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February 16, 2006

Thank you for attending the public hearing open house for projects MSL-0003-00(168) and MSL-0004-00(86), P.I. Numbers 0003168 and 0004086, the proposed State Route 316 High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) lane and interchange improvement projects located from just west of Breckinridge Boulevard to just west of Cedars Road in Gwinnett County, Georgia. Total project length is approximately 8.5 miles. In this handout package you will find a need and purpose statement, project description, summary of environmental studies, location map, right-of-way acquisition statement, and comment card.

As you enter the room, you will notice displays of the proposed project. Department of Transportation (DOT) representatives, who can be identified by the name tags they are wearing, are available to discuss the project and answer your questions. Please take this opportunity to discuss the project with a DOT representative. There will be no formal presentation.

A court reporter will be available for those persons who would like to make a verbal statement about the project. You may also complete a comment card and deposit it into the box provided here or send in written comments about the project until March 2, 2006. Written comments should be sent to Mr. Harvey D. Keeper, State Environmental/Location Engineer, Georgia Department of Transportation, 3993 Aviation Circle, Atlanta, Georgia 30336-1593. Comments can also be made via the web at www.dot.state.ga.us. Click on **Public Outreach** from the list of Featured Links. All comments will be made a part of the project record. We hope you will take advantage of one of these opportunities to let the Department know your view of the proposal.

The displays and plans will be available for review for ten days after the public hearing open house at the Georgia Department of Transportation District One Office located at located at 2505 Athens Highway S.E., Gainesville, Georgia 30507 as well as on the Georgia DOT Public Outreach website. A copy of all comments received will be available for public review at the Office of Environment/Location, 3993 Aviation Circle, Atlanta, Georgia 30336 as soon as compilation is completed.

Again, thank you for attending this public hearing open house and for giving us your comments.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Buddy Gratton".

Buddy Gratton, P.E.
Director of Preconstruction

BG/ss

Attachments

**State Route 316 High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) Improvements
Projects MSL-0003-00(168) and MSL-0004-00(86)
P.I. Numbers 0003168 and 0004086**

NEED AND PURPOSE

The purpose of the proposed project is to provide realistic travel time savings that would encourage commuters to make use of alternative modes of transportation such as car pools and van pools; thus, encouraging the use of High Occupancy Vehicles (HOV) and the HOV system. The proposed HOV lanes would provide a safe, less congested and reliable transportation alternative through this portion of the State Route (SR) 316 corridor. Vehicles allowed to utilize the HOV lanes would include automobiles with two or more passengers, van pools, buses, and motorcycles.

The growth in traffic congestion in the Atlanta metropolitan area over the past three decades has been well documented. In the past twenty years, Gwinnett County has made a dramatic transition from a rural agrarian county to a suburban county of the City of Atlanta. According to the Gwinnett County Planning Department, in the next ten years portions of the county will undergo a transition from suburban to urban centers. According to the Gwinnett County 2004 Land Use Map, the SR 316 corridor is currently comprised of light industry, commercial, and low and medium density residential. As the County's Comprehensive Plan states, *As Gwinnett County continues to grow, appropriate land use regulations have become an essential tool to maintain a quality of life which provides a positive sense of place, vibrant centers of activity, permanent greenspace and a strong economy; while minimizing the traffic and gridlock which are so detrimental to this quality of life.*

Efforts to minimize the traffic and gridlock have included many major additions and improvements to the area's arterial streets, freeways, future land use plans, and local transit. In 1973, the Atlanta Regional Commission, in cooperation with the affected local governments, the Metropolitan Atlanta Rapid Transit Authority (MARTA), and the Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT), began a comprehensive planning process designed to develop a long-range guide for regional growth and development. In 1975, the Commission adopted a guide for growth, known as the Regional Development Plan (RDP). Extensive detailed analysis and evaluation of the transportation element of the RDP resulted in the preparation of the Regional Transportation Plan (RTP), which indicated that a system of arterial and collector roads would be needed to complement the major transit facilities of the Atlanta region.

Today, this program of major facility construction is reaching the point where additional projects carry increasing economic, social, and environmental costs. This situation has been addressed in two major Legislative acts ~ the Clean Air Act Amendment of 1990 and the Intermodal Surface Transportation and Efficiency Act (ISTEA) of 1991, reauthorized as the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21) in 1998 and as the Safe, Accountable, Flexible and Efficient Transportation Equity Act-A Legacy for Users (SAFTEA-LU) in August 2005. These legislative acts encourage and prescribe

more efficient use of existing transportation systems in order to both improve the air quality and to provide an effective transportation system. One of the major strategies promoted by these acts is to increase the vehicle occupancy rate. The creation of HOV lanes in major commuter corridors is an effective means to promote and encourage higher occupancy rates in metro areas. The HOV lanes would reduce traffic congestion by encouraging commuters to rideshare, thus reducing energy consumption, improving air quality, reducing total person travel time, and improving the efficiency of public transit operations and the reliability of transit services which would induce a shift in the use of alternate transportation modes. High Occupancy Vehicle lanes would provide commuters with a viable choice for their commute.

The construction of HOV lanes and interchanges would provide mobility and relief from congestion for HOV users, particularly during the peak hours. During peak traffic hours, auto occupancy rates tend to be higher overall, and the origins and destinations of trips are more concentrated toward work destinations, lending themselves to ride sharing and transit usage. High occupancy vehicle lanes would be utilized most frequently. As stated previously this would reduce energy consumption, improve air quality, reduce total person travel time, and improve the efficiency of public transit operations and the reliability of transit services.

PROJECT DESCRIPTIONS

Proposed project MSL-0003-00(168) would begin approximately 2,200 feet west of Breckinridge Boulevard where it would tie-in with the proposed concurrent HOV lanes entering SR 316 from the interchange reconstruction project at SR 316 and I-85 (Project Number HPP-IM-85-2(146), P.I. Number 110530). Proposed project MSL-0003-00(168) would end just prior to the intersection of SR 316 and Cedars Road. Total project length is approximately 8.5 miles.

State Route 316 is currently a four-lane divided facility with a 40-foot depressed median from the beginning of the project to just west of Collins Hill Road. The median widens to 64-feet from just west of Collins Hill Road to the end of the project corridor. All travel lanes are 12-feet wide, inside shoulder slopes are 8:1 and 2-foot wide (paved), outside shoulders are 12-feet wide (paved) with slopes varying from 6:1 to 2:1 (with guardrail). From the beginning of the project to SR 120/Duluth Road, SR 316 is a limited access facility with existing interchanges at Sugarloaf Boulevard, Riverside Drive and SR 120/Duluth Road. East of SR 120/Duluth Road, there are only signalized at-grade intersections with access points provided for developed and undeveloped commercial driveway openings.

The proposed project would reconstruct SR 316 to accommodate the construction of one barrier separated HOV lane in each direction and allow for HOV only access points throughout the project corridor. The HOV lanes would be constructed within the existing median along SR 316. No additional SOV lanes would be added as a result of this project. The proposed typical section for these improvements would include the construction of a 2.5-foot wide median barrier to be placed on the project centerline to

separate the eastbound and westbound HOV lanes. Two 12-foot wide HOV lanes would be constructed, one in each direction, with 4-foot wide inside shoulders and 10-foot wide outside shoulders. A second 2.5-foot barrier would be placed between the HOV lanes and the 14-foot inside shoulder of SR 316.

Improvements necessary to accommodate the HOV lanes include the construction of a new grade-separated interchange at the existing intersection of Collins Hill Road and SR 316 and new HOV only interchanges on SR 316 at Herrington Road, Lawrenceville-Suwanee Road (west side ramps only), Walther Boulevard, and Hi-Hope Road (west side ramps only).

In order to accommodate the addition of the new interchanges, new interchange bridges would be necessary at Herrington Road, Lawrenceville-Suwanee Road, Walther Boulevard, and Hi-Hope Road. Additionally, new bridges are necessary at SR 120/Duluth Road and SR 316 over the Yellow River, and the existing bridge over the gas line easement west of Collins Hill Road would be widened. All new bridges would be designed in such a manner as to not preclude future identified improvements to the corridor.

In addition to the HOV only interchanges to be constructed at Herrington Road, Walther Boulevard and Hi-Hope Road, an additional access point would be provided in the vicinity of Sugarloaf Parkway as a direct merge from the HOV lane westbound to the SOV westbound. This would provide an opportunity for HOV users to exit to I- 85 north or to access the proposed Collector Distributor (C-D) Road between Old Peachtree Road and Pleasant Hill Road that is being constructed as part of the Interstate 85/SR 316 interchange construction project.

Proposed project MSL-0004-00(86) would construct a new grade-separated interchange at SR 20/Buford Road. New collector-distributor roads would be constructed between Collins Hill Road and SR 20/Buford Road to facilitate operational efficiency. The collector distributor roads are needed due to the close proximity of these interchanges to one another. The SOV traffic traveling eastbound on SR 316 would exit prior to Collins Hill Road to reach Collins Hill Road and SR 20/Buford Road. A ramp has been provided underneath Collins Hill Road so that vehicles traveling to SR 20/Buford Road would not have to pass through the signalized intersection at Collins Hill Road. The SOV traffic traveling westbound on SR 316, would exit prior to SR 20/Buford Road to reach SR 20/Buford Road or Collins Hill Road. The Collins Hill Road ramp is a loop ramp on the north side of SR 316.

The collector-distributor roads between Collins Hill Road and SR 20 would include two 12-foot travel lanes with 10-foot paved inside shoulder and 10-foot paved outside shoulders. Separation between SR 316 and the inside collector-distributor lane is approximately 58 feet; however, it varies at the bridge openings and ramp transitions.

Interchange ramps for both projects would consist of one to two lane sections with 12-foot to 16-foot travel lanes, 6-foot inside shoulders (4-feet being paved), 8-foot outside

shoulders (6-feet being paved), and side ditches. Some ramps open to 4 lanes at the side street intersection.

Affected side streets in both projects would consist of 12-foot travel lanes in both directions. The number of lanes would vary. All shoulders will include curb / gutter and sidewalks, and vary from 12-feet to 16-feet wide.

All businesses which now have direct access to SR 316 would be accommodated through access roads provided from Collins Hill Road and SR 20/Buford Road. A new connection would be provided to the Arrington-Blount Ford dealership on the southwest corner of Collins Hill Road and SR 316.

Existing intersections at SR 316 at Hosea Road and Progress Center Avenue would be closed. These roadways are still provided access between SR 20, Hi-Hope Road, or Cedars Road.

SUMMARY OF ENVIRONMENTAL STUDIES

In compliance with the 1969 National Environmental Policy Act, the Georgia Department of Transportation has conducted an assessment of the social, economic and environmental effects for the proposed SR 316 HOV and Interchange Improvements Projects. The following information gives a summary of the environmental document:

Approximately 0 residential units and 8 commercial businesses would be displaced by the proposed project.

In accordance with Executive Order 11990, the proposed project was surveyed for wetland and waters of the U.S. involvement. Eleven wetlands and 6 sediment detention ponds were identified in the project area. A total of approximately 2.60 acre of permanent and 3.05 acre of temporary impacts would occur to wetlands as a result of project construction. Twenty-seven streams were identified within the project corridor. A total of approximately 3950.0 linear feet of stream would be temporarily impacted and approximately 4072.5 linear feet of stream would be permanently impacted as a result of project construction.

In accordance with Executive Order 11988, the proposed project was surveyed for floodplain involvement. Portions of the proposed project are located within the regulatory floodway and the 100-year floodplain; however, the project would be designed in such a way as to have no significant encroachment on these floodplains; it would not represent a significant risk to life or property; it would not support incompatible floodplain development; and it would not interrupt or terminate a transportation facility which is needed for emergency vehicles or provides a community's only evacuation route. Coordination with the Federal Emergency Management Agency would take place prior to project construction due to the projects encroachment with the regulatory floodway.

The project would not have an adverse effect on water quality within the project corridor.

A U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Section 404 Individual Permit would be required for this project.

The proposed project would not exceed state and federal air quality standards, and it is consistent with the State Implementation Plan for the attainment of clean air quality in the state.

The construction of this project would result in a -1.4 to 7.5 decibel increase in traffic generated noise by the design year, and 26 residential units would approach or exceed the noise abatement criteria. Noise abatement measures in the form of a structural barrier were identified for 24 residential units at the Herrington Mill Apartment Complex. The proposed barrier locations are shown on the attached project location map.

In compliance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, the project has been surveyed for existing and eligible National Register properties. A total of five archaeological sites were found to be located within the project's area of potential environmental effect. None are considered eligible for inclusion in the National Register. A total of three historic resources were found to be located within the project's area of potential environmental effect. One of these resources, the Thompson House located at 1556 Herrington Road is considered eligible for inclusion in the National Register. A finding of No Adverse Effect has been established for the Thompson House. The State Historic Preservation Office concurs with this finding.

The proposed project would not affect any threatened or endangered plant or wildlife species, as none are located in or adjacent to the project area.

The project would not involve any farmland as defined in the Farmland Protection Policy Act, 7 CFR Part 658, due to no response being received from the Natural Resources Conservation Service in conjunction to the AD-1006 (Farmland Conversion Impact Rating) forms, project description and location map submitted for their review.

The proposed project has been surveyed for potential sites where contaminated soil and/or water from leaking underground storage tanks (UST) may exist. Four commercial properties containing UST sites were identified within the proposed right-of-way of the project. Subsurface testing will be conducted to determine if any contaminants are leaking into the soil. If contaminants are found, avoidance alternates may be considered, or applicable laws and regulations concerning the removal of toxic or hazardous material will be followed and the removal coordinated with the Environmental Protection Division.

Right-Of-Way Acquisition
Projects MSL-0003-00(168) and MSL-0004-00(86)
Gwinnett County

The Georgia Department of Transportation has the responsibility once a project is approved, of appraising, purchasing property and, if required, assisting individuals, families or businesses in relocating. When purchasing property, we desire to pay full market value for the necessary property. This value will be established by using qualified real estate appraisers who will prepare, for the Department's use, written appraisals using actual sales data in the surrounding community.

In making an appraisal, the appraiser will contact each property owner and arrange a convenient time to make an on-site inspection of the property with him or her. After completion of the appraisal, our right-of-way appraisal staff will review and field check the findings for accuracy to ensure that all things relating to value have been considered in establishing the amount to be offered. When only a part of the property is needed, we will purchase that part plus pay for loss of value, if any, to the remaining property. In all cases, when the Department purchases property, we will make additional payments to property owners for the cost of transferring ownership to the Georgia Department of Transportation. These costs generally include transfer taxes, deed-recording fees, mortgage pre-payment penalties and the pro-rata share of city or county taxes.

The Department is aware of the problems experienced by individuals, families, businesses, and nonprofit organizations when they are required to move. It is our commitment that no family or individual will be required to relocate until comparable decent, safe and sanitary housing is available or is provided for those occupants.

Additionally, the Department will provide assistance to businesses and nonprofit organizations in relocating to other sites and will encourage them to remain in the community.

The information pamphlet "What Happens When Your Property is Needed for a Transportation Facility" is available at the entrance, and this booklet outlines the services offered and any payments for which you may be eligible, such as moving expenses and replacement housing benefits for owners and tenants. The brochure also outlines the eligibility requirements for receiving these payments.

Results of the field inspection by Department of Transportation Personnel have revealed that there will be 0 residences and 8 businesses that will be required to relocate.

It is important to remember that the Department is committed to the fact that no one will be required to relocate until housing is available, or, if there is no housing available, until provisions have been made by the Department to provide housing. It is also important to remember that all displacees will be given sufficient advance notice of the Department's intention to purchase any property in order to allow sufficient time in which to relocate.

The Department of Transportation District One office, located in Gainesville, Georgia, telephone (770) 532-5500 will be in charge of acquiring the necessary right-of-way for this project.

Georgia Department of Transportation

State Route 316 High Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) Improvements

PROJECTS MSL-0003-00(168) and MSL-0004-00(86)

P.I. NUMBERS 0003168 and 0004086

Gwinnett County, Georgia

Please print responses.

Name _____

Address _____

Do you support the project? *For* *Against* *Conditional* *Uncommitted*

Comments

How did you hear about this meeting? *Radio* *Newspaper* *Sign* *Word of Mouth*

Was the location of the meeting 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 the DOT personnel? *Yes* *No*

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

Please share your suggestions on improving the way Georgia DOT conducts public meetings?

Mail To:

*Mr. Harvey D. Keepler, State Environmental/Location Engineer
Georgia Department of Transportation
3993 Aviation Circle
Atlanta, GA 30336-1593*

