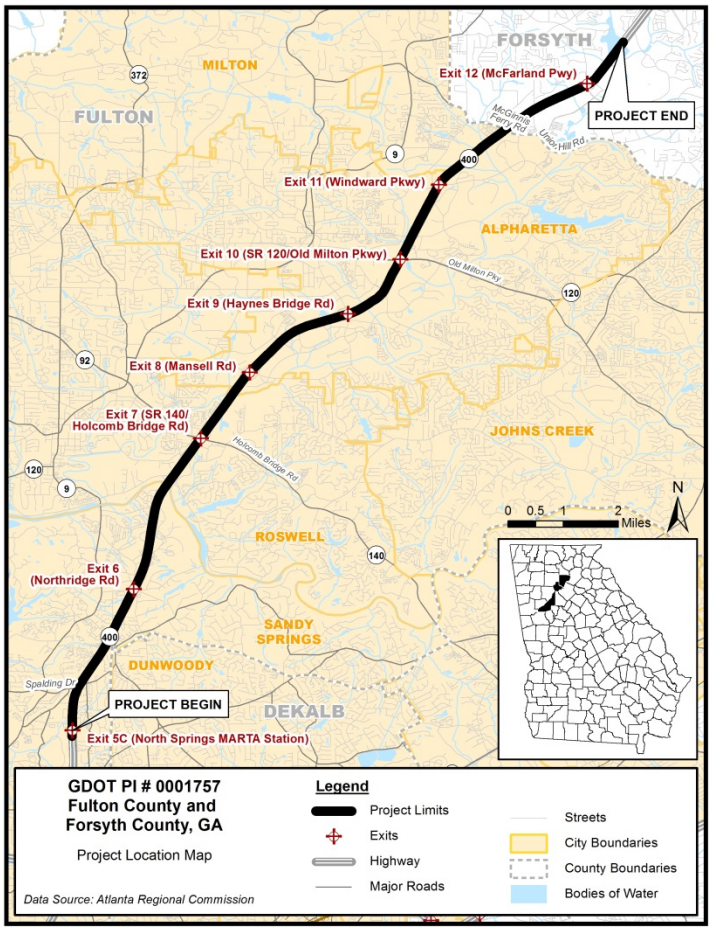


2019 Public Information Open House
Response to Public Comments

Version 1

June 2019

SR 400 Express Lanes

From North Springs MARTA Station to north of McFarland Pkwy

GDOT PI 0001757, Fulton and Forsyth counties

Georgia Express Lanes SR 400

GDOT Georgia Department of Transportation

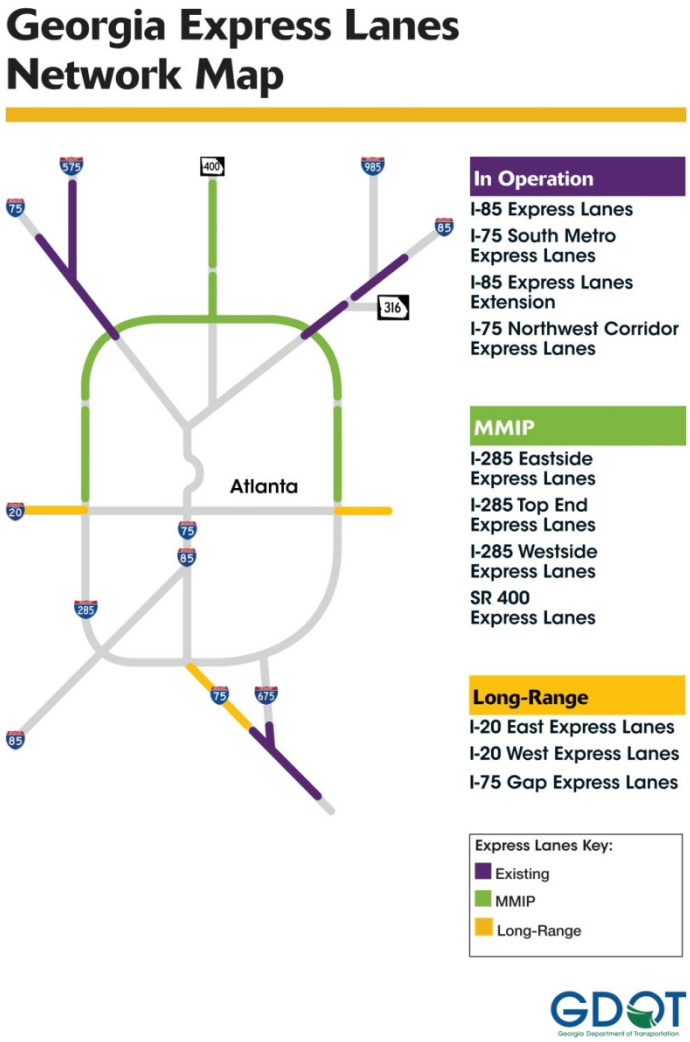
Contents

In February and March 2019, the Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) hosted five (5) Public Information Open Houses (PIOHs) to provide project information and to solicit public comments on the SR 400 Express Lanes project. The attendees of the PIOHs and those persons submitting comments within the comment period raised a number of questions. In coordination with the State Road and Tollway Authority (SRTA), GDOT has developed this summary of comments and responses to provide clarity to the project's features and process. Below, the project team has organized the comments into broad topics. In each section, individual comment themes are presented in italics followed by GDOT's response to each comment. GDOT anticipates additional responses will be added in the future to more thoroughly address the comments received and will update this summary as the project concept evolves and more project details become available.

Express Lanes Overview

What are the Georgia Express Lanes?

Georgia Express Lanes are optional priced lanes that complement the general purpose lanes along the interstates in some of the most congested corridors around metro Atlanta. These lanes provide a choice for drivers to bypass congestion when desired, offer a clear path for transit operators, and add an alternative to the general purpose lanes that exist today. The result will be a network of express lanes that provide more reliable and predictable trip times. All Georgia Express Lanes rely on a dynamically-priced toll in order to provide reliable travel times especially during peak congestion.



Project Overview

Project Need and Purpose

Why is this express lanes project needed?

The project is needed to provide reliable travel times for drivers and transit users and to improve connectivity between regional destinations through priced, express lanes that are proposed to integrate with a proposed metro Atlanta express lanes network.

Project Process

Comments were received requesting for increased and continuing transparency, public notice, and coordination with local governments.

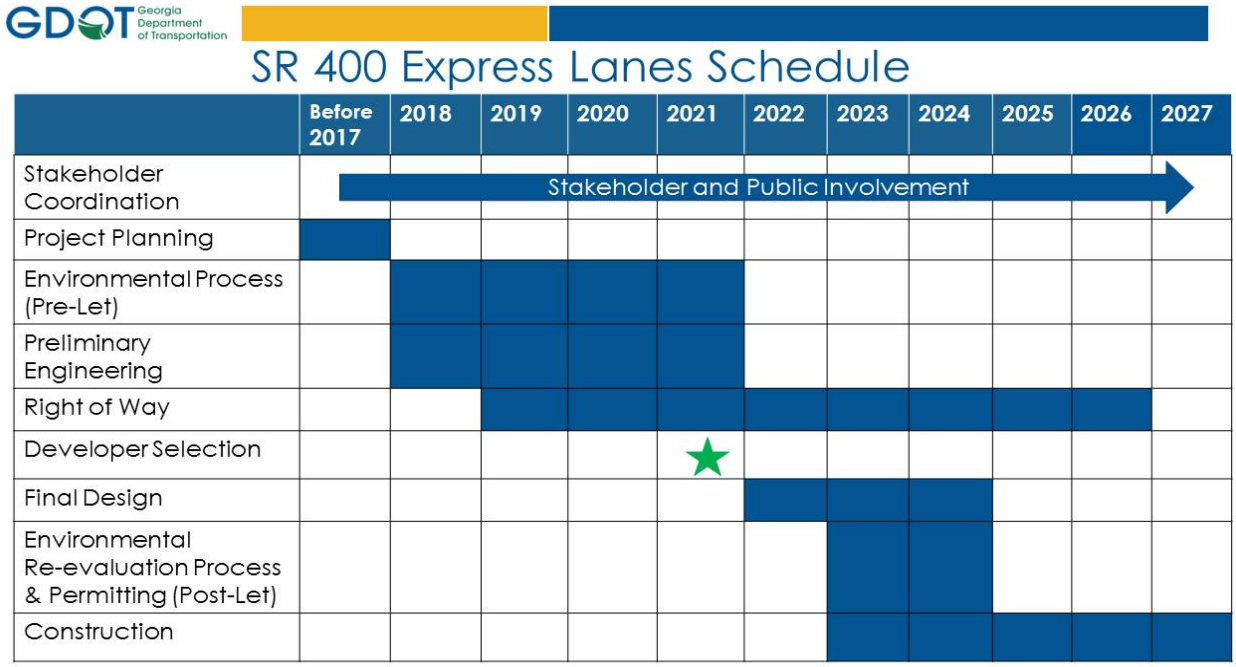
Since the SR 400 Express Lanes project was announced in early 2016 as part of the larger Major Mobility Investment Program (MMIP), GDOT has coordinated with stakeholders and sought to inform the public about the project. GDOT has held more than 150 presentations and meetings to educate and seek input from stakeholders and local citizens in the past two years. These include concept coordination meetings with elected officials and local government staff as well as numerous public presentations to city councils, homeowners associations (HOAs), and other civic organizations. Information on the project has been shared by both traditional and social media outlets. GDOT has also undertaken activities to distribute and gather more information about the project. Such include:

- sending early coordination letters to federal, state, and local agencies;
- solicited feedback from organizations along the corridor;
- requested civic and religious organizations along the corridor share information with their contacts and distribution lists about the project and public meetings;
- posted information in five public libraries along the corridor; and
- published legal ads and posted road signs advertising the public meetings.

In addition, GDOT hosted five (5) Public Information Open Houses (PIOHs) along the corridor in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA); posted meeting materials online at both the project website (http://www.dot.ga.gov/DS/GEL/SR400) and GDOT public outreach website (http://www.dot.ga.gov/PS/Public/PublicOutreach); and solicited comments via the project website, email, letter, and court reporter. The PIOHs attracted more than 1,200 attendees and generated over 500 public comments, in addition to the project team receiving numerous phone calls, letters, and emails. As the project is still in the concept design/environmental review phase, GDOT will continue to coordinate with local governments on the project's preliminary engineering. Additional comments may be submitted by emailing 400ExpressLanes@dot.ga.gov.

The project website will continue to be updated during the preliminary engineering process and a more refined project concept will be presented at the project's Public Hearing Open Houses (PHOHs) that are proposed to be held in 2020. The design-build contractor, referred to the as the Developer, would be responsible for completing the final design for the project.

Project Schedule



Note: Schedule updated May 2019.

Funding

Comments were submitted regarding the funding and cost of the project.

The SR 400 Express Lanes project was made possible by the General Assembly's passage of the Transportation Funding Act (TFA) of 2015 and funding from the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), including a $184 million federal Infrastructure for Rebuilding America (INFRA) grant. The INFRA grants program provides dedicated, discretionary funding for projects that address critical issues facing our nation's highways and bridges. These funding sources are only available to be used on roads and bridges and cannot be used for transit facilities or access.

Additionally, the project at this time is anticipated to be delivered using a Public-Private Partnership contracting model, whereby GDOT solicits bids from private investors/equity partners/Developers for the project. The successful bidder partners with GDOT and secures financing for the design and construction of the project.

The state, under the direction of former Governor Nathan Deal, also allocated $100 million state bond funds to facilitate/not preclude and pave the way for future implementation of a bus rapid transit (BRT) system by the Metropolitan Atlanta Rapid Transit Authority (MARTA) to operate within the express lanes corridor. Much of these funds will be used to acquire the right-of-way needed to support the future BRT infrastructure. BRT stations along with rider/pedestrian circulations and accommodations would be designed and built in the future by MARTA. However, by coordination between GDOT and MARTA, there are inherent cost-saving benefits of avoiding future costs associated with building a BRT infrastructure after decisions on the SR 400 Express Lanes project are already made.

Access Points

Access Point – North Springs MARTA

Comments were received regarding potential safety concerns with weaving locations near the North Springs MARTA Station.

> We are continuing to refine weaving locations to meet federal and state design criteria and a safety analysis will be completed before final design.

Access Point – Webb+

Comments were received with concerns about increased traffic volumes on the local road network surrounding the proposed Webb+ access point; specifically, Webb Bridge Road, North Point Parkway, Tradewinds Parkway, and Morris Road.

> As part of this project, potential traffic impacts related to this proposed express lane access point will be further studied within the confines of GDOT's Intersection Control Evaluation (ICE) policy. Extensive coordination is being conducted with local government staff as well as elected officials of the City of Alpharetta to determine the most feasible and efficient express lanes access solution within the City of Alpharetta.

Suggestions were made to have the Webb+ access point moved to Windward Parkway, Old Milton Parkway, or Haynes Bridge Road.

> It is GDOT's general practice not to consider general purpose interchanges for arterial access ramps to express lanes. General purpose and express lanes interchanges remain as separate facilities to avoid potential operational impacts of combining both traffic types into a single location. As a result, GDOT is not considering Windward Parkway, Old Milton Parkway, or Haynes Bridge Road, among others, as potential access points.

Access Point – South of Holcomb Bridge Road

We received requests to move the proposed access point to north of Holcomb Bridge Road, potentially Big Creek Parkway.

> As part of this project, express lane access points are being studied. The project team has been coordinating with the City of Roswell on access to the express lane system. The City of Roswell originally proposed Big Creek as an overpass without SR 400 access. To remain consistent with the original intent and citizen understanding of the City of Roswell's Big Creek Parkway project, through coordination between GDOT and City of Roswell, an express lanes access point was removed from consideration at Big Creek. Based on this, in order to incorporate a direct access point for express lanes users in Roswell, the current proposed design is to place the access point for the City of Roswell south of Holcomb Bridge Road.

We received a request to move the access point to Mansell Road.

> It is GDOT's practice not to consider general purpose interchanges for arterial access ramps to express lanes. General purpose and express lanes interchanges remain as separate facilities to avoid potential operational impacts of combining both traffic types into a single location. As a result, GDOT is not considering Mansell Road, as well as other general purpose access points as potential express lane access points.

Comments were received with concerns about increased traffic volumes in proximity to Stepping Stones Academy and Swift School and on arterial roads surrounding the proposed access point south of Holcomb Bridge Road; specifically, Dogwood Road, Old Dogwood Road, Old Alabama Road, Riverside Parkway, and Grimes Bridge Road.

> As part of this project, potential traffic impacts related to this express lane access point will be further studied within the confines of GDOT's Intersection Control Evaluation (ICE) policy.

Comments were received requesting no access points in the City of Roswell.

Roswell is a large city within the project corridor, and in order to provide regional connectivity, increased mobility, and more reliable trip times to Roswell residents, an express lanes access point has been under evaluation through ongoing coordination with the City of Roswell's staff and elected officials. Close coordination is being conducted with these individuals while balancing the need to meet express lanes demand in Roswell to arrive at a most feasible and efficient express lanes access solution within the City of Roswell.

Access Point – North of McFarland Parkway

Why do the Express Lanes and bus rapid transit projects not terminate farther north in Forsyth County?

Previous analysis showed the need for one lane of additional capacity on SR 400 in the segment north of McFarland Parkway. This need has been addressed by the recently constructed third general purpose lane in both northbound and southbound directions as part of the Forsyth County SR 400 capacity adding project. The third general purpose lane begins immediately north of McFarland Parkway and extends north of SR 20. Traffic patterns show that there is a congestion drop off at McFarland Parkway and the recently constructed third general purpose lane has further relieved traffic volumes.

While MARTA service does not extend into Forsyth County, the express lanes would be used by *Xpress* buses with origins and destinations in Forsyth County.

Suggested Access Points/General Access Point

We received several comments regarding access point locations in Sandy Springs including: Adding an access point at Abernathy Road, increasing express lane access for residents in northern Sandy Springs, and not allowing an access point at Spalding Drive.

- In addition to Abernathy Road being outside the limits of this project and as stated above, it is GDOT's general practice not to consider general purpose interchanges for arterial access ramps to express lanes. General purpose and express lane interchanges remain as separate facilities to avoid potential operational impacts of combining both traffic types into a single location. We are forwarding this comment to the I-285 Top End Express Lanes project team, which is evaluating possible access points between I-285 and SR 400 south of the North Springs MARTA Station.
- As currently proposed, motorists in north Sandy Springs may enter and exit the express lanes system within one mile north or south of the Northridge Road where there is a direct merge/slip ramp access between the general purpose lanes and express lanes. These express lanes access points would allow the drivers to enter the system and to transfer from Sandy Springs into the express lanes network along I-285 as well as the collector-distributor (CD) lane system being constructed under the Transform 285/400 Interchange project that is currently under construction.
- Spalding Drive was considered as an access point in early planning studies. Through further evaluation, the North Springs MARTA Station was selected as the access point for this area. An express lanes access point is not proposed at Spalding Drive; however, there is a proposed direct merge/slip ramp access point, near Spalding Drive.

Comments were received requesting an access point in Alpharetta at Encore Parkway.

In coordination with the City of Alpharetta, Encore Parkway has been determined to not be a viable direct access point location. There are currently proposed direct merge/slip ramps within .5 mile of Haynes Bridge Road that will provide motorists the choice to access the express lanes. Encore Parkway was designed as a gateway signature project to include a pedestrian friendly concept and is wide enough to allow the express lanes to pass underneath the existing bridge.

A request was made to build a MARTA rail station farther north and to have the SR 400 Express Lanes terminate at that station.

Building rail stations and providing transit services are not in Georgia DOT's purview as a state highways and bridges agency. This request for additional MARTA service has been provided to the MARTA team for their evaluation. To request additional transit related information, please email MARTA at: connect400@itsmarta.com.

Design

How many lanes will SR 400 have once the project is finished?

Existing SR 400 has generally four non-tolled general purpose lanes in each direction from MARTA North Springs Station to McFarland Parkway and three general purpose lanes north of McFarland Parkway.

The SR 400 Express Lanes project would add two priced express lanes in each direction from MARTA North Springs Station to McGinnis Ferry and one priced express lane in each direction from McGinnis Ferry to just north of McFarland Parkway. Additional lanes are required intermittently along the corridor for either general purpose or express lane access points or for potential queuing BRT stations as well as the collector-distributor lanes. Within the SR 400 Express Lanes project limits and upon project completion, SR 400, in general, will have between eight and 10 travel lanes in each direction (express lanes, collector-distributor lanes, and general purpose lanes). Although in some locations the number of lanes increases to allow for access ramps and connections to other roadway facilities, for example connecting to I-285 near the North Springs MARTA Station and to allow for BRT access to MARTA's Windward Parkway Park-and-Ride.

Commenters expressed concerns that the design precluded future rail expansion.

The project team is working with MARTA to provide BRT on the corridor; however, to allow for a future potential northern rail expansion, the concept specifically incorporates design elements to not preclude the potential for future heavy rail transit. To request additional transit related information, please email MARTA at: connect400@itsmarta.com.

Commenters requested clarification on how the SR 400 Express Lanes project will tie into the I-285 Top End Express Lanes project.

GDOT is closely coordinating the two projects to maintain seamless transition between the two projects; however, the exact project tie-in/transition points are still being determined. The SR 400 Express Lanes project would open to traffic prior to the construction completion of the I-285 Top End Express Lanes project. Before the I-285 Express Lanes open to traffic, the southbound SR 400 Express Lanes would provide a connection to the MARTA North Springs Station and back to southbound general purpose lanes to access I-285. Traveling northbound, motorists (personal vehicles and buses) from the MARTA North Springs Station are proposed to have a direct connection to the express lanes. There would also be an at-grade direct merge/slip ramp to allow traffic coming from downtown via SR 400 or I-285 to access the express lanes.

Once the I-285 Top End Express Lanes project is open to traffic, these access points will remain in use, but motorists will have the additional option of remaining in the express lanes southbound on SR 400 and continuing onto the I-285 Top End Express Lanes.

Requests were made to include local complete streets concepts including pedestrian and cycling infrastructure along the project.

There are a number of local bike, pedestrian, and complete streets interests, plans, and projects near the SR 400 Express Lanes corridor. Bike, pedestrian, and complete streets facilities are not within the confines of the SR 400 Express Lanes project scope; however, GDOT will coordinate with local governments to determine if they wish to

provide funding to advance portions of the bike, pedestrian, and complete streets facilities into this project. It is GDOT's intent to replace existing overpasses in kind and in a manner that doesn't preclude other pedestrian, cycling, and complete streets local projects. The SR 400 Express Lanes project is a managed lanes project and complete streets policies do not apply to managed lanes projects.

Comments were received seeking justification for additional stormwater detention ponds along the project. Safety concerns were raised regarding stream realignments, pedestrian access to proposed stormwater retention ponds, and potential mosquitos near the ponds.

As more lanes are added to SR 400 via the SR 400 Express Lanes project, additional stormwater runoff will occur along the corridor. Detention ponds are essential to reducing the risk of flooding on neighboring properties. The roadway's drainage design will be brought to current standards, where possible, as part of the overall design process and conform to best management practices. The project corridor falls within a Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) Permitted area which consists of a system of conveyances owned by the state or local municipalities that discharges to waters of the U.S. Therefore, this project is subject to the requirements of the MS4 Permit. The stipulations to comply with this permit will require treatment of the runoff and protection of area surface waters and water quality. To address drainage concerns, design features in this project include, but are not limited to: detention basins, curb inlets and pipes (e.g., a closed drainage system), and ditches along the corridor where feasible to convey stormwater away from the roadway.

The detention ponds are stormwater management systems that will be used to both remove some of the pollutants in the roadway runoff (improve water quality) during a storm as well as to prevent downstream flooding. They are not intended to be permanently wet but rather to detain the water and allow it to trickle out at a slow rate at or near the pre-widened roadway rate so as not to flood downstream. It is intended for these ponds to release all the water within 48 hours of most rain events and not to serve as permanently wet ponds. Stormwater retention ponds will include fencing to discourage unauthorized access to GDOT right-of-way.

The detention ponds are being designed by registered design professionals in accordance with GDOT policies and standards. All stream alignments will be designed to safely convey water back to the existing riverbed. As part of the installation of these basins, routine maintenance will be conducted. Being dry between rain events greatly reduces the attractiveness to nuisance species.

Comments were made in both support of and against elevated lanes along the corridor.

For the SR 400 Express Lanes project, elevated lanes are necessary but limited to select locations including access points and to bring the express lanes from the outside of the general purpose lanes to the inside of the general purpose lanes. As part of our alternatives analysis, the amount of required elevated lanes has been reduced. As part of the design process, the project team is reviewing the corridor to assess where elevated lanes are needed and in an attempt to minimize the number of locations.

Why are the express lanes not elevated for the entire project?

Elevating the express lanes when they could otherwise be at-grade is cost prohibitive. The effort of this project is to incorporate express lanes as cost effective as possible. There are areas that require GDOT to elevate lanes due to the complexities of the system.

Commenters asked GDOT to clarify specific heights of the proposed SR 400 Express Lanes project at specific locations along the corridor.

While we know that elevated portions of the express lanes will be required, we are currently developing preliminary plans that will be finalized by the successful bidder/Developer. The project's goal is to first avoid, and second minimize/mitigate, any right-of-way impacts, including evaluation of potential solutions such as elevated lanes. One of the benefits of elevated lanes includes a minimized project footprint, however, this needs

to be balanced with costs and visual impacts as well as engineering constraints. Final design plans, including final elevations, are anticipated to be completed in 2024 and will meet the required design height standards.

Bridge Replacements

Commenters requested that GDOT coordinate bridge closures to reduce local traffic impacts.

GDOT will coordinate the bridge construction schedule to reduce traffic impacts where feasible. Before bridge reconstruction begins, GDOT will work with the local municipalities to identify viable detours, if needed, which will consider and assess impacts to schools, first responders, and mobility.

Pitts Road Overpass

Concerns were raised over the construction alternatives presented at the Public Information Open Houses. Commenters requested that the Pitts Road overpass be rebuilt in its existing location resulting in the bridge being closed during construction and local traffic being detoured during construction resulting in a reduced right-of-way and displacements need.

In an effort to seek public input on potential construction alternatives at the five PIOHs, the public was presented with and asked to indicate a preference between two options for how to rebuild the Pitts Road Bridge.

- The first option was to rebuild the bridge in place, which would require a detour.
- The second option includes building the new bridge alongside the existing bridge allowing the bridge to remain open during construction but would require additional right-of-way, including displacing residences.

There are many factors, one of which is public input, which will help in the final decision on how to rebuild the Pitts Road Bridge. The project team will work with the City of Sandy Springs to determine if there is a viable detour available for Pitts Road. Detour route viability will be determined with consideration of impacts to schools, first responders, and mobility. It is anticipated that feedback on public detour will take place during the Public Hearing Open House.

Holcomb Bridge Road Interchange

Requests were made to incorporate previous local studies of the Holcomb Bridge corridor when designing the replacement bridge for the Holcomb Bridge Road Interchange.

Current traffic data are being used in close coordination with the City of Roswell and a review of its previous local studies to best design the Holcomb Bridge Road Interchange.

Spalding Drive Overpass

Concerns were raised by residents related to widening the Spalding Drive Bridge, predicting an increase in commuter traffic on Spalding Drive. Additional traffic calming measures were requested.

It is anticipated that the Spalding Drive overpass will be lengthened and relocated south of the existing overpass to allow enough space for the SR 400 Express Lanes to pass underneath the bridge. The existing two-through lane bridge would be replaced with a two-through lane bridge. The SR 400 Express Lanes project would not be adding access, capacity, or additional lanes to the Spalding Drive Bridge. As Spalding Drive is a local road, requests for additional project(s) to relieve traffic congestion have been forwarded to the City of Sandy Springs for their review.

Construction

Commenters requested to see construction plans and schedules.

> Detailed construction plans and schedules outlining phasing are not currently available and will be designed after multiple rounds of public comment and in coordination with the Developer once the project is Let (awarded) in 2021/2022. Please see page 5 for general schedule information.

Requests were made to install noise barriers before construction begins.

> Noise barriers are built by the Developer, usually near the end of construction phase of the project. The construction phase of this project is currently proposed to start in 2023 and conclude in 2027.

Residents requested that GDOT disallow construction traffic on neighborhood streets.

> Generally, when constructing the SR 400 Express Lanes, vehicles will access the project from SR 400 or from roads that are part of the project; however, there may be constructability needs in areas that may require access by local roads during certain points of construction.

Residents requested that construction materials be placed on the "400 side" of any noise barriers and that any construction supplies, flammable, or hazardous materials should not be parked overnight at locations where homes are removed.

> Construction materials will be placed and stored in GDOT right-of-way in compliance with the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) standards. GDOT will follow established policies on the storage and handling of flammable and hazardous materials.

Remaining residents near residential displacements asked how long is the period between the removal of homes and the construction of the project, requested landscaping to be installed on the right-of-way before construction begins, and requested that GDOT property be landscaped and/or turned into a neighborhood park (i.e. Spalding Woods and Talbot Colony in Sandy Springs).

> Early right-of-way acquisition will take place with certain properties beginning in late 2019. Removal of structures, foundations, and general grading will be performed. Typical GDOT erosion control measures will be implemented. These areas may be used by the Developer for construction activities and project needs. Final grading and site cleanup will commence at the end of work activities. This work includes reestablishment of natural vegetation and removal of any silt fence and other erosion control materials. Landscaping is not performed by GDOT contractors and is usually implemented under a separate agreement and by permission from GDOT with a local government or other stakeholder. These newly acquired properties will become GDOT right-of-way and as such, GDOT cannot commit to any additional landscaping beyond grassing due to maintenance concerns and the imminent need for the land to construct the project. GDOT does not perform maintenance of landscaped facilities within GDOT right-of-way, only allows its right-of-way to be landscaped and maintained by others under separate agreements. If a landscaping plan and agreement is in place, this work is typically performed at the completion of construction activities in the affected areas. Construction of the project is currently scheduled to begin in 2023.

Commenters requested to know how GDOT will monitor and enforce construction and safety standards and specific requests to have seismic monitoring devices placed on surrounding homes.

> GDOT has seismic monitors that will be placed as needed and in accordance with GDOT policies. As part of the project, inspectors will be required to make sure standards are being met.

Residents and commuters requested limitations on the times of construction to reduce travel and noise impacts

GDOT will review construction time periods and lane closures during the Request for Proposal (RFP) process that defines the scope of work for the Developer to follow.

Stakeholders have requested a weekly construction schedule and a point of contact to reach with questions or concerns.

Road closure and major construction would be communicated to stakeholders along the corridor in a timely manner by the project team through the project website and email. The project will continue to maintain a project hotline number throughout construction which will be communicated to the public.

Environmental Impacts

What environmental impact studies are being done for the project and when will a report be available?

Environmental studies are currently being conducted in compliance with the NEPA and the draft Environmental Assessment is expected to be completed in early 2020 and will be made available to the public for review and comment prior to and during the Public Hearing Open Houses.

Air Quality

Concerns were raised about air quality impacts during construction.

Construction of the SR 400 Express Lanes will follow all applicable, current GDOT policies and standards including the Department Construction Manual, available online at: http://www.dot.ga.gov/PartnerSmart/Business/Source/construction/cm001.pdf

Commenters expressed concerns about potential air quality impacts from the SR 400 Express Lanes project once open to traffic.

Previous planning studies by the Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC) considered whether the SR 400 Express Lanes project would affect regional air quality. The project was evaluated in the Region's Air Quality Conformity Analysis and was included in the financially-constrained six-year Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) for the region as early as 2014. The latest Air Quality Conformity Determination Report can be found at this link: http://documents.atlantaregional.com/transportation/tip19/am7/TARPCDR%20Am7.pdf.

The proposed express lanes project is found in an amendment to the conformity report. All amendments require a conformity determination from the U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT), in consultation with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). This amendment will involve a new air quality conformity determination by the United States Department of Transportation and is expected in June 2019. The most recent regional emissions analysis was approved by Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and EPA on December 4, 2018. Additional background is found at this website: https://atlantaregional.org/transportation-mobility/transportation-planning/tip-amendment/

An air quality analysis will be completed for this project as a part of the environmental process. Intersection analyses to evaluate the project's potential effects on carbon monoxide emissions will be completed for intersections that exceed the threshold for traffic volumes and traffic delays.

Trees

Commenters requested information on how wooded areas will be maintained on GDOT right-of-way.

The GDOT right-of-way is maintained to facilitate site distance, clear zone requirements, and safety consideration, which may require the removal of trees. Multiple activities could occur in this right-of-way as part of routine maintenance or during construction including staging areas, utility maintenance/relocation or other infrastructure needs.

Commenters requested that trees be used for noise abatement.

Vegetation must be high enough, wide enough, and dense enough that it cannot be seen through to reduce noise, and typically vegetation provides more of a perception of noise reduction to the human ear. Therefore, it is not considered a noise abatement/reduction option by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA).

Water Quality

Commenters questioned if water quality will be impacted by the project?

The proposed project would be designed to comply with current water quality standards. The project corridor falls within a Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) Permitted area which consists of a system of conveyances owned by the state or local municipality that discharges to waters of the U.S. Therefore this project is subject to the requirements of the MS4 Permit. The stipulations to comply with this permit will require treatment of the runoff and protection of area surface waters.

Impacts to Existing Parks/Greenspace

Requests were made to preserve the existing park space around the Chattahoochee River.

We anticipate relocating the existing entrances to Don White Memorial Park. Other than short term closures, access to the parking lot will remain open during construction. Advance notice of all closures will be provided and coordinated with the City of Roswell and the National Park Service.

Noise/Noise Barriers

Are noise barriers part of the project?

Considerations for mitigating impacts from highway traffic generated noise, including noise barriers, are part of the planning, location, and design of the SR 400 Express Lanes.

How are noise barrier locations determined?

A Noise Impact Assessment Study will be conducted to determine the acoustic impact of the proposed project and the need for abatement measures on noise sensitive receivers (e.g., residences and public outdoor spaces, etc.). During the planning phase, the analysis will focus on identifying potentially impacted noise sensitive receivers. Final location of noise barriers will be determined during final design with the input of affected landowners and residents. Benefited landowners and residents will be invited to participate and vote on whether they would like to have the barrier constructed. Only at that point will a final decision be made. For the walls/barriers to be installed the vote will need to be over 50 percent in favor.

The determination of noise impacts and abatement measures will comply with Title 23, Code of Federal Regulation (CFR), Part 772, and the GDOT's policies for highway noise barrier construction. More information regarding the GDOT's noise barrier policy can be found in the GDOT's Environmental Procedures Manual http://www.dot.ga.gov/PartnerSmart/DesignManuals/Environmental/GDOT-EPM-Chap05_6.pdf

Additional information concerning the FHWA's guidelines is available at https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/noise/regulations_and_guidance/index.cfm

When will noise barriers be built?

Noise barriers are built by the Developer, usually at the end of construction phase of the project. Noise barriers are built in-line with construction schedule, which is determined by the Developer. The construction phase of this project is currently expected to start in 2023 and continue through 2027.

What will the noise barriers look like?

Currently the preferred noise barrier material is concrete, however, in areas where a lighter weight material is necessary, such as on bridges and retaining walls, steel panels would be used. Final determination of the material and finishes will be determined as the project advances through Letting.

What will happen to the noise barrier that is already planned to be installed under a separate, adjoining project?

Noise barriers will be constructed under a separate project in which they were planned as a need and voted on to advance. The schedule for that is dependent on the unique construction timeline for each project. Noise barriers constructed as part of adjoining projects *may* be removed as part of the construction process for the SR 400 Express Lanes. The Noise Impact Assessment Study for the SR 400 Express Lanes will determine the acoustic impact of the proposed project and the need for abatement measures as a result of this express lanes project is being evaluated separately than previously analyzed projects. It is important to evaluate impacts as a result of the express lanes project, and ensure that any noise abatement (e.g., barrier) would be effective at noise reduction and meet the cost feasibility requirements. As mentioned above, the determination of noise impacts and abatement measures will comply with Title 23, Code of Federal Regulation (CFR), Part 772, and the GDOT's policies for highway noise barrier construction.

Right-of-Way

Comments were received from property owners along the corridor.

In the event your property is required in total or in part, GDOT's right-of-way team will meet individually with each property owner to discuss the project and the impacts to the specific property. At that time, the property owner will be shown design drawings and have the opportunity to discuss their specific property and access needs. More information regarding the acquisition process can be found in the pamphlet titled *What Happens When Your Property is Needed for a Transportation Facility* which can be found on the GDOT website at http://www.dot.ga.gov/PS/ROW.

Concerns were expressed about widening SR 400 and converting land to roads.

GDOT makes every attempt to minimize property acquisition and relocations during the project design phase. Unfortunately, property acquisitions and displacements are unavoidable for some projects. As the design progresses, GDOT will make every effort to minimize the amount of right-of-way impacts to the greatest extent possible.

Requests were made to reduce right-of-way impacts wherever possible or to impact commercial properties instead of residential.

GDOT must make right-of-way decisions based on what is required for the project's engineering and design while conforming with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) environmental decision-making process and not based on parcel type. When feasible and practical, GDOT first tries to avoid right-of-way impacts. If they cannot be avoided, GDOT works to minimize right-of-way impacts. Right-of-way impacts shown at the 2019 Public Information Open Houses were identified but the project team continues to identify needs based on the evolving engineering and design refinements.

We received comments requesting information regarding the schedule for right-of-way acquisitions that will be made as part of the SR 400 Express Lanes project.

Early right-of-way acquisition is currently underway for the SR 400 Express Lanes project; however, not all right-of-way will be acquired early. The Developer will be responsible for any remaining right-of-way acquisition required as part of their final design in the construction phase. The project's final design will be completed by the Developer and approved by GDOT in 2024 with right-of-way acquisition extending through 2026. If a

property owner would like to sell in advance of the project's final design, please contact the right-of-way lead, Phil Copeland at pcopeland@hntb.com.

Homeowners expressed concerns that their property values would be negatively impacted by the project.

The final plans for the project are still under development. The conceptual drawings presented will continue to be refined with a focus on avoiding perceived negative impacts when possible. If avoidance is not possible, the Design Team will explore opportunities to minimize or mitigate these impacts while adhering to the scope limitations of the project.

Potential School Impacts

Comments were received requesting reduced impacts to school facilities.

GDOT works to avoid and minimize impacts to school facilities where feasible and practical. Any facility impacts including but not limited to right-of-way, facilities upgrades, landscaping, special needs access, etc., will be addressed through the design, environmental, and right-of-way process and will be negotiated as part of the cost to cure.

Comments were submitted expressing concerns over increased traffic and consequential safety impacts at nearby schools, located near new direct access points bringing new travel patterns and traffic volumes.

As part of this project, GDOT is conducting traffic analysis studies comparing the No-Build and Build conditions.

Physical barriers and noise walls were requested to be placed along GDOT right-of-way near Fulton County schools.

If additional right-of-way is required, any existing physical barriers that separate SR 400 from school property would be replaced. Additional barriers, including noise barriers, will be further evaluated as part of the design process.

Comments were received regarding potential air quality impacts near schools.

Previous planning studies by the Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC) considered whether the SR 400 Express Lanes project would affect regional air quality. The project was evaluated in the Region's Air Quality Conformity Analysis and was included in the financially-constrained six-year Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) for the region as early as 2014. The latest Air Quality Conformity Determination Report can be found at this link: http://documents.atlantaregional.com/transportation/tip19/am7/TARPCDR%20Am7.pdf. The proposed express lanes project is found in an amendment to the conformity report. All amendments require a conformity determination from the U.S. Department of Transportation, in consultation with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). This amendment will involve a new air quality conformity determination by the United States Department of Transportation and is expected in June 2019. The most recent regional emissions analysis was approved by Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and EPA on December 4, 2018. Additional background is found at this website: https://atlantaregional.org/transportation-mobility/transportation-planning/tip-amendment/

An air quality analysis will be completed for this project as a part of the environmental process. Intersection analyses to evaluate the project's potential effects on carbon monoxide emissions will be completed for intersections that exceed the threshold for traffic volumes and traffic delays.

Commenters requested that bridge closures be coordinated to limit disruptions for school traffic.

All bridge detours will be coordinated with local governments, first responders, and schools to ensure continued access to parcels and minimize impacts during construction when feasible.

Commenters highlighted the need for continued coordination between GDOT and Fulton County Schools and real-time information sharing with stakeholders.

After initiating project coordination with Fulton County Schools in 2018, Fulton County Schools invited GDOT to present information to Sandy Springs parents on GDOT's Major Mobility Investment Program and the SR 400 Express Lanes project. During the presentations, information was shared including: an overview of the Georgia Express Lanes network, an overview of the stakeholder coordination done to date, a proposed project schedule, and a high-level, proposed project concept including typical sections. Although the project was early in concept development and data gathering, GDOT wanted to share the overall project vision and need and purpose. Opportunities for public comments were highlighted, including the Public Information Open Houses which were held in February and March 2019. A copy of the full presentation and handouts may be viewed here. Fulton County Schools collected comments at these meetings which were subsequently shared with GDOT. GDOT submitted responses to Fulton County Schools on February 27, 2019. These responses are posted and can be reviewed on Fulton County Schools' website. In addition, at the Public Information Open Houses, GDOT specifically made potential school impact information available to all attendees. All PIOH materials may be viewed on the SR 400 Express Lanes' project website; http://www.dot.ga.gov/DS/GEL/SR400.

Traffic

We received comments stating that current traffic levels along SR 400 were both acceptable and not acceptable.

Previous analysis concluded that all segments of SR 400 between I-285 and Holcomb Bridge Road operated at Level of Service (LOS) E or LOS F in the peak-period/peak-direction in 2010. Level of Service is a measure of traffic congestion ranging from A (free flow) to F (forced or breakdown flow). The 2012 feasibility study showed that this trend continues, with traffic forecasts predicting that all segments of SR 400 within the project limits described above would operate at LOS E or LOS F in the peak-period/peak-direction in 2040. Additionally, the analysis showed that under 2010 conditions, traversing the project limits in the peak-period/peak-direction requires 25 to 35 minutes of additional travel time as compared to traversing the project limits at posted speeds. Similarly, in 2040, the gap between posted speed travel time and actual peak-period/peak-direction travel time grows to range from 55 to 90 minutes.

Based on these existing conditions a need was identified to improve mobility along the corridor.

Comments were submitted expressing traffic and safety concerns on the local road network near the proposed express lane direct access points.

As part of this project, GDOT is conducting traffic analysis studies and will be comparing the No-Build and Build conditions for local roads at proposed access points.

Commenters requested clarification of potential traffic impacts of existing construction along the corridor overlapping with the construction of the SR 400 Express Lanes.

The proposed McGinnis Ferry Road Interchange and general purpose access point as well as the Transform 285/400 Interchange project are scheduled to be opened to traffic by the end of 2020. Construction for the SR 400 Express Lanes project will begin in 2023 and is projected to last until 2027. If there are changes to project schedules, the public will be notified.

Tolling/Business Rules

Commenters requested information regarding why the new lanes are being priced, how pricing is set, and who can use the lanes for free.

There is no single budget from which all types of projects are funded, and budgets are typically allocated for specific needs by the state legislature. Accordingly, funds used by GDOT for Georgia Express Lanes do not come from a budget that would be otherwise earmarked for transit. However, GDOT supports transit and works with transit agencies throughout the region to improve transit options. The Georgia Express Lanes system is an investment that enhances transit options and opportunities in the corridor. Dedicated express lanes offer more reliable trip times to transit riders at no additional cost and greater predictability for transit operators. Improved service along these corridors makes transit a more attractive alternative, which can help reduce the number of vehicles on those routes. GDOT, via the Georgia Express Lanes network, is providing greater reliability, expanding growth opportunities, and enhancing connectivity for the region's transit systems. Regional transit providers are expanding park-and-rides in express lanes corridors and considering additional service in order to accommodate the ridership demand.

As a dynamically priced system, the Georgia Express Lanes are offered as a choice that complements the general purpose lanes along the interstates in some of the most congested corridors around metro Atlanta. These lanes provide a choice for drivers to bypass congestion when desired, offer a clear path for transit operators, and add an alternative to the general purpose lanes that exist today. The result will be a network of express lanes that provide more reliable and predictable trip times. All Georgia Express Lanes rely on a dynamically-priced toll in order to provide reliable travel times especially during peak congestion.

Studies show that express lanes have a much more reliable travel speed than carpool lanes and provide more consistent performance over time.

Rates on any express lane are based on a dynamic pricing format, which increases the price during peak travel times and decreases the price during off-peak times. Dynamic pricing facilitates reliable trip times for those utilizing the express lanes including those in transit vehicles. Dynamic pricing allows as many motorists as possible to use the lanes while still meeting expectations for free-flowing traffic.

State-registered transit vehicles, vanpools, and emergency management services (EMS) are the only vehicles that can ride toll-exempt on the express lanes. State-registered alternative fuel vehicles, motorcycles, and all carpools must pay the toll on the SR 400 Express Lanes.

Commenters expressed concerns that the lanes would only benefit those who can afford the toll.

Express lanes users only pay if they choose to travel on the express lanes. Motorists will continue to have the option to use the existing general purpose lanes, as a toll-free option. Rates on the express lanes will be dynamic which aids in managing the number of motorists that use the lanes while still meeting expectations for free-flowing travel to ensure reliable trip times.

In addition, transit vehicles traveling the express lanes will experience a more reliable trip, improving the overall transit experience for the numerous riders who choose transit as a mobility option. The express lanes support the existing general purpose lanes by providing travel choices in mobility to make a behavioral decision based on the need of a reliable trip time.

How will the toll revenue be spent?

Road construction is mainly funded through state gas tax collection and federal support; however, both the gas tax and federal funding are not sufficient for the state's needs for road maintenance, operation, and construction. Express lanes are a reliable source of funding that allows Georgia to invest in today's road maintenance, as well as future transportation investments. Funding from express lanes comes from Georgia and stays in Georgia.

Gross toll revenues are used to fund operations and maintenance of the roadway, as well as to support the payment of any loans and/or bonds used to fund the upfront capital cost of constructing the roadway.

Operation of the pricing aspects of the lanes, including all customer service functions related to the Peach Pass system is managed by the State Road and Tollway Authority (SRTA) and not a private entity.

Transit

Requests were made to enhance transit service along the corridor to help mitigate any traffic delays due to construction.

The State Road and Tollway Authority (SRTA) is presently conducting a study to identify service changes due to the addition of express lanes along the corridor.

Visit the SRTA website here https://www.srta.ga.gov

Why did you choose to build more highway lanes rather than building more transit?

Transit expansion is a necessary part of an entire regional transportation system as are express lanes. Motorists need options for their trips based on how they travel. As Georgia creates a transportation system for the future, areas within the metro Atlanta region will experience growth differently. The SR 400 Express Lanes and MARTA bus rapid transit (BRT) will provide motorists and transit users more reliable trips in areas where rail expansion has not yet occurred. The SR 400 Express Lanes project is being designed to accommodate MARTA's future BRT stations and service. There is currently no programmed project or funding for heavy rail. More information about MARTA's BRT service, visit their project website at: https://www.itsmarta.com/ga400-corridor-overview.aspx.

Additional Comments

Additional comments were received regarding MARTA's existing transit service and their proposed bus rapid transit stations and service. When available, MARTA's responses to these comments will be posted on the SR 400 Express Lanes project website: http://www.dot.ga.gov/DS/GEL/SR400.

To provide additional responses to public comments received, the project website will continue to be updated during the preliminary engineering process and a more refined project concept will be presented at the project's Public Hearing Open Houses (PHOHs) that are proposed to be held in 2020.

To request additional transit related information, please email MARTA at: connect400@itsmarta.com.