

Welcome to the GA 400 Express Lanes Study
Public Information
Open House



Georgia Department of Transportation
March 2012

Feasibility Study

Welcome to the Public Information Open House for the GA 400 Express Lanes Feasibility Study in Fulton and Forsyth counties. Public Information Open Houses for the study are being held at several locations in the GA 400 corridor this month. This presentation was developed to provide an introduction to the study and details on the study's scope and schedule. At the conclusion of the video, please visit the stations around the room. Please let us know what you think by submitting a comment with the form provided or by visiting the court reporter. Your opinion matters to us!

Study Background

- Initiated in 2005 with HOV; now including tolling
- 2007 State Transportation Board Resolution:
All new capacity on limited access corridors shall be managed lanes.
- Atlanta Regional Managed Lanes System Plan



Improvements to the section of GA 400 from I-285 to SR 20 were initially considered in 2005 in the form of High Occupancy Vehicle or HOV lanes. Since then, the scope of the study has changed to include tolling. Two significant developments led to the change. First, the State Transportation Board adopted a resolution in June 2007 directing that all new capacity lanes within limited access corridors in Metro Atlanta shall be managed lanes. Second, to study and coordinate the implementation of the managed lanes, GDOT developed and adopted the Atlanta Regional Managed Lane System Plan (MLSP). The MLSP identifies a network of tolled lanes designed to provide additional and more reliable travel options for motorists.

The MLSP establishes some initial ideas for managed lane implementation on the GA 400 corridor. The GA 400 Express Lanes Feasibility Study is taking a closer look at the corridor to determine what, if any, specific improvements should be advanced for further analysis. To adhere to Board policy and to maintain consistency with the MLSP, all potential future improvements for consideration on GA 400 will include tolling.

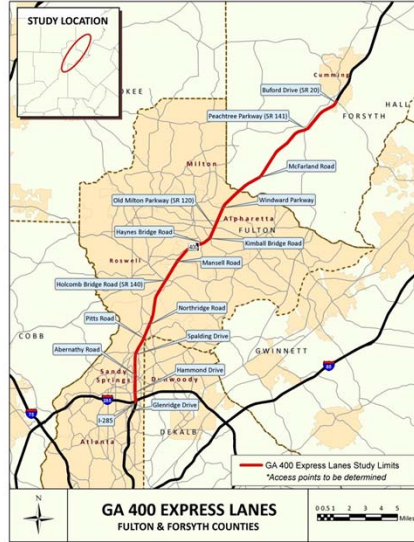


What is this study all about?

- Improving mobility in the GA 400 Corridor
- Considering addition of tolled Express Lanes
- Identifying:
 - Problems
 - Issues
 - Potential Express Lanes Solutions
 - Community Comments

Tired of being stuck in traffic? The GA 400 Express Lanes Feasibility study is looking at ways to give motorists another option than to “just wait it out”. The study is considering the addition of tolled Express Lanes on GA 400. Currently the study is working to answer such questions as “What problems can a potential future project solve?”, “What issues does it need to address?”, “What are the options for express lanes solutions?”, “What does the community think?” and ultimately “Should we move forward with a deeper analysis of alternatives”? There is the possibility that through this feasibility process, it may be decided that no alternatives should move forward. Your input will play a critical role in that decision.

Study area extends on
 GA 400 from I-285
 interchange to SR 20.



The feasibility study area starts at the I-285 interchange in Fulton County and extends 24 miles to the SR 20 interchange in Forsyth County.

Why Tolled Express Lanes?

- 2007 Board Resolution
- Congestion and limited transportation funding are two critical issues.
- Managing the lanes with tolls provides drivers with a choice for a reliable trip.
- Tolling the lanes also can offset cost of operation and maintenance.



The Board's decision on managed lanes provided the framework for all future improvement studies and projects, specifically that no general purpose lanes would be considered. Tolled express lanes, a type of managed lane, are a viable solution to address both the critical issues of worsening congestion and limited transportation funding. Here's how they work. The express lanes are managed by a variable priced toll. When the general purpose and the express lanes are free flowing, the toll will be lower. As congestion increases, so will the toll. The demand in the express lane can be managed by the price of the toll to ensure that traffic is flowing at a targeted minimum speed of 45 miles per hour at all times. When the general purpose lanes are congested, motorists have the choice to use the free-flow Express Lanes to save trip time. Express Lanes provide drivers with more reliable trip times on those days when they need it. Proceeds generated by the tolls can also be used to offset the cost of future operation and maintenance of the lanes.

Why are we here tonight?

- To introduce the study
- To get your thoughts:
 - ▣ Draft Needs and Purpose
 - ▣ Draft Evaluation Criteria
 - ▣ Issues and Areas of Concern
- To help decide if a project moves forward
- To answer any questions



So, why are we here tonight? We are holding this open house for several reasons. Because we care about your thoughts and feelings, we want to make you aware and educated about the study so we can get your input. As you walk around the room tonight, you will notice displays depicting what we know about the corridor from a technical point of view. We recognize that you can offer the important “on the ground” insider perspective on GA 400. As residents, employees, and/or travelers you offer a unique knowledge of the issues, problems, and challenges as well as what we should consider in potential tolled solutions. We’ve developed some draft ideas on needs for the study area, a purpose for potential solutions, and some draft criteria to evaluate possible alternatives. We’d like to know your thoughts and suggestions. Additionally, please let us know if you have any questions on the study or the material presented.



Study Schedule

- Feasibility Study: Initial data collection, public comment period and technical analysis - completed June 2012

- If a Project moves forward:
 - More detailed environmental analysis and continued public involvement - start late summer 2012
 - Environmental Document Approval – anticipated late 2013
 - Right-of-way acquisition and construction - if funding becomes available

We anticipate the technical components of this initial feasibility phase, such as data collection and analysis, will be complete the end of June 2012. Your comments received during these PIOHs are important as the first public response to the study. Your input will be carried forward and considered along with the technical information to determine if the study should progress beyond the feasibility stage into a project. Should a project move forward, draft alternatives will be further studied for their potential impacts to environmental features, such as natural, historic, and community resources; air quality; noise; and others. More public meetings like this one will be also included in the continuation of the process. If initiated, the next phase is anticipated to begin in late summer of 2012, and is expected to wrap up late 2013. It is important to note that if the study does move forward into development of a proposed project, there currently is no funding identified for right of way acquisition and construction. Even with the tolling component, there may be insufficient funding to build any improvements.



Contacts

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You may also submit written comments to:

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Thank you for attending our public information open house. Please visit the information stations around the room, comment area, or court reporter to leave your input! Tonight's displays will also be available on the study website and locations listed in the welcome letter you received in the handout package.