

ATLANTA **to** CHARLOTTE
PASSENGER RAIL CORRIDOR INVESTMENT PLAN



DRAFT | PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT PLAN /
COORDINATION PLAN

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1. OVERVIEW

The Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) awarded the Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) \$4,100,000 for the High Speed Intercity Passenger Rail Program on November 18, 2011 for FY 2010. FRA and GDOT are preparing a Passenger Rail Corridor Investment Plan (PRCIP) to evaluate high-speed rail along the 280-mile Atlanta, GA to Charlotte, NC corridor. A Tier I Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) and Service Development Plan (SDP) will be completed as a part of this PRCIP Tiering Process

1.1 PROJECT LOCATION

The Atlanta to Charlotte High-Speed Rail Corridor begins in Atlanta, GA, travels northeast through portions of South Carolina and extends to Charlotte, NC. The exact logical termini of the corridor routes have not yet been established and will be finalized as a part of the PRCIP which will address connectivity to proposed and existing passenger rail stations, airports, and other regional transportation services along the corridor. In particular, the project will consider connectivity to the proposed Georgia MultiModal Passenger Terminal (MMPT) and Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport (H-JAIA) in Atlanta, and the Gateway Station and Charlotte-Douglas International Airport, as well as connectivity to the Southeast High Speed Rail (SEHSR) in Charlotte. The potential corridor route alternatives include the Norfolk Southern (NS) railroad corridor (also referred to as the Southern Crescent Corridor route), the I-85 corridor, and a Greenfield corridor that is yet to be established. These corridor alternatives were previously defined as a result of the 2008 Volpe Center Report Evaluation of High-Speed Rail Options in the Macon-Atlanta-Greenville-Charlotte Rail Corridor (2008 Volpe Center Report) and agreements between GDOT and FRA¹. The PRCIP plans to build upon the findings of the 2008 Volpe Center Report by further examining these and other potentially feasible alternatives. Based on this work, two route alternatives have been initially identified: the existing Southern Crescent Corridor owned by Norfolk Southern Railroad, which is currently used by Amtrak to provide passenger rail service, and the I-85 interstate highway corridor which offers the opportunity to take advantage of grade-separated, publicly owned right-of-way between the two cities. Two additional shared use alternatives, CSX Augusta through Augusta, GA, Columbia, SC and Rock Hill, SC and CSX Athens, via Athens, GA, Greenwood, SC and Rock Hill. Additionally, the I-20 and I-77 corridor offers another interstate alternative through Augusta, Columbia, and Rock Hill. A Greenfield corridor(s) is a final alternative which offers the opportunity to define a fully grade-separated route alignment which has optimal geometric characteristics for high-speed passenger rail service. Other potentially feasible routes may also be identified if they meet the basic requirements of the purpose and need statement for the corridor. As a part of the alternatives development analysis, the study will analyze corridor alternatives, station locations, and service technologies including diesel and electrified operations, service frequency and hours of service. Other route alternatives may also be evaluated pending the outcome and identification of additional alternatives from the agency and public scoping meetings.

1.2 TIERING PROCESS

The Atlanta to Charlotte PRCIP includes a Tier I EIS. The tiering environmental analysis process takes an approach of conducting two or more rounds, or “tiers”, of environmental review rather than preparing a single EIS document as the basis for approving the entire project. In a Tier I document, the lead agency

¹ See http://www.sehsr.org/reports/hsr/eval_hsr_options.pdf

typically prepares an EIS that analyzes a program or large project on a broad scale, in this case an Atlanta to Charlotte high-speed rail corridor. In Tier II, the lead agency prepares one or more additional NEPA documents, which examine individual component projects or sections identified within the Tier I EIS process in greater detail.

1.3 PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Atlanta to Charlotte Corridor was first introduced as a part of the SEHSR that connects Atlanta to Washington, DC. GDOT included the corridor in their most recent 2009 State Rail Plan following the 2008 Volpe Center Report of the corridor (which included the extension from Atlanta to Macon, GA). This corridor is part of the strategic vision for passenger rail service in Georgia as well as the Southeast region, and will include considerations for intermodal connections in Atlanta and Charlotte, as well as intermediate cities. For example, the passenger rail service may link to existing or proposed intercity rail services, long-distance airline travel at each city, intercity, regional and local transit services, all of which will be governed by the location of terminal points and service scheduling for the benefit of the regional traveling public. It should be noted that while this study will focus on the Atlanta-Charlotte Corridor, considerations will be made for other high-speed and passenger rail efforts along the SEHSR and Northeast Corridor.

As previously mentioned, the potential, already identified corridor alternatives include the NS and CSX railroads, the I-85 and I-20/I-77 corridors, and a Greenfield corridor. Figure 1 illustrates the project corridor and study area.

Within these corridors, the study team will evaluate the potential of the following options:

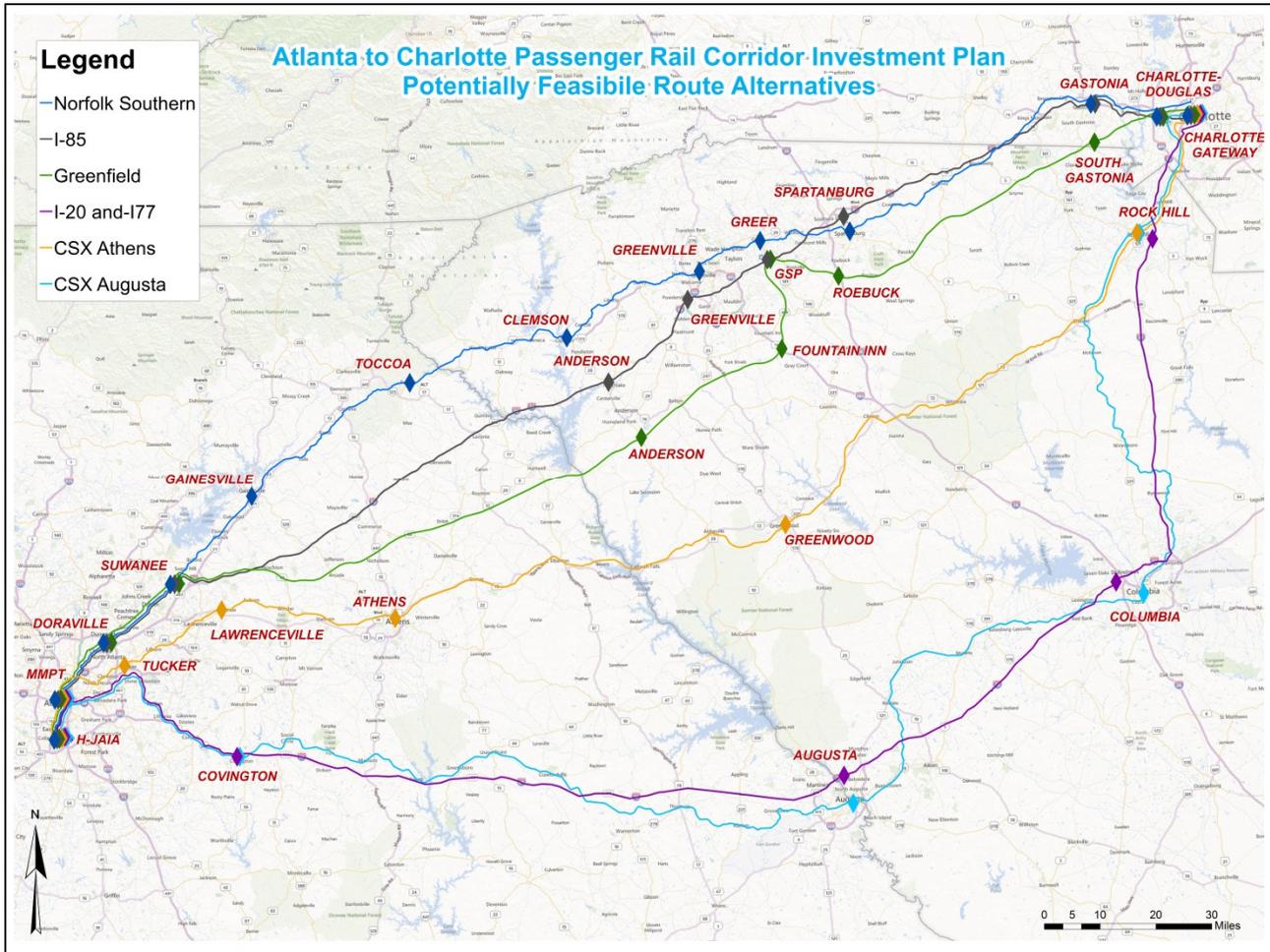
- Shared use operations using diesel-electric technology (FRA Class 6 track);
- Dedicated operations² using diesel-electric technology with the opportunity for future electrification (FRA Class 7 track)³; and
- Dedicated operations using electrified technology options (FRA Class 8-9 track).

Once the corridors have been evaluated at a high-level, the route alternatives will be screened to the most feasible alternatives and go through refinement before beginning detailed analysis.

² “Dedicated” refers to predominately grade-separated and passenger-only operations (no concurrent freight operations) except in “last mile” segments in urban areas approaching stations.

³ The PRCIP will evaluate traditional high-speed rail services levels; however, in addition it will also evaluate this “hybrid” concept, first outlined in the GDOT High Speed Rail Planning Services utilizing a diesel-electric technology with an operation to upgrade to full electrification as demand increases.

Figure 1.1: Atlanta to Charlotte Study Area



The PRCIP will determine the environmental impacts and operations of the refined corridor alternatives and technologies for passenger rail service between the cities of Atlanta and Charlotte and will also conduct a general financial analysis including cost, ridership, and revenue. These, along with other user and non-user benefits will be used in the evaluation of the benefit cost and operating ratios of each alternative to assist in determining a preferred alternative. Additionally, this project will evaluate the environmental, economic and social impacts of each of the refined route alternatives. Once these activities are completed, the study will establish a preferred route alternative and technology for advancement to a Tier II environmental evaluation. The PRCIP will outline the operational characteristics of the preferred alternative and provide a phasing and implementation plan and will also identify Tier II projects.

Because the PRCIP includes a high-level corridor analysis, the study will not include a number of factors or decisions as a part of the study. The major factors and decision points that will not be evaluated as a part of the PRCIP include:

- Specific track alignments within the NS corridor and I-85 corridor;
- Specific greenfield sub-alignment options;

- Specific treatment of design elements (e.g., interchanges, rail/road crossings, bridges, viaducts);
- Specific equipment; and
- Specific locations, design, elevation requirements, and funding partnership for stations.

This corridor includes a variety of transportation agencies and stakeholders that will ultimately be affected by the outcomes of the study. NS owns the railroad between Atlanta and Charlotte and CSX Transportation owns railroad within the Atlanta area that will be evaluated as a potential connection to the proposed Georgia MMPT in Atlanta.

Currently, Amtrak operates passenger rail service along the NS corridor twice daily connecting passengers from the southeastern to the northeastern U.S. The corridor also includes the I-85 corridor between the two cities, affecting the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the GA, SC and NC Departments of Transportation (GDOT, SCDOT, NCDOT), and Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs). Finally, the Greenfield corridor could have an impact on all of the stakeholders previously mentioned as well as private property owners, local municipalities, and businesses, dependent upon the final corridor, which will be determined as a part of the alternatives development analysis.

As required by NEPA, but also an important aspect of any planning study, the PRCIP will include an expansive stakeholder and public outreach effort that will allow all affected parties an opportunity to learn about the project and present concerns and comments on all aspects of the conceptual design, operational findings and environmental impacts of high-speed rail service in the corridor. The list of stakeholders along with public outreach techniques are highlighted within this Public Involvement Plan/Coordination Plan (PIP/CP) (refer to Appendix A). Known stakeholders include FRA, GDOT, NCDOT, SCDOT, FHWA, NS, CSX Transportation, Amtrak, Federal Transit Administration (FTA), local transit operators, MPOs, county and local governments. It will be determined during the scoping process whether these stakeholders will be cooperating or participating agencies during the NEPA process.

1.4 PUBLIC OUTREACH AND AGENCY COORDINATION PURPOSE

To support the successful delivery of this project, the public involvement process has been designed to involve and inform as many citizens and stakeholders as possible during the planning efforts for the environmental and operational documentation of this process. Together, GDOT and partnering agencies are committed to ensuring that the development and evaluation of the Atlanta to Charlotte PRCIP components, alternatives and final products reflect extensive involvement and input by all stakeholders and the public. This PIP/CP provides a framework for all outreach and communications activities related to the Atlanta to Charlotte PRCIP including the development of the SDP and development of the Tier I EIS that will select a preferred alternative for the ultimate design and construction of the Atlanta-Charlotte Corridor.

The PIP/CP includes methods for soliciting input from the public on the purpose and need of the project as well as issues to be addressed in both the service development planning and environmental study. The service development planning and NEPA scoping processes are combined to facilitate efficiency and to streamline project delivery. These methods address interagency outreach and engagement, community outreach and engagement, environmental justice outreach, media and government relations, and public relations. The PIP/CP documents and addresses all federal and state requirements relevant to public involvement activities, identify target audiences, identify stakeholder and public involvement goals and objectives for the Atlanta to Charlotte PRCIP, and highlights specific tools and strategies that will be

utilized throughout the course of the environmental process. The proposed strategies will be designed to specifically address the needs of identified target audiences, but the PIP/CP will remain flexible enough to accommodate additional opportunities to address public involvement goals that present themselves during ongoing Atlanta to Charlotte PRCIP outreach efforts.

The PIP/CP will specifically address the following:

- Federal and state requirements regulating public involvement activities;
- Public involvement goals and objectives;
- Target audiences;
- Outreach tools, techniques, and strategies for engaging stakeholders and the public including:
 - Public workshops,
 - Interviews,
 - Open houses,
- Media outreach;
- Ongoing team activities supporting the stakeholder and public involvement process;
- Environmental justice involvement efforts;
- Section 106 consulting party efforts;
- NEPA scoping activities;
- External communications protocol;
- Government relations;
- Monitoring of effectiveness of ongoing stakeholder and public involvement activities;
- Phasing the PIP/CP;
- Schedule of public involvement activities; and
- Stakeholder and public involvement process documentation.

1.5 LEGISLATIVE/REGULATORY FRAMEWORK

The Atlanta to Charlotte PRCIP must be developed with the full involvement of the public to ensure a timely and successful implementation. Federal laws and regulations set guidelines to ensure the public's participation in transportation related projects. FRA and GDOT, in concert with other key federal and state agencies, will strive to go beyond the mandated laws to fully engage the public in the identification of mutually agreeable solutions that will meet the purpose and need of the project. The PIP/CP will adhere to include the following guidelines.

1.5.1 Federal

National Environmental Policy Act

Public involvement is an important part of the NEPA process. NEPA's success as an environmental disclosure documentation and problem-solving policy depends on full disclosure to the public and open decision-making on the part of the federal agencies involved. Therefore, federal agencies must make diligent efforts to involve the public and those opportunities are identified within this PIP/CP. In addition to the public participation methods identified herein, the public will be afforded the opportunity to comment on the agencies actions during the following project milestones:

- Notice of Intent;
- Public scoping meetings;
- Public comment period on the NEPA document;
- Public information open houses; and
- Public hearing open house.

Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act

In June and July 2012, Congress passed, and President Obama signed into law the Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century (MAP-21), that is the reauthorization of transportation funding and guidance on transportation practices, including NEPA best practices. However, because FRA does not fall under the new MAP-21 legislation, the NEPA guidelines for the Atlanta to Charlotte PRCIP will follow the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU). The PIP/CP will be modified if there are any changes in guidance under MAP-21 that would affect the Atlanta to Charlotte corridor. Both laws are important and relevant to the Atlanta-Charlotte Corridor due to the inclusion of the I-85 corridor as a build alternative. This will result in FHWA's involvement in the PRCIP with additional sets of regulations that must be considered as a part of the evaluation.-

Adopted in August 2005, Section 6001 SAFETEA-LU (23 USC 139) provides guidance on both metropolitan and statewide planning processes, as well as explanations of new approaches for linking planning activities with the overall project development process, including NEPA requirements and associated implementing regulations.

Specific reference to public involvement for transportation planning studies and project development is made in Section 450.318, which states that, to the extent practicable, development of transportation planning studies shall involve consultation with, or joint efforts among, the MPO, state, and public transportation operator(s). These regulations will be followed in the implementation of this PIP/CP.

In addition, 23 CFR 771.111 sets forth the requirements under NEPA for early coordination, public involvement, and project development in the processing of highway and urban mass transit projects. Specifically, it states that state public involvement/public hearing procedures must provide for:

- Coordination of public involvement activities and public hearings with the entire NEPA process;
- Early and continuing opportunities during project development for the public to be involved in the identification of social, economic, and environmental impacts, as well as impacts associated with relocation of individuals, groups, or institutions;

- One or more public hearings or the opportunity for hearing(s) to be held by the state highway agency at a convenient time and place; and
- Reasonable notice to the public of either a public hearing or the opportunity for a public hearing.

All public involvement techniques anticipated under this PIP/CP are designed to comply with these regulations.

Americans with Disabilities Act

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) encourages the involvement of persons with disabilities in the development and improvement of transportation plans, services and facilities. ADA provides accommodations for persons with disabilities for all public involvement activities, including access to meetings and communicating effectively with people who have hearing, vision, or speech difficulties.

Title VI of Civil Rights Act of 1964

Section 601 states that “no person in the United States shall, on the ground of race, color, or national origin, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance”. Protected classes include:

- Race: U.S. Census categories define race;
- Color: Discrimination based on skin color or complexion; and
- National Origin: foreign born ancestry.

Title VI applies institution-wide and it applicable to both federal aid recipients and subrecipients.

Executive Orders 12989 and 13166 – Environmental Justice

Executive Order 12988 defines environmental justice as the fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people, regardless of race, ethnicity, income, or education level, in transportation decision-making. Executive Order 13166 further provides for Limited English Proficiency persons requiring all recipients of federal funds to take reasonable steps to ensure meaningful access to their programs and activities. All environmental justice outreach activities anticipated under this public involvement plan will meet these regulations.

1.5.2 State

GDOT conducts public information open houses and public hearing open houses under procedures described in “The Plan Development Process”, Policies & Procedures Section 4055-1 on Public Involvement, and the Official Code of GA Annotated (O.C.G.A §50-13-3).⁴

Additionally, GDOT has adopted a comprehensive Public Involvement Plan and a Public Involvement Policy, as outlined in Chapter 4 of the *GDOT Environmental Procedures Manual*.⁵ These documents represent a conscious effort to create more proactive programs and initiatives that form additional

⁴ <http://www.dot.ga.gov/doingbusiness/policiesmanuals/roads/pdp/4050-1.pdf>

⁵ <http://www.dot.state.ga.us/doingbusiness/PoliciesManuals/roads/Environmental/GDOT-EPM-Chap04.pdf>

partnerships and provide greater opportunities to involve residents and other stakeholders in transportation planning and project development.

2. PROJECT TEAM

FRA and GDOT are co-lead agencies for the Atlanta to Charlotte PRCIP. Partnering Agencies/Entities may include, but are not limited to:

- NS Railroad;
- CSX Transportation;
- Amtrak;
- SCDOT;
- NCDOT;
- FHWA; and
- FTA.

The Atlanta to Charlotte PRCIP will be managed by the HNTB Atlanta Office and the GDOT Atlanta Office. The following provides an overview of each of the consultants' responsibilities.

HNTB Corporation – HNTB will be responsible for the overall project management as well as task leadership for both the NEPA Compliance and service development planning. Additionally, HNTB will lead conceptual engineering and capital costs for two of the three corridor alternatives (NS and I-85). HNTB will conduct a review of all available funding/financing sources and Public Private Partnership opportunities. For NEPA Compliance, HNTB will be responsible for the environmental investigation and reporting as well as the direct, indirect and cumulative impacts associated with water quality, ecological systems, wetlands, endangered species, flood hazards, natural resources, elderly and handicapped populations, recreational opportunities, 4(f) resources, environmental sustainability, transportation, historic resources and the operational period.

Parsons Brinkerhoff (PB) – PB will support HNTB in the Service Planning and NEPA compliance activities. Specifically, PB will develop the greenfield alignment and provide the conceptual engineering and capital costs for the greenfield alignment as a part of the alternatives development analysis. PB will be responsible for station locations and assessments as well as maintenance facilities. PB will also provide research and recommendations on vehicle technologies. For NEPA compliance, PB will be responsible for the direct, indirect and cumulative impacts associated with air quality, noise/vibration, energy resources, aesthetic and design quality, land use, environmental justice, public health, public safety/hazmat, socioeconomic environment, archeological resources, and the construction period impacts.

Steer Davies Gleave (SDG) – SDG is responsible for the development and implementation of the travel demand model and the associated ridership and revenue estimates for service year and future horizon year (2025 and 2050, respectively).

TEMS, Inc. – TEMS is responsible for the development of the operations planning and the final operation plan associated with all alternatives considered during the alternatives development analysis. TEMS will produce train schedules and frequencies as inputs for the ridership and revenue forecasts. TEMS will

calculate and provide operations and maintenance cost forecasts for the service and horizon years (2025 and 2050, respectively). TEMS will also provide a user and non-user benefit analysis (i.e., operating ratio and benefit cost ratio). As a part of the Tier I EIS, TEMS will conduct an economic impact analysis that will look at the impacts to jobs, growth, development and tax base.

3. KEY PROJECT ISSUES

Throughout the process, key project issues will be vetted through both agency and public involvement. Identified project issues include, but are not limited to, the following:

3.1 STATION LOCATIONS

An initial station location analysis will be based on the 2008 Volpe Center Report.⁶ The study team will evaluate the performance of each station as it relates to ridership volumes and determine the optimal number of stations and more precise station locations. It is anticipated that station locations will become substantial issues with local stakeholders and the public based on proximity to residential and downtown areas.

3.2 COORDINATION WITH CLASS 1 RAILROADS

The NS Southern Crescent and CSX right-of-way will be evaluated as alternatives in the service development planning. It will be imperative to include NS and CSX during the PRCIP process as an important stakeholder to coordinate future planning efforts and ensure that the parameters set within the service development planning are in conjunction with respective policy and plans.

3.3 ENVIRONMENTAL CONSTRAINTS

The Atlanta- Charlotte PRCIP will evaluate multiple alternatives within the study corridor. One of the key issues will be the identification of environmental constraints along each of the alternatives including, but not limited to, wetlands, streams, lakes, habitats, historical/archeological and community resources, and environmental justice populations. This study will calculate these impacts and evaluate the mitigation potential for each. Environmentally critical areas may constitute a fatal flaw for an alternative, and will be an important factor towards the identification of the preferred alternative moving forward into the SDP.

3.4 CONNECTIVITY

3.4.1 High Speed and Other Rail Initiatives

Connectivity to other high-speed rail efforts will be critical in Charlotte, as the Charlotte to Raleigh Corridor is also underway in the design phase. Ensuring a smooth transition and integration between these two segments will be essential to the success of the overall SEHSR corridor from Washington, DC to Atlanta. Consideration will also need to be made for an overall high-speed, intercity and commuter rail network and the interaction of this high-speed rail corridor with other rail projects in the region.

⁶ http://www.sehsr.org/reports/hsr/eval_hsr_options.pdf

3.4.2 Intermodal Facilities

Intermodal connectivity around proposed stations will be critical to the development of strong ridership volumes through the understanding of how passengers will be able to access the high-speed rail corridor. Connectivity at the terminal cities will be the most critical part of this evaluation, especially with the proposed development of multi-modal terminals in both cities.

3.4.3 Airport Connectivity

Integration with existing airports will provide an additional connection to other modes of travel within the southeastern U.S. H-JAIA is the largest airport in the U.S., and connectivity between rail and air in the Atlanta region will be critical to the success of the Atlanta to Charlotte high-speed rail corridor. Further, connectivity between rail and air travel in Charlotte will also provide additional passenger volume for the corridor, as Charlotte is a well-known connection airport for the region.

4. GOALS AND PRINCIPLES

4.1 PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT GOALS

Public involvement goals for the Atlanta to Charlotte Tier I EIS include:

Goal: Clearly communicating the process from project initiation through completion.

Strategy: In order to create clear expectations, the environmental and public involvement process will be clearly defined and explained from the outset through completion. The PIP/CP will be refined as the project moves forward to address unexpected scheduling conflicts, additional stakeholders that arrive late into the process, etc. However, at all stages, planning participants and the public will be kept apprised of where the process stands and community concerns will be regularly monitored.

- Educating the public on the environmental studies as it relates to the project;
- Providing information in a comprehensive, yet, understandable manner; and
- Ensuring the federal, state, regional and local government agencies and key stakeholders within the project study area are well informed at every stage.

Goal: Ensure meaningful participation for all stakeholders.

Strategy: In order for collaboration to be fully successful, collaboration must involve a wide variety of stakeholder agendas including governmental/public-sector administrators and service providers (city, county, region and state), political interests, businesses and property owners, residents, the development community, and other special interests.

- Conduct a public outreach effort to gather input from all populations along the study corridor including student populations, environmental justice communities, businesses, government, transit and transportation authorities and citizen groups; and

- Utilize local residents, business owners, and vendors throughout the community to the extent feasible and practicable to provide services that support the outreach process.

Goal: Create realistic expectations of project outcomes.

Strategy: In order to maintain public and agency expectations regarding the outcome and results of the PRCIP, it will be imperative for FRA and GDOT to be proactive in anticipating the concerns and issues.

- Begin agency and stakeholder outreach in the early stages of the project to convey the purpose and goal of the PRCIP; and
- Continue to keep stakeholders updated on a regular basis through a variety of communication methods including a project website, social and print media, and email to ensure that the goals and objectives remain a focus of public and agency outreach.

4.2 PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT PRINCIPLES

Based on the identified public involvement goals, several principles provide the foundation for the PIP/CP. These principles support the goals of the PIP/CP and ensure that the environmental and selection of alternatives processes serve the public interest. These principles include:

1 **Facilitating early involvement by agency and public stakeholders in identifying corridor issues and opportunities**

- Building an understanding of the project and credibility in decision-making for the environmental process.

2 **Understand and respect varying stakeholder agendas**

It is critical to understand that different stakeholders represent different and sometimes conflicting agendas. Finding the appropriate middle ground requires a detailed understanding of what each party is trying to achieve:

- Establishing and maintaining productive partnerships with individuals and organizations who are interested in the project; and
- Providing information to the media proactively throughout the environmental process.

3 **Use a variety of formats for seeking public input**

Just as different stakeholders have diverse agendas, it is important to recognize that people respond differently to diverse public involvement methods. In this regard, this process will utilize a wide variety of input mechanisms depending upon the audience and circumstance. Over the course of the plan, input and consensus will be achieved through such measures as, but not limited to, one-on-one interviews, short-answer survey questions, and more traditional public presentations. The project team will also leverage relationships with existing committees, advisory groups, and citizen organizations to expand participation efforts within and beyond the study corridor. Strategies include:

- Providing assistant services at public workshops and meetings (such as court reporters and translators) so all interested residents can participate in the process;
- Providing a constructive format for collaboration that facilitate the dissemination of information while encouraging discussion and consensus-building;
- Utilizing alternative forms of outreach including webinars, video conferencing, virtual public meetings, and social media; and
- Figure 4.1 illustrates the overall public input and decision-making process that will take information from all of the outreach strategies described above.

Figure 4.1: Public/Agency Input and the Decision-Making Process



4 Maintaining an administrative record that clearly tracks all residents and stakeholders and their input into the decision-making process

The administrative record will be developed and maintained consisting of papers, documents, memoranda and studies that will ultimately be used by FRA in making a decision concerning the Atlanta to Charlotte PRCIP documentation. Included in the administrative record will be a database of all comments and input from stakeholders and the public. The project team will develop a systematic approach for documenting and filing all comments received by GDOT and FRA. Tasks include:

- Developing a database system with filing organization;
- Collecting and filing all comments received by GDOT and FRA; and
- Documenting and filing all comment responses.

4.3 UPDATING THE PIP/CP

This PIP/CP addresses stakeholder and public outreach activities through the service development planning and environmental phases of the Atlanta to Charlotte Tier I EIS effort. Due to the nature of this project and the potential for new stakeholder and new information as the study progresses this PIP/CP will be updated as necessary throughout the duration of the project.

5. STAKEHOLDER PARTICIPATION

All interested stakeholders including, federal, state, and local agencies will have the opportunity to participate in the development of the Atlanta to Charlotte PRCIP. This participation is fundamental in providing information to FRA and GDOT and all cooperating agencies to fully understand and assess

potential impacts and benefits from the proposed project. Early and continuing stakeholder participation will allow GDOT and the resource agencies to be aware of perceived issues, concerns, and impacts, and provide opportunities for the agencies to discuss and comprehensively address these concerns.

The Atlanta to Charlotte PRCIP has a comprehensive list of interested parties that will be expanded as project efforts continue (Appendix A). This list identifies an initial list of interested parties, the type of stakeholder, and the anticipated participation level for each. Participation levels are defined as follows:

- **Stakeholder**: A person, group, or organization that realizes a direct or indirect impact or benefit (or an interest in the project) based upon the outcome of the Atlanta to Charlotte PRCIP.
- **Partner**: Class 1 Railroads – NS and CSX

6. AGENCY INVOLVEMENT

As outlined in the SAFETEA-LU Section 6002 Environmental Review Process Checklist and in cooperation with FRA, this PIP/CP has been developed for federal and state resource and regulatory agencies. The PIP/CP is intended to define the process by which the study and FRA shall communicate information about the project to the lead, cooperating, participating and other agencies. The plan will identify early coordination efforts, identify cooperating and participating agencies, and establish the timing and form for agency involvement in defining the project's purpose and need and study area, as well as the range of alternatives to be investigated. The following provides a description of agency involvement.

- **Lead Agency**: FRA, the federal agency with primary responsibility for complying with NEPA on the proposed project.
- **Cooperating Agency**: May be any federal agency other than the lead agency that has discretionary authority over the proposed action, jurisdiction by law, or special expertise with respect to the environmental impacts expected to result from the proposed Atlanta to Charlotte PRCIP.
- **Participating Agency**: Defined as an agency that may have an interest in the project and is afforded an opportunity for involvement in the development of the Atlanta to Charlotte PRCIP. Participating agencies also may provide the lead and cooperating agencies access to information integral to understanding and assessing the potential impacts and benefits of the proposed the Atlanta to Charlotte PRCIP.

6.1 INVITATIONS TO COOPERATING AND PARTICIPATING AGENCIES

FRA and GDOT will distribute invitations to cooperating and participating agencies. FRA will be responsible for inviting federal agencies and Native American Tribal Governments. GDOT will be responsible for inviting all state, regional, and local agencies. Invitations will be sent by certified mail or e-mail with verification of receipt. The PIP/CP will also be included with the invitation. A copy of each invitation will be maintained in the project file. The invited agencies will have 45 days to respond to the invitation and to comment on the Draft Scoping Document.

6.1.1 Responding to an Invitation

If a federal agency chooses to decline, the response letter (hard copy, electronic email, or fax the signed form that will be included in packet) must state that the agency:

- Has no jurisdiction or authority with respect to the project;
- Has no expertise or information relevant to the project; or
- Does not intend to submit comments on the project.

If the federal agency's response does not state the agency's position in these terms, then the agency will be treated as a participating agency. A state, regional or local agency or a Native American Tribal Government must respond affirmatively to the invitation to be designated as a participating agency.

6.2 AGENCY MEETINGS

FRA and GDOT will conduct several agency meetings that will include representatives from North and South Carolina DOTs, FHWA, FTA, and other federal, state, regional and local agencies. Because of the large geographic area of the study corridor, the following meetings will be web-based and or utilize video conferencing:

- Agency Scoping Meeting (Webinar); and
- Corridor Alternatives Development Meeting.⁷

7. PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT ACTIVITIES

FRA and GDOT will initiate outreach activities to the public, key stakeholders and target audiences to introduce the project to the community, frame the structure of the public involvement process and articulate how input will be integrated into the planning process. FRA and GDOT will establish a variety of techniques to provide the public and stakeholders the opportunity to participate in the master plan and environmental study throughout the planning process. Due to the magnitude of the study area, the public involvement activities will focus on virtual outreach such as webinars, social media, newsletters and website materials. It is thought that these activities will provide information to a larger group than public meetings alone. The following are the major objectives for outreach:

- Education and outreach on the NEPA processes will be the cornerstone for this public involvement process;
- Material and messages developed will be clear and understandable; and
- Comments received from public outreach activities, based on established criteria to comply with the NEPA process, will be documented and responded to.

The public involvement program will be consistent with the study's practices and will be developed to effectively obtain and incorporate public comments without jeopardizing or interfering with an objective and unbiased technical analysis of this project's impact.

Outreach activities will be varied in their approach in order to encourage participation across different audiences, with sensitivity to the fact that groups receive information in different ways. The following are

⁷ Corridor Alternative Development meeting will be conducted if deemed necessary after the Corridor Alternative Development Report per FRA guidance.

tools that may be used to actively engage stakeholders and the public. This PIP/CP is a document that will continue to develop as the project progresses and the programs are tailored to meet the needs.

7.1 COMMUNICATION TOOLS

The project team understands the need to maintain open and accessible communication with environmental justice populations and will use the appropriate communication tools to achieve this objective.

Newsletters: A one-page, color newsletter will be distributed during outreach efforts and public meetings in both electronic and hardcopy formats. The publication will also be distributed to public officials, elected officials, and interested stakeholders. A maximum of three (3) newsletters will be produced and distributed.

Public Website: The existing GDOT website will be used to post project information (e.g., upcoming events, date, time and location of meetings, materials, contact information, etc.) regarding the project. The project team will be responsible for updating the website.
www.dot.ga.gov/AtlantaCharlotteHSR

Surveys: Utilizing different survey techniques including online surveys and meeting surveys allows the project team to reach a wide variety of people. Questions will be formed to gather input on commuting practices, potential impacts, and aspects to improve quality of life. No survey will take more than 5 minutes to complete. This can include website and smart phone applications. Further, if more detailed information is needed along the corridor, the project team may distribute surveys through school systems in order to obtain results from a wider range of people within the study area as compared to only public meetings.

Social Media: Social media will be leveraged, such as Facebook and/or Twitter, to post information regarding the project such as meeting information, newsletters, links to online surveys, links to other media, and website updates.

Master Email and Mailing List: A master email and mailing list database of contacts will be developed using information supplied by cities and counties in the project area, FRA, and from previous studies in the area. The project team will maintain and update the email and mailing list through the life of the project.

7.2 PUBLIC MEETINGS

The public meetings will be an open house format to allow attendees to review exhibits, discuss issues with project personnel, and provide written and verbal comments. Virtual online public meetings will also be provided for those unable to attend the meetings in person.

Task/Deliverables:

- **NEPA Scoping Meetings:** One (1) Public and Stakeholder Scoping Meeting will be conducted in each of the three study corridor states (Georgia, North Carolina, and South Carolina) for a total of three (3) public scoping meetings. Included in this subtask is the identification of appropriate stakeholders for inclusion in the meetings and advertising the meetings for public attendance as well as mailing invitation letters and scoping packets to appropriate stakeholders. All responses will be

maintained as a part of the Administrative Record. In addition appropriate agencies will be identified for inclusion in the meeting. The project team will maintain and document all responses as part of the Administrative Record.

- A **Scoping Comment Summary** will be prepared that includes a list of attendees and notes relating to issues identified and applicable comments. The Scoping Comment Summary will also be prepared that lists, in table format, the issues identified and provided to FRA for review and approval.
- **Draft EIS Public Hearings**: The public hearings (3) will be held along the corridor in central locations and will be held during the corridor evaluation stage to solicit input from the public in support of this process. The team will prepare appropriate display and presentation materials.
- For each meeting, the team will provide a sign-in sheet, exhibits, handouts, and a questionnaire. The team will summarize each round of public meetings in a technical memo. The team will provide summary documentation following the public meeting and hearing following the close of the comment period.

Schedule:

- Scoping Meetings (including Agency and Public Scoping meetings) – June 2013
- Draft EIS Public Hearing (including Comment Summary Documentation) – Spring/Summer 2014

7.3 ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE INVOLVEMENT EFFORTS

Ample opportunity must be provided for meaningful input from all interested participants and this extends to environmental justice communities along the study corridor who may utilize the facility in the future. Participants must be aware their issues have been heard and understood. Outreach to these communities and populations identified in conjunction with GDOT and partners will be crafted based on local preferences and input on effectively capturing the needs and reactions of these communities with respect to the Atlanta to Charlotte PRCIP . Based on the study team’s previous experience and lessons learned working with environmental justice communities, proposed outreach methods include:

- Leveraging minority business associations, establishing a grass-roots approach with local communities and leaders using existing active citizen groups, faith-based organizations, and other community facilities and produce information materials for those groups;
- Utilizing connections established through diverse groups of leaders representing community organizations, advocacy groups, coalitions, environmental justice groups, and local governments;
- Providing translation services, as needed, to ensure suitable communication; and
- Adhering to ADA requirements for public information.

7.4 SECTION 106 CONSULTING PARTY EFFORTS

Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act requires the FRA and the GDOT, in consultation with the Georgia, South Carolina, and North Carolina State Historic Preservation Officers, to identify potential consulting parties and to invite them to participate in the Section 106 process. Also, on behalf of FHWA, in keeping with a government-to-government relationship and in compliance with 36CFR800, the Tribal

Governments will also be invited to participate in the Section 106 process for this project. The full list of invited potential consulting parties and Tribal Governments to be invited will be added to the PIP/CP at the time the Section 106 process is initiated.

7.5 ADMINISTRATIVE RECORD

The Administrative Record will be developed and maintained consisting of papers, documents, memorandum and studies that will ultimately be used by FRA in making a decision concerning the Atlanta to Charlotte PRCIP documentation.⁸ The project manager will ensure all information related to the NEPA process is filed and organized for easy accessibility and provides thorough information to FRA.

7.6 COMMUNICATIONS PROTOCOL

Official Comments

The Atlanta to Charlotte High-Speed Rail Tier I EIS is partially federally funded; therefore, the project will undergo a NEPA process. The Council for Environmental Quality requires that all federal agencies make information available to the public officials and citizens regarding the social and environmental impacts of any federal funded transit related action before decisions are made. Each of the comments gathered and their individual responses will become part of the administrative record. To comply, the following process will be followed in gathering “Official Comments”:

- Only written comments on GDOT/Atlanta to Charlotte PRCIP specific forms;
- Formal comments addressed to Glenn Bowman, PE, State Environmental Administrator or other officials at the GDOT’s Office of Environmental Services;
- Formal comments addressed to John Winkle, Transportation Industry Analyst at FRA;
- Comments taken from court reporters available at Public Information Open Houses/Public Information Hearings;
- Specific comment forms provided through the website; and
- Comment cards available to the public at project events.

Examples of comments not recorded in the “Official Record”:

- Posts on Facebook;
- Phone calls;
- Unsolicited emails to non-official personnel;
- Twitter threads; and/or
- Blog comments.

⁸Administrative Record will follow guidelines identified in *Maintaining a Project File and Preparing an Administrative Record for a NEPA Study*, AASHTO Practitioner’s Handbook 01, July 2006.

8. PUBLIC OUTREACH EFFECTIVENESS EVALUATION

The project team, in cooperation with FRA and GDOT team leaders, will monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the PIP/CP by using performance measures and goals. Measuring what is most effective will have to be continuously monitored.

As the public outreach and involvement processes develops, FRA, GDOT, state and federal partners, and the NEPA team will evaluate the effectiveness of the public involvement process using performance measures such as number of public participants at meetings, how the meetings were advertised, and how successful the effort appears to have been. As the process moves forward and through cooperative efforts from the project team, agencies, and citizens; adjustments and the incorporation of new techniques and measures will be developed to continuously strengthen the effectiveness of public outreach and involvement.

In addition to analyzing feedback from participants, team evaluation of specific outreach activities will consider the following questions:

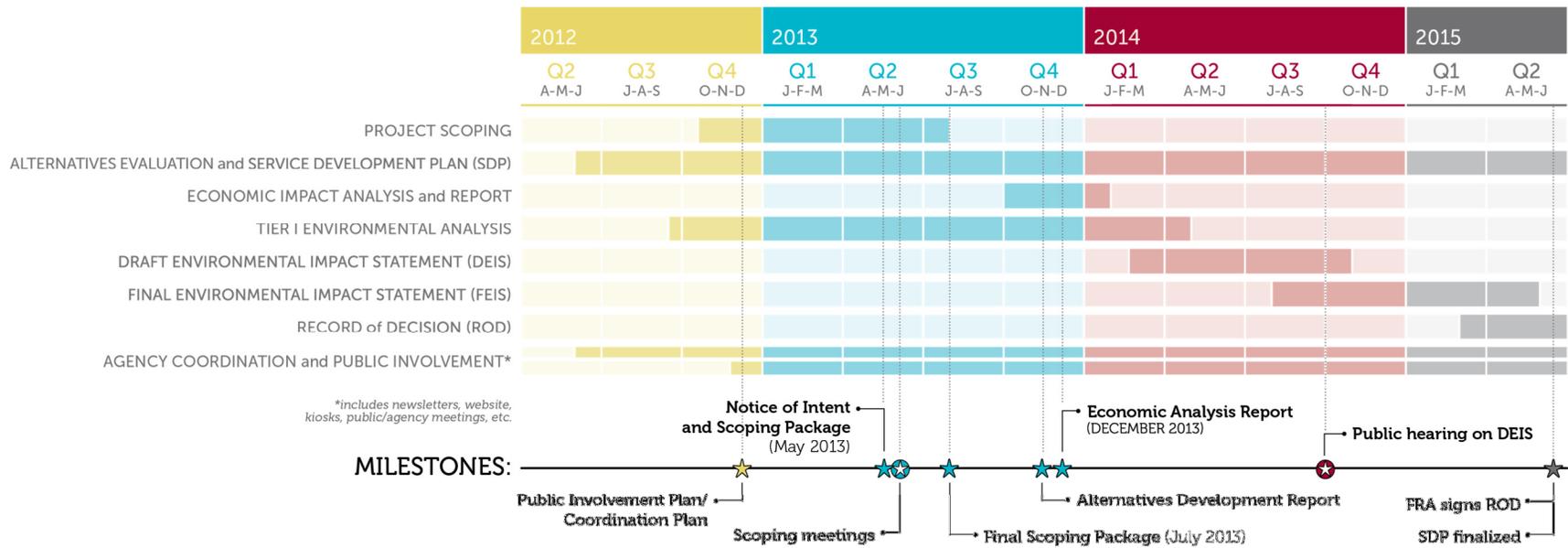
- Was the method successful in reaching the intended audience?
- Did the method result in an opportunity for the audience to receive, consider, and react to information?
- Did the method provide the project team an adequate opportunity to share information and listen to the audience's response?
- Was the information provided clearly understood by the audience?

Continuous adjustments will be made during the process to ensure effective, two-way communication with stakeholders and the general public.

9. SCHEDULE

The Atlanta to Charlotte High-Speed Rail Tier I EIS project began June 2012 and is scheduled to be completed (through a Record of Decision) in June 2015. The PIP/CP will need to be applied throughout this study process, whereas the public involvement activities are expected to have more a focus during certain deliverables as outlined in Figure 9-1 on the following page.

Figure 9.1: Atlanta to Charlotte High-Speed Rail Passenger Rail Corridor Investment Plan Schedule



APPENDIX A

STAKEHOLDERS

The following is a working draft of key stakeholders for the Atlanta to Charlotte Corridor as of May 2013. The list will continue to be updated and expanded during the public involvement process.

1. FEDERAL AGENCIES

Agency	Contact	Title	Address	City	State
FRA	Randy Brown	Regional Manager - Gulf States	1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE, MS-20	Washington	DC
FRA	John Winkle	Transportation Industry Analyst	1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE, Rm38-311	Washington	DC
FHWA - Georgia	Katy Allen	Environmental Team Leader	61 Forsyth Street, SW, Suite 17T100	Atlanta	GA
FHWA - South Carolina	Patrick Tyndall	Planning & Environmental Program Manager	1835 Assembly Street, Suite 1270	Columbia	SC
FHWA - North Carolina	Clarence Coleman	Preconstruction & Environment Director	310 New Bern Avenue, Suite 410	Raleigh	NC
FTA - Region IV	Yvette G. Taylor, Ph.D	Regional Administrator	230 Peachtree St., N.W. Suite 800	Atlanta	GA
US Department of the Interior	Gregory Hogue	Regional Environmental Officer; Regional Offices - Atlanta	75 Spring Street, SW, Suite 144	Atlanta	GA
US Army Engineer Division, South Atlantic Division	Major General Todd T. Semonite	Commander - South Atlantic Division	6 Forsyth Street, SW, Room 9M15	Atlanta	GA
Advisory Council for Historic Preservation	John Fowler	Office of the Executive Director	Old Post Office Building, 1100 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW Suite 803	Washington	DC
US EPA - Region 4	Ntale Kajumba	NEPA Program Office, Office of Policy and Management	Sam Nunn Federal Center, 61 Forsyth Street, SW	Atlanta	GA
NPS - Southeast Region	David Vela	Regional Director	100 Alabama Street, SW 1924 Building	Atlanta	GA
US Fish and Wildlife - Region 4	Cindy Dohner	Regional Director	1875 Century Boulevard, Suite 400	Atlanta	GA

2. State/Local Agencies

Agency	Contact	Title	Address	City	State
GDOT - Project Management	Derrick Cameron	Project Manager	600 West Peachtree Street, NW	Atlanta	GA
GDOT - Intermodal	Carol Comer	Director of Intermodal	600 West Peachtree Street, NW	Atlanta	GA
GDOT - NEPA	Glenn Bowman, PE	State Environmental Administrator	600 West Peachtree Street, NW	Atlanta	GA
GDOT - NEPA	Gail D'Avino, Ph.D.	Assistant State Environmental Administrator	600 West Peachtree Street, NW	Atlanta	GA
NC DOT - Rail Division	Anthony L. Fuller	Director	1553 Mail Service Center	Raleigh	NC
SC DOT - Intermodal	Doug Frate	Interim Deputy Secretary for Intermodal and Freight Programs	955 Park Street	Columbia	SC
Georgia DNR - Historic Preservation Division	David Crass Ph.D.	Division Director & Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer	254 Washington Street, SW Ground Level	Atlanta	GA
Appalachian Regional Commission	Tom Hunter	Executive Director	1666 Connecticut Avenue, NW, Suite 700	Washington	DC
SC State Historic Preservation Office	W. Eric Emerson, Ph.D.	State Historic Preservation Officer	SC Department of Archives and History, 8301 Parklane Road	Columbia	SC
NC State Historic Preservation Office	Kevin Cherry Ph.D.	State Historic Preservation Officer	4610 Mail Service Center	Raleigh	NC
Atlanta Regional Commission	Douglas Hooker	Executive Director	40 Courtland Street, NE	Atlanta	GA
Georgia Mountains Regional Commission	Danny Lewis	Executive Director	1310 W Ridge Road	Gainesville	GA
Mecklenburg-Union Metropolitan Planning Organization	Robert Cook	MUMPO Secretary	600 East Fourth Street (8th Floor)	Charlotte	NC
Greenville-Pickens Area Transportation Study (GPATS)	John Owings	Manager of Current Planning	301 University Ridge, Suite 400	Greenville	SC
Spartanburg Area Transportation Study (SPATS)	Jim D'Amato, PhD	Transportation Planning Manager	366 North Church Street, Suite 700	Spartanburg	SC
Gainesville-Hall Metropolitan Planning Organization	Srikanth Yamala	Director	2875 Browns Bridge Road	Gainesville	GA
City of Charlotte	Anthony Foxx	Mayor	600 East Fourth Street (15th Floor)	Charlotte	NC
City of Charlotte	Julie Burch	Interim City Manager	600 East Fourth Street	Charlotte	NC
City of Atlanta	Kasim Reed	Mayor	55 Trinity Avenue	Atlanta	GA
City of Atlanta	Tom Weyandt	Mayor's Transportation Policy Advisor	55 Trinity Avenue	Atlanta	GA
City of Greenville	John Castile	City Manager	206 S. Main Street, 10th Floor	Greenville	SC
City of Spartanburg	Ed Memmott	City Manager	145 W. Broad Street	Spartanburg	SC

3. RAILROADS

Agency	Contact	Title	Address	City	State
Norfolk Southern	John Edwards	General Director Passenger Policy	1200 Peachtree Street, NE	Atlanta	GA
CSX Transportation	Craig Camuso	Regional Vice President – State Government Affairs	500 Water Street, 15th Floor	Jacksonville	FL
Amtrak	Todd Stennis	Director of Government Affairs	1001 Loyola Avenue	New Orleans	LA

4. STATE AND LOCAL STAKEHOLDERS

GEORGIA

State	Regional	Local	Organizations
Governor Deal	Appalachian Regional Commission	City of Atlanta	Georgia Council for Quality Growth
Lt. Governor Cagle	Atlanta Regional Commission	Atlanta City Council	NAACP - Georgia
Georgia Representatives US Senate	Georgia Mountains Regional Commission	Atlanta Beltline Inc.	Citizens for Progressive Transit
Georgia Representatives US House	Gainesville-Hall Metropolitan Planning Organization	Atlanta Convention and Visitors Bureau	Clean Air Campaign
Georgia House and Senate Leadership	Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport	MARTA	Social Equity Committee
House Transportation Committee		Gwinnett County Transit	Center for Pan Asian Community Services
Senate Transportation Committee		Counties within the Study Area	Georgia Stand Up
Key Georgia Legislators		Cities within the Study Area	Georgia Chamber of Commerce
Georgia Regional Transportation Authority			Georgia Hispanic Chamber of Commerce
Georgia Department of Natural Resources			Georgia Trust for Historic Preservation
Georgia State Historic Preservation Officer			Rotary (along study corridor)
Georgia Department of Economic Development			Kiwanis (along study corridor)
			Trust for Public Land
			Chambers of Commerce (along study corridor)

SOUTH CAROLINA

State	Regional	Local	Organizations
South Carolina Representatives US Senate	Greenville-Pickens Area Transportation Study (GPATS)	City of Greenville – Mayor	South Carolina Chamber of Commerce – cities/towns within study corridor
South Carolina Representatives US House	Spartanburg Area Transportation Study (SPATS)	City of Greenville – City Manager	South Carolina Hispanic Chamber of Commerce
South Carolina House and Senate Leadership	Pee Dee Council of Governments	City of Spartanburg – Mayor	NAACP – South Carolina
Key South Carolina Legislators	Greenville-Spartanburg International Airport	City of Spartanburg – City Manager	Rotary (along study corridor)
South Carolina State Historic Preservation Office – Department of Archives		Anderson County Planning and Development	Kiwanis (along study corridor)
South Carolina Department of Natural Resources		Greenville County Planning and Development	Trust for Public Land
		Spartanburg County Planning and Development	Transportation Association of South Carolina
		City of Greenville Department of Economic Development	South Carolina Economic Developers' Association
		Counties within the Study Area	
		Cities within the Study Area	

NORTH CAROLINA

State	Regional	Local	Organizations
North Carolina Representatives US Senate	Mecklenburg-Union Metropolitan Planning Organization	City of Charlotte - Mayor	North Carolina Active Transportation Alliance
North Carolina House and Senate Leadership	Charlotte Douglas International Airport	Charlotte Area Transit	North Carolina Public Transportation Association
Key North Carolina Legislators		Metropolitan Transit Commission (Charlotte)	North Carolina Chambers of Commerce – cities/towns within study corridor
North Carolina Hispanic Chamber of Commerce		Citizen Transit Advisory Group (Charlotte)	NAACP – North Carolina
Carolinans Asian-American Chamber of Commerce		Transit Services Advisory Committee (Charlotte)	Rotary (along study corridor)
North Carolina State Historic Preservation Office		LYNX Red Line Task Force Committee (Charlotte)	Kiwanis (along study corridor)
North Carolina Department of Natural Resources		Greenlink Transit	Trust for Public Land

State	Regional	Local	Organizations
		Clemson Area Transit	Sustainable Communities Task Force
		Counties within the Study Area	
		Cities within the Study Area	