



Russell R. McMurry, P.E., Commissioner
One Georgia Center
600 West Peachtree NW
Atlanta, GA 30308
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March 5, 2019

Thank you for attending the Public Information Open House for the proposed operational improvements to the Interstate 20 (I-20) Interchange at Panola Road, PI Number 0002868. Our goal is two-fold: 1) to provide you with information on the proposed project and 2) to provide an opportunity for you to give us your comments on the proposed project. In this handout package, you will find a description of the project, a location map, and a comment card.

As you enter the room, please look at the project display. Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) representatives, wearing nametags, are available to discuss the project and answer your questions. There will be no formal presentation.

We hope you will take the opportunity to tell the GDOT what you think about the proposed project. Listed below are several ways to comment on the project. Your comments are important to us and, should you provide comments by one of the methods noted below, we will respond to you in writing usually within 30 days of the close of the comment period. All comments will become part of the project's official record.

While you are attending the open house, you can provide your comments today by filling out the comment card provided with this handout and dropping it in the comment box, or you may choose to provide your verbal comments to the court reporter who will transcribe your comments.

You can also provide your comments by **Tuesday, March 19, 2019** by using either of the following methods:

- Online at www.dot.ga.gov/PS/Public/PublicOutreach.
 1. From the menu, select the county in which the proposed project is located and click *Go*;
 2. Then select *Diverging Diamond Interchange Panola Road at I-20*;
 3. Lastly, click *Comment* and follow the instructions to leave your comments.
- Mail in your comment card to Mr. Eric Duff, Georgia Department of Transportation, 600 West Peachtree Street NW, 16th Floor, Atlanta, Georgia 30308.

The project displays and plans will be available for review for ten days after this open house at the website noted above. Hardcopies will also be available at the GDOT District 7 Area 3 Office located at 5025 New Peachtree Road, Chamblee, GA 30341. Following the ten-day public comment period, a copy of all comments received will be available by request at the Atlanta address listed above.

Again, thank you for attending this open house. If you should have any questions or need additional information, feel free to contact the project manager, Perry J. Black, at 404-631-1224, or the environmental analyst, Elliott Robertson, NEPA planner, at 404-631-1190, of the Office of Environmental Services.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'Eric Duff' with a stylized flourish at the end.

Eric Duff
State Environmental Administrator
Georgia Department of Transportation

Why We Are Here: We are here to show you a revised concept for reconstructing the Panola Road/Interstate 20 (I-20) Interchange and to receive your feedback. In 2013 a PIOH was held which showed two concepts for widening and replacing the existing bridge over I-20, both of which would have put into place a new standard diamond interchange with greater capacity. Today's concept would replace the bridge with a new, wider one—creating a much more efficient diverging diamond interchange (DDI). A DDI is a diamond interchange in which the two directions of traffic cross to the opposite side of the road on both sides of the bridge. The “cross-over” sections typically are traffic-light intersections. A number of DDIs are already functioning in metro Atlanta, and the advantages they offer are fairly straightforward such as increasing the capacity of turning movements onto and off of interstate ramps. Another advantage of a DDI configuration is that it reduces the number of conflict points that could cause car crashes. The attached figure illustrates the directional flow of traffic for the proposed DDI.

Purpose and Need: The traffic congestion at the Panola Road/I-20 Interchange is high and is projected to become worse in the future. The GDOT uses Level-of-Service (LOS) as a qualitative measure to relate the quality of traffic service that a roadway segment provides. LOS ranges from LOS A which represents free flowing traffic at the posted speed limit, to LOS F which represents a road experiencing heavy congestion. LOS B, LOS C, and LOS D represent the increase of congestion respectively. The I-20 ramp termini at Panola Road currently operate at LOS D. Without improvement, the I-20 ramp termini is projected to operate at LOS E by the year 2030.

Safety is also a concern: crash data shows that of the crashes that occurred between the years 2005 through 2009, more than 80 percent were rear-end or angle crashes, which are typically attributed to congestion and lack of physical separation between two directions of travel. Panola Road currently does not have access control in the interchange area, and there are multiple commercial driveways within close proximity to the I-20 ramps. The lack of access control contributes to congestion and increased turning movements in this area. Lastly, the interchange and its approaches lack adequate pedestrian facilities. Only one sidewalk is located on the road over the I-20 bridge (west side) due to the width of the bridge. Contributing to pedestrian activity in the project area is a Georgia Regional Transportation Authority (GRTA) park-and-ride lot located at the southwest quadrant of the interchange.

A cost benefit analysis was completed for the interchange and four alternatives were considered, as well as a no-build alternative. The alternatives reviewed ranged from a conventional diamond interchange (Alternative 1), a DDI where the existing bridge was left intact (Alternative 2), a DDI where the bridge was replaced with a wider one (Alternative 3), and a contra-flow lefts interchange (Alternative 4). The analysis determined that out of the four considered alternatives the DDI with replacing the bridge with a wider one (Alternative 3) provided the optimal traffic improvements not only now but in the future. Alternative 3 also allows for safe pedestrian access and would accommodate the future I-20 expansion. The proposed project would alleviate traffic congestion by improving the operation of the interchange, reduce crash frequency at the interchange, and promote pedestrian use along Panola Road.

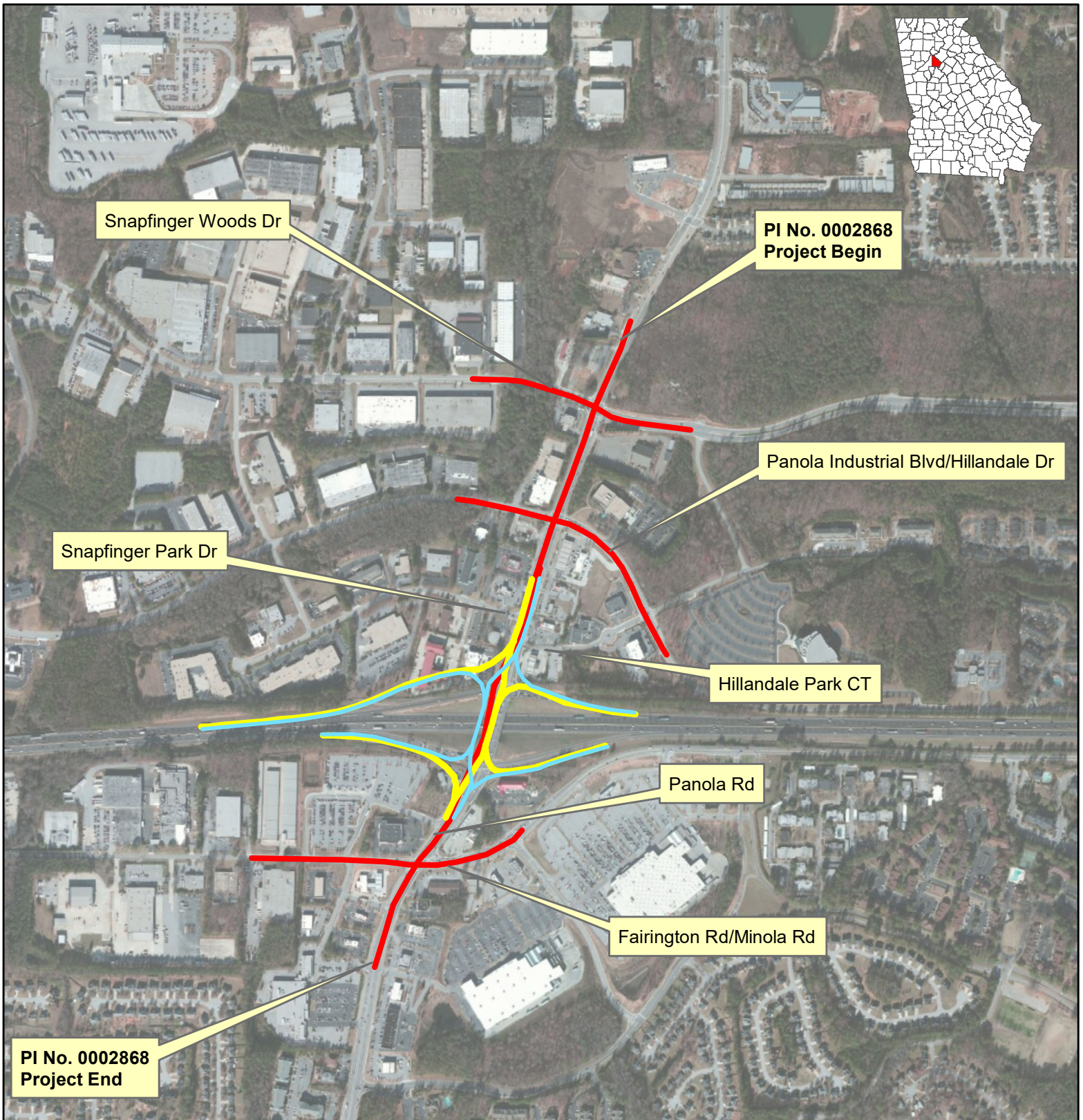
Project Description: Panola Road serves as a major north-south corridor in DeKalb County, providing important access to I-20. A variety of proposed improvements have been presented to the public in the past. PIOHs were held in 2006, 2013, and 2016. Project PI 002868 was originally a part of a much larger group of five GDOT projects that would increase capacity and improve operations along Panola Road from Snapfinger Road/State Route (SR) 155 to just north of Covington Highway/SR 12. While these projects may move forward, the immediate need for improvements at the Panola Road/I-20 interchange and the need to modify the interchange to allow for the future I-20 expansion has necessitated this project being separated from the others.

The project limits for PI 0002868 extend from Fairington Road to Snapfinger Woods Drive—focusing solely on improvements to the I-20/Panola Road interchange. The proposed project would convert the more traditional existing interchange to a DDI. The proposed project would:

- Increase the total number of lanes from 7 to 12 across the bridge. At the I-20 interchange bridge, Panola Road consists of seven lanes: two through lanes in each direction, two northbound left-turn lanes onto I-20 westbound, and one southbound left-turn lane onto I-20 eastbound. The proposed typical section at the interchange bridge would consist of six, 12-foot wide lanes, with two through lanes, and one exclusive left-turn lane in each direction separated by a 10-foot wide (minimum) raised median.;
- Improve pedestrian access across the bridge because the center median would be used as a shared bicycle and pedestrian path for travel through the interchange;
- Replace the bridge with a new one that is approximately 45 feet wider;
- Adjust the typical section of Panola Road approach in either direction from a four-lane road with a two-way left turn lane at the center to four to five lanes (two to three through lanes northbound and two through lanes southbound). Additionally, southbound travel lanes would require a separate 12-foot wide right turn lane and 12-foot wide double left-turn lanes at the Fairington Road/Minola Road intersection. The northbound travel would require 12-foot wide double left-turn lanes and a separate 12-foot wide right-turn lane at the Panola Industrial Boulevard/Hillandale Drive intersection.
- Instead of the two-way left turn lane in the center, there would be a variable 8 to 34-foot wide raised center median, 4-foot wide bike lanes, and a 12-foot wide urban shoulder with 5-foot wide sidewalks on both sides of the road.

Beyond converting the interchange to a DDI, the project would make a number of associated and complimentary improvements to the interchange and to the two Panola Road approaches to the interchange. The improvements would include:

- Realigning the existing Snapfinger Woods Drive to the southern approach of the intersection with Panola Road, thereby improving the through movement.
- Closing the Hillandale Park Court and Snapfinger Park Drive intersections with Panola Road and turning them into cul-de-sacs. This allows for reduced access/conflict points near the interchange.
- Constructing a two-lane (one lane in each direction) access road between Snapfinger Park Drive and Panola Industrial Boulevard, allowing for access to the businesses on Snapfinger Park Drive.



Service Layer Credits: Source: Esri, DigitalGlobe, GeoEye, Earthstar Geographics, CNES/Airbus DS, USDA, USGS, AeroGRID, IGN, and the GIS User Community

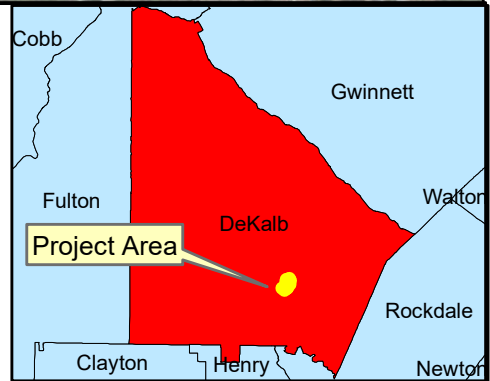
PI No. 0002868
 Panola Road at I-20 from
 Fairington Road to Snapfinger Woods Drive
 DeKalb County, Georgia

Figure 1. Project Location Map

Legend

- Project Location
- DDI Northbound Flow
- DDI Southbound Flow

0 500 1,000 2,000 Feet



Comment Card

Please print responses.

Name _____

Address _____

Do you support the project? (check your response)

- For**
- Against**
- Conditional**
- Uncommitted**

General Comments _____

How did you hear about this Open House? (check) **Newspaper** **Signs** **GDOT Website** **Radio**

Word of Mouth **Social Media** **Other** _____

Was the location of the Open House convenient for you to attend? **Yes** **No**

If no, please suggest a general location that is more convenient to your community.

Was the time of the meeting convenient for you to attend? **Yes** **No**

If no, please suggest a time frame that is more convenient for you. _____

Were your questions answered by GDOT personnel? **Yes** **No**

Do you understand the project after attending this meeting? **Yes** **No**

Please share your suggestions on improving the ways GDOT conducts Open Houses:

Mail to:
 Mr. Eric Duff, State Environmental Administrator
 Georgia Department of Transportation
 600 West Peachtree Street, NW – 16th Floor
 Atlanta, Georgia 30308