**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

**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.

**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.**

**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 an major 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 terminal locations.**

**WHAT IS THE MOBILITY MATTERS PROJECT (MMP)?**

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Key Elements of the Proposed Highway Improvements
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- Truck climbing lanes between US 31 and Lakeshore Drive.
- Improvements to all existing interchange in the corridor.
- HOV-Only interchanges and ramps at critical locations.

Key Elements of the Proposed Transit Improvements
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Key Elements of the Proposed Highway Improvements
- HOV Lanes from Valleydale Road to University Boulevard.
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Key Elements of the Proposed Transit Improvements

- 7 Premium Transit Routes.
- 67 Premium Transit Stops/Stations.
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- 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.
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Executive Summary

WHY DOES THE I-65/US31 CORRIDOR NEED THE MMP?

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

Key Elements of the Proposed Highway Improvements

- HOV Lanes from Valleydale Road to University Blvd.
- Auxiliary lanes between most interchanges.
- Overpass improvements at the intersections.
- HOV-Only interchanges at freeway locations.
- Additional HOV lanes where feasible.
- Truck climbing lanes between US 31 and Lakeshore Drive.

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**PROJECT GOALS AND EVALUATION**

The analysis of corridor needs has gone through a structured process of characterizing existing and potential corridor conditions, describing the purpose and need for corridor improvements, defining a set of corridor goals and objectives against which to evaluate improvement options, and developing Tier 1 set of multimodal corridor improvement alternatives, and screening these alternatives through a structured process of characterizing existing and projected corridor conditions, and objectives against which to evaluate improvement options, and developing 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 evaluation in the Tier 2 study activities. The study concluded the Tier 2 alternatives evaluation and provided recommendations concerning the most viable highway alternative and transit improvements identified in the Tier 2 alternatives analysis. Additional Post-Tier 2 analysis was completed to determine the best performing proposed transportation investment strategy.

**ANALYSIS**

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**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.

- **I-65 HOV Lanes and Premium Transit Alternative**
  - Increases Mobility and Reduces Congestion.
  - Supports Local and Regional Land Use and Transportation Vision and Plans.
  - Provides a cost effective and efficient transportation investment strategy.

- **I-65 General Purpose Transit Alternative**
  - 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.

**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, vans 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.

**GOALS**

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

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

**OVERALL RATING**

RATING: Closest to 1 is the best performing alternative.

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**NEXT STEPS**

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

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

**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.

**RTP INTEGRATION**

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

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

Incorporate the full proposed MMP premium bus routes into all demonstration or pilot programs in the near future.
**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 alternative that were formulated and analyzed in the I-64/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 improvements options, developing 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 alternative analysis and provided recommendations concerning the most viable alternative. Additional Post-Tier 2 analysis was completed to determine the best performing premium transit improvements identified in the Tier 2 of alternatives after a structured process was employed across all alternatives.

**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.

The grade for the I-64/US 31 HMP are as follows:

- **Goal 1**: Improve transportation mobility and reduce congestion through and within the project 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: Increase Mobility and Reduce Congestion, Goal 2: 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.

**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. The proposed HOV lanes will accommodate carpools, vanpools and buses.

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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 lane on I-65 to the improvements in the full cost-constrained RTP and the Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP). Integrate the proposed HOV lanes and Premium Transit alternatives into I-65 HOV lane interchange projects and truck lanes on I-65 in the cost-constrained RTP.
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, drafting a set of corridor goals and objectives against which to evaluate improvement options, developing Tier 1 set of multimodal corridor improvement alternatives, and identifying the best performing proposed improvements through a structured process of characterizing existing and projected corridor conditions, and objectives against which to evaluate improvement options, developing Tier 1 set of multimodal corridor improvement alternatives, and identifying the best performing proposed improvements 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 multimodal corridor improvement identified in the Tier 2 set of alternatives after a constant highway element was employed across all alternatives. The goal for the Tier 2 study activities:

- **Goal 1**: Improve transportation mobility and reduce congestion through and within the study corridor.
- **Goal 2**: Minimize adverse impacts to the human/habitat 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 65 HOV Lanes and Premium Transit alternative performed the best for the Goal 1: Increase Mobility and Reduce Congestion, Goal 2: Support the Human/Habitat and Natural Environments, and Goal 4: Effective, and performed the best overall and is endorsed as the Locally Preferred Alternative (LPA) for the MMP.

**GOALS**

- **GOAL 1**: Increases Mobility and Reduces Congestion
- **GOAL 2**: Support local and regional land use and transportation vision and plans
- **GOAL 3**: Cost Effective and Efficient Transportation Investment Strategy
- **GOAL 4**: Provide a cost effective and efficient transportation investment strategy

**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 the transportation plan project progress in the next rollout**
- **Integrate the full proposed MMP premium transit system in the cost constrained Regional Transportation Plan (RTP)**
- **Incorporate the proposed auxiliary lane on I-65 and the improvements to the HOV lanes in the cost constrained RTP and in the Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP)**
- **Integrate the proposed HOV lane I-65, HOV-only interchanges/lanes, and truck lanes on I-65 in the cost constrained RTP**

**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.

**Project Goals and Evaluation**

Project goals were established by the project advisory and technical committees as well as through public information meetings for use in the analysis, comparison, and screening of alternatives that were formulated and analyzed in the I-40/US 31 Mobility Matters Project (MMP).

**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, vans 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.

**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 include environmentally friendly buses and attractive stations with numerous amenities to make your trip safe, efficient and comfortable.

High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) Lanes

The I-65 HOV Lanes and Premium Transit alternative performed the best for the Goal 1: Increase Mobility and Reduce Congestion, Goal 2: Support the Human/Habitat and Natural Environments, and Goal 4: Effective, and performed the best overall and is endorsed as the Locally Preferred Alternative (LPA) for the MMP.

**Ranking - All Goals**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Goal</th>
<th>Overall Average</th>
<th>Goal 1: Increase Mobility and Reduce Congestion</th>
<th>Goal 2: Support Local and Regional Land Use and Transportation Vision and Plans</th>
<th>Goal 3: Cost Effective and Efficient Transportation Investment Strategy</th>
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**I-65 without HOV Lanes (Baseline)**

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

**I-65 with HOV lanes (Baseline)**

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

**I-65 with HOV lanes on the inside and auxiliary lane on the center portion**

HOV only interchanges and ramps are proposed at several locations on I-65 to improve access to the proposed HOV lanes.
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 alternative that were formulated and analyzed in the I-465/US 31 Mobility Matters Project (MMP).

The goals for the I-465/US 31 MMP are as follows:

- **Goal 1**: Increase transportation mobility and reduce congestion through and within the study corridor.
- **Goal 2**: Minimize adverse impacts to the human/social 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 analysis of corridor needs has gone through a structured process of characterizing existing and projected corridor conditions, identifying and refining 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 corridor improvements in the Tier 2 set of alternatives after a structured process of characterizing existing and projected corridor conditions, identifying and refining in the Tier 2 study activities. The I-65 HOV Lanes and Premium Transit Alternative performed the best for the Goal 1: Increase Mobility and Reduce Congestion, Goal 2: Support Local and Regional Land Use and Transportation Vision and Plans, and Goal 4: Effective, and performed the best overall as evaluated in the study. Preferred Alternative (LPA) for the MMP.

NEXT STEPS

- Stakeholder interviews
- Two rounds of public involvement activities
- Steering Committee meetings
- On-line survey
- Three newsletters
- Project website

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

Stakeholders and the public have been actively engaged in 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

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 Planning (RTP).
- Involve the proposd auxiliary lanes on I-65 and the improvements to the I-465 intersections in the cost-constrained RTP and in the Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP).
- Integrate the proposed HOV lanes on I-465, HOV interchanges/lanes, and truck lanes on I-65 in the cost-constrained RTP.

PREMIUM BUS SERVICE

Premium bus service uses new technology and design to improve your experience and provides a comfortable and convenient alternative to 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 a comfortable and safe travel experience.

HIGH OCCUPANCY VEHICLE (HOV) LANES

An HOV lanes 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 (Baseline)

I-65 with HOV lanes on the inside and auxiliary lane on the outer (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.

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 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 analysis 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 corridor improvements in the Tier 2 set of alternatives after a structured process of characterizing existing and projected corridor conditions, identifying and refining in the Tier 2 study activities. The I-65 HOV Lanes and Premium Transit Alternative performed the best for the Goal 1: Increase Mobility and Reduce Congestion, Goal 2: Support Local and Regional Land Use and Transportation Vision and Plans, and Goal 4: Effective, and performed the best overall as evaluated in the study. Preferred Alternative (LPA) for the MMP.
The I-65/US 31 corridor serves as a major transportation route to Birmingham’s downtown and financial district, the University of Alabama-Birmingham, 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 terminal locations.

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.

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.