



**Gwinnett County Department of Transportation
SR 324 / Gravel Springs Road at I-85 / SR 403 Interchange
Project Number F-0782-01, PI No. 0012698**

June 4, 2015

Dear Resident:

Thank you for attending this public information meeting for the proposed SR 324 / Gravel Springs Road at I-85 Interchange. The purpose of this meeting is two-fold: to provide the public an opportunity to preview the preliminary concept and to gather comments on the project.

At the meeting, displays of the project will be located throughout the room for viewing. Representatives from the Gwinnett County Department of Transportation, who can be identified by their name badges, will be able to discuss the project and assist you with any questions. There will be no formal presentation.

An information handout package is being provided. The package includes information about the need and purpose of the project, a description of the design features, information regarding the purchase of right of way, a location map and a comment sheet.

Your comments on the proposed project are welcomed. A court reporter will be available for those persons who would like to make a verbal statement about the project. You may also make a written comment and deposit it in the comment box. Written comments should be sent to Mrs. Amanda Reed, Assistant to the Director – Community Relations, Gwinnett County Department of Transportation, 75 Langley Drive, Lawrenceville, Georgia 30046. In addition, comments may be faxed to 770.822.7478 or emailed to DOTCommunityRelations@gwinnettcounty.com. In order to expedite moving forward with this project, the County asks that all comments be submitted by July 6, 2015.

Displays from the public information meeting will be available for viewing at the Gwinnett County Department of Transportation, 75 Langley Drive, Lawrenceville, Georgia 30046.

Again, thank you for attending this meeting and for giving us your comments.

Sincerely,

Alan R. Chapman, PE
Acting Director



Gwinnett County Department of Transportation SR 324 / Gravel Springs Road at I-85 / SR 403 Interchange Project Number F-0782-01, PI No. 0012698

Need and Purpose Statement

Gwinnett County Department of Transportation Project F-0782, PI No. 0012698, proposes to (1) improve transportation access to and from the interstate highway system, (2) reduce crash frequency and severity on Interstate I-85 in the vicinity of the proposed project area, (3) improve traffic operations on the local roadway network, and (4) enhance economic development opportunities by constructing an interchange on Interstate 85 / SR 403 with SR 324 / Gravel Springs Road in Gwinnett County. Interstate 85 / SR 403 is a four lane roadway with a 64 ft. depressed median with a 70 mph speed limit. SR 324 / Gravel Springs Road, which is posted for a 45 mph speed limit and crosses over Interstate 85 / SR 403, was recently constructed by a separate GDOT project to be a four lane roadway with a raised median. There is presently no connection between these two roadways. Access, operational, and economic issues that will be addressed by the project are as follows:

- The SR 20 / Buford Drive interchange, located 2.7 miles west of SR 324 / Gravel Springs Road along I-85 / SR 403, is presently the only access point on I-85 / SR 403 for both local and regional traffic into and out of the Mall of Georgia area. SR 324 / Gravel Springs Road currently provides access to the east side of the Mall of Georgia and the commercial developments surrounding the regional mall from areas east of I-85 / SR 403. An interstate access point at SR 324 / Gravel Springs Road would provide direct access for southbound traffic into the Mall of Georgia area and provide an alternate route to the same area for northbound traffic wishing to avoid either the congestion of SR 20 / Buford Drive or the extended trip back to the commercial areas from Hamilton Mill Road.
- SR 324 / Gravel Springs Road has a densely populated residential area and new commercial shopping centers that support the residential developments. The existing SR 324 / Gravel Springs Road overpass on I-85 / SR 403 is located 2.7 miles east of the I-85 / SR 403 at SR 20 / Buford Drive interchange. Without interstate access at SR 324 / Gravel Springs Road, truck and vehicular traffic must travel 3.5 miles (measured from proposed SR 324 / Gravel Springs Road Interchange) on arterial roadways to reach the SR 20 / Buford Drive interchange to access I-85 / SR 403. Vehicular traffic usually travels northwesterly on SR 324 / Gravel Springs Road then turns west onto Mall of Georgia Boulevard and then turns south onto SR 20 / Buford Drive to the interchange. Truck traffic uses a little longer route by traveling on SR 324 / Gravel Springs Road to SR 20 / Buford Drive and then onto the I-85 / SR 403 at /SR 20 interchange.
- The crash rate data for I-85 / SR 403 from SR 20 / Buford Drive to Hamilton Mill Road indicate that this segment of I-85 / SR 403 has a moderate crash rate compared to the statewide crash rates for urban interstates. The injury rate for this segment of I-85 / SR 403 is slightly lower than the statewide average injury rate. However, the fatality rate ranges from 1.1 to 1.8 times the statewide average for fatalities on urban interstates. Fatality rates usually are high along parts of an interstate that has a mix of traffic traveling at widely varying speeds which is indicative of traffic congestion. Traffic congestion on the arterial roads crossing I-85 / SR 403 contribute to traffic queuing onto the freeway and create the potential for rear-end crashes on I-85 / SR 403 at the junction points of the interchanges. Specifically, I-85 / SR 403 at its junction points of SR 20 / Buford Drive and Hamilton Mill Road has had a high number of rear-end collisions.



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Need and Purpose Statement *continued*

- The crash rate data for the segments of SR 20 / Buford Drive off of the I-85 / SR 403 at SR20 / Buford Drive interchange show that these segments have crash rates that are higher than the statewide crash rates for urban principal arterials. Traffic volumes on SR 20 / Buford Drive from Old Peachtree Road to Laurel Crossing Parkway have led to poor operational conditions with crash rates for 2006-2008 that are much higher than the statewide average crash rate. For that roadway segment, the crash rate ranges from 1.6 to 2.0 times higher than the statewide average. Injury rates on that segment of SR 20 / Buford Drive ranged from 2.7 to 3.3 times higher than the statewide average for urban principal arterials. SR 20 / Buford Drive from Laurel Crossing Parkway to Mall of Georgia Boulevard has become so congested that the crash rates on that particular segment were the second highest of the three SR 20 / Buford Drive segments analyzed and the corresponding crash rates were 2.6 to 3.7 times higher than the statewide average for that functional classification of roadway. Injury rates on that segment of SR 20 / Buford Drive were 3.0 to 5.7 times higher than the statewide average for those same years. Traffic volumes on the segment of SR 20 / Buford Drive from Mall of Georgia Boulevard to South Bogan Road result in lower crash rates as compared to the Laurel Crossing Parkway to Mall of Georgia Boulevard segment. The data indicate that the crash rates for the Mall of Georgia Boulevard to South Bogan Road segment were 2.7 to 3.2 times higher than the statewide average for urban principal arterials. Injury rates on this segment of SR 20 / Buford Drive were 3.4 to 4.1 times higher than the statewide average for those same years, and there was one fatality in 2007, which represented 3.8 times the statewide average rate.
- Interstate 85 / SR 403 showed deficient 2008 levels of service from SR 20 / Buford Drive north to Hamilton Mill Road according to the approved Interchange Justification Report (IJR). This is partly attributable to the aforementioned queuing backup from both the SR 20 / Buford Drive and Hamilton Mill Road interchanges onto the I-85 mainline. An additional interchange on I-85 / SR 403 between SR 20 / Buford Drive and Hamilton Mill Road would help improve the mainline operation of I-85 / SR 403 and, as previously noted, would likely reduce the potential for rear-end crashes. An interchange at I-85 / SR 403 at SR 324 / Gravel Springs Road would also improve the near-term operations of SR 20 / Buford Drive and Hamilton Mill Road by diverting traffic from these roadways.

The business community has tried to develop the area in the vicinity of the project into a viable industrial and business area. Gwinnett County has already planned as part of their adopted Comprehensive Plan to facilitate this type of development. However, inadequate access for trucks would be a deterrent from the land being developed as planned by the County. Consequently, future employment opportunities from potential employment centers would be lost. Enhanced development of industrial and commercial properties within the project's vicinity would provide additional goods and services to the region and create significant employment opportunities.



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Project Description

Gwinnett County Department of Transportation Project, F-0782-01, PI No. 0012698 proposes four new ramps to create a new location, full access diamond interchange with the existing overpass of (non-controlled access) SR 324 / Gravel Springs Road over (controlled access) I-85 / SR 403. The interchange will be situated between the existing SR 20 / Buford Drive and Hamilton Mill Road interchanges at milepost 118 within Gwinnett County. No new bridge or bridge widening is proposed by this project.

The southbound entrance ramp (Ramp A) will have two through lanes that converge to a single through lane prior to merging onto I-85 / SR403. The southbound exit and northbound entrance ramps (Ramps B and C, respectively) will each have a single through lane. The northbound exit ramp (Ramp D) will have two through lanes diverging from I-85 / SR 403. One of these lanes will be received from an auxiliary lane constructed by GDOT PI No. 110600 prior to this project.

The intersection of SR 324 / Gravel Springs Road with the southbound ramp terminals will consist of dual left turn lanes onto both I-85 / SR 403 SB and SR 324 / Gravel Springs Road EB. Dedicated right turn lanes will be provided onto SR 324 / Gravel Springs Road WB and I-85 / SR 403 SB. The intersection of SR 324 / Gravel Springs Road with the northbound ramp terminals will consist of dual left turn lanes onto SR 324 / Gravel Springs Road WB. A single turn lane will accommodate the I-85 / SR 403 NB movements. A dedicated right turn lane will be provided onto SR 324 / Gravel Springs Road EB and I-85 / SR 403 NB. Traffic signals would be placed at both of these intersections.

The project limits along I-85 / SR 403 are 3.14 miles long and dictated by the length of proposed ramps tapering into the through general purpose lanes and the advance signage for the interchange on both the general purpose lanes and the 'HOT' managed lanes proposed by PI #110600. The project limits along SR 324 / Gravel Springs Road are 0.45 miles long and set where the turn lanes for the ramp terminals tie back into the through lanes near the intersections with Morgan Road and Camp Branch Road.



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Right of Way Acquisition

The proposed project is being designed by consultants employed by the Gwinnett County Department of Transportation. Agents of the Gwinnett County Department of Transportation will acquire all necessary rights of way.

The Gwinnett County Department of Transportation has the responsibility, once a project is approved, of appraising, purchasing and, if required, assisting individuals, families or businesses in relocation. When purchasing property, the intent is to pay fair market value for the necessary property. The value will be established by qualified real estate appraisers, who will perform written appraisals using actual market data from the surrounding community.

In making the appraisal, the appraiser will contact each property owner and arrange a convenient time to make an on site inspection of the property. The property owner may accompany the appraiser during this inspection. All appraisals are reviewed for accuracy to make certain that all items relating to the value have been considered. If only a part of the property is needed, that part will be purchased; in addition, payment will be made for any loss in value to the remaining property, if any. In all cases, when the County purchases property, additional payments will be made to the property owners for the cost of transferring ownership to the acquiring agency. These costs generally include transfer taxes, deed recording fees, mortgage prepayment penalties and the pro-rata share of the city of county taxes.

Results of the concept plan and field studies show approximately 10 parcels will be impacted by this project.

For additional information, please call 770.822.7400.



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Location Map



