



4800 Ashford Dunwoody Road
 Dunwoody, Georgia 30338
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MEMORANDUM

To: Mayor and City Council

From: Michael Smith, Public Works Director

Date: February 27, 2023

Subject: **Authorization to Provide Local Match Funding to Design Improvements for the Ashford Dunwoody Road Interchange at I-285**

ITEM DESCRIPTION

Authorize the Mayor, City Manager, or designee to execute all documents necessary and proper to provide \$100,000 as local matching funds to the Georgia Department of Transportation to design improvements for the Ashford Dunwoody Road interchange at I-285.

BACKGROUND

In 2016 the city received funding from the Atlanta Regional Commission and the Georgia Transportation Infrastructure Bank for preliminary engineering on the Westside Connector project. The project was conceived to provide a direct connection from the westbound I-285 off ramp at Ashford Dunwoody Road to Perimeter Center Parkway via Goldkist Drive. The purpose of this connection was to reduce traffic congestion and lane change conflicts on Ashford Dunwoody Road between I-285 and Hammond Drive. After the initial conceptual design was developed, the alignment of the proposed connector had to be shifted further out of the I-285 right of way to make room for the Top End managed lanes being planned by the Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT). This shift placed the new alignment in conflict with the approved development plans for the Ravinia parcel adjacent to the off ramp, which significantly increased the cost for the right of way needed for the project.

The City, in partnership with the Perimeter Community Improvement District (PCID), then began to explore other options to improve traffic flow at the Ashford Dunwoody interchange. The recommendation, presented to the City Council in 2022, called for widening the bridge by one lane in each direction and adding a separate, parallel bridge over I-285 for bicycles and pedestrians. The PCID and City presented this recommendation to ARC and GDOT representatives along with a request to fund further advancement of the project.

GDOT has agreed to take ownership of the project and proposes to allocate \$1,000,000 with the PCID and City contributing \$100,000 each as a local match to further advance the project. The City's current capital budget includes \$100,000 for this project (No. SP1-1813).

DETAILS

When the Diverging Diamond interchange was constructed at Ashford Dunwoody Road and I285, it was intended as an interim improvement that would eventually be replaced by a



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complete reconstruction of the interchange. Over the last decade, the DDI has successfully improved traffic flow but excessive delays in the AM and PM peak periods are projected in the next 10 years even when accounting for the new managed lane system planned by GDOT. The proximity of Hammond Drive and the weaving movements between the interchange and Hammond also have a direct impact on the traffic congestion at the interchange. The original Westside Connector project was intended to mitigate these traffic issues by providing a direct connection between the westbound off ramp and Perimeter Center Parkway, thereby diverting a sizable percentage of traffic away from the interchange and Hammond Drive.

When it became evident that the right of way for the Westside Connector would be cost prohibitive, the City and PCID began exploring other alternatives. Eleven different concepts were considered with most being eliminated because they were found to be unfeasible, did not provide a significant traffic improvement, or because they required too much additional right of way.

The recommended concept presented to GDOT involves widening the Ashford Dunwoody Road bridge over I-285 by one lane in each direction to allow for more turning capacity on and off the interstate ramps. The design also includes adding a parallel bridge for non-motorized transportation modes. This alternative is projected to reduce vehicle delay by 22% in the AM peak hour and 11% in the PM peak hour.

RECOMMENDED ACTION

Authorize the Mayor, City Manager, or designee to execute all documents necessary and proper to provide \$100,000 as local matching funds to the Georgia Department of Transportation to design improvements for the Ashford Dunwoody Road interchange at I-285.