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April 19, 2022

Dunwoody City Council
4800 Ashford Dunwoody Road
Atlanta, GA 30338

Dunwoody City Councilmembers:

Thank you for meeting with the Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) on March 23, 2022 regarding some of our projects. We appreciate your feedback and thoughtful questions. What we provided in the meeting as well as those items needing answers are bulleted below.

Immediate Short-Term Issues

City Comment/Question: A Better Solution for Peachtree Industrial Boulevard (PIB) and I-285 Managed Lane Access: Current plans for Top End 285 do not provide direct access from PIB to the I-285 managed lanes. Without direct access, commuters are more likely to avoid this congested interchange by cutting through local streets of the city. There is also a significant operational and safety issue with the additional merging that will be required on this section of I-285 which already suffers from long delays in part due to closely spaced ingress and egress points.

As designed, westbound PIB traffic will have to merge onto I-285 then exit just over a half mile later to access the managed lanes while traffic exiting the managed lanes and entering the westbound collector/distributor lanes are merging along the same stretch of I-285. A similar scenario will occur in the eastbound direction also.

The city encourages GDOT to consider providing a direct transfer between the limited access segment of PIB and I-285.

- Existing general purpose (GP) interchanges are not generally considered for arterial access ramps to and from express lanes (EL) in order to avoid potential operational impacts of combining GP and EL traffic into a single location. GDOT is advancing the NEPA document for the project with the previously planned access points. The Developer will be performing their own assessment of the access points from a traffic and revenue perspective, and may propose additional points for GDOT consideration as part of the procurement process.
- Under the currently proposed build condition, drivers would use the direct merge on I-285 at North Shallowford Road to move from the GP lanes to the EL system in order to reach destinations west of Peachtree Industrial Boulevard, such as the Perimeter area and Cobb County. Essentially, drivers could still use northbound or southbound Peachtree Industrial Boulevard as they do today, merge onto I-285 heading west, and then almost immediately enter the EL system at the direct merge to travel westward

without using local streets. The reverse commute would be similar for drivers traveling northbound or southbound on Peachtree Industrial Boulevard wanting to go in the eastbound direction of I-285.

City Comment/Question: Temporary Construction Signage Issues at I-285 and Georgia 400: While not in the city limits, the signage on I-285 and Georgia 400 has been causing significant confusion for drivers. City Council understands that there are issues with erecting signs during construction; however, the current alignment is not providing clear guidance to drivers in advance so that they can safely get in the correct lane.

Drivers heading westbound that need to access Roswell Road or Georgia 400 are, in some instances, misdirected by the existing signage. This has been brought up previously with GDOT staff and now has made the local news as an issue.

The city requests GDOT to address this issue as quickly as possible.

- Transform 285/400 will implement a new traffic shift in the next two to three weeks where all motorists entering SR 400 will exit at the same point, then split to travel to either northbound or southbound SR 400. This shift will help with the existing challenges, but as construction of the interchange continues the contractor will continue to implement other traffic shifts where signage will be adjusted. Keeping travel lanes open and traffic moving during active construction is challenging, especially regarding signage. GDOT is committed to working to improve signage; however, it's important to recognize changes to signage will continue so we ask motorists to plan ahead and pay attention for updated signage. GDOT will continue to share public communications and maps as broadly as possible to help communicate new traffic patterns.

City Comment/Question: Condition of I-285 During Construction: It is understandable that road resurfacing is being deferred until the end of the interchange project. However, the delays in the project have resulted in a pavement condition on I-285 that is now being perceived to be unsafe to residents.

The city encourages GDOT to regularly review road conditions to prevent potholes and to provide a timeline when I-285 from SR 400 to I-85 will be fully resurfaced.

- As construction progresses on Transform 285/400, GDOT regularly assesses roadway conditions and responds as early as possible. Asphalt pavement patching in select areas has recently been done as part of the project. It's important to note that there is a major GDOT maintenance project coming in 2023 where the roadway will be repaved starting near Ashford Dunwoody Road (just outside the Transform 285/400 project limits) east to the I-285/Peachtree Industrial Boulevard Interchange.

City Comment/Question: Confusing Existing Exit Signage at North Peachtree Road Westbound: The overhead signage for this exit indicates that the two outermost lanes are exit only but they can actually continue on I-285 in the inner lane. According to District 7 staff the

signage is technically acceptable but from the feedback the city has received it does not align with driver's expectations and leads to confusion.

- In response to the lack of sufficient notice given for I-285 ramp closures at Ashford Dunwoody Road in March, Transform 285/400 will begin to issue and email major stakeholders with details of the planned lane closures for the weekend. This notice will be in addition to the regular Traffic Impact Report emails, website postings, D7 announcements or any press releases.
- Transform 285/400 does not include a refresh of striping on Ashford Dunwoody Road at the Diverging Diamond Interchange. The only striping shown in the plans is at the I-285 Westbound entrance ramp intersection.
- As part of the future I-285 Express Lanes construction, all signage will be evaluated as part of the implementation of the express lanes.

Previous GDOT Commitments

City Comment/Question: The new Chamblee Dunwoody Road bridge over I-285 will include a shared-use path.

- The replacement of the Chamblee Dunwoody Road bridge over I-285 is currently included as part of the I-285 Express Lanes scope and will include a shared-use path.

City Comment/Question: There will be aesthetic enhancements to the Chamblee Dunwoody Road bridge through a memorandum of understanding with the city.

- The replacement of the Chamblee Dunwoody Road bridge over I-285 is currently included as part of the I-285 Express Lanes scope and aesthetic treatments to the bridge will be coordinated with the city per previous discussions.

City Comment/Question: The return access bridge from Cotillion to Savoy will be constructed concurrently with the Chamblee Dunwoody Road bridge replacement.

- The replacement of the Chamblee Dunwoody Road bridge over I-285 is currently included as part of the I-285 Express Lanes scope and the commitment for the return access bridge still applies.

City Comment/Question: A shared-use path (minimum 10-foot wide, preferred 12-foot) will be included in the realignment of Cotillion Drive.

- The proposed improvements along Cotillion Drive currently include a 10-foot shared-use path. As the project progress, project team will look for opportunity to widen the sidewalk 12-foot if possible.

City Comment/Question: Plans should allow for future bus rapid transit as envisioned by the I-285 Top End Transit Study.

- GDOT collectively shares a vision with the ATL, MARTA, ARC, Cobb County, Fulton County, and DeKalb County as part of the MOU for transit along the northern half of I-285. Future Express Lanes Transit (ELT) in the form of BRT are not precluded and commitments to advance transit elements will be considered in the developer selection.

City Comment/Question: A return access lane from Savoy to Cotillion will be included at North Peachtree Road.

- The current project scope includes a return access lane at North Peachtree Road.

City Comment/Question: Top End construction will allow for future widening of the Ashford Dunwoody Road bridge and addition of a separate shared use path bridge parallel to Ashford Dunwoody Road.

- The project team has met with the city to work through the details to not preclude the future widening of the Ashford Dunwoody Road bridge or construction of the pedestrian bridge and will continue to coordinate as the city's project progress.

Previous Issues

Managed Lane Access:

City Comment/Question: Including Mount Vernon Road, managed lane access at Georgia 400, while in Sandy Springs, this and the following two items affect Dunwoody traffic.

- Mount Vernon Road access along SR 400 is in the current scope of work for the project and will be included as a proposed access point in the NEPA document. The Developer will be performing their own assessment of the access points from a traffic and revenue perspective and may propose additional points for GDOT consideration as part of the procurement process. In that scenario, GDOT will conduct additional environmental review and public engagement as part of its due diligence evaluation process. GDOT will continue to coordinate with local stakeholders regarding this access.

City Comment/Question: Including Johnson Ferry Road managed lane access at Georgia 400.

- Johnson Ferry Road access along SR 400 to and from the north is currently in the scope of work for the project and will be included as a proposed access point in the NEPA document. The Developer will be performing their own assessment of the access points from a traffic and revenue perspective and may propose additional points for GDOT consideration as part of the procurement process. In that scenario, GDOT will conduct additional environmental review and public engagement as part of its due diligence evaluation process. GDOT will continue to coordinate with local stakeholders regarding this access.

City Comment/Question: Including a managed lane interchange on I-285 between Georgia 400 and the Cumberland CID, as opposed to a direct merge.

- An express lane interchange is not currently in the scope of work for the project in this area. The Developer will be performing their own assessment of the access points from a traffic and revenue perspective and may propose additional points for GDOT consideration as part of the procurement process. In that scenario, GDOT will conduct additional environmental review and public engagement as part of its due diligence evaluation process. GDOT will continue to coordinate with local stakeholders regarding this access.

Path Connections:

City Comment/Question: Including a shared-use path connection at the North Shallowford and North Peachtree underpasses.

- The shared-use path connections at these locations appear to be feasible and will be evaluated further for inclusion into the project.

City Comment/Question: Allowing for a shared-use path in GDOT right-of-way between Chamblee Dunwoody Road and Old Georgetown Trail to connect the city's Georgetown and Perimeter paths. City staff is currently evaluating feasibility.

- GDOT's evaluation of this trail connection has determined it is not feasible to construct within GDOT ROW.

Other:

City Comment/Question: Including bus rapid transit station infrastructure in the managed lane construction process.

- GDOT collectively shares a vision with the ATL, MARTA, ARC, Cobb County, Fulton County, and DeKalb County as part of the MOU for transit along the northern half of I-285. Future Express Lanes Transit (ELT) in the form of BRT are not precluded and commitments to advance transit elements will be considered in the developer selection.

City Comment/Question: Adding sidewalk and pedestrian friendly features on Savoy Drive.

- A 5-foot sidewalk is currently proposed along Savoy Drive.

City Comment/Question: Avoiding right-of-way encroachment at the Madison Square condominiums on Cotillion Drive.

- GDOT has continued to coordinate with the community and plans are currently the same. ROW will be required but will be minimized as much as possible. Access to the community will be maintained.

City Comment/Question: Constructing sound walls as early in the project as practical.

- GDOT will continue to evaluate opportunities where areas within the project limits can receive barriers as early as practical.

City Comment/Question: Working with the Perimeter Community Improvement District and local jurisdictions to incorporate aesthetic treatments on managed land bridges.

- GDOT has and will continue to closely coordinate with the PCIDs and local jurisdictions throughout the project corridor regarding aesthetic treatments.

Again, we appreciate your input and believe the meeting was positive for each of us. Please don't hesitate to reach out if you have further questions or feedback.

Sincerely,



Tim Matthews, P.E., State Express Lanes Administrator

cc: Kevin Abel, State Transportation Board Vice Chairman
Russell R. McMurry, P.E., GDOT Commissioner
Meg Pirkle, P.E., Chief Engineer
Darryl VanMeter, P.E., Alternative Deliver Administrator
Marlo Clowers, P.E., DBIA, PMP, Alternative Delivery Program Manager

To: Commissioner Russell McMurry
Georgia Department of Transportation

Kevin Abel
Vice Chair, State Transportation Board

Meg Pirkle
Chief Engineer

From: Members
Dunwoody City Council

Re: I-285 and Related Issues

Date: 8 March 2022

The Dunwoody City Council has taken time internally to review issues concerning improvements along the I-285 Corridor. The city felt a need to directly communicate these issues to GDOT. The issues are broken into three groups: (a) immediate short-term issues, (b) issues that GDOT has commented on positively in the past, but in areas the city wants confirmation, and (c) newer issues of which GDOT may not be aware of the city's stance.

Immediate Short Term Issues

1. A Better Solution for Peachtree Industrial Boulevard (PIB) and I-285 Managed Lane Access. Current plans for Top End 285 do not provide direct access from PIB to the I-285 managed lanes. Without direct access, commuters are more likely to avoid this congested interchange by cutting through local streets of the city. There is also a significant operational and safety issue with the additional merging that will be required on this section of I-285 which already suffers from long delays in part due to closely spaced ingress and egress points.

As designed, westbound PIB traffic will have to merge onto I-285 then exit just over a ½ mile later to access the managed lanes while traffic exiting the managed lanes and entering the westbound collector/distributor lanes are merging along the same stretch of I-285. A similar scenario will occur in the eastbound direction also.

The city encourages GDOT to consider providing a direct transfer between the limited access segment of PIB and I-285.

2. Temporary Construction Signage Issues at I-285 and Georgia 400 While not in the city limits, the signage on I-285 and Georgia 400 has been causing significant confusion for drivers. City Council understands that there are issues with erecting signs during construction; however, the current alignment is not providing clear guidance to drivers in advance so that they can safely get in the correct lane.

Drivers heading westbound that need to access Roswell Road or Georgia 400 are, in some instances, misdirected by the existing signage. This has been brought up previously with GDOT staff and now has made the local news as an issue.

The city requests GDOT to address this issue as quickly as possible.

3. Condition of I-285 During Construction It is understandable that road resurfacing is being deferred until the end of the interchange project. However, the delays in the project have resulted in a pavement condition on I-285 that is now being perceived to be unsafe to residents.

The city encourages GDOT to regularly review road conditions to prevent potholes and to provide a timeline when I-285 from S.R. 400 to I-85 will be fully resurfaced.

4. Confusing Existing Exit Signage at North Peachtree Road Westbound- The overhead signage for this exit indicates that the two outermost lanes are Exit Only but they can actually continue on I-285 in the inner lane. According to District 7 staff the signage is technically acceptable but from the feedback the city has received it does not align with driver's expectations and leads to confusion.

Previous GDOT Commitments The following areas are ones in which the city understands that there was a previous commitment by GDOT to incorporate in the Top End 285 project, but with recent public comments about changing the financing and development of the project, the city is asking for confirmation that these will still be followed principles.

1. The new Chamblee Dunwoody Road bridge over I-285 will include a shared use path.
2. There will be aesthetic enhancements to the Chamblee Dunwoody Road bridge through a memorandum of understanding with the city.
3. The return access bridge from Cotillion to Savoy will be constructed concurrently with the Chamblee Dunwoody Road bridge replacement.
4. A shared use path (minimum 10-foot wide, preferred 12-foot) will be included in the realignment of Cotillion Dr .
5. Plans should allow for future bus rapid transit as envisioned by the I-285 Top End Transit Study.
6. A return access lane from Savoy to Cotillion will be included at North Peachtree Road.
7. Top End construction will allow for future widening of the Ashford Dunwoody Road bridge and addition of a separate shared use path bridge parallel to Ashford Dunwoody Road.

Previous Issues Raised by Council where GDOT's position is not known. Some of these items have come up in City Council meetings and at the current time, the city does not know where GDOT stands on them based on the new direction of the Top End project.

1. Managed Lane Access:
 - a. Including Mount Vernon Rd managed lane access at Georgia 400, while in Sandy Springs, this and the following two items affect Dunwoody traffic.
 - b. Including Johnson Ferry Road managed lane access at Georgia 400.

- c. Including a managed lane interchange on I-285 between Georgia 400 and the Cumberland CID, as opposed to a direct merge.
2. Path Connections:
 - a. Including a shared use path connection at the North Shallowford and North Peachtree underpasses.
 - b. Allowing for a shared-use path in GDOT right of way between Chamblee Dunwoody Road and Old Georgetown Trail to connect the city's Georgetown and Perimeter paths. City staff is currently evaluating feasibility.
3. Other:
 - a. Including bus rapid transit station infrastructure in the managed lane construction process.
 - b. Adding sidewalk and pedestrian friendly features on Savoy Drive.
 - c. Avoiding right-of-way encroachment at the Madison Square condominiums on Cotillion Drive.
 - d. Constructing sound walls as early in the project as practical.
 - e. Working with the Perimeter Community Improvement District and local jurisdictions to incorporate aesthetic treatments on managed land bridges.

The city is requesting time with you and your staff for a meeting with a delegation of Council Members to discuss these items in detail. This meeting can be coordinated through the Dunwoody city manager's office.