drivers longer than 30 minutes to return to the same point. Real (INRIX) data shows a similar pattern but with a PM commute time that is much worse. SR 20 shows a serious congestion issue, however, planned improvements are expected to address these concerns.

- Are the travel shed numbers accurate? They may be too generous. It takes more than 30 minutes to travel from Cumming to north of the Perimeter.
- Cumming at SR 20:
  - This was a huge discussion during the City’s land use plan meetings.
  - There are some other options such as the widening of Bethelview to serve as a relief or by-pass route to SR 20.
- Re: crash severity:
  - Hwy 53 near the Dollar General – many rear end traffic accidents. This is a sight distance issue.
  - SR 306 at Grindle Road is also a high crash area.
  - SR 400 at SR 20 – lots of weaving to get to far left lane to Marketplace
  - Could ramp meters help to disperse or manage traffic?
- Pittman Road – will have a new fire station there. This area will get busy. Brookwood & Chaney is a busy fire station as well.

### Transit

Mr. Kray presented some 2016 operating statistics of the Dial-A-Ride service in the County. The system does get used but many trips were rejected because the system is at capacity. Fleet services is addressing the capacity need by providing additional vans. There will be new County services for disabled citizens that will be coordinated with transportation services, as well. GRTA is also available in Cumming with three routes leaving from the Park and Ride lot in

Cumming and serving Downtown, Perimeter, and Emory. Amending the Xpress services to serve north Fulton is a consideration.

- Dial-A-Ride is turning 100 calls away per week.
- The formula for Federal funding is based on if a County is urban or suburban.
- What are the costs of the Dial-A-Ride program? Are maintenance costs covered with the fare?
  - Not sure of costs, but Federal and State grants and passenger fares are all used to maintain the program
- The population is aging and the number of kids entering school with disabilities has increased versus past data. The County needs to consider this in the future of public transit.
- New programs are being piloted – vouchers, partnerships with ridesharing providers like Uber/Lyft, etc.

### Freight

There are a number of freight/truck routes since Forsyth is served by many state routes. Committee members confirmed that SR 369, SR 306 and SR 53 have heavy truck traffic. The Committee did not recommend adding any local roads to the freight network.

### Public Engagement

Jen Price provided an overview of the first round of public open houses and the community survey. The input collected at the public open house sessions confirmed what the Team heard from the Technical and Stakeholder Advisory Committees at the first meeting. The online survey responses also confirmed many of the findings including automobile ownership, commute patterns, transit usage, and concerns about congestion. The public is likely/extremely likely to vote for the next SPLOST.

The Team also logged and mapped public comments in regards to specific congested corridors. This data will help the Team compare to analytical needs that has been identified to be sure the Team is making recommendations where they are most needed. The Team also mapped public comments on problem intersections. Many comments are off of the major

route system. The Team will look at this information more closely during the Needs Assessment phase.

- Mapped comments:
  - Red light needed at Buford Hwy east at Echols Road
- Some state routes do not have street lights. Why? What is the street light policy with regards to GDOT roads? Increased lighting helps visibility.
- Johns Creek has converted all of their left turn signals to a flashing yellow. Would recommend doing this in Forsyth. There is a lack of innovation with the County's signals.
- Should some of these smaller projects be a part of our transportation plan?
  - The Team will talk with the County about making these ideas a part of the policy for future development.
- Run arounds (like in Gwinnett) can be implemented easily in Forsyth on County roads

### Schedule

The remaining schedule was reviewed. At this time, the Existing Conditions report is currently being reviewed for comments. The Team will finalize the Needs Assessment by mid-August. The final plans will be submitted in the December timeframe.

### Goals & Objectives Discussion

Goals presented were from the 2011 Comprehensive Transportation Plan. The Team has added some objectives to these goals. The Committee will review in depth and will submit comments to The Team.

### Prioritization Structure – Draft

Mr. Kray reviewed the draft prioritization structure and explained that the Team can prioritize projects based on geography or other factors, and can adjust measures to achieve the outcomes that are desired for a certain area, activity center, or node. Different projects with different needs/outcomes can be weighted differently based upon where they are located or the project scale. Prioritization weights are not final.

- How does this advance us forward? What is the end game? How do we tie this into advancing some of these projects? At the end of the day, there is not enough funding for all of the projects.
  - The Transportation Plan provides the County with access to more funding. This process also informs GDOT and provides the agency with a list of projects specific to the County that needs to be addressed.
  - The end result will be five year work plan.
  - When the County contributes funding, it is more likely that GDOT will contribute funding and that projects will get implemented.

### **Next Steps**

The Committee was asked to review and offer comments on the 2017 CTP Goals and Objectives and the Prioritization Structure. Materials will be sent to all Committee members. The date of the next Committee meeting will be in the September/October timeframe.