



PIOH #2 Summary Report
SR 20 Improvements from Canton to Cumming
(PI Nos. 0002862, 0003681, 0003682)

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Definitions of Acronyms

Agency Coordination Plan	ACP
Citizen's Advisory Committee	CAC
Environmental Impact Statement	EIS
Environmental Justice	EJ
Executive Order	EO
Federal Highway Administration	FHWA
Georgia Department of Transportation	GDOT
Interstate	I
National Environmental Policy Act	NEPA
Public Involvement Plan	PIP
Public Information Open House	PIOH
State Route	SR
Technical Advisory Committee	TAC
U.S. Department of Transportation	USDOT

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This Public Information Open House (PIOH) #2 Summary Report provides an overview of the activities undertaken by the Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) to gather public input in the development of the Screen 1 for alternatives for the State Route (SR) 20 Improvements project between the cities of Canton and Cumming, Georgia. This report summarizes the public outreach efforts, including two PIOHs that were held on December 10, 2013 and December 12, 2013. Public notification of the PIOHs utilized newspaper articles and radio stations, press releases and advertisements in local and regional media outlets, social media, and extended across population demographics. The outcome of these efforts resulted in a total of 532 people (273 in Cumming and 259 in Ball Ground) attending the PIOHs. The comments received from this phase of public involvement activities included overall support for the project need and a variety of supported solutions to meet that need.

A total of 6,707 visits to the MetroQuest survey website were made. Of the 1,997 respondents who submitted a comment as of January 13, 2014, the distribution was as follows:

- 158 paper comment forms,
- 28 court reporter comments,
- 16 letters,
- 36 email comments,
- 1 petition, and
- 1,767 visitors left feedback via the MetroQuest website, which includes 241 visitors who left written comments via the MetroQuest website.

The comment forms indicated the following level of support for the project: 47 in favor, 27 opposed, 71 conditional, and 3 uncommitted. Several individuals submitted multiple comments, which accounts for a difference in the number of respondents and total number of responses received. Many visitors to the PIOHs and MetroQuest website provided map-based input or survey data on areas of concern or community facilities, which are counted toward the 'feedback' category in the bullets above. Written comments via MetroQuest are those in which typed comments were provided. All input received during and after the formal comment period has been added to a database of locally important areas to help the project team better understand the issues and guide their development of solutions. All comments received will be part of the official public record. All respondents have been included in the project contacts database.

This report also describes the results of public involvement activities and proposed future public engagement efforts.

2.0 PROJECT AND SCOPING PROCESS INTRODUCTION

2.1 Proposal Overview and Context

The GDOT is sponsoring the preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) to identify potential improvements to the SR 20 corridor, between the cities of Canton and Cumming, Georgia.

The SR 20 Improvements study area extends for approximately 24 miles, between Interstate (I)-575 in Canton and SR 400 in Cumming, as shown in Figure 2.1. From west to east, jurisdictions along the corridor include the city of Canton; unincorporated communities of Buffington, Macedonia, Orange, and Free Home in Cherokee County; as well as the unincorporated community of Ducktown and the city of Cumming in Forsyth County. Existing land uses along the corridor include a mix of suburban and exurban uses including low density residential, strip commercial, and agricultural. Residents and the commuting public experience congestion, limited mobility, and safety issues along this heavily traveled corridor as outlined in the project Need and Purpose, which can be found on the project website at: <http://www.dot.ga.gov/BS/Projects/I575SR400> under the **Project Information** section. The SR 20 Improvements project is conducting engineering and environmental studies to evaluate reasonable range of alternatives to relieve congestion, improve mobility, and reduce crashes along SR 20 between Canton and Cumming.

Figure 2.1: Corridor Overview Map



2.2 Purpose of Public Outreach Activities

The GDOT hosted two PIOHs to present to the public the results from the Scoping Meetings and to present the Phase 1 alternatives analysis screening, which is the first draft of alternatives for them to consider and provide input.



Materials for the PIOH included a virtual PIOH, displays, boards, Welcome Packet (including comment form) can be found at: <http://www.dot.ga.gov/BS/Projects/1575SR400> under the **PIOH (December 2013)** section.

3.0 PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

The following section outlines the public involvement opportunities and ways in which the public involvement opportunities were advertised. The public involvement efforts consisted of two PIOHs, several kiosk events (staffed and unstaffed), project website (including a virtual PIOH), and MetroQuest, a web-based interactive survey. Efforts made to notify the public about these opportunities to learn about the project and provide comment included the following:

- Newspaper advertisements
- Press releases and articles in the media
- PIOH notification flyers (English and Spanish)
- Newsletter (English and Spanish)
- PIOH notification signs
- Kiosk events (staffed and unstaffed)
- Internet tools (e.g., project website, MetroQuest survey website, and social media)

Due to the length of the study corridor, these PIOH events were strategically located along the corridor at locations close to SR 20 and one was held in each of Cherokee and Forsyth counties. This was done to minimize travel distances for citizens along the study area. The meetings were held at these times and locations:

December 10, 2013	December 12, 2013
Calvary Baptist Church	Otwell Middle School
Ball Ground, GA	Cumming, GA
5-7 pm	5-7 pm

3.1 Public Notification

The PIOHs were widely publicized in an effort to encourage public participation. The public notification process started in late-November and continued through early-December as per GDOT policy.

3.1.1 Newspaper Advertisements

Advertisements were placed in the county legal organs, *Cherokee Tribune* and *Forsyth County News*, as well as the Spanish-language newspaper, *Mundo Hispánico*, consistent with GDOT policy of 3 weeks and 1 week prior to the meeting dates. These were published on 11/20/13 and 12/4/13 in the *Cherokee Tribune* and *Forsyth County News*, and in *Mundo Hispánico* on 11/28/13 and 12/5/13. The printed advertisement is provided in Appendix A: Newspaper Ads/Tear sheets.

3.1.2 Press Releases and Articles in the Media

Press releases were distributed to the GDOT District 1 and 6 media lists, including more than 100 media outlets in the North Metro Atlanta area on November 22nd and December 2nd, 2013. A copy of the press is provided in Appendix B: Press Release. These media distribution efforts resulted in 12 articles published in local and metro-Atlanta news outlets between November 2013 and January 2014. A list of media articles throughout the scoping period, both before and after the PIOHs, are compiled in Appendix C: Media Articles. Ten of the articles preceded the PIOHs, serving as additional notices of the upcoming opportunities for public input, and most were

published in print or on-line newspapers. Several of the articles reported the activities at the PIOHs and prompted on-line comments.

3.1.3 PIOH Notification Flyers and Newsletters

A PIOH notification flyer and project newsletter, including promotion of the upcoming open houses, were developed in both English and Spanish and distributed to the project database by mail and email, as well as being available on the project website. The newsletter also provided information about the draft alternatives. The project database included more than 875 addresses, including residences, businesses, more than 30 social service organizations and religious organizations, neighborhood associations, and elected officials. The database was developed through previous Scoping meeting public involvement efforts as well as the Citizens Advisory Committee. Newsletters were also sent to various public locations (see Section 4.0, *Environmental Justice* below). Elected officials in Cherokee and Forsyth Counties were notified directly via formal letter. Additionally, PIOH notification flyers were sent to environmental justice populations (see Section 4.0, *Environmental Justice* below).

Since the time of the flyer and newsletter distribution, the project database has grown with the addition of contacts acquired during the project development. All interested parties who request information or expressed interest in the project are included in this database. English and Spanish copies of the flyer and newsletter are provided in Appendix D: Project Flyer (English and Spanish) and Newsletter.

3.1.4 PIOH Notification Signs

A total of 40 PIOH Notification Signs were placed along the corridor on November 25 and 26, 2013. The signs included the location, date, and time of the PIOH meetings to be held. The signs also stated that the same information would be presented at both meetings. The signs were placed at approaches to major intersections in and around the corridor.

3.2 Outreach Activities

3.2.1 Public Information Open Houses

Two PIOH events were held within the project corridor. The first was in Ball Ground on December 10 and the second was held in Cumming on December 12. Both events presented the same material. Directional signs along the corridor were placed near the locations on the day of the events to assist in notifying the public of the meetings. The PIOHs consisted of a number of stations with display boards around the room as well as high resolution project mapping.

Upon entering the open house, participants were greeted and encouraged to place a sticker on where they live and where they work in order to gain a better idea of how residents use SR 20. The entire study area (from just west of I-575 to just east of SR 400, including a 1,000-foot buffer along SR 20) was displayed on roll plots at the open houses.

Other boards displayed around the room showcased the study area map, project history/timeline, the Need and Purpose, project schedule, the EIS process, traffic projections, the Alternatives Analysis process, and potential alternatives. Participants were given the opportunity to talk to the project team and provide feedback directly on

the informational display boards either by writing on the plots or through sticking 'post-it' notes directly onto the boards.

The interactive stations provided for participants included: a comment/response station, where participants could fill out and submit their comment form and survey; and a portable web-based MetroQuest survey iPad station, where participants were able to complete an electronic survey.

3.2.2 Informational Kiosk Events

Unstaffed kiosks with materials in both English and Spanish were placed at the Cherokee and Forsyth County Administrative Buildings and Chambers of Commerce in Cumming and Canton. These events were intended to reach out to people who may not otherwise attend a public meeting. The kiosks provided some basic information about the project, announced the PIOHs, and held copies of the newsletter for distribution to the public. Kiosks were in place for 1 week leading up to the PIOHs. Approximately 43 English newsletters and 11 Spanish newsletters were distributed in this manner. In addition, staffed kiosk events were held to reach out to low-income and minority populations (see Section 4.0, *Environmental Justice* below).

3.2.3 Internet Tools

Internet tools for the project and the PIOH meetings included a Project website, MetroQuest interactive web-based survey, and social media.

3.2.3.1 Project Website

The project website is directly linked to the GDOT web pages and includes project information such as, the Public Involvement Plan (PIP), the Agency Coordination Plan (ACP), Scoping Booklet, a virtual PIOH, and scans of the materials presented at the PIOH. It is found at: <http://www.dot.ga.gov/BS/Projects/I575SR400>. The virtual PIOH is a web-based video providing a walk-through of the PIOH as if the viewer had been able to attend the actual PIOH. The website provides the contact information for the GDOT project manager as well as an email address to make inquiries.

3.2.3.2 MetroQuest Website

A MetroQuest engagement website was created to reach out to individuals who might not otherwise attend a public meeting. An announcement of the MetroQuest website was emailed out to the project database. The MetroQuest website (<http://sr20.metroquest.com/>) serves an interactive web-based survey tool that provides project background information and solicits input on the corridor needs. Comments can be provided in text-based format and there is ability to provide map-based comments. Additionally, inquiries were made to the Chambers of Commerce in each county to let their memberships know about the site. The MetroQuest website had more than 6,700 visitors to the site, with more than 1,700 visitors providing input, including 241 visitors who provided written comments.

3.2.3.3 Social Media

To ensure social media messaging supported the goals of the Public Involvement Plan, a social media content calendar was created to support upcoming events, PIOHs, and MetroQuest. This schedule provided post- and tweet-specific text which was disseminated using GDOT's project-specific Facebook and Twitter pages between December 3rd and 13th,

2013. The calendar is attached in Appendix E: Social Media Calendar. In addition to the dates noted on the calendar, an additional Facebook reminder was sent on December 19th thanking participants for attending the meetings and that comments can be taken on the project website.

3.3 Comment Opportunities

A variety of methods were available for the public to provide a formal comment and be part of the project record, including the following:

- fill out a formal comment on the comment form provided at the PIOHs (158 paper comment cards received);
- visit the SR20 MetroQuest website (as linked from the project website), fill out a web-based interactive survey, and leave comments (241 written comments received);
- provide verbal comments at PIOHs, which were transcribed by a court reporter (28 comments received);
- call the GDOT project manager as indicated on the flyer and project web card; and,
- submit a letter/email/call to GDOT (16 letters and 36 emails received by GDOT)

The PIOH comment form is found in Appendix F: PIOH Comment Form. In addition, comments received after the 1/13/14 formal comment period are included as part of the project record, but not as part of this PIOH #2 summary. Verbal comments informally provided by talking with project staff at the PIOHs or kiosks have been useful in informing overall project knowledge and understanding; however, these are not considered a 'formal' comment. Formal comments are included in Appendix G: PIOH Comments.

The results of the comments received during the PIOHs are summarized in Sections 5 and 6.

4.0 ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE OUTREACH

4.1 Introduction

Analysis of Environmental Justice (EJ) in relation to transportation projects funded by the federal government has been mandated by Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), Federal-aid Highway Act of 1970 (23 United States Code 109(h)), Executive Order (EO) 12898 (1994), U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT) Order 5610.2(a) Final DOT Environmental Justice Order (2012), Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) Order 6640.23A Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-Income Populations (2012), and FHWA's Guidance on Environmental Justice and NEPA (2011). Specifically, EO 12898, Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-Income Populations, requires Federal agencies to achieve environmental justice by identifying and addressing disproportionately high and adverse human health or environmental effects, including the interrelated social and economic effects of their programs, policies, and activities on minority and low-income populations in the U.S. Pursuant to FHWA Order 6640.23A, if the data demonstrate that there may be a disproportionately high and adverse human health or environmental effects to a minority or low-income population, then efforts must be proposed to avoid, minimize and/or mitigate the disproportionately high and adverse human health or environmental effects. Given the potential for the proposed project to affect low-income and minority populations activities geared toward reaching out to these populations were made.

4.2 Outreach Efforts

4.2.1 Translations

Due to an initial data review of 2010 census data, it was identified that Spanish-speaking populations may be present along the corridor and efforts to reach these groups was conducted. To ensure materials were made available to the Spanish-speaking population, the following materials were translated into Spanish:

- Project flyer and newsletter
- Welcome packet for public meetings
- Comment Form
- Press Release

4.2.2 Citizen's Advisory Committee

The Citizen's Advisory Committee (CAC) meeting was held in advance of the PIOHs. Members of the CAC include individuals who represent low-income and minority populations. CAC members were encouraged to share the project meeting details and meeting content with individuals they represent.

4.2.3 Social Service and Religious Organizations

In an effort to ensure outreach to EJ populations, a project database of social service and religious organizations that provide services to low-income and minority populations was developed. Additionally, 15 copies of both the Spanish and English newsletters were distributed to each of the following locations:

1. La Zacatecana	104 Pirkle Ferry Rd, Cumming, GA 30040
2. Aguilera Mexican Food Store	1535 Atlanta Hwy, Cumming, GA 30040
3. Cumming Forsyth Chamber of Commerce	212 Kelly Mill Rd. / Cumming, GA 30040
4. Cumming First UMC	770 Canton Highway; Cumming, GA
5. Church of the Good Shepherd	3740 Holtzclaw Road, Cumming, GA 30041
6. St. Brendan The Navigator	4633 Shiloh Road, Cumming, GA 30
7. Place of Forsyth County	2550 The Place Circle, Cumming, GA 30040
8. Ninth District Opportunity, Inc.	133 Samaritan Dr. Ste. 202, Cumming, GA 30040
9. Meals By Grace	6755 Majors Road, Cumming, GA 30040
10. Secure Economic Empowerment Development	133 Samaritan Drive, Cumming, GA 30040
11. Good Shepherd Place	198 N Corners Pkwy, Cumming, GA 30040
12. Summit Crossing Apartments	3920 Ivy Summit Ct, Cumming, GA 30040
13. Evergreen at Aubrey's Landing	3305 Hutchinson Road, Cumming, GA 30040
14. Willows of Cumming	225 Nancy Road, Cumming, GA 30040
15. Cumming City Hall	100 Main Street, Cumming GA 30040
16. Forsyth County Govt. Bldg.	110 Main Street, Cumming, GA 30040
17. Canton Hispanic Seventh Day Adventist	462 Scott Road, Canton, GA
18. Centro Mi Familia	2745 Marietta HWY, Suite 300, Canton, GA 30114
19. Emanuel Assemblée De Dios	1461 Reinhardt College Pkwy. Canton, GA 30114
20. Iglesia De Dios Jesus En El Senor	2178 Marietta Hwy. , Canton, GA 30114
21. Iglesias Pentecostal El-Faro MMM	385 Crisler Street, Canton, GA 30114
22. St Paul AME	390 Crisler Street, Canton, GA
23. Allen Temple AME	232 Arnold Mill Road, Woodstock, GA
24. North Georgia Community Action	3049 Marietta Hwy. St 120h, Canton, GA 30114
25. Timothy's Cupboard	566 Arnold Mill Road, Woodstock, GA
26. Canton Hispanic Seventh Day Adventist	462 Scott Road, Canton, GA
27. Canton City Hall	115 Elizabeth Street, Canton, GA
28. Cherokee County Govt.	1130 Bluffs Parkway, Canton, GA

4.2.4 Direct Mail

Another effort to reach minority populations included the purchase of a mailing list of 1,800 addresses where the residents identified themselves as Spanish speaking and earning a household income of less than \$50,000 per year. A double-sided copy of the PIOH flyer, one side in Spanish and one side in English, was mailed to each of the households in the database.

4.2.5 Kiosk Events

Finally, a full day of staffed kiosks was held during the PIOH comment period to spread the word about the project to individuals not likely to attend a public meeting and to encourage those individuals to submit comments about the project. Staffed kiosks were held on Saturday, January 4th, 2014 at the following locations:

- Habitat for Humanity Re-Store in Canton, Georgia
- Supermercado in Canton, Georgia
- Post Road Library in Cumming, Georgia
- La Zacatecana in Cumming, Georgia



These staffed kiosk events were selected to reach out to low-income and minority populations, who may frequent the Habitat for Humanity Re-Store and library. Specifically, the potential to reach Spanish speaking communities was met during outreach to the Spanish markets identified above. At the staffed kiosk events, staff and interpreters spoke to approximately 42 individuals, of whom about 75% of whom were Hispanic. Thirty-seven (37) newsletters were distributed to these individuals. Few questions were received, and the kiosk events primarily served as an opportunity for educating the individuals about the project. While a few individuals stated the project had been around a long time and wanted to know when something would be built, most of the people were unaware of the project.

During the unstaffed kiosk events, as mentioned above in Section 3.2.2, approximately 43 newsletters in English and 11 in Spanish were distributed.

4.2.6 Tribal Partners

The Muscogee (Creek) tribal partners were invited to attend the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) #2 and provided materials for evaluation. Other tribal partners have either declined participation or not responded to requests. Details of the tribal coordination are outlined in the Agency Coordination Plan.

5.0 SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

5.1 Comments

A total of 6,707 visits to the MetroQuest survey website were made. Of the 1,997 respondents who submitted a formal comment as of January 13, 2014, the distribution was as follows:

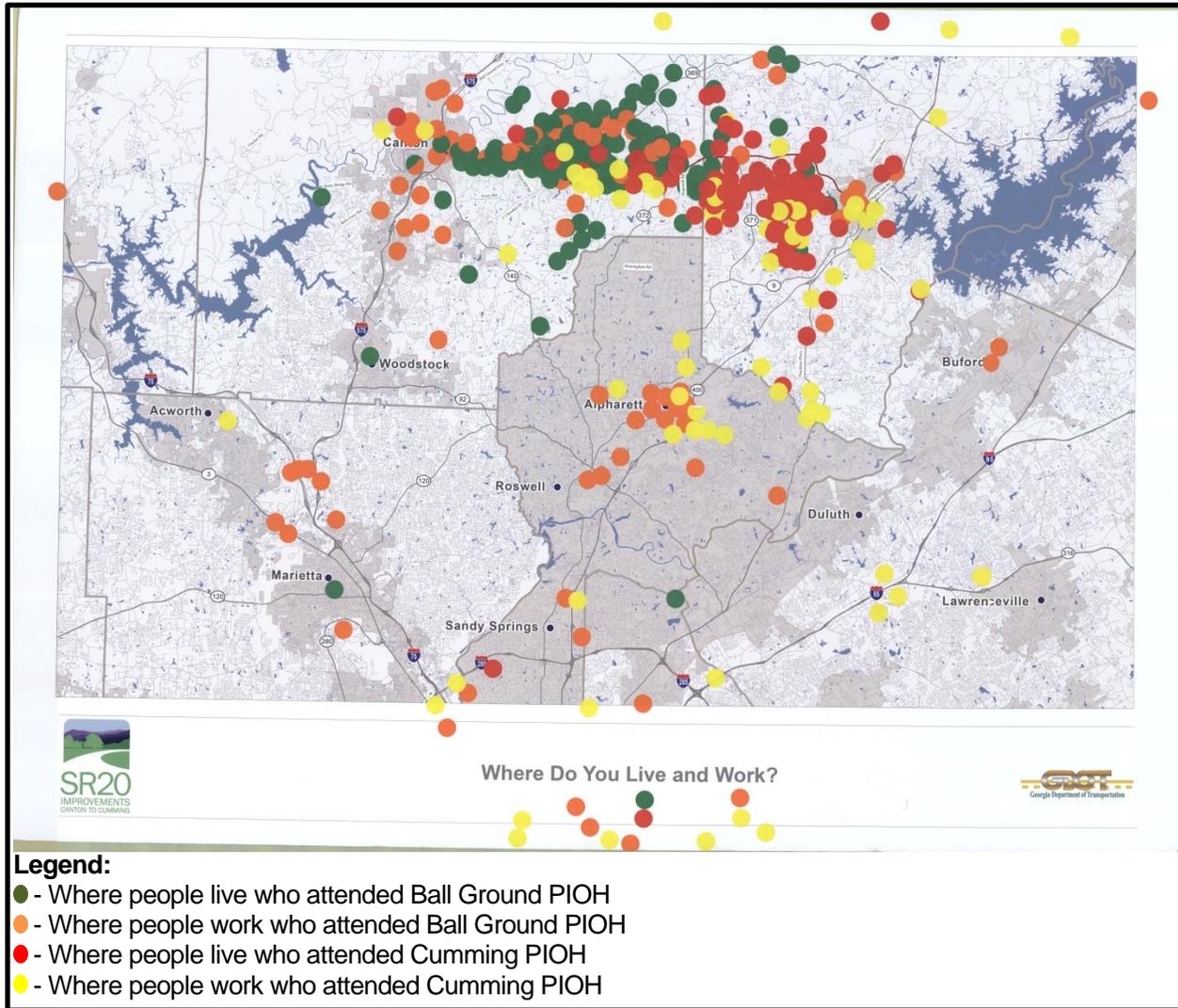
- 158 paper comment forms,
- 28 court reporter comments,
- 16 letters,
- 36 email comments,
- 1 petition, and
- 1,767 visitors left feedback via the MetroQuest website, which includes 241 visitors who left written comments via the MetroQuest website.

The comment forms indicated the following level of support for the project: 47 in favor, 27 opposed, 71 conditional, and 3 uncommitted. A total of 480 written comment forms were submitted; while 1,526 responses were submitted via MetroQuest that included preference data. Several individuals submitted multiple comments, which accounts for a difference in the number of respondents and total number of responses received. Many visitors to the PIOHs and MetroQuest website provided map-based input or survey data on areas of concern or community facilities, which are counted toward the 'feedback' category in the bullets above. Written comments via MetroQuest are those in which typed comments were provided. All input received during and after the formal comment period has been added to a database of locally important areas to help the project team better understand the issues and guide their development of solutions. All comments received will be part of the official public record. All respondents have been included in the project contacts database.

5.2 Attendees

The location range of where PIOH attendees live and work is indicated in Figure 5.1. Similar to the attendee who participated during the Scoping meetings, the Live/Work Dot Map indicated that a substantial number of participants are corridor residents and that most people also work in the vicinity of SR 20. Distribution of the dots also suggests that PIOH participants originated from all portions in the vicinity of the project corridor that the PIOHs were well-attended by local stakeholders. The Live/Work Dot Map demonstrates that the locations of the public meetings were successful in reaching residents and people affected by the project throughout the corridor.

Figure 5.1: Live/Work Dot Map



6.0 PIOH RESULTS

6.1 Stations

Following a series of informational boards and the project displays, meeting participants were provided the opportunity to comment on the project alternatives. The most-frequent comments are provided below:

- There is need for a project
- Widening SR 20 will result in the fewest impacts to neighborhoods
- Avoid neighborhood impacts (e.g., the Shoals at Arbor Hills, south of SR 20 Ducktown bypass alternatives)
- If a new location highway is selected, it would affect fewer people
- Safety is a top concern
- Preserve the rural/community

6.2 Roll Plots

Two roll plots of the entire corridor were on display at the open houses. Participants were invited to review the maps and indicate areas of concern. These concerns were written onto post-its and stuck to the maps in the vicinity of the issues.

6.3 PIOH Comment Forms and MetroQuest Feedback

Finally, participants were provided with a comment form and an opportunity to take the MetroQuest web-based survey to provide input on SR 20 alternatives (see Appendix F: PIOH Comment Form). Feedback from the comment forms was gathered and reviewed. The comment forms and MetroQuest forms were the same which allowed for data to be compiled. Overall, by using the MetroQuest survey tool, large numbers of respondents provided feedback and substantial community input was received. A copy of the comments is provided in Appendix G: PIOH Comments.

Following Screen 1: Fatal Flaw Strategy Screen (found on the project website at: <http://www.dot.ga.gov/BS/Projects/I575SR400>), several strategies were identified to be evaluated by the public and recommended for further analysis. These include: a transportation system management approach, widen existing roadway, new location, widen existing/partial new location, and widen existing/rerouting/partial rerouting. The results were presented at the PIOH. Public input was solicited on the Screen 1: Fatal Flaw Strategy Screen.

The comment form specifically solicited public preference for alignments: a northern new location freeway, a southern new location freeway, widening SR 20, and a combination of widening with short-new location bypasses around congested areas with multiple resources in Buffington, Macedonia, Lathemtown, Ducktown, and Cumming.

Participants were asked to provide their ranking for this project on the PIOH and MetroQuest survey forms which allowed for detailed quantitative and qualitative input to be provided by respondents. Input was collected on comment forms or through the MetroQuest website. The following preference data were obtained:

1. Overall Alternatives
2. Buffington Alternatives



- 3. Macedonia Alternatives
- 4. Lathetown Alternatives
- 5. Ducktown Alternatives
- 6. Cumming Alternatives
- 7. Bike Lanes
- 8. Facility Type
- 9. Median Type
- 10. Sidewalk Treatment

On all the graphics, results are shown from the PIOH comment forms received at the meeting, mailed in, or emailed and received via MetroQuest. MetroQuest data is shown on the darker color, while the lighter color shows data from the PIOH comment forms; the text in bold over each column is the total number of responses received.

For the alternatives, responders were asked to evaluate their preference for an alternative by selecting a number (1-5) to indicate how much they disliked (1) or liked (5) each alternative. For the purposes of the analysis below, values of 1 and 2 were considered “Dislike” and values of 4 and 5 were considered “Like”; a score of 3 was considered neutral. Most responders had strong opinions about the alternatives, indicated by the high number of responses received for values 1 and 5 and the lower number of responses received for values 2, 3, and 4.

Respondents had the choice to provide input on any portion of the comment form; therefore, some areas along the corridor received more input than others. The overall alignments, Ducktown and Cumming areas received the greatest amount of input.

6.3.1 Overall Alignments

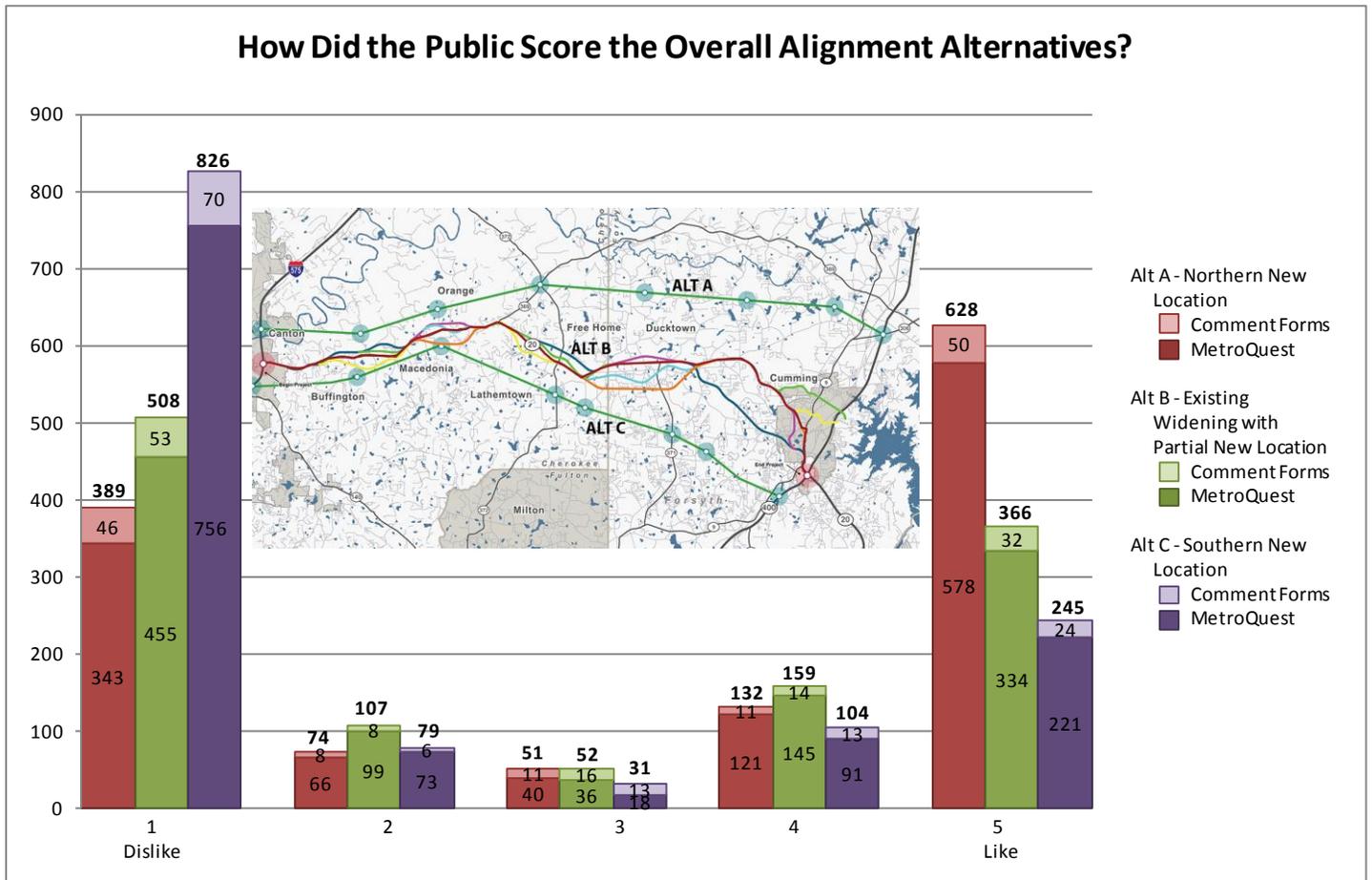
The Overall Alternatives question on the comment form and MetroQuest website was developed to distinguish public opinion about the potential for two new location alternatives versus the widening of existing SR 20 with partial new location alternatives. Alternative A is a new location facility to the north of existing SR 20 and Alternative C is a new location facility to the south of existing SR 20. Alternative B differs from Alternatives A and C, in that it is a widening of existing SR 20 with the option to go on shorter new location bypasses around areas that are constrained by narrow existing right-of-way, numerous businesses and residences, historic resources, and other environmental concerns. The intention of this grouping of alternatives was to determine the public’s opinion on either building a new location facility or widen along existing SR 20. Table 6.1, Evaluation of the Overall Alignment Alternatives, provides the number of responses to the Overall Alternatives and Figure 6.1, How Did the Public Score the Overall Alignment Alternatives?

Table 6.1 Evaluation of the Overall Alignment Alternatives

Alternative	Dislike (1&2)	Neutral (3)	Like (4&5)	Total Responses
A	463	51	760	1,274
B	615	52	525	1,192
C	905	11	349	1,265

Alternative C is the least popular alternative, while Alternative A is the most popular. The area south of SR 20, in the vicinity of Alternative C is relatively more developed compared to the north side, in the vicinity of Alternative A. Although Alternative B is not supported as much as the new location to the north (e.g., Alternative A), one of the most common responses from the PIOH comments was support for widening existing SR 20. It is the project team's interpretation that the preference of the alternatives may reflect the commonly heard public opinion to avoid residential impacts.

Figure 6.1 How Did the Public Score the Overall Alignment Alternatives?



6.3.2 Buffington Alignments

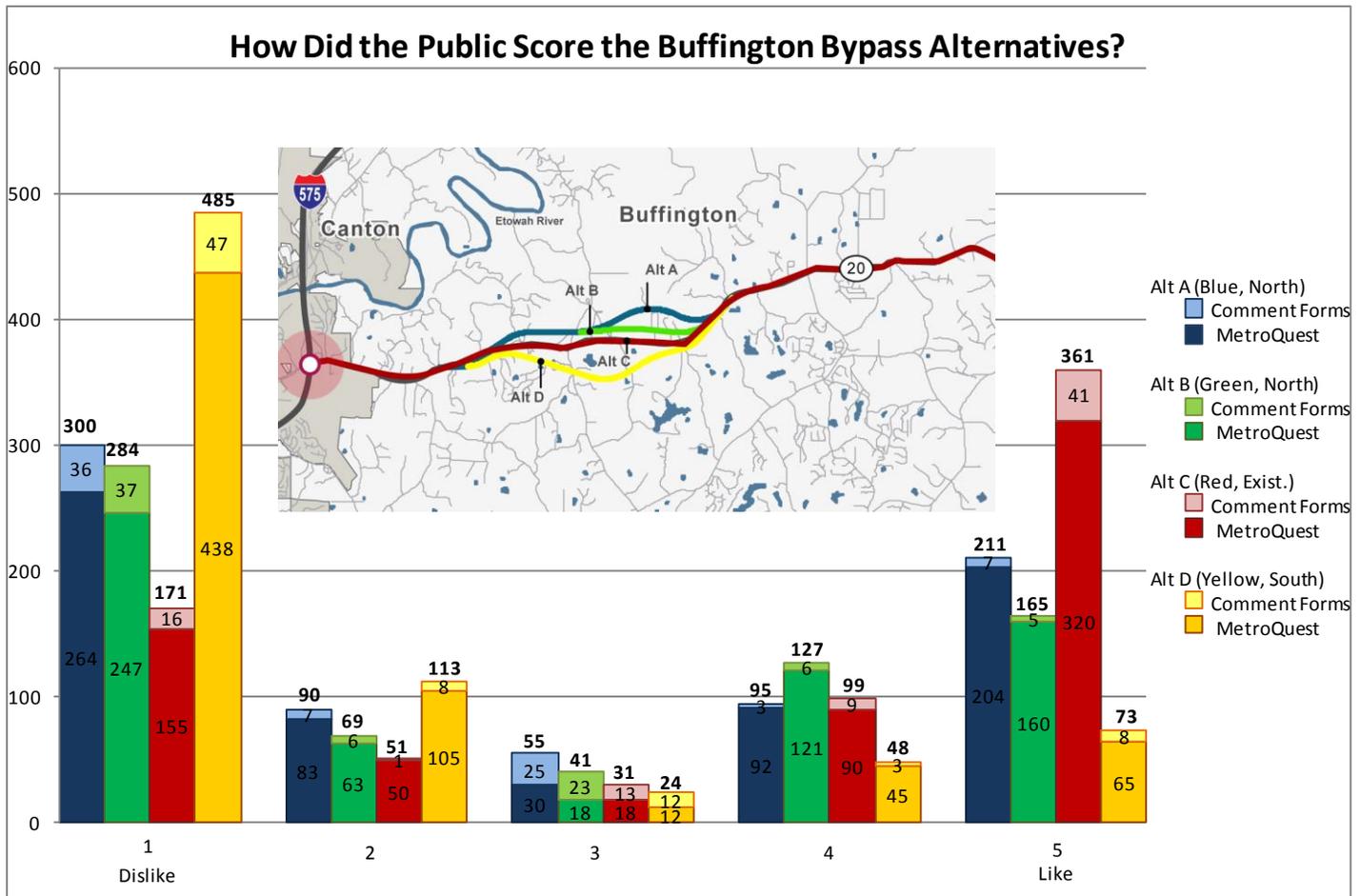
The Buffington question on the comment form and MetroQuest website was developed to solicit public opinion on the potential bypasses around Buffington. Alternatives A and B run north of the existing SR 20, while Alternative D runs to the south. Alternative C represents widening along the existing alignment. Table 6.2 provides the number of responses to the Buffington Alternatives and Figure 6.2, How Did the Public Score the Buffington Bypass Alternatives?

Table 6.2 Evaluation of the Buffington Alternatives

Alternative	Dislike (1&2)	Neutral (3)	Like (4&5)	Total Responses
A	390	55	306	751
B	353	41	292	686
C	222	31	460	713
D	598	24	121	743

Alternative D is the least popular alternative. Alternative C is the most popular and the only alternative that received more “Like” than “Dislike” selections. It is the project team’s interpretation that the preference of the alternatives may reflect the commonly heard public opinion to avoid residential impacts.

Figure 6.2 How Did the Public Score the Buffington Bypass Alternatives?





6.3.3 Macedonia Alignments

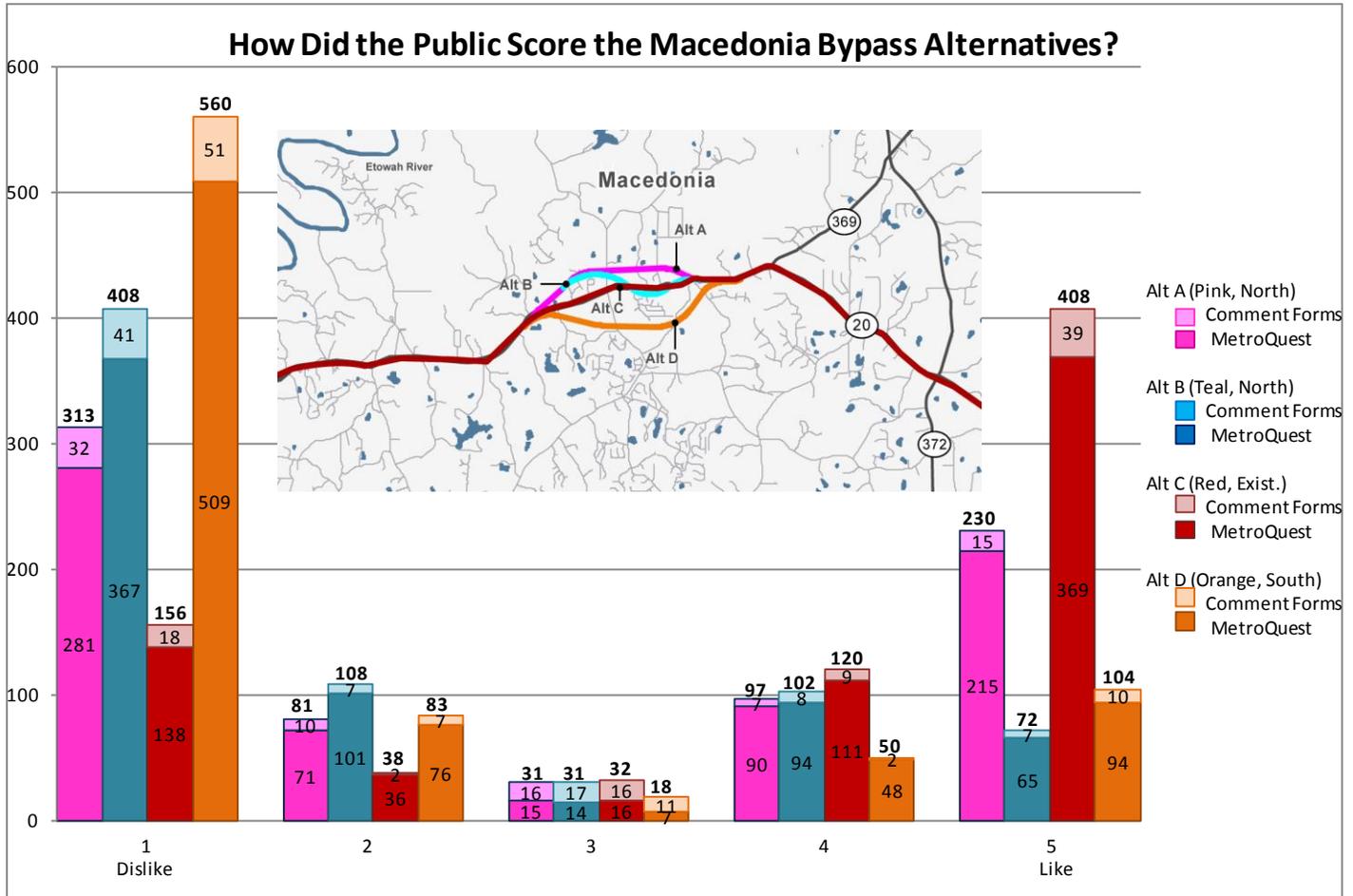
The Macedonia question on the comment form and MetroQuest website was developed to solicit public opinion on the potential bypasses around Macedonia. Alternative A runs north of the existing SR 20, while Alternative D runs to the south. Alternative B begins north of the existing road, and then dips towards the south before tying back into existing SR 20. Alternative C represents widening along the existing SR 20 alignment. Table 6.3 provides the number of responses to the Macedonia Alternatives and Figure 6.3, How Did the Public Score the Macedonia Alternatives?

Table 6.3 Evaluation of the Macedonia Alternatives

Alternative	Dislike (1&2)	Neutral (3)	Like (4&5)	Total Responses
A	394	31	327	752
B	516	31	174	721
C	194	32	528	754
D	643	18	154	815

Alternative D, located within a highly developed residential area, is the least popular alternative. Alternative B is also unpopular. Alternative B starts out north of SR 20 and dips south of SR 20 before tying back in to existing SR 20. Alternative C is the most popular. It is the project team’s interpretation that the preference of the alternatives may reflect the commonly heard public opinion to avoid residential impacts.

Figure 6.3 How Did the Public Score the Macedonia Bypass Alternatives?



6.3.4 Lathemtown Alignments

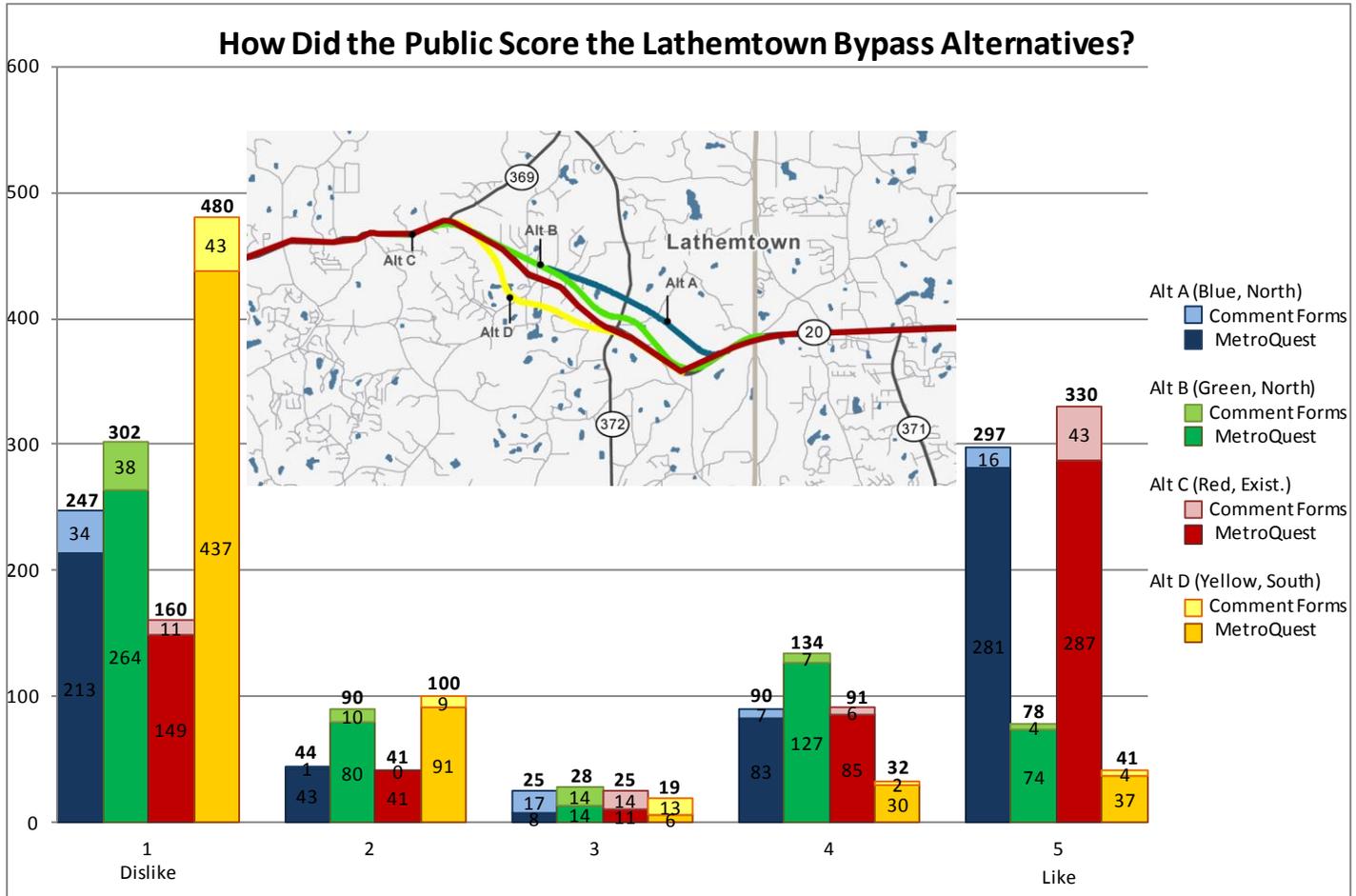
The Lathemtown question on the comment form and MetroQuest website was developed to solicit public opinion on the potential bypasses around Lathemtown. Alternatives A and B run north of the existing SR 20, while Alternative D runs to the south. Alternative C represents widening along the existing SR 20 alignment. Table 6.4 provides the number of responses to the Lathemtown Alternatives and Figure 6.4, How Did the Public Score the Lathemtown Bypass Alternatives?

Table 6.4 Evaluation of the Lathemtown Alternatives

Alternative	Dislike (1&2)	Neutral (3)	Like (4&5)	Total Responses
A	291	25	387	703
B	392	28	212	632
C	201	25	421	647
D	580	19	73	672

Alternatives A and C received a relatively similar amount of support while Alternative D is the least popular, which follows the same patterns as the other areas along the corridor. Alternative A runs near an existing gas line easement. It is the project team’s interpretation that the preference of the alternatives may reflect the commonly heard public opinion to avoid residential developments.

Figure 6.4 How Did the Public Score the Lathemtown Bypass Alternatives?



6.3.5 Ducktown Alignments

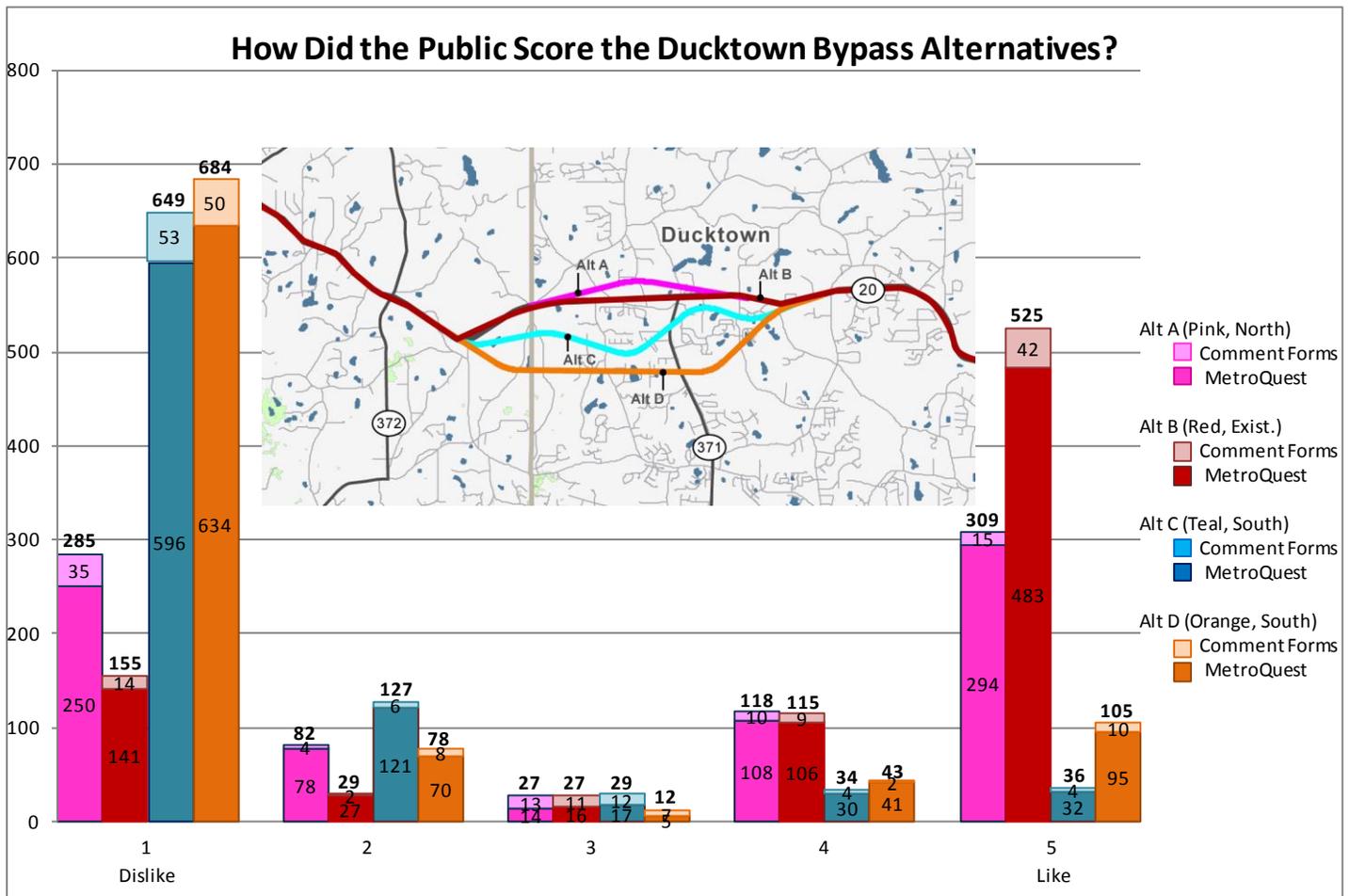
The Ducktown question on the comment form and MetroQuest website was developed to solicit public opinion on the potential bypasses around Ducktown. Alternative A and runs north of the existing SR 20, while Alternatives C & D run to the south. Alternative C represents widening along the existing alignment. Table 6.5 provides the number of responses to the Ducktown Alternatives and Figure 6.5, How Did the Public Score the Ducktown Bypass Alternatives?

Table 6.5 Evaluation of the Ducktown Alternatives

Alternative	Dislike (1&2)	Neutral (3)	Like (4&5)	Total Responses
A	367	27	427	821
B	184	27	640	851
C	776	29	70	875
D	762	12	148	922

The southern alternatives (Alternatives C and D) are overwhelmingly unpopular. Alternative B is the most popular alternative, similar to the other areas along the corridor. Some comments indicated that these alternatives appeared to be similar to the alternatives in the Northern Arc project. However, it should be noted that the final corridor for the Northern Arc was not located along the same alignment as any of the alternatives within this link of the project.

Figure 6.5 How Did the Public Score the Ducktown Bypass Alternatives?





6.3.6 Cumming Alignments

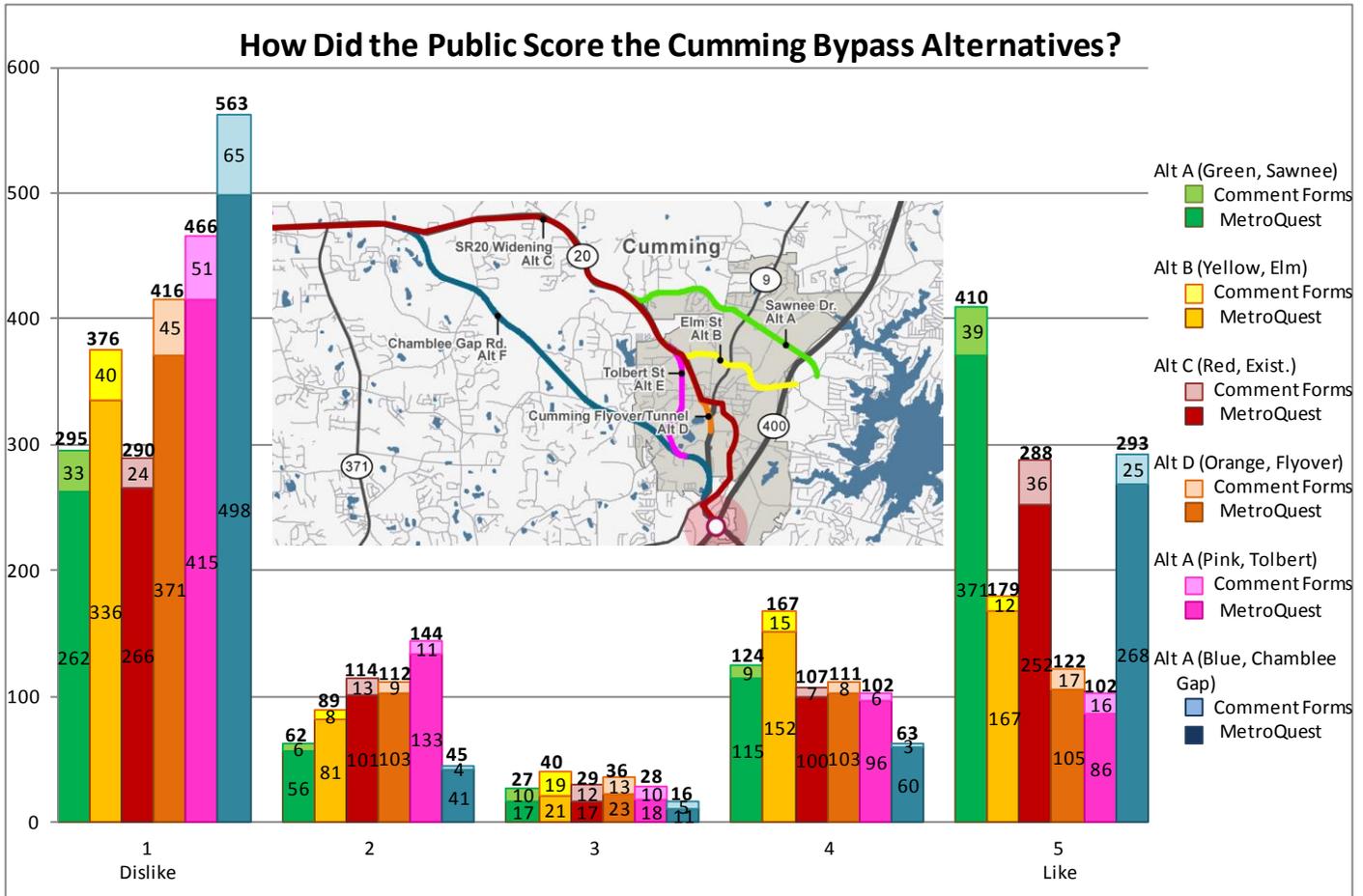
The Cumming question on the comment form and MetroQuest website was developed to solicit public opinion on the potential bypasses around Cumming. Alternatives A & B bypass the City of Cumming to the north while alternatives D, E, & F bypass Cumming to the south. Alternative C represents widening along the existing alignment. Table 6.6 provides the number of responses to the Cumming Alternatives and Figure 6.6, How Did the Public Score the Cumming Bypass Alternatives?

Table 6.6 Evaluation of the Cumming Alternatives

Alternative	Dislike (1&2)	Neutral (3)	Like (4&5)	Total Responses
A	357	27	534	918
B	465	40	346	851
C	404	29	395	828
D	528	36	233	797
E	610	28	204	842
F	608	16	356	980

Cumming is the only area along the SR 20 corridor that the existing widening alternative is not the most popular. Alternative A is the most popular and is the only alternative that received more “Likes” than “Dislikes.” Compared to the other areas along the corridor, the preference of these alternatives seems to be more distributed among all the bypass options with no clear favorite. For example, relative to all alternatives, Alternative F received the second-most number of “Dislikes,” but also the third-most number of “Likes.”

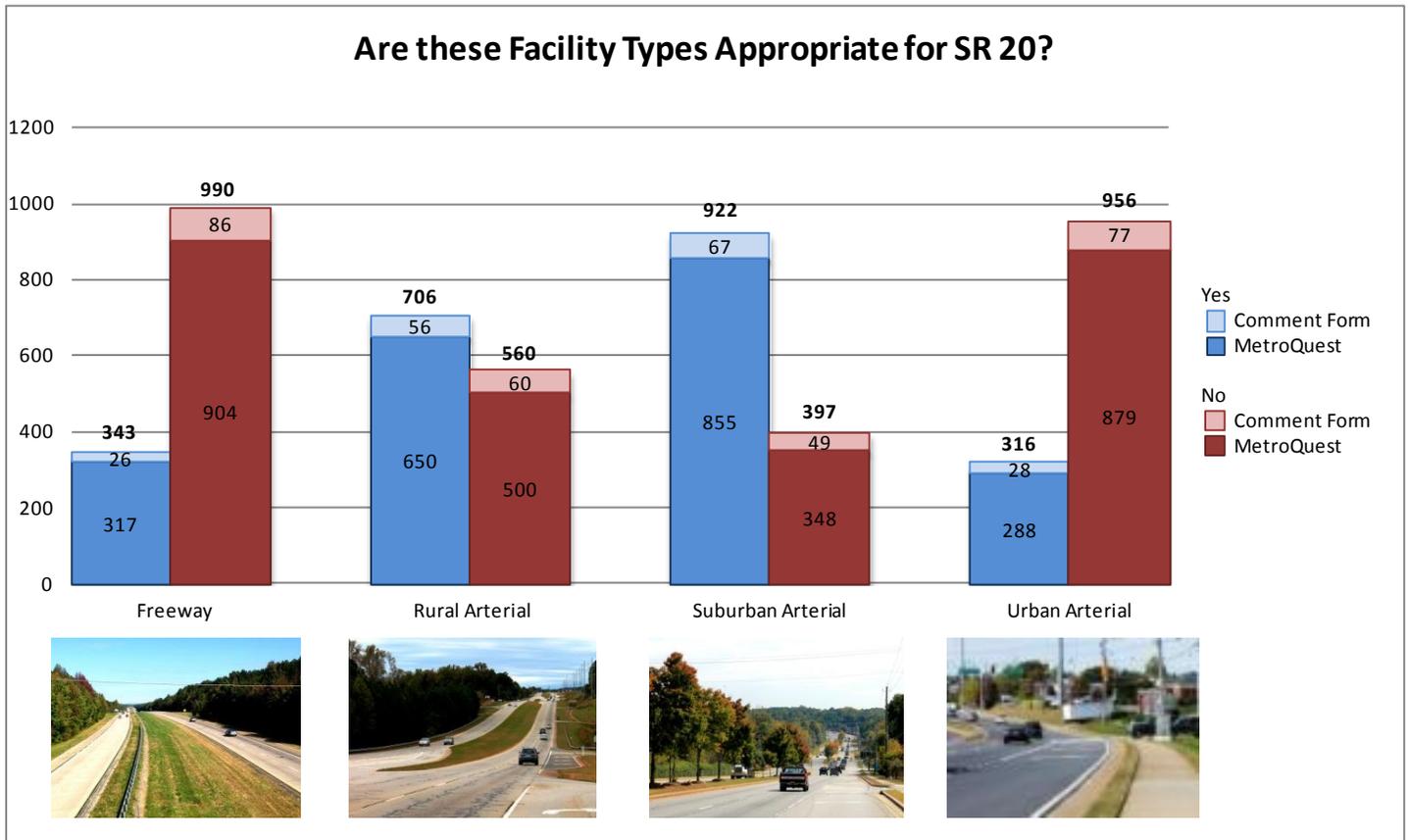
Figure 6.6 How Did the Public Score the Cumming Bypass Alternatives?



6.3.7 Facility Type

The Facility Type question on the comment form was designed to capture whether the public thought these different facility types are appropriate for the corridor. The four options that were chosen to solicit feedback included: Freeway, Rural Arterial, Suburban Arterial, and Urban Arterial. These options were selected as they represent different characteristics that could occur on any of the alternatives presented in the preceding sections. Figure 6.7, Are these Facility Types Appropriate for SR 20?, shows the distribution of responses.

Figure 6.7 Are these Facility Types Appropriate for SR 20?



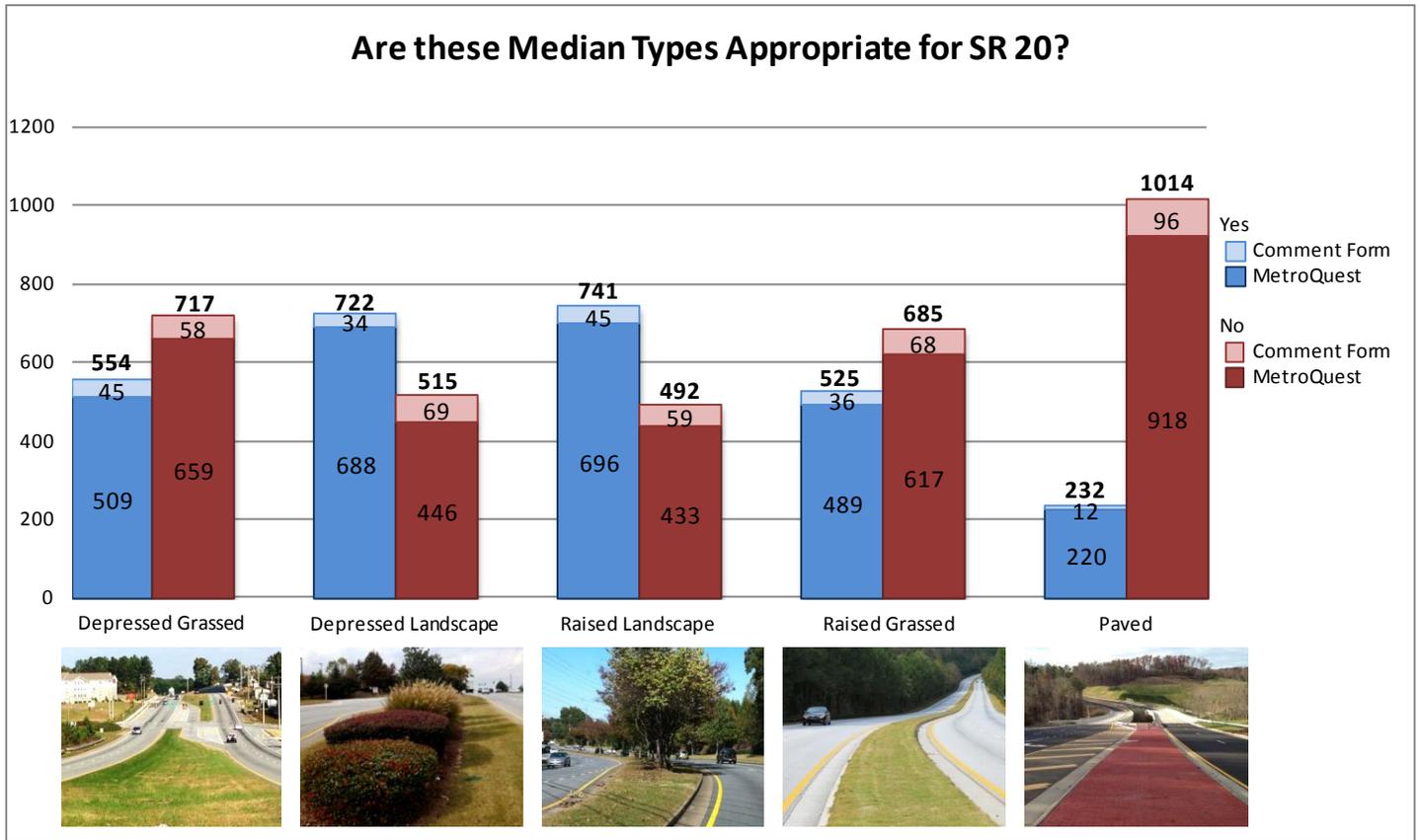
Freeway and Urban Arterial were the least popular. Based on the written comments accompanying the preference data selection, many commenters indicated these facilities were not consistent with the rural nature of the area. Suburban Arterial was the most popular as people indicated it was a good balance between the residential and commercial aspects of the corridor.

The limitations of these questions are that these facility types may be appropriate in certain areas of the project, as opposed to the entire corridor. As an example, it may be appropriate to build an urban arterial facility in and around downtown Cumming, but not in an area like Macedonia or Lathemtown. Many commenters noted that certain facility types would be more appropriate in some areas.

6.3.8 Median Type

The Median Type question on the comment form was designed to capture whether the public thought these different median types are appropriate on the corridor. The five options that were chosen to solicit feedback were Depressed Grassed, Depressed Landscape, Raised Landscape, Raised Grassed, and Paved. These options were selected as they represent a wide variety of the types of medians that could be used along the corridor within the alternatives presented above. Figure 6.8, Are these Median Types Appropriate for SR 20?, shows the distribution of responses.

Figure 6.8 Are these Median Types Appropriate for SR 20?



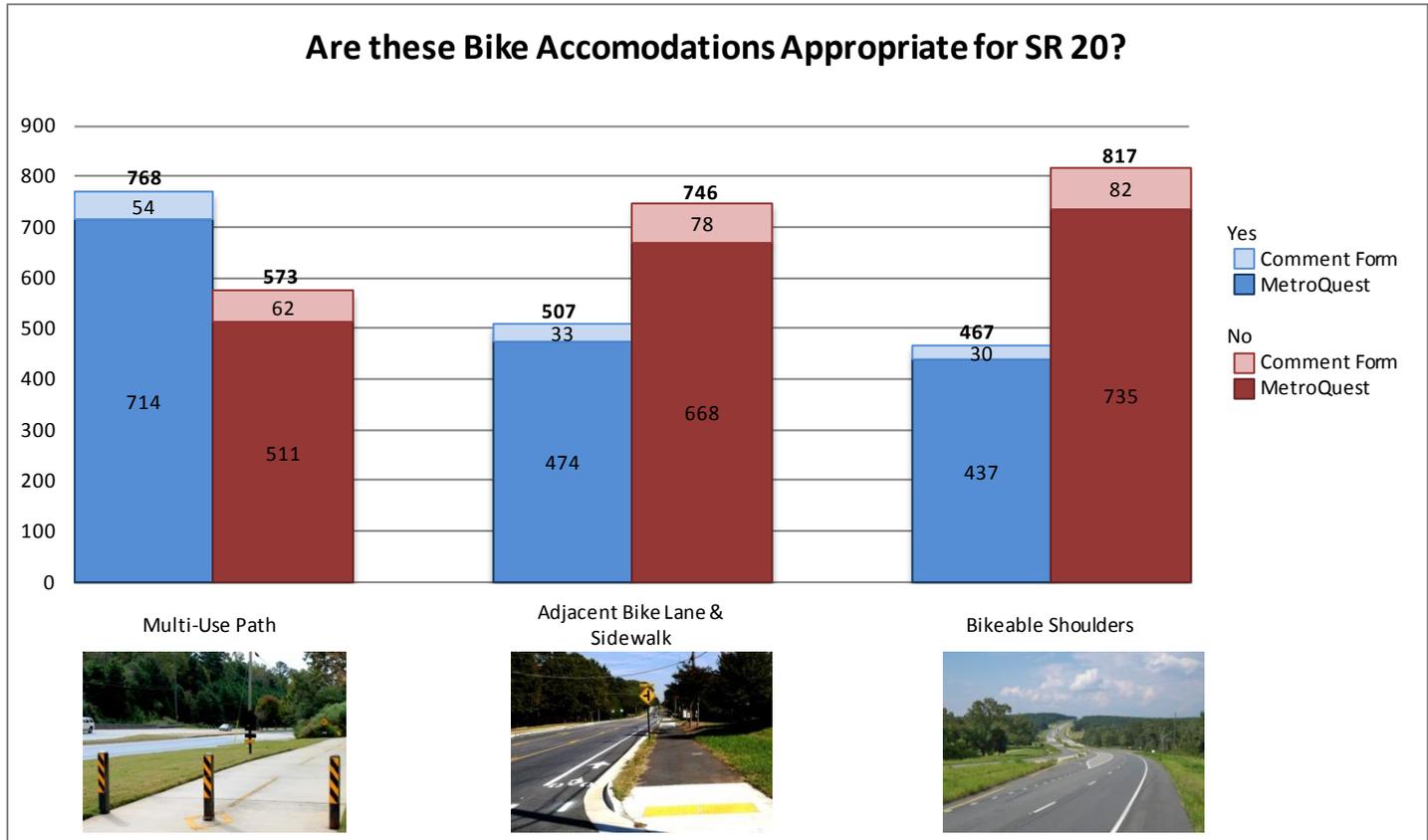
Paved medians were the least popular option. Based on the written portion of the comment form, people indicated that paved medians were not consistent with the rural nature of the area. Depressed Landscaped and Raised Landscaped were the most popular. Many comments indicated that the landscaping added to the community feel in the area. Safety and maintenance cost also played a factor in the selection of median type.

It should be noted that responses indicated a varied level of education regarding the pros and cons of the different median types. For example, some people commented about the maintenance cost of a depressed median when in fact it has a relatively low maintenance cost compared to the other median types.

6.3.9 Bike Accommodations

The Bike Accommodation question on the comment form and MetroQuest was designed to capture whether the public thought these different bicycle accommodations are appropriate on the corridor. The three options that were chosen to solicit feedback were Multi-Use Path, Adjacent Bike Lane and Sidewalk, and Bikeable Shoulders. These options were selected as they represent a wide range of options, in terms of safety, cost, etc. Figure 6.9, Are these Bike Accommodations Appropriate for SR 20?, shows the distribution of responses.

Figure 6.9 Are these Bike Accommodations Appropriate for SR 20?



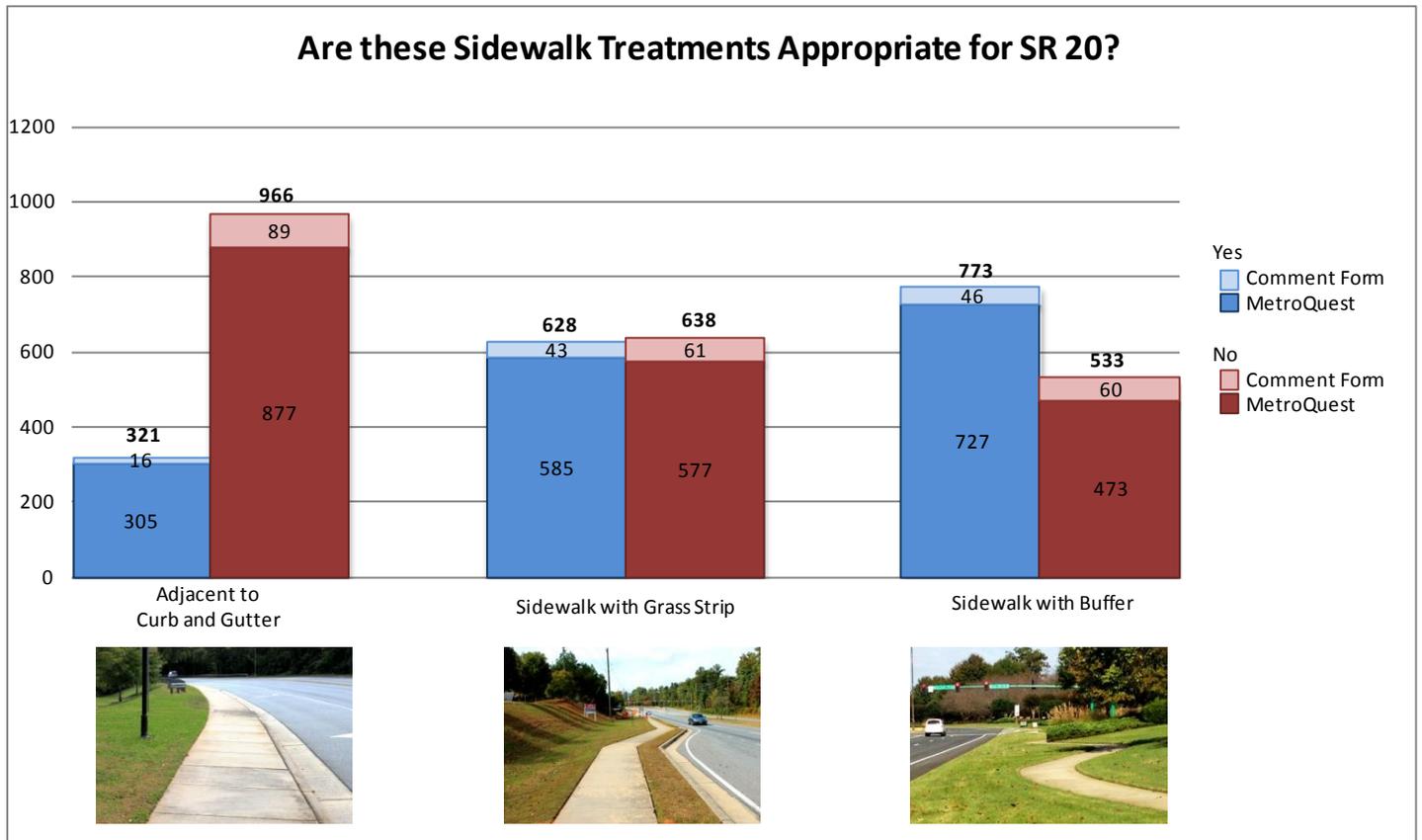
The multi-use path option was the most popular while the bikeable shoulders option was the least popular. Safety was a big concern, as evidenced by the comments received in these sections. It is the project team’s interpretation that the preference of the bike options may reflect the commonly heard public preference for options that are perceived as the safest.

It is also the project team’s interpretation of the bike results that there may be limitations to these questions. In future outreach opportunities, it is recommended to provide information regarding GDOT’s Complete Streets Policy as a tool to explain why bicycle accommodations are considered.

6.3.10 Sidewalk Treatments

The Sidewalk Treatment question on the comment form and MetroQuest was designed to capture whether the public thought these sidewalk treatments are appropriate on the corridor. The three options that were chosen to solicit feedback were Sidewalk Adjacent to Curb and Gutter, Sidewalk with Grass Strip, and Sidewalk with Buffer. These options were selected as they represent a range of options that could be included as needed along the corridor. Figure 6.10, Are these Sidewalk Treatments Appropriate for SR 20?, shows the distribution of responses.

Figure 6.10 Are these Sidewalk Treatments Appropriate for SR 20?



Sidewalk with Buffer was the most favorable preference while Sidewalk Adjacent to Curb was the least popular preference. Safety likely played a large role in these results as well. Respondents commented that a sidewalk directly adjacent to the curb was not appropriate for a high speed road and that the addition of a buffer would be safer for pedestrians.

Several comments noted that sidewalks may not be appropriate along the entire corridor, but could be appropriate in areas where walking destinations are prevalent. The nature of the question did not allow respondents to distinguish between implementing the sidewalk treatment along the entire corridor versus in specific areas only. Therefore, interpretation of this feedback on sidewalks should consider potential limitations of the survey.

6.4 Social Media

GDOT’s Facebook page currently has 3,372 likes (up from 1,800 in June, 2013 after the Scoping Meetings). Relative to the December 2013 PIOHs, GDOT published a total of 6 posts to its Facebook page, resulting in 2 likes, 7 shares and zero comments.

GDOT’s Twitter page currently has 4,256 followers (up from 2,090 in June, 2013 after the Scoping Meetings). Relative to the December 2013 PIOHs, GDOT published a total of 6 tweets, resulting in 35 total retweets. Content of the tweets included meeting dates and



reminders prior to the PIOHs, and calls for feedback (including links to MetroQuest) following the PIOHs.

Based on monitoring GDOT's social properties and targeted keywords on Facebook and Twitter, there have been no negative mentions or comments regarding SR 20 Improvements from Canton to Cumming.

Based on these statistics, social media engagement for SR 20 Improvements corridor content is down slightly from the first round of public involvement, but still roughly consistent. The data from social media will be used as a benchmark for this project moving forward into other public involvement activities. Social media will continue to be monitored through the project development. Continued activity on social media channels is necessary to supporting GDOT's commitment to transparency through every stage of the project, and valuably expands upon traditional public involvement efforts by allowing a timely means of interactive communications with residents.

7.0 HOW WILL THE PUBLIC CONTINUE TO BE ENGAGED?

In summary, highlights of the public involvement tools for the scoping process include using the map-based methods and comment forms to obtain information at the PIOHs and on MetroQuest. These geo-referenced methods for obtaining feedback are being consolidated and will be used for evaluating preferences for alternatives along the corridor for design. The project team recommends using these tools again. The project team recommends that future comment forms solicit specific feedback as well.

7.1 General Population

7.1.1 Internet Tools

The project website will continue to be a tool used throughout project development to engage the public, solicit input, and provide project updates and materials. The social media tools will continue to be monitored and assessed for activity. The method of receiving input from MetroQuest appeared to be highly successful not only in visitor's interest in the project, but also in soliciting feedback. It is recommended to use this tool again.

7.1.2 Newsletters

Project newsletters were developed and made available to the public via the project website, kiosk events, mail-outs, and the project database. Those parties who have left a formal comment and/or expressed an interest to receive project updates and information have been added to the project database. Newsletters will continue to be developed and distributed at key project milestones.

7.2 Environmental Justice Populations

Focused outreach was conducted to EJ populations during this PIOH effort since the project database has grown, the CAC has met again, a direct mail list was obtained, and kiosk events were held. The locations of the staffed kiosk events were used to reach out, educate, and distribute more newsletters/PIOH flyers at areas with higher potential to reach EJ populations. The direct mail-out of the PIOH flyer to 1,800 potential low-income and Hispanic households was an effort focused on EJ populations with a potential to be affected by the project. Also, the project team has identified that an EJ focus group will be formed to consist of members of the CAC as well as other community leaders who can provide specific input regarding EJ populations. The engagement of an EJ focus group will enable EJ population needs and interests to be incorporated into project development. Additional collaboration among the CAC and TAC regarding details on implementing the EJ focus group is forthcoming. In summary, the project will continue to identify and reach out to EJ populations with the potential to be affected by the proposed project.

7.3 Responses to Comments

A response letter dated February 11, 2014 was mailed to all commenters who provided a formal comment and contact information (see Appendix H: PIOH Response Letter). The letter has been posted on the project website. The upcoming outreach activities will include public meetings in the Fall 2015, to provide the public updates on the alternatives analysis.



8.0 CONCLUSIONS

This PIOH #2 Summary Report provided details of the public and stakeholder outreach efforts relative to the PIOH #2 for the SR 20 Improvements Canton to Cumming project. Outreach efforts during the Scoping Phase included two PIOHs (one each in Canton and Cumming), kiosk events, and a web-based interactive survey (MetroQuest). Public notifications of these efforts were provided in newspaper advertisements, media press releases and articles, PIOH notification flyers/newsletters and signs, and web-based notifications.

Efforts were made to reach out to and include low-income and minority populations. PIOH notification flyer mail-outs and kiosk events were provided in both English and Spanish in recognition of the substantial Hispanic population along the corridor. Low-income, minority and tribal representation is included in the CACs, which was held in advance of the PIOHs, and CAC members were encouraged to notify their community members of the meetings and project website.

A total of 532 people attended the public information open houses, held on December 10, 2013 in Cumming and December 12, 2013 in Ball Ground, and provided a total of 480 formal comments through paper comment forms (158 comments), MetroQuest (241 comments), 28 comments to court reporters, 16 letters, 1 petition, and 36 emailed comments to GDOT.

This is only the second phase of soliciting community input. Public and stakeholder outreach will continue as the project development and NEPA process progress. This will include regular TAC and CAC committee meetings throughout the duration of the project, as well as PIOHs at the completion of each major stage of the process.



9.0 REVISION HISTORY

The following revisions were made.

Revision Number	Date	Content
1	September 2015	<p>-Due to public comment, interpretations and limitations of the data have been clarified on page 14, paragraph 1; page 16 paragraph 2; page 18 paragraph 1; page 19 paragraph 1; page 24 paragraph 2; and page 25 paragraph 2.</p> <p>-page 20, 2d paragraph, last sentence revised to update ranking order, from "...the second-most number of "Likes" to "...the <i>third</i>-most number of "Likes".</p> <p>- the PIOH response letter has been included</p> <p>- statement included that Appendix G comments are available upon request.</p> <p>- Section 7.3, Responses to Comments, updated to reflect current timeline.</p>



Appendix A: Newspaper Ads/Tear sheets



Calvin Hill already signed in to go after the District 22 seat in the Georgia House of Representatives which was left vacant after Hill's death from leukemia in late October, according to the Georgia Secretary of State's Office.

Two other potential candidates, Megan Biello and Francis Patten, have expressed their interest in running for the seat covering parts of Cherokee, Filton and Forsyth counties, but as of the end of the day Tuesday, they had not qualified.

Moore, 37, Ball Ground, is a 16-time Cherokee resident who says he is willing to start a small business. Duncan, 52, of Ball Ground, is the former Cherokee GOL chair and a recent addition to the Cherokee Resource Recovery Development Authority. Cochran, 3, of Canton, is an attorney in downtown Canton. Although he race is



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Georgia Department of Transportation
 Public Information Open House
 SR 20 Improvements from Canton to Cumming
 Cherokee and Forsyth Counties
 Projects STP00-0002-00(662), STP00-0003-00(661)
 and STP00-0003-00(682)
 P.I. Nos. 0002862, 0003681, 0003682



The Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) invites you to attend a Public Information Open House to discuss improvements to SR 20 from Canton to Cumming. The project team has identified a variety of potential improvement alternatives along the 24-mile corridor. Please come and share your thoughts on these initial concepts. No formal presentation will be made - stop by at your convenience. Information displayed will be identical at both locations.

- December 10, 2013
 Calvary Baptist Church
 137 Hightower Road/SR 369
 Ball Ground, GA
- December 12, 2013
 Otwell Middle School
 605 Tribble Gap Road
 Cumming, GA

Both open houses will be from 5-7 pm. Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Information: The open house sites are accessible to persons with disabilities. Accommodations for people with disabilities can be arranged with advance notice by calling the project hotline at 404-377-4012. A court reporter will be available during the open houses to record formal comments. The project information and displays at the Public Information Open House will also be available for review online at www.gdot.gov/sr20improvements and for 10 days following the last PICH date at the GDOT District 1 Office located at 2505 Athens Highway, SE, Gainesville, GA and at the GDOT District 6 Office located at 500 Joe Frank Harris Parkway, Cartersville, GA. A copy of all comments received will be available for public review at these same locations and at the Atlanta address listed below. Written comments in response to the project open houses will be accepted until December 23, 2013 and should be submitted to:

Mr. Glenn Bowman, PE
 Georgia Department of Transportation
 Office of Environmental Services
 16th Floor, One Georgia Center
 600 West Peachtree Street, N.W.
 Atlanta, Georgia 30308

GDOT
 Georgia Department of Transportation

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 20, 2013

forsythnews.com | FORSYTH COUNTY NEWS | 3A

Traffic stop turns into meth bust

Suspects face drug trafficking charges

By Alyssa LaRenzie
alarenzie@forsythnews.com

A Forsyth County couple faces drug trafficking charges after a search of their vehicle turned up a large amount of suspected methamphetamine.

Roger Brumbelow and Britney Chavez, both 25, were arrested Friday following a traffic stop on Hurt Bridge Road near Tallam Drive.

Each has been charged with trafficking methamphetamine, possession of a schedule II narcotic and possession of a

schedule IV narcotic.

As of Tuesday, they remained in custody at the Forsyth County Detention Center.

According to a Forsyth County Sheriff's report, deputies stopped Brumbelow after they spotted him not wearing a seatbelt while driving.

The trafficking charge was levied due to the large amount of suspected methamphetamine found in the vehicle, according to the sheriff's office. The state statute requires possession of more than 28 grams.

Brumbelow and Chavez live in the same home on Knight Road, according to the incident report. Chavez told deputies she is dating Brumbelow.

The National Barbecue Cup mascot waits for Saturday's award ceremony to begin.



Photos by Crystal Ledford
Forsyth County News

FROM 1A Cup

crowds. "[Friday] night the weather was cold and wet, but I got to tell you that we still had bigger attendance than we did that first year on opening night," Bowman said. "We had people walking around in the rain last night, which was shocking to me."

Overall Bowman said the event drew numbers comparable to those in 2012. "Everything ended up being almost identical

from last year," he said Tuesday, noting that while Friday's numbers were lower, things picked up on Saturday. "We ended up with right around 18,000 people between the two days."

The more than 100 amateur and professional teams that competed at the Cumming Fairgrounds didn't seem hindered by the weather either. They all gathered at the venue's saw mill stage at 5 p.m. Saturday for the awards presentation.

Moyer's Competition Barbecue of Cartersville

was named Grand Champion of the event. In the backyard division, Pop 'n' Chubby's took home the Buddy Lang Award, which is given each year to the Forsyth County team that receives the highest score.

Some of the others earning top prizes included Nice Rack, which took home the People's Choice award for pulled pork, and Warren County Pork Choppers, which was named Reserve Grand Champion.

Allen Tucker of Gainesville-based Chattahoochee-Que said

Large black bear hit by car on 400

By Alyssa LaRenzie
alarenzie@forsythnews.com

A driver struck a black bear on Ga. 400 north on Sunday night, and its carcass remained on the shoulder near Pilgrim Mill Road until another person claimed it.

The Forsyth County Sheriff's Office received a report of the incident from a passer-by late Sunday night. Sgt. Lee Brown with the Georgia Department of Natural Resources said a man filed paperwork at the Gainesville office Monday to take possession of the bear.

Anyone can claim a bear hit by a vehicle, Brown said, but the documents are required for DNR record-keeping purposes.

"Deer or anything else, there's no paperwork involved, but on a bear ... I have to get paperwork from DNR saying that I have possession of this bear. Because there's a black market on bears and their parts, so we have to keep a record of bears, and who has them."

Brown did not know why the man

wanted to take the animal.

The female black bear weighed about 300 pounds and didn't have any cubs, he said.

The age of the bear is not known, since the only true measure is to send one of its teeth to a laboratory for testing, he said.

"They cut it and count the rings in it, just like you count the rings in a tree to tell how old it is," Brown said. "You can't just look at a bear and tell how old it is."

It's not uncommon for black bears to be hit by vehicles, he said, adding that he has picked up several that have been struck, and seen the damage they've done to the cars too.

Several bears have been spotted this season in the area, which Brown said is likely due to fewer acorns in the mountains.

"They're kind of branching out, finding food," he said. "People will have bird feeders out, their garbage out. Bears also love dog food."

Black bears will usually leave if they see a person or hear loud noises, he added.



Maci Mace, 2, enjoys a ride during Saturday's National Barbecue Cup.

here. They have big sites with nice water and power and everything," he said. "For us, we don't like a lot, but heated bathrooms, with weather like last night that means a lot."

Bowman said all in all, things went very well.

"I've had no complaints and plenty of compliments from barbecue teams," he said. "It's not the 65 degrees that we were hoping for, but it's not miserably cold either so we're in good shape."

He said planning has already begun for the 2014 National Barbecue Cup.

"We have some big things in mind for next year," he said.

FROM 1A Troop

who, no matter their size, do their very best and more to keep their roads and highways as safe as possible for their community," he said in a statement.

Agencies are evaluated not just for enforcement initiatives, but for innovative problem-solving in their communities, using public information activities and creating

departmental policies that support their traffic enforcement campaign efforts.

In a statement, GOHS Director Harris Blackwood congratulated

Forsyth County Sheriff Duane Piper and his "dedicated group of deputies."

"This recognition just goes to show how dedicated they are to protect-

ing and serving their community," he said. Also honored during the Governor's Challenge Awards at the Macon Centreplex was Georgia State Patrol's Troop B.

which won first place for the second year in a row. Troop B covers Forsyth and many other counties, including Dawson, Hall and Lumpkin.

FROM 1A Review

have been present. If so, Roper could still be included as one of three defendants at a future trial, along with the hospital and the shelter. "This decision from the Georgia Court of Appeals will determine whether he's there or not," McFarland said. "Obviously we would

like him to be there because we feel like the defendants will point the finger at the empty chair and say he's the one that caused the problems." County Attorney Ken Jarrard, who represents Roper, said Forsyth is "very pleased with the result" from the Supreme Court. "We understand it will be going back to the court of appeals," Jarrard said, "and we'll await any direction by the court."

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Cherokee and Forsyth Counties**
Projects STP00-0002-00(862), STP00-0003-00(681) and STP00-0003-00(682)
P.I. Nos. 0002862, 0003681, 0003682

The Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) invites you to attend a Public Information Open House to discuss improvements to SR 20 from Canton to Cumming. The project team has identified a variety of potential improvement alternatives along the 24-mile corridor. Please come and share your thoughts on these initial concepts.

No formal presentation will be made – stop by at your convenience. Information displayed will be identical at both locations.

December 10, 2013 Calvary Baptist Church 137 Hightower Road/SR 369 Ballground, GA	December 12, 2013 Orwell Middle School 605 Tribble Gap Road Cumming, GA
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Both open houses will be from 5-7 pm.

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Information: The open house sites are accessible to persons with disabilities. Accommodations for people with disabilities can be arranged with advance notice by calling the project hotline at 404-377-4012.

A court reporter will be available during the open houses to record formal comments.

The project information and displays at the Public Information Open House will also be available for review online at www.dot.ga.gov/sr20improvements and for 10 days following the last PIOH date at the GDOT District 1 Office located at 2505 Athens Highway, SE, Gainesville, GA and at the GDOT District 6 Office located at 500 Joe Frank Harris Parkway, Cartersville, GA. A copy of all comments received will be available for public review at these same locations and at the Atlanta address listed below. Written comments in response to the project open houses will be accepted until December 23, 2013 and should be submitted to:

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Office of Environmental Services
16th Floor, One Georgia Center
600 West Peachtree Street, N.W.
Atlanta, Georgia 30308

Georgia Department of Transportation



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WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 4, 2013

U.S. home prices inch up 0.2 percent in October

WASHINGTON (AP) — A measure of U.S. home prices rose only modestly in October, adding to signs that prices have stabilized after experiencing big gains earlier this year.

Real estate data provider CoreLogic said Tuesday that prices increased 0.2 percent in October from September. That's up from a 0.1 percent gain in September. But it is down sharply from a 0.9 percent increase in August.

One reason for the slowdown is that the figures aren't adjusted for seasonal patterns. Prices usually decline in the fall and winter, when sales slow.

Still, large gains during the previous months, along with higher mortgage rates, may be pricing some buyers out of the market.

Home prices have risen 12.5 percent from a year ago. The increase could encourage more sellers to put their homes on the market, easing a shortage of homes for sale.

Only 1.88 million homes were on the market at the end of October, down 2.1 percent from the previous month and the lowest since March.

The shortage of inventory has affected sales. Home re-sales fell in October for a second straight month to a seasonally adjusted annual pace of 5.12 million, the lowest since June, according to the National Association of Realtors. That pace is still 6 percent higher than it was a year earlier. But it's below the roughly 5.5 million sold each year in healthier

markets. Some sales were delayed in October due to the 16-day partial government shutdown, the Realtors' group said. The shutdown prevented the IRS from verifying incomes, a critical part of the mortgage-approval process. Those sales may have been pushed into November or December.

But a measure of signed contracts to buy homes fell for a fifth straight month in October. That points to weaker final sales in the coming months. Final sales typically occur one to two months after contracts are signed.

According to CoreLogic, prices rose in October from the previous year in all states except New Mexico. The biggest gains were in Nevada (28.9 percent), California (22.4 percent), Georgia (14.2 percent), Michigan (14.1 percent) and Arizona (14 percent).

Ninety-six of the 100 largest metro areas reported price gains from the previous year. That's down from September, when all 100 cities reported gains.

The biggest increase was in Riverside, Calif., with 24.1 percent, followed by Los Angeles (22.1 percent), Atlanta (16.4 percent), Phoenix (15.9 percent) and Chicago (12.3 percent).

Home prices are still about 17 percent below the peak reached in April 2006, according to CoreLogic. US home prices rise just 0.2 percent in October.

FROM 5A Drive

Forsyth and growing the organization's relationships with local merchants. Two of the restaurants that provide fresh surplus food, Lenny's Subs and Good Crab Subs, are also participating in the canned good drive.

The majority of the businesses collecting for the drive, however, aren't food-related.

Lance White, owner of Lance's Jewelry, joked that people figured he must be looking for dog-food donations, since he's also president of the Humane Society of Forsyth County.

"I'm helping people instead of just animals now," White said with a laugh. The county has been great to his business, he said, and so he tries to give back "as much as [he] can."

Though White is best known for his work with animals, he got involved with Feed Forsyth several months ago as a volunteer and saw the nonprofit as a great way to assist.

Customers in his store have told him they're happy he's expanding his charitable efforts, he said. But many have also questioned the need in Forsyth, which has been ranked the wealthiest county in the state.

"We don't realize that there are people going hungry in our own county," White said. "It is there. Let's embrace it and take care of it."

Maddox said Feeding America in 2011 determined 16,000 people in the county were "food insecure," plus about 100 children.

In addition, Forsyth County tripled its number of food stamp cases between June 2007 and June 2012, tying it with neighboring Cherokee for the largest percent increase of counties in Georgia, according to data from the Emory Center for Community Partnerships.

The help comes locally, Maddox said, with 28 organizations providing food to community families in need. However, each would have to feed

How to help

Visit www.feedforsyth.org for a full list of participating businesses and other ways to help.

500 people to fully meet the demands, which he said "isn't mathematically possible."

"We're trying to ramp up how much food is available to each one of those pantries so they can maximize what they're doing and then trying to encourage other organizations to start pantries," he said. "We wanted to step in and support the organizations that have been working in food ministry for a long time."

The holiday food drive aims to increase that supply at a time when people seem most eager to give.

Businesses also want to participate in that giving spirit, seeing the holiday food drive as a good time to use their presence to support a need in the community.

Todd Levent, owner of Midway Warehouse, set up a collection barrel next to a Christmas tree in the store.

"There are always people less fortunate and they need a little bit of assistance," Levent said. "Everybody should always pull together to help their own in their own community."

He liked that the donations stay within local organizations, something White emphasized about Feed Forsyth as he spread the word through his business connections, including Midway Warehouse, Lakeside Pharmacy and local car dealerships such as Andean Chevrolet and Billy Howell Ford.

Small, local businesses have the ability to step up in times of need more quickly than a national company with a large chain of command, White said.

"With this growth [in the county] becomes a responsibility for the community to give back," he said. "I think people are going to come back down to the grassroots and go back and help their neighbors instead of trying to help the whole world."

Delta sees December passenger revenue rise

ATLANTA (AP) — Delta Air Lines Inc. said a key measure of revenue would rise as much as 9 percent this month, offsetting a November decline, as it benefits from strong Thanksgiving travel.

Delta said overall demand for Thanksgiving travel "was especially strong." However, the late Thanksgiving means that passengers returning after the holiday weekend took their flights in December.

The result was a 3 percent decline in November passenger revenue compared to the same month last

year, Delta said. The combination of those passengers returning home in December, plus "solid bookings" for the remainder of the year, should boost December passenger revenue 7 percent to 9 percent, Delta said in reporting its monthly operating results on Tuesday.

November traffic fell 2.4 percent, with a 4.8 percent drop in domestic traffic offsetting a 1.7 percent gain in international traffic. November flying capacity rose 1.4 percent,

with a very small gain in domestic capacity and a 3.3 percent increase in international flying capacity. Airlines can add capacity by using bigger planes, or by flying longer flights.

Because fewer people flew even as Delta added more flying capacity, its planes weren't as full. Occupancy fell 3.1 percentage points to 79.4 percent in November.

FROM 5A Portal

members to more easily enter their information to alert the cooperative that they are experiencing an outage.

"The new online forms used to report an outage are now intuitive and allow the user to select certain information which can be retained for later use," said Carl Badgett, vice president of information systems, in

a statement.

"This new feature, called 'my outage,' allows the user to select the 'remember me' feature so that they will not have to reenter the same data if they ever visit the site in the future."

There is also a feature that allows customers to see if power has been restored to their home or business if they are away. The site also offers a separate set of tools for mobile phones and tablets.

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Georgia Department of Transportation Public Information Open House SR 20 Improvements from Canton to Cumming Cherokee and Forsyth Counties

Projects STP00-0002-00(862), STP00-0003-00(681) and STP00-0003-00(682)
P.I. Nos. 0002862, 0003681, 0003682

The Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) invites you to attend a Public Information Open House to discuss improvements to SR 20 from Canton to Cumming. The project team has identified a variety of potential improvement alternatives along the 24-mile corridor. Please come and share your thoughts on these initial concepts.

No formal presentation will be made — stop by at your convenience. Information displayed will be identical at both locations.

<p>December 10, 2013 Calvary Baptist Church 137 Hightower Road/SR 369 Ballground, GA</p>	<p>December 12, 2013 Orwell Middle School 605 Tribble Gap Road Cumming, GA</p>
--	--

Both open houses will be from 5-7 pm.

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Information: The open house sites are accessible to persons with disabilities. Accommodations for people with disabilities can be arranged with advance notice by calling the project hotline at 404-377-4012.

A court reporter will be available during the open houses to record formal comments.

The project information and displays at the Public Information Open House will also be available for review online at www.dot.ga.gov/sr20improvements and for 10 days following the last PIOH date at the GDOT District 1 Office located at 2505 Athens Highway, SE, Gainesville, GA and at the GDOT District 6 Office located at 500 Joe Frank Harris Parkway, Cartersville, GA. A copy of all comments received will be available for public review at these same locations and at the Atlanta address listed below. Written comments in response to the project open houses will be accepted until December 23, 2013 and should be submitted to:

Mr. Glenn Bowman, P.E.
Georgia Department of Transportation
Office of Environmental Services
16th Floor, One Georgia Center
600 West Peachtree Street, N.W.
Atlanta, Georgia 30308



Appendix B: Press Release



PRESS RELEASE



For Immediate Release:
Monday, December 2, 2013

Contact:
Cherokee County - Mohamed Arafa 770.359.9523 Mobile
Forsyth County - Teri Pope 404.274.6436 Mobile

PUBLIC INPUT SOUGHT ON PROPOSED OPTIONS ON STATE ROUTE 20

Ball Ground and Cumming, Ga. – The public is invited to discuss potential improvements to State Route 20 at two public meetings in December. The Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) seeks to identify potential improvements along State Route 20 from I-575 in Canton to State Route 400 in Cumming to improve mobility, reduce congestion and address safety. State Route 20 has exceeded its capacity and multiple improvements are needed in Cherokee and Forsyth counties.

Following a series of public meetings in May 2013 where people provided ideas for potential improvements along State Route 20, meetings on Dec. 10 and 12 will provide the public with an opportunity to comment on initial alternatives and learn more about the next steps of the SR 20 project.

At these open house meetings, there will be no formal presentations. GDOT staff will be available to discuss the project as they seek feedback on the potential solutions for the corridor. Identical information will be presented at each meeting.

December 10, 2013 from 5 p.m. to 7 p.m.
Calvary Baptist Church
137 Hightower Road/ SR 369
Ball Ground, GA 30107

December 12, 2013 from 5 p.m. to 7 p.m.
Otwell Middle School Cafeteria
605 Tribble Gap Road
Cumming, GA 30040

For more information about this project or to download information that will be provided at the public meetings and provide input if unable to attend in person, please visit <http://www.dot.ga.gov/sr20improvements>. You can also make your voice heard through an online survey by visiting <http://sr20.metroquest.com>.

The Georgia Department of Transportation is committed to providing a safe, seamless and sustainable transportation system that supports Georgia's economy and is sensitive to both its citizens and its environment. Georgia is among the fastest growing states in the nation yet lags near the bottom in per capita spending on transportation. Additional transportation revenues are imperative to grow and sustain Georgia's economic vitality and quality of life through the 21st Century. For more information on Georgia DOT, please visit www.dot.ga.gov or subscribe to our Press Release [RSS feed](#).

###

WWW.DOT.GA.GOV



Appendix C: Media Articles



Media Coverage
February 5, 2014

SR20 Improvements - Master Coverage Report			
Run Date	Outlet	Title	Link
4/28/13	<i>Cherokee Tribune</i>	Changes ahead for traffic-prone Ga Highway 20	N/A*
4/30/13	Cumming Patch	Patch Users Speak Out On SR 20	http://cumming.patch.com/articles/patch-users-speak-how-would-you-fix-sr-20-e3857edd
5/1/13	Cumming Patch	How Would You Improve State Road 20?	http://cumming.patch.com/articles/how-would-you-improve-sr-20
5/5/13	<i>Atlanta Journal-Constitution</i>	May meetings set for Ga. 20 improvements	N/A - PRINT ONLY (5/5 edition)
5/5/13	<i>Atlanta Journal-Constitution</i>	May meetings set for Ga. 20 improvements	http://www.ajc.com/news/news/local/county-by-county-news-for-sunday/nXgLY/
5/5/13	<i>Cherokee Tribune</i>	GDOT asks for input on Highway 20 construction	http://cherokeetribune.com/view/full_story/22472781/article-GDOT-asks-for-input-on-Highway-20-construction
5/6/13	NorthFulton.com	Blank slate for Ga. 20 improvements	http://www.northfulton.com/Articles-COMMUNITY-NEWS-c-2013-05-06-198653.114126-sub-Blank-slate-for-Ga-20-improvements.html
5/7/13	<i>Forsyth County News</i>	Input sought on Hwy. 20 Widening	http://www.forsythnews.com/section/1/article/18022/
5/8/13	<i>Gwinnett Daily Post Online</i>	Work approved for long-awaited Ga. 20 widening	http://www.gwinnettdailypost.com/news/2013/may/07/work-approved-for-long-awaited-ga-20-widening/
5/15/13	<i>Atlanta Journal-Constitution</i>	Input sought on northern route	http://www.ajc.com/news/news/local/state-eyes-major-upgrade-to-northern-commuter-rout/nXrHz/
5/15/13	<i>The Cherokee Ledger-News</i>	Speak your piece about Ga. 20	http://www.ledgernews.com/opinion/columns/speak-your-piece-about-ga/article_7621bd6e-bca0-11e2-bb60-001a4bcf6878.html?mode=image&photo=0
5/17/13	<i>Saporta Report</i>	A Northern Arc by another name: Public process begins for widening of Ga 20	http://saportareport.com/blog/2013/05/a-northern-arc-by-another-name-public-process-begins-for-widening-of-ga-20/
5/19/13	<i>Cherokee Tribune</i>	GDOT to conduct public input meeting on Hwy 20	http://cherokeetribune.com/view/full_story/22630751/article-GDOT-to-conduct-public-input-meeting-on-Hwy--20?
5/19/13	<i>Forsyth County News</i>	DOT gathers input on Hwy. 20	http://www.forsythnews.com/section/1/article/18200/
5/20/13	NorthFulton.com	Ga. 20 Meeting Lays our Roadway's Future	http://www.northfulton.com/Articles-NEWS-c-2013-05-20-198853.114126-sub-Ga-20-meeting-lays-out-roadways-future.html
5/22/13	<i>Cherokee Tribune</i>	DOT seeks input on Highway 20 improvements	http://cherokeetribune.com/view/full_story/22678266/article-DOT-seeks-input-on-Highway-20-improvements?
5/23/13	<i>Forsyth County Online</i>	SR 20 Improvements - Canton to Cumming (I-575 to SR 400)	http://www.forsythco.com/info_details.asp?articleid=2971
6/26/13	<i>Atlanta Journal-Constitution</i>	GDOT wants input on Ga. 20 project via web	http://www.ajc.com/news/news/local/county-by-county-news-for-wednesday/nYT66/

6/26/13	<i>Cherokee Ledger-News</i>	GDOT agrees with sentiments	http://www.ledgernews.com/opinion/letters/gdot-agrees-with-sentiments/article_201a6ea6-dd99-11e2-9d93-0019bb30f31a.html
6/26/13	<i>Forsyth County News</i>	DOT: Still time to comment on Hwy. 20	http://www.forsythnews.com/section/1/article/18766/
6/27/13	<i>Gainesville Times</i>	Still time to comment on Ga. 20 improvements	http://www.gainesvilletimes.com/section/6/article/85458/
7/2/13	<i>Atlanta Journal-Constitution</i>	GDOT wants input on Ga. 20 project via Web	http://www.ajc.com/news/local/county-by-county-news-for-tuesday/nYbMh/
8/21/13	<i>Forsyth County News</i>	Plans taking shape for Hwy. 20 on both sides of city	http://www.forsythnews.com/section/1/article/19568/
9/18/13	Canton-Sixes Patch	Truck Passing Lanes Open on Highway 20	http://canton-ga.patch.com/groups/politics-and-elections/p/truck-passing-lanes-open-on-highway-20
9/19/13	<i>Cherokee Tribune</i>	GDOT: Widening on Highway 20 now complete	http://www.cherokeetribune.com/view/full_story/23640999/article-GDOT--Widening-on-Highway-20-now-complete?instance=home_top_bullets
11/22/13	<i>AccessNorthGA.com</i>	GDOT seeks public input on improving Ga. 20 in Forsyth, Cherokee counties	http://www.accessnorthga.com/detail.php?n=268136
11/25/13	Canton-Sixes Patch	GDOT Wants Public Input on S.R. 20	http://canton-ga.patch.com/groups/politics-and-elections/p/gdot-wants-public-input-on-sr-20
12/2/13	<i>Forsyth County News</i>	Next round of meetings set on Hwy. 20 widening	http://www.forsythnews.com/section/1/article/21316/
12/2/13	Lakelanier.com	GDOT Open House Meetings: Rt 20 Congestion	http://lakelanier.com/2013/12/gdot-open-house-meetings-rt-20-congestion/
12/3/13	NorthFulton.com	Public input sought on proposed Ga. 20 options	http://www.northfulton.com/articles-c-2013-12-03-201755.114126-public-input-sought-on-proposed-ga-20-options.html
12/3/13	<i>Atlanta Journal-Constitution</i>	Public input meetings on Ga.20 planned	http://www.ajc.com/news/local/county-by-county-news-for-wednesday/hb9sL/
12/4/13	<i>Cherokee Ledger-News</i>	GDOT wants more public input on Ga. 20	http://www.ledgernews.com/news/news_briefs/gdot-wants-more-public-input-on-ga/article_df992f4a-5c2b-11e3-8976-0019bb30f31a.html
12/7/13	<i>Cherokee Tribune</i>	GDOT seeks input on Canton-to-Cumming overhaul	http://www.cherokeetribune.com/view/full_story/24184909/article-GDOT-seeks-input-on-Canton-to-Cumming-overhaul?instance=home_lead_story
12/8/13	<i>Gainesville Times</i>	Eyes on the Road: Hall gears up for update to roads plan	http://www.gainesvilletimes.com/section/6/article/92670/
12/11/13	<i>Cherokee Tribune</i>	Hwy. 20 residents share thoughts on proposed overhaul	http://www.cherokeetribune.com/view/full_story/24207405/article-Hwy--20-residents--share-thoughts-on-proposed-overhaul?instance=home_top_bullets
12/15/13	<i>Forsyth County News</i>	Input offered on widening Hwy. 20	http://www.forsythnews.com/section/1/article/21542/
1/23/14	FOX 5 (WAGA)	GDOT wants your feedback on Highway 20	http://www.myfoxatlanta.com/story/24526535/gdot-wants-your-feedback-on-highway-20#axzz2EYBqQT

*Note: Cherokee Tribune links expire 14 days after article run date



Appendix D: Project Flyer (English and Spanish) and Newsletter



SR 20 IMPROVEMENTS

From Canton to Cumming

WHEN & WHERE

December 10, 2013
Calvary Baptist Church
137 Hightower Rd./SR 369
Ball Ground, GA

December 12, 2013
Otwell Middle School
605 Tribble Gap Rd.
Cumming, GA

5pm - 7pm

There will be no formal presentation. Displays at both locations will be identical.



www.dot.ga.gov/sr20improvements

PUBLIC OPEN HOUSES

Georgia DOT is seeking ways to improve SR 20 between Canton and Cumming. We're hosting a second round of open house sessions to present draft solutions and to get feedback from the public.

We are still early in the project development process and no solution has been identified. That's why we need to hear from you!

CONTACT

Cynthia Burney
GDOT Project Manager
SR20Improvements
@dot.ga.gov
404.631.1851



SR20
IMPROVEMENTS
CANTON TO CUMMING

MEJORAS DE LA CARRETERA SR20 De Canton a Cumming

FECHA Y LUGAR

**10 de diciembre de 2013
Calvary Baptist Church
137 Hightower Rd./SR 369
Ball Ground, GA**

**12 de diciembre de 2013
Otwell Middle School
605 Tribble Gap Rd.
Cumming, GA 30041**

5pm - 7pm

No habrá una presentación formal. Los materiales visuales en ambos lugares serán los mismos.



www.dot.ga.gov/sr20improvements

SESIONES ABIERTAS INFORMATIVAS Y PÚBLICAS

El Departamento de Transporte de Georgia (GDOT) está buscando formas de mejorar la carretera SR20 entre Canton y Cumming. Vamos a auspiciar una segunda ronda de sesiones abiertas informativas para presentar las soluciones preliminares y recabar las opiniones del público.

Aún nos encontramos en una etapa temprana del proceso de desarrollo del proyecto, y no se ha identificado ninguna solución. ¡Por ello, nos interesa escuchar su opinión!

PERSONA DE CONTACTO:

Cynthia Burney
Gerente de Proyectos de GDOT
sr20improvements@dot.ga.gov
404.631.1851



SR20
IMPROVEMENTS
CANTON TO CUMMING



Tuesday, December 10, 2013
5:00 - 7:00 p.m.
Calvary Baptist Church
137 Hightower Road/SR 369
Ball Ground, GA

Thursday, December 12, 2013
5:00 - 7:00 p.m.
Otwell Middle School
605 Tribble Gap Road
Cumming, GA

WE NEED TO HEAR FROM YOU.
The Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) is seeking long term solutions to improve SR 20 between Canton and Cumming. The goal is to provide a safe and reliable roadway that would operate acceptably through the year 2045.

Everyone has a voice in this project. We're hosting a second round of open house sessions to present draft solutions and to get feedback from the public. There is no formal presentation, just drop in during open house hours. The same information will be presented at both sessions, so please attend the meeting most convenient to you. We hope to see you there.

THANKS FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION!

GDOT hosted two public information open houses (PIOH) in May 2013 to gain input from the local residents and corridor users on improvements and safety concerns along SR 20 from I-575 in Canton to SR 400 in Cumming. These PIOHs were the first step in the project development process. More than 360 citizens attended the two open house sessions. Attendees were given the opportunity to talk to the project team and provide feedback on a series of informational boards that displayed project related material such as aerial views of the study corridor, the project history and timeline, and the draft Need and Purpose statement. Many comments were received regarding access, mobility and congestion. Attendees also identified specific locations along the SR 20 corridor where traffic congestion and safety are a concern. A full Scoping Report is available on the project website: www.dot.ga.gov/sr20improvements



Participants reviewed displays and spoke one-on-one with project staff during the May 2013 public information open houses.

THE ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW PROCESS.

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), in cooperation with the Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT), will prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for proposed transportation improvements in the vicinity of State Route 20. An EIS is a document required by the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) for federal actions which could significantly affect the quality of the environment. An EIS describes the positive and negative environmental effects of a proposed action. The document also includes one or more alternative actions that may be chosen to address the transportation needs identified. The development of an EIS must follow the NEPA process, which is designed to promote informed decision making by federal agencies by making "detailed information concerning significant environmental impacts" available to everyone. The schedule illustrates the key elements and timeframes of this planning process.



WHAT'S NEXT?

The project team will evaluate comments received during the December PIOHs, respond to comments, and advance alternatives for further development. In 2014, the alternatives considered for advancement for further study in the Draft EIS will be presented to the public for comment.



Georgia Department of Transportation
c/o Sycamore Consulting, Inc.
195 Arizona Avenue, Unit LW-4
Atlanta, GA 30307

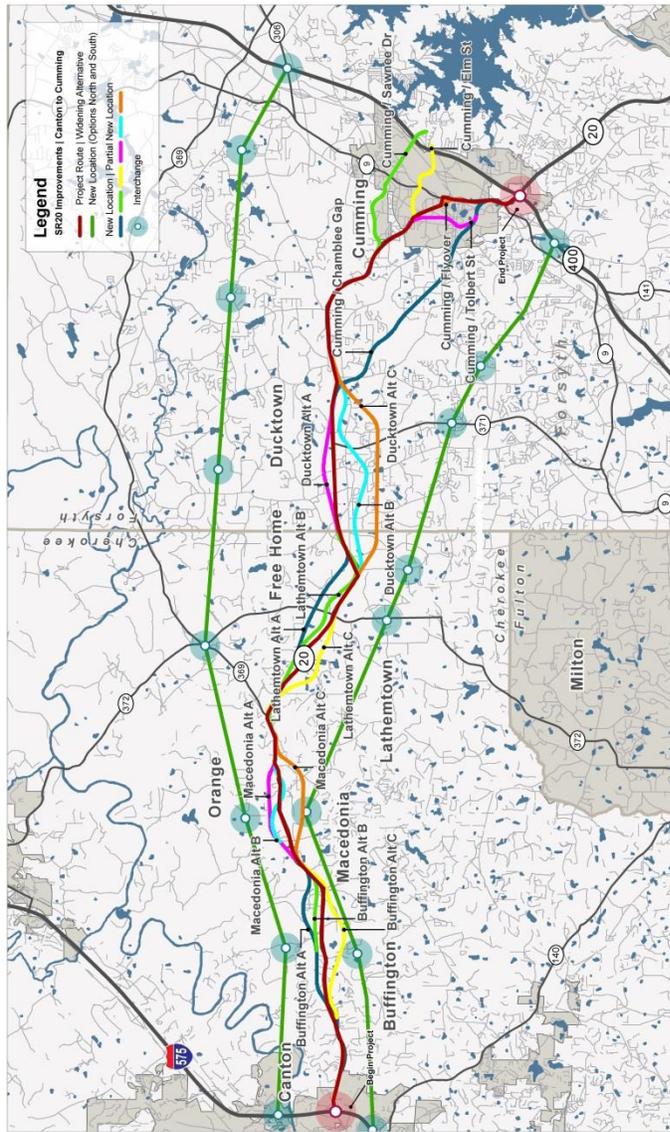
STAY INVOLVED!
GDOT PROJECT MANAGER
Cynthia Burney | 404.631.1851 | SR20improvements@dot.ga.gov | www.dot.ga.gov/sr20improvements



View our Scoping Report online at www.dot.ga.gov/sr20improvements

HELP IDENTIFY A SOLUTION.

The development and evaluation of project alternatives is central to the NEPA process. Since our public information open houses for scoping the project in May, the project team has worked to identify several options to address the challenges along SR 20 based on the input received at the May meetings. Some of these Build Alternatives include widening only on SR 20, constructing bypasses, new location roadways, or a combination of ideas. As a part of the project development process, a No Build Alternative and Transportation System Management (TSM) concept will also be considered. At this point in the process, there is no final solution - that's why we need to hear from you! Come to the open houses and tell us what you like and what you don't so that we can craft the best possible solution to address the Need and Purpose identified for SR 20 from Canton to Cumming. Please note, the alternatives shown are preliminary and will be adjusted based on public and stakeholder feedback.



Potential Alternatives Map

Alternatives shown are preliminary and will be adjusted based on public and stakeholder feedback.



GLOSSARY OF TERMS

National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) – a regulation that requires the full consideration of environmental effects for any project that may receive federal funding.

Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) – A document required by the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) for federal actions that could significantly affect the quality of the human and natural environment.

Alternatives Analysis – The process by which preferred alternative solutions are evaluated to determine the preferred alternative to address a project's need and purpose. This process narrows down the range of alternatives through an increasingly detailed set of criteria that evaluates technical performance and considers the desires of the community. Alternatives considered include:

No Build Alternative – required by NEPA, the "No Build" illustrates what happens if no improvements are made to SR 20 and no new roadways are constructed in the area.

Transportation System Management Concept – the "TSM" is a concept that would seek to improve the operations of SR 20 relying upon lower cost roadway improvements such as intersection signalization, turn lane additions, and shoulder upgrades.

Build Alternatives - concepts that would add roadway capacity to the SR 20 corridor by adding lanes to the existing roadway, construction of new location roadways or partial new location roadways along portions of SR 20, rerouting the SR 20 designation onto other existing facilities, or a combination of these strategies.

For more information about the FHWA NEPA process, visit: <http://environment.fhwa.dot.gov/projeiv/>



Appendix E: Social Media Calendar



Social Media Calendar

Date	Project	Facebook	Twitter
12/3/13	Cherokee reminder	For any Cherokee residents interested in sharing feedback on SR 20 improvements, Georgia DOT invites you to attend an Open House at Calvary Baptist Church in Ball Ground on Tuesday, December 10 from 5 to 7 p.m. For more information, visit www.dot.ga.gov/sr20improvements	Cherokee residents: GDOT will host an Open House on SR20 improvements @ Calvary Baptist, 12/10, 5PM. Details at www.dot.ga.gov/sr20improvements
12/5/13	Forsyth reminder	For any Forsyth residents interested in sharing feedback on SR 20 improvements, Georgia DOT invites you to attend an Open House at Otwell Middle School in Cumming on Thursday, December 12 from 5 to 7 p.m. For more information, visit www.dot.ga.gov/sr20improvements	Forsyth residents: GDOT will host an Open House on SR20 improvements @ Otwell MS, 12/12, 5PM. Details at www.dot.ga.gov/sr20improvements
12/6/13	Cherokee reminder	Cherokee residents: if you are interested in sharing feedback on SR 20 improvements, Georgia DOT invites you to attend an Open House at Calvary Baptist Church in Ball Ground on Tuesday, December 10 from 5 to 7 p.m. For more information, visit www.dot.ga.gov/sr20improvements	Cherokee residents: GDOT will host an Open House on SR20 improvements @ Calvary Baptist, 12/10, 5PM. Details at www.dot.ga.gov/sr20improvements
12/9/13	Cherokee final reminder	Want input on proposed SR20 improvements? Georgia DOT invites you to attend an Open House at Calvary Baptist Church in Ball Ground tomorrow from 5 to 7 p.m. For more information, visit www.dot.ga.gov/sr20improvements	Want input on proposed SR20 improvements? GDOT will host Open House @ Calvary Baptist, 5PM tmrw. Details at www.dot.ga.gov/sr20improvements
12/9/13	Forsyth reminder	Forsyth residents: if you are interested in sharing feedback on SR 20 improvements, Georgia DOT invites you to attend an Open House at Otwell Middle School in Cumming on Thursday, December 12 from 5 to 7 p.m. For more information, visit www.dot.ga.gov/sr20improvements	Forsyth residents: GDOT will host an Open House on SR20 improvements @ Otwell MS, 12/12, 5PM. Details at www.dot.ga.gov/sr20improvements
12/10/13	Cherokee PIOH (Calvary Baptist Church)	Reminder: Georgia DOT invites you to attend the Cherokee County Open House on SR 20 improvements. The meeting will be held today at Calvary Baptist Church (Ball Ground) from 5 p.m. - 7 p.m. For more information, visit www.dot.ga.gov/Projects/activeprojects/StateRoute/SR20/Pages/I-575toSR400.aspx .	Cherokee residents: there will be an Open House on SR20 improvements @ Calvary Baptist, 5PM today. Details at www.dot.ga.gov/sr20improvements
12/11/13	Cherokee follow-up	Thanks to all who attended last night's open house on SR 20 improvements. To share your feedback, visit www.dot.ga.gov/Projects/activeprojects/StateRoute/SR20/Pages/I-575toSR400.aspx .	Thanks to all who attended last night's open house on SR 20 improvements. To share your feedback, visit http://sr20.metroquest.com .
12/11/13	Forsyth final reminder	Want input on proposed SR20 improvements? Georgia DOT invites you to attend an Open House at Otwell Middle School in Cumming tomorrow from 5 to 7 p.m. For more information, visit www.dot.ga.gov/sr20improvements	Want input on proposed SR20 improvements? GDOT will host Open House @ Otwell MS (Cumming), 5PM tmrw. Details at www.dot.ga.gov/sr20improvements
12/12/13	Forsyth PIOH (Otwell Middle School)	Reminder: Georgia DOT invites you to attend an Open House on SR 20 improvements. The meeting will be held today at Otwell Middle School (Cumming) from 5 p.m. - 7 p.m. For more information, visit www.dot.ga.gov/sr20improvements	Forsyth residents: there will be an Open House on SR20 improvements @ Otwell MS, 5PM today. Details at www.dot.ga.gov/sr20improvements
12/13/13	Forsyth follow-up	Thanks to all who attended the open house meeting in Forsyth County on SR 20 improvements. If you couldn't make it, you can still share your feedback, visit http://sr20.metroquest.com .	Thanks to all who attended the open house meeting on SR 20 improvements. To share your feedback, visit http://sr20.metroquest.com .
12/16/13	MetroQuest reminders	Canton and Cumming: we want to hear from you! Share your feedback on SR 20 improvements at http://sr20.metroquest.com .	Canton and Cumming: we want to hear from you! Share your feedback on SR 20 improvements at http://sr20.metroquest.com .



Appendix F: PIOH Comment Form



COMMENT FORM
SR 20 Improvements from Canton to Cumming Public Information Open House
PI Nos: 0003681, 0002862, 0003682, Cherokee and Forsyth Counties

The Georgia Department of Transportation is seeking to identify potential improvements along SR 20 from I-575 in Canton to SR 400 in Cumming. In cooperation with the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), GDOT is developing an environmental impact Statement (EIS) to document existing issues and appropriate solutions for the corridor. To help us in identifying existing issues and needs, please provide us with your input!

Please print responses.

Name _____

Address _____

Do you support the project? (check your response)

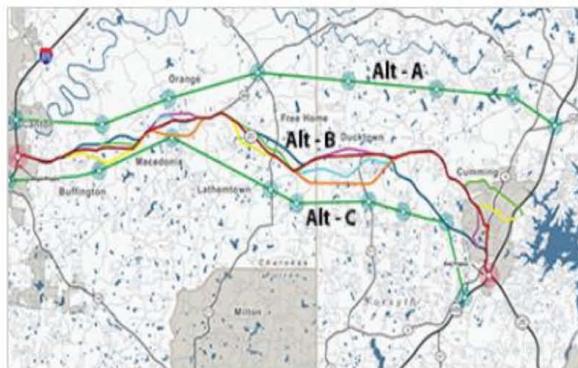
- For** **Against** **Conditional** **Uncommitted**

General Comments _____

I. Alignments

Circle along the scales below to tell us what you think.

Overall Alignment



What do you think of Alt A?



What do you think of Alt B?



What do you think of Alt C?



"Alt B" represents alternatives that include widening along existing or combinations with partial bypasses.

December 2013

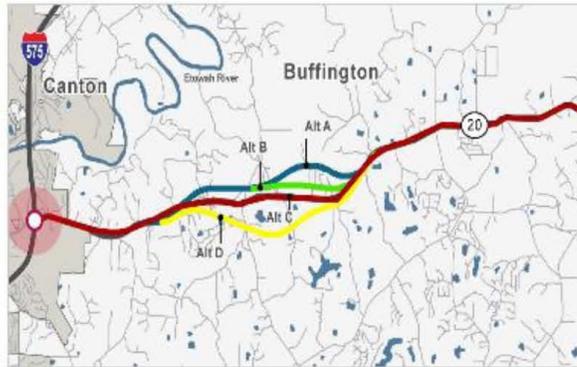


COMMENT FORM

SR 20 Improvements from Canton to Cumming Public Information Open House

PI Nos: 0003681, 0002862, 0003682, Cherokee and Forsyth Counties

Buffington Area



What do you think of Alt A (Blue)?

Dislike Like

What do you think of Alt B (Green)?

Dislike Like

What do you think of Alt C (Red)?

Dislike Like

What do you think of Alt D (Yellow)?

Dislike Like

Macedonia Area



What do you think of Alt A (Pink)?

Dislike Like

What do you think of Alt B (Teal)?

Dislike Like

What do you think of Alt C (Red)?

Dislike Like

What do you think of Alt D (Orange)?

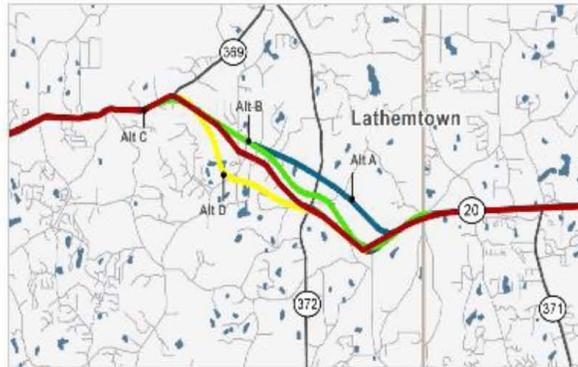
Dislike Like

December 2013



COMMENT FORM
SR 20 Improvements from Canton to Cumming Public Information Open House
PI Nos: 0003681, 0002862, 0003682, Cherokee and Forsyth Counties

Lathemtown Area



What do you think of Alt A (Blue)?

Dislike Like

What do you think of Alt B (Green)?

Dislike Like

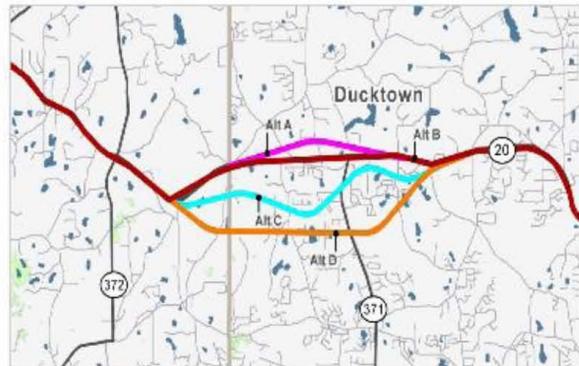
What do you think of Alt C (Red)?

Dislike Like

What do you think of Alt D (Yellow)?

Dislike Like

Ducktown Area



What do you think of Alt A (Pink)?

Dislike Like

What do you think of Alt B (Red)?

Dislike Like

What do you think of Alt C (Teal)?

Dislike Like

What do you think of Alt D (Orange)?

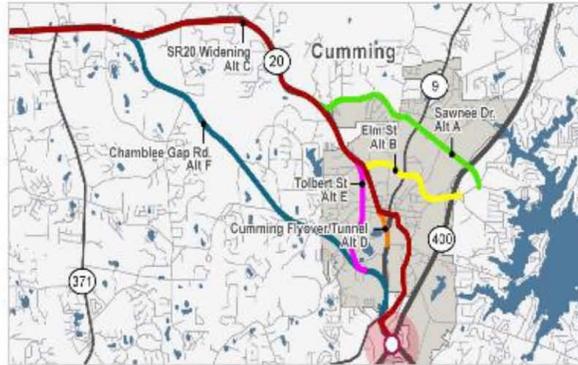
Dislike Like

December 2013



COMMENT FORM
SR 20 Improvements from Canton to Cumming Public Information Open House
PI Nos: 0003681, 0002862, 0003682, Cherokee and Forsyth Counties

Cumming Area



What do you think of Alt A (Green)?

Dislike Like

What do you think of Alt B (Yellow)?

Dislike Like

What do you think of Alt C (Red)?

Dislike Like

What do you think of Alt D (Orange)?

Dislike Like

What do you think of Alt E (Pink)?

Dislike Like

What do you think of Alt F (Blue)?

Dislike Like

For the following questions, please select **Yes** or **No** and indicate if you think the image is appropriate or not appropriate for SR 20. Please respond such that yes=appropriate for the SR 20 and no= not appropriate. Please provide additional comments below.

II. Facility Type

A. Freeway

Yes No



Comment: _____

December 2013



COMMENT FORM
SR 20 Improvements from Canton to Cumming Public Information Open House
PI Nos: 0003681, 0002862, 0003682, Cherokee and Forsyth Counties

B. Rural Arterial

 Yes	 No
--	---



Comment: _____

C. Suburban Arterial

 Yes	 No
--	---



Comment: _____

D. Urban Arterial

 Yes	 No
--	---



Comment: _____

December 2013



COMMENT FORM
SR 20 Improvements from Canton to Cumming Public Information Open House
PI Nos: 0003681, 0002862, 0003682, Cherokee and Forsyth Counties

III. Medians

A. Depressed, Grassed Median

 Yes	 No
--	---



Comment: _____

B. Depressed, Landscaped Median

 Yes	 No
--	---



Comment: _____

C. Raised, Landscaped Median

 Yes	 No
--	---



Comment: _____

December 2013



COMMENT FORM
SR 20 Improvements from Canton to Cumming Public Information Open House
PI Nos: 0003681, 0002862, 0003682, Cherokee and Forsyth Counties

D. Raised, Grassed Median



Comment: _____

E. Raised, Hardscaped Median



Comment: _____

IV. Bicycle Features

A. Multiuse Path



Comment: _____

December 2013



COMMENT FORM
SR 20 Improvements from Canton to Cumming Public Information Open House
PI Nos: 0003681, 0002862, 0003682, Cherokee and Forsyth Counties

B. Adjacent Bike Lane and Sidewalk

 Yes	 No
--	---



Comment: _____

C. Bike Lane on Shoulder

 Yes	 No
--	---



Comment: _____

V. Sidewalks

A. Sidewalk Adjacent to Curb and Gutter

 Yes	 No
--	---



Comment: _____

December 2013



COMMENT FORM

SR 20 Improvements from Canton to Cumming Public Information Open House

PI Nos: 0003681, 0002862, 0003682, Cherokee and Forsyth Counties

B. Sidewalk with Grass Strip

 Yes	 No
--	---



Comment: _____

C. Sidewalk with Buffer

 Yes	 No
---	--



Comment: _____

VI. Other

How did you hear about this Open House? (check)

- Radio
 Newspaper
 Signs
 Word of Mouth
 Mailed Meeting Notice
 Newsletter
 Other (please specify): _____

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.

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COMMENT FORM

SR 20 Improvements from Canton to Cumming Public Information Open House

PI Nos: 0003681, 0002862, 0003682, Cherokee and Forsyth Counties

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 process after attending this Open House? Yes No

Please share any additional comments about improving SR 20 from Canton to Cumming:

Name: _____

Address: _____

Email: _____

Email form to sr20improvements@dot.ga.gov, or mail to Mr. Glenn Bowman, P.E., Georgia Department of Transportation, 600 West Peachtree Street NW, 16th Floor, Atlanta, Georgia 30308

December 2013



**Appendix G: PIOH Comments
(Comment forms/Letters/Emails)**

Available upon Request



Appendix H: PIOH Response Letter

Keith Golden, P.E., Commissioner



GEORGIA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

One Georgia Center, 600 West Peachtree Street, NW
Atlanta, Georgia 30308
Telephone: (404) 631-1000

February 11, 2014

Proposed SR 20 Improvements from Canton to Cumming
Projects STP00-0002-00(862), STP00-0003-00(681), STP00-0003-00(682)
P.I. Nos. 0002862, 0003681, 0003682, Cherokee and Forsyth Counties
www.dot.ga.gov/sr20improvements

Re: Responses to December 2013 Public Information Open House Comments

To the stakeholders of SR 20 between Canton and Cumming:

Thank you for your comments concerning the proposed project to improve State Route (SR) 20 between Interstate (I)-575 in Cherokee County and SR 400 in Forsyth County. Please understand we are early in the process and there will be multiple opportunities to provide feedback as we narrow down the alternatives to arrive at a final solution. The Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) appreciates your participation and all of the input that was received as a result of the December 10 and 12, 2013 Public Information Open Houses (PIOHs) as well as provided through the project and MetroQuest survey websites. All comments received will be part of the official record of the project.

A total of 532 people attended the PIOHs (259 in Ball Ground and 273 in Cumming) and 6,707 visits to the MetroQuest survey website were made. Of the 1,997 respondents who submitted a formal comment as of January 13, 2014, the distribution was as follows:

- 158 paper comment forms,
- 28 court reporter comments,
- 16 letters,
- 36 email comments,
- 1 petition (with regards to opposing the southern bypass alternatives in the Ducktown area), and
- 1,767 visitors left feedback via the MetroQuest website, which includes 241 visitors who left written comments via the MetroQuest website.

Several individuals submitted multiple comments, which accounts for a difference in the number of respondents and the total number of responses received. Additionally, many visitors to the PIOHs and MetroQuest website provided map-based input or survey data on areas of concern or community facilities, which are counted toward the 'feedback' category in the bullets above. Written comments via MetroQuest are those in which typed comments were provided. All input received during and after the formal comment period has been added to a database of locally important areas to help the project team better understand the issues and guide their development of solutions.

This response letter addresses all comments received so that everyone who has expressed interest in the process can be informed regarding all concerns raised and the responses provided. The comments have been consolidated into the following categories: GDOT Project Development Process and Schedule, Public Involvement, Need and Purpose (e.g., Mobility and Truck Considerations), Potential Impacts (e.g., Environmental, Community Feel, and Real Estate), Alternatives (e.g., Alignments, Rerouting, Bypasses, and Medians), Bike/Pedestrian Accommodations, Roundabouts, and Next Steps. This response letter is organized by category with a paraphrased citizen's comment or question included in **bold**, followed by our response.

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February 10, 2014
Page 2 of 7

1. GDOT Project Development Process and Schedule: How will the decision be made? What is the project schedule? Solutions are needed now.

We've initiated the process of evaluating different improvement strategies and alternatives in accordance with state and federal requirements. Because Federal funds will be used for this project, GDOT, in partnership with the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) must follow the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) requirements to identify a solution for the corridor.

Currently, the project is in the Alternatives Screening phase of the NEPA process, where we must first identify a full range of alternatives that can potentially address the identified Need and Purpose along SR 20, which is to improve mobility, reduce congestion, and improve safety. Then, we narrow those potential solutions based on performance and environmental criteria as well as the potential to avoid or minimize impacts to resources. Our current step in the process is Screen 2, where we evaluate these alternatives for performance as well as impacts to the natural (protected species, ecological, water quality, etc.), social (such as residences, businesses, churches, etc.), cultural (history, archaeology, etc.), and physical (air, noise, hazardous waste, etc.) environment. We will present the results of Screen 2 for each alternative to the public in the spring or summer of 2014. At that time, we will consider the technical analyses and public input to narrow these alternatives evaluated during screening and develop the reasonable range of alternatives that will be carried forward for further evaluation in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS).

The detailed environmental evaluation in the DEIS will assess how the reasonable range of alternatives avoid, minimize, and mitigate impacts to natural, social, cultural and physical resources while meeting the Need and Purpose of the project. The DEIS is a multi-year process, which is expected to be completed in 2016. Stakeholders, the public, and the partner agencies will all provide feedback to inform the decision. There are many opportunities to get involved in the process. You can learn more by reviewing the **Public Involvement Plan** under "Project Information" on the project webpage www.dot.ga.gov/sr20improvements.

In summary, the schedule is as follows. During 2013-2014, the screening of alternatives is being evaluated. During 2014-2016, detailed environmental analysis will be conducted on the reasonable range of alternatives through the DEIS. Once the DEIS has been drafted and reviewed by the agencies in 2016, it will be brought to the public and the Citizen Advisory Committee (CAC) for input. Public involvement opportunities are afforded throughout the NEPA process at project milestones. The Final EIS and Record of Decision (ROD) are anticipated in 2018. The ROD represents the final decision of the selected alternative. At that point we can complete the design and begin acquiring right of way. Construction activities are anticipated to begin in 2020 and beyond.

2. Public Involvement: How can the public find out about the project and meetings?

The project website provides access to information about the project and is updated with opportunities to get involved. You can also use the website to contact the Project Manager and request more information. We maintain a project database which we will use to email meeting announcements and project materials, such as newsletters, to those who have provided comments or who have requested to be informed about the project. If you are receiving this letter and have provided your contact information, you are now a part of the database. Additionally, information will be provided periodically to the media to notify the public of project updates.

To navigate the project website noted above, select *View Website* under the I-575 to SR 400 (Canton/Cumming) section. Then navigate to the bottom of the page under the section **Project Information**. Here you will find our current documents. Some of these documents will change from time to time as the project develops and updates are appropriate for effectively completing this project.

The SR 20 Improvements Public Involvement Process has been a priority since the project kicked off in early 2013. We developed a Public Involvement Plan that is available for review and download from our project website. We encourage you to review the document, as it outlines the full scope of activities for this process. The latest version is available here:

http://www.dot.ga.gov/Projects/activeprojects/StateRoute/SR20/Documents/SR20_PIP_100713.pdf.

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3. Need and Purpose: A project is needed to relieve traffic and provide safety. Why does this project overlap with the I-575 and Scott Road project?

As documented in the Need and Purpose Statement, available for review at www.dot.ga.gov/sr20improvements, this project is needed due to unacceptable levels of congestion; high crash, injury and fatality rates; and limited mobility for east/west travel movements between Canton and Cumming. Although a project is currently underway for the segment of SR 20 between I-575 and Scott Road, it is scheduled to advance ahead of the proposed project between I-575 and SR 400. To ensure a full range of options that could address the Need and Purpose are evaluated, the corridor between I-575 and SR 400 is being considered.

4. Need and Purpose: Mobility- There needs to be a limited access east/west corridor north of the area. There needs to be an I-75 to I-85 corridor.

The proposed project must address the Need and Purpose identified for the SR 20 corridor within the study termini of I-575 and SR 400. The Need and Purpose of the SR 20 Improvements Project (available at www.dot.ga.gov/sr20improvements) identifies improvements to east / west mobility between I-575 and SR 400 as one of the project objectives under the need **Improve Mobility for People and Goods**. A limited access corridor that may potentially address this need is part of the initial universe of alternatives that is currently under evaluation. Additional information is available in the Alternatives Analysis Methodology and the Screen 1: Fatal Flaw Strategy Screen Technical memorandum available for review at www.dot.ga.gov/sr20improvements.

5. Need and Purpose: Truck Considerations- How will truck traffic be addressed?

Although many comments were received about the preference for trucks to be removed from SR 20, this corridor is an arterial designated to accommodate trucks. There are many studies and documents to provide support for accommodating truck traffic along SR 20 corridor between I-575 and SR 400, which are outlined in the project Need and Purpose. As such, the Alternatives Analysis Screen 2 evaluation will analyze the performance of all alternatives for multiple criteria, which specifically addresses trucks and passenger vehicles. The results of the Screen 2 Alternatives Analysis will be presented in the next public meeting and available on the project website at www.dot.ga.gov/sr20improvements.

6. Potential Impacts: Environmental- How will the project account for potential impacts of the proposed project? Consider these types of impacts: residential/business displacements, communities (including schools, neighborhoods, old family lands), consistency with local land uses, change in number/location of SR 20 access points, farmland, rural/natural feel of the area, noise, potential for new congestion, emergency management services, utilities, historic areas, ecological resources, and cemeteries.

GDOT strives to balance the need to move vehicles in a safe and efficient manner with quality of life issues. As part of the NEPA process, the team must document the potential impacts to natural, social, cultural, and physical resources and evaluate them in detail. We will work toward developing solutions that meet the needs of the traveling public while avoiding, minimizing, and mitigating impacts to the environmental resources along the corridor including:

- Natural (e.g., wetlands, streams, farmland, protected species, environmental permitting);
- Social (e.g., economics, social and community assessment [neighborhoods, subdivisions, community infrastructure [including schools and emergency management services]], churches, businesses, institutions, and commercial or residential displacements);
- Cultural (e.g., historic properties, cemeteries, Native American interests, and archaeological findings); and
- Physical (e.g., air quality, noise quality, hazardous material involvement, utilities).

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The coordination for land use planning is being conducted with the planners at the cities of Canton and Cumming, and Cherokee and Forsyth counties. These localities are also serving on the project's Technical Advisory Committee in the role of evaluating the consistency between the local land use and zoning plans and the proposed design alternatives.

For more on the FHWA NEPA process, visit <http://environment.fhwa.dot.gov/projdev/>

7. Potential Impacts: Community Feel- Please keep in mind this is a rural area and the aesthetics and community feel are important.

We understand that the look and feel is of significant importance to the local residents and as such we reach out for feedback to understand how to best design to complement the area. While our goal is to provide a facility that meets the needs of the traveling public, how we make this facility fit into the local community is important to us and requires understanding your priorities. We pledge to follow GDOT's Context Sensitive Design (CSD) Policy to ensure that the transportation investments create the greatest value possible within the community. Please look for future opportunities to continue to work with us as we engage the community in decisions once project alternatives are identified and begin to advance to design. Aesthetics and visual impacts of the landscape will be evaluated for each alternative advancing for analysis in the DEIS (as referenced in the Environmental Methodologies Memo on the project website: www.dot.ga.gov/sr20improvements).

8. Potential Impacts: Real Estate- Now that these alternatives have been shown to the public, do we need to disclose this project when listing properties for sale?

Property owners should consult with their real estate agent for information regarding what needs to be disclosed to prospective buyers. However, as discussed above, the NEPA process requires the evaluation of a range of alternatives, including a No Build or 'No Action' (do nothing) alternative. Since it is very early in the evaluation process, it is premature to assume which alternative will advance and this information could also be disclosed to prospective buyers.

9. Alternatives: Alignments- The following are needed: an east/west highway; widening to 4-lanes; a new location/outer perimeter; turn lanes, signal timing, and widening improvements in addition to a new location freeway; or a 3-lane roadway like in Cherokee County.

The Alternatives Analysis and NEPA process require an evaluation of a full range of alternative solutions that address the project's Need and Purpose. We begin by identifying the full range of alternatives, then narrow these down based on a quantitative and qualitative screening analyses. We have developed initial alternatives ranging from minor improvements of the existing route, such as adding turn lanes and optimizing signal timing; to providing additional through lanes; to the development of new location access controlled freeways. Each alternative will be evaluated based on the Screen 2 criteria to determine performance and levels of impact. This process is currently underway as part of Screen 2 and the results will be presented to the public in the spring or summer of 2014. To review the alternatives displays from the PIOH, the virtual PIOH, and display boards, please view the project website under **Public Information Open House (December 2013)** or the **Fatal Flaw Strategy Screening** (Screen 1 analysis) located under **Project Information** at: www.dot.ga.gov/sr20improvements.

10. Alternatives: Rerouting Options- Could SR 369 or Bethelview Road be used for rerouting of SR 20?

Yes, these are potential rerouting alternatives. As a result of this suggestion, we have added alternatives which would consider rerouting SR 20 onto SR 369 and also one that considers rerouting onto Bethelview Roads to our Screen 2 evaluation. We will present the results of these alternatives at the next public meetings in the spring or summer of 2014, as well as on the project website.

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11. Alternatives: Bypasses- How do bypasses work?

Bypasses offer benefits such as providing additional lanes of traffic to improve mobility and traffic flow around congested areas while maintaining access and providing a performance benefit for those traveling on the existing facility. This may improve performance while avoiding and/or minimizing impacts to residents, businesses, and other resources along existing SR 20.

The bypass alternatives were developed as an alternative to the widening of existing SR 20 in areas that are heavily developed or in areas where widening may encounter a significant number of impacts to environmental resources. The intent is to find an alternative location that would provide fewer accumulated impacts. NEPA law requires us to avoid impacts to environmental resources and then when not possible, to minimize impacts and provide mitigation for those impacts.

The bypasses could be developed in one of two ways. One possibility is to divert SR 20 onto these new location bypasses and then tie back into existing SR 20. The existing SR 20 in these bypass locations would become a local road. The second type of bypass would be to create a one-way pair whereby existing SR 20 would handle traffic flowing in one direction and the bypass would handle the traffic flowing in the opposite direction. This would minimize the footprint since the new roadway would only need to be wide enough to accommodate the volume of traffic flowing in one direction. This in turn could reduce impacts and costs. The one-way pair bypass alternative would need to consider accommodation of access to the properties in the affected area using north/south connector roads and u-turns at the beginning and end of these one-way pair bypasses. These details would be developed in a later phase of the project during the DEIS phase and would involve seeking public input on viability, location of access points, and other considerations.

12. Alternatives: Medians- What are the pros and cons of the different types of medians?

Once we identify the alternatives that will advance into the DEIS, we will begin to focus more on design details, including the types of median options. Divided highways with depressed or raised medians provide substantial improvements to traffic flow and safety to the traveling public. Medians do carry increased construction and maintenance costs when compared to undivided highways. The current and projected traffic volumes, high-rate of speed, and high-rate of accidents along SR 20 indicate that medians would likely improve the safety and traffic flow of the corridor; thereby justifying the costs associated with their construction and operation.

Hardscaped or paved medians are typically utilized in areas where environmental considerations constrict the roadway footprint or right-of-way costs are high. These medians provide similar safety and operational improvements within a smaller footprint than a depressed median; however, maintenance cost is higher and in most cases, there is a lower posted speed limit. Newer construction techniques and materials have improved the look and feel of these medians, when constructed in the appropriate areas.

Landscaping in the median provides several benefits over grassed or paved medians. These benefits range from reducing the glare from on-coming traffic, reducing stormwater pollution, and improving aesthetic appeal and community character. A variety of landscape options assist in providing a unique visual sense of place however, there are limitations of what can be used based on safety considerations. These benefits can also come at an increased maintenance cost to GDOT or the local community.

Guardrail is typically installed in narrower depressed medians to reduce or prevent impact with stationary objects such as poles, trees and drainage features, as well as serving as a barrier between on-coming traffic, and to prevent encountering unrecoverable slopes. These protective barriers carry high construction and maintenance costs and are typically seen as an eye-sore when compared to providing a wider median.

Both raised medians (with curb and gutter) and depressed medians collect storm water in order to reduce the potential for hydroplaning on roadways. Raised medians typically convey water via underground pipes, while depressed medians convey water via open ditches that are then piped to the outside ditches and conveyance systems. Typically, the maintenance and construction cost associated with raised medians is higher than that of depressed median, as they require complex underground drainage systems.

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At this stage in the design process, we are still at a very rough conceptual level and have not made decisions regarding specific design details. We have gathered initial ideas from the public on the types of details they might like to see. As we narrow the alternatives, we will also develop more detail in our design including the design of the medians.

13. Bike/Pedestrian Accommodations: The project needs to balance bike and pedestrian accommodations with minimizing overall impacts and should be applied in a safe and context sensitive manner.

The GDOT has adopted a Complete Streets policy that emphasizes safety, mobility, and consideration of accessibility for all modes of travel (including pedestrians, bicyclists, transit riders, and motorists) and individuals of all ages and abilities during the design of transportation projects. Therefore, the design approach will consider a "balance" across modes as appropriate to the type of roadway and context within the SR 20 project area.

We have received a mix of comments both for and against bicycle lanes along SR 20. According to the Georgia Statewide Bike Map (2010), SR 20 is not currently designated as a state bicycle route. Cherokee County does not have a bicycle and pedestrian master plan. However, the City of Canton has a master plan, accommodating bicycle and pedestrian connections from the downtown area to commercial and residential neighborhoods within the city limits, which extends into the SR 20 study area just east of I-575 for approximately 2000 feet. The Forsyth County Bicycle Transportation and Pedestrian Walkways 2025 Plan identifies SR 20 through Forsyth County as a proposed sidewalk route. Phase 5 of the Big Creek Greenway, a multi-use trail (accommodates pedestrians and bicycles) generally traveling north and south, is also planned to cross over as well as utilize a portion of SR 20 west of Sawnee Mountain Preserve in Forsyth County.

We have heard from some residents that the bike lanes (paved shoulders signed as bike lanes) installed as part of the recently completed passing lanes project of SR 20 in Cherokee County were a poorly conceived idea. However, due to GDOT's *Complete Streets Policy*, bicycle accommodations must be considered on facilities where evidence of bicycle traffic exists. Additionally, it is GDOT policy to identify all 6.5' wide paved shoulders as bike-able shoulders. We will continue to consider alternatives that try to accommodate bicycles and pedestrians as we advance the design details. We look forward to a continued conversation with the public on these accommodations and their viability when weighed against needs and impacts.

14. Roundabouts: It would be good to look at roundabouts for intersections along the corridor. Roundabouts would not be a good idea.

Roundabouts provide a number of safety, operational, and other benefits when compared to other types of intersections. Specifically, they have fewer conflict points, lower speeds, and have been found to reduce the number and severity of crashes, fuel consumption, and air pollution in certain circumstances. It is current GDOT policy that roundabouts be considered as an alternative for all new intersections as well as for existing intersections that have been identified as needing major safety or operational improvements.

At this stage of the alternatives development, roundabouts have not yet been studied to determine viability or specific locations. As part of the Alternatives Analysis process (current phase), an initial, planning-level roundabout analysis will be performed to identify potential roundabout locations along existing SR 20 and will be included as part of the Alternatives Analysis results. As we get deeper into the process and begin to develop additional detail on the alternative designs, we will consider the viability of roundabouts at the intersections along SR 20 and along any alternatives that advance into the DEIS phase of consideration.

15. Next Steps: Where do we go from here?

As a result of the December 10 and 12, 2013 PIOHs we have summarized all feedback into a PIOH #2 Summary Report, which is available on the project website or by contacting the GDOT project manager. Over the next few months, we will complete Screen 2 of the alternatives by analyzing the performance and assessing the impacts of

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the alternatives according to the Screen 2 criteria, as described at the December PIOHs and also described in the *Alternatives Analysis Methodology* document posted under **Project Information** on the project website. GDOT will continue to consult with the advisory committees throughout this process. We will hold additional public meetings in the spring or summer of 2014 to share the results of the alternatives screening process, as well as request more public input.

The GDOT values each comment received for this project. We hope you will continue to stay engaged throughout the design process and continue to provide feedback so we can develop the best solution for addressing the needs of this important state route while trying to fit into your local community. Our next opportunity for input is anticipated in the spring or summer of 2014. This will provide another opportunity to comment as the project advances. Should you have any further questions, comments, or concerns, please contact the GDOT project manager, Cynthia Burney, or email us at SR20Improvements@dot.ga.gov. Again, thank you for your observations and remarks. For project status updates, schedule information, information about our process, and other additional information, please visit the project website at: <http://www.dot.ga.gov/sr20improvements>.

Sincerely,



Glenn Bowman, P.E.
Acting State Environmental Administrator

GB/sp/ld

cc: Cynthia Burney, GDOT Project Manager
Scott Gero, AECOM