

## Federal Transit Administration Region IV

### Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI)

**PROJECT:** CONNECT COBB CORRIDOR

**SPONSOR:** COBB COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION (CCDOT)

**LOCATION:** COBB AND FULTON COUNTIES, ATLANTA

### Introduction

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This document provides the basis for a determination by the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) of a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) for the Connect Cobb Corridor project. This determination is made in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969 (42 USC 4321-4347), the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) NEPA implementing regulations (40 CFR § 1500-1508), and the NEPA implementing procedures of the FTA (23 CFR § 771).

FTA, as the lead federal agency, and Cobb County Department of Transportation (CCDOT), as the local project sponsor, jointly prepared the Environmental Assessment (EA) to determine potential impacts to the human and natural environment that may result from the Connect Cobb Corridor project. The EA was prepared pursuant to 23 CFR § 771.119 and signed by FTA on April 14, 2015. This FONSI was prepared by FTA pursuant to 23 CFR § 771.121 and incorporates by reference the EA and other cited documentation.

### Project Description

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Two alternatives, the No Build Alternative and the proposed project, were evaluated in the EA.

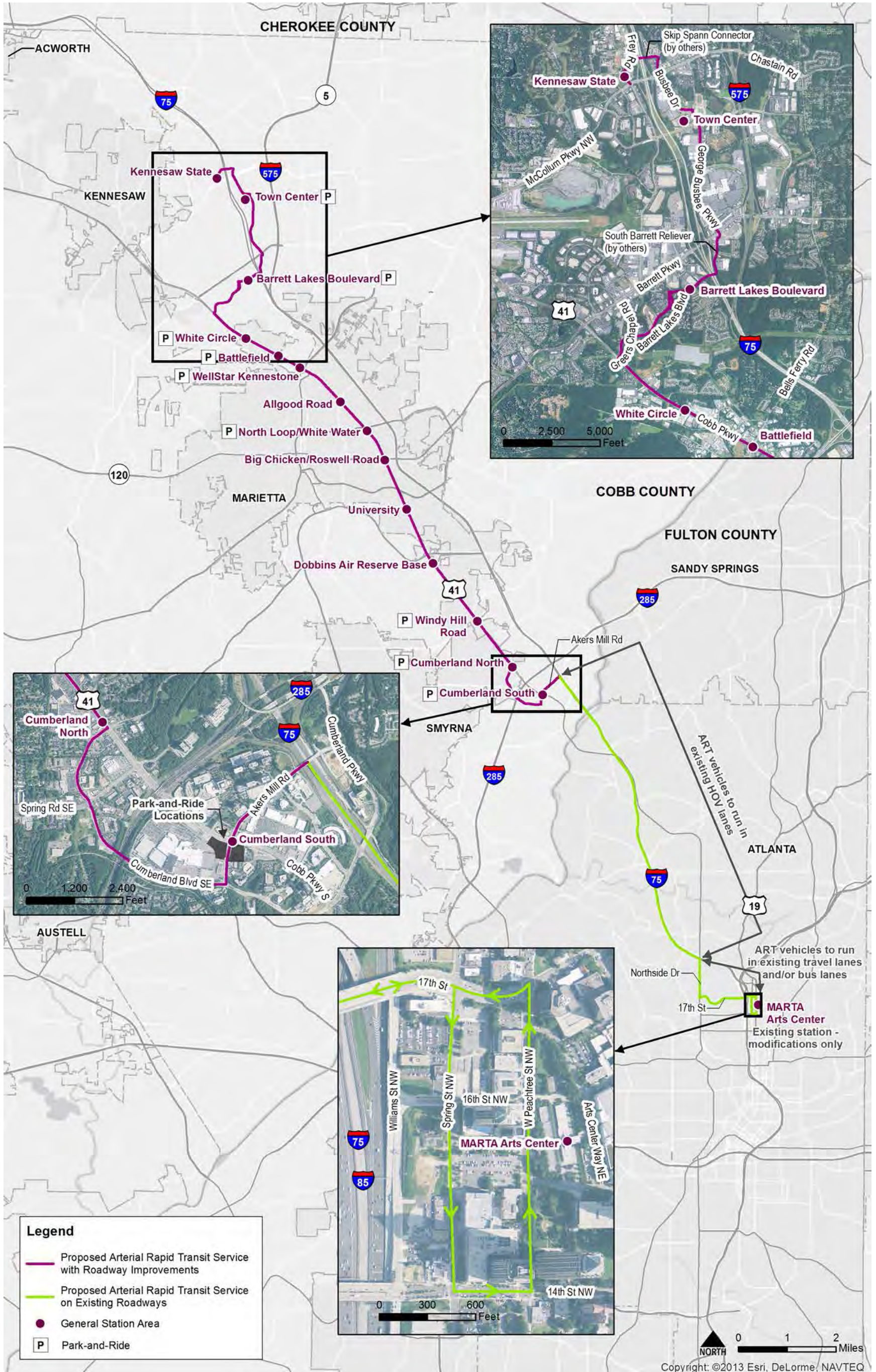
#### No Build Alternative

The No Build Alternative assumed that existing Cobb Community Transit (CCT) service on US 41/Cobb Parkway would continue, as well as CCT and Georgia Regional Transportation Authority (GRTA) express bus service in the I-75 corridor. This alternative also included projects in the vicinity either currently in construction or identified in the fiscally-constrained plan for the Atlanta region showing the region's highest transportation priorities (PLAN 2040).

#### Proposed Project

The proposed project includes arterial rapid transit (ART) service and associated improvements on US 41/Cobb Parkway, as described below (see **Figure 1**). The majority of the ART system would operate on dedicated guideway from the Kennesaw area to the Cumberland Mall area, would have continuing service to the existing Metropolitan Atlanta Regional Transit Authority (MARTA) Arts Center Station, and would begin at the terminus station at Kennesaw State University (KSU) near the intersection of Chastain Road and Frey Road.

Figure 1. Proposed Project





In total, the length of the proposed project is 25.3 miles from the Kennesaw area to the existing MARTA Arts Center Station. Of this length, 13.2 miles (52.2 percent) is in dedicated guideway and 12.1 miles (47.8 percent) is in mixed traffic. No new bridges or bridge modifications are currently proposed as part of this project. The proposed project anticipates only extensions of existing culverts.

In addition to the 14 stations to be added for ART, it is anticipated that the existing MARTA Arts Center Station could accommodate ART vehicles inside the existing Arts Center Station footprint – by either the use of two existing 62-foot bus parking spaces or with the addition of four new platforms – or would be modified outside the existing station footprint with the addition of four platforms to accommodate parking of ART vehicles on Arts Center Way.

The proposed vehicle maintenance facility (VMF) site is located approximately 0.75 miles to the west of US 41/Cobb Parkway on South Marietta Parkway. This is an existing CCT bus storage and maintenance facility. No new right-of-way would be acquired for the VMF.

## REFINEMENTS SINCE THE EA

### MARTA Arts Center Station

The EA evaluated two alternative improvements related to access to and boarding and alighting at the existing MARTA Arts Center Station. CCDOT, MARTA, the City of Atlanta, and the Midtown Alliance have engaged in development of these alternatives, and since the EA was published, MARTA has issued a letter stating its preference for both alternatives to remain under study (**Attachment A**). Circulation of the ART vehicles is shown on **Figure 2** for each alternative. The areas of proposed improvements are shown on **Figure 3**. This includes adding four platforms to accommodate the parking of ART vehicles for the internal circulation alternative and restriping Arts Center Way for vehicle pull-offs and adding platforms/shelters for the external/Arts Center Way alternative. There are also two existing 62-foot bus parking spaces at the MARTA Arts Center Station that could accommodate the proposed ART vehicles.

### Cumberland South Park-and-Ride

The EA identified all four quadrants at the intersection of US 41/Cobb Parkway and Akers Mill Road as potential locations for a park-and-ride to serve the Cumberland South Station. Based on development plans for the north side, the options have been narrowed to the south side of Cobb Parkway. The park-and-ride will utilize both sides of Akers Mill Road, with the inbound station platform and parking spaces to the west in part of the existing mall parking lot and the outbound station platform and parking spaces to the east at the site of a current retail business (see inset on **Figure 1**).

Due to the split inbound and outbound platforms and parking areas, each rider arriving by car and using a park-and-ride lot will have to cross Akers Mill Road at least once. A pedestrian crossing is proposed to facilitate the safe movement of persons from one side of Akers Mill Road to the other.



Figure 2. MARTA Arts Center Station Routing

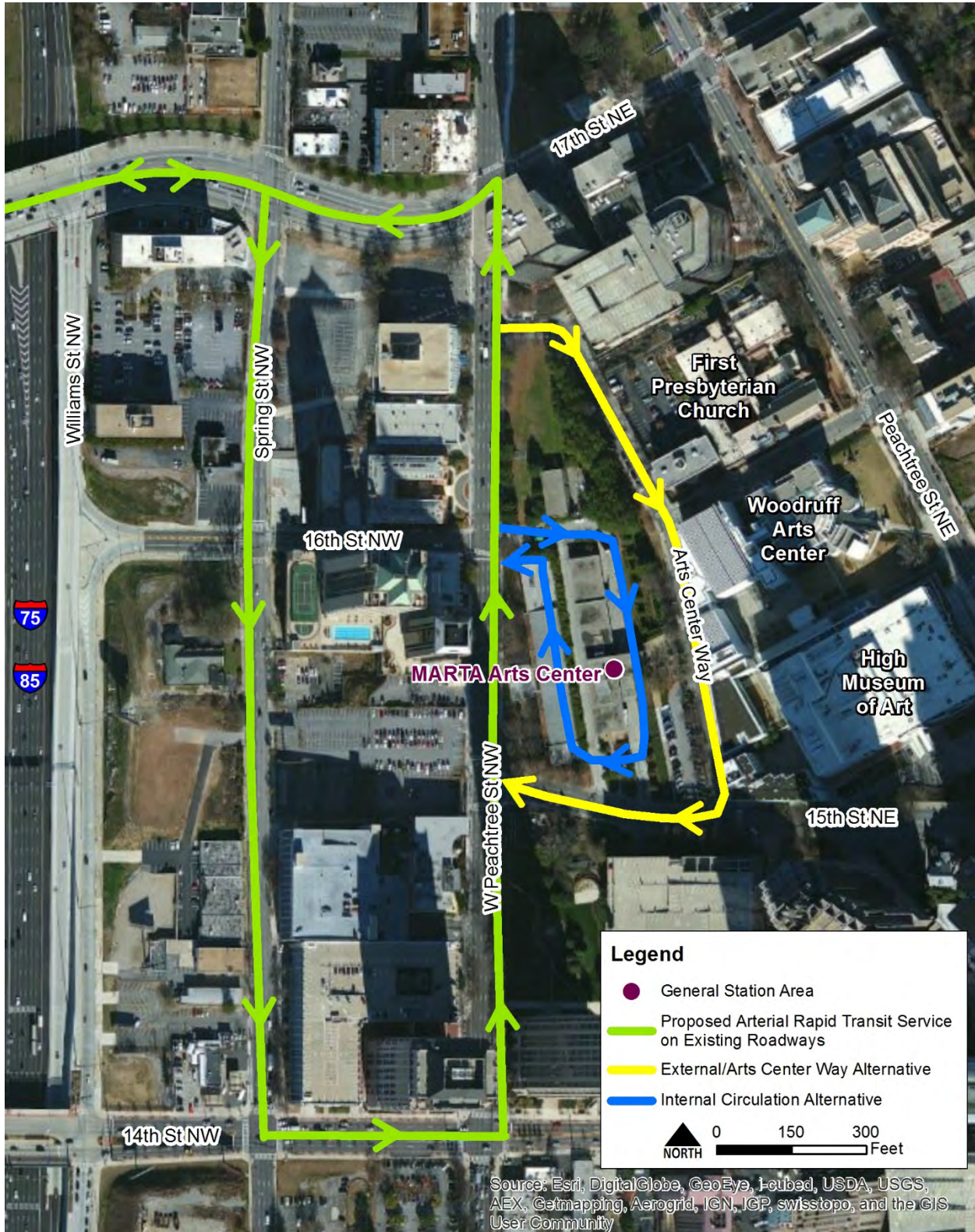
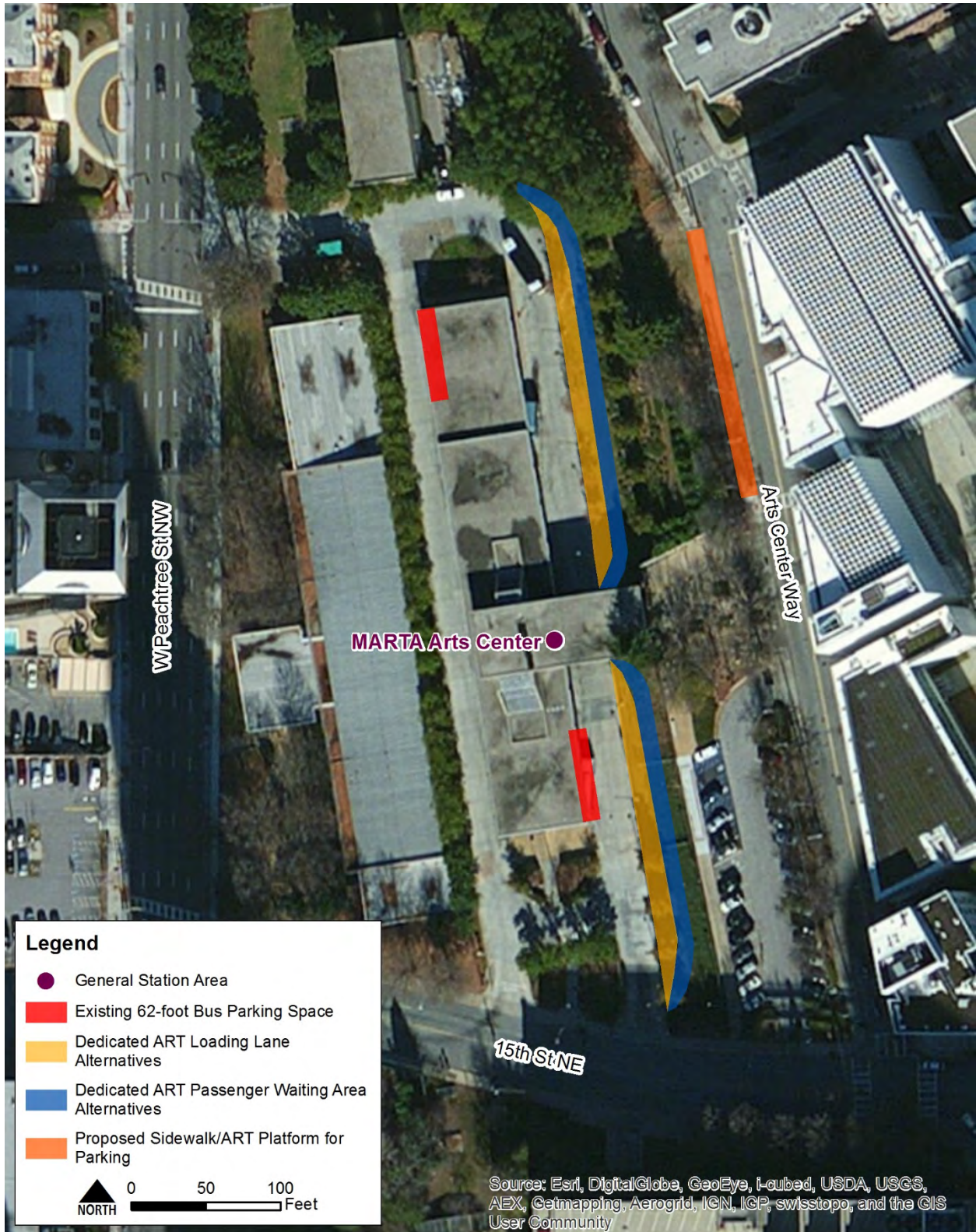




Figure 3. MARTA Arts Center Station Configuration



## Agency Coordination and Public Opportunity to Comment

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### Public Engagement

Cobb County Department of Transportation (CCDOT) has a [project website](#) specific to the EA process.<sup>1</sup> The website includes an electronic copy of the EA with contact information for submitting comments, general information about the project and upcoming meetings, a map of the proposed project, ways for the public to engage online including a project video and survey, frequently asked questions, and links to Cobb County social media ([Facebook](#),<sup>2</sup> [Twitter](#),<sup>3</sup> and [YouTube](#)<sup>4</sup>). Additionally, following the Public Hearing Open House on June 29, 2015 (discussed below), the display boards and handouts from the meeting were posted to the website. A separate webpage specific to the Alternatives Analysis (AA) process is also linked on the EA website.

In addition to the website, the project team manages a project specific [Facebook](#)<sup>5</sup> page, which includes fact sheets, information about kiosk events and meetings, and other announcements. As of October 2015, the Connect Cobb Facebook webpage has 131 “likes”, an increase of over 400 percent since the start of the EA process in early 2013.

Connect Cobb Corridor fact sheets were made available in English and Spanish in January 2013, fall 2013, winter 2015, and spring 2015. The fact sheets provided the most current information available for the project at the time of production, including project descriptions and maps, information about ART and express bus service, public meeting details, and ways for the public to get involved or ask questions. The fact sheets are included on the project website, on the project’s Facebook page, and were distributed at CCT Cumberland and Marietta Transfer Centers and at the MARTA Arts Center Station kiosks.

Legal and display advertisements announcing the availability of the EA and the June 29, 2015 Public Hearing Open House were placed in the *Marietta Daily Journal*, *Daily Report*, and *Mundo Hispanico*. Legal ads ran in the *Marietta Daily Journal* and *Daily Report* on May 29, 2015, June 19, 2015, and June 26, 2015. A display ad in Spanish ran in the *Mundo Hispanico* on June 4, 2015 and June 25, 2015.

Electronic copies of the EA were distributed on DVDs to the cooperating and participating agencies listed in Section 5.1.1 of the EA on May 28, 2015. A copy of the Notice of Availability and the Public Hearing Open House accompanied the DVDs, listing the logistics and timeframe for submitting comments. Paper copies of the EA were also made available for public review at CCDOT starting on May 29, 2015.

Cobb County also manages a project mailing list, for which the public can sign up for email updates. As of July 2015, the list includes approximately 500 active email addresses.

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<sup>1</sup> [http://www.cobbcounty.org/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=2763:connect-cobb-nw-transit-corridor-environmental-assessment&catid=130:department-of-transportation&Itemid=596](http://www.cobbcounty.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=2763:connect-cobb-nw-transit-corridor-environmental-assessment&catid=130:department-of-transportation&Itemid=596)

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.facebook.com/CobbCountyGovernment>

<sup>3</sup> <https://twitter.com/cobbcountygovt>

<sup>4</sup> [http://www.cobbcounty.org/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=752:tv23-youtube&catid=110](http://www.cobbcounty.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=752:tv23-youtube&catid=110)

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.facebook.com/connectcobb>

## Public Hearing Open House

CCDOT held a Public Hearing Open House concerning the project on June 29, 2015 from 5:30 pm-7:30 pm at CCDOT. The purpose of the Hearing was to provide the public with an opportunity to review the EA and its findings, ask questions, and comment on the project. The Hearing was informal, without a presentation, and the public was invited to attend anytime during the advertised hours. Copies of the EA were available for review. Handouts were provided in both English and Spanish, and a Spanish interpreter was present at the meeting. A court reporter was available to allow for oral comments about the project. Following the Hearing, paper copies of the EA and the Hearing boards continued to be available at CCDOT and online at the project website. A total of 72 people attended the Hearing with 35 written comments and two oral comments submitted.

Notifications for the Hearing were widely distributed. In addition to the legal and display ads described in the section above, postcards were developed listing the Hearing date, time, and place, and sent electronically to the project mailing list and in paper copy to the following locations:

- Cobb County Library - Main, Vinings, and Kennesaw branches
- Schools including Life University, Kennesaw State University (Kennesaw and Marietta campuses), and Chattahoochee Technical College
- Center for Family Resources
- Cobb County Government
- City of Marietta
- City of Kennesaw
- Transit centers including CCT Marietta and Cumberland Transfer Centers and MARTA Arts Center Station

Additionally, the GRTA distributed the postcard by email to their Xpress customer list; the Atlanta Regional Commission posted the meeting in its Engagement Network newsletter; and several organizations such as the Council for Quality Growth, Town Center Community Improvement District (CID), and Cumberland CID included the meeting announcement in their email newsletters and also posted it on their social media sites. Pursuant to County guidelines, roadway signs advertising the meeting were fabricated and placed within County right-of-way along the project corridor.

Comments on the EA were accepted from the start of the comment period on May 29, 2015 until July 14, 2015. Commenters could submit their comments at the Public Hearing, to the mailing address at CCDOT, or to [info@sycamoreconsulting.net](mailto:info@sycamoreconsulting.net). In addition to the 37 comments received at the Hearing, another 78 comments were received by email and US mail for a total of 114 public comments. In addition, letters from MARTA and Georgia Department of Natural Resources (DNR) Historic Preservation Division (HPD) were received.

Of the public comments received, both support and opposition to the project was heard, as well as general questions and comments. Most comments fell within these 11 categories:

- Agency Coordination
- Support for the Project
- Opposition to the Project
- Public Outreach
- Status of Locally Preferred Alternative (LPA) Approval



- Title VI
- Development
- Referendum
- Business Impacts
- Traffic Impacts
- Pedestrian Concerns

A summary of the comments by theme, with responses, is included in **Attachment C**, as well as responses to specific comments and copies of all the original comments received.

## Environmental Consequences

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The project will have the following effects on the resources listed below.

### Transportation

#### TRAFFIC

The intersection of US 41/Northside Drive at 17<sup>th</sup> Street will likely experience severe congestion within the 2040 planning horizon without the proposed project and will require infrastructure improvements to maintain acceptable levels of service operations. These improvements could include grade separation.

#### TRANSIT

Projected ART ridership in 2040 is 17,700 passengers per day. Implementation of ART would require some changes to improve transfers from connecting bus service to ART. Section 4.1.4.4 of the EA states that CCT “will develop and refine a service plan to enhance service in the corridor, including service changes to improve transfers from connecting bus service to ART.” Specific route changes will be determined during the design phase.

### Utilities

The project will require modification and/or relocation of utility lines located in the existing roadway right-of-way and in station areas. Proposed station platforms may also require connection to electrical power and a communication network to provide lighting, real-time messaging systems, security cameras, and fare collection. Further coordination with utility owners during the engineering design phase will be required.

### Historic Resources

The proposed project has been determined by FTA to have no adverse effect on any eligible or potentially eligible archaeological properties within the project area. The Georgia State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) concurred with this determination on July 16, 2014 (see **Attachment D**).

The proposed project will also have no adverse effect on historic structures. The Georgia SHPO conditionally concurred with the FTA’s no adverse effect determination on March 15, 2016. (**Attachment D**). The conditions are discussed in Measures to Minimize Harm, below.

### Visual

Minimal to moderate impacts are anticipated as a result of station construction, with moderate effects anticipated to occur in areas where dense wooded areas will be removed to construct



stations and parking areas at Barrett Lakes Boulevard Station and North Loop/White Water Station. This use is consistent with the adjacent parking lot use.

### Displacements and Relocations

To accommodate stations as well as roadway reconstruction necessary for the implementation of ART service, acquisition of property would be required. This would include 10 full parcels and 59 partial parcels, requiring the relocation of 26 businesses. This includes four business suites adjacent to the Barrett Walk Apartment complex; three commercial strip malls (18 individual businesses); and four standalone commercial businesses. There would be no impacts to residential parcels.

### Safety and Security

Personal safety and security at the proposed stations is important to the community. Stations would be well lit and include public address systems, video monitoring, and emergency telephones. Bollards or fencing would be placed on the side of the platform not used to board the ART vehicles. In addition, medians would be constructed with mountable curb facing to facilitate median crossover by emergency vehicles.

### Hazardous Materials

One leaking underground storage tank (LUST)/underground storage tank (UST) site is located on a parcel that Cobb County would acquire for the North Loop/White Water Station and would require testing during the design phase to determine the presence, type, and magnitude of contaminated soil and/or groundwater.

### Noise

No noise impacts are anticipated for residential or institutional land uses along the corridor from either transit operations or station activities. There may be a temporary increase in noise due to construction activities.

### Air Quality

There would be no anticipated exceedances of air pollutant concentrations during the operating phase of the proposed project. There may be a temporary increase in dust and other airborne irritants during construction.

### Federal and State Protected Species

Summer roosting habitat for the federally listed northern long-eared bat (*Myotis septentrionalis*) is typically found in hardwood forest areas. The project will directly affect some hardwood forest by the clearing of trees during the construction phase, specifically approximately 725 feet southwest of the southernmost intersection of White Circle Drive NW and US 41/Cobb Parkway and near the North Loop/White Water Station area. With the implementation of mitigation measures, the project “may affect, but not likely to adversely affect” the northern long-eared bat. The project would have “no effect” to the other federally listed species and “no significant adverse effect” to identified state-listed species in the project area (**Attachment E**).

### Hydrology/Floodplains

Existing culverts will be extended unless a visual inspection during design finds obvious signs of damage or deterioration that would warrant replacement.

## Water Quality/Stormwater

The proposed project would increase impervious area by approximately 25 percent for guideway construction and between 25 and 50 percent for each park-and-ride facility. The proposed project is not anticipated to affect water quality impairment of 303(d) listed waters in the project corridor.

## Waters of the US/Buffered State Waters

Approximately 963 feet of culvert extensions are anticipated in the project area streams, resulting in fill. No pond or wetland fills are anticipated. Ten buffered state water impacts are anticipated.

## Measures to Minimize Harm – Planning/Design/Operations

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Cobb County, in coordination with FTA, will implement the following mitigation measures during planning for and operation of the project.

### Traffic

- Additional analysis will be conducted in coordination with Cobb County and the Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) to identify specific types of improvements necessary to mitigate intersection impacts and bring traffic operations to a level comparable with the No Build level of service.

### Transit

- CCDOT will develop and refine a service plan to enhance service in the corridor, including service changes to improve transfers from connecting bus service to ART.
- CCDOT will follow standard procedures for route changes, additions, and deletions which would include a Title VI analysis to determine how service changes may affect low-income and minority communities, a community outreach process in designing route changes, a public hearing for the proposed service changes, and ongoing outreach efforts to communicate service changes prior to implementation.

### Utilities

- Prior to any construction activities, utilities throughout the corridor and near the stations will be identified and avoided to the extent practicable.
- As design of the project progresses, specific utility impacts and necessary mitigations (i.e., utility relocations, replacements, or other actions) will be determined in coordination with the owners of the utilities.
- Cobb County will be responsible for relocation of any Cobb County-owned utilities, such as water, sewer, and stormwater.
- Relocation of private utilities such as telecommunication, electric, or gas will be coordinated with the owner. In many cases an agreement exists that states in the event of a roadway improvement, the utility owner will move the utility facility at the owner's

cost. Any relocation costs not subject to such an agreement will be the responsibility of Cobb County.

## Visual

- For all stations, the community will be involved in the station design process, and the process of selecting landscaping and streetscape elements that will complement and benefit the visual nature of the neighborhoods.

## Displacements and Relocations

- No impacts to residential properties are anticipated; therefore, no mitigation for residential acquisitions is required. For non-residential displacements, the following will be provided:
  - Relocation advisory services
  - Minimum 90 days written notice to vacate prior to requiring possession
  - Reimbursement for moving and reestablishment expenses
- All necessary coordination with property owners will occur prior to the construction phase.

## Safety and Security

- CCDOT will prepare and implement safety and security plans for operation of the proposed project. Plans will cover requirements for safety and security design criteria, hazard analyses, threat and vulnerability analyses, operational staff training, and emergency response measures.
- These plans and programs will also specify actions and requirements of the CCDOT to maintain continuation of safety and security during operations.
- The CCDOT will be the responsible agency for communicating safety and security measures during operations of the Connect Cobb Corridor project.

## Hazardous Materials

- Prior to construction, CCDOT will complete subsurface testing to identify the presence of contaminated materials.
- For those sites that would be partially taken for the proposed project, further survey will be conducted during design to determine if tank removal would be necessary.

## Historic Resources

- Prior to construction, CCDOT will continue consultation with the Georgia State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO). Specifically, CCDOT will provide 60% and 90% construction plans and elevations to SHPO for their evaluation. These plan submittals will include an overall project map that identifies the confirmed station locations/footprints with the historic resources identified throughout the project corridor and that keys the setting

photographs. CCDOT will not proceed with ground disturbing activities or staging before consultation is complete per 36 CFR Part 800.

### **Federal and State Protected Species**

Mitigation measures have been identified during coordination between Cobb County, FTA, and the US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) as outlined below.

- Cobb County will preserve existing landscaped areas to encourage stormwater infiltration and nutrient filtering.
- Cobb County will include a special provision in the contract documents for the protection of the northern long-eared bat that will stipulate that tree clearing within suitable hardwood forest habitat will not occur from March 30th to October 15th. This will prevent clearing of suitable habitat for roosting northern long-eared bats during time periods that include spring migration, summer roosting, and raising young in early fall.
- Cobb County will conduct surveys during the nesting and common bat roosting season (March 30th to October 15th) and prior to construction to determine if bridges or culverts proposed for modification are used by migratory birds and bats.
- In the event that new or wholly replaced culverts are included in the project, Cobb County will ensure that they are designed under the specified fish passage guidelines for new culverts included in Section E of the US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) Savannah District's Regional Conditions for Nationwide Permits. These guidelines dictate culvert dimension design, bank-full flow accommodations, culvert embedding, culvert slope, flooding design, and stormwater management considerations.
- Per the USACE Savannah District's Regional Conditions for Nationwide Permits and prior to construction, Cobb County will evaluate the use of bottomless culverts to determine if they may be a good alternative for fish passage where foundation conditions allow their construction and width criteria can be met. This requirement applies to proposed new culverts for perennial streams only. Culvert design options, including box culverts that allow for the natural embedment of stream material as well as bottomless culverts, will also be evaluated to determine the appropriate design for fish passage, constructability, and meeting of hydraulic criteria.

### **Hydrology/Floodplains**

- Any modifications to existing structures on Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)-studied streams will be coordinated with the appropriate local, state, and federal agencies with the goal of achieving a "No Rise" certification from FEMA.
- Any impacts to FEMA floodplains as a result of final design will be documented in a Hydraulic and Hydrology Report that will be prepared during final design.
- A stormwater analysis will determine the appropriate water quality best management practices (BMPs) for affected stormwater outfalls. Mitigation measures could include

using structures to cross floodplains instead of fill material, providing adequate flow circulation, reducing grading requirements, and preserving natural drainage.

### Stormwater

- Long-term mitigation measures, to be determined by CCDOT, would include the design and construction of permanent BMPs that would control and treat stormwater runoff caused by an increase in impervious surfaces as a result of the project and meet the appropriate rate control, volume control, and water quality requirements. Surface stormwater runoff would be filtered through the use of wet ponds, stormwater infiltration, or detention facilities and bioretention BMPs for proposed park-and-ride facilities.
- BMPs that are compatible with linear corridors would be used to the extent possible without the need to purchase additional right-of-way.

### Waters of the US/Buffered State Waters

#### STREAMS, WETLANDS, PONDS

- Cobb County will complete steps necessary for federal and state agency verification of federal and state waters as required by the federal Clean Water Act and the Georgia Erosion and Sediment Control Act. This includes a USACE Jurisdictional Determination submittal and field verification and a DNR Environmental Protection Division (EPD) buffered state water field verification.
- The construction contractor will utilize design measures to avoid or minimize disturbance of water resources. Design measures will include shifting improvements away from water resources, utilizing guardrail to reduce shoulder fill slopes, and sizing and locating new drainage structures to support natural stream and floodplain hydrology.
- For new or wholly replaced culverts, culvert stability for passage of aquatic fauna will be assessed as detailed in the mitigation measures listed for federal and state protected species.

#### STATE WATER BUFFERS

- The construction contractor will limit the amount of clearing and grubbing areas to minimize habitat disturbance and preserve existing vegetation.

### Measures to Minimize Harm – Construction

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Cobb County, in coordination with FTA, will implement and monitor the construction of the project to assure compliance with the additional mitigation measures listed below, including special provisions included in contract documents.

## Traffic

- For short-term changes to traffic operations during construction, Cobb County will distribute information via its website, Twitter account, and press releases to local news outlets, indicating temporary closures and/or detour details.

## Transit

- For short-term changes to bus operations during construction, CCT will post information at bus stops indicating temporary stop closures and/or detour details. Information will also be published in advance of detours on CCT's and GRTA's websites and Twitter accounts, in on-board information brochures, and at transfer centers.

## Historic Resources

- In the event of an unanticipated discovery of archaeological artifacts or remains during construction, CCDOT will follow procedures outlined in **Attachment F**.

## Hazardous Materials

- If contaminated materials are found, avoidance alternatives may be considered or applicable laws and regulations concerning the removal of toxic or hazardous material will be followed and the removal coordinated with the DNR EPD.

## Noise

CCDOT will require the construction contractor to do the following:

- Avoid nighttime (10 pm to 7 am) construction in residential neighborhoods
- Use specially quieted equipment with enclosed engines and/or high-performance mufflers
- Require all construction equipment to comply with pertinent US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) equipment noise standards
- Locate stationary construction equipment as far as possible from noise-sensitive sites
- Re-route construction-related truck traffic along roadways that would cause the least disturbance to residents
- Notify nearby residents and community stakeholders whenever extremely noisy construction work would occur

## Air Quality

A series of BMPs will be implemented by the contractor during construction to control dust. This may include the following preventive and mitigation measures:

- Minimization of land disturbance during site preparation
- Use of watering trucks to minimize dust
- Covering of trucks while hauling soil/debris off-site or transferring materials
- Stabilization of dirt piles if they are not removed immediately
- Use of dust suppressants on unpaved areas



- Minimization of unnecessary vehicle and machinery idling
- Revegetation of any disturbed land post-construction

### Federal and State Protected Species

Mitigation measures have been identified during coordination between Cobb County, FTA, and the USFWS. Cobb County will include in the contract documents a requirement that the construction contractor will implement special provisions as described below.

- During the construction phase, Cobb County will ensure that all practicable enhanced erosion control measures are taken within the construction limits. This includes, but is not limited to: hydro-seeding, street sweeping, dust control, vehicle covers on sediment transport vehicles, and concrete washouts. In addition, Cobb County could use wet ponds, stormwater infiltration, or detention facilities and bio-retention to filter stormwater runoff from the impervious surfaces of the proposed park-and-ride facilities. When practical, Cobb County could also utilize impervious surfaces to mirror predevelopment hydrologic conditions in order to encourage infiltration and filtering during the construction phase within project limits.
- Locations of suitable roosting habitat for the northern long-eared bat (*Myotis septentrionalis*) will be labeled on the construction plans.
- If northern long-eared bats are found in suitable roosting habitat, the construction contractor will notify the Project Engineer who in turn will notify the Deputy Director of CCDOT to provide information.
- If birds and bats are observed nesting or roosting in culverts or bridges, Cobb County will ensure that measures to survey and protect migratory birds and bat use will be implemented through the use of a special provision. Cobb County will include a special provision in the contract documents that will utilize netting to prevent birds and bats from nesting or roosting and/or limit construction timing to avoid the breeding season of migratory birds and use by roosting bats (from March 30<sup>th</sup> to October 15<sup>th</sup>).
- Cobb County will include special provisions in the contract documents for enhanced erosion control in streams containing suitable habitat for the Chattahoochee crayfish (*Cambarus howardi*). Enhanced erosion control measures are outlined in Section 4.0 of the Ecology Report and are necessary to prevent sedimentation of streams with suitable habitat for aquatic species.
- Cobb County will include special provisions in the contract documents for seasonal restrictions (no in-stream construction during the spawning season from April to June) and enhanced erosion control in streams containing suitable habitat for the highscale shiner (*Notropis hypsilepis*).
- Cobb County will utilize construction timing restrictions, construction monitoring, and habitat replacement and/or enhancement.
- Cobb County will locate staging areas away from environmentally sensitive areas where mature vegetation and potential fish and wildlife habitats are present. No new staging areas are identified at this time.



- Where applicable, Cobb County will provide educational materials to construction personnel for awareness of protected species and their habitats.
- Cobb County will ensure that the design plans include the locations of environmentally sensitive areas.

### Hydrology/Floodplains

- Short-term mitigation measures will include the development of erosion and sediment control plans to reduce erosion and sedimentation during construction.

### Stormwater

- Short-term mitigation measures will include the development of erosion and sediment control plans to control runoff and reduce erosion and sedimentation during construction.
- Construction activities will be phased to minimize runoff. Specific mitigation measures that will be used for stormwater impacts include:
  - Minimizing soil compaction in landscaped areas by techniques such as scarification and incorporating appropriate amendments to improve soil quality/water holding capacity and foster healthy vegetation
  - When practical, utilizing impervious surfaces to mirror predevelopment hydrologic conditions in order to encourage infiltration and filtering during construction
  - Preserving existing landscaped areas to encourage stormwater infiltration and nutrient filtering
  - Implementing enhanced erosion control measures including supplemental hydroseeding, street sweeping/vacuuming, stabilized construction access points and sediment stockpiles, dust control, sediment transport vehicle covers, and concrete washouts

### Waters of the US/Buffered State Waters

#### STREAMS, WETLANDS, PONDS

- The construction contractor will utilize a phased construction schedule to limit the extent of land disturbance activities, and use Orange Barrier Fencing to prevent construction staging in the vicinity of water resources and buffers.
- The construction contractor will be required to have trained personnel responsible for BMP installation and maintenance.

#### STATE WATER BUFFERS

- The construction contractor will limit the amount of clearing and grubbing areas to minimize habitat disturbance and preserve existing vegetation.
- As soon as possible during or after construction activities, the construction contractor will remove any temporary fill and construction debris and restore disturbed areas to





pre-project conditions using native vegetation replanting. Native riparian plant species will be species that are adapted to riparian forests or stream edges in Georgia and the Southeast.

## Environmental Determinations and Findings

### National Environmental Policy Act Finding

FTA served as the lead agency for the project under NEPA. FTA reviewed the draft versions of the EA and signed the EA on April 14, 2015. The EA found that the project's construction and operation would cause no significant adverse environmental effects that would not be mitigated. This finding applies to all applicable environmental elements, including transportation, utilities, land use, neighborhood and community resources, cultural resources, parks and public lands, Section 4(f)/Section 6(f), visual, displacements and relocations, safety and security, hazardous materials, noise, air quality, federal and state protected species, hydrology/floodplains, water quality/stormwater, navigable waterways, Waters of the US and Buffered State Waters, indirect and cumulative impacts, and environmental justice and limited English proficiency.

After carefully considering the analysis in the EA and the public comments and responses, FTA finds that the proposed project will have no significant adverse effect on the environment. The record provides sufficient evidence and analysis for determining that an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) is not required.

### Environmental Finding

The Connect Cobb Corridor EA (April 2015) is attached and incorporated by reference as part of this Finding of No Significant Impact.

Based on the EA and its associated supporting documents, the Federal Transit Administration finds, pursuant to 23 CFR 771.121, that there are no significant impacts to the environment associated with the development and operation of the Connect Cobb Corridor project.

Dr. Yvette G. Taylor  
Regional Administrator  
Federal Transit Administration Region IV

4-1-16  
Date



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Attachment A

MARTA Letter



**marta**   
2424 Piedmont Rd. N.E.  
Atlanta, GA 30324-3330  
404-848-5000

July 9, 2015

Faye Q. DiMassimo, Director  
Cobb County DOT  
1890 County Services Parkway  
Marietta, GA 30008

Subject: Connect Cobb Project

Dear Ms. DiMassimo:

The Metropolitan Atlanta Rapid Transit Authority ("MARTA") appreciates the opportunity for continued collaboration with Cobb County in the environmental process supporting the development of Connect Cobb, a proposed bus rapid transit project from the Kennesaw State University area in north Cobb to the MARTA Arts Center Station.

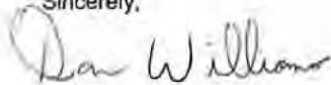
We understand that two alternatives are being considered for the connection at the Arts Center Station as part of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process, one in the existing bus intermodal and the other along Arts Center Way.

MARTA has issued the Request for Expression of Interest (RFEI) for the development of air rights above our four most urban stations last summer. Arts Center Station was identified as a viable near-term TOD opportunity based on the strong level of interest expressed by developers in response to the RFEI.

We have now moved to the next step in the process and issued a Request for Proposals for TOD at the Arts Center Station. Proposals are due to MARTA on September 3, 2015.

We look forward to continuing in partnership with the Cobb County DOT and support the final environmental document concluding with both operational alternatives in place such that MARTA's ongoing efforts will be supported. Should you have any questions or require additional information, please contact me at (404) 848-4422 or [drwilliams@itsmarta.com](mailto:drwilliams@itsmarta.com).

Sincerely,



Don Williams  
Acting Assistant General Manager of Planning

cc: Amanda Rhein  
Senior Director of Transit Oriented Development



## EA Errata Sheet

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The following bullets represent minor changes or clarifications since the EA was published that are incorporated into the EA document by reference.

- Page 5, Section 2.3: CCT Route 50, Franklin Road to Allgood Road, is added to the list of routes currently operating in the project area.
- Page 6, Section 2.4: The CTP 2040 was adopted by the Board of Commissioners on May 26, 2015. Each city in the corridor also adopted CTP 2040.
- Page 7, Section 2.5: The date used for the presentation to the Board of Commissioners is incorrect. The correct dates are September 11, 2012 and September 25, 2012.
- Page 23, Section 3.2.1, third bullet, last sentence: Edited to “The alignment then continues on dedicated guideway on Barrett Lakes Boulevard until US 41/Cobb Parkway.”
- Page 23, Section 3.2.1, fourth bullet: Barrett Lakes Boulevard is the incorrect street name at that location. The correct name is Greers Chapel Road.
- Page 35, Section 3.2.3, Table 3.2-1: The WellStar Kennestone Station would have a surface lot, not a parking structure.
- Page 41: Table 3.3-1 includes an incorrect estimate of capital costs for the proposed project. The correct estimate is \$493.7 million.
- Page 44, Section 4.1.1.1, sentence immediately preceding the three bullets: The correct wording of the sentence is “These improvements were modeled only for the Build Improved scenario and are as follows:”
- Page 45, Table 4.1-2: Delete the rows associated with McCollum Parkway, Cobb International Boulevard, and Barrett Parkway. These intersections are along the alignment alternative described in Section 3.3.1. The alignment alternative was eliminated from further consideration.
- Pages 46-49: Delete references to intersections with McCollum Parkway, Cobb International Boulevard, and Barrett Parkway. These intersections are along the alignment alternative described in Section 3.3.1. The alignment alternative was eliminated from further consideration.
- Page 87, Section 4.9.3.2: Based on a July 2015 field survey, commercial property impacts include four business suites adjacent to the Barrett Walk Apartment complex; three commercial strip malls (18 individual businesses); and four standalone commercial businesses.
- Page 109+, Sections 4.9.3 and 4.9.4: Text updated to reflect April letter from US Fish and Wildlife Service
- Page 119, Table 4.18.1: Delete rows associated with stream S-7. This impact was associated with a possible maintenance facility site, which is no longer part of the proposed project.
- Page 120, Table 4.18.2: Delete row associated with stream S-7. This reduces the total stream piping to 963 feet.



- Page 127, Table 4.19-3: The US 41/Cobb Parkway widening project “scoping only” from Windy Ridge Parkway to N Marietta Parkway is no longer in the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) or Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) because the funding was authorized. It had been listed in the TIP/RTP under ID# CO-041 (GDOT Project ID # 0010510) as scoping only (network year 2030) with the remaining phases in the unconstrained list under ID# ASP-CO-041. The project is listed in Table 4.19-3 of the EA as a “reasonably foreseeable future action” with construction program listed as “long range.” The Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC) is currently updating the plan and reviewing the unconstrained list.
- Appendix C: Sheet 2 of 5 in the exhibits has been updated to reflect updated design that avoids the Dairy Queen property. Sheet 3 of 8 in the exhibits has been updated to reflect that the WellStar Kennestone station would have surface parking and not structured parking.
- Appendix E: Added May 4, 2015 letter from SHPO
- Appendix K: The concept plans have been revised to include only the historic properties that are in the Area of Potential Effect for the proposed project
- Appendix I: Added April 16, 2015 letter from USFWS





Each comment received was assigned a unique ID number. An index is provided on page C-3 that indicates the method the comment was submitted, the assigned ID number, the name of the commenter, their organization (if applicable), their city (if provided), and a comment category. Most comments fell within the following 11 categories:

- Agency Coordination
- Support for the Project
- Opposition to the Project
- Public Outreach
- Status of Locally Preferred Alternative (LPA) Approval
- Title VI
- Development
- Referendum
- Business Impacts
- Traffic Impacts
- Pedestrian Concerns

For comments related to one of the above categories, the responses by category are included on pages C-10 through C-13. For comments with a specific question that did not fall within the categories above, "Specific Questions" is noted in the index (pages C-3 through C-9) under comment category. Responses to these specific questions can be found on pages C-14 through C-48.

Copies of all comments received are provided on pages C-49 through C-152.



## Comment Index

Method	ID	First Name	Last Name	Organization	City	Comment Category
Comment Form	1			Sierra Club	Mableton	Specific Questions
Comment Form	2	Michael E.	Paris	Council for Quality Growth	Marietta	Support
Comment Form	3	Kim	Paris		Marietta	Support
Comment Form	4	Michael	Murphy		Mableton	Specific Questions
Comment Form	5	Linda	Bell	Sierra Club	Mableton	Support
Comment Form	6	Craig	Dryden	Georgia Power	Marietta	Support
Comment Form	7	James	Taunton		Smyrna	Support
Comment Form	8	Jennine	Duelge	TCACID	Marietta	Support, Specific Questions
Comment Form	9	Sigmondo	Malatesta	Concerned Citizens of West Cobb	Powder Springs	Support
Comment Form	10	Bakari	Height	Citizens for Progressive Transit	Atlanta	Support, Specific Questions
Comment Form	11	James	Toronton		Smyrna	Support
Comment Form	12	Tyler	Pelfrey	Town Center Area CID	Atlanta	Support
Comment Form	13	Tracy	Rathbone	TC CID	Marietta	Support
Comment Form	14	Aaron	Berryhill		Marietta	Support, Specific Questions
Comment Form	15	Sharon	Mason		Marietta	Support
Comment Form	16	Tim	Preece		Marietta	Support
Comment Form	17	John	Loud		Kennesaw	Support
Comment Form	18	Mike	Ricciardi		Marietta	Support
Comment Form	19	Steve	Byrne		Atlanta	Support
Comment Form	20	Slade	Gulledge		Smyrna	Support

Method	ID	First Name	Last Name	Organization	City	Comment Category
Comment Form	21	Al	Martin		Kennesaw	Support
Comment Form	22	Allison	Giddens		Marietta	Support
Comment Form	23	Charley	Lewinson		Marietta	Conditional Support, Specific Questions
Comment Form	24	Joseph J	Bushell		Powder Springs	Specific Suggestions
Comment Form	25	Holly	Quinlan	Cobb Travel and Tourism	Smyrna	Support
Comment Form	26	Nathan	Humphrey		Mableton	Support
Comment Form	27a	Thomas	House		Atlanta	Specific Questions
Facebook	27b	Thomas	House			Specific Questions
Comment Form	28	Elaine	Cruz		Marietta	Opposition
Comment Form	29	Don	Hicks		Marietta	Support
Comment Form	30	Barkley	Russell		Atlanta	Support
Comment Form	31	Larry	King	Cobb TAB		Specific Questions
Comment Form	32a	Bob	Hovey		Marietta	Public Outreach
Letter	32b	Bob	Hovey			Opposition
Email	32c	Bob	Hovey			Opposition
Comment Form	33a	Tom	Cheek		Marietta	Opposition, Public Outreach
Court Reporter	33b	Tom	Cheek			Opposition, Public Outreach, LPA Approval
Comment Form	34	Gabriel	Rueda			Public Outreach, Support, Traffic Impacts, Specific Questions
Comment Form	35	Patricia	Burns		Smyrna	Support
Court Reporter	36a	Mary Rose	Barnes		Smyrna	Development, Pedestrian Concerns
Email	36b	Mary Rose	Barnes			Title VI, Opposition, Traffic Impacts, Development, Pedestrian Concerns, Specific Questions
Email	37a	Craig	Kootsillas			Specific Questions

Method	ID	First Name	Last Name	Organization	City	Comment Category
Email	37b	Craig	Kootsillas			Specific Questions
Facebook	37c	Craig	Kootsillas			Specific Questions
Facebook	37d	Craig	Kootsillas			LPA Approval
Facebook	37e	Craig	Kootsillas			LPA Approval
Facebook	37f	Craig	Kootsillas			LPA Approval
Facebook	37g	Craig	Kootsillas			LPA Approval, Specific Questions
Facebook	37h	Craig	Kootsillas			LPA approval
Email	38a	Douglas	Jenkins			Opposition
Facebook	38b	Douglas	Jenkins			Opposition, Public Outreach
Email	39	Diane	Fallow			Support
Email	40	Stephen	Butler			Support
Email	41	Jalisa	Stamant			Specific Questions
Email	42	James	Astuto			Opposition
Email	43	Jan and Jon	Barton			Opposition, Business Impacts, Pedestrian Concerns
Email	44a	David	Bunch		Smyrna	Opposition
Email	44b	David	Bunch			Opposition
Email	45	N/A	N/A			Opposition
Email	46	Dan	Stephens			Support
Email	47	Richard and Virginia	Decker			Opposition, Pedestrian Concerns
Email	48	Terry	Dudley			Opposition
Email	49	Megan	Escalona			Support
Email	50	Kurt	Graham			Opposition
Email	51	Ed	Higginbotham			Opposition
Email	52	Jim	Jess		Marietta	Opposition
Email	53	Phyllis DeNeve	Kostelnik			Opposition

Method	ID	First Name	Last Name	Organization	City	Comment Category
Email	54	Mary Lou	Stephens		Marietta	Support
Email	55	Henry	Munford			Opposition, Business Impacts
Email	56	Carol	Olson			Opposition
Email	57	Jim	Serrate			Opposition
Email	58a	Ron	Sifen			Opposition, Business Impacts, Pedestrian Concerns
Email	58b (1-9)	Ron	Sifen			Business Impacts, Pedestrian Concerns, Traffic Impacts, Specific Questions
Email	58c (1-3)	Ron	Sifen			Business Impacts, Pedestrian Concerns, Traffic Impacts, Specific Questions
Email	58d	Ron	Sifen			LPA Approval
Email	58e	Ron	Sifen			Traffic Impacts
Email	59	MA	Sikes			Referendum
Email	60a	J	Smith			Opposition
Email	60b	J	Smith			Opposition
Email	61	W. Clayton	Sparrow, Jr.			Opposition
Email	62	Torbett	Crocker			Opposition
Email	63	Ann	Turner			Opposition
Email	64	Helen	White		Atlanta	Opposition
Email	65	Kathy	Young			Support
Email	66			A.T. NORTON, JR & ASSOC., INC.	Marietta	Opposition
Email	67	Teri	Anulewicz	Ward 3, Smyrna City Council		Support
Email	68	Hall	Brodie, P.E.		Atlanta	Specific Questions
Email	69	Bryan	Kirshon		West Melbourne, FL	Support

Method	ID	First Name	Last Name	Organization	City	Comment Category
Email	70	Joanne	Minster			Opposition
Email	71	Justin	O'Dell	O'Dell & O'Neal Attorneys	Marietta	Support
Email	72	Elizabeth	Greene			Opposition
Email	73	Lynn	Walston		Marietta	Support
Email	74	Donald	Myrick			Opposition
Email	75	Carol	Brown			Support
Email	76a	David	Weldon		Powder Springs	Opposition, Development
Email	76b	David	Weldon			Opposition
Email	77a	Thomas J.	Palmer			Opposition
Email	77b	Thomas J.	Palmer			Opposition, Pedestrian Concerns
Email	78	NT	Nickell			Opposition
Email	79	Richard	Kolsby			Opposition
Email	80	Carol	Robertson			Opposition, Traffic Impacts
Email	81	Steven	Taylor			Opposition, Referendum
Email	82	Lee	Graham		Powder Springs	Support
Email	83	Cynthia	Patterson		Marietta	Support
Email	84	Nancy	Sauer		Marietta	Support
Email	85	Michael	Johnson		Marietta	Support, Opposition
Email	86	Mary Frances	Williams		Marietta	Support
Email	87	Lynn	Clarke			Opposition, Traffic Impacts
Email	88	Rick	Wemmers			Opposition
Email	89	Kerry	Prance		Marietta	Opposition
Email	90	Sherry	Steinway			Opposition
Email	91	Trevor	Woodhams			Opposition
Email	92	Timothy	Elder			Opposition, LPA Approval, Traffic Impacts, Referendum

Method	ID	First Name	Last Name	Organization	City	Comment Category
Email	93	Charlotte	Clark			LPA Approval
Email	94	Fran	Jackson			Opposition
Email	95	Wyn	Engle			Opposition
Email	96	Claudia	Cook		Atlanta	Opposition, Business Impacts, Pedestrian Concerns
Email	97	Robert	Magill			Opposition
Email	98	Dick	Gregson			Opposition
Email	99	Bill	Voegeli			Opposition
Email	100	Jane	Mitchell			Opposition
Email	101	Terry	Blackwell			Opposition, Traffic Impacts, Pedestrian Concerns
Email	102	Schuyler	Rector			Opposition
Letter	103	Richard	Smith		Atlanta	Opposition
Letter	104	Brian	Gist	Southern Environmental Law Center	Atlanta	Support
Letter	105	Malaika	Rivers	Cumberland CID		Support
Email	106	Linda	Fierman			Opposition, Traffic Impacts, Business Impacts
Email	107	Keli	Gambrill			Opposition, Traffic Impacts, Specific Questions
Email	108	John Michael	Roach	Eye Consultants of Atlanta	Atlanta	Traffic Impacts, Business Impacts
Email	109	Fred	Singer			Opposition
Email	110	Michael	Murphy			Opposition, Development
Comment Form	111	Deborah	Tompkins		Smyrna	Opposition
Facebook	112	William	Harrison			Opposition
Letter	113a	Jennifer	Dixon	GADNR, HPD	Stockbridge	Agency Coordination

Method	ID	First Name	Last Name	Organization	City	Comment Category
Letter	113b	Jennifer	Dixon	GADNR, HPD	Stockbridge	Agency Coordination
Letter	114	Don	Williams	MARTA	Atlanta	Agency Coordination

## Responses by Category

Comment Category	Comment Response
<b>Agency Coordination</b>	The coordination letters have been received and are attached to the Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI).
<b>Support</b>	Thank you for your comment; your input has been recorded.
<b>Opposition</b>	Thank you for your comment; your input has been recorded.
<b>Public Outreach</b>	<p>Extensive outreach to the general public was conducted in the Alternatives Analysis (AA) and the EA phases. In the AA, eight meetings of the Stakeholder Roundtables were held, all of which were widely publicized to the public and heavily attended. Further, four public meetings were held in conjunction with Beltline Inc. and City of Atlanta, all of which were open to the public and publicized to both Atlanta and Cobb County residents. In addition, project information kiosks were set up at the Cobb Community Transit (CCT) transit centers and Metropolitan Atlanta Regional Transit Authority (MARTA) Arts Center Station with project display boards and fact sheets. In the EA phase, a large scale Public Information Open House was held in November 2013, also with wide notification and advertisement. The June 2015 Public Hearing Open House was advertised as an opportunity for the public to provide comments, in addition to receiving information about the project. While the meeting was held in an open house format, its advertisement with legal notices in three newspapers and road signs and recording of comments by a court reporter and comment forms, emails, and Connect Cobb Facebook posts, was consistent with Cobb County Department of Transportation's (CCDOT) outreach for other transportation projects. Please note, a public hearing for an EA is not required by the National Environmental Policy Act. Cobb County voluntarily chose to hold the public hearing in order to provide an opportunity for the public to review the EA and provide comments. Additionally, the EA was available electronically at the project webpage and in paper copy at CCDOT's offices starting on May 29, 2015. Citizens were welcome to review the document online, at CCDOT, or at the hearing, and submit comments until July 14, 2015. For those unable to attend any of the physical meetings in the AA or the EA phases, information was available 24/7 online at the project webpage at <a href="http://www.cobbdot.org">www.cobbdot.org</a> from the onset of the AA study continuing throughout the EA with contact information for providing comments. Information was provided in English and Spanish, and an interpreter was present at the public meetings and hearing. Lastly, the proposed project was also discussed and widely reported in local media, in the context of a countywide transportation network during multiple stakeholder and public meetings associated with preparation and adoption of the Cobb County Comprehensive Transportation Plan 2040 (CTP 2040). CTP 2040,</p>



was adopted by Cobb County Board of Commissioners (BOC) and the governing bodies of all six cities located in Cobb County.

**Status of LPA  
Approval**

The Cobb County BOC has not voted to approve the Connect Cobb Locally Preferred Alternative (LPA). The proposed project is not finalized until after the conclusion of the EA and would require a future vote of the BOC. The project team has not represented to the FTA or any other governmental agency that the BOC has yet done so. The EA signature cover sheet signed by FTA Regional Administrator Yvette Taylor is an approval indicating that FTA is moving the EA document forward for public review and comment. Page 7 of the Table of Contents and Glossary, first paragraph of Section 2.5 of the EA document, states specifically not that the Cobb BOC accepted the LPA at their work session on February 28th, 2012 but that “the presentation was accepted.” The EA included an incorrect date for acceptance of the presentation of the LPA; the correct dates are September 11 and 25, 2012. Please see the errata sheet in Appendix B of this document. On November 8, 2011, January 10, 2012, February 14, 2012, February 28, 2012, March 13, 2012, and July 24, 2012, actions were taken by the BOC conducting various public hearings and votes authorizing the development of the Environmental Assessment/Environmental Impact Statement documentation as well as the chairman’s comments at the September 25, 2012 work session referencing the continuation of study beyond the completion of the AA. The proposed LPA that resulted from the AA and was refined through the EA, may continue to be refined in design and engineering, and may be considered by the BOC in the future. The project team has not stated that the LPA was adopted but that authorizations were granted by the BOC to continue the work effort from AA through EA.

**Title VI**

It is CCDOT policy to fully comply with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and all related regulations and directives. CCDOT assures that no person shall, on the grounds of race, color, sex, national origin, disability, or age as provided by Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the Federal-Aid Highway Act of 1973, the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Age Discrimination Act of 1975, and the Civil Rights Restoration Act of 1987, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be otherwise subjected to discrimination under any program or activity. By asking the public to voluntarily provide their demographic information via “Title VI Voluntary Information Request” cards at public meetings, including the Public Information Open House in December 2013 and the Public Hearing Open House in June 2015, the public is assisting CCDOT in documenting its efforts to comply with Title VI. The voluntary demographic information is intended for recordkeeping in compliance with federal regulations and for developing and monitoring nondiscrimination enforcement programs.

**Development**

The current transportation conditions of the Connect Cobb Corridor project area indicate a very clear need for transit options to provide access to population and employment growth in activity centers now and in the future and the need for faster, more reliable, and more effective public transportation. The proposed project will improve the predictability and efficiency of transit service by constructing a dedicated guideway for arterial rapid transit (ART) vehicles, improving transit service considerably in the corridor. It will also help to meet the growing demand for transit as recent polls demonstrate strong support among Cobb residents for increased transit service (see Appendix E of the Alternatives Analysis Report ([www.cobbdot.org](http://www.cobbdot.org)); CTP 2040 ([www.cobbinmotion.com](http://www.cobbinmotion.com)); and State of the Region Report: Metro Atlanta Speaks Survey ([www.atlantaregional.com](http://www.atlantaregional.com))). While the project has the potential to spur transit-oriented development (TOD) around the 14 proposed ART stations in Cobb County, this development is not included in the expressed purpose of the project documented on page 8 of the EA. If development were to occur, however, the residential and commercial space constructed around the new transit facilities could be used to accommodate the anticipated job growth in the corridor and limit sprawl elsewhere in the county.

**Referendum**

On June 23, 2015, the Cobb County BOC approved a resolution that their intent is to call for the project to be put to Cobb County voters in the form of a referendum.

**Business Impacts**

Businesses remain open along roads such as US 41/Cobb Parkway after a median is installed. Motorists and customers adjust their driving habits to new access requirements. In most cases, the new access will mean driving to the nearest signalized intersection, often within a mile, and making a U-turn in order to access businesses on the other side of the road. Specific impacts, including the possibility of land acquisition, will be addressed on a business by business basis during final design.

**Traffic Impacts**

The purpose of the EA traffic analysis was to document what level of service (LOS) impacts the project would have. Often intersection LOS does not improve due to a transit project because the purpose of transit projects often is to provide transportation alternatives, not to improve vehicle traffic. Based on the results of the 2040 peak hour operations modeling, most intersections could operate acceptably at-grade with little to no improvements needed. A select few intersections may require a higher level of improvements, but with those improvements, the traffic LOS in the Build Improved condition would be the same as that in the No Build condition. As documented in Section 5.0 of the EA, the Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) is a cooperating agency for this project. Several coordination meetings have occurred and will continue to occur between CCDOT and GDOT to discuss other GDOT efforts in the project area, including the US 41 Scoping Project (GDOT Project ID# 0010510), which is studying necessary improvements in the corridor.



**Pedestrian  
Concerns**

If the proposed project is approved, pedestrian improvements would be made at each station as well as along the corridor. Proposed improvements would include ADA-compliant cross walks, improved pedestrian signals, lighting, and other amenities. The proposed center median ART stations would reduce the number of lanes for riders to cross when they board and alight ART vehicles. In addition, because ART boardings and alightings would occur at stations that consolidate numerous bus stops along the corridor, it would reduce the points of conflict between riders and cars.

## Responses to Specific Questions and Suggestions

ID	Name	Specific Questions	Responses to Specific Questions
1		<p>1) As the new lanes are being planned what would it take to prepare them to accept light rail?</p> <p>2) What is the projected cost benefit as we move from car to bus considering a reasonable # of riders?</p> <p>3) Same question car to rail</p> <p>4) Same question bus to rail</p> <p>5) What creative marketing strategies have been discussed to encourage riders, for example having sports, media, celebrities ride the buses?</p>	<p>1) The conversion of the proposed ART lanes into a light rail guideway would require additional study and are beyond the scope of this EA.</p> <p>2, 3, 4) Calculating the cost benefit of moving from car to bus to rail on Cobb Parkway requires a myriad of inputs and often the use of an analysis model, again beyond the scope of this EA. However, some general research does exist on the subject and can be found on the Transportation Research Board's website (<a href="http://www.trb.org">www.trb.org</a>).</p> <p>5) It is anticipated that a comprehensive educational and marketing campaign will accompany the implementation of the proposed project, should the project be approved and funding identified. At that time, such ideas as celebrity riders may be discussed.</p>
2	Michael E. Paris	Support	N/A
3	Kim Paris	Support	N/A

ID	Name	Specific Questions	Responses to Specific Questions
4	Michael Murphy	Why is there not a similar project to revitalize South Cobb, especially Veterans Memorial Hwy (Rt 278)? Parts of it look like tombstone territory yet there are some positive pockets that could flourish with public transportation. "A rising tide should lift all boats, even those stuck at the bottom."	The scope of the Connect Cobb project is focused on improvements to the US 41/Cobb Parkway area, as it is one of the most congested in the region. CCDOT will develop and refine a service plan to enhance service in the corridor, including service changes to improve transfers from connecting bus service to ART. While the South Cobb area is beyond the scope of this project, your comments are acknowledged and may be considered in future planning efforts.
5	Linda Bell	Support	N/A
6	Craig Dryden	Support	N/A
7	James Taunton	Support	N/A
8	Jennine Duelge	Support  1) How will this affect the local transit service? 2) The Town Center Area is home to many call centers: is there a plan to increase service for 2 <sup>nd</sup> and 3 <sup>rd</sup> shift workers?	CCDOT will develop and refine a service plan to enhance service in the corridor, including service changes to improve transfers from connecting bus service to ART. Table 3.2-2 in Section 3.2.5 of the EA includes the proposed operating hours for the proposed project. There is no plan at this time to increase service for 2 <sup>nd</sup> and 3 <sup>rd</sup> shift workers. However, the Comprehensive Operations Analysis that will be completed in 2016 will consider the needs of all potential customers by assessing future transit routes as well as operating hours. It is anticipated that the Comprehensive Operations Analysis will be prepared in 2016.

ID	Name	Specific Questions	Responses to Specific Questions
9	Sigmondo Malatesta	Support	N/A
10	Bakari Height	Support  Is there a consideration to change the HOV lanes to bus only lanes? These lanes are underused through the corridor, and would be better suited for just the BRT.	The High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) lanes operate on I-75 under the jurisdiction of the Georgia Department of Transportation. The Connect Cobb project assumes the HOV lanes would operate under the current restrictions allowing vehicles with two or more (living and not pre-infant) persons, emergency vehicles, motorcycles, buses, and alternative fuel vehicles. Inquiries concerning the HOV lanes may be addressed to GDOT at 404-631-1990.
11	James Toronton	Support	N/A
12	Tyler Pelfrey	Support	N/A
13	Tracy Rathbone	Support	N/A

ID	Name	Specific Questions	Responses to Specific Questions
14	Aaron Berryhill	<p>Support</p> <p>One thing that I think would be valuable to study more is the existing transit services in the county. A map showing both the ART line along with the existing transit lines would help to show just how comprehensive the project could be on the county's public transportation. It would be interesting to know if the inclusion of ART would result in an increase in current CCT lines and if existing transit services need to be adjusted due to ridership on the ART line.</p>	<p>CCDOT will develop and refine a service plan to enhance service in the corridor, including service changes to improve transfers from connecting bus service to ART. In addition, the Comprehensive Operations Analysis will consider future transit routes. It is anticipated that the Comprehensive Operations Analysis will be prepared in 2016.</p>
15	Sharon Mason	<p>Support</p>	<p>N/A</p>
16	Tim Preece	<p>Support</p>	<p>N/A</p>
17	John Loud	<p>Support</p>	<p>N/A</p>
18	Mike Ricciardi	<p>Support</p>	<p>N/A</p>
19	Steve Byrne	<p>Support</p>	<p>N/A</p>

ID	Name	Specific Questions	Responses to Specific Questions
20	Slade Gullledge	Support	N/A
21	Al Martin	Support	N/A
22	Allison Giddens	Support	N/A
23	Charley Lewinson	<p>Conditional Support</p> <p>What is the direct benefit of this plan to Austell, Mableton, and Powder Springs? What capacity, either directly or at second stage, does this add to District 4?</p>	<p>CCDOT will develop and refine a service plan to enhance service in the corridor, including service changes to improve transfers from connecting bus service to ART. Two new CCT service expansions (FLEX service that began in spring 2015 and Route 25 service that is tentatively set to begin in summer 2016) will together improve access from Austell, Mableton, and Powder Springs to the ART service. This enhanced access to transit will, in turn, offer more reliable service to activity centers in Cobb County and throughout the Atlanta region via ART's connection to the MARTA Arts Center Station. In addition, the Comprehensive Operations Analysis will consider future transit routes. It is anticipated that the Comprehensive Operations Analysis will be prepared in 2016.</p>



ID	Name	Specific Questions	Responses to Specific Questions
24	Joseph J Bushell	<p>System needs to take into consideration how sewage will be affected. Need adequate lighting and sidewalks. WiFi on bus and at stations. I would like to see a fare system that uses the Breeze card. I also want to see electric or hybrid buses. Buses should connect to flex bus, current bus service, and new Route 25 service. I think the bus service should extend into Acworth. The buses should have transit police in operation or guards. Safety is important. I really hope we can get new electric technology in order to reduce emissions and protect the environment. Bus should have audio and visual aids for announcing stops to blind/ hearing impaired. Bus needs to be run on Saturdays and Sundays as well as on weekdays with late hours.</p>	<p>Thank you for your comments. As the project continues to develop, and the alternative is refined, sewage and utilities will be taking into account. Safety, such as lighting and security, and pedestrian improvements will also be carefully designed. Coordination with the Breeze Card is anticipated and routes will be coordinated with existing transit to maximize travel times and benefit. There will be continuing regional discussions and coordination with MARTA relating to potential Breeze Card use on all CCT routes. WiFi service at stations and on vehicles will be considered during the design phase of the proposed project based on available technology and cost effectiveness. Several fuel technologies are being considered and compared to offer maximum benefit and reduce environmental impact. Vehicles and stations are envisioned to be equipped with state of the art ADA features. Service is proposed to operate on Saturday until 3:00 am and Sunday until 10:00 pm.</p>
25	Holly Quinlan	Support	N/A
26	Nathan Humphrey	Support	N/A

ID	Name	Specific Questions	Responses to Specific Questions
27a	Thomas House	I believe there is an opportunity to review placement of the Cumberland north station to ensure it is properly connected to the new Brave development. Making it convenient for North Cobb residents to choose BRT as an options to the games. An opportunity to review zoning on 41. Need to encourage residential development which will deliver ready riders to near station stops.	Thank you for your comment. As the project continues to develop into final design, the location of the stations may be examined and refined.
27b	Thomas House	I think a new look should be taken at the proposed Cumberland North Station. This was designed before the Braves announcement. I recommend the positioning be placed closer to the Braves development to facilitate and encourage game day riders from the north.	Thank you for your comment. As the project continues to develop into final design, the location of the stations may be examined and refined.
28	Elaine Cruz	Opposition	N/A
29	Don Hicks	Support	N/A
30	Barkley Russell	Support	N/A

ID	Name	Specific Questions	Responses to Specific Questions
31	Larry King	<p>1) 26 businesses targeted for re-location – please provide list.            2) Impervious area to increase by 26% – what is the expected impact on stormwater management? How much will this cost? Will it be a Cobb expense?</p>	<p>1) The 26 businesses requiring relocation include: Solid Commercial Solutions, Inc. and 3 empty suites at 2015 Barrett lakes Boulevard (4 businesses); Strip mall at 909 Cobb Parkway containing Whittaker Law Offices, Abest Insurance, Pro Tutoring, and Maxwell, Cohen, and Legens, Inc. (4 businesses); Strip mall containing Love Lace Multi Care Health Solutions, Wood Family Chiropractic, and Steel Magnolias Salon (4 businesses); Arrival Inn at 919 Cobb Parkway (1 business); Crooked Tree Cafe at 915 Cobb Parkway (1 business); Checks Cashed Auto Insurance at 2610 Cobb Parkway (1 business); Strip mall at 2620 Cobb Parkway containing 10 Minute Title Pawn, Ming Xing Massage, Hargrove Alterations, Luxor Nail, Shoe Repair, Salon Sutra, Soccer World, Vape Pkwy, ProFRESHional Cuts (9 businesses); Taco Bell at 2623 Cobb Parkway (1 business); and Barnes and Noble at 2952 Cobb Parkway (1 business).            2) Needed stormwater management treatment dimensions, locations, and cost will be determined during the design phase of the project. The cost of stormwater improvements needed as a result of Connect Cobb will be included in the cost of the proposed project.</p>
32a	Bob Hovey		See Responses by Category – Public Outreach
32b	Bob Hovey	Opposition	N/A
32c	Bob Hovey	Opposition	N/A

ID	Name	Specific Questions	Responses to Specific Questions
33a	Tom Cheek	Opposition	See Responses by Category – Public Outreach
33b	Tom Cheek	Opposition	See Responses by Category – Public Outreach, LPA Approval
34	Gabriel Rueda	What is the estimated cost for taxpayers? Where is subsidized from?	<p>A conceptual estimate of probable costs from Kennesaw to Cumberland calculates the cost of the project at \$493,700,000. Costs may be refined during final design. Funding for the project could potentially come from a mix of federal, state, local, and private-sector sources. The cost of the project is summarized in Table 3.3-7 on page 41 of the EA.</p> <p>See Responses by Category – Public Outreach, Support, Traffic Impacts</p>
35	Patricia Burns	Support	N/A
36a	Mary Rose Barnes		See Responses by Category – Development, Pedestrian Concerns

ID	Name	Specific Questions	Responses to Specific Questions
36b	Mary Rose Barnes	<p>I was appalled that one reader board at last week's meeting listed the extensive loss and degradation of the habitat of the endangered northern long-eared bat, Chattahoochee crayfish and shiner was listed as a BENEFIT! Bats are NECESSARY to reduce the population of mosquitoes. The massive deforestation would benefit the MOSQUITOES, certainly not the citizens or the protected species!</p>	<p>The referenced board from the public hearing discussed both project impacts and benefits, and also listed mitigation measures. Concerning the northern long-eared bat, it was determined that the project may affect, but is not likely to adversely affect this species. As discussed in Section 4.14.3 of the EA, the project will directly affect some hardwood forest by the clearing of trees during the construction phase, specifically approximately 725 feet southwest of the southernmost intersection of White Circle Drive NW and US 41/Cobb Parkway and near the North Loop/White Water station area. As described in Section 4.14.4 of the EA, mitigation measures have been coordinated with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, including that tree clearing within suitable hardwood forest habitat will not occur from March 30th to October 15th (covering time periods that include spring migration, summer roosting, and raising young in early fall). For the Chattahoochee crayfish and the highscale shiner, it was determined that there was no significant adverse effect to the species. These studies were conducted according to federal requirements and are included in their entirety in the Ecology Report in Appendix I of the EA. A complete list of mitigation measures for all species is included in Section 4.14.4 of the EA.</p> <p>See Responses by Category – Title VI, Opposition, Traffic Impacts, Development, Pedestrian Concerns</p>

ID	Name	Specific Questions	Responses to Specific Questions
37a	Craig Kootsillas	Prior to beginning the AA, you told the FTA this: "This short list will be introduced into the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) scheduled to begin in the summer for further environmental screening 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 someone in 2014." Did you ever tell them you DID NOT intend to follow this process?	The determination of the appropriate level of environmental analysis completed for an action depends on the anticipated significance of the impacts. An Environmental Assessment is prepared so that the federal lead agency can determine if an Environmental Impact Statement is required. FTA has not yet made that determination for the Connect Cobb project. FTA will review the EA and issue a decision document based on the findings and the comments received during the public comment period.
37b	Craig Kootsillas	Was there any other purpose to do an EA other than not have to complete an Environmental Impact Statement?	The determination of the appropriate level of environmental analysis completed for an action depends on the anticipated significance of the impacts. An Environmental Assessment is prepared so that the federal lead agency can determine if an Environmental Impact Statement is required. FTA has not yet made that determination for the Connect Cobb project. FTA will review the EA and issue a decision document based on the findings and the comments received during the public comment period.
37c	Craig Kootsillas	When does the comment period end?	The comment period ended on July 14, 2015.
37d	Craig Kootsillas		See Responses by Category – LPA Approval
37e	Craig Kootsillas		See Responses by Category – LPA Approval

ID	Name	Specific Questions	Responses to Specific Questions
37f	Craig Kootsillas		See Responses by Category – LPA Approval
37g	Craig Kootsillas	On June 15, CDOT sent correspondence to USDOT officials backing down on their claim (shown below) that Cobb Commissioners had given the green light to this project. The EA you still have posted does not reflect this. Please remedy this misrepresentation immediately. You are in the middle of a public comment period and many people will comment about the fraud you attempted to perpetrate. To eliminate the risk that public comments are struck from the record because they refer to this fraud, PLEASE CORRECT THE DOCUMENT. or.... will you give your word that NO COMMENTS received will be changed IN ANY MANNER and forwarded directly to federal authorities?	Copies of all comments received in their original format are included in this document and will be submitted to FTA.  See Responses by Category – LPA Approval
37h	Craig Kootsillas		See Responses by Category – LPA Approval
38a	Douglas Jenkins	Opposition	N/A
38b	Douglas Jenkins	Opposition	See Responses by Category – Public Outreach



ID	Name	Specific Questions	Responses to Specific Questions
39	Diane Fallaw	Support	N/A
40	Stephen Butler	Support	N/A
41	Jalisa Starnant	When will there be a meeting on having Sunday service I work and don't have a vehicle it very difficult for me to get to work I see more and more individuals riding your transit each day it would be nice to consider this since you are a public transportation service this is really affecting as a single parent and have to provide sometimes I have to call out I tried working out a different schedule with my employer but they won't allow me to be off please please help....	The EA analysis considered the location hours of operation for existing service. The Comprehensive Operations Analysis will consider future transit routes. It is anticipated that the Comprehensive Operations Analysis will be prepared in 2016.
42	James Astuto	Opposition	N/A
43	Jan and Jon Barton	Opposition	See Responses by Category – Business Impacts, Pedestrian Concerns
44a	David Bunch	Opposition	N/A
44b	David Bunch	Opposition	N/A



ID	Name	Specific Questions	Responses to Specific Questions
45	N/A	Opposition	N/A
46	Dan Stephens	Support	N/A
47	Richard and Virginia Decker	Opposition	See Responses by Category – Pedestrian Concerns
48	Terry Dudley	Opposition	N/A
49	Megan Escalona	Support	N/A
50	Kurt Graham	Opposition	N/A

ID	Name	Specific Questions	Responses to Specific Questions
51	Ed Higginbotham	Opposition	N/A
52	Jim Jess	Opposition	N/A
53	Phyllis DeNeve Kostelnik	Opposition	N/A
54	Mary Lou Stephens	Support	N/A
55	Henry Munford	Opposition	See Responses by Category – Business Impacts
56	Carol Olson	Opposition	N/A
57	Jim Serrate	Opposition	N/A

ID	Name	Specific Questions	Responses to Specific Questions
58a	Ron Sifen	Opposition	See Responses by Category – Business Impacts, Pedestrian Concerns
58b (1)	Ron Sifen	<p>The EA acknowledges that left turns into and out of many businesses would be eliminated by the fixed guideway, and also the taking of property involving 69 parcels of property. However, I find no discussion of the most obvious question. Will these impacts be detrimental to the profitable operations of these businesses? Will the Connect Cobb BRT wind up causing numerous existing successful businesses to fail?</p>	<p>The US 41/Cobb Parkway portion of Connect Cobb includes fixed guideway transit lanes in the center median from Greers Chapel Road to Windy Ridge Parkway SE.</p> <p>It is important to note that final determination of access points along Cobb Parkway has not occurred and will occur during the engineering/design phase that may follow the EA. As such, a specific economic study along this section of the project has not been conducted. During the more detailed design phase, further coordination with businesses will occur. This coordination will include the review of potential economic impacts, and will occur to better understand potential impacts to businesses. As the design advances, there may be opportunities to refine specific design elements to minimize potential impacts.</p> <p>The identification of the number and type of existing businesses that may be impacted by acquisition for the proposed project is included in Section 4.9.3.2 of the Environmental Assessment. The introduction of fixed guideway ART lanes is not anticipated to negatively impact the remaining existing businesses. It is true that access to and from some businesses will change due to the dedicated lanes, which would essentially function as a center median.</p>

ID	Name	Specific Questions	Responses to Specific Questions
58b (1) Cont'd	Ron Sifen		<p>A number of "before and after" studies along highways across the United States where access has been managed found that the vast majority of businesses do as well or better after the access management projects are completed (Safe Access is Good for Business, FHWA, August 2006) <a href="http://www.dot.state.oh.us/districts/D01/PlanningPrograms/trafficstudies/Documents/Safe-Access-is-Good-for-Business-FHWA-Brochure.pdf">http://www.dot.state.oh.us/districts/D01/PlanningPrograms/trafficstudies/Documents/Safe-Access-is-Good-for-Business-FHWA-Brochure.pdf</a></p> <p>It should be noted that according to the Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) Design Policy Manual, a median is required once the existing daily traffic volumes exceed 18,000 vehicles per day (vpd), or 24,000 vpd during the design year. The existing average daily traffic volume along Cobb Parkway north of Herodian Way is in excess of 40,000 (vpd), according to GDOT's traffic count database system, and there is no volume on Cobb Parkway south of the KSU campus that is lower than 18,000 vpd. Because Cobb Parkway carries considerably more traffic than the GDOT threshold for a median, the installation of a median along Cobb Parkway has been planned by GDOT for many years, including in the US 41 Scoping Project (GDOT Project ID# 0010510) from Windy Ridge Parkway to the SR 120 Loop (North Marietta Parkway).</p>

ID	Name	Specific Questions	Responses to Specific Questions
58b (2)	Ron Sifen	<p>The EA discloses that the fixed guideway will necessitate widening Cobb Parkway (and perhaps also Cumberland Boulevard) by 20 - 28 feet. That's a lot. The EA acknowledges that this necessitates the full or partial taking of 69 properties. I do not find any discussion of how these takings, or just the partial takings, will impact the profitability of these businesses.</p>	<p>See the response to comment 58b (1) above.</p>
58b (3)	Ron Sifen	<p>Section 4.1 discusses traffic impacts. There is discussion of projections that traffic volumes on Cobb Parkway will increase over time, and that improvements are needed to reduce expected future traffic congestion. However, Section 4.1.1.3 compares traffic Level Of Service (LOS) projections comparing Build vs. No Build of Cobb Connect BRT, in a variety of scenarios. In some scenarios Cobb Connect BRT is projected to provide no improvement to LOS and in all of the other scenarios, Cobb Connect BRT is projected to make the LOS worse! There are no scenarios where Cobb Connect BRT projects any improvement in traffic conditions vs. No Build.</p>	<p>The proposed project maintains existing overall corridor and intersection operations. The corridor ridership forecasts of 17,000-18,000 (page 41 of the EA), coupled with the Build Improved conditions demonstrate how the proposed project would benefit the growing multimodal transportation needs of Cobb residents, students, commuters, and visitors.</p> <p>The commenter applied limited intersection-specific results to the overall project and corridor. The proper comparison is between the No Build and the Build Improved conditions.</p> <p>Build Improved is the proposed project including additional intersection improvements (page 44 of the EA). As is noted in Appendix C of the EA, November 6, 2013 Connect Cobb At-Grade BRT Analysis memo, traffic signal operations were still being considered as priority or pre-emption. For Table 4.1-3, pre-emption was included thus showing more impact to intersection levels than would be demonstrated in the final environmental document with the conclusion of prioritization as the preferred operation.</p>

ID	Name	Specific Questions	Responses to Specific Questions
58b (3) Cont'd	Ron Sifen		<p>Based on 2040 peak hour operations modeling using high and medium growth rates as reported in Section 4.1.1.2 of the EA, without improvements to three intersections along US 41/Cobb Parkway (Roswell Road, Cumberland Boulevard/Windy Ridge Parkway and at the Spring Road/Cumberland Boulevard intersection), the traffic level of service would not improve in the Build condition. With the identified improvements, described as the Build Improved conditions in Section 4.1.1.1, the traffic level of service in the Build Improved condition would be the same as that for the No Build condition. Please also see the page 44 reference in the Errata Sheet in Attachment B. The intersection at South Marietta Parkway (SR 120) would have the same level of service in the Build and No Build conditions.</p> <p>Since the EA was published, the City of Smyrna has programmed intersection improvements at Spring Road/Cumberland Boulevard; therefore, the additional improvements at this intersection, as identified in the EA, would not be needed.</p> <p>In the EA, the intersection of Windy Hill Road and Cobb Parkway is described with a worsening level of service (comparing 2040 No Build to 2040 Build Improved). At the time the EA intersection analysis was completed, no improvements were planned for this intersection. Since that time, an intersection improvement project for the SR 3/US 41 (Cobb Parkway) at Windy Hill Road has been planned. Therefore, no additional improvements would be needed at this intersection. As documented in Section 5.0, GDOT is a cooperating agency for this project.</p>

ID	Name	Specific Questions	Responses to Specific Questions
58b (3) Cont'd	Ron Sifen		Several coordination meetings have occurred and will continue to occur between Cobb DOT and GDOT to discuss other GDOT efforts in the project area, including the US 41 Scoping Project (GDOT Project ID# 0010510), which is studying necessary improvements in the corridor.
58b (4)	Ron Sifen	Also in Section 4.1.1.3, there are tables that compare No Build and Build and "Build Improved"(?). In earlier parts of Section 4.1, I also see numerous recommended intersection improvements and other enhancements. At the end of Section 3 I note that the project is projected to cost \$491 – 529 million, depending on the alignment. Does "Build Improved" mean that Cobb County is acknowledging that Connect Cobb BRT will make traffic congestion significantly worse, and is recommending additional "Build Improved" enhancements to offset the overall transportation damage by spending only a half billion dollars to make traffic worse? How much more will the Build Improved enhancements cost?	As stated in the technical memo included in Appendix C of the EA, the 2040 ARC model and the 2040 peak hour operations modeling forecast poor operations for at-grade operations of the ART at three locations. The poor operations are a result of all projected traffic on the roadway network in 2040, as well as ART. In order to improve the traffic operations, potential improvements may be needed by 2040 at the intersections of US 41/Cobb Parkway with Roswell Road and Cumberland Boulevard/Windy Ridge Parkway. Additional analysis and evaluation, and coordination with GDOT would be needed before these potential improvements would be incorporated into the project. Estimates of probable cost for those potential improvements would be prepared at that time.

ID	Name	Specific Questions	Responses to Specific Questions
58b (5)	Ron Sifen	<p>Since the fixed guideway is in the middle of Cobb Parkway, does the EA address how BRT riders will get across Cobb Parkway to get onto BRT vehicles, and how they will get across Cobb Parkway when they get off of the BRT vehicles? If yes, where is this addressed in the EA document? I have found nothing in the EA that explains how Connect Cobb plans to enable pedestrians to safely cross Cobb Parkway.</p>	<p>Signalized pedestrian crossings would provide safe access to each station. In 8 out of 10 locations where stations are proposed along US 41/Cobb Parkway, there are already signals and provisions for pedestrians; therefore, the pedestrian and traffic environments would not be much different with ART. Pedestrians would also be crossing a shorter distance at one time, with opportunity for refuge in the new median.</p> <p>The FHWA has identified medians and median refuge islands as one of the top safety countermeasures for pedestrians, especially in urban and suburban areas. A raised median allows a pedestrian to split the crossing into two signal phases, if needed, with a safe place to wait in between. A raised median also increases the visibility of the pedestrian, and cuts in half the distance they must see to evaluate traffic. Cobb County will coordinate with GDOT and ARC on appropriate pedestrian safety measures which could include marked crosswalks, high visibility signs and pavement markings, in-street crossings signs, overhead lighting, active crossing treatments (with signals or lights that prompt drivers to stop or yield to pedestrians), red light/signal treatments, and/or midblock signals.</p> <p>Signals evaluated in the traffic modeling included pedestrian phasing that accommodate pedestrian crossings of the roadway and/or to the transit station. There are 2 instances where a signal and pedestrian crossing does not already exist, and a new signal and crossing would be implemented: North Loop/White Water Station and University Station.</p>



ID	Name	Specific Questions	Responses to Specific Questions
58b (5) Cont'd	Ron Sifen		<p>Current concept plans are high level for purposes of the EA, and did not include specific signal/pedestrian improvements for these two areas. Details will be refined as engineering progresses, and in close coordination with the city, GDOT, and the community in how and where that access best occurs to accommodate pedestrians, vehicles, and the ART station. All pedestrian crossings would be designed to federal and state standards for safety and accessibility.</p> <p>Sources:            Safety Benefits of Raised Medians and Pedestrian Refuge Areas, FHWA Safety Program, 2010;  <a href="http://safety.fhwa.dot.gov/ped_bike/tools_solve/medians_brochure/medians_brochure.pdf">http://safety.fhwa.dot.gov/ped_bike/tools_solve/medians_brochure/medians_brochure.pdf</a> and            Pedestrian Safety Guide for Transit Agencies, FHWA, 2008;  <a href="http://safety.fhwa.dot.gov/ped_bike/ped_transit/ped_trans_guide/transit_guide.pdf">http://safety.fhwa.dot.gov/ped_bike/ped_transit/ped_trans_guide/transit_guide.pdf</a></p>
58b (6)	Ron Sifen	If pedestrian crossings are at-grade crosswalks, does the EA address how this can be accomplished safely on a major high speed US highway, and how it would impact traffic flow on this major high speed US highway? If yes, where is this addressed in the EA document?	See the response to comment 58b (5) above.

ID	Name	Specific Questions	Responses to Specific Questions
58b (7)	Ron Sifen	If pedestrian crossings are via tunnels under Cobb Parkway, or bridges over Cobb Parkway (which would have to be high enough to not be hit by any trucks or other potential large vehicles carrying large loads), does the EA address how potential BRT riders, including people with disabilities would negotiate getting up and down to and from the bridges or tunnels, which would involve going up and down considerable heights? Also, does the EA address the cost of the bridges and tunnels, and perhaps any elevators and other equipment that might be needed, as well as any public safety needs that would be needed? If yes, where is this addressed in the EA document? And if not, and if it is not included in The Build specifications, how much more is it going to cost to address getting pedestrians safely across Cobb Parkway to and from BRT?	Pedestrian crossings would be at grade as they are currently and provisions for such are included in the project cost. No tunnels or bridges over US 41/Cobb Parkway are included in the proposed project.
58b (8)	Ron Sifen	Cobb Parkway is a major high speed highway whose transportation purpose is the high speed efficient movement of many vehicles. It is not a downtown city street with traffic lights every block that control the interaction of cars and pedestrians. Since Cobb Connect BRT will necessitate every transit rider crossing Cobb Parkway for every boarding, and for every exit of a BRT vehicle, does the EA evaluate this dramatic, intense increase in the interaction of pedestrians and high volume high speed traffic along a major high speed highway, and address how pedestrians can safely cross Cobb Parkway, while not impeding the existing transportation use of US41, which is the high speed efficient movement of many vehicles through this corridor? If yes, where is this addressed in the EA document?	See response to comment 58b (5) above. In addition, the purpose of the Connect Cobb project is to “introduce high capacity transit service to Cobb County and the northwest area of metropolitan Atlanta that will satisfy the long-term regional mobility and accessibility needs for residents, businesses, and the traveling public” (page 8 of the EA). The intent is to balance travel on Cobb Parkway for all modes.

ID	Name	Specific Questions	Responses to Specific Questions
58b (9)	Ron Sifen	If these questions have not been addressed by the EA, then the EA is not ready for approval. In addition, how much is all of this additional infrastructure going to cost?	See the response to comment 58b (4) above.  Also See Responses by Category – Business Impacts, Pedestrian Concerns, Traffic Impacts
58c (1)	Ron Sifen	Impacts on existing businesses: Has the Connect Cobb process done any specific analysis to determine whether the Connect Cobb BRT fixed guideway will cause some existing businesses to lose enough customers that some of these businesses will fail, and others to become less profitable? Has Connect Cobb analyzed the impact of the property takings, and the blocking of left turns into and out of businesses, on making existing businesses less accessible for their customers, and causing these businesses to lose business and become less profitable or unprofitable? If adverse impacts that might cause existing businesses to lose customers, please describe how this analysis was performed?	See the response to comment 58b (1) above.

ID	Name	Specific Questions	Responses to Specific Questions
58c (2)	Ron Sifen	<p>Getting BRT riders to and from the middle of Cobb Parkway: Has Cobb Connect determined how BRT riders will be able to safely get to and from the middle of Cobb Parkway? If yes, how will BRT riders be able to safely get to and from the middle of Cobb Parkway? Whatever infrastructure will be needed to get BRT riders to and from the middle of Cobb Parkway, is the cost of this infrastructure included in the \$491 - 529 million projected cost of the Connect Cobb project? Or is this infrastructure going to be an additional cost? Cobb Parkway is a major US highway whose transportation purpose is the high speed efficient movement of many vehicles. Cobb Parkway is not a downtown city street with traffic lights every several hundred feet that control the interaction between vehicles and pedestrians. What analysis has Connect Cobb performed regarding the dramatic increase in the quantity of interactions between many high speed vehicles and pedestrians, and how will this be managed to be sure that pedestrians will be safe. Also, since Cobb Parkway is a major US highway whose transportation purpose is the high speed efficient movement of many vehicles, has Connect Cobb analyzed how to manage the dramatic increase in pedestrians crossing traffic on Cobb Parkway, without adversely impacting the existing transportation purpose of this major US highway? If the answer to the last question is yes, please describe how this was analyzed, and please describe the specific solutions that Connect Cobb includes to safely get pedestrians across Cobb Parkway without adversely impacting the existing transportation purpose of this major high-speed highway?</p>	<p>See response to comments 58b (5), 58b (7), and 58b (8) above.</p>

ID	Name	Specific Questions	Responses to Specific Questions
58c (2) Cont'd	Ron Sifen	Please also provide the cost of the improvements that will be necessary to enable many pedestrians to safely get across Cobb Parkway while not enabling US41 to continue to perform as a major high speed highway whose purpose is the high speed efficient movement of many vehicles?	
58c (3)	Ron Sifen	"Build Improved:" What does "Build Improved" mean? Does "Build Improved" mean that the Connect Cobb studies have revealed that Connect Cobb will cause adverse impacts on traffic congestion, and that there are additional "improvements" that will be needed to offset some (not all) of the adverse impacts on traffic congestion? Since The Build infrastructure is clearly what is included in Connect Cobb, how much more will the Build Improved projects/infrastructure cost?	See response to comment 58b (4) above.  Also See Responses by Category – Business Impacts, Pedestrian Concerns, Traffic Impacts
58d	Ron Sifen		See Responses by Category – LPA Approval
58e	Ron Sifen		See Responses by Category – Traffic Impacts
59	MA Sikes		See Responses by Category - Referendum
60a	J Smith	Opposition	N/A
60b	J Smith	Opposition	N/A



ID	Name	Specific Questions	Responses to Specific Questions
61	W. Clayton Sparrow, Jr	Opposition	N/A
62	Torbett Crocker	Opposition	N/A
63	Ann Turner	Opposition	N/A
64	Helen White	Opposition	N/A
65	Kathy Young	Support	N/A
66	A.T. Norton Jr & Assoc., Inc.	Opposition	N/A
67	Teri Anulewicz	Support	N/A

ID	Name	Specific Questions	Responses to Specific Questions
68	Hall Brodie, P.E.	Where else in the US has a similar system been designed, built and operated? What are the similarities and dissimilarities to the Cobb BRT? Do these systems require large government subsidies to operate?	A number of similar systems operate in the US, including Boston, Cleveland, Las Vegas, Los Angeles, New York City, and Pittsburgh. Among the best known are Cleveland's HealthLine and Los Angeles's Orange Line. Both are operated by public transit agencies and are funded similarly to how transit is funded nationally, through a mix of federal, state, and local funds. The HealthLine is the most similar to the proposed Connect Cobb project, with a dedicated center guideway, traffic signal prioritization, level boarding, and median stations. It connects the two largest regional employment centers in the Cleveland area. Annual ridership has increased about 60 percent over the previous Number 6 bus line, which was the transit agency's highest ridership bus line and was replaced by the HealthLine in 2008. The HealthLine has been credited with having the highest return-on-investment of any public transit project in the nation, leveraging \$114 for every transit dollar invested, and delivering \$6.3 billion of economic development along its corridor. The two differ in that Connect Cobb serves a longer distance and has fewer stations. Additionally, the HealthLine operates 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.
69	Bryan Kirhon	Support	N/A
70	Joanne Minster	Opposition	N/A

ID	Name	Specific Questions	Responses to Specific Questions
71	Justin O'Dell	Support	N/A
72	Elizabeth Greene	Opposition	N/A
73	Lynn Walston	Support	N/A
74	Donald Myrick	Opposition	N/A
75	Carol Brown	Support	N/A
76a	David Weldon	Opposition	See Responses by Category - Development
76b	David Weldon	Opposition	N/A
77a	Thomas J. Palmer	Opposition	N/A



ID	Name	Specific Questions	Responses to Specific Questions
77b	Thomas J. Palmer	Opposition	See Responses by Category – Pedestrian Concerns
78	NT Nickell	Opposition	N/A
79	Richard Kolsby	Opposition	N/A
80	Carol Robertson	Opposition	See Responses by Category – Traffic Impacts
81	Steven Taylor	Opposition	See Responses by Category - Referendum
82	Lee Graham	Support	N/A
83	Cynthia Patterson	Support	N/A
84	Nancy Sauer	Support	N/A



ID	Name	Specific Questions	Responses to Specific Questions
85	Michael Johnson	Support, Opposition	N/A
86	Mary Frances Williams	Support	N/A
87	Lynn Clarke	Opposition	See Responses by Category – Traffic Impacts
88	Rick Wemmers	Opposition	N/A
89	Kerry Prance	Opposition	N/A
90	Sherry Steinway	Opposition	N/A
91	Trevor Woodhams	Opposition	N/A

ID	Name	Specific Questions	Responses to Specific Questions
92	Timothy Elder	Opposition	See Responses by Category – LPA Approval, Traffic Impacts, Referendum
93	Charlotte Clark		See Responses by Category – LPA Approval
94	Fran Jackson	Opposition	N/A
95	Wyn Engle	Opposition	N/A
96	Claudia Cook	Opposition	See Responses by Category – Business Impacts, Pedestrian Concerns
97	Robert Magill	Opposition	N/A
98	Dick Gregson	Opposition	N/A
99	Bill Voegeli	Opposition	N/A



ID	Name	Specific Questions	Responses to Specific Questions
100	Jane Mitchell	Opposition	N/A
101	Terry Blackwell	Opposition	See Responses by Category – Traffic Impacts, Pedestrian Concerns
102	Schuyler Rector	Opposition	N/A
103	Richard Smith	Opposition	N/A
104	Brian Gist	Support	N/A
105	Malaika Rivers	Support	N/A
106	Linda Fierman	Opposition	See Responses by Category – Traffic Impacts, Business Impacts

ID	Name	Specific Questions	Responses to Specific Questions
107	Keli Gambrill	Does this study take in to account that the county has already allocated over \$100 million dollars in SPLOST funds for the Third Army Road interchange which is also claiming to provide the same benefits as BRT? This project was on the GDOT project list but no longer found. Yet Cobb County is proceeding with engineering and environmental studies. Why? This is not about improving commuter transit.	<p>On page 25 of the <a href="#">2016 SPLOST book</a> (Congestion Relief and Mobility Improvements, Projects Requested to be funded by GDOT), the referenced project is described as “new Interchange on I-75 in the general vicinity of Third Army Rd with a multi-lane connector to N Cobb Pkwy and Dabbs Bridge Rd with an estimated cost of \$60M.” The I-75/Third Army Road project does not address the need for transit alternative options, which is a primary need of the Connect Cobb project, as noted in Section 2.7 of the EA.</p> <p>See Responses by Category – Traffic Impacts</p>
108	John Michael Roach		See Responses by Category – Traffic Impacts, Business Impacts
109	Fred Singer	Opposition	N/A
110	Michael Murphy	Opposition	See Responses by Category - Development
111	Deborah Tompkins	Opposition	N/A

ID	Name	Specific Questions	Responses to Specific Questions
112	William Harrison	Opposition	N/A
113a	Jennifer Dixon		See Responses by Category – Agency Coordination
113b	Jennifer Dixon		See Responses by Category – Agency Coordination
114	Don Williams		See Responses by Category – Agency Coordination



Northwest Transit Corridor Environmental Assessment

Comments Received on the EA

1



Project Comment Form

\*Name/Organization # SIERRA CLUB
Address 4706 Crest Knoll Dr
City, State and Zipcode Marietta Ga
Email Sewell CSSI @ gmail.com

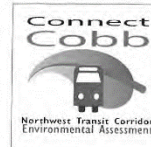
Please list below any comments concerning the Connect Cobb Project.

- 1) As the new lanes are being planned what would it take to prepare them to accept light rail?
2) What is the projected cost benefits as we move from cars to bus (including reasonable # of riders)?
3) Same of car to rail
4) Benefits of bus to rail
5) What creative, sympathetic strategies have been discussed to increase riders' numbers: for example having sports, media celebrities ride the buses?

Please send by July 14, 2015 to Mr. Marty Sewell, Connect Cobb EA Project Manager, Cobb County DOT, 1890 County Services Pkwy, Marietta, Georgia 30008-4014, info@sycamoreconsulting.net

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2



Project Comment Form

\*Name/Organization Michael E. Paris / Council for Quality Growth
Address 150 E. Blackland Ct.
City, State and Zipcode Marietta, GA. 30067
Email mp@councilforqualitygrowth.org

Please list below any comments concerning the Connect Cobb Project.

The BRT project is an essential element to the County's plan and imperative for the future growth and economic success of Cobb and its residents. Further important is connectivity to Atlanta and the rest of the region.

BRT will provide all citizens greater mobility access to jobs, schools and entertainment activities.

Also important is connectivity KSU - The S. Poly Campus - Wellstar - Cumberland - Browns and Shores Apartments

Totally support!!!!!!

Please send by July 14, 2015 to Mr. Marty Sewell, Connect Cobb EA Project Manager, Cobb County DOT, 1890 County Services Pkwy, Marietta, Georgia 30008-4014, info@sycamoreconsulting.net

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Project Comment Form

\*Name/Organization Kim Paris  
Address 150 E. Blackland Ct.  
City, State and Zipcode Marietta GA 30167  
Email mep150@bellsouth.net

Please list below any comments concerning the Connect Cobb Project.

Thank you to Cobb County + the DOT team for being proactive and visionary for Cobb's future related to transportation. It's critical that these projects move forward and I personally support every initiative included - especially the Arterial Rapid Transit proposal. I appreciate that the public will also have the chance to weigh in.

Thank you - great job on the open house and excellent information provided for the public!

Please send by July 14, 2015 to  
Mr. Marty Sewell, Connect Cobb EA Project Manager  
Cobb County DOT  
1890 County Services Pkwy  
Marietta, Georgia 30008-4014  
info@sycamoreconsulting.net

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Project Comment Form

\*Name/Organization Michael Murphy  
Address 5715 Glandon Dr  
City, State and Zipcode Marietta GA 30126  
Email Michael\_M-30126@yahoo.com

Please list below any comments concerning the Connect Cobb Project.

Why is there not a similar project to revitalizing Solids Cobb, especially Veterans Memorial Hwy (at 278) parts of it looks like tombstone territory yet there are some positive pockets that would flourish with public transportation.  
A rising tide should lift all boats, even those stuck at the bottom

Please send by July 14, 2015 to  
Mr. Marty Sewell, Connect Cobb EA Project Manager  
Cobb County DOT  
1890 County Services Pkwy  
Marietta, Georgia 30008-4014  
info@sycamoreconsulting.net

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5



Project Comment Form

\*Name/Organization Linda Bell / Sierra Club  
 Address 4706 CHEST KNOLL DR, ~~APT~~  
 City, State and Zipcode MABLETON, GA 30126  
 Email LBELL51@yahoo.com

Please list below any comments concerning the Connect Cobb Project.

Pleased to see opportunity for increased  
alternative transportation in Cobb County -  
given our unbelievably congested traffic  
situation, we must begin to look at  
alternatives. It's been pretty much proved  
that building more & more roads will not  
work. I believe, however, that you will  
need a marketing strategy for a  
referendum to pass. Keep working!!

Please send by July 14, 2015 to  
 Mr. Marty Sewell, Connect Cobb EA Project Manager  
 Cobb County DOT  
 1890 County Services Pkwy  
 Marietta, Georgia 30008-4014  
 info@sycamoreconsulting.net

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6



Project Comment Form

\*Name/Organization CRAIG DRYDEN / GEORGIA POWER  
 Address 1769 SANDS PLACE  
 City, State and Zipcode MARIETTA, GA 30067  
 Email ~~ADRYDEN@GEP.COM~~

Please list below any comments concerning the Connect Cobb Project.

TRANSPORTATION IN AND AROUND COBB  
COUNTY WILL BE SO IMPORTANT OVER  
THE NEXT DECADE AND BEYOND. IF PLANS  
ARE NOT MADE IN THE NEAR FUTURE, THE  
COUNTY WILL BE NEGATIVELY IMPACTED  
IN REGARDS TO ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT,  
FUTURE JOB GROWTH, ETC. DEVELOPING  
AND IMPLEMENTING A COMPREHENSIVE  
PLAN WILL ENSURE COBB'S SUCCESS FOR  
DECADES TO COME.

Please send by July 14, 2015 to  
 Mr. Marty Sewell, Connect Cobb EA Project Manager  
 Cobb County DOT  
 1890 County Services Pkwy  
 Marietta, Georgia 30008-4014  
 info@sycamoreconsulting.net

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Northwest Transit Corridor  
Environmental Assessment

7



Project Comment Form

\*Name/Organization James Taunter  
Address 236 Langcove way  
City, State and Zipcode Smyrna GA 30080  
Email \_\_\_\_\_

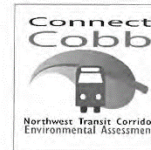
Please list below any comments concerning the Connect Cobb Project.

AR 7 is also critical to not just Cobb County, but the Region. With former state grants to over 35,000 students, Lake Point in Acworth, the Bus in Smyrna, we need to have more options to meet the needs of the County. It is critical that the Citizens understand this need and the County continues to move forward. The project along US 41 is critical to the redevelopment also.

Please send by July 14, 2015 to  
Mr. Marty Sewell, Connect Cobb EA Project Manager  
Cobb County DOT  
1890 County Services Pkwy  
Marietta, Georgia 30008-4014  
info@sycamoreconsulting.net

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Project Comment Form

\*Name/Organization Jennine Dudge / TCACID  
Address 440 Cherokee St.  
City, State and Zipcode 30060  
Email jennine@tcacid.com

Please list below any comments concerning the Connect Cobb Project.

No concerns, looks like a strong/worthwhile project. Questions:  
• How will this affect the local transit service?  
• The Town/In<sup>2</sup>Area is home to many call centers; is there a plan to increase service for 2nd & 3rd shift workers?

Please send by July 14, 2015 to  
Mr. Marty Sewell, Connect Cobb EA Project Manager  
Cobb County DOT  
1890 County Services Pkwy  
Marietta, Georgia 30008-4014  
info@sycamoreconsulting.net

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Project Comment Form

\*Name/Organization SILVANO MATESTA - CONCERNED CITIZENS OF WEST COBB  
Address 1 MAIN ST.  
City, State and Zipcode POWDER SPRINGS GA  
Email \_\_\_\_\_

Please list below any comments concerning the Connect Cobb Project.

I THINK COBB COUNTY IS WAY BEHIND ON MAKING ANY PROGRESS ON TRAFFIC. NOT ONLY SHOULD THIS PROJECT GO FORWARD BUT IT SHOULD ALREADY BE IN PLACE.

IF ANY THING WE SHOULD BE LOOKING AT EXTENDING THE ROUTE DOWN WINDY HILL ROAD AND WEST TO POWDER SPRINGS.

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
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Please send by July 14, 2015 to  
Mr. Marty Sewell, Connect Cobb EA Project Manager  
Cobb County DOT  
1890 County Services Pkwy  
Marietta, Georgia 30008-4014  
info@sycamoreconsulting.net

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Project Comment Form

\*Name/Organization Bakari Height Citizens for Progressive Transit  
Address 180 Jackson St NE Apt # 706 Atlanta, GA 30312  
City, State and Zipcode \_\_\_\_\_  
Email transportation@npmatlanta.org

Please list below any comments concerning the Connect Cobb Project.

The project is wonderful! I am excited ~~that~~ that Cobb County is considering connecting the county to the rest of the metro via a progressive transit alternative. I hope that through the EA, there is an option to tunnel under Cumberland, ~~providing~~ giving underground access to the two stations in the area and decreasing ~~the~~ <sup>street</sup> fine front signals or traffic, similar to Seattle, Boston & Pittsburgh's busways.

Also, is there a consideration to change the HOV lanes to bus only lanes? These lanes are underused through the corridor, and would be better suited for just the BRT.

Keep up the good work, and go for those small start grants!

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Please send by July 14, 2015 to  
Mr. Marty Sewell, Connect Cobb EA Project Manager  
Cobb County DOT  
1890 County Services Pkwy  
Marietta, Georgia 30008-4014  
info@sycamoreconsulting.net

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Northwest Transit Corridor Environmental Assessment



Project Comment Form

\*Name/Organization James Tursten  
Address 2316 Coz cant way  
City, State and Zipcode Smyrna, GA 30080  
Email JTB\_Coward\_for\_Quality\_Growth.org

Please list below any comments concerning the Connect Cobb Project.

The need for transit is critical to this region. This project and the additional work needed to launch a Cobb County process forward. Bus rapid transit from Kennesaw State University to Inman Square is the top priority for Cobb County. I will expand on it more forward with the list. The benefits far outweigh the costs. Thank you for all of your work on this.

Please send by July 14, 2015 to  
Mr. Marty Sewell, Connect Cobb EA Project Manager  
Cobb County DOT  
1890 County Services Pkwy  
Marietta, Georgia 30008-4014  
info@sycamoreconsulting.net

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Project Comment Form

\*Name/Organization Tyler Peltrey/Town Center Area CID  
Address 4573 Oliver Pkwy  
City, State and Zipcode Atlanta, Ga 30339  
Email tyler.peltrey@gmail.com

Please list below any comments concerning the Connect Cobb Project.

Very informative experience. It is a great project that will benefit the community that will truly connect Cobb. I look forward to seeing this project grow and flourish. Marty Sewell did a great job breaking down the process and everyone was very welcoming!

Please send by July 14, 2015 to  
Mr. Marty Sewell, Connect Cobb EA Project Manager  
Cobb County DOT  
1890 County Services Pkwy  
Marietta, Georgia 30008-4014  
info@sycamoreconsulting.net

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Project Comment Form

\*Name/Organization Sharon Mason  
 Address 2248 Chodds Creek Dr.  
 City, State and Zipcode Marietta, GA 30062  
 Email \_\_\_\_\_

Please list below any comments concerning the Connect Cobb Project.

It is critical for economic  
development that we increase  
reliable transportation options  
especially from our major activity  
centers. Thank you for your time  
and attention to detail in  
providing this information.

With all the new growth in  
Cobb county, this will be even  
more crucial that we add  
more options.  
Thank you!

Please send by July 14, 2015 to  
 Mr. Marty Sewell, Connect Cobb EA Project Manager  
 Cobb County DOT  
 1890 County Services Pkwy  
 Marietta, Georgia 30008-4014  
 info@sycamoreconsulting.net

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Project Comment Form

\*Name/Organization Tim Preece / resident  
 Address 4538 Windsor Oaks Court  
 City, State and Zipcode Marietta, GA 30066  
 Email tpreece68@yahoo.com

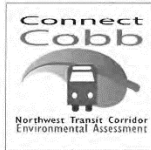
Please list below any comments concerning the Connect Cobb Project.

This is an important project to serve the  
current and future needs of Cobb residents,  
businesses, employees and visitors. I support  
this project.

The meeting materials were well done and staff  
were very helpful. Well done.

Please send by July 14, 2015 to  
 Mr. Marty Sewell, Connect Cobb EA Project Manager  
 Cobb County DOT  
 1890 County Services Pkwy  
 Marietta, Georgia 30008-4014  
 info@sycamoreconsulting.net

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Project Comment Form

\*Name/Organization JOHN LOUD  
Address 1690 Roberts BLVD  
City, State and Zipcode KENNESAW, GA 30144  
Email JOHN@LOUDSecurity.com

Please list below any comments concerning the Connect Cobb Project.

Thank You for Hosting this Open House Public Forum. It is Remarkable the working/research/planning that has been completed to help develop a future transportation alternative. We all realize this County is growing rapidly and we need to confirm our future transportation solutions so we can continue SMART GROWTH with positive Economic Development Opportunities

I Applaud the steps looking into the impact of the neighborhoods, the environment, the noise, and current traffic projections and impact.

Looking forward to learning more.

Please send by July 14, 2015 to  
Mr. Marty Sewell, Connect Cobb EA Project Manager  
Cobb County DOT  
1890 County Services Pkwy  
Marietta, Georgia 30008-4014  
info@sycamoreconsulting.net

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Project Comment Form

\*Name/Organization MIKE RICCIARDI  
Address 167 FRYER DRIVE  
City, State and Zipcode MARIETTA, GA  
Email micciardi5@gmail.com


Please list below any comments concerning the Connect Cobb Project.

I AM STRONGLY IN FAVOR OF THE ART PROPOSAL. ATLANTA AND COBB COUNTY HAVE LONG BEEN LACKING A VIABLE TRANSIT SYSTEM IN AND OUT OF THE CITY AND THIS SEEMS TO BE THE MOST COST EFFECTIVE SOLUTION.

Please send by July 14, 2015 to  
Mr. Marty Sewell, Connect Cobb EA Project Manager  
Cobb County DOT  
1890 County Services Pkwy  
Marietta, Georgia 30008-4014  
info@sycamoreconsulting.net

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Project Comment Form

**\*Name/Organization** Steve Byrne

**Address** ~~200 Galleria Pkwy, SE, STE 1700~~ 200 Galleria Pkwy, SE, STE 1700

**City, State and Zipcode** ATLANTA GA 30339

**Email** sbyrne@mjcpc.com

Please list below any comments concerning the Connect Cobb Project.

I believe transportation is the most critical quality of life issue facing Cobb. The biggest challenge is the timeline - the longer we take to commit to transportation improvements the more costly and problematic large scale improvements become.


I fully support the ART - I view it as the Backbone of a feasible plan - once in place I expect improvements to link directly to the Cobb Pkwy corridor - particularly from higher density areas like Marietta, Galleria hopefully to by pass or ease congestion on smaller arteries like Whitlock/Polk, Powers Ferry & Roswell Rd.

I believe if properly accessible to adjacent and nearby areas it will become important to seniors and enable us to live independently longer as transportation is currently a barrier to those who should not drive or who cannot drive.

Please send by July 14, 2015 to  
Mr. Marty Sewell, Connect Cobb EA Project Manager  
Cobb County DOT  
1890 County Services Pkwy  
Marietta, Georgia 30008-4014  
info@sycamoreconsulting.net

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Project Comment Form

**\*Name/Organization** Slade Gullledge

**Address** 1355 Twin Oaks Circle

**City, State and Zipcode** Smyrna, GA 30080

**Email** sgullledge@cobbchamber.org

Please list below any comments concerning the Connect Cobb Project.

My family and I are very supportive of the Connect Cobb project and look forward to seeing it completed. I believe this is a critical piece to Cobb continuing to lead in providing great commuting and transportation options for its citizens. Cobb's future growth and prosperity depends on first class infrastructure. I believe the ART is a positive step towards securing that future.

Please send by July 14, 2015 to  
Mr. Marty Sewell, Connect Cobb EA Project Manager  
Cobb County DOT  
1890 County Services Pkwy  
Marietta, Georgia 30008-4014  
info@sycamoreconsulting.net

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Project Comment Form

\*Name/Organization Al Martin  
 Address ~~1117~~ 2127 Golden Morning Ct  
 City, State and Zipcode Kennesaw GA 30152  
 Email almartin@comcast.net

Please list below any comments concerning the Connect Cobb Project.

*I believe we are blessed to live in a community who values leadership and a thoughtful and thorough planning process to ensure our transportation needs are met in step with the prosperous economic growth we are experiencing. When many countries would be lagging behind & wondering what to do, we are setting the pace to provide residents with many cutting edge options. I applaud Cobb DOT & County leadership!*

Please send by July 14, 2015 to  
 Mr. Marty Sewell, Connect Cobb EA Project Manager  
 Cobb County DOT  
 1890 County Services Pkwy  
 Marietta, Georgia 30008-4014  
 info@sycamoreconsulting.net

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Project Comment Form

\*Name/Organization Allison Giddens  
 Address 306 Rosemont Pk Ln  
 City, State and Zipcode Marietta GA 30064  
 Email amkgiddens@gmail.com

Please list below any comments concerning the Connect Cobb Project.

*This type of route/transit is long overdue! Looking forward to the new project's completion*

Please send by July 14, 2015 to  
 Mr. Marty Sewell, Connect Cobb EA Project Manager  
 Cobb County DOT  
 1890 County Services Pkwy  
 Marietta, Georgia 30008-4014  
 info@sycamoreconsulting.net

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Project Comment Form

\*Name/Organization Charley Levinson - daily transit user (CCT/MARTA)  
 Address 677 Kinnua Dr., Apt. H6  
 City, State and Zipcode Marietta, GA  
 Email charley4mayer@gmail.com

Please list below any comments concerning the Connect Cobb Project.

What I need from the BRT/ART:  
The Allgood Road Station, where I would board (2 minute walk away from home)  
The vehicles would have to start early enough that I could get to  
the Arts Center Station by no later than 5:45am every weekday on a reliable  
basis. Would be willing to pay up to \$5.00 per fare, assuming I could transfer  
to MARTA rail (and then MARTA bus 104) for free using Breeze Card. It  
is extremely important that BRT/ART ~~can~~ passenger can utilize a Breeze  
Card to pay fares from the outset; it is an existing payment system being used  
currently for CCT, MARTA, SGT, and GRTA Express. Making a <sup>separate</sup> payment  
system will undermine ease of connectivity and create nothing but frustration.  
Give me a reasonable expectation that these conditions can be met, and the  
project will have my full support.... HOWEVER....

there is also a new political concern regarding the mechanics of passing a  
pro-transit referendum in Cobb. It would need a strong yes vote out of north  
Cobb (Comm Dist. 4) what is the direct benefit of this plan to Austell,  
Mableton and Powder Springs? What capacity, either directly, or as a second stage,  
does this add to District 4?

Please send by July 14, 2015 to  
 Mr. Marty Sewell, Connect Cobb EA Project Manager  
 Cobb County DOT  
 1890 County Services Pkwy  
 Marietta, Georgia 30008-4014  
 info@sycamoreconsulting.net

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Project Comment Form

\*Name/Organization JOSEPH J BUSHELL  
 Address 3794 DEERCREEK DR  
 City, State and Zipcode POWDER SPRINGS GA 30127  
 Email JOSEPH J BUSHELL@GMAIL.COM

Please list below any comments concerning the Connect Cobb Project.

SYSTEM NEEDS TO TAKE INTO CONSIDERATION HOW  
SEWERAGE WILL BE AFFECTED. NEED ADEQUATE LIGHTING,  
AND SIDE WALKS, WIFI ON BUS AND AT STATIONS.  
I WOULD LIKE TO SEE A FARE SYSTEM THAT USES  
THE BREEZE CARD. I ALSO WANT TO SEE ELECTRIC  
OR HYBRID BUSES. BUSES SHOULD CONNECT TO  
FLEX BUS, CURRENT BUS SERVICE AND NEW ROUTE  
25 SERVICE. I THINK THE BUS SERVICE SHOULD  
EXTEND INTO ACWORTH. THE BUSES SHOULD HAVE  
TRANSIT POLICE IN OPERATION OR GUARDS.  
SAFETY IS IMPORTANT. I REALLY HOPE WE CAN  
GET NEW ELECTRIC BUS TECHNOLOGY IN ORDER  
TO REDUCE EMISSIONS AND PROTECT ENVIRONMENT.  
BUS SHOULD HAVE AUDIO AND VISUAL AIDS FOR  
ANNOUNCING STOPS TO BLIND + HEARING IMPAIRED.  
BUS NEEDS TO BE RUN ON SATURDAYS + SUNDAYS  
AS WELL AS IN WEEKDAYS WITH LATE HOURS. :)

Please send by July 14, 2015 to  
 Mr. Marty Sewell, Connect Cobb EA Project Manager  
 Cobb County DOT  
 1890 County Services Pkwy  
 Marietta, Georgia 30008-4014  
 info@sycamoreconsulting.net

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Project Comment Form

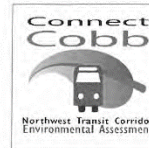
\*Name/Organization Holly Quinlan / Cobb Travel's Tourism  
 Address One Callahan Parkway 4530 Wilkerson Place  
 City, State and Zipcode Atlanta, GA 30339 Smolena, GA 30082  
 Email hquinlan@travelcobb.org

Please list below any comments concerning the Connect Cobb Project.

The connection for residents and tourists will  
be a huge plus for our community.

Please send by July 14, 2015 to  
 Mr. Marty Sewell, Connect Cobb EA Project Manager  
 Cobb County DOT  
 1890 County Services Pkwy  
 Marietta, Georgia 30008-4014  
 info@sycamoreconsulting.net

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Project Comment Form

\*Name/Organization Nathan Humphrey  
 Address 29 Dunwoode Court  
 City, State and Zipcode Mableton, GA 30126  
 Email nate.humphrey@gmail.com


Please list below any comments concerning the Connect Cobb Project.

Very pleased with the work done to pull this important  
project together and the opportunity for community engagement.  
I think transit is a major component that needs to be  
included. I was happy to see efforts made to do that.

Please send by July 14, 2015 to  
 Mr. Marty Sewell, Connect Cobb EA Project Manager  
 Cobb County DOT  
 1890 County Services Pkwy  
 Marietta, Georgia 30008-4014  
 info@sycamoreconsulting.net

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27a



**Project Comment Form**

\*Name/Organization Thomas Howe  
 Address 3687 Essex Ave  
 City, State and Zipcode Atlanta, GA 30337  
 Email thomh777@gmail.com

Please list below any comments concerning the Connect Cobb Project.

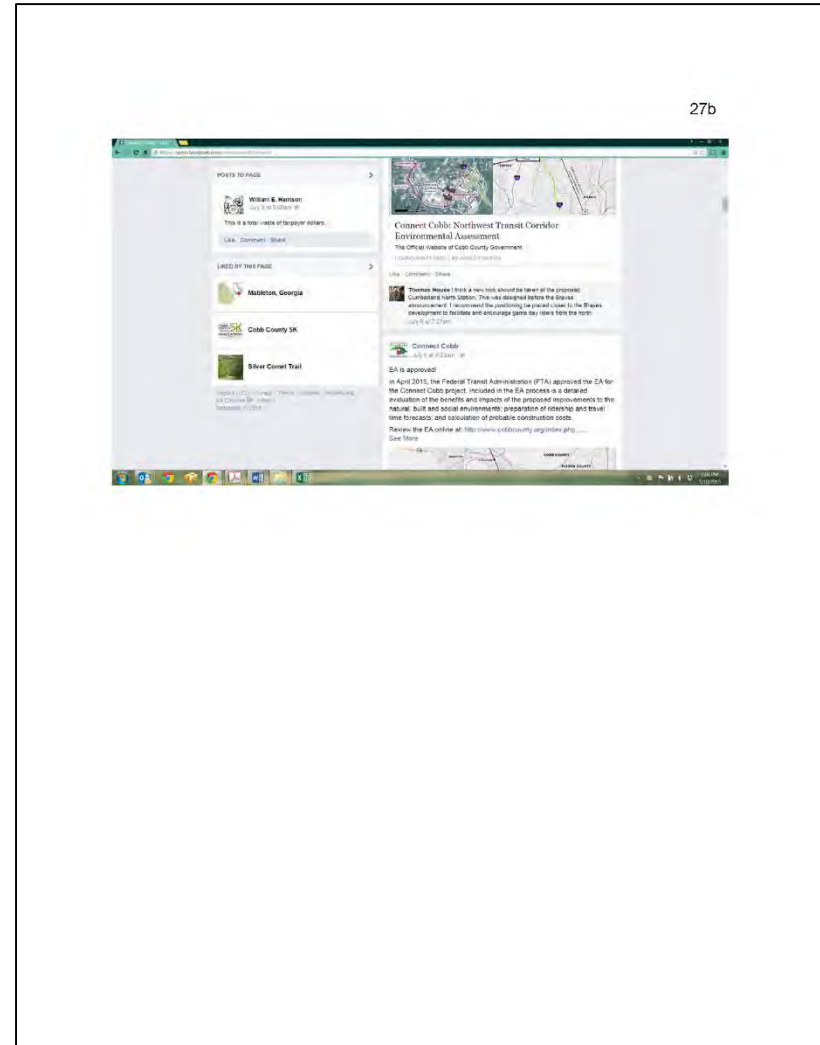
I believe there is an opportunity to review placement of the Cumberland North station to ensure it is properly connected to the new Brave development. Making it convenient for North Cobb County residents to choose BRT as an option to the games.

An opportunity to review zoning on 41. Deal to encourage residential development which will deliver ready riders near station stops.

Exciting Project. I vote YES!

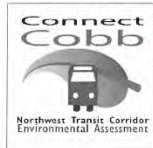
Please send by July 14, 2015 to  
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 Cobb County DOT  
 1890 County Services Pkwy  
 Marietta, Georgia 30008-4014  
 info@sycamoreconsulting.net

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Northwest Transit Corridor  
Environmental Assessment



### Project Comment Form

\*Name/Organization Elaine Cruz  
 Address 55 Henderson Street, Apt 607  
 City, State and Zipcode Marietta, GA 30064  
 Email not active

Please list below any comments concerning the Connect Cobb Project.

*Cobb should be connecting to Rapid Rail. The issue is too many cars on the road. The engineers say at some point interstate 75 is as we know it cannot accept any more buses or cars. The bus line you propose going into Cobb will be the same lanes that is used today. The Bus line proposed is the cheaper way to solve the problem or though it seems. Rapid Rail is the way to go for all practical purposes. Cobb is shooting itself in the foot while putting a Band-aid on the larger problem.*

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Please send by July 14, 2015 to  
 Mr. Marty Sewell, Connect Cobb EA Project Manager  
 Cobb County DOT  
 1890 County Services Pkwy  
 Marietta, Georgia 30008-4014  
 info@sycamoreconsulting.net

\*Contact information provided to a government agency may be subject to public release as required by Georgia's open records law.



### Project Comment Form

\*Name/Organization Don Hicks  
 Address \_\_\_\_\_  
 City, State and Zipcode Marietta  
 Email \_\_\_\_\_

Please list below any comments concerning the Connect Cobb Project.

*A much needed project for the future of Cobb. Pursue as quickly as possible.*

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Please send by July 14, 2015 to  
 Mr. Marty Sewell, Connect Cobb EA Project Manager  
 Cobb County DOT  
 1890 County Services Pkwy  
 Marietta, Georgia 30008-4014  
 info@sycamoreconsulting.net

\*Contact information provided to a government agency may be subject to public release as required by Georgia's open records law.

30



Project Comment Form

\*Name/Organization Barkley Sewell  
 Address 3350 Elmwood Dr SE  
 City, State and Zipcode Atlanta, GA 30339  
 Email barkley@barkleysewellagency.com

Please list below any comments concerning the Connect Cobb Project.

This is a necessary plan to  
improve mobility within Cobb County,  
enhanced connectivity will help  
from the economic growth  
 • provide better access  
city and who do our clients  
 • include the public from  
the other around the region  
bottom access to the corridor  
and other amenities  
 • transit phase release  
some of the anticipated  
increase in vehicle traffic  
as the population of the  
corridor increases

Please send by July 14, 2015 to  
 Mr. Marty Sewell, Connect Cobb EA Project Manager  
 Cobb County DOT  
 1890 County Services Pkwy  
 Marietta, Georgia 30008-4014  
 info@sycamoreconsulting.net

\*Contact information provided to a government agency may be subject to public release as required by Georgia's open records law.

31



Project Comment Form

\*Name/Organization LARRY KING (COBB TAB)  
 Address \_\_\_\_\_  
 City, State and Zipcode \_\_\_\_\_  
 Email \_\_\_\_\_

Please list below any comments concerning the Connect Cobb Project.

- ① 26 BUSINESS TARGETED FOR RE-LOCATION - PLEASE  
PROVIDE LIST
- ② IMPROMIOUS DUES SET TO INCREASE BY 26% - WHAT IS  
EXPECTED IMPACT ON STORMWATER MANAGEMENT?  
HOW MUCH WILL THIS COST? WILL IT BE A COBBI  
EXPENSE?

Please send by July 14, 2015 to  
 Mr. Marty Sewell, Connect Cobb EA Project Manager  
 Cobb County DOT  
 1890 County Services Pkwy  
 Marietta, Georgia 30008-4014  
 info@sycamoreconsulting.net

\*Contact information provided to a government agency may be subject to public release as required by Georgia's open records law.



Northwest Transit Corridor  
Environmental Assessment



32a

Project Comment Form

\*Name/Organization Bob Hovey  
Address 1165 WARD CREEK DR  
City, State and Zipcode MARIETTA GA 30067  
Email hovey2171@delbartn.net

Please list below any comments concerning the Connect Cobb Project.

*This meeting format is not a "public hearing" in the traditional sense. It excels in one to one discussion but lacks the cross-pollination of ideas we would get with a public group discussion or Q+A session as part of the overall program.*

*Staff are well prepared and helpful*

Please send by July 14, 2015 to  
Mr. Marty Sewell, Connect Cobb EA Project Manager  
Cobb County DOT  
1890 County Services Pkwy  
Marietta, Georgia 30008-4014  
info@sycamoreconsulting.net

\*Contact information provided to a government agency may be subject to public release as required by Georgia's open records law.

32b

To: Meeting Recorder  
Connect Cobb Environmental Analysis  
Arterial Rapid Transit on US Hwy 41, Cobb County GA  
Public Meeting June 29, 2015

Please include this letter and enclosures in the Public Record

SUMMARY

The proposed Connect Cobb plan is very unpopular with voters. In this environment the project will encounter serious opposition to funding initiatives for construction capital and ongoing operation and maintenance expenses. A series of changing declarations about project scope and costs has seriously damaged the credibility of public leadership. Project benefits are limited to a small portion of Cobb voters reducing public support, especially from the residential community.

SUPPORTING OBSERVATIONS

There is widespread public distrust of the Connect Cobb project. I am enclosing with this letter a series of eight articles from our two newspapers (\*1) describing this environment. I enter these articles and editorials to illustrate the scope of the public's distrust, not to support any particular issue addressed.

Cobb usually expects local leaders to promote projects of value. Generally they do an excellent job, but in the case of Connect Cobb the leaders will not be able to rally support for the big dollar expenses. I am enclosing an AJC article (\*2) outlining a Federal Investigation of the Connect Cobb Environmental Assessment illustrating the depth of public doubt and their distrust of this process. Again I don't speak to the accuracy of these allegations but I present them to document the problem Connect Cobb has with public support.

The Connect Cobb project serves a small portion of Cobb citizens at a very high price. If the project is approved there will be little money left to address other very significant Cobb transportation needs - especially in important underserved areas of the county.

Existing Cobb roads feeding the Connect Cobb route do not include densely populated "walk to the bus" ridership. Our heritage of hub and spoke roads serves mainly single entrance/exit subdivisions. Most bus customers don't live along Hwy 41 and thus must drive to park and ride locations compounding congestion there. This will extend total trip times on the Connect Cobb route and deter potential customers.

The existing Express Bus routes are being re-routed to use the new reversible I-75 express lanes. This will create shorter Express bus total trip times than the proposed Connect Cobb Route along US 41. Commuters to Mid town and Downtown Atlanta will prefer Express bus, reducing Connect Cobb ridership.

Proponents of Connect Cobb represent a relatively small number of political and commercial real estate interests. While their superior funding makes their advocacy known they represent relatively few votes and very few target commuters.


  
 Bob Hovey
   
 Marietta GA 30064
   
[hovey2131@bellsouth.net](mailto:hovey2131@bellsouth.net)

Enclosures:

- (\*1) Referendum Promised; referendum taken away
  - Commissioners support referendum for BRT
  - Town hall chance for Lee to test-fly BRT trial balloon
  - Voters get no say on bus line
  - Commission should heed promises, allow BRT vote
  - BRT line an express to taxpayer wallets
  - Cobb transit study misleading
  - Lee commits to BRT referendum
- (\*2) Feds consider BRT complaint as two separate issues (AJC)

\* 1 - 1
   
 FROM: Robert Hovey
   
 SUBJECT: Environmental Assessment comment - Brien June 9
   
 DATE: June 29, 2015 at 12:34 PM

Referendum promised; referendum taken away

by Bob Hovey



At the Cobb Board of Commissioners (BOC) meeting on May 26, 2015, the commissioners adopted the new Comprehensive Transportation Plan (CTP).

The CTP includes the widely opposed Cobb Parkway Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) proposal. Some commissioners wanted language added to the CTP to make it clear that inclusion of the BRT in the CTP did not mean that it had been approved or that any decision had been made for this project to move forward.

During the commissioners discussion of the CTP before the vote, at the May 26 BOC meeting, the commissioners told the public that language had been added to the CTP that before the BRT project could move forward, it would have to be approved by the BOC, and it would also have to be approved by the voters in a referendum.

I decided to check the language to be sure that it said what it was supposed to say.

The part about BRT having to be approved by the BOC was worded exactly as stated by the commissioners at the BOC meeting.

However, the language in the CTP document posted on the county's CobbinMotion website says "If deemed necessary by the BOC, (emphasis added) it will be put to a referendum of the voters of Cobb County."

As currently worded, this language does not even recommend that a referendum should take place. This language does nothing more than to give future commissioners an OK to not hold the referendum.

Is this just one more attempted deception in a long line of attempted deceptions regarding the BRT project?

At the July 22, 2014 BOC meeting, the BOC voted to put a new SPLOST on the ballot, which was approved by voters last November. In the weeks preceding the BOC approval, to go forward with the SPLOST referendum:

1 Cobb County claimed that BRT had been removed from the SPLOST list even though it was clearly still included on the SPLOST list.

1 Then Cobb County broke the BRT up into a bunch of different components of the BRT, and included the pieces of the BRT project on the list. Cobb then said, OK, the BRT is now off the list, even though these component projects were still labeled as "BRT."

1 So then, Cobb County kept all of those BRT component projects on the list, but removed the words BRT, even though they were clearly still the same projects.

Fortunately, Commissioners Lisa Cupid, JoAnn Birrell and Bob Ott insisted on removing the disguised BRT component projects from the SPLOST list before the SPLOST went on the ballot.

At that same July 22, 2014 BOC meeting, the BOC also represented that BRT would not move forward unless approved by the voters in a referendum. This has also been discussed at commissioner town hall meetings since last July. And as pointed out in Hillary Butschek's article in the MDJ June 6, there are additional documented times when Cobb citizens were led to believe that BRT would have to be approved by Cobb voters in a referendum.

When I brought this to the attention of Cobb County last week, I got two basic responses:

1 They can't obligate future commissions, and

1 A lot of finger pointing saying somebody else was at fault.

It doesn't matter who is at fault. The BOC has represented to the citizens of Cobb County for the last 10 months that in order for BRT to move forward it would have to be approved by Cobb voters in a referendum. And now we have actual language that is nothing more than a blanket OK for future commissioners to NOT hold the referendum. Regardless of who is at fault, this needs to get fixed.

The June 6 MDJ article says Cobb County is now denying that it ever said the referendum would be "required." Once again, that's not the point. The county spent 10 months leading Cobb citizens to believe that BRT would not move forward unless it was approved by Cobb voters in a referendum.

I have suggested alternative wording to Cobb County. "While not obligating future commissions, it is the intent of the current Board of Commissioners that before BRT could move forward it would also be put to a referendum of the voters of Cobb County."

This would be reasonably consistent with what the BOC represented to the citizens of Cobb County, and would make it clear that future BOCs are not obligated to follow this recommendation.

If this is going to be fixed, it appears that it will have to be fixed by the district commissioners. I am asking the district commissioners to revise the referendum language in the CTP to be better aligned with what the BOC has told the citizens of Cobb County.

Three commissioners can fix this. I'm asking all of the district commissioners to work together to do the right thing.

From: Robert Hovey  
Subject: Fwd: Environmental Assessment comment - "Commissioners Support" MDJ  
Date: June 29, 2015 at 12:22 PM

\* 1-2  
Commissioners support referendum for BRT

by Kirby Leitch



YES  NO  UNCOMMITTED

MARIETTA—Cobb's four district commissioners are all in favor of putting a proposed bus rapid transit project to connect the county with Midtown Atlanta on the ballot for a voter referendum.

Cobb Chairman Tim Lee told the MDJ last week he "could not answer right now" whether he would personally advocate putting the BRT on the ballot, but the other four members of the Board of Commissioners all said they supported a voter referendum.

On Monday, Lee offered a clarification to his previous statements.

"I certainly do not oppose a referendum if the (Board of Commissioners) chooses to move in that direction once the details of the project are known," Lee said in an email. "There are too many unknowns — including project scope, timing, cost, and available funding sources — to make a definitive statement today. It is always my policy to make sure I have all of the relative facts in front of me before I make a declarative statement about how I am going to vote on any issue."

The BRT is a public transit option the county is considering that would begin at Kennesaw State University and end at the MARTA Arts Center Station. Most of the BRT's 25.3-mile route is along Cobb Parkway, which would see dedicated lanes built for the buses to travel in, according to county documents.

The project was included in the recent update to the county's long-range transportation planning guide — the Cobb County Comprehensive Transportation Plan — which lists projects the county could consider implementing over the next 15 years.

Commissioner JoAnn Birrell said she supports letting the voters decide whether the county should pursue the project because of the "size and magnitude and the area that it's going to service" affects the entire county.

"All I can assure you and the voters — the public — is that if BRT comes before the Board of Commissioners while I'm a commissioner, I will vote for it to be a referendum," Birrell said. "That is my intent and it has been



all along.”

As to whether her district would support the BRT project, Birrell said it depends on when the BRT comes up. The lines of Cobb's four districts are changing in the next few years, and after the new lines take effect, her district will include all of KSJ, which is proposed to be the northern endpoint of the BRT.

“If it came before us now, the majority of the people in my district now that I heard from were not in favor of the BRT,” Birrell said. “But when my district changes, it could be different; there could be more support for it. I don't know until I get there.”

The new district lines will take effect for voting purposes in January 2016, Birrell said, but she won't officially be representing these new areas until January 2017.

Commissioner Bob Weatherford also committed to putting the project on the ballot.

“If it comes up in the next three years when I'm on the Board of Commissioners, I would vote to put it in a referendum, and I think my fellow commissioners would as well,” Weatherford said.

However, Weatherford stressed that the sitting Board of Commissioners cannot bind future boards to holding the referendum, which is why a referendum requirement wasn't included in the transportation plan.

“If it's 15 years from now, we can't require, legally, them to do it,” Weatherford said. “We can suggest they do it and give them the authority to do it, but they're the ones that make the decision. ... If they decide not to, that's the elected officials' prerogative to do that, and it's up to the citizens to decide if elected officials did what they want them to do.”

Commissioner Lisa Cupid said she supports the voter referendum and said putting the project to the public for a vote has been “articulated publicly” by the county in the past.

“I think that it would be at the very least inconsistent with what we've communicated publicly about that project if the referendum didn't happen,” Cupid said.

Cupid said she's not sure how her district would vote if the project was put on the ballot.

“I think the constituents in District 4 are very supportive of transit, but BRT is not a project that has direct impact to this area. ... I think if they see bus rapid transit, they'll support the concept in general, but I think for some who are peeling back the layers and observing that there is no direct impact to District 4, it raises more questions about the project,” Cupid said.

Commissioner Bob Ott said the BRT should “absolutely” be put on a referendum.

“It's what we promised the public,” Ott said. “That's what the board said they would do all the way during the SP\_OST discussions, and it's the right thing to do. ... It's the right thing to do because in all the discussions with the people that came and talked about BRT and mass transit and everything, it was a commitment that was made. And if you're going to make a commitment to the public, you need to honor it.”

Ott said he doesn't think the east Cobb residents he represents on the board support the project.

“There may be some support in the Cumberland area, but I think overall, the district is not for it,” Ott said.

Read more: [The Marietta Daily Journal - Commissioners support referendum for BRT](#)

X / - 3

### Town hall chance for Lee to test-fly BRT trial balloon

by Joe Kirby, Orla A. Brunby III and Lee R. Garrett, - Around Town Columnists

DO COBB RESIDENTS DESERVE a chance to vote on construction of a \$494 million BRT line up the Cobb 41 corridor, as county commissioners have repeatedly promised? Or should the chairman and commission decide whether to build the potentially budget-busting bus line, and cut the public out of the loop?

Cobb Chairman Tim Lee last week gave strong indications he's leaning toward the latter course, despite earlier assertions that he favors a referendum.

What has caused the apparent change of heart? And why would Lee — who must face voters next spring — risk his political career on a transit proposal that is palpably unpopular in much of Cobb?

Many wonder how the chairman and commission could consider even for a moment embarking on such a gargantuan public works project without first gaining public buy-in via a referendum.

Lee has a town hall meeting scheduled for 6:30 to 8 p.m. June 16 at Vinings United Methodist Church on Paces Mill Road. Perhaps it will give him a chance to test-fly his no-referendum trial balloon in front of a live audience.

It could be an interesting night.

X / - 4

Robert Hovey  
Environmental Assessment comment - "Voters get no say," June 10 A/C  
June 23, 2015 at 12:13 PM

### Print Headline = "Voters get no say on bus line"

## No public vote needed for controversial BRT project

Posted 2:51 p.m. Tuesday, June 9, 2015

1 Comment | 244 Shares | 65 Tweets | 535 Shares

By Dan Klepa - The Atlanta Journal-Constitution

Despite Cobb County Chairman Tim Lee's assurances over the past year that the public will decide if a controversial rapid transit bus system is built, the \$500 million project can now proceed with a simple majority vote of the county commission.

That detail is embedded in a 110-page transportation planning document that was approved by the commission May 26. Each of the four district commissioners say they thought that the planning document required a public referendum on the system when they voted for it.

"I thought that because that's what we were told," said commissioner Bob Ott, who does not support the project. "I came to that conclusion because of all the pledges made by the chairman."

Commissioner Lisa Ciprioli said she voted for the transportation plan "under the premise there would be a BRT referendum."

"Apparently, I didn't read the document carefully enough," she said. "We may need to reverse that."

Lee has not responded to phone messages and questions sent to him through email over the past week for this story.

Bus rapid transit, or BRT, as it is known, would cut a path for buses only down U.S. 41 and through some of the most congested roads in metro Atlanta: from Kennesaw State, past the Rig Chicksen, down through the Cumberland area and the new Atlanta Braves stadium, before linking up with I-75 and rolling on to a MARTA station in Midtown.

Half of its cost would be paid by local taxpayers.

Ron Sifen, a Cobb resident and transit activist, does not support BRT because he believes there are better, more cost-effective ways to thin out congestion in the corridor. Sifen said Lee has repeatedly told the public that voters would have the final say on BRT.

Sifen said it's "an issue of government telling citizens one thing, then doing the opposite."

Tom Cheek said deceptive government leadership is becoming the norm in Cobb County. Cheek is a frequent county government observer who last year successfully fought for upgrades to the Cobb Medical Examiner's Office.

"This is part of a trend that I've observed lately where everything seems like a trick," Cheek said. "I know the chairman will say that I can't have expertise, but I know the difference between the truth and a lie."

Oh said at Tuesday's commission meeting that he will introduce a resolution next month saying there should be a referendum on BRT, if it proceeds.

#### No 'sleight of hand'

Lee has long supported bus rapid transit.

The chairman threw his political weight behind the project when it was part of the 2014 regional T-SPTOST, which was overwhelmingly rejected by Cobb voters. The project was estimated to cost \$1 billion at the time.

Then last year, after the project's cost was cut in half, Lee wanted to include a \$100 million line item in the 2016 special purpose sales tax project list that would help the county qualify for a \$250 million federal grant for BRT.

But district commissioners would not support the item for fear that its inclusion on the SPTOST project list would tip the vote against the six-year, \$750 million tax, which they say is vital to funding a variety of government needs.

In response, Lee removed the line item, which was clearly identified as part of the BRT project, and asked for the addition of \$75 million in intersection improvements along U.S. 41. Money allocated for those 10 projects would have qualified as matching funds for the federal BRT grant.

The change generated little support among district commissioners. Lance Lambertson, president of the Cobb Taxpayer's Association, called Lee's proposed change from a single line item to individual intersection improvements a "Trojan Bus."

Lee made his first promise for a public BRT referendum at a July 2014 commission meeting, during which the board approved placing the SPTOST tax referendum on ballots last November. Lee tried to assure voters that they could vote in favor of the tax and not worry about the money being used to fund BRT.

"I just want to be clear on something," Lee said during the July meeting. "My intent, if the board sees fit in the future to consider bringing the (BRT) project forward ... it'll be done in a public environment. It'll be done in my recommendation — in a separate election, to be held on its own merit ... and be voted on by the citizens of Cobb County ... by itself in an election year ballot."

"There's nothing sleight of hand."

Oh said it was that comment — and others — that led him to assure the public during last month's meeting that approval of the county's transportation plan would not mean approval of BRT. "...I would take further action from the board, and then a referendum," he said.

Neither Lee nor Cobb DCT Director Faye DiMassimo, who was standing at the podium during Oh's comment and whose staff compiled the document, corrected the misstatement.

The Atlanta Journal-Constitution submitted three questions to DiMassimo last week, including whether Lee or County Manager David Hankerson directed her staff to leave the BRT referendum to the discretion of commissioners.

DiMassimo did not answer, but Lee's deputy chief Kelle Brownlow sent an email in response.

"Last week, the Cobb County Board of Commissioners adopted a forward thinking planning document that includes long-term innovative transportation alternatives to achieve regional connectivity," Brownlow's email says. "Instead of recognizing this as forward thinking, we received a line of questions that actually make it far more controversial than it is, particularly at this juncture."

Brownlow then asked the newspaper not to report that it asked questions of DiMassimo.

During the same May 26 meeting at which the transportation plan was approved, commissioners also approved submission of a federal grant application for \$20 million worth of intersection improvements down U.S. 41. The project includes building dedicated lanes at six intersections, so buses can zip around congestion.

The grant asks for \$10 million in federal funds, and says local SPLOST money could be used for the local share.

Neither DIMassimo nor Lee's office responded to the newspaper's question about whether those intersection improvements could be used to qualify for a larger BRT federal grant.

\* 1-5

Robert Hovey  
Environmental Assessment - MDJ June 9 Editorial "Commission should heed..."  
June 29, 2015 at 12:53 PM

### Commission should heed promises, allow BRT vote

It's safe to say there is agreement that traffic is the No. 1 nuisance in these parts. Consensus ends, however, on how to fix it.

The CTP or Cobb Comprehensive Traffic Plan is a planning document to guide the county as it considers and implements remedies.

Approved by the Board of Commissioners late last month on a 5-0 vote, the CTP lists 240 projects to ease congestion. The projects are categorized as short-term (completed within six years), mid-term (completed within 15 years) and "aspirational" to be completed in 16 years or more.

The "aspirational" goal garnering most attention is the BRT or a bus rapid transit line stretching from Kennesaw State University to Victown Atlanta. Public transit always prompts public debate. Some are for it, some are against for a variety of reasons, not the least of which is cost. The latest figure bandied about is \$464 million to get the BRT up and running.

Public contention was quelled a bit with the assurance that the BRT would be put to a countywide vote. That point was front and center as commissioners voted to approve the CTP and in some cases was used to justify the "yes" votes. Quoting from last week's MDJ story, Commissioner Bob Ott said, "What I got added (to the transportation plan) is that in order for (the BRT) to move forward it has to have a separate action by the board and then a referendum by the public."

Said Commissioner Lisa Cupit, "I'm not opposed to (the BRT), but I do believe at the end of the day it should be up to the voters."

Said Commissioner JoAnn Birrell: "The BRT, even light rail, is in the current plan, and with the requirement that it be approved by the Board of Commissioners and the public with a referendum — I'm agreeable to that ..."

And said Commissioner Bob Weatherford: "If it comes up in the next three years when I'm on the Board of Commissioners, I would vote to put it in a referendum, and I think my fellow commissioners would as well."

That brings us to Chairman Tim Lee, who has on many occasions referred to the referendum as a necessary step in the process.

Now it appears he thinks that is not necessarily true. The transportation plan carries no requirement that funding of Bus Rapid Transit must be approved by referendum.

It does say a referendum is a possibility if deemed necessary: "Adoption of CTP does not authorize funds to construct Connect Cobb BRT. The project will only move forward with specific and separate approval of the BOC, if deemed necessary by the BOC, it will be put to a referendum of the voters of Cobb County."

That's different than promised. So instead of requiring a majority of countywide votes, the truth is that BRT passage requires only three votes: those of a majority of the commission.

The MDJ polled the commissioners on Monday. All four district commissioners indicated that yes, a referendum is "deemed necessary" in their way of thinking. Chairman Lee doesn't go as far in making a commitment.

"I certainly do not oppose a referendum if the (Board of Commissioners) chooses to move in that direction once the details of the project are known," Lee said in an email. "There are too many unknowns — including project scope, timing, cost and available funding sources — to make a definitive statement today."

And part of the chairman's reluctance is that the current board can't — and shouldn't — commit future boards to such action.

Should the BRT be included in the transportation plan? Absolutely. Any and all viable solutions should be among the possibilities laid out in the plan.

Should it be built? That is another question. And one that should be put to the citizens of Cobb County. Which is exactly what they've been promised.

No better argument exists than the one made by the county itself within its own transportation plan. From Page 12 of the May 2015 CTP Recommendations Report.

"Citizens are the authors of Cobb's story. You live, work and play here. You drive on our roads, ride our buses and bike on our multi-use trails and bike lanes. When it comes to how transportation affects your daily life, nobody knows the answers better than you."

Commissioners, heed your own words. Let the people vote.

\* 1-6

Author: Robert Hovey  
Category: Environmental Assessment comment - Savage June 16  
Date: June 29, 2015 at 12:38 PM

## BRT line an express to taxpayer wallets

Posted: 3:50 a.m. Monday, June 15, 2015

Email 0 Facebook 39 Twitter 0 ShareThis 39

By Larry Savage

Cobb County has again found controversy in mundane activities. Georgia law requires the counties to periodically update future plans, in this case the Comprehensive Transportation Plan that is revised to reflect a vision to the year 2040.

The controversy erupts over the inclusion of the "aspirational" plan for a county-owned-and-operated transit line that would connect Kennesaw State University to the Cumberland area, roughly following Cobb Parkway, then on into Atlanta to the Arts Center Station in Midtown, using the existing HOV lanes. The proposed system, known as Bus Rapid Transit (BRT), would operate on a dedicated bus-only roadway from KSU to Cumberland.

In its most basic form, the problem is money. Such a system will cost no less than a half-billion dollars, and likely more. Operating it will require millions each year in operating subsidies. Once established, the same pressure that built it will push to expand it, requiring more billions to build and more millions to operate. Even if unreliable federal funding helps launch a BRT line, the long-term financial burden falls on the citizens of Cobb County.

Here the reader might ask, "but what about the benefits of building a transit system?" referring to promised improvements in air quality, reduced travel times and reduced traffic congestion.

Those benefits might be called "aspirational" as well. After years of discussion, probing, studying, and debating, we have nothing that actually identifies any benefits that accrue from building and operating such a system.

**Opinion**

ention should become thing of  
as you laugh, D.C. It make you  
overation: Leadership  
DNA" of fathers  
"Lean, Clean and Green"  
Union "

The idea for mass transit in the Cobb Parkway corridor originated with commercial real estate investors who felt that transit would focus new development into the area bookended by the Cumberland CID and the Town Center CID in Kennesaw. A feasibility study concluded that it was feasible but difficult, owing to the hilly terrain, especially near Cumberland. The question examined in the feasibility study was, could it be built, not whether it should it be built.

Nevertheless, this concept became the platform for every mention of transit in Cobb County. Since

federal financial support would be essential, the required alternatives analysis was initiated in 2010. This was a study that explored a variety of alternatives for transit development. The study determined that light rail would cost more than \$3 billion. Ultimately, the locally preferred alternative (LPA) became BRT, which was estimated at more than \$1 billion.

At this point, many millions of dollars have been spent on studies and plans. Countless meetings consuming countless hours have been invested by county staff, consultants and citizens to create an impression that all are on board with whatever the latest idea might be. If the project were green-lighted today, hardly anyone could claim to know what would be coming.

And what about the benefits? The real estate investors who started this discussion years ago may still believe that transit will create opportunity for them. There is little or nothing to point to that confirms any other benefits.

For all the studies and reports, there is no reliable assessment that construction of the BRT or any other transit system will have positive effects on traffic congestion, air quality, transportation service, or anything else. Various parties have surveyed public opinion about transit, but never has there been an assessment of the market for transit riders.

Most telling, there has never been an assessment that compares the benefits that might be derived from a billion dollars spent on transit versus a billion dollars invested in roads and bridges for cars and trucks.

Cobb leaders already are trying to saddle taxpayers with unprecedented debt for the new Braves stadium and unknown obligations for additional related infrastructure. Buying into BRT or other "no ending" investment seems a bit too much for many.

*Cobb County resident Larry Savage ran for Cobb County Commission chairman in 2010 and 2015.*

\* 1-7

0000 Robert Hovey  
 Archived Environmental Assessment - AJC June 17 - 18 study misleading\*  
 Date: June 23, 2015 at 1:12 PM  
 ID:

## Print headline: Cobb transit study misleading BRT environmental study contains errors

Printed: 6:37 p.m. Tuesday, June 16, 2015

[Email](#) 0 [Share](#) [Tweet](#) 0 [Clear This](#) 3

by Dan Klepal - The Atlanta Journal-Constitution

A key environmental study, necessary for Cobb County to qualify for a federal grant of up to \$250 million, contains incorrect statements about a divisive transit project that Commission Chairman Tim Lee has been saying for years.

The Environmental Assessment report says Cobb commissioners were "presented the results" of a bus rapid transit analysis during a February 2012 meeting. It also says commissioners "accepted" the \$500 million BRT as the county's "locally preferred alternative" among various transit options, an important designation needed to qualify for federal funding.

In fact, no analysis had been completed when that meeting was held, no vote was taken, and commissioners made no comments whatsoever after the presentation on Connect Cobb, a plan to build bus-only lanes down U.S. 41 from Kennesaw to the Cumberland area, where SunTrust Park is located.

Critics say the designation gives the impression that there's more support for BRT in Cobb County than exists.

"We're obviously at the very top of this flow chart — this is the ... very structured process we need to follow to do our work, to remain eligible for future federal funding under their program," the consultant said at the Feb. 28, 2012 meeting. "The ... analysis will look at a good deal data, input from stakeholders."

"At that point, we [will] select this" locally preferred alternative, she said.

The newspaper twice asked county officials to provide information about when

commissioners officially adopted BRT as the locally preferred alternative. County Manager David Hankerson referred the newspaper to two meetings in September 2012, at which BRT presentations were made. The Atlanta Journal-Constitution could find no record of a vote being taken at either meeting.

Hankerson, who would only respond to AJC questions through email, also suggested that the preferred alternative will be selected later because it "continues to be refined through the Environmental Analysis." When pressed on the issue, Hankerson had the county attorney send the newspaper a resolution passed by Cobb commissioners in 2004, which endorses bus rapid transit as a connection between I-75 and I-285 HOV lanes.

Kellee Brownlow, deputy chief in Lee's office, said the commission accepted BRT in February 2012 "in the sense it was presented and there was no comment from" commissioners.

The issue is important because the federal government wants to know there is public support for projects it funds. Critics say the Environmental Assessment creates an impression of support that doesn't exist. Cobb voters in 2012 roundly rejected a regional special purpose sales tax that would have funded BRT, and the project has only fractured support on the county commission.

"I absolutely think that Cobb has been exaggerating the amount of community support for BRT," said Ron Sifen, a transit activist who opposes BRT because he thinks there are more efficient ways to address congestion along Cobb Parkway. "That is a huge problem."

Cobb used identical language — saying BRT was "accepted" by the commission in February 2012 — last month in an application for a \$10 million federal TIGER grant, which would fund half of a project that calls for bus-only lanes at a handful of U.S. 41 intersections.

The lanes, called queue-jumper lanes, would allow buses to zip around traffic at those intersections and give bus drivers the ability to control traffic signals so they don't have to wait at red lights.

Cobb officials say the so-called Smart Corridor project described in the TIGER grant is unrelated to BRT. But key aspects of BRT are similar — dedicated bus lanes and giving bus drivers the technology to control stop lights, called "signal priority."

In fact, the definition of BRT in that project's Environmental Assessment says the system will "use signal priority or queue jumper lanes to increase operational efficiency and reliability."

Brownlow called the misstatements on the TIGER grant application that the BRT was the preferred option "not materially important" ... on the Smart Corridor project application other than as corridor background."

Teri Cheek disputes that.

Cheek is a West Cobb resident and frequent county government observer who last year successfully fought for major changes to the county's Medical Examiner's Office. He said the Smart Corridor only makes sense in the context of the large BRT project, otherwise the buses will maneuver around the congestion at the selected intersections only to get back in traffic at the next.

He has called the Smart Corridor "a \$20 million piece of BRT."

"Language in the document seems carefully selected to make it seem like the Locally Preferred Alternative is approved by the Board of Commissioners," Cheek said. "They are presenting this as if the LPA is the preferred option of the community, and it seems to only be the preferred option of the DOT."

"They are presenting an inaccurate history."

The history of BRT is complicated -- and confusing. Lee vigorously supported BRT as part of the regional T-SPLOST vote and watched it defeated by Cobb voters by a two-to-one margin.

The chairman then suggested placing a \$100 million line item on the 2016 local SPLOST project list that would have provided about 40 percent of the required \$250 million local match to fund BRT. Lee's fellow commissioners rejected that idea, saying they were afraid inclusion of BRT would doom the SPLOST, which will provide \$750 million over six years for a variety of government operations.

As an alternative, Lee suggested removing the \$100 million BRT line item and replacing it with \$75 million worth of intersection improvements along U.S. 41. Those improvements would have counted toward the county's local match for the BRT project, but were not identified as being related to BRT.

Commissioners again rejected Lee's idea, and suspicion over 2016 SPLOST money being used for BRT led the chairman to promise a public referendum if the project moves forward.

"I just want to be clear on something," Lee said during the commission's July 2014 meeting, at which they voted to place the 2016 SPLOST on ballots last November. "My intent, if the board sees fit in the future to consider bringing the (BRT) project forward ... it'll be done in a public environment. It'll be done -- in my recommendation -- in a separate election, to be held on its own merit."

"There's nothing sleight of hand."

But then last month, commissioners approved a long-range transportation plan that they thought required a referendum before BRT could be built. As the AJC reported last week, the planning document does not require a public vote. And Lee, who has refused interview requests from the AJC, told the Marietta newspaper that he wasn't sure if he would ask for a referendum.

That led to political backlash.

Commissioners Bob Ott and Lisa Cupid will introduce a resolution next month saying it is the commission's intent to hold a referendum before building BRT, and State Sen. Lindsey Tippets, R-Marietta, says he may introduce local legislation next year that would require a referendum before major transit projects are built.

In a column written for the AJC and published Tuesday, Lee now says it is his intention to have a referendum if the BRT project moves forward.

"If Cobb County taxpayers are expected to foot the bill, it will be up to Cobb County taxpayers to decide via a referendum," Lee wrote in the column. "In fact, I was the first person to suggest a voter referendum last year."



How we got the story:

The Atlanta Journal-Constitution has been following the bus rapid transit issue in Cobb County for the past year. For this story, the newspaper reviewed the Environmental Assessment for the bus rapid transit plan; a \$10 million federal TIGER grant application, and video of meetings from 2012 until present. The newspaper emailed a list of 15 questions to Cobb ECT Director Kaye DiMassimo. Four days later, County Manager David Hankerson responded by answering some of the newspaper's questions.

\* 1-8

From: Robert Hovey  
Subject: Environmental Assessment - MDJ June 17- Lee commits  
Date: June 28, 2015 at 12:50 PM

Lee commits to BRT referendum  
by Hilary Eutschek



MARIETTA — After declining to say whether he would support a public referendum on a bus rapid transit system earlier this month, county Chairman Tim Lee is now embracing a public vote.

Lee said Tuesday it was his idea to call for a referendum and he would support one.

"I have never opposed it. In fact, I was the first person to suggest a voter referendum last year," Lee said in a Tuesday email sent to the MDJ by his deputy, Kellie Brownlow.



Lee's position on BRT sparked controversy following the May 26 vote by the Board of Commissioners to approve the county's long-range transportation planning guide. Bus Rapid Transit was included in that plan, although language requiring a public referendum was not. Passage of the plan prompted critics to accuse Lee of trying to slip BRT by the public without a public vote.

Questioned about that plan, Lee told the MDJ in a June 8 article he could not answer whether he would support a referendum on the BRT in the future. He also said he never intended to make the referendum a requirement, just an option for future commissioners.

"The BoC cannot legally bind a future board to a voter referendum or any other course of action," Lee said in the interview, adding, "If your question is what did I say versus what it is, that's really not important because there's a lot of things leading up to it. A lot of things have changed ... what's important is we worked together for that language, it was given consensus by the commission prior to getting printed."

Yet Lee had said in January he planned to put a referendum for the BRT on the November 2016 ballot.

After Lee said earlier this month he "could not answer right now" whether he advocated a public referendum, the MDJ polled the county's four district commissioners, who all said they were committed to holding a referendum before moving forward with BRT.

Commissioner Bob Ott, with the support of Commissioner Lisa Cupid, announced his plans to prepare a resolution that would commit the current board to holding a referendum before allowing a BRT to be built.

Ott said he expects to present the referendum to the commission for a vote at its July 14 meeting.

Commissioners respond in unison

The BRT is a public transit option the county is considering that would begin at Kennesaw State University and end at the MARTA Arts Center Station. Most of the BRT's 25.3-mile route is along Cobb Parkway, which would see dedicated lanes built for the buses to travel in, according to county documents.

Commissioner JoAnn Birrell was clear that she supported letting the voters decide whether the county should pursue the project because of the "size and magnitude and the area that it's going to service."

"All I can assure you and the voters — the public — is that if BRT comes before the Board of Commissioners while I'm a commissioner, I will vote for it to be a referendum," Birrell said. "That is my intent and it has been all along."

Commissioner Bob Weatherford said he is committed to putting the project on the ballot also.

"If it comes up in the next three years when I'm on the Board of Commissioners, I would vote to put it in a referendum, and I think my fellow commissioners would as well," Weatherford said.

Commissioner Lisa Cupid said she supports the voter referendum and wants to stick with what has been "articulated publicly" by the county in the past.

"I think that it would be at the very least inconsistent with what we've communicated publicly about that project if the referendum didn't happen," Cupid said.

Ott said he "absolutely" supports a referendum for BRT.

"It's what we promised the public," Ott said. "That's what the board said they would do all the way during the SPLOST discussions."

\* - 2

By **Robert Hovey**
  
 Updated: Pwd: Feds consider
   
 Date: June 23, 2015 at 11:42 AM

## Feds consider BRT complaint as two separate issues

Updated: 9:10 p.m. Tuesday, June 23, 2015 | Posted: 5:32 p.m. Tuesday, June 23, 2015
   
 Email Facebook Share Twitter Tweet ShareThis 3

By Tom Kregel - The Atlanta Journal-Constitution

West Cobb resident Tom Cheek said federal authorities have told him that the complaint he filed last week, alleging Cobb County twice filed incorrect and misleading information with federal transit officials, will be handled as two separate investigations.

Critics say the incorrect information gives an impression of widespread support for the \$500 million bus rapid transit (BRT) project, which would build bus-only lanes on U.S. 41 from Kennesaw to the Cumberland area.

Cheek said he has been "pleasantly surprised" at the interest shown by the Inspector General's Office.

"The Feds have been more responsive than the county," Cheek said. "The people I have spoken to seem genuinely interested in my input. At the county level, there seems to be very little interest. I have not yet received related information requested in an Open Records request made over two weeks ago, and no one seems to be interested in correcting the misstatements."

The controversy became public last week when The Atlanta Journal-Constitution reported that a BRT Environmental Assessment — a key study necessary for the county to qualify for up to \$250 million in federal grants — incorrectly says the project was "accepted" as the county's preferred option during a Feb. 28, 2012 commission meeting.

The same thing is stated in Cobb's \$10 million TIGER grant application, submitted to the Federal Transit Administration last month to build a similar project on a smaller scale along U.S. 41.

In fact, no analysis had been completed when that meeting was held, no vote by the commission was taken and commissioners made no comments whatsoever after the presentation. The county still has not adopted BRT as its "locally preferred alternative," which is an important designation for federal funding.

Cheek said he has tried unsuccessfully to have the county correct the statements and commit to reviewing the process that led to them being printed in two important documents. He hopes his complaint to the Inspector General will accomplish that.

"My goal is to show the U.S. DOT where the errors are in the applications since the county government has decided not to do the right thing on their own," Cheek said. "Perhaps it will give the county a new position where they (will) more closely review future applications before submitting them."

The commission Tuesday night approved a resolution that says it intends to have a public referendum before BRT is built. The resolution only applies to the current board of commissioners, and would have no impact after three commissioners are up for re-election next year.

Commission Chairman Tim Lee sponsored that resolution after a state senator last week threatened to sponsor local legislation that would require a referendum on all transit projects. And Commissioner Bob Ott said three weeks ago that he planned to introduce an identical resolution next month.

Ott was absent Tuesday, and Lee's decision to move forward with the resolution without him sparked a sharp text exchange.

"What is your problem?" Ott wrote in a text to Lee last week. "Are you so insecure that you had to wait until I'm out of the country to move behind our backs? You're over the edge. It's pathetic."

"Have a great day," Lee responded.

"Oh, please," Ott replied. "People are a lot smarter than you think they are."

Lee said Tuesday night that it was important "to get this clarification in place ... and move forward with the business of the county. This was my first opportunity to clarify my intent to this board."

32c

**Kristine Hansen-Dederick**

**From:** Robert Hovey  
**Sent:** Thursday, June 18, 2015 4:21 PM  
**To:** Christine Dederick  
**Cc:** Bob Hovey  
**Subject:** Environmental Assessment - AJC June 17 - "... study misleading"

Hi Christine  
 Please include the following June 16/17 AJC article in the official record for the Connect Cobb Open House June 29, 2015. Please confirm that you received this ok and it will be in the Environmental Assessment record.

Bob Hovey

**Print headline: Cobb transit study misleading  
 BRT environmental study contains errors**

Posted: 6:37 p.m. Tuesday, June 16, 2015  
 Email [0](#) Facebook [3](#) Twitter [0](#) ShareThis [3](#)

By Dan Kiesel - The Atlanta Journal-Constitution

A key environmental study, necessary for Cobb County to qualify for a federal grant of up to \$250 million, contains incorrect statements about a divisive transit project that Commission Chairman Tim Lee has been eyeing for years.

The Environmental Assessment report says Cobb commissioners were "presented the results" of a bus rapid transit analysis during a February 2012 meeting. It also says commissioners "accepted" the \$500 million BRT as the county's "locally preferred alternative" among various transit options, an important designation needed to qualify for federal funding.

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consultant said at the Feb. 28, 2012 meeting. "The ... analysis will look at a good deal of data, input from stakeholders."

"At that point, we (will) select the" locally preferred alternative, she said.

The newspaper twice asked county officials to provide information about when commissioners officially adopted BRT as the locally preferred alternative. County Manager David Hankerson referred the newspaper to two meetings in September 2012, at which BRT presentations were made. The Atlanta Journal-Constitution could find no record of a vote being taken at either meeting.

Hankerson, who would only respond to AJC questions through email, also suggested that the preferred alternative will be selected later because it "continues to be refined through the Environmental Analysis." When pressed on the issue, Hankerson had the county attorney send the newspaper a resolution passed by Cobb commissioners in 2004, which endorses bus rapid transit as a connection between I-75 and I-285 HOV lanes.

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That led to political backlash.

Commissioners Bob Ott and Lisa Cupid will introduce a resolution next month saying it is the commission's intent to hold a referendum before building BRT; and State Sen. Lindsey Tippins, R-Marietta, says he may introduce local legislation next year that would require a referendum before major transit projects are built.

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Bob Hovey

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Version: 2014.0.4800 / Virus Database: 4365/10049 - Release Date: 06/18/15

**Kristine Hansen-Dederick**

**From:** Robert Hovey [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Thursday, June 18, 2015 4:08 PM  
**To:** Kristine Dederick  
**Cc:** Bob Hovey  
**Subject:** Environmental Assessment - MDJ June 9 Opinion 'Town Hall Chance'

Hi Christine  
 Please include the following June 9 MDJ Opinion Column in the official record for the Connect Cobb Open House June 29, 2015. Please confirm that you received this card and it will be in the Environmental Assessment record.

Bob Hovey  
 [REDACTED]

**Town hall chance for Lee to test-fly BRT trial balloon**

by Joe Kirby, Otis A. Brumby III and Lee B. Garrett - Around Town Columnists  
 June 10, 2015 12:00 AM | 2325 views | 7 | 0 | 0 | 0



DO COBB RESIDENTS DESERVE a chance to vote on construction of a \$434 million BRT line up the Cobb-41 corridor, as county commissioners have repeatedly promised? Or should the chairman and commissioner decide whether to build the potentially budget-busting bus line, and cut the public out of the loop?

Cobb Chairman Tim Lee last week gave strong indications he's leaning toward the latter course, despite earlier assertions that he

favors a referendum.

What has caused the apparent change of heart? And why would Lee—who must face voters next spring—risk his political career on a transit proposal that is palpably unpopular in much of Cobb?

Many wonder how the chairman and commission could consider even for a moment embarking on such a gargantuan public works project without first gaining public buy-in via a referendum.

Lee has a town hall meeting scheduled for 6:30 to 8 p.m. June 18 at Vinings United Methodist Church on Paces Mill Road. Perhaps it will give him a chance to test-fly his no-referendum trial balloon in front of a live audience.

It could be an interesting night.

Read more: The Marietta Daily Journal - Town hall chance for Lee to test fly BRT trial balloon

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Version: 2014.0.4890 / Virus Database: 4365/10047 - Release Date: 06/18/15

**Kristine Hansen-Dederick**

**From:** Robert Hovey [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Thursday, June 18, 2015 3:59 PM  
**To:** Christine Dederick  
**Cc:** Bob Hovey  
**Subject:** Environmental Assessment - MDJ editorial June 9 "Commission should heed...."

Hi Christine  
 Please include the following June 9 MDJ editorial in the official record for the Connect Cobb Open House June 29, 2015. Please confirm that you received this ok and it will be in the Environmental Assessment record.

Bob Hovey  
 [REDACTED]

**Commission should heed promises, allow BRT vote**

Image description: A small graphic with icons for email, print, and social media.

It's safe to say there is agreement that traffic is the No. 1 nuisance in these parts. Consensus ends, however, on how to fix it.

The CTP or Cobb Comprehensive Traffic Plan is a planning document to guide the county as it considers and implements remedies.

Approved by the Board of Commissioners late last month on a 5-0 vote, the CTP lists 240 projects to ease congestion. The projects are categorized as short-term (completed within six years), mid-term (completed within 15 years) and "aspirational" to be completed in 16 years or more.

The "aspirational" goal garnering most attention is the BRT or a bus rapid transit line stretching from Kennesaw State University to Midtown Atlanta. Public transit always prompts public debate. Some are for it, some are against for a variety of reasons, not the least of which is cost. The latest figure bandied about is \$494 million to get the BRT up and running.

Public contention was quelled a bit with the assurance that the BRT would be put to a countywide vote. That point was front and center as commissioners voted to approve the CTP and in some cases was used to justify the "yes" votes. Quoting from last week's MDJ story, Commissioner Bob Ott said, "What I got added (to the transportation plan) is that in order for (the BRT) to move forward it has to have a separate action by the board and then a referendum by the public."

Said Commissioner Lisa Cupid: "I'm not opposed to (the BRT), but I do believe at the end of the day it should be up to the voters."

Said Commissioner JoAnn Birrell: "The BRT, even light rail, is in the current plan, and with the requirement that it be approved by the Board of Commissioners and the public with a referendum — I'm agreeable to that ..."

And said Commissioner Bob Weatherford: "If it comes up in the next three years when I'm on the Board of Commissioners, I would vote to put it in a referendum, and I think my fellow commissioners would as well."

That brings us to Chairman Tim Lee, who has on many occasions referred to the referendum as a necessary step in the process.

Now it appears he thinks that is not necessarily true. The transportation plan carries no requirement that funding of Bus Rapid Transit must be approved by referendum.

It does say a referendum is a possibility if deemed necessary: "Adoption of CTP does not authorize funds to construct Connect Cobb BRT. The project will only move forward with specific and separate approval of the BOC. If deemed necessary by the BOC, it will be put to a referendum of the voters of Cobb County."

That's different than promised. So instead of requiring a majority of countywide votes, the truth is that BRT passage requires only three votes: those of a majority of the commission.

The MDJ polled the commissioners on Monday. All four district commissioners indicated that yes, a referendum is "deemed necessary" in their way of thinking. Chairman Lee doesn't go as far in making a commitment.

"I certainly do not oppose a referendum if the (Board of Commissioners) chooses to move in that direction once the details of the project are known," Lee said in an email. "There are too many unknowns — including project scope, timing, cost and available funding sources — to make a definitive statement today."

And part of the chairman's reluctance is that the current board can't — and shouldn't — commit future boards to such action.

Should the BRT be included in the transportation plan? Absolutely. Any and all viable solutions should be among the possibilities laid out in the plan.

Should it be built? That is another question. And one that should be put to the citizens of Cobb County. Which is exactly what they've been promised.

No better argument exists than the one made by the county itself within its own transportation plan. From Page 12 of the May 2015 CTP Recommendations Report:

"Citizens are the authors of Cobb's story. You live, work and play here. You drive on our roads, ride our buses and bike on our multi-use trails and bike lanes. When it comes to how transportation affects your daily life, nobody knows the answers better than you."

Commissioners, heed your own words. Let the people vote.

Read more: [The Marietta Daily Journal - Commission should heed promises allow BRT vote](#)

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Version: 2014.0.4800 / Virus Database: 4365/10047 - Release Date: 06/18/15

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**From:** Robert Hovey [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Thursday, June 18, 2015 3:49 PM  
**To:** Christine Dederick  
**Cc:** Bob Hovey  
**Subject:** Environmental Assessment - MDJ June 17- Lee commits

Tti Christine  
 Please include the following June 17 MDJ article in the official record for the Connect Cobb Open House June 29, 2015. Please confirm that you received this ok and it will be in the Environmental Assessment record.

Bob Hovey  
 [REDACTED]

**Lee commits to BRT referendum**

by Hilary Ransick

June 17, 2015 11:58 AM | 271 views | 0 comments



©2015 by Hilary Ransick



Tim Lee

MARIETTA — After declining to say whether he would support a public referendum on a bus rapid transit system earlier this month, county Chairman Tim Lee is now embracing a public vote.

Lee said Tuesday it was his idea to call for a referendum and he would support one.

"I have never opposed it. In fact, I was the first person to suggest a voter referendum last year," Lee said in a Tuesday email sent to the MDJ by his deputy, Kellie Brownlow.

Lee's position on BRT sparked controversy following the May 26 vote by the Board of Commissioners to approve the county's long-range transportation planning guide. Bus Rapid Transit was included in that plan, although language requiring a public referendum was not. Passage of the plan prompted critics to accuse Lee of trying to slip BRT by the public without a public vote.

Questioned about that plan, Lee told the MDJ in a June 6 article he could not answer whether he would support a referendum on the BRT in the future. He also said he never intended to make the referendum a requirement, just an option for future commissioners.

"The BoC cannot legally bind a future board to a voter referendum or any other course of action," Lee said in the interview, adding, "If your question is what did I say versus what it is, that's really not important because there's a lot of things leading up to it. A lot of things have changed ... what's important is we worked together for that language, it was given consensus by the commission prior to getting printed."

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Commissioner Lisa Cupid said she supports the voter referendum and wants to stick with what has been "articulated publicly" by the county in the past.

"I think that it would be at its very least inconsistent with what we've communicated publicly about this project if the referendum didn't happen," Cupid said.

Ott said he "absolutely" supports a referendum for BRT.

"It's what we promised the public," Ott said. "That's what the board said they would do all the way during the SPLOST discussions."

Read more: [The Marietta Daily Journal - Lee commits to BRT referendum](#)

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**Kristine Hansen-Dederick**

**From:** Robert Hovey [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Thursday, June 18, 2015 3:21 PM  
**To:** Kristine Dederick  
**Cc:** Bob Hovey  
**Subject:** Environmental Assessment comment - "Voters get no say," June 10

Hi Christine

Please include the following June 9/10 AJC article in the official record for the Connect Cobb Open House June 29, 2015. Please confirm that you received this ok and it will be in the Environmental Assessment record.

Bob Hovey  
 [REDACTED]

**Print Headline = "Voters get no say on bus line"**

**No public vote needed for controversial BRT project**

Posted: 2:51 p.m. Tuesday, June 9, 2015

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By Dan Klepal - The Atlanta Journal-Constitution

Despite Cobb County Chairman Tim Lee's assurances over the past year that the public will decide if a controversial rapid transit bus system is built, the \$500 million project can now proceed with a simple majority vote of the county commission.

That detail is embedded in a 110-page transportation planning document that was approved by the commission May 26. Each of the four district commissioners say they thought that the planning document required a public referendum on the system when they voted for it.

"I thought that because that's what we were told," said commissioner Bob Ott, who does not support the project. "I came to that conclusion because of all the pledges made by the chairman."

Commissioner Lisa Cupid said she voted for the transportation plan "under the premise there would be a (BRT) referendum."

"Apparently, I didn't read the document carefully enough," she said. "We may need to reverse that."

Lee has not responded to phone messages and questions sent to him through email over the past week for this story.

Bus rapid transit, or BRT as it is known, would cut a path for buses only down U.S. 41 and through some of the most congested roads in metro Atlanta: from Kennesaw State, past the Big Chicken, down through the Cumberland area and the new Atlanta Braves stadium, before linking up with I-75 and rolling on to a MARTA station in Midtown.

Half of its cost would be paid by local taxpayers.

Ron Sifen, a Cobb resident and transit activist, does not support BRT because he believes there are better, more cost-effective ways to thin out congestion in the corridor. Sifen said Lee has repeatedly told the public that voters would have the final say on BRT.

Sifen said it's "an issue of government telling citizens one thing, then doing the opposite."

Tom Cheek said deceptive government leadership is becoming the norm in Cobb County. Cheek is a frequent county government observer who last year successfully fought for upgrades to the Cobb Medical Examiner's Office.

"This is part of a trend that I've observed lately where everything seems like a trick," Cheek said. "I know the chairman will say that I don't have expertise, but I know the difference between the truth and a lie."

Ott said at Tuesday's commission meeting that Lee will introduce a resolution next month saying there should be a referendum on BRT, if it proceeds.

**No 'sleight of hand'**

Lee has long supported bus rapid transit.

The chairman threw his political weight behind the project when it was part of the 2012 regional T-SPILOST, which was overwhelmingly rejected by Cobb voters. The project was estimated to cost \$1 billion at the time.

Then last year, after the project's cost was cut in half, Lee wanted to include a \$100 million line item in the 2016 special purpose sales tax project list that would help the county qualify for a \$250 million federal grant for BRT.

But district commissioners would not support the item for fear that its inclusion on the SPILOST project list would tip the vote against the six-year, \$756 million tax, which they say is vital to funding a variety of government needs.

In response, Lee removed the line item, which was clearly identified as part of the BRT project, and asked for the addition of \$75 million in intersection improvements along U.S. 41. Money allocated for those 10 projects would have qualified as matching funds for the federal BRT grant.

The change generated little support among district commissioners. Lance Lambertson, president of the Cobb Taxpayer's Association, called Lee's proposed change from a single line item to individual intersection improvements a "Trojan Bus."

Lee made his first promise for a public BRT referendum at a July 2014 commission meeting, during which the board approved placing the SPILOST tax referendum on ballots last November. Lee tried to

assure voters that they could vote in favor of the tax and not worry about the money being used to fund BRT.

"I just want to be clear on something," Lee said during the July meeting. "My intent, if the board sees fit in the future to consider bringing the (BRT) project forward ... it'll be done in a public environment. It'll be done — in my recommendation — in a separate election, to be held on its own merit ... and be voted on by the citizens of Cobb County ... by itself in an election-year ballot."

"There's nothing sleight of hand."

Ott said it was that comment — and others — that led him to assure the public during last month's meeting that approval of the county's transportation plan would not mean approval of BRT. "...It would take further action from the board, and then a referendum," he said.

Neither Lee nor Cobb DOT Director Faye DiMassimo, who was standing at the podium during Ott's comment and whose staff compiled the document, corrected the misstatement.

The Atlanta Journal-Constitution submitted three questions to DiMassimo last week, including whether Lee or County Manager David Hankerson directed her staff to leave the BRT referendum to the discretion of commissioners.

DiMassimo did not answer, but Lee's deputy chief Kellie Brownlow sent an email in response.

"Last week, the Cobb County Board of Commissioners adopted a forward thinking planning document that includes long-term innovative transportation alternatives to achieve regional connectivity," Brownlow's email says. "Instead of recognizing this as forward thinking, we received a line of questions that actually make it far more controversial than it is, particularly at this juncture."

Brownlow then asked the newspaper not to report that it asked questions of DiMassimo.

During the same May 26 meeting at which the transportation plan was approved, commissioners also approved submission of a federal grant application for \$20 million worth of intersection improvements down U.S. 41. The project includes building dedicated lanes at six intersections, so buses can zip around congestion.

The grant asks for \$10 million in federal funds, and says local SPILOST money could be used for the local share.

Neither DiMassimo nor Lee's office responded to the newspaper's question about whether those intersection improvements could be used to qualify for a larger BRT federal grant.

Bob Hovey

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**Kristine Hansen-Dederick**

**From:** Robert Hovey [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Thursday, June 18, 2015 2:48 PM  
**To:** Christine Dederick  
**Cc:** Bob Hovey  
**Subject:** Environmental Assessment comment - "Commissioners Support." MDJ June 9

Hi Christine  
Please include the following June 9 MDJ article in the official record for the Connect Cobb Oper. House June 29, 2015. Please confirm that you received this ok and it will be in the Environmental Assessment record.

Bob Hovey  
[REDACTED]

**Commissioners support referendum for BRT**

by Rudy Lassus

June 09, 2015 12:40 AM | 2015 | 7 min | 0 comments



**YES** **NO** **UNCOMMITTED**

MARIETTA — Cobb's four district commissioners are all in favor of putting a proposed bus rapid transit project to connect the county with Midtown Atlanta on the ballot for a voter referendum.

Cobb Chairman Tim Lee told the MDJ last week he "could not answer right now" whether he would personally advocate putting the BRT on the ballot, but the other four members of the Board of Commissioners all said they supported a voter referendum.

On Monday, Lee offered a clarification to his previous statements.

"I certainly do not oppose a referendum if the (Board of Commissioners) chooses to move in that direction once the details of the project are known," Lee said in an email. "There are too many unknowns — including project scope, timing, cost and available funding sources — to make a definitive statement today. It is always my policy to make sure I have all of the relative facts in front of me before I make a declarative statement about how I am going to vote on any issue."

The BRT is a public transit option the county is considering that would begin at Kennesaw State University and end at the MARTA Arts Center Station. Most of the BRT's 25.3-mile route is along Cobb Parkway, which would see dedicated lanes built for the buses to travel in, according to county documents.

The project was included in the recent update to the county's long-range transportation planning guide — the Cobb County Comprehensive Transportation Plan — which lists projects the county could consider implementing over the next 15 years.

Commissioner JoAnn Birrell said she supports letting the voters decide whether the county should pursue the project because of the size and magnitude and the area that it's going to service" affects the entire county.

"All I can assure you and the voters — the public — is that if BRT comes before the Board of Commissioners while I'm a commissioner, I will do my best to be a referendum," Birrell said. "That is my intent and it has been all along."

As to whether her district would support the BRT project, Birrell said it depends on when the BRT comes up. The lines of Cobb's four districts are changing in the next few years, and after the new lines take effect, her district will include all of CSI, which is proposed to be the northern endpoint of the BRT.

"At a time before us now, the majority of the people in my district now that I heard from were not in favor of the BRT," Birrell said. "But when my district changes, it could be different; there could be more support for it. I don't know until I get there."

The new district lines will take effect for voting purposes in January 2016, Birrell said, but she won't officially be representing these new areas until January 2017.

Commissioner Bob Weatherford also committed to putting the project on the ballot.

"If it comes up in the next three years when I'm on the Board of Commissioners, I would vote to put it in a referendum, and I think my fellow commissioners would do so," Weatherford said.

However, Weatherford stressed that the sitting Board of Commissioners cannot bind future boards to holding the referendum, which is why a referendum requirement wasn't included in the transportation plan.

"It's 15 years from now, we can't require, legally, them to do it," Weatherford said. "We can suggest they do it and give them the authority to do it, but they're the ones that make the decision. ... If they decide not to, that's the elected officials' prerogative to do that, and it's up to the citizens to decide if elected officials did what they want them to do."

Commissioner Lisa Cupid said she supports the voter referendum and said putting the project to the public for a vote has been "articulated publicly" by the county in the past.

"I think that it would be at the very least inconsistent with what we've communicated publicly about that project if the referendum didn't happen," Cupid said.

Cupid said she's not sure how her district would vote if the project was put on the ballot.

"I think the constituents in District 4 are very supportive of transit, but BRT is not a project that has direct impact to this area. ... I think if they see bus rapid transit, they'll support the concept in general, but I think for some who are peeling back the layers and observing that there is no direct impact to District 4, it raises more questions about the project," Cupid said.

Commissioner Bob Ott said the BRT should "absolutely" be put on a referendum.

"It's what we promised the public," Ott said. "That's what the board said they would do all the way during the SPOB1 discussions, and it's the right thing to do. ... It's the right thing to do because in all the discussions with the people that came and talked about BRT and mass transit and everything, it was a commitment that was made. And if you're going to make a commitment to the public, you need to honor it."

Ott said he doesn't think the east Cobb residents he represents on the board support the project.

"There may be some support in the Cumberland area, but I think overall, the district is not for it," Ott said.

Read more: The Marietta Daily Journal - Commissioners support referendum for BRT

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**Kristine Hansen-Dederick**

**From:** Robert Hovey  
**Sent:** Thursday, June 18, 2015 2:37 PM  
**To:** Christine Dederick  
**Cc:** Bob Hovey  
**Subject:** Environmental Assessment comment - Safer June 9

Hi Christine

Please include the following June 8/9 Op-Ed by Ron Sifer in the MDJ in the official record for the Connect Cobb Open House June 29, 2015. Please confirm that you received this ok and it will be in the Environmental Assessment record.

Bob Hovey

**Referendum promised; referendum taken away**

by Ron Sifer



At the Cobb Board of Commissioners (BOC) meeting on May 26, 2015, the commissioners adopted the new Comprehensive Transportation Plan (CTP).

The CTP includes the widely opposed Cobb Parkway Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) proposal. Some commissioners wanted language added to the CTP to make it clear that inclusion of the BRT in the CTP did not mean that it had been approved or that any decision had been made for this project to move forward.

During the commissioners discussion of the CTP before the vote, at the May 26 BOC meeting, the commissioners told the public that language had been added to the CTP that before the BRT project could move forward, it would have to be approved by the BOC, and it would also have to be approved by the voters in a referendum.

I decided to check the language to be sure that it said what it was supposed to say.

The part about BRT having to be approved by the BOC was worded exactly as stated by the commissioners at the BOC meeting.

However, the language in the CTP document posted on the county's CobbMotion website says "If deemed necessary by the BOC,

(emphasis added) it will be put in a referendum of the voters of Cobb County."

As currently worded, this language does not even recommend that a referendum should take place. This language does nothing more than to give future commissioners an OK to not hold the referendum.

Is this just one more attempted deception in a long line of attempted deceptions regarding the BRT project?

At the July 22, 2015 BOC meeting, the BOC voted to put a new SPLOST on the ballot, which was approved by voters last November. In the weeks preceding the BOC approval, to go forward with the SPLOST referendum.

Cobb County claimed that BRT had been removed from the SPLOST list even though it was clearly still included on the SPLOST list.

Then Cobb County broke the BRT up into a bunch of different components of the BRT and included the pieces of the BRT project on the list. Cobb then said, OK, the BRT is now off the list, even though these component projects were still labeled as "BRT."

So then, Cobb County kept all of those BRT component projects on the list, but removed the words BRT, even though they were clearly still the same projects.

Fortunately, Commissioners Lisa Cupid, JoAnn Birrell and Bob Orr insisted on removing the disguised BRT component projects from the SPLOST list before the SPLOST went on the ballot.

At that same July 22, 2015 BOC meeting, the BOC also represented that BRT would not move forward unless approved by the voters in a referendum. This has also been discussed at commissioner town hall meetings since last July. And as pointed out in Hillary Buschel's article in the MDJ June 6, there are additional documented times when Cobb citizens were led to believe that BRT would have to be approved by Cobb voters in a referendum.

When I brought this to the attention of Cobb County last week, I got two basic responses:

1 They can't obligate future commissioners, and

2 A lot of finger pointing saying somebody else was at fault.

It doesn't matter who is at fault. The BOC has represented to the citizens of Cobb County for the last 10 months that in order for BRT to move forward it would have to be approved by Cobb voters in a referendum. And now we have actual language that is nothing more than a blanket OK for future commissioners to NOT hold the referendum. Regardless of who is at fault, this needs to get fixed.

The June 6 MDJ article says Cobb County is now denying that it ever said the referendum would be "required." Once again, that's not the point. The county spent 10 months leading Cobb citizens to believe that BRT would not move forward unless it was approved by Cobb voters in a referendum.

I have suggested alternative wording to Cobb County: "While not obligating future commissions, it is the intent of the current Board of Commissioners that before BRT could move forward it would also be put to a referendum of the voters of Cobb County."

This would be reasonably consistent with what the BOC represented to the citizens of Cobb County, and would make it clear that future BOCs are not obligated to follow this recommendation.

If this is going to be fixed, it appears that it will have to be fixed by the district commissioners. I am asking the district commissioners to revise the referendum language in the CTP to be better aligned with what the BOC has told the citizens of Cobb County.

These commissioners can't fix this. I'm asking all of the district commissioners to work together to do the right thing.

*Bob Hovey is a member and past president of the Cobb County Civic Coalition. His views do not necessarily represent the views of CCC.*

Read more: The Marietta Daily Journal - Referendum promised referendums taken away

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**Kristine Hansen-Dederick**

**From:** Robert Hovey [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Thursday, June 18, 2015 2:24 PM  
**To:** hansen\_dederick@sycamoreconsulting.net  
**Cc:** Bob Hovey  
**Subject:** Environmental Assessment comment - Savage June 16

Hi Christine

Please include the following June 16 Op-Ed by Larry Savage in the AJC in the official record for the Connect Cobb Open House June 29, 2015. Please confirm that you received this ok and it will be in the Environmental Assessment record.

Bob Hovey  
 [REDACTED]

**BRT line an express to taxpayer wallets**

Posted: 3:00 p.m. Monday, June 15, 2015

Email [Facebook](#) [39](#) [Twitter](#) [0](#) [ShareThis](#) [39](#)

By Larry Savage

Cobb County has again found controversy in mundane activities. Georgia law requires the counties to periodically update future plans, in this case the Comprehensive Transportation Plan that is revised to reflect a vision to the year 2040.

The controversy erupts over the inclusion of the "aspirational" plan for a county-owned-and-operated transit line that would connect Kennesaw State University to the Cumberland area, roughly following Cobb Parkway, then on into Atlanta to the Arts Center Station in Midtown, using the existing HOV lanes. The proposed system, known as Bus Rapid Transit (BRT), would operate on a dedicated bus-only roadway from KSU to Cumberland.

by Conversation: Transportation

bus system just one option

Opinion: Fewer guns, not more, at airports

In its most basic form, the problem is money. Such a system will cost no less than a half billion dollars, and likely more. Operating it will require millions each year in operating subsidies. Once established, the same pressure that built it will push to expand it, requiring more billions to build and

more millions to operate. Even if unreliable federal funding helps launch a BRT line, the long-term financial burden falls on the citizens of Cobb County.

Here the reader might ask, "but what about the benefits of building a transit system?" referring to promised improvements in air quality, reduced travel times and reduced traffic congestion.

Those benefits might be called "aspirational" as well. After years of discussion, probing, studying, and debating, we have nothing that actually identifies any benefits that might accrue from building and operating such a system.

**from Opinion**

Intervention should become thing of past for U.S.  
 It makes you laugh B.C. It'll make you cry  
 Way Conversation: Leadership  
 g the "DNA" of fathers  
 Haven't Done, Clear, and Green"  
 from Opinion

The idea for mass transit in the Cobb Parkway corridor originated with commercial real estate investors who felt that transit would focus new development into the area bookended by the Cumberland CID and the Town Center CID in Kennesaw. A feasibility study concluded that it was feasible but difficult, owing to the hilly terrain, especially near Cumberland. The question examined in the feasibility study was, could it be built, not whether it should be built.

Nevertheless, this concept became the platform for every mention of transit in Cobb County. Since federal financial support would be essential, the required alternatives analysis was initiated in 2010. This was a study that explored a variety of alternatives for transit development. The study determined that light rail would cost more than \$3 billion. Ultimately, the locally preferred alternative (LPA) became BRT, which was estimated at more than \$1 billion.

At this point, many millions of dollars have been spent on studies and plans. Countless meetings consuming countless hours have been invested by county staff, consultants and citizens to create an impression that all are on board with whatever the latest idea might be. If the project were green-lighted today, hardly anyone could claim to know what would be coming.

And what about the benefits? The real estate investors who started this discussion years ago may still believe that transit will create opportunity for them. There is little or nothing to point to that confirms any other benefits.

For all the studies and reports, there is no reliable assessment that construction of the BRT or any other transit system will have positive effects on traffic congestion, air quality, transportation service, or anything else. Various parties have surveyed public opinion about transit, but never has there been an assessment of the market for transit riders.

Most telling, there has never been an assessment that compares the benefits that might be derived from a billion dollars spent on transit versus a billion dollars invested in roads and bridges for cars and trucks.

Cobb leaders already are trying to saddle taxpayers with unprecedented debt for the new Braves stadium and unknown obligations for additional related infrastructure. Buying into BRT or other "no ending" investment seems a bit too much for many.

*Cobb County resident Larry Savage ran for Cobb County Commission chairman in 2010 and 2012.*

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33a

Project Comment Form

\*Name/Organization TOM CHEEK  
 Address 2800 MULLINS PASS  
 City, State and Zipcode MARIETTA GA  
 Email TOMCHEEK@MSW.COM

Please list below any comments concerning the Connect Cobb Project.

I AM NOT IN FAVOR OF THE PROJECT  
DUE TO THE FACT THAT PROPER PROCEDURE  
WAS NOT FOLLOWED, AND THERE WAS  
NOT ENOUGH PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT IN THE  
ALTERNATIVES ANALYSIS.  
THERE WERE 53 ACTIVITIES IN THE AA,  
AND THE PUBLIC WAS NOT INVITED TO  
ANY OF THEM

I BELIEVE THAT THIS PROJECT SHOULD BE  
RE-EVALUATED WITH MORE PUBLIC INPUT -  
THEN IF IT IS THE LPA - I WOULD BE  
MORE IN FAVOR.

Please send by July 14, 2015 to  
 Mr. Marty Sawell, Connect Cobb EA Project Manager  
 Cobb County DOT  
 1890 County Services Pkwy  
 Marietta, Georgia 30008-4014  
 info@sycamoreconsulting.net

\*Contact information provided to a government agency may be subject to public release as required by Georgia's open records law.

FTA and Cobb County DOT Public Hearing  
 Open House Meeting on 06/29/2015

33b

Page 2

1 COMMENTS BY:

2 Tom Cheek  
 3 2800 Mullins Pass  
 4 Marietta, GA 30064

5 I'll start with just saying that I'm against  
 6 the project reaching the approval stage because I don't  
 7 think there was enough public involvement and public  
 8 input in the alternatives analysis stage. There were  
 9 53 events, 53 meetings, and the public in general was  
 10 not invited to any of those 53. There were business  
 11 stakeholders, special interest groups in three cases,  
 12 but mostly it was limited to business, commerce, DOT  
 13 and so forth, and not to the public in general. So if  
 14 you think about it that way, there were 53 meetings.  
 15 This is the 54th, and this is the first one that the  
 16 public in general has been invited to.

17 I also do not think there is a consensus over  
 18 whether a locally preferred alternative has been  
 19 chosen. The alternatives analysis, according to the  
 20 Federal Transportation Administration definition, is  
 21 not finished until a locally preferred alternative, an  
 22 LPA, is chosen. Our Board of Commissioners has not  
 23 voted on an LPA, there's been no referendum on an LPA,  
 24 and the original LPA for a \$1.1 billion solution was  
 25 changed to the current solution without the current  
 solution being compared to the other choices in the



1 alternatives analysis. So we got halfway done with the  
2 comparison and then changed this choice without going  
3 back and comparing them.

4 I believe that the studies are incomplete  
5 because the studies were done before there was a  
6 two lane reversible lane project for I-75 and before we  
7 knew that the Braves stadium was coming, so the studies  
8 are out of date and would not reflect our current or  
9 future issues.

10 I'm going to point out some specific examples  
11 of mismanagement in the process. First, the  
12 Environmental Assessment document states that the Board  
13 of Commissioners, who is the sole governing authority  
14 for Cobb County, accepted an LPA at a meeting on  
15 February 28, 2012 when, in fact, no vote was taken, and  
16 the Board of Commissioners did not adopt any resolution  
17 regarding the LPA even to this date. According to the  
18 Director of the Cobb County Department of  
19 Transportation, there has been no LPA selected.

20 The Director of the Cobb County Department of  
21 Transportation describes the alternatives analysis as  
22 being complete, but states that an LPA has not been  
23 officially adopted. According to the definition of the  
24 Federal Transit Administration, the alternatives  
25 analysis is a four-step process with the fourth step

1 defined as selection of a locally preferred  
2 alternative.

3 Further, the alternatives analysis itself was  
4 financed by a Federal 5309 grant for \$1.36 million, and  
5 seemingly this AA was not completed within the required  
6 two years and may not have been completed at all since  
7 there is currently no LPA.

8 There is also no consensus on financing this  
9 project. The Cobb County Department of Transportation  
10 tried and failed to have this project included in a  
11 local SPLOST. A Local Transportation SPLOST or a  
12 T-SPLOST referendum included this project, and it  
13 failed by a two-to-one margin. The Director of the  
14 Cobb County Department of Transportation wrote to the  
15 FTA promising a March 2016 bond referendum, but that  
16 path has since been abandoned. There's simply no local  
17 funding option approved or even on the horizon for this  
18 project.

19 Language used to include this solution in the  
20 County's long-range planning document was so misleading  
21 that four of the five commissioners later voted on a  
22 subsequent resolution just to try to clear up the  
23 confusion.

24 Again, public input for this project is  
25 lacking. While there have been several documented

1 stakeholder meetings, public input has been limited to  
2 targeted groups. And when this public hearing was  
3 scheduled, the hearing is described as an, "Open house  
4 to provide information," on the project. Poll  
5 questions are leading and show results that have been  
6 misinterpreted by the Cobb County Department of  
7 Transportation. Contrary opinions such as the results  
8 of the Transportation SPLOST vote are not mentioned in  
9 the grant application or EA documentation.

10 In general it seems that the goals of the Cobb  
11 County Department of Transportation were identified  
12 early in the process and that the process was altered  
13 to meet the goals by ignoring public opinion and by  
14 ignoring the governing authority, the Board of  
15 Commissioners.

16 The Cobb County Department of Transportation  
17 seems determined to also ignore this directive from the  
18 FTA, and I'm quoting the directive. The locally  
19 preferred alternative and all of its costs and benefits  
20 is the -- emphasis on "the," their emphasis -- is the  
21 project that local stakeholders are expected to  
22 implement and implicitly becomes the project the FTA  
23 may potentially fund. Therefore, the alternatives  
24 studied must be objectively defined, and planning level  
25 predictions of their impacts must be reasonably

1 accurate.

2 COMMENTS BY:

3 Mary Rose Barnes  
4 4756 Oakdale Road  
5 Smyrna, Georgia 30080

6 I have a lot of issues with the proposed  
7 project, one being that I believe it's basically a  
8 development issue and not a traffic issue. It will not  
9 solve those problems. It does not reach the real area  
10 which needs more transit, the Southwest Cobb area, the  
11 Austell area.

12 However, all these things aside, I have a deep  
13 embedded fear of hundreds of people getting off the  
14 buses and crossing Cobb Parkway. The idea of that many  
15 pedestrians on Cobb Parkway is absolutely terrifying.  
16 I'm thinking of people getting off the bus, whether or  
17 not there's a green light or whatever, and there might  
18 be a straggler, a woman getting off with a stroller and  
19 two little kids coming back. Without any way for an  
20 overpass for pedestrians, it cannot be safe.

21 - - - - -

22

23

24

25



Northwest Transit Corridor  
Environmental Assessment

EN ESPAÑOL 34



Project Comment Form

\*Name/Organization GABRIEL RUEDA  
Address \_\_\_\_\_  
City, State and Zipcode \_\_\_\_\_  
Email GABRIELRUEDA@YAHOO.COM

Please list below any comments concerning the Connect Cobb Project.

- MUY BUENA ORGANIZACION DEL FUENTO
- LOS DOCUMENTOS DISPONIBLES EN ESPAÑOL SON DE CALIDAD SUPERIOR! QUE BUEN EQUIPO TRADUCCION DEBEN TENER 😊
- EL PROYECTO TIENE CIFRAS ATRACTIVAS QUE PODRIAN PRESENTARSE ~~AL PUEBLO~~ PARA LOS USUARIOS:
  - TIEMPO QUE SE NECESITA EL USUARIO AL UTILIZAR EL SISTEMA DE EXTREMO A EXTREMO COMPARANDO CON ALTERNATIVAS
  - CALIDAD DE LOS BUSES (TANTO COMO COMFORT)
  - EXPECTATIVA DE COSTO POR UTILIZACION
  - TRANSFERIBILIDAD A COCT/MARTA
- SE ESPERA MAS CONGESTION EN COBB PKWY COMO RESULTADO DE ESTE SISTEMA ART?
- CUALDO ESTIMADO A LOS CONTRIBUYENTES?
- SUBSIDIO DE DONDE?

Please send by July 14, 2015 to  
Mr. Marty Sewell, Connect Cobb EA Project Manager  
Cobb County DCT  
1890 County Services Pkwy  
Marietta, Georgia 30008-4C14  
info@sycamoreconsulting.net

\*Contact information provided to a government agency may be subject to public release as required by Georgia's open records law.

34 (English)

TRANSLATION

Gabriel Rueda - Gabriel.Rueda@yahoo.com

- The event was very well organized
- The documents available in Spanish are excellent! You must rely on a great translating team
- The project has some interesting characteristics for the users:
  - The time saved by the user when utilizing the system from end to end in comparison to the alternatives
  - The quality and comfort of the buses
  - The cost expectation by use
  - The transferability to COCT/MARTA
- Is more congestion expected on Cobb Pkwy as a result of this ART System?
- What is the estimated cost for taxpayers?
- Where is subsidized from?



Northwest Transit Corridor  
Environmental Assessment

# Finding of No Significant Impact

35



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Project Comment Form

\*Name/Organization Patricia Burns  
Address 10 Concord Rd  
City, State and Zipcode Smyrna, GA 30080  
Email PATRICIA@BURNS@COB.COM

Please list below any comments concerning the Connect Cobb Project.

Totally support mass transit & public transportation.

Cobb Co needs to move forward & lead the state not drag our feet on this issue

would like to see the proposed bus serving by The Marietta Transfer Station to make travel easier

Please send by July 14, 2015 to  
Mr. Marty Sewell, Connect Cobb EA Project Manager  
Cobb County DOT  
1890 County Services Pkwy  
Marietta, Georgia 30008 4014  
info@sycamoreconsulting.net

\*Contact information provided to a government agency may be subject to public release as required by Georgia's open records law

FTA and Cobb County DOT Public Hearing  
Open House Meeting on 06/29/2015

Page 6

1 accurate.  
2 COMMENTS BY:  
3 Mary Rose Barnes  
4 4756 Oakdale Road  
5 Smyrna, Georgia 30080

36 a

6 I have a lot of issues with the proposed  
7 project, one being that I believe it's basically a  
8 development issue and not a traffic issue. It will not  
9 solve those problems. It does not reach the real area  
10 which needs more transit, the Southwest Cobb area, the  
11 Austell area.

12 However, all these things aside, I have a deep  
13 embedded fear of hundreds of people getting off the  
14 buses and crossing Cobb Parkway. The idea of that many  
15 pedestrians on Cobb Parkway is absolutely terrifying.  
16 I'm thinking of people getting off the bus, whether or  
17 not there's a green light or whatever, and there might  
18 be a straggler, a woman getting off with a stroller and  
19 two little kids coming back. Without any way for an  
20 overpass for pedestrians, it cannot be safe.

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36b

**Kristine Hansen-Dederick**

**From:** [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 14, 2015 8:33 AM  
**To:** info@sycamoreconsulting.net  
**Subject:** Connect Cobb

I attended the Connect Cobb meeting last week. Upon entering, I was immediately struck by the fact that the sign-up sheets for further information called for delineation of ethnicity, and specifically stated a very limited number of choices. What is the purpose for asking for such information? Will different groups get different "targeted" information? I refused to sign up and this first impression left a "bad taste in my mouth" for the "presentation."

Southwest Cobb is the area that desperately needs a more expansive public transit. This project would do nothing to provide public transportation for this section and yet it would place an unfair additional financial burden on the citizens of that section of the county.

There is no excuse for spending millions and millions of dollars of our tax money for construction of the project, plus unknown maintenance costs, ostensibly for traffic improvement, when your OWN STUDY states that the ride time and traffic congestion would be WORSE after all the initial outlay. It is obvious that contracting companies, engineering companies and real estate developers would benefit, but NOT the public that the project purports to benefit.

I was appalled that one reader board at last week's meeting listed the extensive loss and degradation of the habitat of the endangered northern long-eared bat, Chattahoochee crayfish and shiner was listed as a BENEFIT! Bats are NECESSARY to reduce the population of mosquitoes. The massive deforestation would benefit the MOSQUITOES, certainly not the citizens or the protected species!

In fact, there was no mention of any of the drawbacks of this boondoggle at the meeting, or any of the information provided. ANY massive project has negative affects and such drawbacks should be divulged, with real solutions for amelioration offered.

This project was clearly designed as a DEVELOPMENT project, not a transportation project. It would severely limit left turns on Cobb Parkway, causing massive traffic congestion and huge losses to the businesses in this corridor. Cobb Parkway traffic is already a nightmare. I do not wish for my tax money to be used to make the traffic WORSE!

I learned at the meeting that there are no plans for either bridges or tunnels for the busses. Therefore, the riders leaving and entering the buses would have to cross Cobb Parkway on foot! Without the massive EXTRA expense for such bridge or tunnels,

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riders, turned pedestrians, would be placed in the extreme danger of being struck by vehicles on Cobb Parkway! I would NEVER utilize such an unsafe system.

These BRT plans need to be scrapped and the 10X fully implemented as soon as feasible. The 10X plan is actually a TRANSPORTATION plan that would provide safe, efficient transit at an AFFORDABLE cost.

Mary Rose Barnes  
 Cobb County homeowner

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 Version: 2014.0.4821 / Virus Database: 4365/10224 - Release Date: 07/13/15

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37a

**Kristine Hansen-Dederick**

**From:** Craig Kootsillas [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, June 24, 2015 5:49 PM  
**To:** hansen-dederick@sycamoreconsulting.net  
**Subject:** FTA Comments

Prior to beginning the EA, you told the FTA this:

For more information on this message, click on the links below. For more information on this message, click on the links below. For more information on this message, click on the links below.

Here:

Review of FTA Comments on Northwest Transit Corridor Environmental Assessment # 2015

Review of FTA Comments on Northwest Transit Corridor Environmental Assessment # 2015

Did you ever tell them you DID NOT intend to follow this process?

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**Craig Kootsillas**  
 [REDACTED]

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 Version: 2014.0.4800 / Virus Database: 365/10089 - Release Date: 06/24/15

37b

**Wilson, Debbie**

**From:** Craig Kootsillas [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, June 24, 2015 3:16 PM  
**To:** Wilson, Debbie  
**Subject:** Connect Cobb EA

Good afternoon,

I am a freelance writer and I have been following the development of this plan for many years.

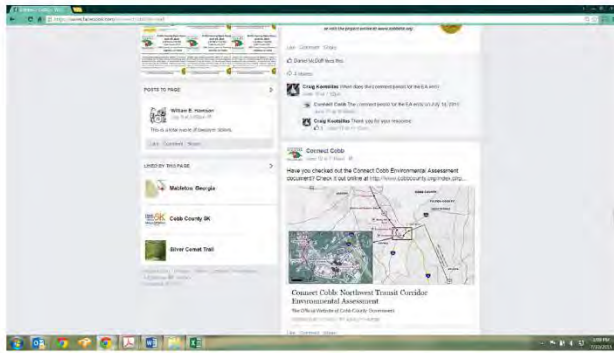
Was there any other purpose to do an EA other than not have to complete an Environmental Impact Statement?

Thank you

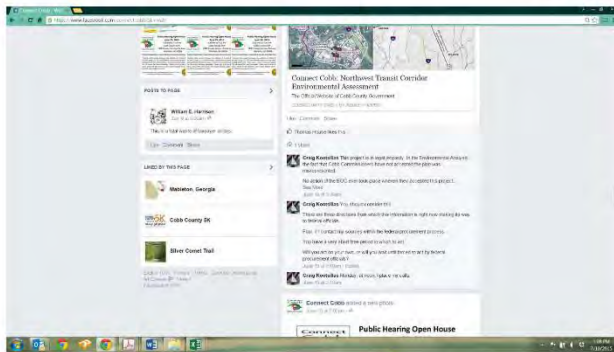
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**Craig Kootsillas**  
 freelance writer  
 [REDACTED]

37c



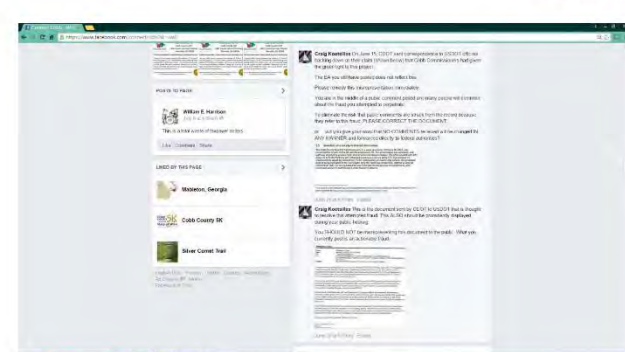
37d and 37e



37f



37g and 37h



38a

**Kristine Hansen-Dederick**

**From:** D Jenkins [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Monday, June 29, 2015 4:58 PM  
**To:** info@sycamoreconsulting.net  
**Subject:** Connect Cobb

I am vehemently opposed to public funding of any transit project. It is grossly unfair to voting taxpayers who do not use the service.

*Douglas L. Jenkins*

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Version: 2014.0.4813 / Virus Database: 4365/10123 - Release Date: 06/29/15

38b





39

**Kristine Hansen-Dederick**

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**From:** Diane Fallaw [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Monday, June 29, 2015 2:34 PM  
**To:** info@sycamoreconsulting.net  
**Subject:** A.R.T.

The transit system is something that I would use. Linking it to Marta is sensible as it would give the public another way to get around Atlanta and the airport.

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40

**Kristine Hansen-Dederick**

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**From:** Stephen Butler [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Monday, June 29, 2015 8:32 PM  
**To:** info@sycamoreconsulting.net  
**Subject:** Connect Cobb

After viewing this plan I am strongly in favor of it. The increase in development from the Braves to the ever expanding KSU campus will increase transportation needs in this corridor. From the information provided it seems to be better on the environment as well. Please keep me informed.

Regards,

Stephen Butler  
[REDACTED]  
Connect Public Relations  
<http://connectpublicrelations.net>

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41

**Kristine Hansen-Dederick**

**From:** Jalisa Stomant [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Friday, June 26, 2015 4:04 PM  
**To:** info@sycamoreconsulting.net  
**Subject:** Sunday transportation

Hi When will there be a meeting on having Sunday service I work and don't have a vehicle it very difficult for me to get to work I see more and more individuals riding your transit each day it would be nice to consider this since you are a public transportation service this is really affecting as a single parent and have to provide sometimes I have to call out I tried working out a different schedule with my employer but they won't allow me to be off please please help.

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Version: 2014.0.4813 / Virus Database: 4365/10104 - Release Date: 06/26/15

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42

**Kristine Hansen-Dederick**

**From:** James Astute [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Monday, July 06, 2015 10:37 AM  
**To:** info@sycamoreconsulting.net  
**Subject:** Comments on Connect Cobb EA

The BRT is a program that would provide very little relief to the traffic problem in Cobb and it comes at a very high cost. Plus it only serves a small part of the population in the county. In business, such a program would NEVER come close to meeting the requirements for Return On Investment (ROI).

Jim Astute  
East Cobb

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Version: 2014.0.4813 / Virus Database: 4365/10175 - Release Date: 07/06/15

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43

**Kristine Hansen-Dederick**

**From:** Jan Barton [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Friday, July 03, 2015 3:33 PM  
**To:** info@sycamoreconsulting.net  
**Subject:** Comments on Connect Cobb EA

Dear Sir or Madam:

We have reviewed this project and are writing to tell you that we DO NOT want the proposed "Connect Cobb EA" otherwise perhaps known as BRT. The citizens of Cobb have repeatedly voted overwhelmingly that they do NOT want to go to transit in Cobb County. The proposed system is bad for the citizens of Cobb for the following reasons.

1. It is too expensive a proposal for what it delivers. It is unsustainable and will require huge maintenance and operating expenses that will not be covered by ticket costs.
  2. It will put the small businesses along the route out of business. People will not be able to turn freely into those businesses any longer without going miles out of their way.
  3. The pedestrian safety issues associated with this proposed finished project have not been addressed. Excessive, expensive pedestrian bridges will have to be implemented and will be problematic for people not in the best physical condition.
  4. Highway 41 is a major route, not intended for "bicyclist areas" and slower traffic.
  5. We are very concerned that this will eventually be sold to MARTA.
- Again, the citizens of Cobb have overwhelmingly repeatedly voted that they DO NOT want MARTA.

There are too many reasons to oppose this project to list them all here. We do NOT want to encourage Federal funds for a project we do NOT want and do NOT need.

We are counting on the rejection of this project.

Sincerely,  
 Jan and Jon Barton  
 Marietta, GA

PS, The Braves are already costing us too much. They have taken money from the citizens of this county without a voter referendum and will continue to cost us dearly. The new proposed Braves pedestrian bridge cost continues to escalate. To this day, we do not know how much that will cost us. We do not need "Braves Rapid Transit" on top of that.

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 Version: 2014.0.4813 / Virus Database: 4365/10175 - Release Date: 07/06/15

44a

**Kristine Hansen-Dederick**

**From:** David Burch [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Saturday, July 04, 2015 10:02 AM  
**To:** jrbto@sycamoreconsulting.net  
**Subject:** BRT

BRT, there must be a better way which is less expensive and less intrusive to impeding traffic, and much safer for boarding and departing passengers. Keep working at it! A better solution is there. David Burch 2075 Westwood Road, SE, Smyrna [REDACTED]

No virus found in this message.  
 Checked by AVG - [www.avg.com](http://www.avg.com)  
 Version: 2014.0.4813 / Virus Database: 4365/10175 - Release Date: 07/06/15

44b

**Kristine Hansen-Dederick**

**From:** David Bunch [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 14, 2015 9:40 AM  
**To:** info@sycamoreconsulting.net  
**Subject:** Connect Cobb

Scrap the BRT... 1) not accomplish the need for transportation, 2) too expensive, 3) exclusive for a few, 4) there are much better ways, 5) there are much less costly ways to accomplish the needs. Thanks. D Bunch 2075 Westwood Road, SE

No virus found in this message.

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Version: 2014.0.4821 / Virus Database: 4365/10228 - Release Date: 07/14/15

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45

**Kristine Hansen-Dederick**

**From:** A CHAMBERS [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Saturday, July 04, 2015 10:05 AM  
**To:** info@sycamoreconsulting.net

I oppose the rapid transit bus proposal. We should utilize and organize the CCT to operate a rapid transit line. Some of the their bus lines are operating with only several passengers riding. The CCT lines could be made more efficient and fill the needs of our county instead of reinventing a new wheel we need to deal with what is readily available. Our commissioners seem to think Cobb citizens have deep pockets. Enough is enough!!! We need a commission with a better vision of the bottom line and to think about stopping the waste. A concerned taxpayer for 50 plus years.

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46

**Kristine Hansen-Dederick**

**From:** DanBStephens [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Sunday, July 05, 2015 2:01 PM  
**To:** info@sycamoreconsulting.net  
**Subject:** Comments for Bus Rapid Trail

Mr. Marty Sewell,

Despite objections from some citizens to any kind of transit, I see a real need for it in the area that has been studied. Those who are most informed seem to be in favor of the BRT and that includes me. Somehow we must address the situation of need for transportation that can move groups of people rather than simply depending on cars. Additionally, I will always be in favor of transportation that provides a way for those needing jobs to get to the jobs available. Those of us blessed with several vehicles might sometimes ignore the needs of the ones in our community who need our assistance most. I pray more people will favor this than agree to be a NIMBY one more time. Our area is growing and that is a good thing. Cobb must embrace these new ways in order to continue our economic expansion and improving our lives here in Cobb.

Sincerely,

Dan B Stephens, MD  
 [REDACTED]  
 Marietta 30060

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 Version: 2014.0.4813 / Virus Database: 4365/10175 - Release Date: 07/06/15

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47

**Kristine Hansen-Dederick**

**From:** Richard Decker [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Friday, July 03, 2015 4:02 PM  
**To:** info@sycamoreconsulting.net  
**Subject:** Comments on Connect Cobb EA

Who in their right mind could think that trying to turn a major US highway (US41, which runs the length of the country) into a pedestrian friendly corridor is a good idea? Businesses along that highway depend on vehicle traffic to bring in customers. It would be extremely dangerous for pedestrians to try to cross a busy multilane highway. Tunnels and/or bridges will be dangerous and/or unsightly. This is not the area to try to build an urban pedestrian mall. The cost alone will be prohibitive, even if this project were needed. There are better alternatives.

We are opposed to any effort to build the Cobb County BRT.

Richard Decker  
 Virginia Decker  
 Vinings, Cobb County residents for 33 years

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 Version: 2014.0.4813 / Virus Database: 4365/10175 - Release Date: 07/06/15

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**Kristine Hansen-Dederick**

48

**From:** tttdudley [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Saturday, July 04, 2015 3:15 PM  
**To:** info@sycamoreconsulting.net

I FEEL THIS IS A TOTAL WASTE OF TAXPAYER MONEY, JUST LIKE THE MONEY SPENT FOR MILLIONAIRE SPORTS OWNERS. THERE ARE MUCH BETTER WAYS TO IMPROVE TRANSPORTATION IN THIS COUNTY INSTEAD OF ANOTHER BOONDOGGLE LIKE THE ONE PROPOSED. MY ONLY HOPE IS THAT VOTERS WILL TURN OUT ANYONE SUPPORTING THIS PROJECT OR AT THE VERY LEAST ALLOW VOTERS TO VOTE ON THIS PROJECT.

TERRY DUDLEY

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 Version: 2014.0.4813 / Virus Database: 4365/10175 - Release Date: 07/06/15

**Kristine Hansen-Dederick**

49

**From:** Megan Escalona [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Thursday, July 02, 2015 9:45 AM  
**To:** info@sycamoreconsulting.net  
**Subject:** IN favor of Marta Station in Cobb County

Hello,  
 I am writing to disclose my favorable "vote" for a public transportation option in Marietta/Cobb/Cumberland - specifically a Marta station leading to the new Braves stadium. Traffic is already terrible heading to the northwest suburbs and the "improvements" they have suggested, including adding an extra center lane that will change directions based on traffic, will only alleviate our current issues and not address the influx of traffic we will have as a result of the games. We are happy to have the Braves here, but we are silly if we don't think that a Marta station and rapid bus transit and even potentially light rail to the northwestern suburbs is not a necessity. Let's make Cobb look good, and be smart. I would be willing to pay extra sales taxes or opt for a split tax to ensure this happens. Please let me know what else I need to do to ensure that my local government officials know my stance.

Thank you

-  
**Megan Escalona**  
 [REDACTED]

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 Version: 2014.0.4813 / Virus Database: 4365/10175 - Release Date: 07/06/15

**Kristine Hansen-Dederick**

50

**From:** Kurt Graham [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Saturday, July 04, 2015 6:51 AM  
**To:** info@sycamoreconsulting.net  
**Subject:** Connect Cobb EA Comments

Connect Cobb BRT is not a cost-effective project. There are other alternatives to improve transit service on Cobb Parkway at a tiny fraction of the cost of BRT. Connect Cobb BRT will not only be ridiculously expensive to build, but also extremely expensive to operate and maintain. Transportation improvements on Cobb Parkway can be achieved in other ways that would result in far lower operating and maintenance costs.

This road is a major US highway. Attempting to convert it into some sort of local city street is not consistent with its intended use and function. Please do not saddle the County's future with this White Elephant.

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Version: 2014.0.4813 / Virus Database: 4365/10175 - Release Date: 07/06/15

**Kristine Hansen-Dederick**

51

**From:** Ed Higginbotham [REDACTED] >  
**Sent:** Monday, July 06, 2015 11:18 AM  
**To:** info@sycamoreconsulting.net  
**Subject:** BRT SCAM

Dear Sycamore;

The Connect Cobb BRT scam is not worthy of consideration. The TAXPAYERS of this county do not want it; it can NEVER be anything but a drain on the economy of the county; it is NOT effective in reducing traffic. What it WILL do is get Tim Lee a larger skybox in SCAMMER STADIUM so he can get more of his CID pals inside to kiss the butts of the billionaire owners. Just what we need. NOT!

Ed Higginbotham  
Mableton GA

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Version: 2014.0.4813 / Virus Database: 4355/10175 - Release Date: 07/06/15

Kristine Hansen-Dederick

52

**From:** Jim Jess [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Friday, July 03, 2015 4:28 PM  
**To:** info@sycamoreconsulting.net  
**Subject:** Comments on Connect Cobb EA

Dear Sirs:

Please discontinue the planning for the Bus Rapid Transit (BRT). It is an incredibly expensive transportation system, and it is obvious the architects of this system have something else in mind besides simply moving people. If you want to move people, add buses to the existing bus lines, or set up new bus routes. This could be accomplished at a fraction of the cost of the BRT.

It is obvious to many citizens that the Cobb County government has lost touch with those it seeks to serve. The BRT is a vehicle of special interest groups: transit jniors, consulting firms, construction firms, etc. It is obvious that these groups—and probably others—have a vested interest in BRT because it will help to enrich them. But this would be at the expense of the taxpayers, who won't benefit much from such a system.

If you want to move people, add buses. We don't need or want BRT.

Jim Jess  
 150 Old Farm Road  
 Marietta GA 30068  
 (770) 971-9606

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Kristine Hansen-Dederick

53

**From:** Phyllis DeNeve [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Friday, July 03, 2015 4:33 PM  
**To:** info@sycamoreconsulting.net  
**Subject:** comments on connect Cobb EA

I am very opposed of the proposal of Cobb County BRT. This must be stopped. This is not a good idea for this highway. The expense would be extreme in expense and to maintain. We are paying more tax than most of us can afford for something like this, that we do not need.

Thank you,  
 Phyllis DeNeve Kostelnik

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 Version: 2014.0.4813 / Virus Database: 4365/10175 - Release Date: 07/06/15



54

**Kristine Hansen-Dederick**

**From:** [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Sunday, July 05, 2015 12:41 PM  
**To:** info@sycamoreconsulting.net  
**Subject:** BRT comments

Admittedly, I was originally in favor of light rail. However, time and cost seems to have ruled that out. From what I have read and studied, BRT seems to be the best option. Exhaustive studies have been done. Now it is important that we get no further behind in implementing some type of transit through this very busy N-S corridor. I appreciate the work that has been thus far.

Mery Lou Stephens  
 156 Blair Valley Dr  
 Marietta GA 30060

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 Version: 2014.0.4813 / Virus Database: 4365/10175 - Release Date: 07/05/15

55

**Kristine Hansen-Dederick**

**From:** Henry Munford [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Friday, July 03, 2015 4:06 PM  
**To:** info@sycamoreconsulting.net  
**Subject:** BRT

I am opposed to the BRT project as currently outlined. It is not a good idea for Cobb business along the corridor to lose left turning customers. Some of us are not destination retailers but retailer of convenience with our customers. They select us because we are convenient and they can get in/out quickly. Blocking left turns is a serious business interruption.

Also - the whole project does not seem thoroughly thought out relative to pedestrian flow across traffic.  
 Don't approve this project. It is NOT the solution. Keep searching.  
 Henry Munford  
 Cobb County resident 31 years

Sent from my iPhone

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 Version: 2014.0.4813 / Virus Database: 4365/10175 - Release Date: 07/05/15

**Kristine Hansen-Dederick**

56

**From:** [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Friday, July 03, 2015 7:52 PM  
**To:** info@svcamoreconsulting.net  
**Subject:** Oppose Cobb parkway BRT proposal

As a tax paying voter in Cobb County I am adamantly opposed to the Cobb parkway BRT proposal for various reasons. I feel the plan will negatively impact traffic flow on this major highway, as well as negatively impact hundreds of businesses along this route. Additionally, the cost to tax payers to construct and maintain this would be enormous.  
Carol Olson DMD

Sent from my iPhone

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Version: 2014.0.4813 / Virus Database: 4365/10175 - Release Date: 07/05/15

**Kristine Hansen-Dederick**

57

**From:** James Serrate [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Saturday, July 01, 2015 10:09 AM  
**To:** info@svcamoreconsulting.net  
**Subject:** Connect Cobb EA

Please add my comments to the official records for this project. This is not a cost-effective project. Transit in Cobb Parkway could be improved at a fraction of the cost of this project.

Jim Serrate  
Acworth

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Version: 2014.0.4813 / Virus Database: 4365/10175 - Release Date: 07/06/15

58a

**Kristine Hansen-Dederick**

**From:** [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Friday, July 03, 2015 4:59 PM  
**To:** info@sycamoreconsulting.net  
**Subject:** Comments on Connect Cobb EA

Please include these comments in the official records for Cobb Connect.

The proposal to build a BRT fixed guideway on Cobb Parkway is a bad idea.

- \* There are other ways to improve transit service on Cobb Parkway at a tiny fraction of the cost of BRT.
- \* We don't need to luxuriate transit on Cobb Parkway, at an extremely high cost to taxpayers. Our objective needs to be good transit service at a reasonable cost to taxpayers.
- \* Fixed guideway transit in the middle of Cobb Parkway will block left turns into and out of hundreds of businesses, adversely impacting these businesses. Just because the adverse impacts are business impacts and citizen impacts, rather than environmental, does not mean that they should be ignored.
- \* Businesses will also be adversely impacted by the need for this project to confiscate some of their land.
- \* US 41 is not a "downtown" type of street with traffic lights at every block to control the interaction of cars and people. US 41 is a major US highway that runs from Michigan to Florida. The transportation purpose of US 41 is the high speed movement of vehicles. It cannot be safely converted to a pedestrian-friendly corridor without dramatically impeding the transportation purpose of this major US highway.
- \* For the entire length of Connect Cobb BRT that will be a fixed guideway on Cobb Parkway (US 41), the fixed guideway is located in the middle of Cobb Parkway. That means that every time anybody gets on or off a BRT vehicle on Cobb Parkway, they will have to cross this major highway. Cobb has repeatedly assured Cobb citizens that they are aware of this issue, but Cobb has also repeatedly refused to answer how they are going to safely enable people to repeatedly cross this heavy-traffic high speed highway, without impeding the existing transportation use of this major high speed highway. Pedestrian crosswalks with traffic lights will dramatically impede / disrupt high speed traffic on this major highway, and without extensive warning signs and lights, many pedestrian fatalities would be likely. Bridges would have to be very high, stairs would be daunting to most, even if they were in reasonably good health, multiple high capacity elevators would probably be needed on the outside of the road on both sides of the road, and in the middle of the road to then access the BRT vehicle. This would be a major additional capital expense and a major additional operations and maintenance expense. Tunnels under Cobb Parkway, from both sides of the road to the middle, at every transit stop would be a major additional capital expense, and these types of tunnels attract criminals who may rob or assault transit riders in the tunnels, unless there is full time policing on site, which again would be a massive additional operations and maintenance expense.
- \* The Connect Cobb BRT study has inadequately looked at impacts on businesses, impacts on citizens trying to get to those businesses, adverse impacts to the high speed movement of vehicles on a major highway, pedestrian safety, and all of the operational and maintenance costs to safely provide BRT as proposed.

Most Cobb citizens oppose Connect Cobb BRT. I support transit and I would support cost-effectively improving transit service on Cobb Parkway. Please consider the overwhelming community opposition

to this project, and let us turn our attention to more cost-effective transit solutions that enable us to more cost-effectively address our transit needs throughout Cobb County.

Please stop Cobb Connect BRT.

Thanks

Ron Sifen

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58b

**Kristine Hansen-Dederick**

**From:** [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Thursday, July 09, 2015 1:56 PM  
**To:** info@sycamoreconsulting.net  
**Subject:** Comments on Connect Cobb EA

I have additional comments regarding the Cobb Connect EA. Please include these comments, and my previous comments, in the official records for the Cobb Connect EA and other Cobb Connect related studies and records.

I have accessed the Connect Cobb Environmental Assessment (EA) document on the Cobb County website. I have several questions and concerns.

1. The EA acknowledges that left turns into and out of many businesses would be eliminated by the fixed guideway, and also the taking of property involving 69 parcels of property. However, I find no discussion of the most obvious question: Will these impacts be detrimental to the profitable operations of these businesses? Will the Connect Cobb BRT wind up causing numerous existing successful businesses to fail?

2. The EA discloses that the fixed guideway will necessitate widening Cobb Parkway (and perhaps also Cumberland Boulevard) by 20 - 28 feet. That's a lot. The EA acknowledges that this necessitates the full or partial taking of 69 properties. I do not find any discussion of how these takings, or just the partial takings, will impact the profitability of these businesses.

3. Section 4.1 discusses traffic impacts. There is discussion of projections that traffic volumes on Cobb Parkway will increase over time, and that improvements are needed to reduce expected future traffic congestion. However, Section 4.1.1.3 compares traffic Level Of Service (LOS) projections comparing Build vs. No Build of Cobb Connect BRT, in a variety of scenarios. In some scenarios Cobb Connect BRT is projected to provide no improvement to LOS and in all of the other scenarios Cobb Connect BRT is projected to make the LOS worse! There are no scenarios where Cobb Connect BRT projects any improvement in traffic conditions vs. No Build.

4. Also in Section 4.1.1.3, there are tables that compare No Build and Build and "Build Improved" (?). In earlier parts of Section 4.1, I also see numerous recommended intersection improvements and other enhancements. At the end of Section 3 I note that the project is projected to cost \$451 - 529 million, depending on the alignment. Does "Build Improved" mean that Cobb County is acknowledging that Connect Cobb BRT will make traffic congestion significantly worse, and is recommending additional "Build Improved" enhancements to offset the overall transportation damage by spending only a half billion dollars to make traffic worse? How much more will the Build Improved enhancements cost?

5. Since the fixed guideway is in the middle of Cobb Parkway, does the EA address how BRT riders will get across Cobb Parkway to get onto BRT vehicles, and how they will get across Cobb Parkway when they get off of the BRT vehicles? If yes, where is this addressed in the EA document? I have found nothing in the EA that explains how Connect Cobb plans to enable pedestrians to safely cross Cobb Parkway.

6. If pedestrian crossings are at-grade crosswalks, does the EA address how this can be accomplished safely on a major high speed US highway, and how it would impact traffic flow on this major high speed US highway? If yes, where is this addressed in the EA document?

7. If pedestrian crossings are via tunnels under Cobb Parkway, or bridges over Cobb Parkway (which would have to be high enough to not be hit by any trucks or other potential large vehicles carrying large loads), does the EA address how potential BRT riders, including people with disabilities would negotiate getting up and down to and from the bridges or tunnels, which would involve going up and down considerable heights? Also, does the EA address the cost of the bridges and tunnels, and perhaps any elevators and other equipment that might be needed, as well as any public safety needs that would be needed? If yes, where is this addressed in the EA document? And if not, and if it is not included in The Build specifications, how much more is it going to cost to address getting pedestrians safely across Cobb Parkway to and from BRT?

8. Cobb Parkway is a major high speed highway whose transportation purpose is the high speed efficient movement of many vehicles. It is not a downtown city street with traffic lights every block that control the interaction of cars and pedestrians. Since Cobb Connect BRT will necessitate every transit rider crossing Cobb Parkway for every boarding, and for every exit of a BRT vehicle, does the EA evaluate this dramatic, intense increase in the interaction of pedestrians and high volume high speed traffic along a major high speed highway, and address how pedestrians can safely cross Cobb Parkway, while not impeding the existing transportation use of US41, which is the high speed efficient movement of many vehicles through this corridor? If yes, where is this addressed in the EA document?

9. If these questions have not been addressed by the EA, then the EA is not ready for approval. In addition, how much is all of this additional infrastructure going to cost?

Thanks

Ron Sifen

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**Kristine Hansen-Dederick**

58c

**From:** [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Friday, July 10, 2015 11:56 AM  
**To:** faye.dimassimo@cobbcounty.org; hansen.dederick@syzmoreconsulting.net; lobboll@cobbcounty.org; theapowell@cobbcounty.org; nfo@syzmoreconsulting.net; marty.sewell@cobbcounty.org; marty.sewell@cobbdoc.org  
**Subject:** revised questions regarding Connect Cobb

Hello Cobb County / Connect Cobb. Please answer the following revised questions regarding Connect Cobb. If you do not have the answers to these questions, please forward this email to whoever can answer these questions, and please let me know who can answer these questions.

1. Impacts on existing businesses -

\* Has the Connect Cobb process done any specific analysis to determine whether the Connect Cobb BRT fixed guideway will cause some existing businesses to lose enough customers that some of these businesses will fail, and others to become less profitable?

\* Has Connect Cobb analyzed the impact of the property takings, and the blocking of left turns into and out of businesses, on making existing businesses less accessible for their customers, and causing these businesses to lose business and become less profitable or unprofitable?

\* If adverse impacts that might cause existing businesses to lose customers, please describe how this analysis was performed?

2. Getting BRT riders to and from the middle of Cobb Parkway

\* Has Cobb Connect determined how BRT riders will be able to safely get to and from the middle of Cobb Parkway?

\* If yes, how will BRT riders be able to safely get to and from the middle of Cobb Parkway?

\* Whatever infrastructure will be needed to get BRT riders to and from the middle of Cobb Parkway, is the cost of this infrastructure included in the \$481 - 529 million projected cost of the Connect Cobb project? Or is this infrastructure going to be an additional cost?

\* Cobb Parkway is a major US highway whose transportation purpose is the high speed efficient movement of many vehicles. Cobb Parkway is not a downtown city street with traffic lights every several hundred feet that control the interaction between vehicles and pedestrians. What analysis has Connect Cobb performed regarding the dramatic increase in the quantity of interactions between many high speed vehicles and pedestrians, and how will this be managed to be sure that pedestrians will be safe.

\* Also, since Cobb Parkway is a major US highway whose transportation purpose is the high speed efficient movement of many vehicles, has Connect Cobb analyzed how to manage the dramatic increase in pedestrians crossing traffic on Cobb Parkway, without adversely impacting the existing transportation purpose of this major US Highway?

\* If the answer to the last question is yes, please describe how this was analyzed, and please describe the specific solutions that Connect Cobb includes to safely get pedestrians across Cobb Parkway without adversely impacting the existing transportation purpose of this major high-speed highway?

\* Please also provide the cost of the improvements that will be necessary to enable many pedestrians to safely get across Cobb Parkway while not enabling US41 to continue to perform as a major high speed highway whose purpose is the high speed efficient movement of many vehicles?

3. "Build Improved"

\* What does "Build Improved" mean?

\* Does "Build Improved" mean that the Connect Cobb studies have revealed that Connect Cobb will cause adverse impacts on traffic congestion, and that there are additional "improvements" that will be needed to offset some (not all) of the adverse impacts on traffic congestion?

\* Since The Build infrastructure is clearly what is included in Connect Cobb, how much more will the Build Improved projects / infrastructure cost?

Thanks

Ron Sifen

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Kristine Hansen-Dederick

58d

**From:** [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 14, 2015 8:51 PM  
**To:** info@sycamoreconsulting.net; hansen-dederick@sycamoreconsulting.net  
**Subject:** Comments on Connect Cobb EA  
**Attachments:** \_Certification\_h.htm

Hello Connect Cobb. Please include these comments in the official record of the Connect Cobb EA, and please consider whether FTA's approval of the EA was based on inaccurate information.

I am forwarding an email to you that I received from Cobb County in response to questions I asked last month. Feel free to review the whole email, but if you just review the first 3 questions and answers, you will see that the Cobb Board of Commissioners never voted to accept the Connect Cobb LPA.

\*\*\*\*\*On page 7 of the EA, Section 2.5, there is a statement that the Cobb BOC accepted the LPA at a work session on February 28, 2012.\*\*\*\*\*

1. The Cobb BOC has never voted to accept the LPA
2. The LPA has not been completed.
3. If FTA has a requirement that in order for FTA to approve the EA, or to move this project forward, the governing body (The Cobb Board of Commissioners) must have approved or accepted the LPA, then FTA needs to be aware that the Cobb BOC has not voted to approve nor accept the LPA.

Thanks

Ron Sifen

From: Faye DiMassimo@cobbcountry.org  
 To: [REDACTED]; Bob.Ott@cobbcountry.org, Lisa.Cupid@cobbcountry.org, JoAnn.Birrell@cobbcountry.org, Bob.Weatherford@cobbcountry.org, Tim.Lee@cobbcountry.org, Kellie.Brownlow@cobbcountry.org, David.Hankerson@cobbcountry.org, Deborah.Dance@cobbcountry.org  
 CC: Jim.Wilgus@cobbcountry.org, Eric.Meyer@cobbcountry.org, Marty.Sewell@cobbcountry.org  
 Sent: 6/23/2015 2:15:48 P.M. Eastern Daylight Time  
 Subj: RE: questions for Cobb County

Mr. Sifen,

Thank you for the opportunity to address your questions. Answers follow each below. As a member of the Transit Advisory Board and several of the mentioned stakeholder activities, you may already be familiar with some of this information.

\* Regarding the Connect Cobb BRT proposal, is it correct that Cobb County has stated in documents / communications to the FTA, and or any other government agencies, that Cobb County has accepted the LPA?

No

\* Is it correct that the LPA has never been put to a vote by the BOC at a BOC meeting?

Yes

\* Is it correct that the assertion that Cobb County has "accepted" the LPA is based on the fact that at a BOC work session on February 28, 2012, that no commissioners had any questions or comments, and that is somehow the basis for the assertion that the BOC "accepted" the LPA?

No, as noted above, Cobb County has not stated that the LPA recommendation has been accepted.

\* With regard to community support for BRT on Cobb Parkway, what has Cobb County told FTA regarding the level of community support for BRT, and what is the basis for that claimed level of support?

Cobb County has communicated the activities of the following regarding community attitudes and comments on the proposed Connect Cobb project:

**Alternatives Analysis**

- **Technical Team and Partners Team (6 total):** 8/31/11, 11/15/11, 1/25/12, 5/29/12 (joint with Stakeholder Roundtables) and were invited to the 9/11/12 and 9/25/12 BOC meetings for the recommended LPA presentation.
- **FTA coordination (4 total):** 10/5/11, 2/16/12, 4/11/12, 6/14/12
- **GDOT coordination (3 total):** 6/8/12, 7/13/12, 8/31/12
- **ARC coordination (3 total):** 4/12/12 (RTC), 4/25/12 (ARC Board), 5/22/12 (TCC)
- **Cobb Transit Advisory Board (2 total):** 2/7/12, 6/25/12

- **Stakeholder Roundtables (7 total):** 11/15/11 (Combined – Kickoff), 12/6/11 (Transportation and Air Quality), 12/6/11 (Land Use), 12/8/11 (Economic Development, 12/8/11 (Environment), 12/13/11 (Financial), 2/7/12 (Combined – Status Update/Alternatives/Station Locations), 5/29/12 (joint with Technical Team and Partners Team)
- **Stakeholder Briefings (14 total):** 1/31/12, 8/13/12 (Midtown Alliance, City of Atlanta and Atlanta BeltLine), 2/7/12 (Dobbins ARB - included base tenants), 2/28/12 (BOC), 3/27/12 (TCACID), 3/29/12 (CCID), 6/14/12 (Upper Chattahoochee Riverkeeper and NPS), 8/3/12 (City of Kennesaw), 8/3/12 (KSU), 8/4/12 (City of Acworth), 8/8/12 (City of Marietta), 8/24/12 (Cobb Marietta Coliseum and Exhibit Hall Authority), 9/1/12 (SPSU), 9/12/12 (City of Smyrna)
- **Environmental Justice (3 total):** 3/6/12 and 3/8/12 (CCT kiosks at CTC and MTC), 3/19/12 (Community Leadership Briefing)
- **College and University:** Online survey collected 480 responses from Chattahoochee Tech, SCAD (Atlanta), Georgia Tech, GSU, KSU, SPSU, Life University
- **City of Atlanta (4 total):** 4/30/12 (citywide conversation), 5/7/12 (Northside Study Group), 5/21/12 (Westside Study Group), 9/27/12 (citywide conversation)
- **BOC (4 total – work sessions):** 2/22/11, 2/28/12, 9/11/12, 9/25/12
- **Scientifically valid Public Opinion Polls (2)** Fall 2011 and 2012

*Environmental Assessment*

- **Technical Team and Partners Team (1 total):** 2/20/13 (members present included MARTA, City of Atlanta, City of Marietta, GDOT, Georgia Tech)
- **City of Marietta (1 total):** 4/4/13 (City of Marietta Departments of Development Services, Economic Development, and Public Works)
- **Arts Center Station area partners (4 total):** 6/21/13, 7/24/13, 1/24/14, 8/12/14 (City of Atlanta, MARTA, Midtown Alliance, ARC)
- **Cobb Transit Advisory Board (2 total):** 9/23/13, 2/24/14
- **CTP 2040 Stakeholder Meeting (1 total):** 10/21/13 (included NPS, SPSU, Life, CCID)
- **NPS/Kennesaw Mountain National Battlefield Park (1 total):** 11/6/13
- **GDOT/ARC (1 total):** 12/2/13
- **North American Properties (operator of Atlantic Station) (1 total):** 1/24/14
- **MARTA (1 total):** 2/24/14
- **Station Area Charrette (5-day Charrette – multiple meetings):** – 3/31/14 – 4/4/14 (included Atlanta Braves, City of Marietta Economic Development Division, City of Marietta Engineering, Cobb

Chamber, ComDev, Council for Quality Growth, CCID, KSU, Lockheed Martin, Olshan Properties, TCACID – 3/31/14 – 4/4/14

- **Public Safety Outreach (1 total):** 1/26/15 (included City of Marietta, City of Smyrna, Cobb County Department of Public Safety)
- **BOC (2 total):** 4/11/14 (work session), 6/20/14 (special called meeting – 2016 SPLOST)
- **Public Information Open House (1 total):** 11/12/13
- **(FUTURE) Public Hearing Open House (1 total):** 6/29/15

**Additional Public Opinion Polls associated with the CTP (2)** Fall 2013 and Spring 2014

**BOC presentations/Works Sessions on Connect Cobb AA/EA** 2/22/11, 2/28/12, 9/11/12, 9/25/12, 4/22/14.

\* CobbDOT.org has a web page for the Cobb Connect Environmental Analysis (EA). That page says that the EA has been approved. Going to the actual document, the first page after the Title page is a letter that appears to be approving the EA, signed by Faye Dimassimo on March 31, 2015, and signed by a representative of FTA on April 14, 2015. Has the BOC voted to approve the EA? Does the BOC have no role in approving the EA?

No - The EA (and all such environmental documents prepared for roadway or transit projects that may be eligible for federal funding) is a technical document not approved by the local or State government but by the lead federal agency.

\* Has the LPA been finalized?

No

Or is the next step after approval of the EA to finalize the LPA?

It may be considered by the BOC as they desire in the future.

\* If the LPA has not been finalized, then how has Cobb County "accepted" the LPA?

As stated above, Cobb County has not indicated that the LPA recommendation was accepted. In the cite referenced, the term "accepted" was in reference to a presentation made.

\* If the FTA has requirements that in order for them to advance a project, or approve a project, that one of the requirements is that the governing authority has to have "accepted" the LPA, and if Cobb County has communicated to the FTA that Cobb's governing authority has accepted the LPA, and if the Cobb BOC has never actually voted to accept the LPA, how is this not a communication that would have caused FTA to believe that a necessary action took place, when that action has not taken place?

Prior to consideration for federal implementation funding (New Starts), the BOC would need to approve the LPA.

\* If FTA's approval of the EA was based in part on Cobb's claims that Cobb's governing authority had "accepted" the LPA, and if acceptance of the LPA was a requirement in order for FTA to be able to approve the EA, and if in fact the Cobb BOC never actually voted to approve the LPA, is the FTA's approval of the EA valid, and could the FTA's approval of the EA be challenged and invalidated?

The LPA recommendation that resulted from the AA continues to be refined through the EA and may be considered upon the study completion and the culmination of the ongoing process. We have not stated it was adopted but the various presentations noted above were received/accepted and the authorizations that continued our work effort from AA through EA were considered and/or approved by the Board of Commissioners on 11/8/11, 1/10/12, 2/14/12, 2/28/12, 3/13/12, 7/24/12.

\* Questions have already been raised as to whether Cobb voters will wind up being bypassed with regard to Cobb Parkway BRT. Is the Cobb BOC also being bypassed in this process?

No

Has the LPA been "accepted" by Cobb's governing authority without the Cobb BOC ever having voted to "accept" the LPA?

No

And has the EA been approved without the Cobb BOC ever having voted on this?

Yes - the BOC does not approve the EA. Rather, they have approved the various contracts and associated commitments of funding for the AA and EA studies. Additionally, should they decide to advance the project in the future, the BOC will need to adopt the recommended LPA and authorize any actions necessary for further development and implementation.

Cobb County is always committed to transparency in our efforts. This information, along with links to relevant supporting documentation, will be posted as a Q & A on our website later this week.

Faye Q. DiMassimo, AICP

Director

**COBB COUNTY DOT**

1880 County Services Pkwy / Marietta, GA 30008 / Tel: (770) 528-1647

Cobb County DOT Website: [www.cobb.dot.org](http://www.cobb.dot.org)

Board Closure Information: <http://www.cobb.gov/81/Cobb1315Mobile/Handbook.html#section=boardminutes>

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**From:** [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Friday, June 19, 2015 8:28 AM  
**To:** Ott, Bob; Cuidi, Lisa; Birrell, JoAnn; Weatherford, Bob; Lee, Tim; Brownlow, Kellie; DiMassimo, Faye;



Hankerson, David; Dance, Deborah  
**Subject:** questions for Cobb County

Hello Cobb County. I have several questions regarding communications and claims that Cobb County may have made regarding the Connect Cobb studies.

\* Regarding the Connect Cobb BRT proposal, is it correct that Cobb County has stated in documents / communications to the FTA, and or any other government agencies, that Cobb County has accepted the LPA?

\* Is it correct that the LPA has never been put to a vote by the BOC at a BOC meeting?

\* Is it correct that the assertion that Cobb County has "accepted" the LPA is based on the fact that at a BOC work session on February 28, 2012, that no commissioners had any questions or comments, and that is somehow the basis for the assertion that the BOC "accepted" the LPA?

\* With regard to community support for BRT on Cobb Parkway, what has Cobb County told FTA regarding the level of community support for BRT, and what is the basis for that claimed level of support?

\* CobbDOT.org has a web page for the Cobb Connect Environmental Analysis (EA). That page says that the EA has been approved. Going to the actual document, the first page after the Title page is a letter that appears to be approving the EA, signed by Faye Dimassimo on March 31, 2015, and signed by a representative of FTA on April 14, 2015. Has the BOC voted to approve the EA? Does the BOC have no role in approving the EA?

\* Has the LPA been finalized? Or is the next step after approval of the EA to finalize the LPA?

\* If the LPA has not been finalized, then how has Cobb County "accepted" the LPA?

\* If the FTA has requirements that in order for them to advance a project, or approve a project, that one of the requirements is that the governing authority has to have "accepted" the LPA,

and if Cobb County has communicated to the FTA that Cobb's governing authority has accepted the LPA, and if the Cobb BOC has never actually voted to accept the LPA, how is this not a communication that would have caused FTA to believe that a necessary action took place, when that action has not taken place?

\* If FTA's approval of the EA was based in part on Cobb's claims that Cobb's governing authority had "accepted" the LPA, and if acceptance of the LPA was a requirement in order for FTA to be able to approve the EA, and if in fact the Cobb BOC never actually voted to approve the LPA, is the FTA's approval of the EA valid, and could the FTA's approval of the EA be challenged and invalidated?

\* Questions have already been raised as to whether Cobb voters will wind up being bypassed with regard to Cobb Parkway BRT. Is the Cobb BOC also being bypassed in this process? Has the LPA been "accepted" by Cobb's governing authority without the Cobb BOC ever having voted to "accept" the LPA? And has the EA been approved without the Cobb BOC ever having voted on this?

\* At Chairman Lee's town hall in Vinings last night, he mentioned that he has added a resolution to the agenda for the June 23 BOC meeting regarding a BRT referendum. I have now reviewed the proposed resolution, and I have concerns.

1. The resolution does nothing to amend the language adopted into the CTP that gives future BOCs a preemptive ok to not hold the referendum.

2. I appreciate the acknowledgement that this BOC has committed to the citizens of Cobb County that if Cobb Parkway BRT is to move forward, that it would be put to Cobb voters for approval. However the resolution is adamant that the commitment to actually hold a referendum is limited to just this BOC, and there is no recommendation that future BOCs honor the commitment made by this BOC to put BRT to a referendum.

3. I would ask all commissioners not to rush into the language of the resolution that is on the June 23 agenda, and to consider alternative solutions offered by CCCC, and the alternative resolution that is supposed to be forthcoming from Commissioners Ott and Cupid.

Thanks

Ron Sifen

Kristine Hansen-Dederick

58e

**From:** [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 14, 2015 8:44 PM  
**To:** hansen-dederick@sycamoreconsulting.net; info@sycamoreconsulting.net  
**Subject:** Re: Comments on Connect Cobb EA

Hi Kristine. I would like to add additional comments for the record on the Connect Cobb EA.

\* In the EA on pages 46 and 47 there are tables that compare Build to No Build. (The tables also include Build Improved) These tables clearly show that Build will make future traffic congestion WORSE than No Build.

\* We should not be spending \$500 million of our tax dollars on a project that will make traffic congestion worse.

\* "Build Improved" appears to be an additional set of projects that are being recommended outside the scope of Connect Cobb, to offset the increase traffic congestion caused by the Connect Cobb fixed guideway. These Build Improved projects will cost taxpayers many millions of dollars more, on top of the cost of Connect Cobb, and the results of Build Improved is less traffic congestion than Build, but still WORSE than No Build.

\*\*\*\*\*On page 7 of the EA, Section 2.5, there is a statement that the Cobb BOC accepted the LPA at a work session on February 28, 2012.\*\*\*\*\*

1. The Cobb BOC has never voted to accept the LPA
2. The LPA has not been completed.
3. If FTA has a requirement that in order for FTA to approve the EA, or to move this project forward, the governing body (The Cobb Board of Commissioners) must have approved or accepted the LPA, then FTA needs to be aware that the Cobb BOC has not voted to approve nor accept the LPA.

Thanks

Ron Sifen

In a message dated 7/14/2015, hansen-dederick@sycamoreconsulting.net writes:

Comment received, thank you for your input.

**From:** [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Friday, July 03, 2015 4:59 PM  
**To:** info@sycamoreconsulting.net  
**Subject:** Comments on Connect Cobb EA

Please include these comments in the official records for Cobb Connect.

The proposal to build a BRT fixed guideway on Cobb Parkway is a bad idea.

\* There are other ways to improve transit service on Cobb Parkway at a tiny fraction of the cost of BRT.

\* We don't need to luxurify transit on Cobb Parkway, at an extremely high cost to taxpayers. Our objective needs to be good transit service at a reasonable cost to taxpayers.

\* Fixed guideway transit in the middle of Cobb Parkway will block left turns into and out of hundreds of businesses, adversely impacting these businesses. Just because the adverse impacts are business impacts and citizen impacts, rather than environmental, does not mean that they should be ignored.

\* Businesses will also be adversely impacted by the need for this project to confiscate some of their land.

\* US 41 is not a "downtown" type of street with traffic lights at every block to control the interaction of cars and people. US 41 is a major US highway that runs from Michigan to Florida. The transportation purpose of US 41 is the high speed movement of vehicles. It cannot be **safely** converted to a pedestrian-friendly corridor without dramatically impeding the transportation purpose of this major US highway.

\* For the entire length of Connect Cobb BRT that will be a fixed guideway on Cobb Parkway (US 41), the fixed guideway is located in the middle of Cobb Parkway. That means that every time anybody gets on or off a BRT vehicle on Cobb Parkway, they will have to cross this major highway. Cobb has repeatedly assured Cobb citizens that they are aware of this issue, but Cobb has also repeatedly refused to answer how they are going to **safely** enable people to repeatedly cross this heavy-traffic, high-speed highway, without impeding the existing transportation use of this major high-speed highway. Pedestrian crosswalks with traffic lights will dramatically impede / disrupt high speed traffic on this major highway, and without extensive warning signs and lights, many pedestrian fatalities would be likely. Bridges would have to be very high, stairs would be daunting to most, even if they were in reasonably good health, multiple high capacity elevators would probably be needed on the outside of the road on both sides of the road, and in the middle of the road to then access the BRT vehicle. This would be a major additional capital expense and a major additional operations and maintenance expense. Tunnels under Cobb Parkway, from both sides of the road to the middle, at every transit stop, would be a major additional capital expense, and these types of tunnels attract criminals who may rob or assault transit riders in the tunnels, unless there is full time policing on site, which again would be a massive additional operational and maintenance expense.

\* The Connect Cobb BRT study has inadequately looked at impacts on businesses, impacts on citizens trying to get to those businesses, adverse impacts to the high speed movement of vehicles on a major highway, pedestrian safety, and all of the operational and maintenance costs to safely provide BRT as proposed.

Mrs. Cobb citizens oppose Connect Cobb BRT. I support transit, and I would support cost-effectively improving transit service on Cobb Parkway. Please consider the overwhelming community opposition to this project, and let us turn our attention to more cost-effective transit solutions that enable us to more cost-effectively address our transit needs throughout Cobb County.

Please stop Cobb Connect BRT.

Thanks

Ron Sifen

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59

**Kristine Hansen-Dederick**

**From:** [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Saturday, July 04, 2015 12:11 PM  
**To:** info@sycamoreconsulting.net  
**Subject:** Connect Cobb Ea

I hope Cobb commissioners won't rush to judgment on transit system. Know Braves are driving schedule, but taxpayers should have a voice in these matters.  
Serious, transparent study before action! MA Sikes Sent from my iPhone

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No virus found in this message.  
Checked by AVG - [www.avg.com](http://www.avg.com)  
Version: 2014.0.4813 / Virus Database: 4365/10175 - Release Date: 07/06/15

**Kristine Hansen-Dederick**

60a

**From:** [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Friday, July 03, 2015 4:17 PM  
**To:** info@sycamoreconsulting.net  
**Subject:** Cobb bri

Yet another waste of taxpayer money by Cobb commissioners.

Busses all over are barely ridden, which makes them huge wasters of taxpayer money. This one will be no different.

The only reason its being proposed is so it will bring Braves fans to their games. Its being sold as something else but that is its main function.

Yet again dipping into hard working peoples pockets to subsidize a billion dollar company.  
Pathetic.

sent from my nexus 4 phone

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**Kristine Hansen-Dederick**

60b

**From:** J Smith [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 14, 2015 7:57 AM  
**To:** info@sycamoreconsulting.net  
**Subject:** Bri

Ugh the more we find out, the worse this boondoggle is.

I havent heard about any of this from the county commissioners, only from the newspaper.  
That by itself is enough for me to say NO!

The newspaper informed that many private properties will be taken, congestion will be worse(!), and there is no proven cost benefit.  
So who really benefits? Not Cobb citizens it appears.

sent from my nexus 4 phone

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61

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**Kristine Hansen-Dederick**

**From:** Sparrow, Clay [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Monday, July 06, 2015 8:39 AM  
**To:** info@sycamoreconsulting.net  
**Subject:** Guide Way (BRT)

A guide way down the middle of Cobb Parkway???

What a ridiculous and stupid idea. It does not even survive the laugh test.

How many more people should we kill as they are trying to get across Cobb Parkway?

Why should we think this will help develop business there, when half the vehicle traffic would no longer have reasonably easy access to the other side of the highway?

How long will the road be a mess as construction inches its way?

This obviously is not the best of the alternatives.

W. Clayton Sparrow, Jr., Seyfarth Shaw LLP  
 1075 Peachtree Street, NE, Suite 2500, Atlanta, GA 30309-3962  
 [REDACTED]  
 [REDACTED]

W. Clayton Sparrow, Jr. | Partner | Seyfarth Shaw LLP  
 1075 Peachtree Street, N.E. | Suite 2500 | Atlanta, Georgia 30309-3958  
 [REDACTED] | www.seyfarth.com

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62

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**Kristine Hansen-Dederick**

**From:** Torbett [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Sunday, July 05, 2015 8:28 AM  
**To:** info@sycamoreconsulting.net  
**Subject:** Cobb BRT

In response to Cobb County building BRT

I have been following this project and for the life of me see no sanity in it, nor does anyone else I know. It is folly. Another example of the government spending money recklessly.

If the majority of Cobb citizens wanted this project (and this should have been the only reason any study should have been initiated) then at least it would have some legality behind it. How many millions have they spent wastefully already anyway?

This action is responsible and horrifically wasteful. It just makes no sense.

We will have a useless rail and a black hole to fund forever into the future, like Mata rail.

Thank you,

Torbett Crocker

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1

Kristine Hansen-Dederick

63

**From:** Ann F Turner [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Saturday, July 04, 2015 10:00 PM  
**To:** info@sycamoreconsulting.net  
**Subject:** BRT and Cobb County

Sir, public transportation is a good idea, but only if:

It goes where people want to go and runs WHEN they need it  
 It runs often enough so people can make use of it when they need to use it

It seems to me that Cobb County has little need for another transit, rapid or otherwise, that goes from Kennesaw to the Cumberland CCT terminal. People who live in Kennesaw may not be the ones who would need to use public transportation. Nor would they want to change buses to go downtown Atlanta. The time involved changing vehicles would offset the time that MIGHT be saved by using public transportation, anyway. (maybe more effort could be put into car-pooling for these people so more of them would be eligible to use the diamond lanes)

People who would use public transpo would be more likely, it would seem to me, to be those who live in apartments. Like southern Cobb County, not the more affluent areas of Cobb ( Kennesaw, Acworth, East Cobb) where houses are larger, and for the most part, single family.

I do not believe there is a transportation system in this country that operates without public funds; they are mostly run as utilities, and are not expected to be self-supporting. Rubber-tired buses are more flexible than fixed guideway vehicles ( trolley cars or light rail trains). And buses could be re-routed to areas in which the need is greater.

Yes, there is an express bus service that runs from the outlying areas of Metro Atlanta to downtown Atlanta; I do not know how full they are, as I have no need to go into the city at an early hour. (when I have to go downtown, I park my car at HE Holmes, and take the train.)

It would seem to me to be a good idea to take a poll among the residents of Cobb County -- and not just the people who watch the Cobb county TV channel ( which I cannot get), or who read the MDJ. Maybe to reach the unregistered, non-voters of the county (who would probably be the ones to use the service), a house-to-house survey could be used. Sort of like the Census.

Just my opinion. And I am not an old-timer in Cobb County, having only moved here in 1995.

Respectfully, Ann F Turner, Austell (registered voter)

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Kristine Hansen-Dederick

64

**From:** Helen White [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Friday, July 03, 2015 8:57 PM  
**To:** info@sycamoreconsulting.net  
**Subject:** Cobb BRT

Connect Cobb BRT is a stupid idea and as a long time (60 year) resident of Cobb County I would urge you to not saddle us taxpayers and homeowners with additional taxes to build this so-called "good for Cobb County" and listen to the voice of constituents who in the long run will foot the bill. It is a bad idea and should not be done.

Helen G White  
 4269 Paces Ferry Road, SE  
 Atlanta, GA 30339

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**Kristine Hansen-Dederick**

65

**From:** Kathy Young [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, July 08, 2015 10:42 AM  
**To:** info@sycamoreconsulting.net  
**Subject:** Connect Cobb

Hi,

I would like to enter my comments into the EA record in support of the Connect Cobb Corridor initiative.

I am a resident of Smyrna, a city planner by education, work as an economic development consultant, and was involved in the community's recent Vision process.<http://www.smyrnavigation.com/>

I believe that Connect Cobb is a vital need and aligns with the preferences of the community\* and the need for more transportation options. While having access to MARTA rail in Cobb would be my personal first preference, this is at least an alternative that will get cars off the road, increase accessibility for all ages and income levels, and will demonstrate to the region and nation that Cobb is trying to take a more progressive approach to transportation and planning for our county.

Excerpt from Smyrna Vision Plan, October 2014, page 26:

2.2 Residents will enjoy a range of transportation options and modes of activities, including increased pedestrian connectivity to destination centers inside and outside City borders.  
 Smyrna residents are concerned about current and future traffic congestion, especially regarding the new development of the Braves Stadium and the surrounding developments that will come with it. The inconsistent presence of sidewalks, bike lanes, timing of traffic lights, and public transportation options were also among the top responses regarding mobility challenges. Further, Smyrna residents desire increased clean and efficient transportation options, and although the 2012 TSPLOST was overwhelming voted against, Smyrna had some of the highest percentage of votes in favor of it in Cobb County. Approximately 41 percent of Smyrna voters were in favor of the TSPLOST compared to 31 percent of Cobb County voters.

2.2.1 Advocate for alternative transportation options that can alleviate congestion for Smyrna residents.

- Investigate the value of incorporating elements of "Complete Streets" into all transportation planning and encourage the support of Georgia's Safe Routes to School program.
- Regularly review feedback received from Smyrna residents regarding interest in MARTA service and other public transportation options with Cobb County leaders.
  - Advocate for the expansion of Cobb Community Transit (CCT) routes as needed.
- Ensure Smyrna's senior citizens' transportation needs are met.
- Coordinate ride-sharing programs and set aside space for commuter park-and-ride lots.
- Ensure that road infrastructure and traffic signalization focus on alleviating congestion around key intersections and along major corridors.

Thank you,

1

Kathy Young  
 Smyrna, GA

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2

Kristine Hansen-Dederick

66

**From:** A.T. [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, July 08, 2015 10:18 AM  
**To:** info@sycamoreconsulting.net  
**Subject:** Cobb Northwest Atlanta Corridor

This was put to a public vote a while back and was voted down. I do not believe this is a solution to the traffic problems that we have in Cobb County and Atlanta. It is nothing more than another project that will end up being government subsidized. From what we hear in the media, CCT is already being subsidized. When I see the CCT buses around Cobb, they are virtually empty. I just do not see many people from Cobb county opting to ride a bus to Atlanta to get to work.

I vote NO!

A.T. NORTON, JR & ASSOC., INC.  
 1357 Canton Road  
 Marietta, GA 30066

**CELEBRATING 44 YEARS**  
**ANNUITIES, LIFE, MEDICARE**



Kristine Hansen-Dederick

67

**From:** Teri Anulewicz [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 07, 2015 5:49 PM  
**To:** info@sycamoreconsulting.net  
**Subject:** Cobb Transit EA

Hi there,

I wanted to chime in on the proposal. I support the initiative. It impacts the City of Smyrna, but I feel that it is a positive impact. While ideally, I'd like to see rail come to Cobb, I don't see what the fuss is against BRT or ART. We already have buses that link Cobb residents and employees with MARTA, so why shouldn't we have a bus system that's faster and more efficient? I only wish our forebears hadn't torn out the streetcar that used to traverse Atlanta Road.

Thanks -

Teri

Teri Anulewicz  
 Ward 3, Smyrna City Council  
 My Ward 3 Facebook Page <<https://www.facebook.com/TeriWard3>>  
 Subscribe to the Ward 3 Newsletter <<http://tinyletter.com/Teri>>

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Kristine Hansen-Dederick

68

**From:** Hall Brodie [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 07, 2015 4:07 PM  
**To:** info@sycamoreconsulting.net  
**Subject:** Cobb Parkway BRT

Here are my questions and concerns:

- Where else in the US has a similar system been designed, built and operated? What are the similarities and dissimilarities to the Cobb BRT? Do these systems require large government subsidies to operate?
- I do not want to hear one word about "electric" or "solar" or "alternative fuels" unless they make sense financially and without subsidies.
- I am concerned about the cost of such a system therefore I look to the experience of other similar systems to use as a "go by". Although CTCC has done a good job (compared to others in the ARC), this could be a much larger undertaking and one that is expensive to build and operate.
- I am concerned about the cost and the impact as a tax payer – whatever is decided should benefit all people from all across Cobb County not just one area or two. This also applies to ridership – if it only services one area of the county or one economic class of citizens, then it will be a failure in my mind.
- If it has a major reduction effect on traffic issues in the area then it will be a huge success.
- If it has a positive effect on the economic status of Cobb County i.e. helps us to prosper, then it will be a huge success.
- It must have a positive effect on businesses large and small – if it does then these businesses will embrace it, support it with ridership and tax revenue.

Hall Brodie, P.E.  
 3051 Farmington Drive  
 Atlanta, GA 30339

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Kristine Hansen-Dederick

69

**From:** Georgia.Sierra.Cl.Lb@atf1mhib53.myregisteredit.com on behalf of Bryan Kirshon  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 07, 2015 2:58 PM  
**To:** info@sycamoreconsulting.net  
**Subject:** Comments on Connect Cobb BRT Project

Jul 7, 2015

Mr. Marty Sewell  
 1890 County Services Pkwy  
 Marietta, GA 30008-4014

Dear Mr. Sewell,

I understand the need for more reliable transportation options to connect activity centers in the highest traffic volume corridor in Cobb County. I am glad to hear that this proposed high capacity transit will have new vehicles using dedicated lanes with traffic signal upgrades, level boarding, and accessible stations with service to the existing MARTA Arts Center Station.

glad to hear t.

Overall, the Environmental Assessment has shown that this project is shovel ready, seems financially feasible, will serve key destinations, has route flexibility, and is propose high end BRT. Please consider my comments for this project.

Sincerely,

Mr. Bryan Kirshon  
 7814 Shadowood Dr Apt 512  
 West Melbourne, FL 32904-1447  
 [REDACTED]

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**Kristine Hansen-Dederick**

70

**From:** Joanne Minster [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 07, 2015 3:47 PM  
**To:** info@sycamoreconsulting.net  
**Subject:** Comments on Connect Cobb EA

Although the costs of the studies has gone down from what was estimated, the cost to maintain the BRT is very high at \$9-10 million per year. No mass transit system anywhere pays for itself.

I wish traffic predictions were accurate but they are not. Otherwise we would not have any traffic problems at all. So, I would like to wait until after the Brave's stadium is built to verify if there are more vital traffic needs in other areas of the county before committing to such an expensive endeavor on one road. Changing the route of the BRT would be very expensive. Changing or adding a bus route is far more flexible at a fraction of the cost.

I am concerned that growth in Cobb County will be limited to one particular area of the county as opposed to all of Cobb County.

I would also like to wait until after the Brave's stadium is up and running before taking on any more debt, either through federal, state or county funds or a SPLOST. The money all comes out of the same pocket. Mine.

And since this is my money helping to build and maintain a BRT, I really don't think the BRT is very cost effective. I prefer to invest in roads all around the state of Georgia that would help with the transportation of goods coming out of the Port of Savannah. I feel this is a far better return on my investment. This expanded road system around the state would help ease traffic in and around Marietta and Cobb County. The decrease in semi-truck traffic inside the perimeter has been beneficial to commuters. The same can be true for Cobb County.

Thank you,

Joanne Minster  
Cobb County resident

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**Kristine Hansen-Dederick**

71

**From:** Justin O'Dell [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Monday, July 06, 2015 3:07 PM  
**To:** info@sycamoreconsulting.net  
**Subject:** Connect Cobb  
**Attachments:** Justin O'Dell.vcf; Certification.html

**Follow Up Flag:** Follow up  
**Flag Status:** Flagged

I am writing to weigh in as in support of CONNECT COBB and the US 41 transit project. Cobb County is LONG overdue for enhanced means of transit. Traffic congestion is getting worse and we cannot build more roads. It is time that Cobb County move forward on all fronts regarding transit solutions and CONNECT COBB is an important step. Please give consideration and approval.

Thank you.

*Justin O'Dell*  
**O'DELL & O'NEAL**  
 ATTORNEYS  
 506 Roswell Street  
 Suite 210  
 Marietta, GA 30060  
 [REDACTED]  
<http://www.odelloneal.com>

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**Kristine Hansen-Dederick**

72

**From:** Elizabeth Greene [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Thursday, July 09, 2015 10:45 PM  
**To:** info@sycamoreconsulting.net  
**Cc:** bob.ott@cobbcounty.org  
**Subject:** Comment on Connect Cobb

I am opposed to the current routing and parking plan for Connect Cobb, especially the excessive amount of parking planned for the Cumberland area.

Specifically, the project seems designed to benefit the Atlanta Braves by having the federal government or Cobb County pay to construct nearly 1,500 parking spaces a short distance from the new stadium, which will open in spring 2017. There are no other parking areas of this size anywhere along the route, including at major points of entry for commuters, like the Kennesaw area. Traffic congestion in the Cumberland Mall area is already high, adding 1,500 parking spaces will only make it worse.

The areas indicated as potential parking for the Cumberland South station are on property already occupied by businesses, and will be costly to acquire. Having a 1000-space garage, or several parking decks or surface parking in this area, will destroy a vibrant commercial area that business owners have worked hard in the last decade to revitalize. The intent seems clear, to destroy retail businesses south of I-285 to help bolster the retail component of the Braves stadium project and to provide additional parking for those attending Braves games -- who can then hop on the new federally funded circulator for the Cumberland area for a quick ride to the stadium.

I do support better access to transit in Cobb, especially connectivity to midtown Atlanta. However, rapid rail is much preferable to a bus system. Cobb already has an express bus system that runs between Cumberland, Marietta and downtown -- ridership projections for this arterial rapid transit seem wildly optimistic based on current commuting patterns and ridership of the express buses. Before investing in arterial rapid transit, Cobb should focus on improving service and ridership of existing bus routes, including those along Cobb Parkway.

Thanks for your consideration,  
Elizabeth Greene

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11

**Kristine Hansen-Dederick**

73

**From:** Georgia.Sierr.Club@et14mhib06.myregisteredsite.com on behalf of Lynn Walston  
**Sent:** Monday, July 13, 2015 10:19 AM  
**To:** info@sycamorecons.jlting.net  
**Subject:** Comments on Connect Cobb BRT Project

Jul 13, 2015

Mr. Marty Sewell  
 1890 County Services Pkwy  
 Marietta, GA 30008-4014

Dear Mr. Sewell,

I understand the need for more reliable transportation options to connect activity centers in the highest traffic volume corridor in Cobb County. I am glad to hear that this proposed high capacity transit will have new vehicles using dedicated lanes with traffic signal upgrades, level boarding, and accessible stations with service to the existing MARTA Arts Center Station.

I am happy that environmental and traffic disruption concerns have been taken into account. I also wonder if, when the lanes are in place, if the bus traffic is not as heavy as anticipated, can one or more of the lanes be restored or converted to other use, under the terms of the proposal.

Thank you for taking public concerns into consideration.

Overall, the Environmental Assessment has shown that this project is shovel ready, seems financially feasible, will serve key destinations, has route flexibility, and is proposed higher-end BRT. Please consider my comments for this project.

Sincerely,

Ms. Lynn Walston  
 1383 Verner Rd  
 Marietta, GA 30062-4066  
 [REDACTED]

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1

**Kristine Hansen-Dederick**

74

**From:** Don Myrick [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Saturday, July 11, 2015 6:05 PM  
**To:** info@sycamoreconsilting.net  
**Subject:** My thoughts on Cobb County BRT

There is zero demand for this service. It's a boondoggle to create another huge slash fund for County Government coffers.  
*Donald Esch Merick*

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**Kristine Hansen-Dederick**

75

**From:** [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Saturday, July 11, 2015 8:01 PM  
**To:** info@sycamoreconsilting.net  
**Cc:** Faye DiMassimo  
**Subject:** Connect Cobb EA comment

Support. Let's move ahead.

Carol Brown

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76a

**Kristine Hansen-Dederick**

**From:** David Welden [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 14, 2015 9:25 AM  
**To:** Comments on Connect Cobb EA  
**Subject:** Comments on Connect Cobb EA

I strongly oppose BRT and any other form of fixed guideway transit on Cobb Parkway.

Cobb needs to focus on transit that:

- \* addresses real transportation needs in various directions and corridors throughout Cobb
- \* provides fast, efficient mobility for riders, at a fair and cost-effective price to taxpayers.
- \* does not adversely impact existing businesses
- \* is flexible and easily changed as conditions warrant in the future.

I want our taxes used to fund services to those who need it – where needed – when needed – a thoughtfully conceived network of express buses, arterial routes and flexible local services. This is Not BRT.

Cease the \$multi-million BRT studies and do not use our taxes to subsidize commercial real estate development.

Please include these comments in the official records of Connect Cobb

Thank you.

David Welden  
5530 Wright Rd  
Powder Springs

1

[REDACTED]  
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2

76b

**Kristine Hansen-Dederick**

**From:** David Welder [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 14, 2015 9:54 AM  
**To:** Comments on Connect Cobb EA  
**Subject:** Comments on Connect Cobb EA

Kindly include this email with the following article in my Comments on Connect Cobb EA. I fully support all of the views expressed herein.

David Welden  
 5530 Wright Rd  
 Powder Springs  
 [REDACTED]

The Marietta Daily Journal - Connect Cobb Environmental Analysis reveals some WMDs

by Ron Sifen July 14, 2015 12:06 AM | 611 views | 0 | 4 | |

[http://mjdonline.com/view/full\\_story/26751209/article-Connect-Cobb-Environmental-Analysis-reveals-some-WMDs?instance=lead\\_story\\_left\\_column&sp-ik=723FAP95161D5B151B09DA51384FA03687A28F56A74D5F82FBD9C6EB62CC6087214700E934DCC3455027209D6BEC8F268EF7ABE6294DB1435D1DEA3D0264FEA45762B480EBF2AF51D7268410FE797197F00A33CBA368E202FF1BD4D9B1A0DD2CA4B264C8FC8974FFE2C488C64B0AF2188B7DA55A24BA6B027C6A79B72BC06F9BA11477C3](http://mjdonline.com/view/full_story/26751209/article-Connect-Cobb-Environmental-Analysis-reveals-some-WMDs?instance=lead_story_left_column&sp-ik=723FAP95161D5B151B09DA51384FA03687A28F56A74D5F82FBD9C6EB62CC6087214700E934DCC3455027209D6BEC8F268EF7ABE6294DB1435D1DEA3D0264FEA45762B480EBF2AF51D7268410FE797197F00A33CBA368E202FF1BD4D9B1A0DD2CA4B264C8FC8974FFE2C488C64B0AF2188B7DA55A24BA6B027C6A79B72BC06F9BA11477C3)

After reviewing the Connect Cobb Environmental Assessment document on the Cobb County website, I have several questions and concerns.

1. The EA acknowledges that left turns into and out of many businesses would be eliminated by the fixed guideway. It also acknowledges the taking of property involving 69 parcels of property. However, I find no discussion of the most obvious question. Will these impacts be detrimental to the profitable operations of these businesses? Will the Connect Cobb BRT wind up causing numerous currently successful businesses to become less profitable or unprofitable?

1

2. The EA exposes and admits that in some locations, Connect Cobb BRT is projected to provide no improvement in traffic congestion, and in other locations Connect Cobb BRT is projected to make traffic congestion worse! The EA shows no locations where Connect Cobb BRT is expected to result in any improvement in traffic conditions vs. No Build. So Connect Cobb is proposing to spend a half billion dollars on a project that will make overall traffic congestion worse than if we do nothing at all!

3. Also in Section 4.1.1.3, there are tables that compare No Build and Build and "Build Improved" (?). Does "Build Improved" mean that Cobb County is acknowledging that Connect Cobb BRT will make traffic congestion significantly worse, and is recommending additional "Build Improved" enhancements to offset some of the overall transportation damage caused by spending a half billion dollars on a project that will make traffic congestion worse? How much more will these "Build Improved" enhancements cost?

By the way, even with the additional "Build Improved" projects, Connect Cobb BRT still results in worse future traffic congestion than doing nothing at all.

4. Cobb Parkway is a major high speed highway whose transportation purpose is the high speed efficient movement of many vehicles. It is not a downtown city street with traffic lights every block that control the interaction of cars and pedestrians. The BRT fixed guideway is in the middle of Cobb Parkway. Since Connect Cobb BRT will necessitate every transit rider crossing Cobb Parkway for every boarding, and for every exit of a BRT vehicle, how will pedestrians be able to safely cross Cobb Parkway, while not impeding the existing transportation use of US41, which is the high speed efficient movement of many vehicles through this corridor?

5. Logically, pedestrian crossings will have to be tunnels under Cobb Parkway, or huge bridges over Cobb Parkway. The EA does not appear to address the cost of these bridges and tunnels, and perhaps any elevators and other equipment that might be needed, as well as any public safety services that would be needed. If this is not included in the "Build" specifications, how much more is it going to cost to address getting pedestrians safely across Cobb Parkway to and from BRT?

6. Last month, other community activists called for an investigation of why Cobb's application for some federal grant money claimed that the Cobb Board of Commissioners had accepted the Connect Cobb Locally Preferred Alternative at a BOC work session on February 28, 2012. In response to some questions that I sent to Cobb County last month, Cobb County emailed me in response that:

The Cobb BOC has never voted to accept the Connect Cobb LPA.

The Connect Cobb LPA has still not been finalized.

2

Cobb County has never represented to the Federal Transit Administration or any other government agency that the Cobb BOC had accepted the LPA.

Now, contrast that with the following:

The date on the cover of the Connect Cobb EA is April 2015;

On the very first page after the cover is a letter signed by Faye Dimassimo on March 31, 2015 and by Yvette Taylor of FTA on April 14, 2015, approving the EA;

After the Table of Contents and Glossary, on page 7 of the actual report, the first paragraph of Section 2.5, is the exact same statement claiming that the Cobb BOC accepted the LPA at their work session on February 28, 2012;

My understanding from newspaper reports during the controversy last month about the grants is that Cobb claimed the statement was immaterial anyway, because those grants were unrelated to BRT;

The Connect Cobb EA is totally about BRT. And the letter signed by Dimassimo and Taylor is evidence that Cobb communicated about the EA with FTA during March and April, and this same claim about the BOC accepting the LPA is in the EA in Section 2.5.

If the FTA has a requirement that in order for certain steps to move forward — including their approval of the EA — “the governing body” must have accepted or approved the LPA, and this document claims that the governing body accepted the LPA, when it clearly hasn’t, then is Section 2.5 of the EA a material misrepresentation?

The Connect Cobb EA is not ready for approval.

###

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**Kristine Hansen-Dederick**

77a

**From:** Jerry Palmer [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 14, 2015 9:06 AM  
**To:** info@sycamoreconsulting.net  
**Subject:** Cobb Connect EA comment

Per Sharpiro Survey:

58% of Cobb residents never use Hwy 41 to commute to Atlanta.....

Expenditure of tax dollars for this roadway would be an extremely wasteful activity. IMHO

Thomas J. Palmer  
Marietta, GA

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**Kristine Hansen-Dederick**

77b

**From:** Jerry Palmer [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 14, 2015 9:06 AM  
**To:** info@sycamoreconsulting.net  
**Subject:** Cobb Connect EA comment

Per Sharpiro Survey:

58% of Cobb residents never use Hwy 41 to commute to Atlanta.....

Expenditure of tax dollars for this roadway would be an extremely wasteful activity. IMHO

Thomas J. Palmer  
Marietta, GA

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78

**Kristine Hansen-Dederick**

**From:** [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 14, 2015 8:12 AM  
**To:** info@sycamoreconsulting.net  
**Subject:** Cobb Connect proposal

I urge you to strongly consider the points raised by Mr. Sifen in the recent Marietta Daily Journal article dated 7/14 regarding issues/concerns with the proposed project. At this point, the project certainly seems to not be in the best interest of Cobb citizen/taxpayers and therefore I don't support it.

Thank you.

N.T. Nickell  
Cobb resident/tax payer

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79

**Kristine Hansen-Dederick**

**From:** Richard Kolsby [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 14, 2015 8:08 AM  
**To:** info@sycamoreconsulting.net  
**Subject:** Cobb Connect

SAY NO TO DRT BUS LANES -

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Northwest Transit Corridor  
Environmental Assessment

80

**Kristine Hansen-Dederick**

**From:** Carol Robertson A Heavenly Carriage [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 14, 2015 7:21 AM  
**To:** info@svcamoreconsulting.net  
**Subject:** Comments on Connect Cobb EA  
**Attachments:** Certification .htm

To whom it may concern:  
This is a terribly bad idea. NOT only will it disrupt bad traffic...IT will make it worse. It will as big a waste of money as Atlanta spent on the trolley. Please don't consider that either! If you are listening - this TAX Paying and VOTING citizen says NO to this boondoggle. We got the Braves in the worst intersection of town, BECAUSE not one person asked the citizens... Blessings,

*Carol Robertson*  
*A Heavenly Carriage, INC.*  
2815 Summit or Stream Drive  
Kennesaw, GA 30142  
[REDACTED]



81

**Kristine Hansen-Dederick**

**From:** Steve Taylor [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Monday, July 13, 2015 9:38 PM  
**To:** info@svcamoreconsulting.net  
**Cc:** cobbdcct@cobbcounty.org  
**Subject:** Cobb County EA

Greetings,

I would like to make a statement against the Connect Cobb Project. The project has been presented to special interest groups, but the real opinions of the voting public has been ignored. We voted against mass transit in the TSPLOST referendum, and you are pretending that didn't happen.

You are pushing a project that has absolutely zero chance of passing a referendum. You are wasting money and you are wasting time by not researching a project that has a chance of being funded locally.

Thank you,

Steven L Taylor  
Marietta, GA

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**Kristine Hansen-Dederick**

82

**From:** GeorgiaSierra.Club@at4mhio35.myregisteredsite.com on behalf of Lee Graham  
**Sent:** Monday, July 13, 2015 9:17 PM  
**To:** info@sycamoreconsulting.net  
**Subject:** Comments on Connect Cobb BRT Project

Jul 13, 2015

Mr. Marty Sewell  
 1890 County Services Pkwy  
 Marietta, GA 30068-4014

Dear Mr. Sewell,

I understand the need for more reliable transportation options to connect activity centers in the highest traffic volume corridor in Cobb County. I am glad to hear that this proposed high capacity transit will have new vehicles using dedicated lanes with traffic signal upgrades, level boarding, and accessible stations with service to the existing MARTA Arts Center Station.

I've traveled some of the world's great cities, and viable transit is an integral part of most of them. It takes a long time for development to coalesce along transit lines, but group transit results in much more livable cities with more efficient land use. Civic leaders need to be visionaries to lead the way to a future that is not hopelessly snarled in traffic.

Overall, the Environmental Assessment has shown that this project is shovel ready, seems financially feasible, will serve key destinations, has route flexibility, and is proposed higher-end BRT. Please consider my comments for this project.

Sincerely,

Mr. Lee Graham  
 5094 Stratford Way  
 Powder Springs, GA 30127-3189

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**Kristine Hansen-Dederick**

83

**From:** GeorgiaSierra.Club@at4mhio37.myregisteredsite.com on behalf of Cynthia Patterson  
**Sent:** Monday, July 13, 2015 7:45 PM  
**To:** info@sycamoreconsulting.net  
**Subject:** Comments on Connect Cobb BRT Project

Jul 13, 2015

Mr. Marty Sewell  
 1890 County Services Pkwy  
 Marietta, GA 30068-4014

Dear Mr. Sewell,

I understand the need for more reliable transportation options to connect activity centers in the highest traffic volume corridor in Cobb County. I am glad to hear that this proposed high capacity transit will have new vehicles using dedicated lanes with traffic signal upgrades, level boarding, and accessible stations with service to the existing MARTA Arts Center Station.

I travel through the Cumberland creek. At all times of day traffic is heavy and slow. Reliable, handicap accessible bus rapid transit (BRT) would be a huge benefit for the area. Connecting the MARTA Arts Center station allows citizens to travel from the suburbs to mid-town and beyond to all MARTA stations.

The positive results are obvious: fewer cars on the road, less air and noise pollution, fewer greenhouse gas emissions, greater access to Atlanta for suburban citizens who rely on public transportation, easier, less stressful commute for people traveling south and north, reliable BRT transportation benefits businesses along the route.

Overall, the Environmental Assessment has shown that this project is shovel ready, seems financially feasible, will serve key destinations, has route flexibility, and is proposed higher-end BRT. Please consider my comments for this project.

Sincerely,

Ms. Cynthia Patterson  
 3122 Enfield Pt  
 Marietta, GA 30068-3824

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**Kristine Hansen-Dederick**

84

**From:** Georgia.Sierra.Club@at4mhnb23.myregisteredsite.com on behalf of Nancy Sauer  
**Sent:** Monday, July 13, 2015 7:17 PM  
**To:** info@sycamoreconsulting.net  
**Subject:** Comments on Connect Cobb BRT Project

Jul 13, 2015

Mr. Marty Sewell  
 1890 County Services Pkwy  
 Marietta, GA 30008-4014

Dear Mr. Sewell,

I understand the need for more reliable transportation options to connect activity centers in the highest traffic volume corridor in Cobb County. I am glad to hear that this proposed high capacity transit will have new vehicles using dedicated lanes with traffic signal upgrades, level boarding, and accessible stations with service to the existing MARTA Arts Center Station.

I agree with Liz Weston's comments. We need more high capacity transit here in Cobb.

Overall, the Environmental Assessment has shown that this project is shovel ready, seems financially feasible, will serve key destinations, has route flexibility, and is proposed higher-end BRT. Please consider my comments for this project.

Sincerely,

Ms. Nancy Sauer  
 387 Cove Island Way NE  
 Marietta, GA 30057-3617  
 [REDACTED]

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**Kristine Hansen-Dederick**

85

**From:** Georgia.Sierra.Club@at4mhnb23.myregisteredsite.com on behalf of michael johnson  
**Sent:** Monday, July 13, 2015 5:16 PM  
**To:** info@sycamoreconsulting.net  
**Subject:** Comments on Connect Cobb BRT Project

Jul 13, 2015

Mr. Marty Sewell  
 1890 County Services Pkwy  
 Marietta, GA 30008-4014

Dear Mr. Sewell,

I understand the need for more reliable transportation options to connect activity centers in the highest traffic volume corridor in Cobb County. I am glad to hear that this proposed high capacity transit will have new vehicles using dedicated lanes with traffic signal upgrades, level boarding, and accessible stations with service to the existing MARTA Arts Center Station.

I personally detests public transit. You folks can have the crap. I've had enough of metro Atlanta and its problems. Cobb County is doomed.

Overall, the Environmental Assessment has shown that this project is shovel ready, seems financially feasible, will serve key destinations, has route flexibility, and is proposed higher-end BRT. Please consider my comments for this project.

Sincerely,

Mr. michael johnson  
 2472 Fairfield C: SW  
 Marietta, GA 30064-3715  
 [REDACTED]

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**Kristine Hansen-Dederick**

86

**From:** Mary F Williams [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 14, 2015 10:01 AM  
**To:** info@sycamoreconsulting.net  
**Subject:** connect cobb comment - I support it

I am a Cobb County resident and I am in favor of Connect Cobb. Traffic between Cobb County and Atlanta has gotten much worse in recent years and will worsen without bold steps. I am assuming that the majority of those who oppose Connect Cobb do not have to drive from anywhere in Cobb County to Atlanta on a regular basis.

Mary Frances Williams  
 41 N Woodland Drive  
 Marietta, GA 30064  
 [REDACTED]

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**Kristine Hansen-Dederick**

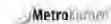
87

**From:** Lynn Clarke [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 14, 2015 9:49 AM  
**To:** info@sycamoreconsulting.net  
**Subject:** Why make it worse?

You must be kidding. There is no way any voter or politician in Cobb should support this plan since it will not improve congestion and in some areas will make it worse. It's the last thing Cobb needs.

"The EA exposes and admits that in some locations, Connect Cobb BRT is projected to provide no improvement in traffic congestion, and in other locations Connect Cobb BRT is projected to make traffic congestion worse! The EA shows no locations where Connect Cobb BRT is expected to result in any improvement in traffic conditions vs. No Build. So Connect Cobb is proposing to spend a half billion dollars on a project that will make overall traffic congestion worse than if we do nothing at all!"

Lynn Clarke  
 CEO  
[www.MetroKitchen.com](http://www.MetroKitchen.com)  
 Top brands for the professional chef in each of us.  
 Friendly, expert service, on line since 1998  
 [REDACTED]



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**Kristine Hansen-Dederick**

88

**From:** Rick Wemmers, CSP  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 14, 2015 11:08 AM  
**To:** info@sycamoreconsulting.net  
**Cc:** Fsilfen@aol.com  
**Subject:** Cobb Parkway ERT

And YET ANOTHER dumb idea...waste of good money...trying to avoid the obvious. If people don't like traffic then car pool...which won't happen either BUT to spend good tax payer money to build this monstrosity is simply DUMB.

*Rick Wemmers*

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**Kristine Hansen-Dederick**

89

**From:** Kerry  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 14, 2015 11:35 AM  
**To:** info@sycamoreconsulting.net  
**Subject:** onnect Cobb EA

Sirs:

This has to be the most incredibly stupid idea that our grossly incompetent Cobb Commissioners have come up with to date (actually possibly equaling the new stadium) to waste our tax money and line their own pockets. I come from an engineering/construction background, both family and myself. My Father was with the Corp of Engineers, Summit Co. Ohio Planning Commission, and owned several companies as well as founder of a utility. I spent many years in a managerial capacity with one of Atlanta's largest Engineering Consulting firms, have been a licensed realtor, and am a current Cobb Co. Business owner.

The current BRT proposal has to be the most short sighted poorly conceived waste of money as well as a plague on businesses along it's proposed route. Please STOP this now before any more funds are wasted on it. IF we were going to waste money on a system that no one will use (because it doesn't GO anywhere), it should at least be light rail that will not be obsolete by the time it is built and could be integrated into other systems.

Kerry Prance  
 3401 Pawnee tr.  
 Marietta, Ga. 30060

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90

**Kristine Hansen-Dederick**

**From:** Sherry Steinway [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 14, 2015 11:37 AM  
**To:** info@sycamoreconsulting.net  
**Subject:** Comments on Connect, Cobb

I am deeply concerned about the lack of concern by elected officials in Cobb county to listen to the residents, it's not about the problems that we face just driving to the grocery. It is frequently so difficult to navigate the streets that it takes 30 minutes to drive 2 miles. Having buses have special lanes that are restricted is ridiculous. Sherry Steinway Sent from my iPhone

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91

**Kristine Hansen-Dederick**

**From:** Trevor Woodhams [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 14, 2015 11:37 AM  
**To:** info@sycamoreconsulting.net  
**Subject:** Comments on Connect, Cobb EA

Hmm. No improvement in traffic congestion. Some businesses will be shouldered aside -good luck to them. Huge price tag. Embarrassing misstatements of fact from Cobb County officials coming to light. Sounds like another Braves Stadium boondoggle!

*J. Trevor Woodhams, MD*


  
 1110 Hammond Drive  
 Suite B5100  
 Atlanta, GA 30328  
 [REDACTED]

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Kristine Hansen-Dederick

92

**From:** Elder, Timothy [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 14, 2015 11:33 AM  
**To:** info@sycamoreconsulting.net  
**Cc:** [REDACTED]  
**Subject:** Comments on Connect Cobb EA

I write in my individual capacity as a Cobb County homeowner and taxpayer. I am deeply concerned about the ill-conceived and deeply flawed plans for BRT including the apparent misrepresentations contained in filing with the Federal Transit Administration.

The cost benefit analysis based on daily ridership alone is grounds for rejecting BRT. From capital cost estimates of doubtful accuracy taking into account the County's clear inability to estimate the cost of a bridge over I-285 in connection with SunTrust Park (another project not submitted to the voters and approved without adequate citizen input which diverted bond funding from approved purposes for parkland to one of private benefit) to on-going and likely underestimated O&M costs for which no revenue stream has been identified, the entire project screams boondoggle. The environmental impact study notes that a fixed guideway BRT will require significant earthwork to accommodate the guideway adversely impacting the community both during construction and after. One need only examine the Highway 41 widening project to see the utter mess with which resident must put up with for extended periods for "improvements" of doubtful utility.

I am also deeply concerned that the materials made available to the public lack detailed discussions of methodologies and that the County employed no "Tiger Team" with a mission of reviewing the analysis with a skeptical eye. For example, is it deeply ironic that a limited sample survey of college students, who are not taxpayers, is used to attempt to bolster the case for BRT when the same survey notes that *congestion relief* was cited by the students as the greatest need and the environmental assessment notes that BRT will NOT improve traffic congestion and in many instances will increase congestion.

Study materials contain bald faced assertions about "highly likely" increases in ridership without a scintilla of supporting evidence either from local operations (e.g. evidence that Atlanta Station's development increased MARTA ridership or mass transit developments involving BRT in other cities). Instead the study systematically displays a "build it and they will come" fantasy.

Similarly the environmental report stresses that vehicle trip reduction should be stressed in order to improve air quality. Fixed guideway bus lanes in the center median will necessarily increase congestion by eliminating center turn lane opportunities for hundreds of thousands of Cobb Countians for a limited ridership. There is no evidence that BRT will result in substitute ridership and, importantly, increased congestion and resulting longer trip times will likely offset any speculative gains attributable to BRT for car and/or standard buses in the unlikely event substitution arises. Cobb Parkway, despite its relatively high density, is simply not equivalent to a central city urban core.

Furthermore continued citation of the "locally preferred alternative" borders on intentional misrepresentation as none of the alternatives have been put to the voters for approval. Indeed, the inability of a vastly greater MARTA ridership to generate sufficient revenue to fund on-going operational needs of the system without resort to sales tax revenues suggests that honest

communications with the voters of Cobb would ask them whether they support a permanent tax increase to fund a BRT system of limited utility.

Because fixed guideway BRT is both unaffordable and fails of its essential purpose of relieving traffic congestion, it should be rejected. At minimum, it must be submitted to the voters of Cobb County for consideration to fulfill undertakings made by elected officials to the public. Finally, misrepresentations to the Federal Transportation Administration suggesting local approval and support should cease.

Tim Elder  
 Vinings

M. TIMOTHY ELDER | Attorney at Law



Promenade, Suite 3100  
 1230 Peachtree Street, N.E.  
 Atlanta, Georgia 30336-3592

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93

**Kristine Hansen-Dederick**

**From:** Charlotte Clark [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 14, 2015 11:53 AM  
**To:** info@sycamoreconsulting.net  
**Subject:** Connect Cobb EA

Hello,

I would like to register my comments against the approval of grant funds for the EA for Connect Cobb ART.

The CCDOT has purposely mischaracterized the approval status of the project, telling the USDOT/FTA that the LPA has been accepted, when it isn't even finalized.

The CCDOT has also stated that the AA is completed, but by definition, an AA can not be complete if the LPA has not been selected.

Do not fund this mismanaged project.

Thank you,  
 Charlotte Clark  
 East Cobb

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94

**Kristine Hansen-Dederick**

**From:** Fran Jackson [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 14, 2015 11:56 AM  
**To:** info@sycamoreconsulting.net  
**Subject:** Comments on connect Cobb EA

Please vote no on this. I do not see this as viable project that will get people moving. It is for a limited audience and costs too much money for that purpose.

Fran Jackson  
 West Cobb resident

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Kristine Hansen-Dederick

95

**From:** Wyn Engle [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 14, 2015 12:21 PM  
**To:** info@sycamoreconsulting.net  
**Subject:** COMMENTS ON CONNECT COBB EA

I oppose Connect Cobb EA. It will be an added burden to taxpayers with no benefit.

---  
**Wyn Engle**  
 [REDACTED]

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Kristine Hansen-Dederick

96

**From:** Claudia Cook [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 14, 2015 12:31 PM  
**To:** info@sycamoreconsulting.net  
**Subject:** Comments on Connect Cobb BRT

As a citizen of Cobb Co. and a resident of Vinings, I would like to register my vote AGAINST the idea of the BRT as presented to be built in the center lanes of Cobb Parkway. The elimination of many left turn lanes into businesses along this corridor would be inconvenient to citizens as well as to businesses. The increase in people needing to cross the parkway to board the BRT buses would also add to congestion for this roadway and create many safety issues.

I do not think this proposal is a good idea and I would not want my federal/state/local taxes to go toward this project.

Sincerely,  
 Claudia Cook  
 4329 Valley Trail Dr.  
 ATL, GA 30339

Sent from my iPad

---  
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**Kristine Hansen-Dederick**

97

**From:** Robert Magill [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 14, 2015 12:36 PM  
**To:** info@sycamoreconsulting.net  
**Subject:** Comments on Connect Cobb EA

The whole Cobb DRT project sounds like a huge waste of money on an inefficient plan being pushed down the taxpayer's throats. Please consider better alternatives or nothing at all!

Thank you

RW Magill

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**Kristine Hansen-Dederick**

98

**From:** Dick Gregson [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 14, 2015 12:45 PM  
**To:** info@sycamoreconsulting.net  
**Subject:** no to new lanes

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99

**Kristine Hansen-Dederick**

**From:** Bill Voegeli  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 14, 2015 1:54 PM  
**To:** info@sycamoreconsulting.net  
**Subject:** Comments on Connect Cobb EA

To whom it may concern,

The quality of life in Cobb County, and subsequent tax revenue and voter preferences, are significantly influenced by the decisions surrounding the proposed Cobb BRT.

Relief from the environmental, economic, and quality-of-life consequences of traffic congestion is clearly not the aim of BRT. The program is also clearly dismissive of the needs for those needing greater access to transportation for personal, professional, or emergency requirements.

The proposed BRT appears to be more of a challenge to be won, than a solution to be enjoyed.

Traffic solutions involve intelligent zoning, responsible spending, community-centered decision making, and some desire by politicians to focus more on public service, and less on personal accomplishment.

The Connect Cobb EA demonstrates much of the proof needed to justify my opinion.

If Cobb politicians want to spend hundreds of millions on something, why not make it something that will help the County, instead of something that will satisfy their egos?

Very sincerely,

Bill Voegeli

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100

**Kristine Hansen-Dederick**

**From:** J H MITCHELL  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 14, 2015 12:16 PM  
**To:** info@sycamoreconsulting.net  
**Subject:** Connect Cobb BRT

To the Cobb County Board of Commissioners;

I hope you will not proceed with this project. I do not think it has had enough investigation. I would like to get the present projects finished; then evaluate what we have and plan the next needed step.

Thank you for your service.  
Jana Mitchell, Cobb County resident for many years and retired Cobb County teacher

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101

**Kristine Hansen-Dederick**

**From:** Terry Blackwell [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 14, 2015 3:22 PM  
**To:** info@sycamoreconsulting.net  
**Subject:** Comments on Connect Cobb EA

As a resident of Vinings who uses Cobb Parkway most every day, I strongly object to the proposed BRT project. I object on (at least) five levels:

- 1- the exorbitant cost for this unproven project is absurd and inevitably will be much higher than projected;
- 2- it's bound to hurt existing businesses, creating a roadblock to turning into them;
- 3- it's dangerous to presume pedestrians can safely cross a very busy, high-speed road where drivers' views are sometimes obstructed by the surface configuration of the road;
- 4-the cost to passengers will be incompatible for those who will need and use it;
- 5- the shifty efforts to disguise this project and re-insert into budget make it highly questionable.

It's doubtful anyone who has authority over this project uses Cobb Parkway frequently. Nor do they have businesses presently located on this road. One is left with a clear question: Despite citizen opposition, why is Chairman Lee stubbornly pushing BRT?

Theresa C. Blackwell  
 resident of Courtyards of Vinings

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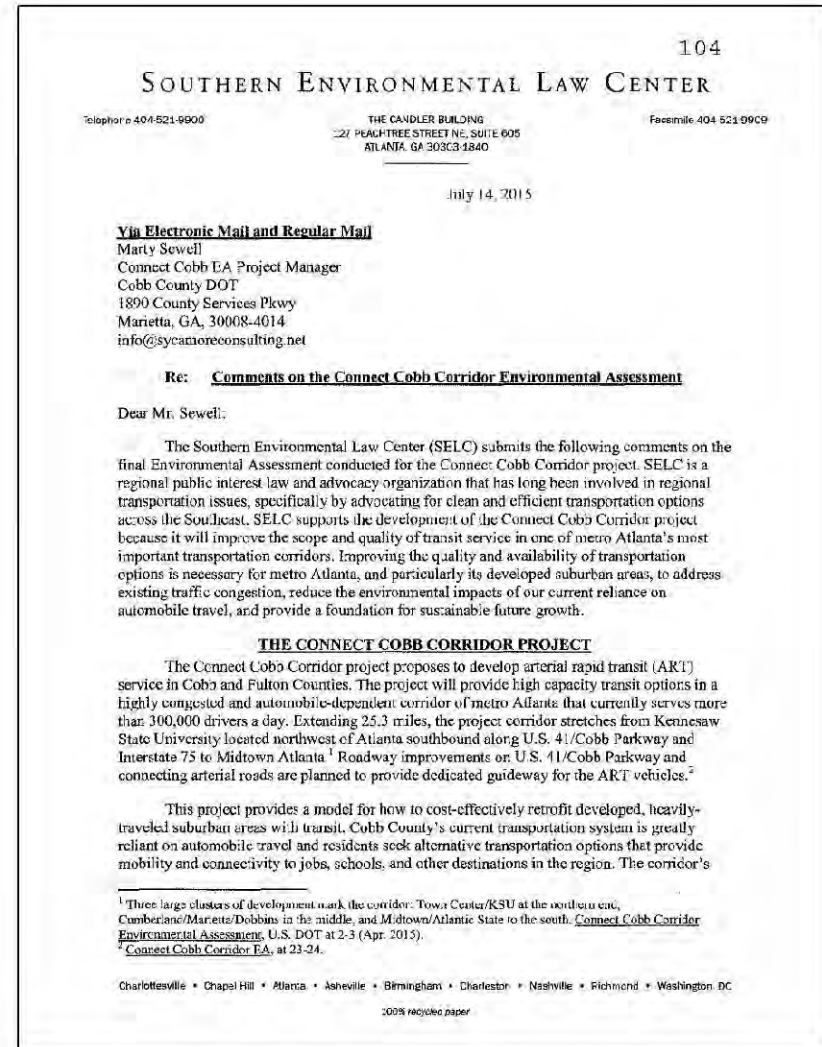
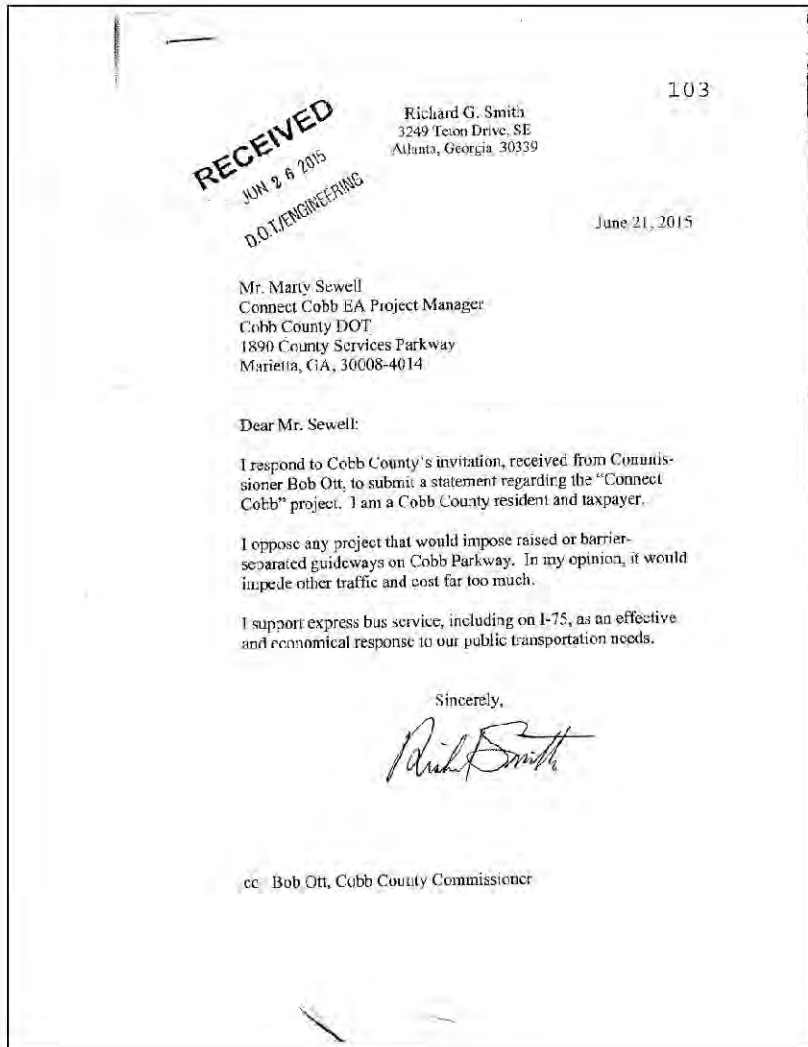
102

**Kristine Hansen-Dederick**

**From:** schuyler rector - [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 14, 2015 3:23 PM  
**To:** info@sycamoreconsulting.net  
**Subject:** BRT

I am adamantly opposed to the BRT which is being proposed along the Hwy 41 corridor. If the state and county DOTs want to make a more efficient corridor along this route they should consider limited access (auto) lanes on either or both sides of Hwy 41. These lanes should provide for inter-parcel connectivity. Buses are an irrelevant nuisance. S. B. Rector

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current transit service is limited to bus routes that operate in mixed traffic.<sup>3</sup> This project, which will improve the predictability and efficiency of transit service by constructing dedicated go-down for ART vehicles, represents a significant opportunity to improve transit service in the county. It will also meet the growing demand for transit: recent surveys demonstrate strong support among Cobb residents for increased transit service in the county.<sup>4</sup> And because the project will largely be located within the existing footprint of Cobb Parkway, the project will improve the efficiency, appeal, ridership, and quality of transit service while working within the confines of the existing corridor. With this approach, the project provides a compelling example of how transit enhancements can be achieved in a cost-effective manner and within the limits of the existing transportation system.

#### **BENEFITS OF THE PROJECT**

SELCO supports the project as proposed, and as the preferred alternative among those examined, because it provides significant benefits while minimizing the project's cost and environmental impacts. Several important aspects of the project commend its development. First, the project's potential to reduce congestion levels in the corridor will have wide-ranging benefits for transit riders and automobile drivers alike. The improved transit service will provide a more appealing transportation option for discretionary riders, which will enhance ridership and fare box collections and simultaneously reduce traffic demand on the corridor. Commuter transit mode share is projected to increase by 22% under the project.<sup>5</sup> Moreover, the project's use of dedicated guideways will allow the transit vehicles to expend less fuel and incur less wear and tear while providing better levels of service. Ultimately, by providing a high quality transit option for travelers in the corridor, this project will improve quality of life for all users of the corridor and less daily wear on roads.

Second, this project represents a long-term investment in Cobb County's growth and transportation infrastructure. By 2040, Cobb County is projected to add over 154,000 more jobs, and increased transit connectivity will be critical to move workers through the corridor.<sup>6</sup> The project has the potential to spur transit-oriented development (TOD) around the 14 proposed ART stations. Residential and commercial space constructed around the new transit facilities can accommodate job growth in the corridor and limit sprawl elsewhere. This project represents a sound investment in Cobb's economic future because it provides cost-effective transit improvement for workers throughout the region and the opportunity to guide future growth around TOD.

Finally, the project creates important ladders of opportunity for Cobb's diverse residents by providing reliable, low-cost access to jobs, schools, universities, and medical facilities in a corridor encumbered by heavy automobile congestion. Home to more than 700,000 residents, Cobb is one of the most diverse counties in the 10-county region of Atlanta, according to the

<sup>3</sup> Cobb Community Transit operates six local and commuter bus routes along the corridor, Route 10, which provides transit service from Cobb County to the MARTA heavy rail system in Midtown Atlanta, is the most used at 3,800 riders daily. *Connect Cobb Corridor EA* at 5.

<sup>4</sup> *State of the Region Report: Metro Atlanta Speaks Survey*, Atlanta Regional Commission (Nov. 2014), <http://www.atlantaregional.com/info-center/state-of-the-region-update>.

<sup>5</sup> *Connect Cobb Corridor EA* at 55.

<sup>6</sup> *Connect Cobb Corridor EA* at 12.

2010 U.S. Census.<sup>7</sup> However, the county's automobile-centric infrastructure challenges transit-dependent residents and impedes their ability to access employment and community services available in the region.<sup>8</sup> By improving transit reliability along an important regional corridor, this project connects transit-dependent users to work and community resources in the region.

#### **MINIMAL ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS IMPOSED BY THE PROJECT**

While providing important benefits, this project will incur only minimal adverse impacts on the environment. Regarding traffic-related impacts, use of a center guideway for ART lanes may impact certain left-hand traffic movements to a limited degree, but the improved traffic flow and safety resulting from this design more than justify it use.<sup>9</sup> In addition, the EA has identified that the project increases the attractiveness of transit: commuting, the commuter transit mode share in Cobb County is 22% higher under the proposed project compared to the No Build Alternative.<sup>10</sup> No impacts to existing sidewalks and bicycle facilities are projected, and the use of ADA-compliant pedestrian ramps at station locations and pedestrian connections from park-and-ride locations to station platforms will improve the transportation options available to those sensitive populations.<sup>11</sup>

Because the proposed project uses existing transportation corridors, the project requires only minimal acquisition of land and right-of-way.<sup>12</sup> None of these acquisitions will displace neighborhood or community facilities, nor will they divide community or its access to local business or shopping areas.<sup>13</sup> Indeed, the proposed project is compatible with future land use plans in the project area and will facilitate beneficial land use changes through TOD.<sup>14</sup> By focusing residential and commercial developments in the form of TOD around the station areas, the project will improve community cohesion and facilitate more sustainable land use patterns in the corridor.

Nor will the project adversely impact air or water quality. The project is likely to reduce air pollution by minimizing idling delays for transit vehicles operating in ART vehicle-only lanes and by providing alternatives to single occupant vehicle driving.<sup>15</sup> Regarding water quality, the project is not anticipated to affect impairment of 303(d) listed waters and, because the project is largely within existing roadway, direct impacts to streams will be minimized. Moreover, by accommodating Cobb County's future growth in the form of TOD in established areas rather

<sup>7</sup> Regional Snapshot, Atlanta Regional Commission (Apr. 2011), <http://www.atlantaregional.com/info-center/2011-census>.

<sup>8</sup> Nearly 13% of Cobb households do not have a vehicle. Approximately 25% of households in the project area are low-income and almost 12% of residents have limited English proficiency, both of which are higher rates compared to the Atlanta metro area as a whole. *Connect Cobb Corridor EA* at 137-38; *Confronting Suburban Poverty in America: Metropolitan Policy Program at Brookings Institute*, [http://www.theatlantic.com/business/archive/2015/01/suburbs-and-the-new-american-poverty/384259/](http://ccofrontingsuburbanpoverty.org/Atlanta_Summit: 'Suburbs and the New American Poverty,' THE ATLANTIC (Jan. 7, 2015), http://www.theatlantic.com/business/archive/2015/01/suburbs-and-the-new-american-poverty/384259/).

<sup>9</sup> *Connect Cobb Corridor EA* at 9.

<sup>10</sup> *Id.* at 54-55.

<sup>11</sup> *Id.* at 56.

<sup>12</sup> *Id.* at 63.

<sup>13</sup> *Id.* at 68.

<sup>14</sup> *Id.* at 63.

<sup>15</sup> *Id.* at 103-06.

than greenfield developments elsewhere, the water quality impacts resulting from the greenfield developments will be avoided.

Finally, implementation of the project will not result in disproportionate adverse impacts on environmental justice populations. Any adverse impacts of the project, which are expected to be minimal, will be borne by all populations in the corridor and limiting the project to the existing transportation corridor minimizes the potential for such impacts.<sup>16</sup> Because residents of the project area will be the primary beneficiaries of the project through the increased transportation options it provides, any impacts to environmental justice communities will be offset by the benefits they will receive.

**CONCLUSION**

The Connect Cobb Corridor project represents an important opportunity to improve transit service, and therefore transportation choices available, in one of metro Atlanta's most important corridors. The project provides these benefits within the confines of the current transportation system, with minimal environmental impacts, and in a cost-effective manner. SELC supports this endeavor as a forward-looking investment in alternative transportation and future growth not only in Cobb County, but for metro Atlanta as a region. Thank you for your consideration of these comments. Please contact us with questions or concerns at 404-521-9900.

Sincerely,



Brian Gist

Senior Attorney  
Southern Environmental Law Center



Helen Barnes

Associate Attorney  
Southern Environmental Law Center

cc (via regular mail only):

Dr. Yvette Taylor  
Ms. Faye DiMassimo  
Mr. Tim Lee  
Mr. Doug Hooker

(Federal Transit Administration)  
(Cobb County DOT)  
(Cobb County Board of Commissioners)  
(Atlanta Regional Commission)

<sup>16</sup> *Id.* at 46-47.



July 14, 2015

To Whom it May Concern:

We, the Cumberland Community Improvement District (CID), are commercial property owners committed to protecting and growing real estate values within our 6.5 square miles. The area serves as the central business district of Cobb County and comprises a third of the county's economy. We also recognize that our community is on the forefront of tremendous growth - \$3.5 billion in investment to be realized by 2018. We need a project that would provide a regional connection to transit for our community. We further support this project because it provides a dedicated right-of-way for a mass transit vehicle throughout the corridor and fixed stations that allow for further development opportunities. We must support the types of initiatives necessary for keeping up with real estate development trends and help foster the conditions needed to attract growth. In order to continue to attract the type of growth that we hope to foster in Cumberland, we have to provide commuting choices. As the potential for mass transit along the 400 corridor comes closer to reality, now seems a critical juncture for our community and the county. Similarly, recent major headquarters announcements, such as Mercedes, State Farm, and Kaiser, were made based on site locations having proximity to mass transit. Providing transit options within our business community and the implementation of a regional transit connection is vital for the future of Cumberland and Cobb County.

Right now in the Cumberland area is a sea of cranes and construction. With the Atlanta Braves site underway alongside more than 20 other development projects worth more than \$1.5 billion, the market has begun to heat up post-recession. In 2018, just three years away, this community could see at least six new Class A office buildings; more than 4,500 high-end residential units translating into an estimated 10,000 new residents; 1,250 new hotel rooms; and half million square feet of new retail including multiple chef-driven restaurant concepts. During construction alone, more than 5,000 jobs will be supported, with a total payroll of more than \$235 million. This type of transformational growth is catapulting the Cumberland community into one of the most attractive, amenity rich neighborhoods in the region.

Cobb has always been incredibly proactive, planning for growth and ensuring that government doesn't get in the way of good business decisions. We must look at the trends and the types of projects that are attracting new growth and development in the coming decades. Fixed guideway transit that connects to the regional system meets that need. We ask that Cobb County continue its tradition of implementing innovative and quality transportation projects that are proactively implemented to meet the needs of its citizens.

Sincerely,



Malaika Rivers  
Executive Director  
Cumberland CID



106

Kristine Hansen-Dederick

**From:** Linda Fierman [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 14, 2015 9:16 PM  
**To:** info@sycamoreconsulting.net  
**Cc:** Lisa Cupid; Bob.Ott@cobbcounty.org; Keli Gambrell; Rsifen@aol.com  
**Subject:** Comments on Connect Cobb EA

Ron Sifen's column on Connect Cobb/BRT is a game changer: the situation is even more dire than I had imagined. Approximately 15 mos ago, I began emailing all of my county commissioners, on several occasions, regarding opposition to BRT. My concern was that the plan would occupy a significant portion of the county budget but provide little, if any relief of traffic congestion county-wide; as a Cobb resident who travels regularly this is my voting hot button. (A native of metro NJ, I am typically a public transport supporter. Recently, in SF on business, I happily commuted on BART.) Only commissioners Ott and Cupid have replied to my emails.

This time last year, Faye Dimassimo sent an email to me stating that there were **No Plans** underway for BRT. After a further exchange of exploratory comments, she admitted it was 'on a list, somewhere'. The last election made it clear that an overwhelming majority of voters oppose plans for BRT, possibly because of the same reasons I do.

Ron Sifen's column states that the Environmental Assessment committee recognizes that **BRT WILL NOT REDUCE TRAFFIC**. Another sucker punch: it is likely to *adversely affect current businesses along the route*. The EA suggests the perhaps BRT "Build Improved" is needed to provide traffic relief. I don't know what in the world Commissioner Lee envisions for BRT. A fast track access for the Braves? A clumsy approach to tie Cobb into MARTA? I say: Let's just skip BRT with it's inherent problems and get right to "Build Improved" -- if that's what it takes to reduce commuter traffic in Cobb county.

I want to believe the best of our elected officials. Their charter is to represent the people. Is this what's happening now?

If the **Connect Cobb** is approved, with these overwhelming problems, there needs to be a **VAST** cleaning house come next elections and appointments.

Sincerely,  
Linda Fierman

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107

Kristine Hansen-Dederick

**From:** Keli Gambrell [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 14, 2015 9:56 PM  
**To:** info@sycamoreconsulting.net  
**Subject:** Connect Cobb BRT on Cobb Pkwy from KSU to Midtown

The consultants who studied this proposed solution to traffic congestion in Cobb County reported this project will actually make traffic worse. How can this be ignored. One can argue this is only an opinion, however, all studies paid for by an organization (government) to a consultant generally result in a favorable support. This one does not.

If we truly want to connect KSU to Midtown, then the most direct route is down 75, not Cobb Pkwy. KSU is a commuter school with students coming from all areas of Georgia. Expecting them to utilize bus transit to commute the last few miles to their destination is unreasonable.

The culture in Cobb is that parents will not put their children on school buses, which is a "free" service provided by the County to take their students to school. Instead, parents shuttle their children to and from school. Commissioner Rob Weatherford noted that his commute is cut in half when school is not in session. Why is the question? Answer, the buses are not stopping traffic to pick up students and parents are not using the same route to take their children to school.

The BRT is only one component of the redevelopment plans for Cobb, and specifically Cobb Parkway. Does this study take in to account that the county has already allocated over \$100 million dollars in SPLCSI funds for the Third Army Road Interchange which is also claiming to provide the same benefits as BRT? This project was on the CDOT project list but no longer found. Yet, Cobb County is proceeding with engineering and environmental studies. Why?

This is not about improving commuter transit.

Keli Gambrell  
Marietta, GA

Sent from my iPad

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108

**Kristine Hansen-Dederick**

**From:** M Roach [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 14, 2015 10:59 PM  
**To:** info@sycamoreconsulting.net  
**Subject:** Comments on Connect Cobb BRI

To Whom it May Concern,

I have grave reservations about the proposed system for Cobb County. Some studies show it would make traffic worse. The inability for automobiles to turn left would create problems. I'm a small business owner along 41, at the intersection of Riverwood and Cumberland. I'm a doctor with Eye Consultants of Atlanta, and we're located in the RaceTrac building. I also live in Vinings. The traffic is so lousy now that I commute by bicycle, partially along a path in the woods along Stillhouse Road. I can't imagine things getting any better with the proposed bus system.

I'm fed up with Tim Lee and his half-assed, moderately dishonest (on a good day), ill-conceived schemes. In fact, at the present time, anything he's for I'm against. We must allow more time for a sensible discussion and transparent analysis. Stadium traffic is a serious issue that needs a thorough evaluation, not a rush job. Lee created this problem for us, and we can't rely on him for a solution. It's a shame we couldn't get someone like Robert Moses involved at the onset before all hell broke loose. This entire process had been out of sequence.

I've said my peace.

Thank you and best regards,  
 John Michael Roach

Eye Consultants of Atlanta  
 3225 Cumberland Parkway  
 Atlanta, Georgia 30339

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 Version: 2014.0.4821 / Virus Database: 4365/10230 - Release Date: 07/14/15

109

**Kristine Hansen-Dederick**

**From:** Fred Singer [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 14, 2015 7:27 PM  
**To:** info@sycamoreconsulting.net  
**Subject:** comments on connect cobb .A

Cobb County taxpayers should not be committed to pay for design, nor for construction, nor for operation, nor for maintenance of a bus rapid transit system in the right of way of Cobb Parkway. This is a boondoggle that can be explained only by malfeasance by elected officials and employees. This should be cancelled now.

Fred Singer  
 [REDACTED]

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 Version: 2014.0.4821 / Virus Database: 4365/10230 - Release Date: 07/14/15

Kristine Hansen-Dederick

110

**From:** Michee Murphy [redacted]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, July 14, 2015 5:41 PM  
**To:** info@svcamoreconsulting.net  
**Subject:** Connect Cobb Project

To Whom It May Concern:

I wish to express my objections to the project. It is too expensive, ineffective and has neared attention away from other deserving areas of Cobb that needs transportation attention. For example, South Cobb is a chronically the largest area that would receive little or no benefit from the project. I regret that us tax payers have not be able to get our elected officials on the same page, the page called "reality".

Furthermore I don't understand how more money is available from a government that is \$18 trillion debt and shrinking. We are broke and can't afford another "Big Dig" like project. There is not a necessity for this project as long as those of us that are still reeling from the anemic economy.

In my view, this is nothing more than a economic development project that will benefit some of the same people that bought up parking around Sun Trust Park.

Michael Murphy  
 Mableton, GA

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111



Project Comment Form

\*Name/Organization Deborah Tompkins  
 Address 789 Church St  
 City, State and Zipcode Smayna, Ga 30020  
 Email deborah.tompkins12@gmail.com

Please list below any comments concerning the Connect Cobb Project.

I oppose the current Connect Cobb project. Cobb currently has a bus system for commuters in the area that also has a station to connect to Marta. The addition of an ART means more removal of green space and environmental impact. Forbes magazine listed Atlanta as one of the 12 largest Metropolitan areas and experiencing large growth. It's clear we need transportation options to mitigate the growth and congestion. I think a better investment of money and resources would be in implementing a rail system. The metropolitan area clearly needs this to connect not only Cobb but other areas in the Metro area. A much better use would be a rail system that connects much of the state rather than more expense in individual counties. This is a permanent solution the state needs and not merely a interim plan. This would result in faster transportation time for passengers and less environmental impact.


Please send by July 14, 2015 to  
 Mr. Marty Sewell, Connect Cobb EA Project Manager  
 Cobb County DOT  
 1890 County Services Pkwy  
 Marietta, Georgia 30008-4014  
 info@svcamoreconsulting.net

\*Contact information provided to a government agency may be subject to public release as required by Georgia's open records law.



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113 a



MARK WILLIAMS  
 COMMISSIONER

DR. DAVID CRASS  
 DIVISION DIRECTOR

May 4, 2015

Yvette G. Taylor, Ph.D.  
 Regional Administrator  
 Federal Transit Administration  
 230 Peachtree Street, NW, Suite 1400  
 Atlanta, Georgia 30303  
 Attn: Stan Mitchell, FTA Region IV

**RE: Connect Cobb Transit Study, 25 Miles along US 41/Cobb Parkway, I-75  
 Cobb County et al, Georgia  
 HP-131021-003**

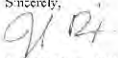
Dear Dr. Taylor:

The Historic Preservation Division (HPD) has reviewed the information submitted concerning the above referenced project. Our comments are offered to assist the US Department of Transportation, Federal Transit Administration (FTA) in complying with the provisions of Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended (NHPA).

The subject project includes arterial rapid transit service and associated improvements on US 41/Cobb Parkway from Cummer to Cumberland. As proposed in its concept phase of design, the subject project cannot be evaluated for effects on historic properties located within its area of potential effect (APE). However, for early Section 106 consultation review purposes, it is our opinion that the project will have no adverse effect to historic property within its APE provided the following conditions are met:

1. Provide HPD with the plans and elevations for construction, including proposed stations and roadwork, as they become available.
2. Provide HPD with photographs of the project setting, including photos of the setting of eligible properties, and views from the properties toward the project area.
3. Include an effects assessment for the bridge (121-0493-0) previously identified within the Georgia Historic Bridge Survey.

Please refer to project number **HP-131021-003** in any future correspondence on this project. If we may be of further assistance, please do not hesitate to contact me at (770) 389-7851 or [jennifer.dixon@dnr.ga.gov](mailto:jennifer.dixon@dnr.ga.gov).

Sincerely,  
  
 Jennifer Dixon, MHP, LEED Green Associate  
 Program Manager  
 Environmental Review & Preservation Planning

cc: Carrie Walker, FTA Region IV  
 Allison Duncan, Atlanta Regional Commission

2610 GA HWY 135, SW | STOCKBRIDGE, GA 30281  
 770.389.7844 | FAX 770.389.7878 | [WWW.GEORGIAHPO.ORG](http://WWW.GEORGIAHPO.ORG)

113b

**Kristine Hansen-Dederick**

**From:** Dixon, Jennifer <Jennifer.Dixon@dnr.ga.gov>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, June 24, 2015 9:14 PM  
**To:** marty.sewell@cobbcounty.org  
**Cc:** info@sycamoreconsulting.net; julia.walker@dcd.gov; stanley.a.mitchell@dcd.gov  
**Subject:** Connect Cobb Northwest Transit Corridor, Cobb Co, HP 131024-003  
**Attachments:** Cobb HP 131021-003 Jun 24 2015.pdf; Certification\_Form

From: Historic Preservation Division

Attached is our letter on the subject undertaking (in Adobe Acrobat PDF format).  
 If you have any questions concerning our letter, please contact:  
 Jennifer Dixon at jennifer.dixon@dnr.ga.gov

A free copy of Adobe Acrobat Reader can be downloaded from: [www.adobe.com](http://www.adobe.com)



MARE WILLIAMS  
COMMISSIONER

DR. DAVID CRASS  
DIVISION DIRECTOR

June 24, 2015

Marty Sewell, AICP  
 Cobb County DOT  
 1890 County Services Parkway  
 Marietta, Georgia 30067-1011

RE: Connect Cobb Northwest Transit Corridor  
 Cobb County et al., Georgia  
 HP-131021-003

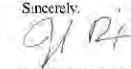
Dear Mr. Sewell,

The Historic Preservation Division (HPD) has received the Environmental Assessment document concerning the above referenced project requesting comments pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969. Our comments are offered to assist the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) in complying with the provisions of Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended.

Thank you for notifying us of this federal undertaking. We look forward to working with the FTA and receiving from the FTA Section 106 compliance documentation as appropriate.

Please refer to project number HP 131021-003 in future correspondence regarding this project. If we may be of further assistance, please contact me at (770) 389-7851 or jennifer.dixon@dnr.ga.gov.

Sincerely,



Jennifer Dixon, MHE, LEED Green Associate  
 Program Manager  
 Environmental Review & Preservation Planning

Cc: Kristine Dederick, Sycamore Consulting  
 Carrie Walker, FTA  
 Stan Mitchell, FTA

114



July 9, 2015

Faye Q. DiMassimo, Director  
Cobb County DOT  
1890 County Services Parkway  
Marietta, GA 30068

Subject: Connect Cobb Project

Dear Ms. DiMassimo:

The Metropolitan Atlanta Rapid Transit Authority ("MARTA") appreciates the opportunity for continued collaboration with Cobb County in the environmental process supporting the development of Connect Cobb, a proposed bus rapid transit project from the Kennesaw State University area in north Cobb to the MARTA Arts Center Station.

We understand that two alternatives are being considered for the connection at the Arts Center Station as part of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process, one in the existing bus intermodal and the other along Arts Center Way.

MARTA has issued the Request for Expression of Interest (RFEI) for the development of air rights above our four most urban stations last summer. Arts Center Station was identified as a viable near-term TOD opportunity based on the strong level of interest expressed by developers in response to the RFEI.

We have now moved to the next step in the process and issued a Request for Proposals for TOD at the Arts Center Station. Proposals are due to MARTA on September 3, 2015.

We look forward to continuing in partnership with the Cobb County DOT and support the final environmental document concluding with both operational alternatives in place such that MARTA's ongoing efforts will be supported. Should you have any questions or require additional information, please contact me at (404) 848-4422 or [drwilliams@itsmarta.com](mailto:drwilliams@itsmarta.com).

Sincerely,

Don Williams  
Acting Assistant General Manager of Planning

cc: Amanda Rhein  
Senior Director of Transit Oriented Development





MARK WILLIAMS  
COMMISSIONER

DR. DAVID CRASS  
DIVISION DIRECTOR

July 16, 2014

Yvette G. Taylor, Ph.D  
Regional Administrator  
Federal Transit Administration  
230 Peachtree Street, NW, Suite 800  
Atlanta, Georgia 30303  
Attn: Stan Mitchell

**RE: Connect Cobb Transit Study, 25 Miles along US 41/Cobb Parkway and I-75  
Cobb County, Georgia  
HP-131021-003**

Dear Dr. Taylor:

The Historic Preservation Division (HPD) has reviewed the survey report entitled *Phase I Archaeological Survey for the Proposed Connect Cobb Transit Improvement Project in Cobb and Fulton Counties, Georgia*, prepared by Edwards-Pitman and dated November 2013. Our comments are offered to assist the US Department of Transportation, Federal Transit Administration and its applicants in complying with the provisions of Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA).

Based on the information contained in the report, HPD concurs that sites 9CO97 (Revisit), 9CO125/9CO446 (Revisit), 9CO502 (Revisit), 9CO555 (Revisit), 9CO611 (Revisit), and 9CO613 (Revisit) are ineligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP), as they have all been destroyed or significantly altered by modern development and construction activities. HPD also concurs that site number 9CO446 should be abandoned and that the site be referred to by the original designation of 9CO125 in order to eliminate the potential for future confusion about the nature and location of this site.

HPD concurs that site 9CO345 (Revisit) was eligible for inclusion in the NRHP at the time of its original discovery, but has since been mitigated (Phase III) prior to its destruction by highway construction. HPD also concurs that site 9CO535 (Revisit) is eligible for inclusion in the NRHP, but the site will not be impacted by construction based on the current plans. HPD concurs that the locale be designated as an Environmentally Sensitive Area (ESA) to help minimize the chance for inadvertent disturbance during planning or construction. Should construction plans change causing impact to 9CO535, HPD recommends that further testing be conducted to mitigate any adverse effects.

HPD concurs that site 9CO428 (Revisit) and Isolated Find (IF) 1 have an unknown eligibility for inclusion in the NRHP as they could not be fully investigated or delineated, but that the portions located within the area of potential effect (APE) are non-contributing.

Please submit one electronic copy of the report to HPD. Please ensure the electronic copy is an optical character enabled .pdf. For your information, the electronic file will be sent to the Georgia Archaeological Site File at the University of Georgia, Athens for permanent retention.





Northwest Transit Corridor  
Environmental Assessment

Dr. Taylor  
July 16, 2014  
HP 131021-003  
Page 2

Please refer to project number **HP-131021-003** in any future correspondence concerning this project. If we may be of further assistance, please do not hesitate to contact Bryan Tucker, State Archaeologist, at (404) 295-1090 or [bryan.tucker@dnr.state.ga.us](mailto:bryan.tucker@dnr.state.ga.us), or Jennifer Dixon, Environmental Review Historian at (404) 651-6546 or [jennifer.dixon@dnr.state.ga.us](mailto:jennifer.dixon@dnr.state.ga.us).

Regards,

William Hover  
Historic Resources Section Chief  
Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer

WRH:jad



Northwest Transit Corridor  
Environmental Assessment



MARK WILLIAMS  
COMMISSIONER

DR. DAVID CRASS  
DIVISION DIRECTOR

May 4, 2015

Yvette G. Taylor, Ph.D.  
Regional Administrator  
Federal Transit Administration  
230 Peachtree Street, NW, Suite 1400  
Atlanta, Georgia 30303  
Attn: Stan Mitchell, FTA Region IV

**RE: Connect Cobb Transit Study, 25 Miles along US 41/Cobb Parkway, I-75  
Cobb County et al, Georgia  
HP-131021-003**

Dear Dr. Taylor:

The Historic Preservation Division (HPD) has reviewed the information submitted concerning the above referenced project. Our comments are offered to assist the US Department of Transportation, Federal Transit Administration (FTA) in complying with the provisions of Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended (NHPA).

The subject project includes arterial rapid transit service and associated improvements on US 41/Cobb Parkway from Kennesaw to Cumberland. As proposed in its concept phase of design, the subject project cannot be evaluated for effects on historic properties located within its area of potential effect (APE). However, for early Section 106 consultation review purposes, it is our opinion that the project will have **no adverse effect** to historic property within its APE **provided the following conditions are met:**

1. Provide HPD with the plans and elevations for construction, including proposed stations and roadwork, as they become available.
2. Provide HPD with photographs of the project setting, including photos of the setting of eligible properties, and views from the properties toward the project area.
3. Include an effects assessment for the bridge (121-0493-0) previously identified within the Georgia Historic Bridge Survey.

Please refer to project number **HP-131021-003** in any future correspondence on this project. If we may be of further assistance, please do not hesitate to contact me at (770) 389-7851 or [jennifer.dixon@dnr.ga.gov](mailto:jennifer.dixon@dnr.ga.gov).

Sincerely,

Jennifer Dixon, MHP, LEED Green Associate  
Program Manager  
Environmental Review & Preservation Planning

cc: Carrie Walker, FTA Region IV  
Allison Duncan, Atlanta Regional Commission



Northwest Transit Corridor  
Environmental Assessment



MARK WILLIAMS  
COMMISSIONER

DR. DAVID CRASS  
DIVISION DIRECTOR

June 24, 2015

Marty Sewell, AICP  
Cobb County DOT  
1890 County Services Parkway  
Marietta, Georgia 30008-4014

RE: Connect Cobb Northwest Transit Corridor  
Cobb County et. al., Georgia  
**HP-131021-003**

Dear Mr. Sewell,

The Historic Preservation Division (HPD) has received the Environmental Assessment document concerning the above referenced project requesting comments pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969. Our comments are offered to assist the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) in complying with the provisions of Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended.

Thank you for notifying us of this federal undertaking. We look forward to working with the FTA and receiving from the FTA Section 106 compliance documentation as appropriate.

Please refer to project number **HP 131021-003** in future correspondence regarding this project. If we may be of further assistance, please contact me at (770) 389-7851 or [jennifer.dixon@dnr.ga.gov](mailto:jennifer.dixon@dnr.ga.gov).

Sincerely,

Jennifer Dixon, MHP, LEED Green Associate  
Program Manager  
Environmental Review & Preservation Planning

Cc: Kristine Dedrick, Sycamore Consulting  
Carrie Walker, FTA  
Stan Mitchell, FTA



Northwest Transit Corridor  
Environmental Assessment



MARK WILLIAMS  
COMMISSIONER

DR. DAVID CRASS  
DIVISION DIRECTOR

March 15, 2016

Yvette G. Taylor, Ph.D.  
Regional Administrator  
Federal Transit Administration, Region IV  
230 Peachtree Street, NW, Suite 1400  
Atlanta, Georgia 30303  
Attn: Julia Walker

**RE: Connect Cobb Transit Study, 25 Miles along US 41/Cobb Parkway, I-75  
Cobb County et al, Georgia  
HP-131021-003**

Dear Dr. Taylor:

The Historic Preservation Division (HPD) has reviewed the additional information submitted concerning the above referenced project. Our comments are offered to assist the US Department of Transportation, Federal Transit Administration (FTA) in complying with the provisions of Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended (NHPA).

The subject project includes bus rapid transit service and associated improvements on US 41/Cobb Parkway from Kennesaw to Cumberland with continuing service to the existing MARTA Arts Center Station in Atlanta. The project was initially determined to have no adverse effect to historic resources within its area of potential effects (APE) with conditions. The current submitted information, received February 25, 2016, is additional conceptual information noting potential station locations and types. However, since the project continues to be in the concept phase of design, HPD continues to find that the subject project cannot be fully evaluated for effects on historic resources within its APE. As such, in order to ensure no change in the effects assessment, it continues to be HPD's opinion that the project will have **no adverse effect** to historic resources within its APE **provided the previous assigned conditions noted in our letter dated May 4, 2015, are satisfied.**

To satisfy Condition 1, HPD looks forward to receiving 60% and 90% construction plans and elevations, once available. To fully satisfy Condition 2, HPD recommends including with the plan submittals an overall project map which identifies the confirmed station locations/footprints with the historic resources identified throughout the project corridor and keying the photographs of the setting previously submitted on September 2, 2015, to the map. It is HPD's understanding that Condition 3 is no longer applicable.

HPD looks forward to receiving the above outlined information, once available, to satisfy previously assigned conditions and working with FTA as this project progresses. Please refer to project number **HP-131021-003** in any future correspondence on this project. If we may be of further assistance, please do not hesitate to contact me at (770) 389-7851 or [jennifer.dixon@dnr.ga.gov](mailto:jennifer.dixon@dnr.ga.gov).

Sincerely,

Jennifer Dixon, MHP, LEED Green Associate  
Program Manager  
Environmental Review & Preservation Planning

cc: Allison Duncan, Atlanta Regional Commission





Northwest Transit Corridor  
Environmental Assessment



United States Department of the Interior

Fish and Wildlife Service  
105 Westpark Drive, Suite D  
Athens, Georgia 30606

West Georgia Sub Office  
P.O. Box 52560  
Fl. Benning, Georgia 31995-2560

April 16, 2015

Coastal Sub Office  
4980 Wildlife Drive  
Townsend, Georgia 31331

Ms. Yvette G. Taylor  
Regional Administrator  
Federal Transit Administration  
230 Peachtree St.  
N.W., Suite 1400  
Atlanta, Georgia 30303  
ATTN: Amy Zaref

RE: USFWS Log# 04EG1000-2015-I-0782, Connect Cobb Northwest Corridor

Dear Ms. Taylor:

Thank you for your April 14, 2015, electronic mail regarding Cobb County / Federal Transit Authority Connect Cobb Northwest Corridor project. We submit the following comments under provisions of the Endangered Species Act (ESA) of 1973, as amended (16 U.S.C. 1531 *et seq.*).

Cobb County's Connect Cobb project includes Arterial Rapid Transit (ART) service and associated improvements on U.S. Highway 41 / Cobb Parkway in Cobb County, Georgia. The project is within the potential range of proposed endangered Northern Long-eared Bat (*Myotis septentrionalis*).

Cobb County habitat surveys revealed potential roosting habitat for Northern Long-eared Bat. This habitat occurs along existing roadways and is fragmented within the urban landscape. To minimize potential impact to Northern Long-eared Bats, and in lieu of mist net and acoustic surveys, Cobb County proposed to restrict clearing of hardwood forests from March 30th to October 15<sup>th</sup> when Northern Long-eared Bats would likely be within the project area.

Based on information provided, we concur with your determination that the proposed project is not likely to adversely affect Northern Long-eared Bat. Obligations of section 7(a)(2) of the Act have been satisfied, and formal consultation is not required. However, obligations under the Act must be reconsidered if: (1) the project is modified in a manner not considered by this assessment; (2) a new species is listed or critical habitat is determined that may be affected by the project; or (3) new information indicates that the project may affect listed species or critical habitat in a manner not previously considered.

If you have any questions or require further information, please contact staff biologist Carrie Straight, at 706-613-9493, ext. 226.

Sincerely,

Donald W. Imm, Ph.D.  
Field Supervisor

cc: Marty Sewell, Cobb County DOT  
file



## Unanticipated Discovery During Construction

An unanticipated discovery is one that occurs during ground disturbing activities.

1. Initiate Unanticipated Discovery Plan. Cultural Resources to be considered as an unanticipated discovery and that require reporting include, but are not limited to: a) any human remains, b) any features (pits, foundations), and c) any artifacts (individual objects, specimens or physical evidence of prehistoric or historic human activity).
2. Procedures to Follow in the Event of an Unanticipated Discovery.
  - (i) CCDOT will notify FTA and SHPO of an unanticipated discovery within forty-eight (48) hours of the discovery.
  - (ii) CCDOT will flag or fence off the archaeological discovery location and take measures to ensure site security. Any discovery made on a weekend will be protected until all appropriate Parties are notified of the discovery. CCDOT will not restart work in the area of the find until clearance has been granted by FTA, in consultation with the SHPO. CCDOT will indicate the location and date of the discovery on the Connect Cobb Corridor Project plans. CCDOT will have an archaeologist undertake a site visit or otherwise coordinate an on-site archaeological consultation.
  - (iii) CCDOT will direct the archaeologist to begin a more detailed assessment of the find's significance and the potential effects of the Connect Cobb Corridor Project to the find(s).
  - (iv) CCDOT will notify FTA and the SHPO of the find within 48 hours of discovery. The notification to FTA and SHPO will either: (i) explain why the archaeologist for CCDOT recommends that the find is not significant, or (ii) describe a proposed scope of work for evaluating the significance of the find and evaluating project effects. All work to evaluate significance of the find would be confined to the Connect Cobb Corridor Project's area of effect. Prior to the implementation of any scope of work, FTA will consult with CCDOT and SHPO.
3. If the find is determined to be significant, and continuing construction may damage more of the site, then CCDOT will work with FTA to determine appropriate recommendations regarding the proper measures for site treatment. These measures may include:
  - (i) Formal archaeological evaluation of the site;
  - (ii) Visits to the site by FTA, CCDOT, SHPO and/or other entities;
  - (iii) Preparation of a mitigation plan by the archaeologist for CCDOT for FTA approval and consultation with CCDOT and SHPO;
  - (iv) Implementation of the mitigation plan; and
  - (v) FTA, in consultation with the SHPO, will provide approval to resume construction following completion of the fieldwork component of the mitigation plan.
4. If the find is determined to be isolated or completely disturbed by prior construction activities, then CCDOT will consult with FTA, SHPO, and/or other entities as appropriate, and will request approval from FTA to resume construction, subject to any further mitigation that may be determined necessary.





### **Procedures to Follow In the Event of an Unanticipated Discovery of Human Remains**

The Unmarked Human Burial and Human Skeletal Remains Protection Act, N.C.G.S. §§ 70-26 – 70-40, (Act) addresses discovery of unmarked human remains. CCDOT will adhere to all provisions of the Act as the Connect Cobb Corridor Project moves forward. Should human remains be discovered as a result of construction related activities associated with the Connect Cobb Corridor Project, “disturbance of the remains shall cease immediately and shall not resume without authorization for either the county medical examiner or the State Archaeologist,” under the provisions of N.C.G.S. §§ 70-30(c) or 70-30(d).

Within 48 hours, CCDOT will notify FTA and SHPO, local law enforcement, the medical examiner of the county in which the remains are encountered, and other appropriate entities of the find and cooperate with all agencies and/or entities as required.

If it is determined that intact internments are present and may be disturbed by continuing construction, CCDOT will consult with the next of kin or descendent community (if known). CCDOT will receive direction from FTA regarding additional measures to avoid or mitigate further damage. FTA will consult with CCDOT, SHPO, and other entities as appropriate. The avoidance or measures may include:

1. Formal archaeological evaluation of the site;
2. Visits to the site by FTA, SHPO, and other entities, as appropriate;
3. Preparation of a mitigation plan by the archaeologist for CCDOT, including procedures for avoidance or disinterment and reinternment, to be approved by FTA and in consultation with CCDOT, SHPO, and others as appropriate;
4. Implementation of the mitigation plan by CCDOT; and
5. Approval to resume construction following completion of the fieldwork component of the mitigation plan.