



Russell R. McMurry, P.E., Commissioner
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February 27, 2019

Re: Fulton County Schools Community Meetings – Q&A Summary
SR 400 Express Lanes I-285 Top End Express Lanes
PI No. 0001757 PI No. 0001758
Fulton and Forsyth counties, Georgia Cobb, DeKalb, and Fulton counties, Georgia

Mr. Bill Boyajan
Director of Land Management, Capital Programs Department
Fulton County Schools

Mr. Boyajan:

Thank you for your collaboration with the Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) for its presentation of the *MMIP Georgia Express Lanes Overview*, hosted by Fulton County Schools on January 14 and 16, 2019. This letter intends to provide a general summary of public comment and feedback received regarding proposed Major Mobility Investment Program (MMIP) projects adjacent to the school district properties and surrounding communities.

A summary of the public comment is outlined beginning on Page 2 of this document. All public comments from attendees outlined in the document were received in written form using Fulton County Schools provided comment cards. Responses to inquiries received at the meetings are compiled in a spreadsheet attached to the electronic communication of the summary. Responses to the environmental related comments are being held to follow upcoming Public Information Open Houses (PIOHs) for the SR 400 Express Lanes project.

GDOT appreciates comments on the project as part of the stakeholder process and we will keep these comments in mind as the project development process continues. Attendees of the community meetings are encouraged to attend upcoming PIOHs where citizens can speak with subject matter experts on their topics of interest and make official public comment as part of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) public involvement process where responses to comments will be provided as part of the official SR 400 Express Lanes project record.

The SR 400 Express Lanes PIOH schedule is as follows:

- February 28, 2019, from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. and 4:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. at the Hilton Garden Inn Atlanta North/Alpharetta; 4025 Windward Plaza, Alpharetta, GA 30005
- March 5, 2019, from 4:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. at the Forsyth Conference Center at Lanier Technical College; 3410 Ronald Reagan Blvd, Cumming, GA 30041
- March 7, 2019, from 4:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. at the DoubleTree by Hilton Hotel Atlanta - Roswell; 1075 Holcomb Bridge Road, Roswell, GA 30076
- March 12, 2019, from 4:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. at the City Springs; 1 Galambos Way, Sandy Springs, GA 30328

PIOH meetings for the I-285 Top End Express Lanes project are planned for the 4th quarter of 2019.

Please find enclosed a fact sheet with contact details for the SR 400 Express Lanes, I-285 Express Lanes, and Transform 285/400 projects. Thank you again for your support and collaboration.

Sincerely,

Tim Matthews, P.E., Program Manager
Major Mobility Investment Program

**Fulton County Schools Community Meetings
Public Comment Summary – January 14 and 16, 2019**

Overview

Meetings were held with representatives from Fulton County Schools and interested school stakeholders at two Fulton County Schools campuses on January 14 and 16, 2019, at Dunwoody Springs Elementary School and Riverwood International Charter School in Sandy Springs, respectively.

Date	Location	Time	Attendance (est.)
1/14/2019	Dunwoody Springs Elementary School (DSES)	6:30 p.m. to 8 p.m.	90
1/16/2019	Riverwood International Charter School (RICS)	6:30 p.m. to 8 p.m.	150

Table 1: Meeting Details

A total of 38 written comments were received at each meeting, resulting in a total of 76 comments received. The majority of the comments at both meetings did not state if they were commenting on the SR 400 Express Lanes project or the I-285 Top End Express Lanes project (see *Table 2* below, n (1/14/19 meeting) = 25 and n (1/16/19 meeting) = 19 for a total of n (combined over both meetings) = 44).

Project	Total	1/14/19 at DSES	1/16/19 at RICS
SR 400 Express Lanes	9	7	2
I-285 Top End Express Lanes	17	2	15
Both	6	4	2
Not Stated	44	25	19
Total	76	38	38

Table 2: Number of comments referencing a specific project per meeting

Table 3 displays the count of times a certain theme was mentioned among the 76 comments reviewed. If one comment mentioned multiple themes it was counted once per theme mentioned. For example, if a comment mentioned both noise and traffic – it counted towards both totals in the table below.

Theme	Total	1/14/19 at DSES	1/16/19 at RICS
Noise	25	19	6
Impacts to Students	17	8	9
Project Design	16	5	11
Right-of-Way (ROW) Acquisition	15	9	6
Future Communications	10	2	8
MARTA Expansion/Connection	10	5	5
Traffic	9	5	4
Property Values	5	2	3
Fees/Revenue (Express Lanes)	5	3	2
Trees/Green Space	3	3	0
Benefits Northern Communities	3	2	1
Funding Source	3	0	3
Air Quality	3	1	2
School Buses (Access)	3	3	0
Construction Timing	2	2	0

Table 3: Comment themes per meeting

Fulton County Schools Community Meetings Public Comment Summary – January 14 and 16, 2019

Themes Represented in 15+ Comments

The most common comment for both meetings combined referenced concerns about **noise impacts** from the project and questions surrounding the noise abatement measures being considered (i.e., sound barriers). Concerns were both for students as well as for residents in the surrounding neighborhoods. The next most common comment element was **impacts to students**, including from noise, localized air pollution, and safety/security and the cascading impact to their learning experiences and their health. It was brought up that the connection between projects and local schools and students should be studied more and that the project team doesn't seem to be specifically addressing this.

There were questions about the **project design** including if there is a minimum distance from schools required for GDOT projects. There were also a number of comments referencing the **right-of-way (ROW) acquisition** process, including questions about which properties are being taken, how the price is determined, when it will start, if there is an appeal process in place, and generally how the ROW process works with GDOT.

Themes Represented in 10-15 Comments

There were also comments referencing the **MARTA** connections and expansions northward. These were related to if the express lanes would connect into MARTA stations and if this project is affecting the anticipated northward expansion of MARTA. Concerns were also raised that MARTA did not appear to be a part of the MMIP planning. Looping into the next theme mentioned, it was brought up that the revenue from the fees should be going toward MARTA funding.

There were comments on **future communications** from the project team/GDOT regarding if there will be any permanent fixtures on project updates and drawings available at locations like city halls or libraries. One comment referenced the timing of the PIOHs conflicting with work schedules, therefore needing project information outside of those events.

Themes Represented in 5-10 Comments

Some concerns were raised regarding the impact to **property values** as a result of these projects including the impacts of increased localized traffic, noise, and the visibility of the highway from various neighborhoods. Comments surrounding concerns about increased **traffic** centered on continued congestion of the local roadways/neighborhoods surrounding the highways, as well as questions about the traffic studies completed for the project.

There were also comments about the **fee/revenue** system associated with the express lanes, asking about the payback of the revenue to the project's build and what will be done with revenue after the project is paid back. There were also comments on who would be allowed to use the express lanes at a reduced or free cost (i.e., school buses, Uber/Lyft, zero-emission vehicles).

Themes Represented in 1-4 Comments

Green space and trees were referenced in comments as a wish for less tree removal and the inclusion of green space in the design to benefit local residents. There were also comments expressing opinions that the **northern communities** and commuters benefit more from this project than the local residents in the project area.

Some comments raised concerns about **air quality** and how that could impact schools and neighborhoods in the area. There was a question about if **school buses** were allowed in express lanes. Two commenters asked about the **construction timing** and if it would conflict with school times. Lastly, three commenters referenced the **funding** source being federal or not.