



Clifton Corridor Alternatives Analysis Stakeholder Advisory Committee Meeting Summary

Stakeholder Advisory Meeting #1

Emory SAAC, Room 316

November 5, 2009

3:00 – 5:00 pm

Attendees

JoAnn McClinton, Metropolitan Atlanta Rapid Transit Authority (MARTA) Board

Stuart Adler, Emory University

Kristin Allin, Great Lakes/Clairemont Neighborhood

Henry Batten, Lindbergh-Lavista Corridor Coalition

Charlie Bleu, Clairmont Heights Civic Association

Ron Foust, Druid Hills Civic Association

James Johnson, Emory University

John Maximuk, Livable Communities Coalition

Mary Hinkel, Mason Mills Civic Association

Steve Patrick, Commissioner Rader Appointee

David Payne, Emory University

Tom Thibadeau, University Inn

Betty Willis, Clifton Community Partnership

Team

Jason Morgan, MARTA Staff

Don Williams, MARTA Staff

Thayra Riley, Clifton Corridor Transportation Management Association (CCTMA) Staff

Grady Smith, Project Consultant Team

Audra Rojek, Project Consultant Team

Jenny Lee, Project Consultant Team

Amanda Easoz, Project Consultant Team

Jonathan Webster, Project Consultant Team

Jen Price, Project Consultant Team

Leah Vaughan, Project Consultant Team

Handouts

Meeting Agenda

Citizen's Guide

Project Newsletter #1

PowerPoint Presentation

Comment Sheet

Transportation, Land Use, and Community Features Fast Facts



Summary

Thayra Riley opened the meeting with a welcome to the group, thanked them for their attendance and participation, and asked each participant to introduce him or herself. Ms. Riley gave an overview of the meeting ground rules, and discussed the purpose of the project and the purpose of the Stakeholder Advisory Committee (SAC). Ms. Riley described the partnership between MARTA and CCTMA before turning the meeting over to Jason Morgan.

Mr. Morgan discussed the study background and previous efforts, provided an overview of the study area, and the reason an Alternatives Analysis (AA) was being conducted.

Grady Smith then presented the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) project development process, the AA work flow, the role of public involvement in the overall process, and the overall project schedule – including SAC meeting dates.

Following the presentation, there was an opportunity for the SAC to ask questions or provide comments.

Questions/Comments (during presentation)

- Regarding educating the public, will there be an opportunity to speak to neighborhood organizations?
 - Yes, the Speakers Bureau will be available to present study information to corridor groups. The team will rely upon the SAC to help identify potential opportunities.
- Is part of the study purpose to see where people in the area are going when they travel?
 - Yes. An on-board survey and an origin/destination study will help supply this information.
- If this process is to help identify funds for implementation, what if there is no funding available?
 - Part of the plan is to develop a financial plan that will explore many sources of potential funding.
 - A recent Executive Order that requires federal agencies to provide transit connections between their facilities may make additional funding available in the future.
 - The FTA process is undergoing changes, some of which may make acquiring funding easier. In addition, funds may be available to promote transit oriented development (TOD).

- Are there any similar studies in the region?
 - Yes, the Beltline, I-20 East, and Peachtree Streetcar projects are similar in scope and size.



- How will MARTA prioritize projects?
 - MARTA is in the process of developing a process to prioritize transit projects. In this regard, coordination with the Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC) will be necessary to ensure that prioritized projects are carried forward.
 - This project is a top priority from a MARTA perspective due to its interconnectivity with planned projects and major activity centers.
- Will we work on local funding availability to make improvements?
 - Yes, low cost investments for corridor improvements will be investigated.
- Would establishing a CID strengthen our case for funding?
 - It is possible, but will need to be investigated further.

Station Comments

The group broke into groups and visited three display and discussion stations focused on transportation, land use, and community features. Discussion notes from each station are provided below. Please note that discussion items are listed by the station at which they were received and not by their overall subject matter.

Community Features

- Toco Hills has been identified by ARC as a Naturally Occurring Retirement Area where residents should be accommodated as they 'age in place.'
- The PATH Foundation has constructed the South Peachtree Creek Trail through Medlock Park. The planned Phase 2 of this project would connect to Emory Clairmont Campus.
- A map of available right of way, including utility ROW, was requested for future discussion.
- Neighborhood impacts should be considered.
- Impacted neighborhoods should be encouraged to develop transit as a community amenity.
- Connecting to the 'Brain Train' is a great opportunity.
- LLCC wants to have access to whatever new transit is developed, especially since they will likely be impacted by transit improvements. The Cheshire Bridge Road area has been rezoned for Mixed Use redevelopment, which could be compatible with transit. More detail about the area's redevelopment vision can be found in the LLCC Blue Print.
- Downtown Decatur can be difficult to access.
- Families with children are moving into a number of the neighborhoods along the corridor, which will impact schools and transportation.
- Druid Hills will likely oppose alignments along the CSX railroad through their neighborhood.

Land Use



- There is currently a lot of single-family development along commercial corridors in the study area. Thus, the challenge is to maintain the community's character while improving access.
- Areas that may benefit from redevelopment include:
 - Toco Hills
 - Cheshire Bridge @ Lindbergh/LaVista
 - Executive Park
 - Emory Point
 - Sage Hill
 - Avondale/East Decatur Station
 - Suburban Plaza
 - North DeKalb Mall
 - Scottsdale
 - DeKalb Avenue
 - Williamsburg Apartments on Clairmont Road
 - Shephards Lane between Briarcliff Road and LaVista Road
 - Scott Boulevard/Lawrenceville Highway
 - Zonolite Road
- More mixed use development would not necessarily create more congestion, as these developments are not just destinations.
- The Future Land Use Map projects higher density in the study area than what will likely be constructed.
- The land use maps should show the Emory campus and Emory Health Care.
- Land use issues might include:
 - Runoff, tree removal, industrial runoff
 - Ingress/Egress
 - Parking
 - Clairmont/North Decatur Reliever
- There are many driveways (curb cuts) on major corridors that can lead to congestion and accidents.
- The study area needs more transportation alternatives and parking.
- Business nodes lack street grids, which would accommodate alternatives like biking or walking for local trips.

Transportation

- The recommendations from the AA should be consistent with the Urban Design Guidelines developed by the Clifton Corridor Community Partnership.
- Early and continued cooperation with CSX is imperative. There are liability issues and potential for federal funding to improve the existing rail corridor.
- Bus operations on shared roadways are not convenient or efficient.



- The study needs to address maximizing existing transit service. Currently, MARTA buses do not appear to be at capacity.
- Public education is critical to gain consensus for a transit solution in the corridor.
- Safety and noise issues are some of the concerns for transit (Clairemont-Great Lakes).
- Limited frequency of transit service is an issue.
- Need to eliminate connections/transfers to reduce overall transit travel time.
- The financial burden of operating the current MARTA system should be fairly distributed to other counties.
- Designated neighborhood cut-throughs are necessary to avoid major congested arterials.
- Low-hanging fruit such as better signage (wayfinding) could better assist visitors to the corridor.
- There is a need to address transit solutions to ease commuter traffic as well as mobility within the corridor.

After the station discussions, the group reconvened to participate in a real-time survey activity to help gather input on study goals and objectives. Each question was answered once by each of the 12 participants. Responses are in **Table 1**, on page 6. Before wrapping up the meeting, Ms. Riley asked for input regarding meeting times and locations. The group decided that, with enough notice, Thursdays between 3 to 5 pm would be a good time. Location suggestions included MARTA, Clifton Community Partnership offices, and Emory.

Mr. Morgan displayed the project webpage on the MARTA website and noted that the site will include data available for download and that a social media presence on Facebook is soon to come.

The meeting concluded at 5:00 pm.



Table 1: Survey Responses

1.	Which corridor do you feel is most in need of mobility enhancements?	
1	Clifton Road	25.0%
2	Lindbergh Drive / LaVista Road	16.7%
3	Clairmont Road / Clairemont Avenue	8.3%
4	Briarcliff Road	16.7%
5	North Decatur Road	33.3%
2.	What would be the most important factor for you to ride transit?	
1	Travel time savings	50.0%
2	Reliability of service	8.3%
3	Comfort and security	0.0%
4	Convenience of service	41.7%
5	Cost savings	0.0%
3.	What is the greatest transit need in the Corridor?	
1	Increased bus frequency	0.0%
2	Better transit coverage	25.0%
3	More dependable service	0.0%
4	Better options for commuters	41.7%
5	Better connections to the rail system	33.3%
4.	Which potential goal do you feel most important for the study?	
1	Enhancing mobility and accessibility throughout the area	50.0%
2	Providing travel options to the Single Occupant Vehicle (SOV)	33.3%
3	Supporting effective land use and development patterns	8.3%
4	Supporting continued economic development	8.3%
5.	What is the most important environmental issue to consider?	
1	Minimizing impacts to natural environment, including air quality	33.3%
2	Promoting more efficient energy use and/or sustainability	33.3%
3	Minimizing potential community impacts	33.3%
4	Preserving historical context of the area	0.0%
6.	What is the value transit brings to the Corridor?	
1	Promoting the competitiveness of employment districts	16.7%
2	Supporting the vitality (live-work-play) of activity centers – such as the Lindbergh , Emory and Downtown Decatur areas	75.0%
3	Promoting more dense residential infill development	0.0%
4	Promoting redevelopment of older shopping centers and/or office complexes	8.3%