



2 PARK PLAZA
ALPHARETTA, GA 30009
PHONE: 678.297.6000
WWW.ALPHARETTA.GA.US

August 27, 2019

Russell R. McMurry
Commissioner
Georgia Department of Transportation
One Peachtree Center
600 Peachtree Street NW
Atlanta, GA 30308

Dear Commissioner McMurry:

Over the past six months the Georgia Department of Transportation has engaged in a public process designed to inform and engage the public regarding concepts for development of a managed lanes program along the GA400 Corridor between the North Springs MARTA station and McFarland Road. We are very much appreciative of those efforts and of the work of Tim Matthews and his team to provide our Mayor, City Council, and staff with a variety of information and data sets necessary to help us understand the project's implications for the residents and businesses comprising the City of Alpharetta.

With 6.59 miles traversing our community and four existing interchanges of the highway within our borders, it would be difficult to overstate the significance of the GA400 Express Lanes Project to Alpharetta. Approximately 41% of the project span is within our community, so the strategic implementation of the project and location of access and merge points along the corridor has major implications for our position as a regional economic and employment center. Beyond that, however, the decisions made in the coming months will set the course for transportation on our local roads, impact land use within our community, and do much to determine the future quality of life for the residents of Alpharetta.

Having now dedicated considerable energy to reviewing the concept plans and related data, the potential impacts to local surface streets and our resident and business community, and the goals and challenges faced by GDOT we respectfully offer the following proposals.

MAYOR
JIM GILVIN

MAYOR PRO TEM
DONALD F. MITCHELL

COUNCIL MEMBERS
JASON BINDER
BEN BURNETT
JOHN HIPES
DAN MERKEL
KAREN RICHARD

CITY ADMINISTRATOR
ROBERT J. REGUS

The changes we are proposing may seem significant. In fact, we agree that if implemented these alternatives to the current concept plan would provide significant benefits in addition to those achieved under the current concept. These include:

- A reduced overall project cost by leveraging previous investments and existing infrastructure;
- Improved connectivity to regional destinations such as North Point Mall, Ameris Bank Amphitheater, and multiple business parks and employment centers;
- Better alignment with short and long-term community transportation and land use plans; and
- Being responsive to concerns raised by local constituents regarding increased commuter traffic on neighborhood collector streets.

GA400 EXPRESS LANES

- **Direct Access Interchange At Encore Parkway**
In lieu of the proposed Webb+ Concept that would require significant right-of-way acquisition and construction of completely new infrastructure, we propose leveraging recent investments made by GDOT, the City and other entities to create a dedicated, direct access interchange at Encore Parkway. Completed in August 2017, the new bridge at Encore Parkway was designed with the expansion of GA400 in mind and could, with relatively minor modification, be configured to be the primary access point to and from the GA400 Express Lanes in Alpharetta. Beyond the aforementioned benefits, leveraging this recent investment could also significantly reduce the time required to deliver a critical component of the Express Lanes Project.
- **Full Direct Merge South Of Windward Parkway**
In lieu of the full direct merge currently proposed for location just south of Haynes Bridge Road, we propose creating it just south of Windward Parkway. This would be in the same approximate location as the currently proposed Webb+ Concept.
- **Sound / Noise Barrier Construction**
While we believe that the construction of sound or noise barriers will be minimal in Alpharetta due to our efforts to protect and undisturbed, vegetative buffer along the corridor, we would appreciate the opportunity to partner with GDOT on any such solutions that are proposed so as to address design elements that are in keeping with Alpharetta's aesthetic standards and environment.

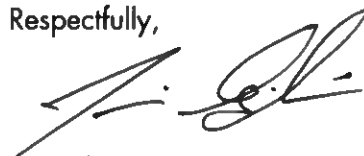
Bus Rapid Transit

- **Bus Rapid Transit At North Point Mall**
 - **Option 1: Dedicated Transit Flyover**
To provide for completely dedicated access to an offline transit node at or adjacent to North Point Mall, we propose that a dedicated transit flyover be constructed. This would replace the currently proposed inline transit stop at this location; resulting in enhanced rider safety and reduced conflicts with vehicles in the Express Lanes as BRT vehicles merge into Express Lane traffic. Further, it is more in keeping with long-standing MARTA strategies and our own community plans as defined in our North Point Livable Centers Initiative (LCI).

- Option 2: Direct Access Interchange At Encore Parkway
As an alternative, we propose leveraging the aforementioned direct access interchange at Encore Parkway to provide access to and from an offline transit node at or adjacent to North Point Mall. In addition to the benefits outlined in Option 1 above, this would provide the ability to leverage existing investments and infrastructure improvements to connect transit riders with surrounding regional destinations and existing MARTA bus service. While this alternative has the potential to present significantly lower cost, it would come at the expense of having to share the access point with surface street vehicles.
- Dedicated Transit Flyover South Of Old Milton Parkway
Our final proposed change would replace the dedicated transit flyover included in the current concept to be just south of Windward Parkway with a dedicated transit flyover just south of State Route 120 / Old Milton Parkway. This location, close in proximity to key destinations like Avalon and the Gwinnett Tech Campus, provides much better regional connectivity due to the ability to connect the resulting transit node to a regional east/west arterial; thus bringing the potential for much higher transit ridership rates than could be achieved through the flyover included in the current concept. Further, given current plans and discussions regarding the potential expansion of State Route 120, a transit node at this location would have far less impact on local surface roads, further improving mobility.
- Flyover And/Or Other Transit Improvements At Windward Parkway Not Precluded
It is the position of the City of Alpharetta that the proposed transit flyover just south of Windward Parkway and/or alterations to the Windward Parkway Interchange should not be part of the GA400 Express Lanes Project and will not be needed in the foreseeable future. While we request that no such investments be constructed at this time, we also request that the project be designed in such a manner so as not to preclude such improvements in the future should conditions so warrant.

The GA400 Express Lanes Project presents an incredible opportunity to improve mobility, enhance quality of life, and propel our region and the communities along the corridor far beyond the lifetimes of anyone currently involved in the project. With that in mind, on behalf of the City of Alpharetta, I respectfully submit the aforementioned proposed changes to GDOT's current concept plans for the project and the related transit components. We are confident that these ideas will advance the project within its current timeline, provide an overall reduction in costs, and result in a project that improves mobility in a manner that best serves our community and the entire region.

Respectfully,



Jim Gilvin
Mayor