

**SUMMARY OF STATEWIDE ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING**

**GDOT Truck Lane Needs Identification Study – October 24, 2006  
Capital Education Center – Atlanta, Georgia**

The third Statewide Advisory Committee Meeting for the GDOT Truck Lane Needs Identification Study was held at the Capitol Education Center on October 24, 2006 beginning at approximately 1:30 PM. Tim Kassa, GDOT Project Manager, welcomed the group. The group made self-introductions. The following individuals attended the meeting.

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Dike Ahanotu	Cambridge Systematics		dahanotu@camsys.com
Marc Cutler	Cambridge Systematics		mcutler@camsys.com
Jamie Cochran	J. Cochran & Co.		
Andrew Smith	HNTB		asmith@hntb.com
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Kelly Burnes	HNTB		kburnes@hntb.com

Andrew Smith, Project Manager for the Consultant Team, gave an overview of the agenda and provided an update on the status of the project. The data collection task is completed and work is underway on the travel demand model. Also under development are the goals, objectives, and policies, which will feed into the policy framework and serve as a guide for truck only lanes.

Marc Cutler then briefed the committee on the results of the various data collection and analysis activities that have been conducted. The project team is using existing data on truck volumes, classification, and truck weight. Existing data from other studies on truck trip origins and destinations and highway safety (crash) data were also used. New data collected as part of this study includes supplemental truck counts, new truck origin-destination data, and data from a proprietary database on truck flows in Georgia. Various statistics were presented related to trucks (see copy of slide presentation).

Mr. Cutler described the Phase I Work Flow (see presentation slide). He emphasized that the Daily Freight Truck Table was different than the Daily All Truck Trip Table because not all trucks carry freight.

Major findings of the crash analysis revealed that accidents involving trucks are more likely to include fatalities. Two roadways in Georgia were analyzed to confirm and compare these findings at a micro level. I-285 and I-59 were selected for analysis. I-285 is a congested facility and I-59 has a high truck percentage. The crash, fatality, and truck percent findings were found to be exactly the same as the statewide analysis.

Results of the parking analysis were then presented to the group. It was noted that an undersupply of parking exists at rest areas. This undersupply has potential impacts, such as truck drivers parking on ramps and shoulders. To confirm these potential impacts, three locations were analyzed in depth: rest areas on I-20 in Morgan County, an I-85 exit in Coweta County, and an I-75 exit in Butts County. It was identified that parking spills over onto the ramps.

The discussion then moved to commodities and Mr. Cutler explained that Georgia commodities are forecasted by 2035 to increase in tons by 160% to 2.45 billion tons, and increase in dollars (value) by 206% to \$4.9 trillion (2004 dollars). Daryl Cranford of GDOT raised the question if truck piracy was increasing due to the higher percentage value of freight. Dike Ahanotu of Cambridge Systematics stated that he did not see any in his research, but the thought would be yes. Drivers do stop some places and not others and it was thought that truck only lanes could solve or contribute to this problem. Guy Young of GMTA stated that cargo is stolen all the time and will continue to be a problem. Caroline Marshall of ARC stated that stolen cargo is occurring a lot in the metro area.

Mr. Smith then directed the group toward the policy discussion. He mentioned that we need to invest in smart, flexible solutions, and focus on how do we identify good investments.

Guiding principles of the study were presented for the group.

- Protect and improve mobility
- Enhance public safety and security
- Maintain Georgia's economic vitality
- Benefit all transportation system users

Performance objectives and criteria were discussed such as reducing congestion, increasing connectivity, and protecting future investment. Protecting future investment was explained in terms that right-of-way costs are the cheapest now than they ever will be. We need to plan for 20, 50, 75 years from now and how our transportation needs change over time. Improve speed of goods delivery was again mentioned since the movement of freight in Georgia is a huge economic engine.

The next discussion item was the evaluation process and how we should identify candidate corridors for truck only lanes. Should it be based on where we see a lot of trucks? Is it a high value commodity? Is it near a port? Also, where should the lanes be, inside, outside, and how many? Mr. Smith noted that policy development is not one size fits all.

The policy framework was then presented and the group was asked for their assistance on this piece as the study moves forward. At this point, the group discussion began.

## Group Exercise

Mr. Smith introduced Jamie Cochran and Claudia Bilotto to lead the group discussion. The exercise consisted of 3 questions.

1. Does this approach to policy development make sense to you? What do you agree with? What is missing?
2. Over the next 30 years, freight flows (tons) in Georgia will increase by 160%. How can truck lane policies be applied in these types of areas (now or in the future)?
3. What do we need to accomplish with truck lanes?

Ms. Cochran directed the group to the "Guiding Principle" slides and asked if they thought these principles needed any changes or if there were others that should be included.

James Gordon of GDOT said that the word reliability and accessibility should be added to "Protect and improve mobility". Caroline Marshall noted that we need connections to the system (in terms of interstate to interstate connections). Ralph Volpe of FHWA stated that we need to try to pinpoint investment in infrastructure, i.e. how truck only lanes might impact other infrastructure investment in the state.

David Weir of SRTA mentioned that the system needs to be customer-oriented; whether it would be tolled, not tolled, or mandatory.

Ms. Cranford made an observation that she didn't see anything that shows we're doing this for the truck industry. Truck lanes are supposed to be a benefit to the trucking industry, but that it hasn't been made clear.

Ms. Marshall thought that the "Benefit all transportation system users" principle should replace the transportation users term with freight industry and general public. In this way, freight is specifically mentioned along with the general public, and truck only lanes are seen to benefit both. She also went on to say that principles have to be embedded in something that is proactive and not a one-time effort, that it must be sustainable. Ms. Cochran noted that GDOT is doing something proactive by initiating the truck only lanes dialogue.

Jim Ritchey of GRTA thought that "Improve the flow of truck traffic" should be changed to "Improve the flow of freight traffic". He stated that freight is carried on more than just trucks.

Mr. Kassa reminded the group that 86% of freight is carried by trucks in Georgia.

Mr. Ritchey acknowledged this but added that if we build two intermodal centers, some freight could be carried by rail which would take congestion off the interstates and that it may be a way to manage the overall system.

Ms. Cochran then steered the group toward the needs assessment phase of the study. A brief discussion took place after Mr. Weir asked for clarification on the meaning of regional goals. Regional in this case refers to MPOs and geographic sections of the state.

Mr. Ritchey suggested the Metro Atlanta Chamber of Commerce has a logistics council that could be used as a source. Ms. Cochran pointed out to the group that study efforts to date have included the logistics council as part of our outreach.

Mr. Gordon suggested we talk to the shipping representatives and dispatchers. Mr. Ahanotu mentioned that we had conducted a Savannah Warehouse Survey. Ms. Cranford said we should consider separating shippers from people doing deliveries.

The next discussion point in the group exercise focused on the performance objectives. Ms. Marshall started out by saying she thought the word "access" was missing from the performance objectives.

Ms. Cochran asked the group if they thought we need truck lanes today. The consensus was yes. Ms. Marshall again noted that any investments made have to be connected, that it must be a system-wide approach. Mr. Weir asked, "How do you implement a system-wide approach rather than a piecemeal approach?" Ms. Cochran responded by saying that a phased-in approach may be the vision of the system. Mr. Gordon stated that designated truck ramps/lanes may be an interim improvement. Ms. Bilotto agreed that a ramp may be more appropriate than a lane. Mr. Smith added that we need to consider when local solutions can stand alone and when we need to think about a system. The policy framework needs to accommodate different locations with different needs.

Angela Alexander of GDOT emphasized that the criteria must be measurable and definable.

Mr. Gordon stated that we need to focus on accident rates: car to truck and truck to truck accidents.

Ms. Marshall said we need to know what are the critical movements of freight and if they differ by corridor.

Mr. Ritchey suggested a policy to encourage truckers to use the facility at off-peak times. Ms. Cochran mentioned that we have heard from the trucking industry on measures such as these that they are already taking.

Mr. Volpe asked how the policy matches up with industries and agencies.

Mr. Gordon stated that design criteria should be done very early on and that maybe more stringent criteria that what is already out there. Perhaps for truck lanes, we need to get rid of steep grades and curves for trucks.

Mr. Ritchey suggested that we should try to factor economics into it; that facilities pay for themselves. Mr. Smith questioned how far should the cost of economics go. Mr. Ritchey said there needs to be a benefit to cost ratio examined and that the benefits are well more than the costs.

Ms. Cochran then turned to the final topic of discussion: what do we want truck only lanes to accomplish? Ms. Marshall said the bottom line is to improve freight movement in Georgia. Mr. Ritchey posed the question: what is our concern, through movement or delivery time during peak hours? He stated we won't move congestion out of the general purpose lanes when we're trying to make deliveries.

Mr. Young stated he supports truck only lanes to make deliveries, but only if truck drivers can use them for free and provided they are not mandatory.

Mr. Smith said that the logistics industry has already adapted by delivering early or late. Cars (commuters) don't necessarily have that flexibility.

Mr. Young countered that delivery in daytime is not a fix-all. Time of day is negotiable. If a truck driver is supposed to make his delivery at 8 AM, he better be there at 8 AM. If not, he may wait 10 hours until the store is ready to unload it. He went on to say that the public perspective is that if there are several trucks in the way, then there is a problem. He suggested the general public look at flex time like the trucking industry has; something other than an 8-5 workday.

Mr. Smith stated the primary goal is to support the trucking community. The secondary goal is to get the trucks out of the way. Overall, the goal is how can we make truck movement more efficient in Georgia?

Mr. Smith then closed the meeting with a summary and discussed next steps. Next steps include the needs assessment and developing preliminary candidate recommendations. The next meeting of the Statewide Advisory Committee will be held in January, 2006. The meeting adjourned at approximately 3:15 PM.