



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



Mobility Matters Project

WHAT IS THE MOBILITY MATTERS PROJECT (MMP)?

The I-65/US 31 Mobility Matters Project (MMP) is a plan that proposes both transit and highway improvements to address the existing and emerging transportation system issues associated with this strategic south-central corridor of metropolitan Birmingham. Traffic conditions in the study corridor on I-65 and US 31 are congested and are expected to become more severe in the years to come. Also, existing public transit service in the I-65/US 31 Mobility Matters Project corridor primarily consists of a limited number of bus routes that have lengthy headways (time between buses). Mobility has become increasingly difficult and time consuming for commuters using I-65 and other routes within the study corridor. Therefore, both transit improvements and highway improvements are proposed in order to increase mobility in the I-65/US 31 corridor.



Legend

- ITP Blue Route
- ITP Green Route
- Highland Ennon Ridge Neighborhood Connector
- Norwood Glen Iris Neighborhood Connector
- Avondale Graymont Neighborhood Connector
- Proposed I-65 / US-31 MMP Routes



Key Elements of the Proposed Transit Improvements

- 7 Premium Transit Routes.
- 67 Premium Transit Stops/Stations.
- 2 Transit Super Stops.
- 5 Park-and-Ride Lots.
- 11 Queue Jumper Lane installations.
- 43 Traffic Signal Priority (TSP) installations.
- 65 Premium Transit buses.
- 10 minute peak waiting times.
- Interface with the planned downtown ITP system and the Blazer Express transit system.
- Buses will use HOV lanes where available.
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WHY DOES THE I-65/US31 CORRIDOR NEED THE MMP?

The I-65/US 31 corridor is essential to the economic vitality of the Birmingham region and the state of Alabama.

The I-65/US 31 corridor serves as a major access route to Birmingham's downtown and financial district, the University of Alabama-Birmingham, the Birmingham Jefferson Convention Complex and Five Points South.

The I-65/US 31 corridor connects suburban Jefferson and Shelby Counties with the commercial and business areas in the remainder of the metropolitan area.

The I-65/US 31 corridor has minimal public transit services outside of the downtown, Vestavia Hills and Hoover areas.

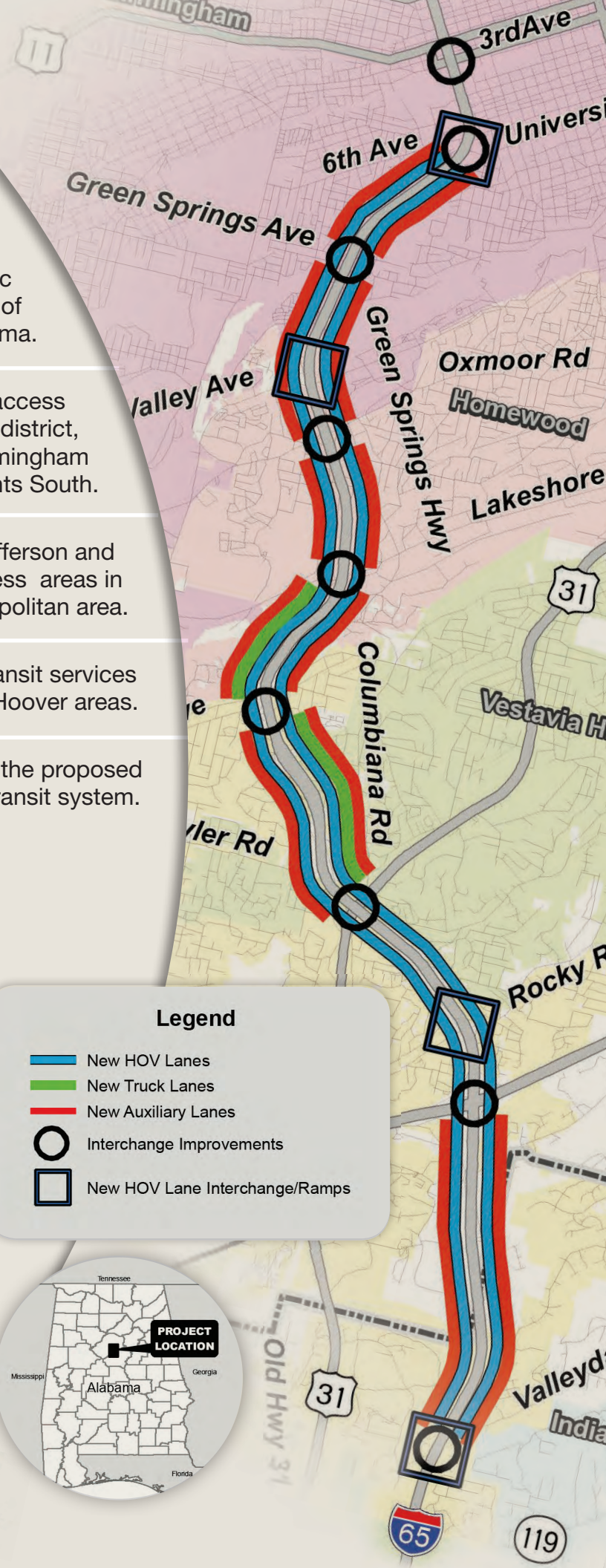
MMP will provide a connection to the proposed downtown ITP transit system.

Key Elements of the Proposed Highway Improvements

- HOV Lanes from Valleydale Road to University Boulevard.
- Auxiliary lanes between most interchanges.
 - Truck climbing lanes between US 31 and Lakeshore Drive.
- Improvements to all existing interchanges in the corridor.
 - HOV-Only interchanges/ ramps at several locations.

Legend

-  New HOV Lanes
-  New Truck Lanes
-  New Auxiliary Lanes
-  Interchange Improvements
-  New HOV Lane Interchange/Ramps





PROJECT GOALS AND EVALUATION

Project goals were established by the project advisory and technical committees as well as by the public via public information meetings for use in the analysis, comparison, and screening of alternatives that were formulated and analyzed in the I-65/US 31 Mobility Matters Project (MMP).

ANALYSIS

The analysis of corridor needs has gone through a structured process of characterizing existing and projected corridor conditions, describing the purpose and need for corridor improvements, defining a set of corridor goals and objectives against which to evaluate improvement options, developing an initial Tier 1 set of multimodal corridor improvement alternatives, and screening these alternatives through an evaluation framework down to a reduced set of alternatives for further analysis and refinement in the Tier 2 study activities.

The study concluded the Tier 2 alternatives evaluation and provided recommendations concerning the most viable highway alternative. Additional Post-Tier 2 analysis was completed to determine the best performing proposed transit improvements identified in the Tier 2 set of alternatives after a constant highway element was employed across all alternatives.

The goals for the I-65/US 31 MMP are as follows:

- **Goal 1:** Improve transportation mobility and reduce congestion through and within the study corridor.
- **Goal 2:** Minimize adverse impacts to the human/built and natural environments, and foster positive environmental impacts.
- **Goal 3:** Support local and regional land use and transportation vision and plans.
- **Goal 4:** Provide a cost effective and efficient transportation investment strategy.

The I-65 HOV Lanes and Premium Transit alternative performed the best for the Goal 1: Increases Mobility and Reduces Congestion, Goal 3: Supports Land Use and Transportation Plans, and Goal 4: Cost Effective, and performed the best overall and is endorsed as the Locally Preferred Alternative (LPA) for the MMP.

	No Improvements to I-65 & No Premium Transit (Baseline)	I-65 General Purpose Lanes & Premium Transit Alternative	I-65 HOV Lanes & Premium Transit Alternative	I-65 Managed Lanes & Premium Transit Alternative
GOALS				
GOAL 1 – Increases Mobility and Reduces Congestion	3.53	2.21	1.53	1.89
GOAL 2 – Minimizes Impacts	1.43	2.00	2.03	2.63
GOAL 3 – Supports Land Use and Transportation Plans	1.75	1.75	1.50	1.75
GOAL 4 – Cost Effective	3.00	2.47	2.11	2.47
OVERALL AVERAGE RANKING - ALL GOALS	2.43	2.11	1.79	2.19

RATING: Closest to 1 is the best performing alternative.

PREMIUM BUS SERVICE

Premium bus service uses new technology and design to improve your experience and provides a comfortable and convenient alternative method of travel to your favorite destinations.



Premium bus service will include environmentally friendly buses and attractive stations with numerous amenities to make your trip safe, efficient and comfortable.



Premium bus service will provide easy access to those who wish to walk, bike or drive to stations.



Premium bus service will provide ground-level boarding design.

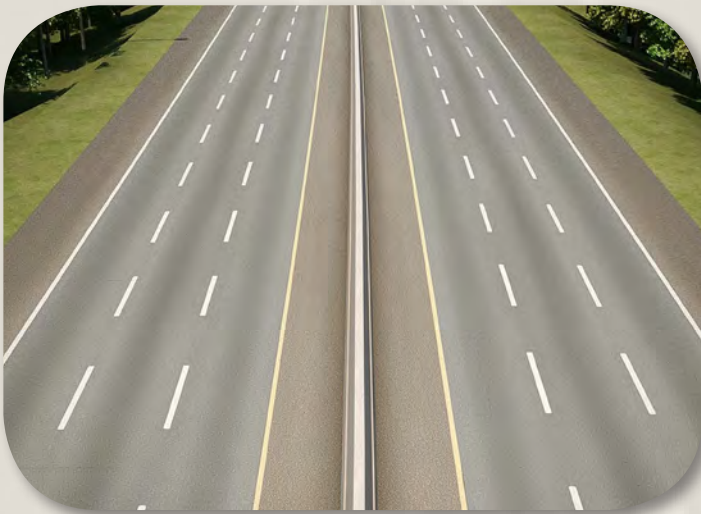


Premium bus service will provide a comfortable and safe travel experience.

HIGH OCCUPANCY VEHICLE (HOV) LANES

An HOV lane is a separate lane that is restricted to vehicles occupied by two or more people. The proposed HOV lanes will accommodate carpools, vanpools and buses.

The HOV lanes will provide a fast and reliable trip during the morning and afternoon commutes and will also improve travel in the regular lanes.



I-65 without HOV Lanes (Existing)



I-65 with HOV lanes on the inside and auxiliary lanes on the outside (Proposed)



HOV-only interchanges and ramps are proposed at several locations on I-65 to improve access to the proposed HOV lanes.



Buses and cars with two or more people will be able to access the proposed HOV lanes.

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

Stakeholders and the public have been actively engaged throughout the Mobility Matters Project (MMP) and their comments and suggestions have been a valuable source of information during the development of the proposed improvements. Those that were engaged in the MMP include residents, elected officials, local agencies, businesses, educational organizations and civic associations.

Public involvement included the following activities:

- Stakeholder interviews
- Two rounds of public information open house meetings
- Steering Committee meetings
- On-line survey
- Three newsletters
- Project website



NEXT STEPS

The next steps as the MMP moves towards implementation involves several key tasks:

Promote the implementation of one or more of the proposed MMP premium bus routes in a demonstration or pilot program in the near future.

Incorporate the full proposed MMP premium transit system in the cost-constrained Regional Transportation Plan (RTP).

Include the proposed auxiliary lanes on I-65 and the improvements to the I-65 interchanges in the cost-constrained RTP and in the Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP).

Integrate the proposed HOV lanes on I-65, HOV-only interchanges/ramps, and truck lanes on I-65 in the cost-constrained RTP.



RPCGB

REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION
OF GREATER BIRMINGHAM