



September 9, 2016

Ms. Catherine Spillman
675 Norfleet Road
Atlanta, Georgia 30305

Re: Responses to Open House Comments for PI#(s): 0007174, Fulton County, SR 3 @ Peachtree Creek
Project Number: CSBRG-0007-00(174)

Dear Ms. Catherine Spillman;

Thank you for your comments concerning the proposed project referenced above. We appreciate your participation and all of the input that was received as a result of the *March 1, 2016 Public Information Open House*. Every written comment received and verbal comment given to the court reporter will be made part of the project's official record.

A total of **162** people attended the open house. Of the **160** respondents who formally commented, **106** were in **support** of the project, **5** were **opposed**, **0** were **uncommitted**, and **33** expressed **conditional support**. An additional 15 respondents either commented on proposed detour routes or provided general input on traffic concerns in the area without commenting directly on whether or not they supported or opposed the SR 3 at Peachtree Creek bridge replacement project.

Of those who supported the project **96 supported** an off-site detour, **29 supported** the eastern on-site detour option and **5 were uncommitted**.

The attendees of the open house and those persons sending in comments within the comment period raised the following questions and concerns. The Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) has prepared this one response letter that addresses all comments received so that everyone can be aware of the concerns raised and the responses given. Please find the comments summarized below (in *italics*) followed by our response.

- *"The off-site detour makes the most sense as the construction length is the shortest and the cost is the least."*

GDOT thanks you for your comment. The off-site detour is indeed the least costly option, and includes the shortest proposed construction time. For this reason, and based on the results of the public comment process, GDOT will move forward in design with the off-site detour option. As design is refined, and as plans evolve, GDOT will hold a second Public Information Open House to explain the detour in greater detail and to take additional public input.

- *Several comments focused on the height of the bridge:*
 - *"Raising the height of the proposed bridge may increase flooding in an area already prone to it. Please ensure the proposed bridge adequately addresses the flooding problem."*
 - *"The elevation of the proposed bridge should be kept as close as possible to its current height to prevent future flooding of nearby residences."*

Additional drainage structures have been added to the proposed project to capture run-off on the roadway. Raising the height of the bridge also allows the proposed project to meet all flood requirements for Peachtree Creek, to help minimize possible future flood damage.

- *“The proposed bridge should take into account a future widening of Northside Drive to four lanes.”*

There are no current plans to widen Northside Drive. In addition, any widening efforts for Northside Drive are outside the scope of this project, which is to replace the structurally deficient bridge on Northside Drive over Peachtree Creek.

- *“Neighborhood side roads should be reopened after construction – there should be no permanent road closures as a result of the proposed project.”*

Closing neighborhood street access to Northside Drive permanently is not part of the scope of this project. Temporary closures may occur during construction, but these would be short in duration and would not occur without first notifying the surrounding neighborhoods.

- *“The proposed project should do as much as possible to ensure the design minimizes environmental damage to surrounding parks and trees.”*

Our design team will continue to investigate measures to minimize and mitigate impacts to surrounding properties throughout the design process. In addition, a City of Atlanta arborist has visited the project site and has done a full inventory of existing trees. Environmental studies are on-going, and any impacts will be mitigated as a part of the environmental document approval process (NEPA).

- *“Construction should be limited to the summer months so as to lessen the impact of the road closure.”*

The project’s proposed compressed construction schedule would start during the summer months, but the overall duration means that it would extend beyond the summer. Starting construction during the summer allows the community to adjust to the detour during lower traffic periods.

- *“City, State and County officials should be coordinating at all times to ensure the proposed project is successful.”*

Stakeholder meetings, including state, county, city and local officials, have been taking place for over a year, and will continue throughout the duration of the project. Specific stakeholders include Atlanta Public Schools, Atlanta City Councilwoman Yolanda Adrean, State Representative Barry Loudermilk, and local emergency services.

- *Several comments referred to the Public Involvement Open House (PIOH) and include the following:*
 - *Should consider presenting at the Neighborhood Planning Unit meeting*
 - *There should be an oral presentation and time for participants to ask questions*
 - *Needed more advanced notice*
 - *Explanation of detour was vague*
 - *Meeting and display were well planned.*

The GDOT appreciates all comments received regarding the PIOH. We strive to make our outreach efforts as accessible, informative, and inclusive as possible. Your comments will help us in framing all of our future outreach efforts on this and other projects.

- *“The ongoing construction on Northside Drive is already an added stress for area residents and has taken too long.”*

The current construction in the area is the result of a joint City of Atlanta/GDOT project. The City of Atlanta’s Northside Drive Water Transmission Main Replacement project seeks to better the area’s water infrastructure and is ongoing. For questions and concerns about this project, please contact the project’s Public Information Officer Lillian Govous at lgovous@atlantaga.gov.

In conjunction with that ongoing project, GDOT is removing the existing reversible lane on Northside Drive and is replacing it with a two-way turn lane. The expected completion of this project is summer 2017. For questions and concerns about this project, please contact the Project Manager, Sam Allen at saallen@dot.ga.gov.

- Several comments were concerned about the cut-through traffic during construction:
 - *“An off-site detour would cause too much cut-through traffic in the neighborhoods between Northside Drive and Howell Mill Road. The surrounding neighborhoods request strict enforcement of any potential off-site detour routes.”*
 - *“Closing Northside Drive is not a viable option. The surrounding neighborhoods have not been designed to handle the level of cut-through traffic that that would cause.”*

The official GDOT signed detour route will be exclusively on state routes (see the attached proposed detour map). Traffic enforcement on local roads is the purview of the City of Atlanta. All questions or comments on local road access should be forwarded to the City of Atlanta, Public Works Department through their website at <http://www.atl311.com/>.

- *“A pedestrian underpass beneath the proposed new bridge is needed to help connect surrounding neighborhoods.”*

A pedestrian underpass is not currently part of the scope of the proposed project. The currently proposed multi-use path and crosswalk at Sagamore and Northside Drives provide pedestrian access to local parks and the neighborhood. Further elevation of the bridge profile to accommodate a pedestrian underpass would likely increase direct impacts to the local residents and historic district.

- *“Why is the proposed construction time so lengthy? The proposed 4 year and 6-9 month options are too long for the traffic in the area to be disrupted.”*

The proposed construction time includes roadway and bridge construction, as well as the necessary time to relocate utilities (a significant part of this project). In addition, the four-year option also includes the time to construct and remove the temporary bridge. For the proposed six-to-nine month option, all utilities would be removed from the bridge in advance in an effort to shorten construction time.

- *“The proposed detour time needs to be as short as possible – the traffic in the area has already been disturbed for some time by the on-going construction along Northside Drive.”*

GDOT will make every effort to ensure that the proposed construction is as non-disruptive to the surrounding communities as possible. Additionally, in an effort to save time and money, the project will be expedited as much as possible.

- *“The current bridge is unsafe for pedestrians and cyclists – the proposed bridge should prioritize safety of those pedestrians in the neighborhood who use the bridge to access the local school, parks and recreation areas.”*

Safety is GDOT’s number one concern in designing all proposed projects. As such, the scope of the proposed bridge replacement includes pedestrian enhancements along both sides of Northside Drive over Peachtree Creek. This helps ensure pedestrian safety while crossing the creek and makes the bridge safer for all users. In addition, a bike lane is proposed to be added to the west side of the proposed bridge. A multi-use path is also proposed as a part of this project in an effort to increase neighborhood connectivity and pedestrian access.

- *“The current bridge is old and dangerous and in desperate need of replacement or repair. Please expedite the project as much as possible.”*

GDOT thanks you for your comment and will make every effort to ensure that the structurally deficient bridge is replaced in a timely manner.

- *“The proposed design of the bridge needs to conform aesthetically to the surrounding neighborhood.”*

As part of the environmental commitment to mitigate the impacts of the proposed project to the historic district, aesthetic design elements are being considered. Aesthetic considerations will be made in conjunction with representatives of the Neighborhood Planning Unit (NPU).

- *Archaeological resources found during construction should be turned over to GDOT archaeologists.*

Existing archaeological records have been reviewed for the surrounding area. As part of the environmental evaluation process, GDOT archaeologists will survey the project limits and if artifacts are found, they will be identified and curated at the University of West Georgia.

Again, thank you for your comments. Should you have further questions, comments or concerns, please call the project manager, Sam Allen, at (404) 631-1552 or the environmental analyst, Andrew Cobb, at 404-631-1255.

Sincerely,



Eric Duff
State Environmental Administrator

ED/RO/ZNA/AC

cc: Sam Allen, GDOT Project Manager (via email)
PDF for Project File; Hardcopy to General Files