
Chapter 1. Introduction

1A. Purpose

The Georgia Department of Transportation's (GDOT) Office of Planning initiated the State Route 6 (SR 6) Access Management Study to document and evaluate the existing and future conditions of the SR 6 corridor in an effort to ensure that the corridor retains its intended use as a major thoroughfare serving freight, local traffic, and commuters, including pedestrians. The study analyzes current and future land use patterns, traffic, level of service (LOS), and crash data in conjunction with transportation projects and development opportunities that will impact the SR 6 corridor in the future. This comprehensive approach to assessing transportation needs along the entire 35-mile corridor has resulted in this final report, which is intended as a resource to guide future development and access along the SR 6 corridor through recommended access management policies and other supplemental transportation improvements. It is important to emphasize that access management can be achieved through a variety of methods, including traffic signal system upgrades, turn lanes and restrictions, driveway spacing management, intelligent transportation systems, and medians.

1B. Study Area

The SR 6 study corridor extends approximately 35 miles from its origin at Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport (HJIA) in Fulton County to the City of Dallas, in Paulding County. The study area, shown in **Figure 1-1**, traverses four counties (Fulton, Douglas, Cobb, and Paulding) and eight municipalities (Cities of College Park, East Point, Douglasville, Lithia Springs, Austell, Powder Springs, Hiram, and Dallas).

SR 6 serves as a major regional travel corridor that runs southeast to northwest, and the roadway has different names designated by the various jurisdictions, including:

- Camp Creek Parkway (Fulton County)
- Thornton Road (Cobb and Douglas counties)
- C.H. James Parkway (Cobb and Douglas counties)
- Wendy Bagwell Parkway (Paulding County)
- Jimmy Lee Smith Parkway (Paulding County)
- Jimmy Campbell Parkway (Paulding County)
- US Highway 278 (Paulding, Cobb, Douglas counties)

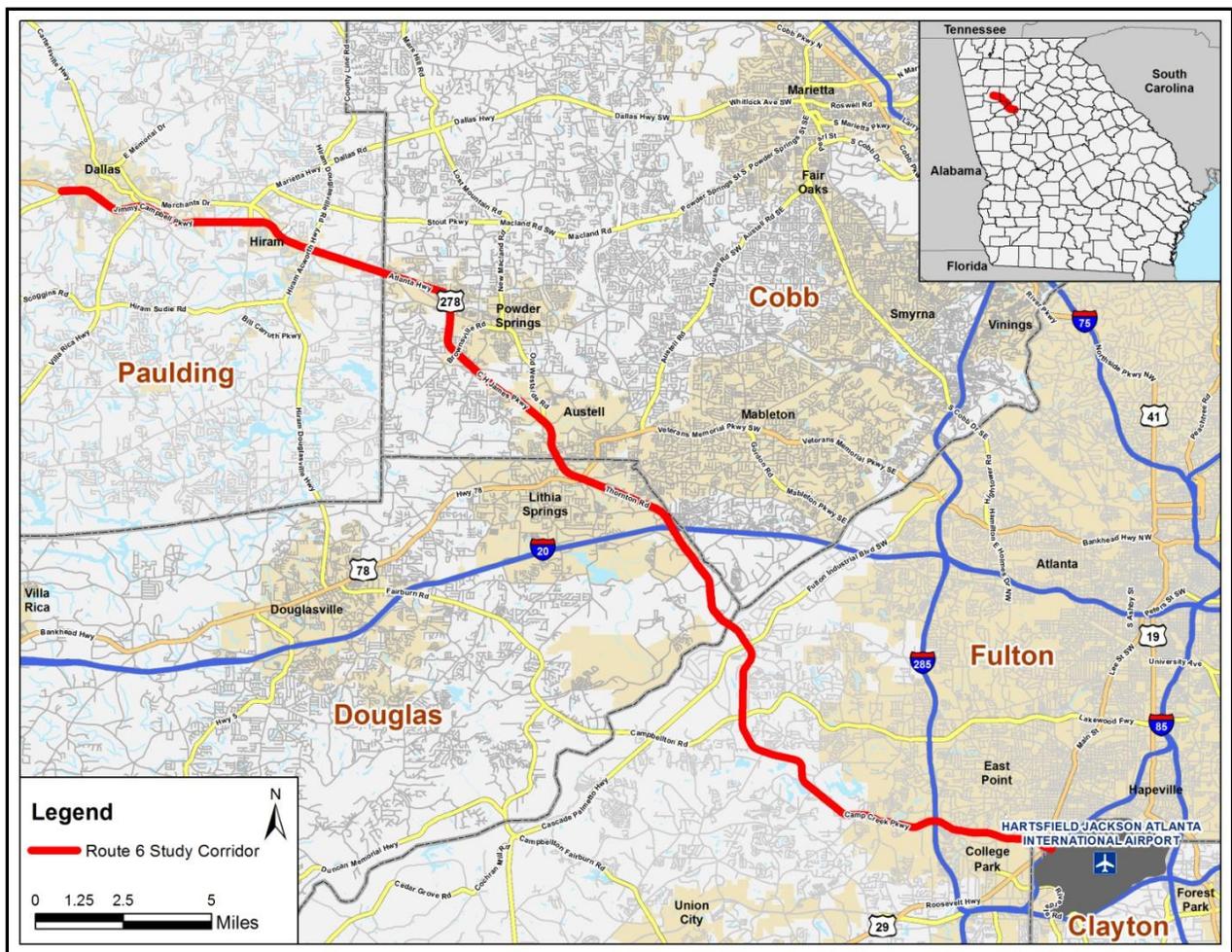


Figure 1-1: Study Area Map

1C. Stakeholder Outreach

The purpose of the stakeholder meetings was to gain input from local agencies for the purpose of developing a vision and goals for the corridor as well as the decision-making process. Local agencies and interested groups were invited to meet at three stakeholder meetings that were held during the course of this study. Four small group meetings were conducted, one for each county, where specific local issues were discussed in more detail. This section provides a summary of the stakeholder meetings and small group meetings.

Stakeholder Identification

The table below shows the key stakeholders identified, which included representatives from county, city, state and local governments, agencies, businesses, and community groups with involvement, oversight, or operations along the SR 6 corridor. In addition to the external stakeholders listed below, GDOT's Office of Planning coordinated with other GDOT offices including the District 6 and 7 Offices and Traffic Operations throughout the course of this study.

| SR 6 Identified Stakeholder List | |
|---|--|
| Airport West Community Improvement District | Douglas County |
| Atlanta Regional Commission | Fulton County |
| City of Austell | Fulton Industrial Community Improvement District |
| City of College Park | Georgia Convention Center |
| City of Dallas | Georgia Regional Transportation Authority |
| City of Douglasville | Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport |
| City of East Point | MARTA Office of Transit Planning |
| City of Hiram | Norfolk Southern |
| City of Powder Springs | Paulding County |
| Cobb County | South Fulton CID |
| CSX Corporation | RTOP Corridor Managers |

Initial Stakeholder Meeting

The first meeting was conducted on May 22, 2014. The meeting purpose was to introduce the study and to gather local knowledge of the corridor. After reviewing the existing conditions, a variety of issues and concerns were discussed, including pedestrian safety, high freight volume, excessive U-turns, lack of frontage roads, and lack of inter-parcel access in the Camp Creek Marketplace area. During subsequent small group stakeholder meetings, stakeholders provided input on visions, goals, and the corridor goals and objectives.

Small Group Stakeholder Meetings

The small group meetings were organized by county, with representatives from agencies, municipalities, and major activity centers in and near each county. The representatives from each of these groups provided input about the proposed development and improvements that they anticipate occurring near the SR 6 corridor over the next few years. Congestion issues and locations with safety concerns were also discussed. These are described below.

Fulton County representatives were concerned about the lack of access management and wanted guidelines to help ease congestion by consolidating driveways and controlling access while providing sufficient access to businesses.

In the **Douglas County** meeting, the lack of mixed-use development along SR 6 within Douglas County and the potential revitalization of some vacant buildings were discussed. The possible expansion of the Whitaker Intermodal Terminal, already a large trip generator for truck traffic, was also discussed. Pedestrian concerns were also raised, especially along the section between I-20 and Maxham Road.

The meeting in **Cobb County**, which is the only county along the corridor without a raised median, included discussions about the option of constructing a raised median through the county, with pedestrian access and rain gardens where practical. Proposed truck-friendly lanes through Cobb and Douglas counties were also discussed as a possible relief to some congestion caused by the heavy freight movement along the corridor.

Paulding County representatives were concerned about uncontrolled growth, new developments, and the addition of more signalized intersections. The County is in the process of updating their Comprehensive Plan and intended to incorporate access management and access control guidelines into the plan.

Many stakeholders suggested that quadrant connectivity to bypass SR 6 by utilizing frontage roads could be developed. Stakeholders requested that the study cover key issues, such as improved pedestrian access, by increasing the number of multiuse facilities and lighting along the corridor and congestion mitigation through limiting the number of traffic signals and providing frontage roads for internal access.

Second Stakeholder Meeting

During the second large stakeholder meeting held on October 24, 2014, the study team presented the corridor vision, goals, and objectives developed based on previous stakeholder input and discussed existing access management policies and their potential effectiveness in the future. The stakeholders refined the vision, goals, and objectives identified key subareas for further technical analysis, and identified possible solutions at specific locations on the corridor. The following vision statement and goals resulted from stakeholder input:

Corridor Vision

State Route 6 will continue to function as a major thoroughfare in the Atlanta region, serving commuters, businesses, residents, freight, pedestrians, and bicyclists. Investments on this corridor will support local and regional economic vitality, mobility, and safety for all users while preserving the essential character of the corridor and minimizing impacts to natural resources. Future access along the corridor will follow a comprehensive corridor plan and will be coordinated among local, regional, and state transportation partners, businesses, and the general public.

Corridor Goals and Objectives

| Goals | Objectives |
|---|--|
| G1: Maintain Mobility While Controlling Access | O1.1: Guide access standards for future development |
| | O1.2: Minimize congestion and travel delay |
| | O1.3: Maintain travel reliability |
| | O1.4: Balance the needs of local and through traffic |
| | O1.5: Accommodate freight movement |
| | O1.6: Employ technological solutions where applicable |
| G2: Contribute to the Economic Vitality of the Region | O2.1: Support new and existing development through transportation infrastructure |
| | O2.2: Support connections between activity centers |
| G3: Improve Safety for All Users | O3.1: Enhance vehicular safety by identifying high crash locations/segments and developing mitigation measures |
| | O3.2: Enhance bicycle and pedestrian access to activity centers |
| G4: Preserve Character Areas along the Corridor | O4.1: Consult local planning documents |

During this meeting, stakeholders identified key subareas, needs, and possible transportation improvements and marked up on the large maps as shown below. Subareas were selected for further technical analysis, and additional traffic counts were collected as needed.



Figure 1-2: Maps from Stakeholder Meetings

Third Stakeholder Meeting

The third and final stakeholder meeting was held on June 18, 2015. Highlights of the corridor-wide and subarea analyses were presented, and the preliminary recommendations were outlined. The recommendation overview map was handed out to stakeholders for their review and comments. Overall, stakeholders supported the recommendations. The outcomes of the discussion and questions section were incorporated into the final report, including the addition of an intersection improvement project at Butner Road and SR 6.