



**Russell R. McMurry, P.E.,**  
**Commissioner**  
One Georgia Center  
600 West Peachtree Street, NW  
Atlanta, GA 30308  
(404) 631-1000 Main Office

February 6, 2026

Re: Responses to Public Information Open House Comments for PI: 0013917, Fulton and Cobb Counties, Interstate (I)-285 from I-20/Fulton to Atlanta Road (Rd)/Cobb-West Express Lane-Phase II

Thank you for your feedback concerning the above proposed project. We appreciate your participation and the questions and comments received through the project's website and the in-person events during the Public Information Open House (PIOH). As the project design and details are refined, the preferred alternative and National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) document will be available for public review at a future Public Hearing Open House (PHOH), which is currently anticipated in Q4 2026. If no significant changes are proposed, the project will proceed to right-of-way (ROW) acquisition and final design. Following the completion of all ROW acquisitions, the project design would be finalized, and the project would advance to construction.

Every comment provided during the project's comment period beginning on September 17, 2025, and ending on October 20, 2025, will be made part of the project's official record. The project's website received **2,809** page views in total, and **194** people attended the in-person open houses. Of the **197** respondents who formally commented, **31** were in **support** of the project, **118** were **opposed**, **14** were **uncommitted**, and **43** expressed **conditional support**. The Georgia Department of Transportation (Georgia DOT) also received two petitions in support of the project.

Georgia DOT has prepared a single response letter that addresses all questions and comments received during the comment period which are summarized below (in *italics*) followed by our response.

- *Commenters expressed support for the project.*

Thank you for expressing your support for the proposed project.

- *Commenters expressed general opposition to the project.*

Your opinion is invaluable while Georgia DOT navigates the early stages of preliminary project development. Georgia DOT appreciates your feedback and will be carefully considering it throughout the design process.

We encourage you to visit the project website for information and to sign up for updates as additional information becomes available.

- *Commenters think the project is unnecessary or does not meet the needs of the corridor.*

The need and purpose of the proposed project is to provide passenger vehicles, transit riders, and commercial vehicles with an effective transportation alternative to address

the following needs: unreliable trip times for commuters, lack of accessibility and regional connectivity, and legislative mandate to accelerate project delivery following the Transportation Funding Act (TFA) in response to the urgency of traffic conditions.

Georgia DOT would construct express lanes to provide an alternative for motorists and transit vehicles along the limits of the proposed project. These express lanes would be tolled to manage traffic volumes, improve travel time reliability, and increase transit options and opportunities (including providing toll-free trips for transit riders and registered vanpools).

- *Commenters expressed concern about the funding type, total cost of the project, and impact to taxpayers.*

Preliminary project funding comes from the passage of the 2015 TFA by the Georgia General Assembly and from the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA). Additionally, the project is anticipated to be delivered using a Public-Private Partnership (P3) contracting model, whereby Georgia DOT will solicit bids from private investors, equity partners, and Developers for the project. The successful bidder will then partner with Georgia DOT and secure financing for the design and construction of the project.

By conducting final design and construction of the project with private industry partners to greatly expand the options for innovative technology and funding, this would likely lessen the amount of public contribution that would otherwise be required by traditional delivery. Taxpayer obligation would be known at the time a Developer is selected.

- *Commenters expressed concern with the current proposed timeline. Some commenters requested that the project construction be expedited, requested additional information regarding the proposed timeline, or requested clarification on when the public will be able to review the final plans.*

The procurement timeline for selecting a Developer for this proposed project is still under evaluation; therefore, the start of construction has not yet been determined. The final project design will be advanced by the successful bidder (Developer) upon award of the contract.

The proposed project is currently in the preliminary design and engineering phase, which includes the environmental process. As the project design and details are refined, the preferred alternative and the NEPA document will be available for public review at a future PHOH. The PHOH is currently anticipated in Q4 2026. This timeline is subject to change.

- *Commenters expressed concern with the use of the Public-Private Partnerships (P3) model and the flexibility the program gives the private sector to set toll rates. Questions were received regarding the percentage of public and private funding, and the distribution of collected funds from use.*

Georgia DOT and the State Road and Tollway Authority (SRTA) will establish parameters that will govern toll rates, which will be refined through the procurement process. At the conclusion of the Request for Proposal (RFP) portion of the procurement process, the SRTA Board will adopt the final parameters included in the RFP prior to the execution of the contract. Information regarding policies and business rules for Georgia express lanes managed by SRTA is available at: <https://srta.ga.gov/georgia-express-lanes>.

The I-285 Westside Express Lanes is a Public-Private Partnership (P3) project. Final design and construction of the project would be conducted with private industry partners, which would greatly expand the options for innovative technology and funding. This model is also likely to reduce the amount of public contribution otherwise required by a traditional delivery method. With the P3 model, the state can leverage the project's future revenue potential to further reduce the public funding necessary for design and construction.

To deliver the proposed project following traditional design, procurement, and construction strategies, Georgia DOT would likely need to divide the project into multiple construction phases wherein construction of the project would be staggered over many years due to the size and funding needs of the proposed project corridor. Also under traditional delivery strategies, Georgia DOT carries most of the risks associated with the multiple project interfaces and coordination between projects and stakeholders.

Using the P3 model, many risks would be shifted to the P3 partner, and the overall delivery of the project is anticipated to be greatly accelerated as a P3 partner would be able to raise funds, deliver the project in larger sections, with fewer construction phases, and likely over a shorter overall construction duration than the state could as a traditional Design-Bid-Build construction project.

- *Commenters expressed concern over the inclusion of toll lanes in the proposed project and the potential for toll lanes to create inequitable corridors that exclude low-income commuters.*

The proposed project would not eliminate any existing general purpose lanes on I-285, which would remain available to drivers at no cost. Rather the proposed express lanes would be a travel option whereby users may pay a toll to use the express lanes, or continue to use the existing, free, general purpose lanes. All travelers in the general purpose lanes, including those low-income areas, would benefit from a decrease in traffic and travel time in the general purpose lanes due to the proposed express lanes project. Public transit providers that may operate in the I-285 corridor and state-registered vanpools would also be able to use the express lanes free of charge. Transit and registered vanpool riders would only need to pay their standard transit rider fee.

Georgia DOT is collaborating with the Atlanta-region Transit Link Authority (ATL), Metropolitan Atlanta Rapid Transit Authority (MARTA), Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC), and four metro Atlanta counties to advance Express Lanes Transit (ELT) to create more regional connectivity and expand transit operations in the metro region.

For general information on metro Atlanta transit operations and providers, visit [ATLTransit.ga.gov](http://ATLTransit.ga.gov).

Additionally, MARTA is concurrently conducting a planning study to improve and optimize transit connectivity in the Atlanta region on I-285. The goal of the MARTA I-285 ELT Study is to develop a plan and preliminary designs for sustainable, equitable, and premium transit service along I-285 between the H.E. Holmes MARTA Station and the Indian Creek MARTA Station; identify opportunities to leverage the proposed express lanes to better serve communities and major employment centers; and position MARTA to seek funding for the implementation of future transit solutions. More information on the study can be found here: <https://www.i285expresslanestransit.com>.

MARTA offers reduced fare programs for riders. Visit the MARTA websites at [https://itsmarta.com/tsp\\_home.aspx](https://itsmarta.com/tsp_home.aspx) or <https://itsmarta.com/reduced-fare-program.aspx> for more information on the available programs and eligibility requirements.

- *Commenters expressed concerns that they have not been given the opportunity to approve the proposed project with some requesting that the public be provided the opportunity to vote on the proposed project through a local election.*

Georgia DOT is governed by a 14-member State Transportation Board which exercises general control and supervision of the Department. The Board is entrusted with powers which include but are not limited to naming the Commissioner; designating which public roads are encompassed within the state highway system; approving long-range transportation plans; overseeing the administration of construction contracts; and authorizing lease agreements. Board members are elected by a majority of a General Assembly caucus from each of Georgia's 14 congressional districts. Each board member serves a five-year term.

In December 2009, the State Transportation Board adopted the Managed Lane System Plan (MLSP). The proposed express lanes projects on I-285 are included on the ARC's Transportation Improvement Program.

Georgia DOT has conducted public involvement throughout the preliminary development phase of the proposed project. A community survey was launched and a Community Conversations series hosted in February 2025. In-person events for the Community Conversations series were hosted at two locations along the project corridor on February 11 and 12, 2025. The Community Conversations series provided the opportunity for the project team to reintroduce the project to the public, announce the updated delivery model, and present the expanded scope of the project since public involvement efforts in 2021.

Public outreach details will be published in the NEPA document and will be available on the project's website.

- *Commenter concerned about construction of new bridges over existing roadways.*

When practical, the express lanes will be constructed at-grade or on walls. Bridges would be implemented in areas to minimize impacts to surrounding areas, avoid reconstruction of existing roadways or interchanges, and when crossing other roadways. It is not anticipated that the project would be constructed exclusively on bridge structures. The strategy of implementing adjacent express lanes that incorporate bridges to minimize impacts has already been implemented along with the I-75 Northwest Corridor Express Lanes on the northwest side of Atlanta. A similar approach is anticipated for the proposed I-285 Westside Express Lanes corridor. Construction and operation of I-75 Northwest Corridor Express Lanes have not resulted in any safety concerns. Georgia DOT bridges are inspected regularly to ensure the safety of the traveling public. As design advances for the proposed project, detours may be assessed, and further coordination would be required to minimize traffic disruptions and travel delays.

- *Commenters noted concerns regarding residential safety with the proposed lanes shifting closer to residential properties.*

Construction of the proposed express lanes would incorporate a combination of concrete barriers and/or sufficient space between the travel lanes and any structures to significantly reduce the likelihood of vehicles or debris leaving the roadway and impacting adjacent properties. Constructed barriers would be compliant with Manual for Assessing Safety Hardware (MASH) standards to prevent vehicles from leaving the express lanes. MASH compliance requires barriers to be tested with vehicles at parallel-angle impacts, ensuring the barriers can redirect vehicles without overturning the barrier. These barriers are designed to withstand impacts from cars, buses, and trucks at higher speeds. Additionally, fencing along the proposed Georgia DOT ROW would also reduce the likelihood of objects leaving the roadway and entering adjacent properties.

- *Commenters are concerned with the potential congestion resulting from construction to travelling public and local residents.*

To minimize disruption to motorists and adjacent neighborhoods during construction, mechanisms would be put in place to maintain traffic flow as much as possible. Construction activities would be scheduled to minimize disruptions to property access. Deliveries of construction materials would be scheduled to minimize disruptions, and temporary lane and road closures would be communicated in advance, with work performed during non-peak hours when possible.

At this stage, it is undetermined if off-site detours are necessary. Potential closures and detours will be communicated to the public, local governments, schools, and first responders.

- *Commenters suggested various design changes be considered for the proposed project.*

Thank you for your suggestions. These design recommendations have been captured and are part of the project record. Comments regarding design changes are analyzed

as part of the proposed project's alternatives analysis, which considers a range of alternatives, or design options, in coordination with FHWA and participating agencies in regard to the environmental and physical constraints in the area, design feasibility and compliance with policy, as well as how they address the mobility needs for the proposed project.

As the proposed project moves through the preliminary design process, the project team will continue to refine the design concept in coordination with state and federal agencies as additional project information and data are collected through coordination with stakeholders, public comment, and technical studies. The preferred alternative will then be presented at a future PHOH, currently anticipated in Q4 2026. This timeline is subject to change.

- *Commenters request clarity on whether the proposed project design can be shifted to the wooded area adjacent to the Longleaf Vinings complex to avoid displacing buildings.*

Projects using federal funds must adhere to the NEPA. Environmental surveys and reports must be completed and summarized in a NEPA document which is subject to approval by the FHWA. Upon identifying all environmental resources, Georgia DOT attempts to develop a conceptual plan that satisfies the proposed need and purpose, addresses citizen feedback, and minimizes the impact to the environmentally sensitive resources. When impacts cannot be avoided, Georgia DOT will evaluate ways to mitigate those impacts in the most responsible manner possible.

As a result of this coordination, design was shifted to balance the environmental impacts with the impacts to property/buildings within the project limits.

- *Requests for clarification whether the project proposes converting existing general purpose lanes to express lanes, will additional lanes be constructed, and how express lane access points are selected.*

The project does not propose converting existing general purpose lanes to express lanes nor constructing additional general purpose lanes.

The proposed projects' express lane access point locations are based on travel demand, stakeholder input, and potential changes in local traffic patterns/volumes. The developer may add benefits through final design, such as additional merge or access points.

- *Commenters request other modes of public transportation are implemented such as investment in MARTA and light rail.*

Thank you for the feedback regarding public transportation. While expanding public transit remains a key aspect to solving metro Atlanta's complex transportation challenges, transit service expansion alone would not address the identified needs for this proposed project. Georgia DOT is working collaboratively with the region's transit

operators and planning agencies through their ongoing study of new, high-capacity transit within the proposed I-285 Westside Express Lanes.

Traditional funding for transit projects comes from the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) and local funding. Currently, there is not sufficient transit funding for a rail transit-only solution on I-285. To provide more mobility options and reliable travel, the ARC and State Transportation Board adopted express lanes as a strategy to combat congestion in metro Atlanta.

Georgia Express Lanes are also considered transit lanes as they support bus rapid transit. Express Lanes Transit (ELT) improves existing transit operations and performance, provides more reliable transit trip times, and promotes transit-oriented development. ELT supports existing transit services and future transit operations planned for the corridor.

- *Commenter requests clarity on what types of smart highway technology are being considered for the proposed project.*

Georgia DOT continues to test emerging transportation technologies but does not currently have plans to implement any specific vehicle communication strategies for these proposed express lanes. Georgia DOT will continue to evaluate these technologies and incorporate opportunities to allow future implementation along Georgia DOT roadways.

- *Commenters are concerned about the increased lighting impacts in their neighborhoods from elevated lanes. Requests for project team to consider downward facing lights.*

Thank you for your suggestion. Georgia DOT is exploring measures to mitigate headlight glare from vehicles traveling on the express lanes. Lighting would be provided at specified locations, such as the express lane merges and direct access ramps. The entirety of the I-285 Westside Express Lanes would not be lit.

- *Commenters had questions about how potential relocations are determined.*

Potential relocations are determined by the project's anticipated impacts to structures on a property or reduction in property access as a result of the proposed Georgia DOT project. Project impacts and potential displacements can change as the design evolves; Georgia DOT will leverage opportunities to mitigate project impacts and avoid displacements as part of the continuing concept development.

- *Concerns were expressed regarding displacements along the corridor such as minimizing potential relocations as much as possible, concerns with relocating during a housing shortage, and the potential for eminent domain.*

Property impacts shown at the PIOH are subject to change as the proposed project moves through the concept development and environmental process. The progress of the design will continue to analyze impacts and Georgia DOT will make every effort to

proactively minimize property acquisitions and displacements. The timeline for corridor-wide ROW acquisition has not yet been determined and is dependent on the approval of the environmental document and the future P3 partner's final design.

In the event ROW is needed from a property, a representative from Georgia DOT would contact the property owner to begin the acquisition and negotiation process. For more information on Georgia DOT's ROW process, please visit: <http://www.dot.ga.gov/AboutGeorgia/Documents/Publications/Program%20Brochures/ROWBrochure-English.pdf>.

- *Commenter requested Georgia DOT to consider early acquisition of their property.*

Georgia DOT will consider early acquisition in areas that are being considered for redevelopment or other opportunities in areas that the concept development has reached a point Georgia DOT is confident that the ROW impacts would not change with further concept development.

- *Commenters asked if homeowners must disclose the construction to potential future buyers if the proposed project may impact homes.*

For guidance regarding what disclosures are required under Georgia's property disclosure statutes, please contact a Georgia real estate agent or property lawyer.

- *Commenters expressed concern about the potential impact on Homeowners Associations (HOAs) should total number of homes within a neighborhood be reduced due to relocations.*

Your Homeowners Association (HOA) president or an HOA member may be able to provide information specific to your HOA. Please contact them for additional information.

In the event ROW is needed from a property, a representative from Georgia DOT would contact the property owner to begin the acquisition and negotiation process. For more information on Georgia DOT's ROW process, please visit: <http://www.dot.ga.gov/AboutGeorgia/Documents/Publications/Program%20Brochures/ROWBrochure-English.pdf>.

- *Commenters asked if properties indirectly affected by the proposed project will receive compensation for loss of home enjoyment or impact to quality of life and expressed concern about disruptions to community cohesion as a result of the proposed project.*

Compensation is based on the physical needs to meet the goals of the project. Georgia DOT strives to design the project with a focus on minimizing adverse effects on the environment including neighborhoods and communities. The proposed project would widen an existing corridor, and as such, project development activities are focused on confining improvements as much as physically possible to this previously disturbed and developed transportation corridor. However, not all improvements fit within the

existing ROW and therefore some impacts to adjacent properties are anticipated. Any unavoidable impacts would be mitigated as much as possible.

Communities are being considered as part of project development. A Community Impact Assessment will be conducted as a part of environmental documentation and will outline the avoidance and minimization measures that are feasible to implement.

- *Commenters requested traffic data and traffic forecast modeling information for the general purpose lanes along I-285.*

PTV Group's PTV Vissim traffic modeling is being used to forecast future traffic patterns and utilize the express lanes in the project corridor. The modeling process is still underway, so detailed utilization forecasts are not yet available. Once the analysis is finalized and results are ready for publication, the findings will be captured in the NEPA document and shared with the public during the PHOH. The PHOH is currently anticipated in Q4 2026. This timeline is subject to change.

- *Commenters expressed concern that the improvement to traffic congestion will not outweigh the proposed impacts or will not improve traffic at all.*

The need and purpose of the proposed project is to provide passenger vehicles and transit riders with an effective transportation alternative to address the following needs: unreliable trip times for commuters, lack of accessibility and regional connectivity, and legislative mandate to accelerate project delivery following the TFA legislation in response to the urgency of traffic conditions.

A traffic analysis for the corridor is in progress and will be incorporated into the NEPA document which will be available for public review at the PHOH, tentatively scheduled for Q4 2026.

- *Commenters expressed concerns about an increase in noise levels throughout the corridor, requested sound barriers, asked what the criteria are that Georgia DOT uses to determine where sound barriers are constructed, and requested that Georgia DOT commit to installing sound barriers along the entire project corridor.*

As part of the environmental analyses being completed for the proposed I-285 Westside Express Lanes project, a Noise Impact Assessment (NIA) is being prepared to evaluate all areas of the proposed project. This traffic noise analysis would determine the potential acoustic impact to noise-sensitive resources (such as residences and public outdoor spaces, etc.) that may occur following the construction of the proposed project and would evaluate where noise abatement (such as noise barriers) may be effective to reduce traffic noise levels while meeting state and federal standards for safety and constructability. This analysis would also evaluate existing noise barriers to confirm their current effectiveness and would identify any potential replacements that would be necessary due to potential design and construction conflicts.

During the preliminary design phase, the analysis focuses on identifying potentially impacted noise-sensitive resources, along with locations where noise abatement would be warranted. Final location of noise abatement measures would be determined during the final design phase and would be followed by a voting period for which the input of affected landowners and residents would be solicited. Benefited landowners and residents would be invited to participate and vote on whether they would like to have any new noise abatement measures implemented, with a majority vote (50% +1) resulting in the final determination for/against installation. The assessment of noise impacts and abatement measures would comply with Title 23, Code of Federal Regulations (CFR), Part 772, and Georgia DOT's Highway Noise Abatement Policy for Federal-Aid Projects.

More information regarding Georgia DOT's noise barrier policy can be found at: <https://www.dot.ga.gov/GDOT/Pages/AirNoise.aspx>.

Additional information concerning the FHWA noise regulations is available at: [https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/noise/regulations\\_and\\_guidance/index.cfm](https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/noise/regulations_and_guidance/index.cfm).

- *Commenters expressed concern over the visual impacts to residents and aesthetic changes to the corridor's landscape.*

The proposed project is being designed with a focus on minimizing adverse effects on the environment, including visual impacts. A visual impact assessment is currently in progress and will be included in the NEPA document as part of the NEPA process.

The visual impact assessment and completed NEPA document will be available at a future PHOH, when the finalized preferred alternative design is presented to the public. The PHOH is currently anticipated in Q4 2026. This timeline is subject to change.

- *Commenters expressed concern about the removal of existing trees and impacts to surrounding environmental resources. Specifically, commenters were concerned about impacts to the Silver Comet Trail, Akers Mill Road Trail, and the Chattahoochee River.*

Clearing of trees and other vegetation would be necessary within the construction limits of the proposed project as it is standard Georgia DOT policy to keep the entire ROW maintained (tree trimming and mowing) to limit potential hazards to the traveling public. Impacts shown at the PIOH are subject to change as the proposed project moves through the concept development and environmental process. As Georgia DOT continues to develop the proposed project, it is committed to minimizing negative effects and maximizing benefits.

Projects using federal funds must adhere to NEPA. Environmental surveys and reports must be completed and summarized in a NEPA document, which is subject to approval by FHWA. These surveys include 1) Social Environment, 2) Cultural Resources such as historic and archaeological resources, 3) Natural Resources such as waters, invasive species, threatened and endangered species, etc., and 4) Physical Environmental such as air and noise. Upon identifying all environmental resources,

Georgia DOT attempts to develop a conceptual plan that satisfies the proposed need and purpose, addresses citizen feedback, and minimizes the impact to the environmentally sensitive resources. When impacts cannot be avoided, Georgia DOT evaluates ways to minimize and/or mitigate those impacts in the most responsible manner possible.

- *Commenters expressed concern with the project website. Specifically, commenters noted that navigating the Virtual Meeting Room (VMR) was confusing, the comment field is limited, the listed project email did not work or requested frequent public updates.*

Georgia DOT initially published the project website with an unreachable email address and apologizes for any inconvenience and confusion. The project's email address was immediately corrected and can be reached at [westsideexpresslanes@dot.ga.gov](mailto:westsideexpresslanes@dot.ga.gov). The Virtual Meeting Room (VMR) is designed to provide the same information as the meetings held in person. All materials linked in the VMR will remain on the project's website for future use.

Georgia DOT encourages the public to subscribe to text or email notifications on the website (<https://i285westsideexpresslanes-gdot.hub.arcgis.com/>) to stay informed of future public involvement and project updates.

- *Commenters made recommendations for future public involvement meetings including holding a formal Q&A and the inclusion of a FAQ document for the public for general questions.*

A Georgia DOT PIOH uses an informal open house format to provide proposed project information, answer questions, and gather public feedback. There are typically no formal presentations; instead, attendees can review handouts and project displays, ask questions of the project team, and submit formal comments. The convenience of this drop-in format allows for open dialogue and the collection of community input on proposed transportation projects during the preliminary design phase.

For public meetings, accommodations for people with disabilities to review materials can be arranged with advance notice by contacting the project team at [westsideexpresslanes@dot.ga.gov](mailto:westsideexpresslanes@dot.ga.gov) or 404-474-8225.

The questions received during the PIOH are being compiled and responses are prepared in this comment response letter for the public to review detailed information about the proposed project. The comment response letter will be available for the public on the project website and leading to the PHOH, the next series of public meetings for the proposed project, currently anticipated to take place in Q4 2026. This schedule is subject to change.

For additional FAQ information:

FAQs for the Georgia Express Lanes Network are available at:

<https://www.dot.ga.gov/DriveSmart/GEL/Documents/GEL%20FAQ.pdf>.

FAQs regarding air quality are available at:

[https://www.dot.ga.gov/systems/ProjectDocuments/Projects/0001758\\_I285TopEndExpressLanes/Air%20Quality%20FAQ.pdf](https://www.dot.ga.gov/systems/ProjectDocuments/Projects/0001758_I285TopEndExpressLanes/Air%20Quality%20FAQ.pdf).

And FAQs regarding noise barriers are available at:

[https://www.dot.ga.gov/systems/ProjectDocuments/Projects/0001758\\_I285TopEndExpressLanes/Sound%20Barrier%20Fact%20Sheet.pdf](https://www.dot.ga.gov/systems/ProjectDocuments/Projects/0001758_I285TopEndExpressLanes/Sound%20Barrier%20Fact%20Sheet.pdf)

- *Commenters expressed that their questions were not fully answered by representatives at the in-person meeting and requested additional information.*

This proposed project is in the preliminary development phase. The intent of a PIOH in these early project stages is to solicit early input into the transportation planning process, including input on potential alignments, environmental concerns, and general public feedback regarding the proposed project to help guide the development of a preferred concept. Final design, project schedule, cost, ROW, and other information are not yet available.

Georgia DOT encourages the public to visit the project website for the most recent project updates and future public involvement advertisements.

<https://i285westsideexpresslanes-gdot.hub.arcgis.com/>

- *Commenters expressed concern about increased air pollution as a result of the proposed project.*

The proposed project would not induce demand; rather, it would serve existing demand currently unmet by the interstate system. The unserved demand, which moves through arterials, would then have a better, faster, and more environmentally friendly way to travel.

The Clean Air Act requires the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to set National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) for criteria air pollutants, which can be harmful to public health and the environment. These standards provide public health protection, including protecting the health of “sensitive” populations such as asthmatics, children, and the elderly. Georgia DOT does not anticipate the proposed project causing or exacerbating any violation of the NAAQS. Criteria pollutants include ozone, carbon monoxide, and fine particulate matter.

While it is possible that some localized areas may show an increase in emissions and ambient levels of these pollutants due to locally increased traffic levels associated with the proposed project, localized emission reductions for some areas may occur due to improved traffic flow and reduced congestion. Regarding pollution created by use of the proposed I-285 Westside Express Lanes, an Air Quality Impact Assessment, which will include a pollutant emissions analysis, will be prepared for the project as traffic forecasting and design progress.

The NEPA document and associated analyses will be presented at a future PHOH, currently anticipated in Q4 2026. This timeline is subject to change.

- *Commenters suggest improvements outside the scope of this project.*

The implementation of separate transportation projects is beyond the scope of the proposed project. However, requests for transportation improvement projects can be made by contacting the ARC using the contact information provided below.

- Atlanta Regional Commission  
Victor Engel, Planning Administrator  
[vengel@atlantaregional.org](mailto:vengel@atlantaregional.org)

Through its Quick Response program, Georgia DOT also allows community members to request or suggest small traffic operations and safety projects. There is a page on Georgia DOT's website that provides instructions for how to do this. It reads: "The Quick Response Project Program allows Georgia DOT to quickly identify, approve, and construct small traffic operations safety projects on the state route system. If you have a suggestion for a quick fix project, please share your thoughts in the form below. The page can be accessed through Georgia DOT's website at: <https://www.dot.ga.gov/GDOT/Pages/ProjectSuggestion.aspx> .

Again, thank you for your feedback. Should you have further questions or comments, please call the P3 Pre-Let Program Manager, Xavier James, at 404-631-1583 or the Environmental Analyst, Mary Seagrave Eurek, at 404-631-1593.

Sincerely,



Amber Phillips  
State Environmental Administrator

AP/JK

cc: Joseph Stein, Georgia DOT Board Member (District 7)  
Mekyah McQueen, State Representative (District 61)  
Sheila Jones, State Representative (District 60)  
Jason Esteves, State Senator (District 35)  
Donzella James, State Senator (District 28)  
Xavier James, Georgia DOT P3 Pre-Let Program Manager (via email)  
Chandria Brown, P3 Pre-Let Assistant Administrator  
Tim Matthews, Assistant P3 Director and Pre-Let Program Administrator  
Hiral Patel, P3 Division Director  
PDF for Project File