COUNTY AGENDA REQUEST

Department:	Commissioners	Presenter(s):	Commissioner Steve Brown
Meeting Date:	Wednesday, January 4, 2012	Type of Request:	New Business

Wording for the Agenda:

Commissioner Brown would like to discuss with the Board the possibility of preparing a resolution to send to the Georgia Department of Transportation encouraging the design of a full-fledged plan for the proposed improvements to the interchange at Georgia Highway 74 and I-85.

Background/History/Details:

The SR 74 and I-85 Interchange near Fairburn is an integral part of the lives of many Fayette County citizens living in the western half of the County. As such, the interchange design plans should include various design elements that would provide meaningful and lasting traffic congestion relief which are not currently in the State's plans, due to a lack of funding.

Obviously, the State will only be able to construct the portions of the plan for which adequate funding is available, however, should other funds become available through the State or Federal governments, it would be prudent to have a viable plan ready for immediate construction of Phase II.

What action are you seeking from the Board of Commissioners?

Concurrence by the Board on whether of not to prepare a resolution encouraging the development of a full-blown design by GDOT for the interchange at Highway 74 and I-85. If the Board concurs, the resolution will be prepared for adoption at an upcoming Board meeting.

If this item requires funding, please describe:

Has this request been considered within the past two years?	No	If so, when?	
Is Audio-Visual Equipment Required for this Request?	No	Backup Provided with Request?	Yes

STAFF USE ONLY

Approved by Finance	Not Applicable	Reviewed by Legal	
Approved by Purchasing	Not Applicable	County Clerk's Approval	Yes
Administrator's Approval	Yes		

Staff Notes:

Carol Chandler

From: Steve Brown [stevebrownptc@ureach.com]
Sent: Monday, December 12, 2011 12:33 AM
To: Jack Krakeel; Carol Chandler
Cc: Philip Mallon
Subject: Item to be placed on the next available workshop agenda

Jack and Carol,

Per my previous discussion with Jack, I need to have an agenda item placed on the next available workshop meeting:

Title:

Resolution encouraging the design of a full fledge plan for the SR 74 and I-85 interchange, including components to be listed as Phase II.

Description:

The SR 74 and I-85 interchange in Fairburn is an integral part of the lives of many Fayette County citizens living in the western half of the county.
As such, the interchange design plans should include various design elements that would provide meaningful and lasting traffic congestion relief which are not currently in the plans due to a lack of funding.

Obviously, the State would only be able to construct the portions of the plan for which they have adequate funding; however, should other funds become available through the Federal or State governments, we would have a viable plan ready for immediate construction of Phase II.

Jack, please let the other commissioners know that if they have any questions, to please call me at their convenience.

Many thanks.

Steve B.

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Carol Chandler

From: Steve Brown [stevebrownptc@ureach.com]
Sent: Sunday, December 11, 2011 11:51 PM
To: Jack Krakeel
Cc: Carol Chandler
Subject: SR 74 and I-85 interchange meeting with GDOT

Jack,

Here is my report on the current planning efforts with the I-85 and SR 74 interchange planning efforts.

Both Phil Mallon and I attended a meeting with top GDOT officials (maybe 15 in the room) at GDOT headquarters in Atlanta. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss what planning scenarios would be presented to the citizenry for public comment.

In the previous meeting, the engineering subcontractor, QK4, had stated their modeling concluded that the half diamond on SR 92 would cause more congestion by pulling traffic from the SR 138 area. This prediction made little sense.
Phil shared some of my concerns.

I emailed the engineer with QK4 and asked to meet at his office, wanting to review the his modeling assumptions. I also asked the key GDOT engineer on this project to assist in my being able to review the modeling data. A meeting was never established.

A review of the sequenced models running at our meeting and their answers to our questions proved that there were significant flaws in the process.

The QK4 team claimed lasting congestion relief with one particular design. However, they had to admit that the traffic flow backed up significantly because of the metered signals - dual flashing lights with the on ramps. A top GDOT official in the room confirmed, upon my inquiry, that the metered signals were going to stay in place. This would decimate our congestion relief under the proposed design.

I also questioned the modelâ019s integrity related to the out parcels on the north bound lanes of SR
74 (Waffle House, McDonalds, Chick-Fil-A, etc.) because the model reflected NO TRAFFIC in or out of those curb cuts. I asked if GDOT had made a firm decision to purchase the access rights and that is why the ingress and egress traffic was omitted. GDOT said no decision has been made and it looks like the final answer will be negative due to cost â013 more on that later. So now we have another significant flaw in the model.

You might have noticed that there are some significant new median cuts in SR 74 on the Fayette side of the interchange. I confirmed at the meeting there will be a Quick Trip fuel station and a Cracker Barrel restaurant on that site. I also confirmed my prediction that a traffic signal had already been approved for that median cut. This is another significant obstacle for Fayette commuters. Likewise, the QK4 engineer confirmed at my request that neither the new median nor the calculated traffic counts for two extremely high use drive-time outlets were incorporated into the model we viewed.

Fairburn's land plans call for one million square feet of office and retail on the Fayette side of the interchange. None of those approved plans and the corresponding traffic counts had been incorporated into the QK4 models. I was told that some of the planned warehouse and

distribution facilities had been incorporated into the models; however, it was certainly not reflected in flow we witness on the screen.

There was no added capacity on SR 74 heading north from Fayette in the designs which means the normal dense congestion from Fayette backing up from Oakley Industrial Blvd. in the AM drive time will not change. This literally means drive times to the interchange will remain the same as we have currently and will worsen with increases in volume.

I found the QK4 engineers' model and their projected forecast for congestion relief up to 2040 to be truly unbelievable. Both Phil and I inquired what they were using for projected population counts coming from Fayette and East Coweta for future years. I asked if they were using ARC projections or running off of future land use calculations from the two counties. They said they used real projections from the immediate area of the interchange - around three
apartment complexes. As far as Fayette and East
Coweta, they said those numbers were in the "background." We asked what exactly that meant. It turns out they merely added one percent growth from Fayette and East Coweta per year, totally unacceptable and unrealistic. It is extremely obvious where the overwhelming amount of the traffic is coming from. This was another significant flaw in the modeling.

Both QK4 and GDOT staff kept saying we could always add the half diamond at SR 92 later and that their designs would allow it. I think the request to see the assumptions in the modeling put the half diamond back into play.

Unfortunately, an official with the Federal Highway Administration has been present at the meetings and has been vague on the inclusion of the half diamond. I took the time after the meeting to discuss the matter with her and she informed me that freight was not her specialty.
She was going to give me the names of her colleagues so we could enhance our discussion.

The distributor and collector lanes on I-85 have also vanished from the plans.

Essentially, Todd Long laid out the GDOT position quite well: make the plans match the dollar figures. That means, under such a scenario, we have little chance of getting meaningful, long-term congestion relief through this type of process. This underscores my opinion that the TIA line item contains only half of the funding necessary for meaningful resolution.

My goal is to have the half diamond, the additional lane capacity on the Fayette side and the distributor and collector lanes added to the plan as another phase, perhaps. If the TIA passes, we can then look to leverage other available funds to integrate the other phase into the original plan for design and construction. I had success doing this in my days holding office in Peachtree City.

We would be doing a disservice to our citizens to by not seeking to advance the full plan to alleviate our congestion problems. Telling our citizens that what is being proposed in current models will satisfy our needs into the future would be dishonest and come back to bite us.

I will offer a recommendation to the Board of Commissioners on a way to achieve a better solution.

Steve Brown

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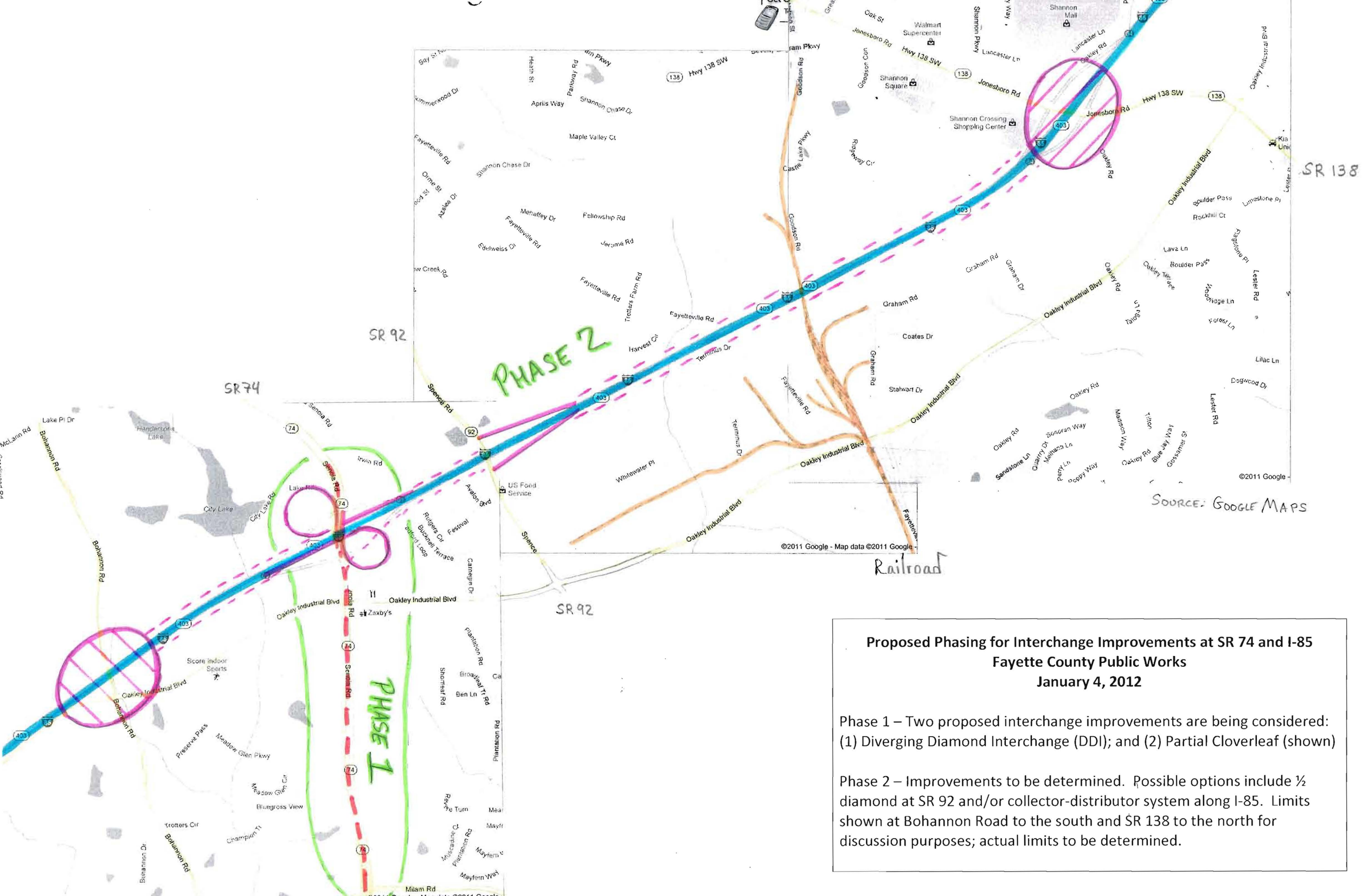

Proposed Phasing for Interchange Improvements at SR 74 and I-85
Fayette County Public Works
January 4, 2012

Phase 1 – Two proposed interchange improvements are being considered: (1) Diverging Diamond Interchange (DDI); and (2) Partial Cloverleaf (shown)

Phase 2 – Improvements to be determined. Possible options include ½ diamond at SR 92 and/or collector-distributor system along I-85. Limits shown at Bohannon Road to the south and SR 138 to the north for discussion purposes; actual limits to be determined.