Russell R. McMurry, P.E., Commissioner
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October 28, 2020

Re: Responses to Virtual Open House Comments for PI#: 0016443, Fulton County, SR 372 at Birmingham Road

Dear Participant,

Thank you for your comments concerning the proposed project referenced above. We appreciate your participation and all of the input that was received as a result of the Virtual Public Open House (VPIOH) that went live on August 18, 2020. Every written comment received will be made part of the project's official record.

A total of **1,079** people viewed the VPIOH website. Of the **214** respondents who commented, **115 strongly supported** the project, **26 supported** the project, **45 strongly opposed** the project, **19 opposed** the project, and **8 were neutral** about the project.

The Georgia Department of Transportation (Georgia DOT) has prepared this one response letter that addresses all comments received so that everyone can be aware of the questions raised and the responses given. Please find the comments summarized below (in *italics*) followed by our response. The attendees of the VPIOH that submitted comments during the comment period raised the following questions:

1. *"What are the expected start and finish dates of the project?"*

   Response: The project is expected to begin construction in July 2022 and be finished by February 2024.

2. *"I think the cost to construct is overvalued/more than it realistically should be."*

   Response: Cost estimates are developed by itemizing the materials and work that is needed for the construction of the project including Erosion Control, Right of Way, Traffic Control, and Utility costs. The cost for itemized construction items is obtained by utilizing Georgia DOT's vast historic cost database. These estimates are updated at least on a monthly basis to account for changes in unit item costs due to location within the State or due to increases/decreases in prevailing market cost.

3. *"I am concerned that the roundabout will not accommodate horse trailers, campers, trucks, emergency vehicles, and school buses. Can the roundabout accommodate a truck pulling a 40-foot long trailer filled with horses? Birmingham Highway is a major artery for local horse farms and trainers to reach the local competition grounds, Wills Park Equestrian Center. It is also a major artery for commercial shippers coming off GA-400 to deliver horses to the farms."*

   Response: Compact roundabouts are designed so that the entire center island is traversable with a gentle curb that allows the truck to drive over the island. Trucks, trailers, and buses can gently run up on the curb and traverse the center island.

Plus, mountable islands would be constructed for right-turn islands for large vehicles making right turns. Mountable islands are about 4-inches tall and have a gently, sloped face to make driving over the islands easier.

4. *"Consider shifting the roundabout to the southeast into the undeveloped land."*

Response: The roundabout has been shifted as much as possible to the southeast without impacting the major utility located on the southeast corner. The expense to relocate the utility is cost prohibitive.

5. "*Can a mini roundabout stand up to the wear and tear of a tractor trailer driving over it?"*

Response: Yes, roundabouts are designed to accommodate standard-sized passenger vehicles and buses within the circulatory roadway. According to Georgia DOT's Design Policy Manual, "The design vehicle for all roundabouts on state routes and interchange ramp terminals should be an AASHTO WB-67. The roundabout geometry should accommodate the swept path of the design vehicle tires and body" (page 8-9) for each of the turning movements.

6. *"Avoid impacting the 7 Acres farm parking."*

Response: Early in the proposed project's development, the project team recognized the importance of the 7 Acre BarnGrill to the community and made every effort to avoid and minimize impacts the structure. The roundabout's footprint was established to maximize the available right-of-way (ROW) by shifting the intersection to the south and east as much as possible without causing disproportionate impacts to the other properties and existing utilities. With this in mind, however, the current parking spots on the east side of the building are not permitted by the State and have been used without permission by the State for several years. Both the orientation of the parking spots and the close proximity to the intersection pose a safety concern to vehicle backing into traffic or blocking travel lanes.

During the negotiation phase, Georgia DOT's ROW team member will meet with individual property owners to discuss the project and the impact upon specific properties. As the project development process moves forward, Georgia DOT will continue to work with businesses and residences. Where possible, the alignment and construction limits will be reduced to minimize impacts. Should there be a need for ROW acquisition, Georgia DOT staff will meet with property owners individually to discuss impacts to specific properties.

According to the Georgia DOT Driveway and Encroachment Control Regulations, "parking is prohibited on Georgia DOT ROW except in downtown areas where parallel or angle parking is provided by the city, by ordinance and in compliance with O.C.G.A. 32-6-2, 40-6-200, 40- 6-202 or 40-6-204, or in those instances where a Temporary Conditional Special Encroachment Permit is approved for parking on the ROW" (2-12). During early research of the project corridor, our project team determined that these parking spaces did not fall under the above regulatory specifications. As a result, there is no planned compensation for the unpermitted

parking spaces at this location. Please contact the District 7 Traffic Operations Office at (770) 216-3948 for additional information

7. *"Remove curbing on the proposed sidewalks to the parking area at the 7 Acre BarnGrill can still be used for parking."*

Response: Early in the project's development, the project team recognized the importance of the 7 Acre BarnGrill to the community and made every effort to avoid and minimize impacts to the structure. The current parking spots on the east side of the building are not permitted by the State. Both the orientation of the parking spots and the close proximity to the intersection pose a safety concern to vehicle backing into traffic or blocking travel lanes.

All roadway design projects within Georgia must be evaluated for the inclusion of accommodations to serve pedestrians and to adhere to the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Due to potential for substantial pedestrian usage along this corridor and to improve pedestrian safety, curb and gutter, sidewalk, and ADA ramps will be implemented as part of construction. Large amounts of pedestrian movements are anticipated around the *7 Acre BarnGrill* and so sidewalk and curb and gutter are merited to safely accommodate these movements. Additionally, curb and gutter serve to channelize vehicles through the roundabout in a slow and controlled manner. Property owners directly affected by a project will be contacted individually later during the ROW negotiations phase of the project. All property owners will have legal access to their property.

8. *"A larger roundabout would be better."*

Response: The proposed compact roundabout is a balance of many constraints present at the intersection, including ROW, adjacent buildings, and existing utilities. As part of the proposed project's Intersection Control Evaluation (ICE) Stage 1 - Screening and ICE Stage 2 - Alternative Selection, a larger roundabout was considered. However, this alternative was eliminated due to the very high cost associated with relocating the utilities present in the southeast quadrant of the intersection and larger ROW impacts that includes existing structures in the project corridor.

9. *"Consider removing the sidewalks and increasing the size of the roundabout."*

Response: Pedestrian and ADA compliant accommodations are a requirement of Georgia DOT in areas where they are warranted. Given the location and presence of pedestrians in the area, sidewalks and crosswalks are warranted. As noted in our previous response, the proposed compact roundabout has been utilized to balance the constraints of the project corridor. Specific warrants for the inclusion of sidewalk include:

- The presence of pedestrian travel generators and destinations (i.e. residential neighborhoods, commercial areas, schools, public parks, Matilda's concert venue, etc.), or areas where such generators and destinations can be expected prior to the design year of the project.
- Existing evidence of pedestrian movements in the project vicinity

- Where a need is identified by a local government, MPO or regional commission through an adopted planning study.

10. *"Consider leaving the decorative brick off the roundabout or at least make it level with the road."*

    Response: A core element to roundabout design is deterring drivers from traveling straight through the center of a roundabout. The proposed roundabout's center would be constructed with stamped concrete, which has the appearance of brick and is slightly raised. The mountable island, in addition to the proposed advanced signage, is being implemented to serve as a visual indicator that traffic should not travel through the center of the roundabout.

11. *"The proposed roundabout should be well lit."*

    Response: It is a Georgia DOT requirement that all roundabouts include lighting to draw attention to the traveling public. Lighting plans for roundabouts should be developed in accordance with illuminance valued published in the Design Guide for Roundabout Lighting (IES DG-19). Adequate lighting should be provided at conflict areas and places where traffic streams separate to exit the roundabout. Lighting should be placed around the perimeter of the roundabout, not in the central island. Advanced signing is also required which would be installed with high reflective sheeting so that all advanced signs will be clear and visible to vehicles traveling at night.

    Additionally, to provide advanced indication of the roundabout lighted signage would be installed at the entries to the roundabout on all approaches, a lighted bollard in the center of the roundabout, and an overhead warning flasher would be implemented.

12. *"This roundabout is a good project and is desperately needed to improve traffic flow and safety."*

    Response: Thank you for your support.

13. *"Please consider using asphalt for sidewalks rather than concrete since horses slip on concrete."*

    Response: Sidewalks, unless designated as a multi-use trail, are designated for pedestrian usage only. All other modes of travel should use the roadway so as not to interfere with pedestrian movement. Since the sidewalks are specifically meant for pedestrian access, concrete is the preferred material of choice and is more appropriate than asphalt for this application.

14. *"Provide tangential exits for the northeast and northwest quadrant as best as practical since it will help operations."*

    Response: Due to the compact nature of this roundabout (as opposed to a full-sized roundabout), this roundabout design uses a more radial alignment approach rather than the traditional "left-offset" approach. This helps to minimize further impact to surrounding properties by reducing the departure offset and encourages traffic

calming on departures where conflict with pedestrian crossings could happen, thus decreasing pedestrian conflict. Performance checks for operating speeds have been performed for all traffic movements within the roundabout and all legs/movements of the roundabout fall within acceptable NCHRP 672 and Georgia DOT operating parameters.

15. *"Flatten the southeast exit to reduce the number of radii to exit the roundabout onto eastbound Birmingham Highway and/or trim the truck apron to create tangent section on south side."*

Response: Please see the previous response. The performance checks show that operating speeds are well within acceptable parameters.

16. *"Is there a traffic study I can refer to for this intersection?"*

Response: An Operational Improvement Synopsis Package was prepared and the decision to propose a roundabout as a preferred alternative was validated through the Intersection Control Evaluation (ICE) Stage 1 - Screening and ICE Stage 2 - Alternative Selection. These studies evaluated the performance of many types of intersection controls and sought to determine the best possible overall value in terms of performance-based criteria. For a copy of the package, please contact the State Traffic Operations Manager, Landon Perry, at laperry@dot.ga.gov.

17. *"Do a mini middle of the roundabout (reduce size of circular structure)."*

Response: The roundabout has been sized to minimize the intersection's footprint while also allowing for full movements and off-tracking of larger vehicles, like large semi-trailers, without encroaching on opposing traffic or riding up on the sidewalks. Based on swept-path evaluation of large vehicles, such as trailers and semi-trailers, reducing the roundabout's footprint could introduce the potential for larger vehicles to come in conflict with other vehicles, pedestrians (by riding up on the sidewalks), and utilities. This roundabout is also sized and signed to make the presence of the roundabout more obvious, causing traffic to slow down on approach. Additionally, a smaller, or flush, central island would not provide the desired visual indicator to a driver nor dissuade drivers from driving over the central portion of the roundabout.

18. *"The surrounding businesses would become less accessible with the addition of a roundabout, and the numerous large vehicles who rely on the intersection would be forced to go out of their way to avoid it."*

Response: Existing access points (driveways) to surrounding businesses are not being modified or restricted by this project and will be maintained throughout the duration of the project's construction.

Large vehicles who currently rely on the intersection will not be forced to go out of their way to avoid the proposed roundabout. Large vehicle "swept path" simulations have been run for this roundabout to determine the amount of circulatory width needed for normal commuter vehicles and larger passenger/school busses. Additional mountable islands have been added specifically to accommodate larger vehicles whose wheels cannot stay within the normal circulatory and/or turning

roadway paths. These mountable islands are designed specifically to withstand the loading of larger vehicles. Sidewalks are set back far enough that larger vehicles can mount the inner and outer raised islands without riding over sidewalks (causing potential pedestrian conflict).

19. *"Bike lanes should be included from Birmingham Crossroads to the Cherokee County line."*

Response: Your suggestion has been noted and it's appreciated; however, the purpose of this project is to improve traffic operations and reduce current and future traffic delays at this intersection. Please contact District Traffic Engineer, District 7, Justin Hatch (juhatch@dot.ga.gov) for further coordination on these concerns.

20. *"Long-term parking and bus connection to North Springs MARTA also badly needed."*

Response: We appreciate your suggestion and it has been noted; however, long-term parking and bus connections to the North Springs MARTA station are not part of the proposed roundabout project. Please contact the District Traffic Operations Office (see previous comment for contact) or Metropolitan Atlanta Rapid Transit Authority (MARTA) at 404-848-5000 (custserv@itsmarta.com) regarding these concerns.

21. *"The mini-roundabout should be designed with a rural design component so it fits with the rural nature of this area of the City of Milton."*

Response: The addition of sidewalks and pedestrian and ADA accommodations are always evaluated as part of Georgia DOT construction projects. Prevailing conditions, including evidence of existing pedestrian movements, the existing concentration of commercial facilities that could generate pedestrian traffic, and the proximity of the "Matilda's" concert venue warrant the inclusion of sidewalks and wheelchair ramps at this intersection.

22. *"PLEASE PLEASE consider paving Birmingham HWY from this 4-way stop north to the county line. It is currently hazardous with dozens of potholes and sinking pavement."*

Response: Thank you for the suggestion. A maintenance project by Georgia DOT to resurface SR 372 (Birmingham Highway) is planned for the near future. This project, referred to as P.I. No.: M005994, Fulton, will begin at the intersection of SR 140/Arnold Mill Road and SR 372 Birmingham Highway and continue north to the Cherokee County line.

23. *"The Birmingham proposal suggests a tight turn is planned and it will be no less dangerous than the roundabouts I had the misfortune of maneuvering yesterday."*

Response: The curving nature of the roundabout's approaches and departures are specifically designed to limit the operating speed of vehicles within the roundabout. Controlling the operating speed of vehicles reduces conflict with pedestrians crossing the roadway and reduces the occurrence and severity of vehicle crashes, if

they do happen. Roundabouts, by their nature, allow for a steadier traffic stream (as opposed to signals or all-way stops) and so will allow for a more efficient traffic operation while still reducing the potential of crashes.

24. *"The proposal will block deliveries to the 7 Acre BarnGrill, change the look and feel of the crossroads, and the historic 7 Acre building."*

Response: Driveways, parking and all other types of access to and from Georgia State Routes are to be permitted through the State. If this service entrance is to remain, a safety analysis of this access should be performed, and the access officially permitted through Georgia DOT. Alternate access for deliveries could potentially be maintained via the existing 7 Acre BarnGrill parking lot. The addition of curb and gutter and sidewalk will encourage safer pedestrian movements to and from the restaurant as well as the surrounding community.

Application to perform any construction or non-routine maintenance work within State Highway ROW, must be made at the appropriate office in the District where the site is located. For commercial driveways, application is made to the District Traffic Operations Office at the District Office. The District Traffic Operations Office is the central point of contact. Application for residential driveways and temporary use driveways are made at the District Area Office. An applicant may also apply for a commercial or special encroachment permit application by Georgia DOT's electronic website https://gpas.dot.ga.gov. Please contact District Traffic Engineer, District 7, Justin Hatch (juhatch@dot.ga.gov) for more information.

25. *"What evidence do we have that a mini roundabout has benefited other towns with similar commuting times?"*

Response: Roundabouts have become a prevailing intersection control method throughout Georgia and the United States. Georgia DOT has constructed several roundabouts of varying diameters, including compact roundabouts, throughout the City of Atlanta and other metro areas where roads are heavily traveled, and ROW is tight. Throughout towns of varying size in Georgia, utilizing a yield versus a stop reduces the amount of time vehicles sit at an intersection. Please visit Georgia DOT's website dedicated to understanding and using roundabouts:

(http://www.dot.ga.gov/DS/Alternative/Roundabouts).

The decision to propose a roundabout as a preferred alternative is validated through the Intersection Control Evaluation (ICE) Stage 1 - Screening and ICE Stage 2 - Alternative Selection. These studies evaluate the performance of many types of intersection and interchange controls for a particular location and seek to determine the best possible overall value in terms of performance-based criteria.

26. *"Consider installing a traffic signal instead of a roundabout."*

Response: As part of the proposed project's Intersection Control Evaluation (ICE) Stage 1 - Screening and ICE Stage 2 - Alternative Selection, a traffic signal was considered as a traffic control measure at the intersection. However, a traffic signal is not favorable because a traffic signal would require widening of all four approaches to the intersection and would impact the existing utilities located on the

southeast quadrant of the intersection (thereby driving up the cost) and the 7 Acre Barngrill located on the northwest quadrant.

Roundabouts create fewer delays than traffic signals due to the reduced number of vehicles required to stop, and typically operate with lower vehicle delays than other types of intersections and controls. As a result, roundabouts are viable solutions for both peak and non-peak hours.

The Intersection Control Evaluation (ICE) Stage 1 - Screening and ICE Stage 2 - Alternative Selection concluded that a roundabout would provide better operations while requiring less ROW than a traffic signal. Additionally, traffic volumes do not warrant a traffic signal at this intersection and the compact roundabout would minimize impacts to surrounding properties. Please contact Landon Perry at laperry@dot.ga.gov for more information on the benefits of a roundabout versus a traffic signal.

27. *"The roundabout needs right turn lanes to really make a difference."*

Response: Right-turn lanes were not practical for this intersection due to the ROW constraints, existing structures located on the corners, and the existing utilities. Performance analysis of this roundabout show that intersection delay times will be reduced versus the current all-way stop configuration, even without the inclusion of dedicated right turn lanes.

28. *"Traffic will be backed up during peak hours."*

Response: The intersection delay (time spent waiting to get through the intersection) is estimated to decrease 75% and 51% during the 2018 and 2038 AM peak hours respectively after introducing the roundabout design. Similarly, the intersection delay reduces 79% and 57% during the 2018 and 2038 PM peak hours, respectively. Therefore, the proposed roundabout significantly improves the intersection's operation, meeting the need and purpose of the project.

29. *"Traffic at the intersection of SR 372 at Birmingham Highway is not that bad and is not worth the cost and disturbance that project construction will cause. I think that construction would impede traffic too much as well, Birmingham Highway is a well-travelled road and there is not easy detour route. The project is not needed."*

Response: Based on traffic engineering analysis, the intersection currently has a failing level of service due to a high level of vehicular delay. Specially, traffic data collected in 2018 demonstrates that the average morning peak hour delay is 140.4 seconds and the average evening peak hour delay is 155.9 seconds. Without the proposed project, delays at the intersection will continue to increase. In the year 2038, the average morning peak hour delay and the evening peak hour delay are projected to be 435.9 seconds and 497.9 seconds, respectively. That equates to delays increasing by 210% in the morning peak hour and 219% during the evening peak hour when compared to delays in 2018.

30. *"The proposed project will increase accidents and stress."*

Response: Roundabouts demonstrate several safety and operational benefits over traditional stop-controlled intersections. Traffic signals do not eliminate crossing movements nor force drivers to slow down through the intersection, leaving the potential for high speed, angle crashes. By contrast, a roundabout reduces the number of vehicular crossing paths by removing left-turn movements, restricts speeds of traffic, and allows drivers to focus their attention on circulating traffic approaching from one direction (the left). Furthermore, the consequences of errors at roundabouts is less severe than at conventional intersections, due to lower speeds. Please visit Georgia DOT's website dedicated to understanding and using roundabouts (http://www.dot.ga.gov/DS/Alternative/Roundabouts).

31. *"A mini roundabout will not solve the congestion that we experience at rush hour. Traffic in the circle will largely favor 372 and may not relieve backups on Birmingham Rd/Hickory Flat."*

Response: Traffic analyses and intersection modeling showed that a compact roundabout is a solution to the operational deficiencies currently experienced at the intersection. Specifically, traffic analyses of the direction movements show that sideroad traffic on Birmingham Road/Hickory Flat Road will have sufficient "gaps" within the circulating traffic to allow vehicles on those sideroads to enter the roundabout. Please visit Georgia DOT's website dedicated to understanding and using roundabouts (http://www.dot.ga.gov/DS/Alternative/Roundabouts).

32. *"Continuous, heavy traffic flow within the roundabout will keep lighter traffic from being able to enter the roundabout. In the morning, most of the traffic is southbound and eastbound. Will there be enough north and westbound traffic to make the entry disruptions work?"*

Response: Yes, travelers will be able to find gaps to enter the roundabout. Each approach to the roundabout is controlled with a yield, thereby allowing a pause or gap for vehicles to enter the roundabout. Furthermore, Sidra roundabout analysis software was utilized to confirm the usability of the roundabout by the traveling public; including gaps for entering and traveling through the roundabout.

33. *"Please reduce the speed of traffic approaching the roundabout. 20 mph is way too fast."*

Response: Good roundabout designs encourage slower speeds through geometric features, not just traffic control devices or by impeding other traffic. Roundabouts should be designed with appropriate geometric features to ensure optimal safety and operational performance for users entering, circulating, and exiting the intersection. Key principles (from NCHRP Report 672, Sec. 6.2) include providing slow entry speeds and consistent speeds through the roundabout by using deflection. The proposed roundabout's entry speed is reduced to 20 mph. Signage in advance of the roundabout will also encourage traffic to slow down prior to reaching the intersection.

34. *"The design needs to include an automatic flashing light alerting oncoming vehicles to the presence of pedestrians."*

Response: Rapid Flashing Beacons will be evaluated at the crosswalks located at the roundabout's approaches and coordinated between the City of Milton and the Georgia DOT District 7 Office. Lower operating speeds and the addition of sidewalks, crosswalks and wheelchair ramps will also provide for safer pedestrian movements.

35. *"Signage needs to be included ¼ to ½ mile down the road in each direction notifying drivers of the upcoming roundabout."*

Response: Advanced signage is important to make drivers aware of roundabouts at a sufficient advance distance so that they can comfortably decelerate to the appropriate speed for entering the roundabout. Advanced signage will be included with the design that follow the Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD) Signing and Marking Guidelines.

36. *"I think multi-lane entries might be needed to accommodate the current and future traffic."*

Response: A multi-lane roundabout was not practical for this intersection due to the ROW constraints, existing structures located on the corners, and the existing utilities. Also, existing and future traffic volumes did not warrant multi-lane entries.

37. *"Consider right-turn by-pass lanes in the northeast and southwest quadrants or create a thru left lane and right turn lane on entry."*

Response: Right-turn bypass lanes were not practical for this intersection due to the ROW constraints, existing structures located on the corners, and the existing utilities. Performance analysis of this roundabout show that intersection delay times will be reduced versus the current all-way stop configuration, even without the inclusion of dedicated right-turn bypass lanes.

38. *"The bulk of the morning traffic and delay comes from New Bull Pen Road and that should be addressed in conjunction with SR 372 at Birmingham Road. We need to examine adding a turn lane at Birmingham Hwy and New Bullpen road (Northbound Birmingham Hwy)."*

Response: The proposed roundabout considers the traffic and operations of the intersection of New Bull Pen Road and SR 372; however, improvements to the intersection of New Bull Pen Road and SR 372 are outside the scope of this project. Please contact District Traffic Engineer, District 7, Justin Hatch (juhatch@dot.ga.gov) with concerns on New Bull Pen Road and SR 372.

Through its Quick Response program, Georgia DOT allows community members to request or suggest small traffic operations and safety projects. There is a page on the Georgia DOT 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 the Georgia DOT website at this link: http://www.dot.ga.gov/BS/Projects/ProjectSuggestion.

39. *"There's not enough traffic for a roundabout to work nor is there enough room."*

Response: This project was identified by the Georgia DOT District 7 Office as a way of reducing the high traffic volumes and extensive queues that occur during the peak periods of travel. A traffic analysis was completed that compared the difference in operations between the existing conditions and the proposed roundabout. The analysis indicated that construction of a compact roundabout would reduce delay by 50%-80% while minimizing impacts to the surrounding structures and utilities.

40. *"This plan allows for less through traffic as the current set up has a dedicated right-turn lane from all directions."*

Response: Roundabouts function more efficiently than four-way stop controlled intersections, with or without right-turn lanes. Traffic modeling for the intersection of SR 372 at Birmingham Highway showed that the proposed roundabout configuration would serve the same number of vehicles as the existing four-way stop but, in less time.

41. *"Additional roundabouts are needed in the area such as the intersection of Freemanville Road and Birmingham Road. Also, other mini roundabouts are need at the intersection of Segwick Drive and Hickory Flat Road as well as one to the north and one to the south SR 372 at Birmingham Road."*

Response: Improvements to intersections other than SR 372 at Birmingham Road are outside the scope of this project. However, suggested improvements along SR 372 can be requested or suggested using Georgia DOT's Quick Response Project Program. The page can be accessed through the Georgia DOT website at this link: http://www.dot.ga.gov/BS/Projects/ProjectSuggestion. Improvements to intersections that are not on State Routes should be directed to the City of Milton.

42. *"As a community, we implore you to create, design and implement an appropriately designed roundabout at this intersection that fits with the community. A low-profile design that embraces the most rural portion of the City of Milton is needed at this intersection."*

Response: Roundabouts are often a context-sensitive solution as they are more aesthetically pleasing than an all-way stop controlled intersection or a signalized intersection. The compact design of the proposed roundabout would minimize property and visual impacts to the community while serving the existing traffic, future traffic, and pedestrian needs at the intersection.

43. "*I would like the City to consider bringing the sidewalk down to our neighborhood so that we can create a more family friendly walkable/bike-able environment so we can easily get to the grocery store, area retailers and restaurants as well as Matilda's located at the Crossroads in lieu of having to drive that short distance."*

Response: While sidewalks are proposed with this project, the scope of the project limits the construction to the immediate vicinity of the roundabout. Sidewalk requests should be submitted to the City of Milton.

44. *"Please reconsider changing the speed limit from 45 mph to 35 mph on Hickory Flat Rd in Milton, GA. Outside of the daily morning traffic jam, cars whiz by at 55-65 mph all day long. The Cherokee Co line is 1.1 miles away where the speed limit changes to 35 mph. Why is it 45 mph in Milton? Nothing changes with the road or topography- it is the same rural & residential type road but for some reason Cherokee Co gets a 35-mph speed limit, yet Fulton Co has 45 mph on the same road."*

Response: The Georgia DOT Design Policy Manual notes that on country roads or city streets, engineers should work with local jurisdictions to set speed limits and design speeds in order to encourage the local jurisdiction to post a speed less than or equal to the design speed. "It is desirable to select a design speed as high as practical to attain a desired degree of safety, mobility, and efficiency within the constraints of environmental quality, economics, aesthetics, and other social or political effects." (Georgia DOT Design Policy Manual, Chapter 3). For additional concerns, please contact City of Milton.

45. *"The commercial nature of the area would need a larger way to transition either northbound to Birmingham Highway from the east and southbound from the west."*

Response: The circulatory roadway within the roundabout was designed to accommodate a school bus and smaller box-trucks. Truck aprons and the central median island are designed to accommodate the larger, standard-sized 18-wheelers. A bus can make most all movements without needing to mount the central island or right turn islands. An 18-wheeler can make all movements (except U-turn), being accommodated by the island and right turn aprons.

46. *"The four way stop has stalled development and the proposed project will increase density north of the roundabout on SR 372. If the roundabout is installed, developers will take the nonAG-1 zoned land north on 372 (and west on Lower Birmingham) and build far more quickly."*

Response: Land use and zoning decisions in Georgia are made by county and local governments. Land use changes and building permits are under the jurisdiction of the City of Milton.

Within the City of Milton, properties north and west of the Birmingham Crossroads are zoned AG-1 (Agricultural) up to the Cherokee County Line. There is no sewer availability outside of the 27.1 acres within the Birmingham Crossroads Overlay (location of the roundabout) and therefore, within the City of Milton, only one acre minimum lots are permitted, which is by right (no rezoning required). This would be the case weather a roundabout is constructed at Birmingham Highway/Hickory Flat/Birmingham Road or not.

All questions regarding zoning should be directed to the City Milton's Zoning Manager, Robyn MacDonald at Robyn.Macdonald@cityofmiltonga.us or 678-242-2540.

47. *"Protect the historic building on the northwest corner."*

Response: The National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) of 1966 requires federal agencies to take into account the effects of their undertakings on historic and archaeological properties. Generally, in order to qualify as historic, the resource must be a minimum of 50 years of age. It must then be evaluated under the four National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) Criteria, A through D.

A. Association with an event that made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
B. Association with a person significant in our past.
C. Significant for its design or construction.
D. Significant due to the information it may yield on prehistory or history.

In compliance with the NHPA of 1966, the project area was surveyed by a qualified historian and the historic buildings in the project area where determined to be not eligible for listing on the NRHP. The Georgia DOT historians and the State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) concurred with the historic eligibility determinations on March 17, 2020.

Although some buildings may not qualify as significant historic resources from the State's perspective, Georgia DOT recognizes that the building located on the northwest corner of the intersection is an integral part of the history and community of the City of Milton. Designers and engineers identified the building's community significance early in the project's development and have made a point to consider the effect of the proposed project on the building and avoid impacting the structure.

48. *"Consider adding the URL to the direct mailer that takes a reader directly to the information."*

Response: Thank you for the comment. We appreciate the suggestion and are currently taking it into consideration.

49. *"I am concerned about the affect the roundabout will have on the 7 Acre BarnGrill and Matilda's."*

Response: The proposed compact roundabout is a balance of many project constraints, and the design has been developed to minimize or avoid impacts to all properties to the extent possible. To allow for grading and sidewalks, construction will be near the 7 Acre BarnGrill's building; however, no damage or impairment to the building would occur. Additionally, driveway access to Matilda's and the 7 Acre BarnGrill's off-street parking lot, located on the north side of Hickory Flat Road, will be maintained during construction.

Again, thank you for your comments. Should you have further questions or comments, please call the project manager, Premiah Gwinn, at 678-802-1106 or the environmental analyst, Jessica Kern, at 404-631-1159.

Sincerely,

Eric Duff
State Environmental Administrator

ED/rt

cc: Kevin Abel, GDOT Board Member (District 6)
Jan Jones, State Representative (District 47)
Brandon Beach, State Senator (District 21)
Wes Cantrell , State Senator (District 22)
Premiah Gwinn, GDOT Project Manager (via email)
PDF for Project File