



TO: John McDonough, City Manager

FROM: Garrin M. Coleman, P.E., Public Works Director

DATE: July 8, 2013 for submission on the July 16, 2013 City Council Agenda

ITEM: Resolution to Accept Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) Mitigation Commitments for Allen Park

Recommendation:

Public Works staff recommends that the City Council approve a resolution to accept the GDOT mitigation commitments for Allen Park as outlined in the February 21, 2013 correspondence “re: Impacts to Allen Park from the Georgia Department of Transportation’s proposed revive285 top end project (NHS00-0001-00(758), Cobb, Fulton, and DeKalb counties P.I. No. 0001758).” Acceptance of the proposed mitigation does not constitute an endorsement of any alternative under consideration but allows GDOT to advance the EIS without additional environmental evaluation specifically related to Allen Park under Section 4(f) of the Department of Transportation Act and the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). Acceptance of the mitigation commitments permits the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) to make a *de minimis* determination for impacts to Allen Park and proceed with the proposed alternatives under evaluation.

Background:

GDOT is undertaking an EIS subject to NEPA to evaluate potential I-285 transportation improvements extending from I-75/Windy Hill Road to I-85. The need and purpose of the project improvements are to:

- Better Manage and Minimize Traffic Congestion
- Improve Mobility Options for the Traveling Public
- Maintain and Improve System Linkages
- Provide Safer Travel Conditions Along the Corridor

GDOT initiated the EIS on July 5, 2006 and anticipates releasing the draft EIS (DEIS) in 2014. The alternatives currently under evaluation include:

- Alternative 1: No Build
- Alternative 4: Express Bus and Operational Improvements
- Alternative 6a: Managed Lanes, Express Bus, Fixed Guideway Transit Right-of-Way Preservation, and Operational Improvements; and Alternative
- 6b: Managed Lanes (with existing lane conversion), Express Bus, Fixed Guideway Transit Right-of-Way Preservation and Operational Improvements

GDOT must evaluate potentially adverse impacts to historic resources/districts and parklands through the NEPA process under the Department of Transportation Act, Section 4(f) and has determined that Allen Park, located at 5900 Lake Forest Drive, Sandy Springs, Georgia, is a



protected resource subject to Section 4(f) evaluation. Through this evaluation, GDOT has determined that Alternatives 4, 6a, and 6b physically impact Allen Park. The extent of impacts are related to alternatives and proposed access concepts. Should an alternative be selected that impacts Allen Park, GDOT has made mitigation commitments to relocate and reconstruct the Allen Park soccer field, basketball court, and trail so that they are open to the public prior to implementation of I-285 construction activities and to provide landscaping to minimize visual impacts from construction of I-285 activities to Allen Park. GDOT will undertake a noise study to determine the feasibility for noise barriers. GDOT will conduct public notification and outreach as required for Allen Park impacts to satisfy Section 4(f).

Discussion:

Council reviewed and discussed the proposal of the Allen Park impacts and mitigation commitments at the Council Meetings on April 16, 2013 and May 7, 2013. Public Works staff has prepared a summary presentation of the Revive285 study alternatives and proposed Allen Park mitigation for Council review.

A City concurrence of the GDOT mitigation commitments will allow FHWA to pursue a *de minimis* finding for Allen Park impacts.

Alternatives:

The Council could choose not to accept GDOT mitigation commitments for Allen Park as identified in the February 21, 2013 correspondence. GDOT will then be required to undertake additional evaluation through NEPA Section 4(f) for the alternatives, thus causing project delay, additional costs and even potential delays to the associated Governor's priority transportation project which is the I-285/Ga 400 interchange reconstruction project, that the City supports.

Financial Impact:

There is no financial impact to the City. GDOT will be financially responsible to complete the proposed mitigation commitments to reconstruct the courts, relocate the walking trail, and provide landscaping screening at I-285 and Allen Road prior to construction activities for I-285 improvements. GDOT is financially responsible for public notification and outreach as required by NEPA to satisfy the requirements of Section 4(f).

Attachments:

- I. February 21, 2013 GDOT Correspondence
- II. Revive285 Presentation
- III. Resolution



February 21, 2013

Mr. Bryant Poole, Assistant City Manager
City of Sandy Springs
7840 Roswell Road, Building 500
Sandy Springs, Georgia 30350

Re: Impacts to Allen Park from the Georgia Department of Transportation's proposed **revive285 top end** project (NHS00-0001-00(758), Cobb, Fulton, and DeKalb counties, P.I. No. 0001758)

Dear Mr. Poole,

In response to our meeting on January 15, 2013, the Georgia Department of Transportation (Department) has investigated options to move the existing basketball and multi-purpose artificial surface courts within the City of Sandy Springs' Allen Park in order to minimize direct impacts to these features as a result of the Department's proposed **revive285 top end** project (NHS00-0001-00(758), Cobb, Fulton, and DeKalb counties, P.I. No. 0001758). As currently proposed, each of the build alternatives being considered for this project would require some right-of-way (ROW) acquisition from within the boundary of Allen Park. However, under the two managed-lane build alternatives currently under consideration (Alternatives 6a and 6b), this ROW acquisition would impact the park's basketball and multi-purpose courts.

Preliminary engineering has determined that it is possible to reconstruct both of these approximately 58.5-foot by 118.5-foot ball courts just north of their existing location, as shown in the attached graphic. The reconstructed facilities would be of the same size and dimensions as the existing facilities, and would entirely retain their current function. Retaining walls would be constructed along the north side of the relocated ball courts in order to minimize impacts to the park's topography and other features. However, reconstruction of these two courts to the north would still require modification to the existing alignment of the concrete walking trail along the north side of the park in this area, as shown in the attached graphic. All of these improvements can be accomplished within the existing park boundary, but would require the removal of some existing vegetation between the ball courts and Allen Road (along the south side of Allen Road). The Department will investigate a landscape plan with the City of Sandy Springs to replace lost vegetation, where feasible.

In order to allow the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) to be able to make a de minimis determination under Section 4(f) of the Department of Transportation Act (recodified in 49 U.S.C. 303 and 23 U.S.C. 138) for impacts to Allen Park, and to allow the **revive285 top end** project to proceed with the proposed alternatives currently under evaluation, the Department proposes to reconstruct the park's basketball and multi-purpose courts within the existing park boundary prior to impacting the existing facilities by roadway construction. This would allow for continued functioning of the park and use of the park's recreational features such that no adverse effect to recreational activities at the park would occur.

In addition to impacts to the basketball and multi-purpose courts, the proposed project would result in noise and visual impacts to Allen Park, and there would be some additional loss of vegetation adjacent to I-285 as a result of the *revive285 top end* project. Noise impacts to the park would occur in the design year under two of the three build alternatives currently under consideration (Alternatives 4 and 6a), as well as under the No-Action (or, "do nothing") Alternative. A noise barrier analysis has not yet been conducted to determine the feasibility of constructing noise barriers along the project corridor, but such a barrier will be investigated for this location. Actual wall design, however, will not occur until after the Record of Decision has been issued for the project.

Visual impacts to the park would result from the construction of additional lanes and/or elevated managed-lanes along I-285 along the southern boundary of Allen Park, and these actions would require the removal of existing trees and other vegetation between existing I-285 and the park. The majority of this vegetation is within the Department's existing ROW along I-285; however, some of this vegetation is within the area of required ROW from Allen Park. Since existing vegetation in this area is sparse, and the interstate is currently visible from Allen Park, these visual impacts are not expected to result in substantial adverse effects to the park or park users. To minimize visual effects, the Department will investigate a landscape plan and other options with the City of Sandy Springs for this area. The Department feels that the project's visual effects on Allen Park would not adversely affect the activities, features, or attributes of the park that qualifies it for protection under Section 4(f).

As the official with jurisdiction over Allen Park, the Department requests the City of Sandy Springs' concurrence with the proposed mitigation to relocate the existing basketball and multi-purpose courts on Allen Park as outlined in this letter, and requests the City's concurrence on the determination that the proposed transportation project as described in this letter would not adversely affect the activities, features, and attributes that qualify Allen Park for protection under Section 4(f). In addition, public outreach in the form of a notification letter, meeting, or a combination of the two will be needed. This can be arranged by the Department's consultant in coordination with the City of Sandy Springs. Based on the City's concurrence on this determination after factoring in the public's comment, please be informed that the FHWA would pursue a *de minimis* finding regarding impacts to Allen Park, thus satisfying the requirements of Section 4(f).

The Department appreciates your assistance in making this transportation project possible. Should you have any questions or concerns, please call Ms. Marlo Clowers, Project Manager, at (404) 631-1713.

Sincerely,



Darryl D. VanMeter, P.E.
State Innovative Program Delivery Engineer

Attachment--Aerial Display of Relocated Ball Courts and Trail on Allen Park

DVM:MLC:BP

ALT 6A
PARCEL TOTAL AREA = 2.97 AC
REQ'D R/W = 0.35 AC
REMAINDER = 2.62 AC



LAKE FORREST DRIVE

ALLEN ROAD

RETAIN EXIST. STAIRS

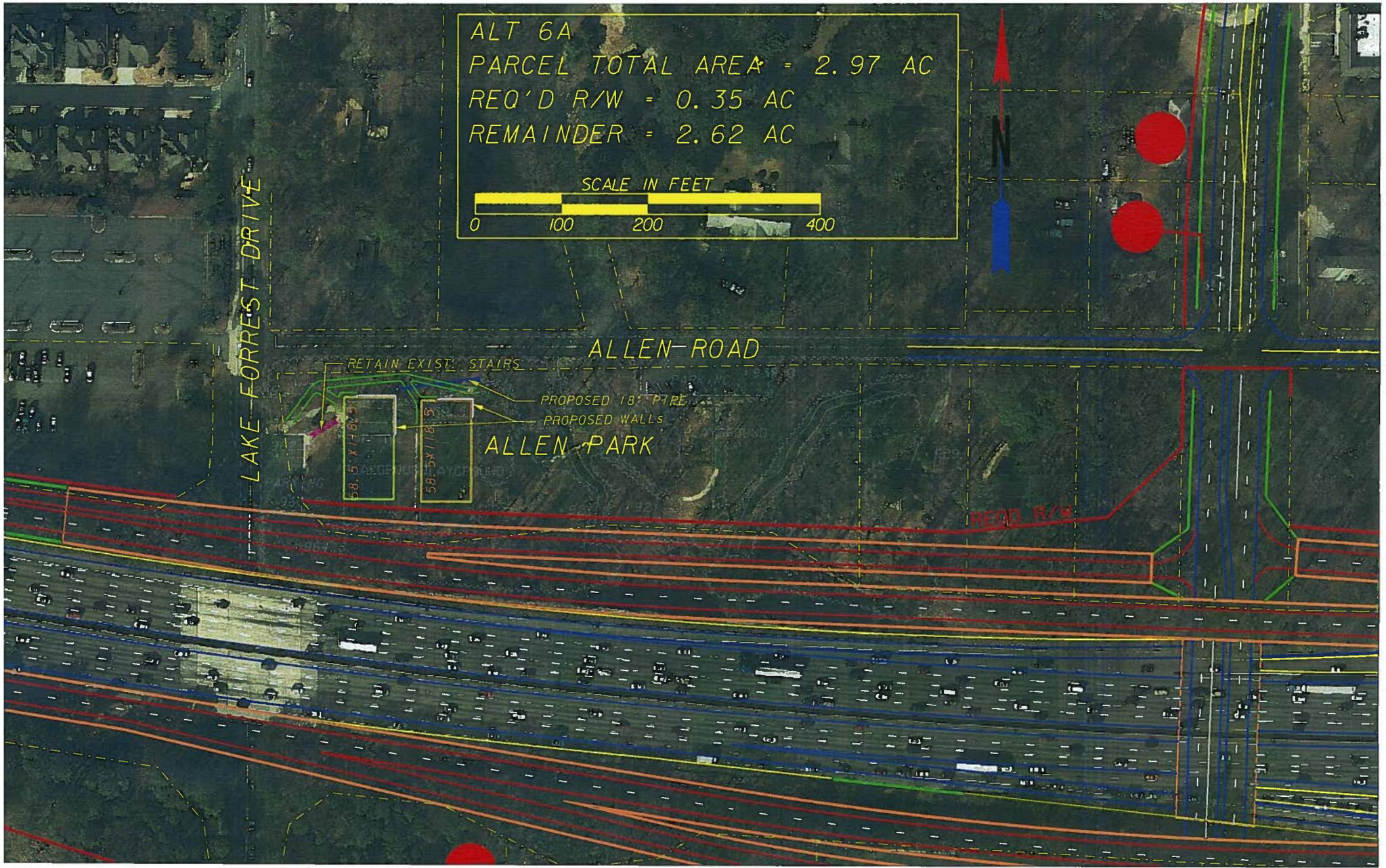
PROPOSED 18" PIPE
PROPOSED WALLS

ALLEN PARK

58' 5" X 118' 3"

58' 5" X 118' 3"

REQD R/W



GEORGIA DOT REVIVE 285 Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) Council Briefing

July 16, 2013



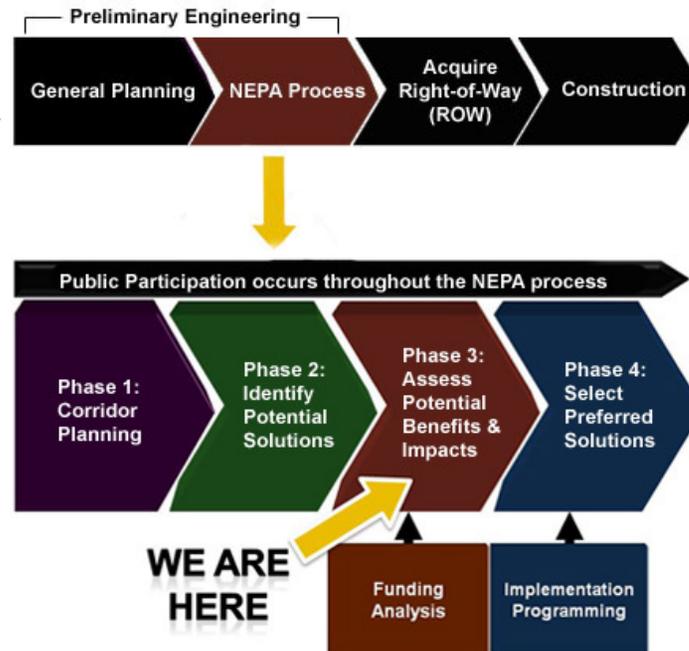
History/Timeline



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- Notice of Intent (announcement of EIS) – July 5, 2006
- Anticipated release of Draft EIS - 2014

**Current
Revive285
Schedule
Diagram**



Public Outreach History

- Corridor Planning
 - December 2006
- Potential Solutions
 - April/May 2007
 - October 2007
- Impacts and Benefits
 - September 2008
 - November 2009
- Multilingual Outreach
 - Winter 2011

Now: 2013 revive285 top end Online Survey
<http://www.revive285.com/2013onlinesurvey.html>

Other outreach:
Citizen Advisory Committee
Technical Advisory Committee
4 Council and additional staff briefings



Purpose/Need Statement

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The Purpose and Need Statement provides the framework for evaluation and justification for public expenditure

1. **Better Manage and Minimize Traffic Congestion**
 - Improve congestion management
 - Accommodate current and future travel demand
 - Reduce traveler delay
 - Maximize efficiency of corridor
2. **Improve Mobility Options for the Traveling Public**
 - Provide convenient and competitive travel choices
 - Improve accessibility for transportation-disadvantaged populations
 - Accommodate interstate and regional trips without degrading local trip-making
3. **Maintain and Improve System Linkages**
 - Maintain and improve regional highway system connectivity
 - Improve linkages of regional transit system within study corridor
 - Maintain and improve freight system connectivity
4. **Provide Safer Travel Conditions Along the Corridor**
 - Reduce potential for severe crashes
 - Reduce secondary impacts of incidents
 - Improve bicycle and pedestrian accommodations

Alternatives History

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Strategies
Identified

Strategies (September 15, 2008)

Roadway Improvements

- Surface street improvements
- General purpose lanes
- Managed lanes
- Truck-only lanes
- Toll lanes
- Operational Improvements
- Transportation System Management (TSM)
- Transportation Demand Management (TDM)

Transit Improvements

- Express Bus
- Bus Rapid Transit (BRT)
- Light Rail Transit (LRT)
- Heavy Rail Transit (HRT)

Screened against
4 Identified
Needs

Had to meet
2+ needs
for
Alternatives

Original Alternatives (April 15, 2009)

- 1 - No Build
- 2 - TSM Alternative
- 3 - BRT and Operational Improvements
- 4 - Express Bus and Operational Improvements
- 5 - BRT, Operational Improvements, and Managed Lanes
- 6 - Express Bus, Operational Improvements, and Managed Lanes
- 7 - LRT and Operational Improvements
- 8 - LRT, Operational Improvements, and Managed Lanes

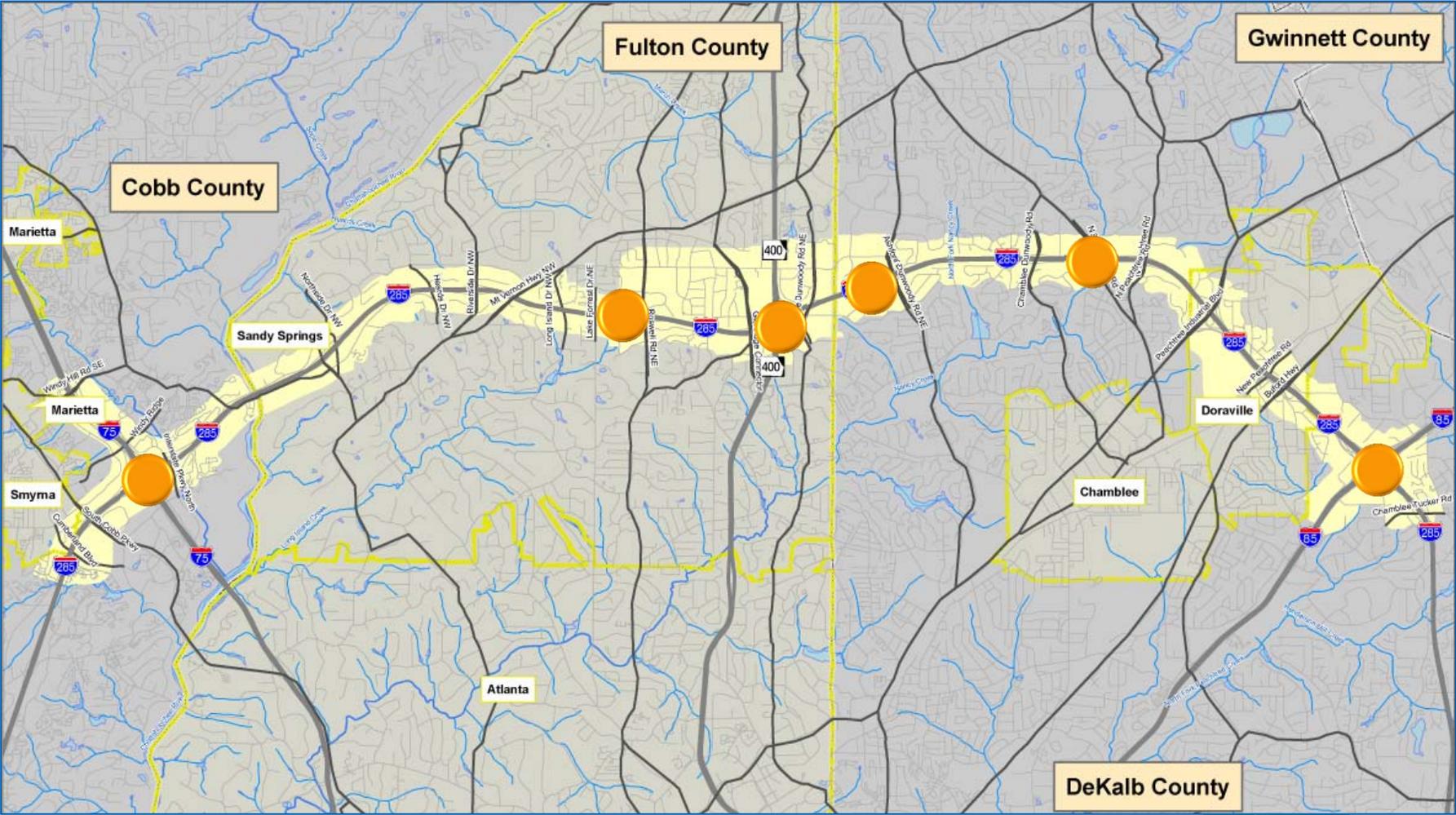
Current Alternatives - Analysis

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- GDOT is currently *Assessing Potential Benefits and Impacts* of four alternatives

Alternative	Description
No Build	No changes to existing condition other than previously programmed projects
Alt 4	Express Bus and Operational Improvements
Alt 6a	Express Bus + Managed Lanes + Operational Improvements + Future Transit Right-of-Way
Alt 6b	Express Bus + Managed Lanes + General Purpose Lane Re-designation + Operational Improvements + Future Transit Right-of-Way

Managed Lanes Entry/Exit



 Managed Lanes Entry/Exit Point- Alt 6A and 6B

7/12/2013

Sandy Springs Circle, design options

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Sandy Springs Circle

Roswell Road

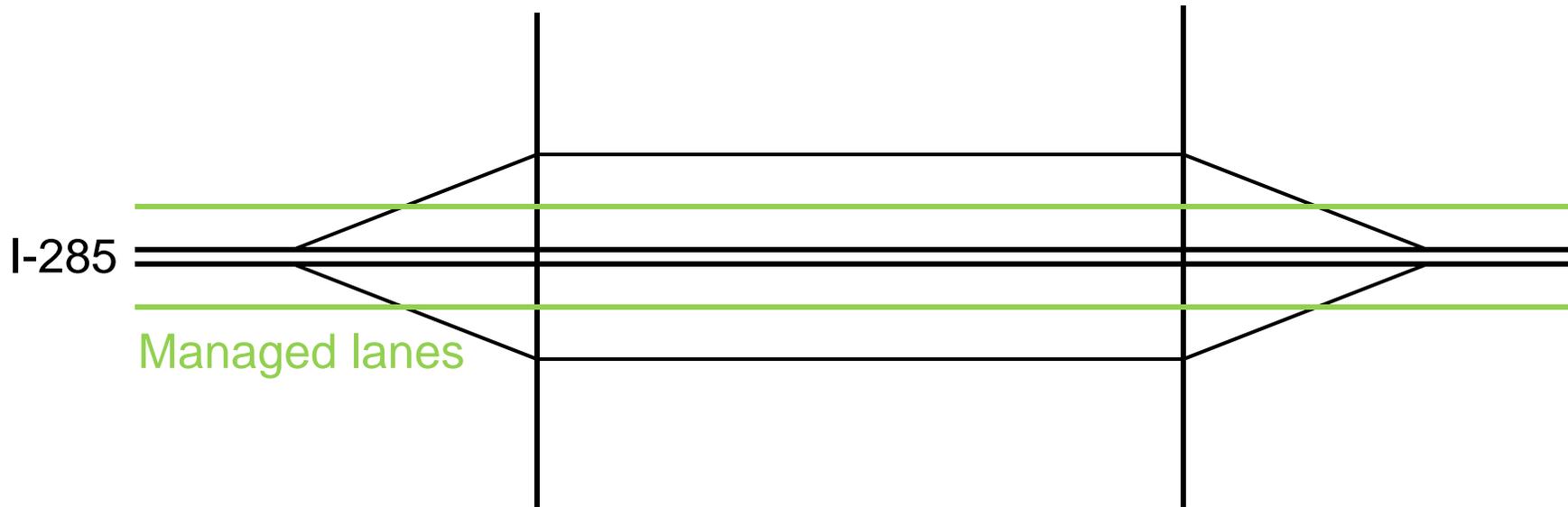


Diagram shows shared half-diamond access between Roswell Road and Sandy Springs Circle for general purpose lanes

Sandy Springs Circle, design options

Sandy Springs Circle

Roswell Road

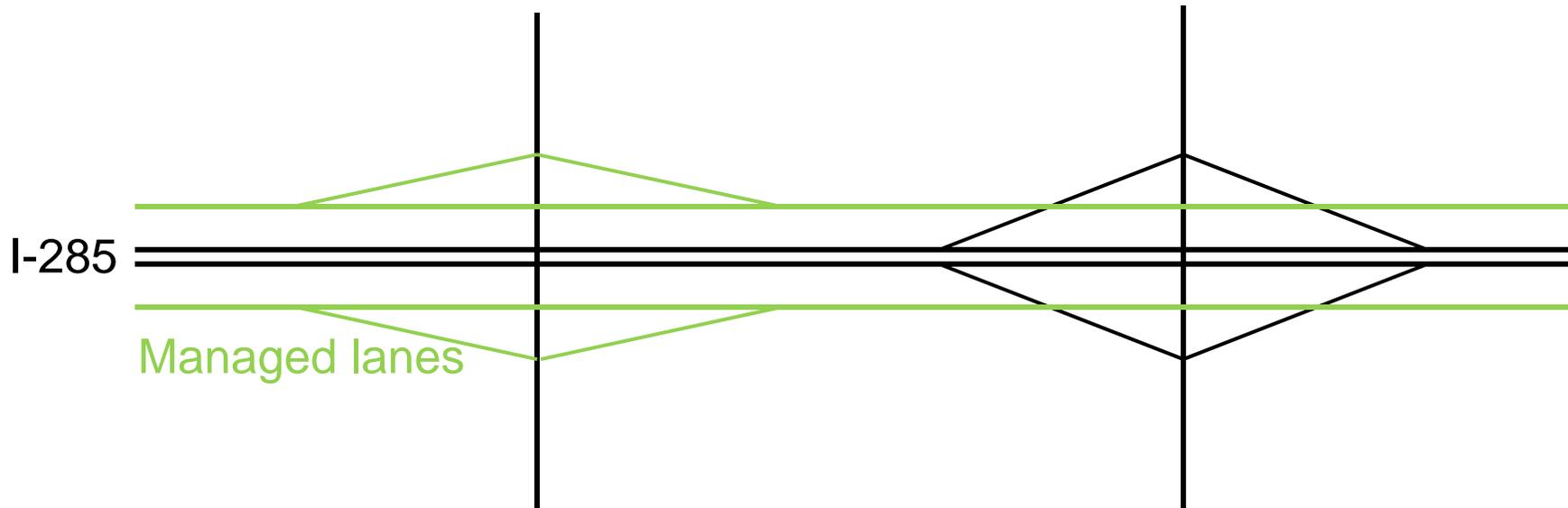
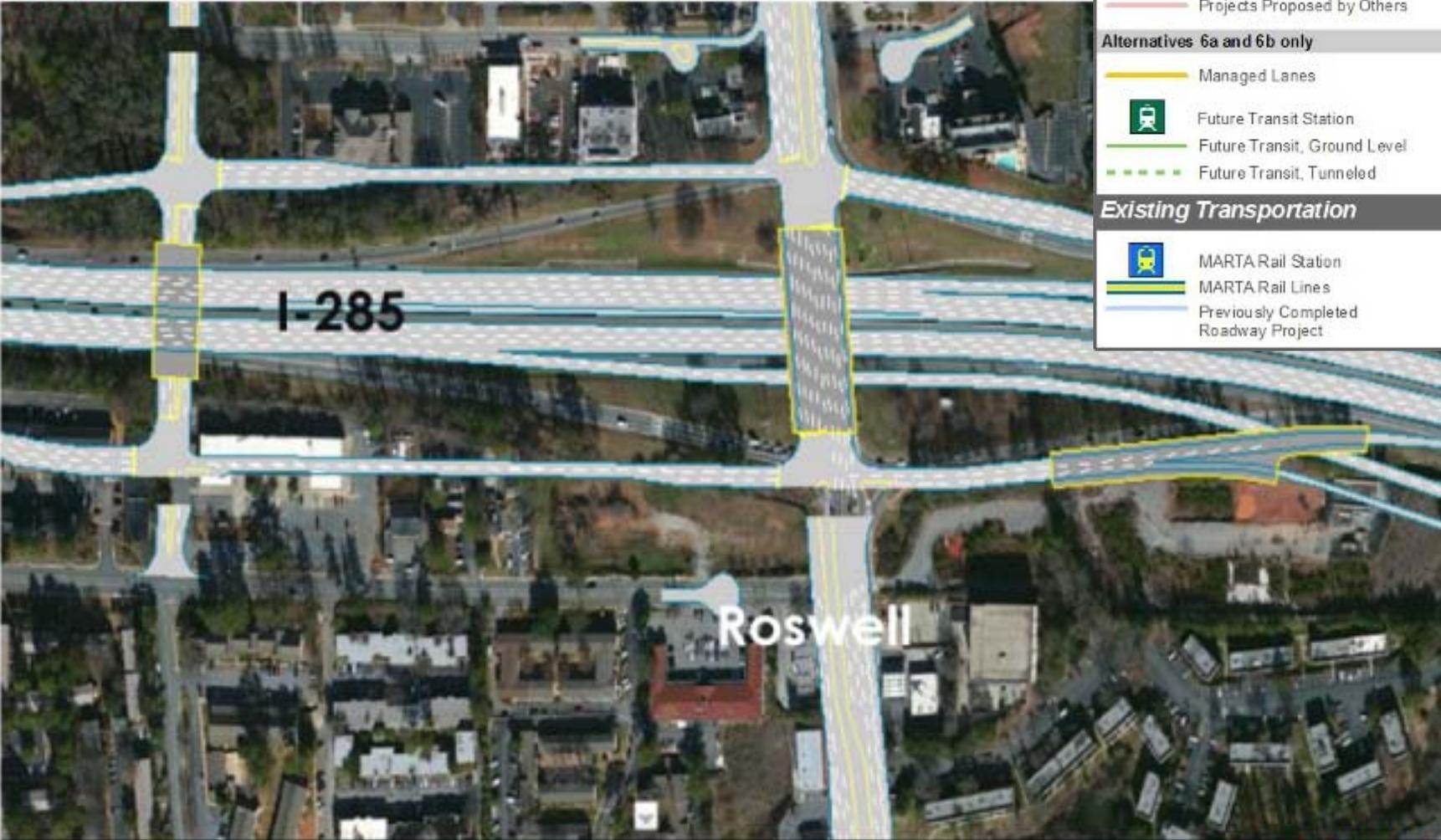


Diagram shows full access for managed lanes and separate full access interchange at Roswell Road for general purpose lanes

4: Sandy Springs Cir/Roswell Rd

Alternative 4 Roswell & I-285



Proposed Infrastructure

- Collector Distributor, Auxiliary Lanes
- Bridge, Elevated Structure
- Tunnel
- Roadway Realignment
- Projects Proposed by Others

Alternatives 6a and 6b only

- Managed Lanes
- Future Transit Station
- Future Transit, Ground Level
- Future Transit, Tunneled

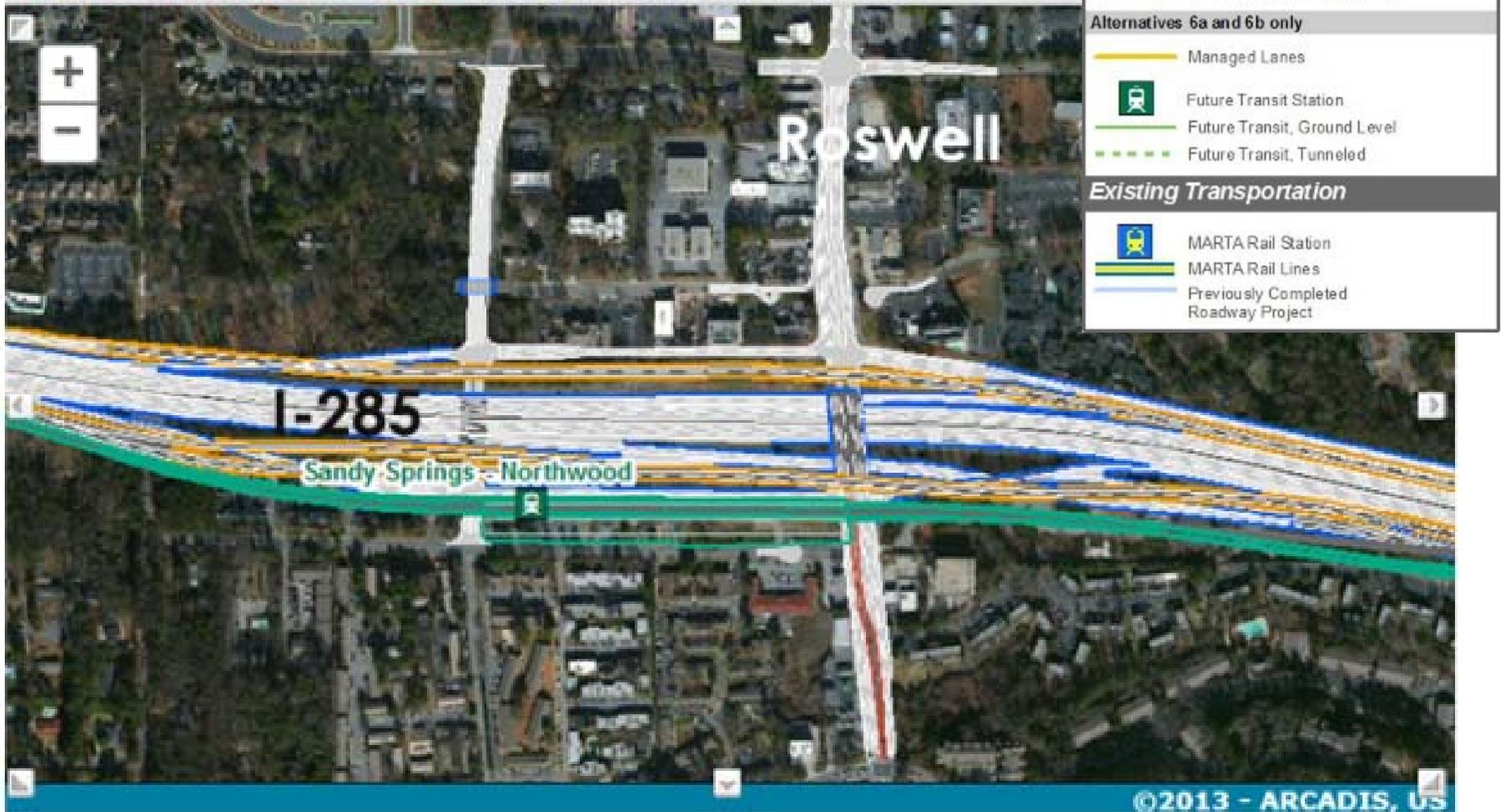
Existing Transportation

- MARTA Rail Station
- MARTA Rail Lines
- Previously Completed Roadway Project

6a: Sandy Springs Cir/Roswell Rd

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Alternative 6a Roswell & I-285



Cost / Travel Benefit

Alternative	Total Capital Costs (2009 Dollars)
4	\$1.1 B
6A	\$2.84 B
6B	\$2.75 B

Alternative	2040 Estimated PM Travel Time I-75 to I-85 (Minutes)	
	General Purpose Lanes	Managed Lanes
Existing	25	n/a
No-Build	26	n/a
4	17	n/a
6A	15	13
6B	25	13

Allen Park - NEPA

I-285 Detailed Environmental Screening under Section 4(f)

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- 3 resources along I-285 identified that could be adversely impacted by the proposed alternatives:
 - Allen Park in Sandy Springs
 - Carver Hill Historic District/Happy Valley Historic District located on both sides of I-285 near Peachtree Industrial Boulevard
 - Former General Motors plant

The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) regulations require that impacts to protected resources be mitigated:

1. Avoid
2. Minimize
3. Repair or Restore
4. Reduce over time
5. Compensate

Anticipated Impacts to Allen Park by Alternative

Impacted Element of Park*	Alt 4	Alt 6A	Alt 6B
Land/Right-of-Way	Y	Y	Y
Basketball/Multi-purpose Courts	N	Y	Y
Trail Alignment (due to moving courts)	N	Y	Y
Allen Road Vegetation (due to moving courts)	N	Y	Y
I-285 Vegetation	Y	Y	Y
Noise	Y	Y	N
Visual	Y	Y	Y

* Per GDOT February 21, 2013 letter, "Impacts to Allen Park from the Georgia Department of Transportation's proposed revive285 top end project (NHS00-0001-00(758), Cobb, Fulton, and DeKalb Counties, P.I. No. 0001758)

Proposed Mitigation of Impacts to Allen Park

Mitigation Categories	GDOT Proposed Mitigation*
Avoid	<ul style="list-style-type: none">n/a
Minimize	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Reduced footprint of Alternatives 4, 6a, 6b to lessen magnitude of overall impacts
Repair or Restore	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Reconstruct ball fields north of existing location prior to roadway construction.Construct retaining wall on north side of ball courts.Modify alignment of walking trail.Replace vegetation where feasible between courts and Allen Road.Replace vegetation between courts and I-285
Reduce Over Time	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Investigate need for noise barrier through noise analysis.
Compensate	<ul style="list-style-type: none">n/a

* Per GDOT February 21, 2013 letter, "Impacts to Allen Park from the Georgia Department of Transportation's proposed revive285 top end project (NHS00-0001-00(758), Cobb, Fulton, and DeKalb Counties, P.I. No. 0001758)

Alt 6A anticipated right-of-way footprint and proposed Allen Park restoration

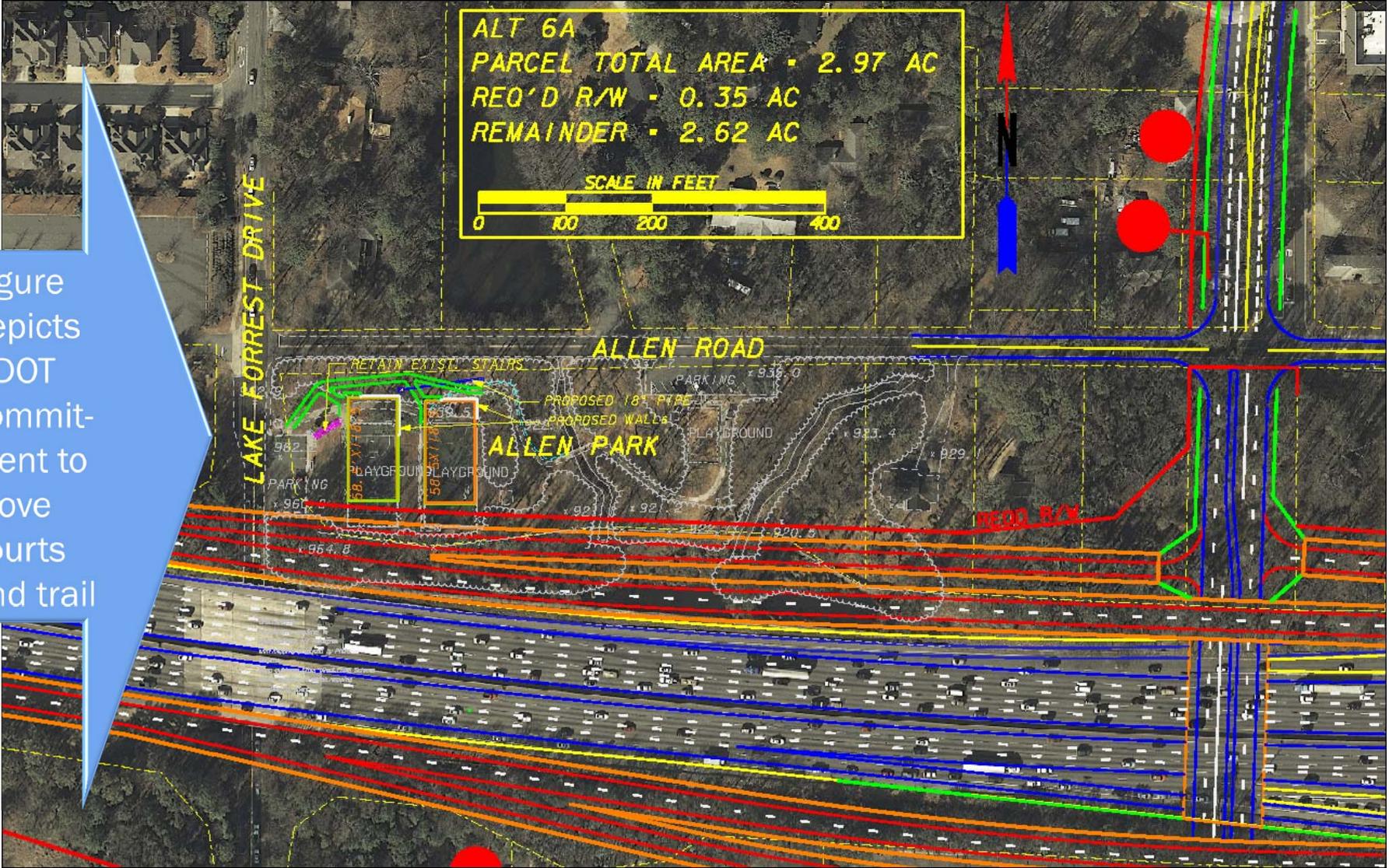


Figure depicts GDOT commitment to move courts and trail

Next Steps

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- Determine if proposed GDOT mitigation commitments meet City requirements
- Grant concurrence that mitigation commitments result in no adverse impact to the activities, features, and attributes that qualify Allen Park for protection under Section 4(f)
- Conduct public outreach to include notification letter, meeting or both (coordinate with GDOT)

Results: City concurrence on no adverse impact determination results in FHWA pursuing *de minimis* finding to satisfy requirements of Section 4(f).

DRAFT
9 July 2013

RESOLUTION NO. _____

STATE OF GEORGIA
COUNTY OF FULTON

A RESOLUTION TO ACCEPT THE GEORGIA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION'S MITIGATION COMMITMENTS FOR ALLEN ROAD PARK AS A RESULT OF THE REVIVE 285 TOP END ALTERNATIVES (PROJECT IDENTIFICATION NO. 0001758, NHS 0001-00(758), COBB, FULTON AND DEKALB COUNTIES)

WHEREAS, the Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) is preparing a draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for Interstate 285 subject to the federal requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) to consider Alternatives to improve regional travel in the I-285 corridor also known as the Revive285 Top End project,

WHEREAS, GDOT has determined that Allen Park is a protected resource subject to Section 4(f) evaluation and found that Alternatives under consideration could have potential impact(s) on Allen Park,

WHEREAS, GDOT has coordinated with the City of Sandy Springs to identify ways to minimize, or mitigate potential impacts to Allen Park and makes Commitments to relocate and reconstruct the Allen Park soccer field, basketball court, and trail so that they are open to the public prior to implementation of I-285 construction activities and to provide landscaping to minimize visual impacts from construction of I-285 activities to Allen Park should an alternative be selected that impacts the park,

WHEREAS, the City of Sandy Springs will coordinate with GDOT as they conduct public outreach related to the proposed mitigation Commitments for Allen Park as required,

WHEREAS, the City of Sandy Springs' concurrence with the proposed mitigation Commitments for Allen Park is not an endorsement or approval of any of the current alternatives under consideration by GDOT for the draft EIS,

WHEREAS, the City of Sandy Springs reserves the right to provide formal and informal comments to GDOT regarding any proposed Revive285 alternatives and draft EIS,

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF SANDY SPRINGS, GEORGIA

1. Does not endorse or approve any current alternative associated with GDOT Revive285 Top End alternatives (*Project Identification No. 0001758, NHS 0001-00(758), Cobb, Fulton and DeKalb counties*) and reserves the right to provide formal and informal comments to GDOT regarding any proposed Revive285 alternatives and draft EIS; and
2. Accepts the GDOT proposed mitigation Commitments for Allen Park should an alternative impact the park, does not consider the impacts of I-285 Alternatives to be adverse to Allen Park, and understands that GDOT and Federal Highway Administration will be seeking a *de minimis* determination for the Alternatives under consideration.

APPROVED AND ADOPTED on this the 16th day of July, 2013.

Approved:

Eva Galambos, Mayor

Attest:

Michael Casey, City Clerk

(Seal)