

AeroATL Model Mile Feasibility Study

Virtual Public Forums

Virtual Forum Schedule

Municipality	Date	Time
Clayton County	8/26/2020	2:00 - 3:00 PM
City of Hapeville	8/26/2020	4:00 - 5:00 PM
City of Forest Park	8/27/2020	1:00 - 2:00 PM
City of Union City	8/27/2020	3:00 - 4:00 PM
City of South Fulton	8/28/2020	1:00 - 2:00 PM
City of Atlanta	9/9/2020	6:00 - 7:00 PM
City of East Point	9/16/2020	6:00 - 7:00 PM

Summary

In response to the continuing COVID-19 pandemic, the second round of public meetings were held in a virtual/dial in format. The purpose of this round of meetings was to give an overview of the alignment(s) being considered and to get some preliminary feedback. All meetings were facilitated by a Consultant Team project manager and followed the same agenda:

- Introduction
- Overview of Goals & Criteria
- Alignment Overview
- Alignment Q&A
- Next Steps

Each meeting was recorded and can be found at <https://aeroatl.org/special-projects>. A summary of the questions/answers recorded at each meeting is included below.

Clayton County

Clayton County Model Mile Q & A Session

Q: Is the elevated concept in the purple alignment expensive to construct?

A: As compared to a concrete trail on the ground, the elevated design is more expensive. You can spend less money in materials up front, but there will be the need for maintenance 10 – 15 years from construction date. However, spending the money up front on quality materials will reduce the need for long

term capital improvements down the line. The construction expenses, the return on investment, and other factors will all be considered when selecting the final alignment.

Q: Is the buffered bike lane in the green alignment similar to what is in Buckhead?

A: Yes, this is similar to the Path 400 trail.

Q: The orange alternative seems to be the best of both worlds. If this is the most highly polled, what other factors go into the final decision making? Does the public get to decide on amenities?

A: We will take public feedback into consideration; we want to know what the public feels most comfortable with. The amenities that we are proposing will be in the final report recommendations, however, final amenities will be decided once the project goes into the full design and construction phases.

Q: Will private land have to be acquired for the blue alignment?

A: The wetlands are owned by either the medical center or Clayton County. The rest of the lands are either school property or privately owned and not developed. There is no need to displace or take any property. Everything that we are looking at would require the acquisition of easements and undeveloped property. We expect that these properties will be relatively easy to acquire.

City of East Point

City Of East Point Model Mile Q & A Session

C: I like that the purple alignment is more of a straight shot, and appreciate that the orange alignment does come across more points of interest, but do not like that there are more potential points of conflict between cars and pedestrians/cyclists and it appears to be curvy, which may deter users.

R: For context, the orange route was drawn the way it was because the attempt was to avoid as many sharp turns as possible in order to favor cyclists. When you walk the site, it's almost 1 mile, and you don't notice the curves as much. The route has a good flow but they are undetectable when at lower walking speeds. Most won't notice the subtle curves when walking and biking.

C: I agree, a combination of the alignments will be a good idea. Much of the green alignment is already existing and is easy to incorporate but I can see there being other alignments constructed along with the green one.

Q: Regarding the existing pedestrian bridge, is this being incorporated into a part of the plan? It's not too pleasant and is difficult to access up and down on a bike. Are any improvements planned for this bridge?

A: The City will be enhancing the bridge with respect to art and aesthetics to make it more attractive to users. We want to also increase safety and to make it more appealing to the public as it can serve as a gateway to the area. By having more traffic on the bridge, it will add to the level of safety here as well. As

far as access, the plan is to make the elevator operable again to improve and increase accessibility. We believe that once it is more useful, it will be more of a destination for the public.

Q: Is there a plan for a ramp to the pedestrian bridge?

A: Not at this time. Once these improvements begin to take place, we will revisit the idea of accessibility and the feasibility of a ramp.

Q: I've heard that MARTA is planning a rail line from Clayton County/Lovejoy that will tie into the East Point MARTA station. If so, how will this impact the trail?

A: Yes, that project is moving forward to create a connection from a Clayton County line and it would connect here in East Point. However, we do not believe that, once constructed, it would be in conflict with the Model Mile trail. We are in conversations with MARTA to ensure that there are no issues with tying into current and future projects at or near this site.

Q: The wider the trail, the better. As a cyclist, it's easier to use the trail with pedestrians and other users. Will this be an 8 – 10 ft trail or wider?

A: We agree. With the trail going through this property, the owners are in favor of a trail as wide as 16ft. On road, we will also try to make the trail as wide as possible (10 – 12 ft). Culture Labs did explore a route through the site that kept all bike/ped traffic separated but it was difficult to make that happen throughout the site. Instead, a handful of spurs or hybrid options can address safety and also create opportunities for engagement with the public and the site.

City of Forest Park

City of Forest Park Model Mile Q & A Session

C: I was wondering how you were going to incorporate Main Street and I like how it is included in the purple alignment. It's clear that it could work.

R: Yes, there may be some modifications that we need to make to Main Street to make it work at the commercial businesses near Lake Drive. There are very few conflicts other than this cross section.

C: Where the open space is shown at Main Street, I believe the Redevelopment Authority may own this piece. If so, that will make it easier to acquire.

R: Great, this is a project that could be completed as a future phase of the project. It's a great site and could accommodate many different uses in the future.

C: I was a little leery about the purple alignment at first but like it because it incorporates the downtown area. The orange alignment could be a future project that the city chooses to address after the study.

C: I agree, I prefer "Activate Main" the purple alignment. It activates many existing uses (the park, community center, library, etc.). Years ago, working with the Comp Plan, crossing Forest Parkway

was mentioned as a big safety concern and still would be an issue with this alignment. The final design has to address how to cross this street safely with all of the traffic on Forest Parkway.

C: It will be important to share this presentation with the Council and the public to be sure they are aware of the alternatives.

R: The City will put the recording on the website. It will also be on the Aerotropolis site as well. We want as much feedback as possible.

Q: Would one option be to put a trailhead on the Main Street side/the north side of Forest Parkway instead of putting one at Starr Park but improving that intersection anyway?

A: Starr Park is an important asset so making this crossing as safe and as inviting as possible will be important. The trailhead is better positioned where you recommend it since the City is looking to acquire more property in and around this location. It will also better activate this space.

C: The City is ramping up a few projects (a new overlay district, the Main Street LCI project) and this project will dovetail nicely with these projects. We will want to coordinate as much as possible.

City of Hapeville

City of Hapeville Model Mile Q & A Session

Q: If the purple alignment utilizes Virginia Ave as the primary corridor, how will it conflict with or tie into other plans under review with AeroATL including Elevated BRT + autonomous vehicle lanes (smart corridor)?

A: We'll show another alternative that utilizes the corridor more than the purple alternative but either way, we will be reviewing other plans and will be coordinating with the City and the client to ensure that we are taking all of those efforts into account in all of our decision making.

C: The new trail will not get a lot less use if there is no tree cover, particularly with the next door heat island that is the airport.

R: I agree, it will have to be a pleasant place to be appealing and to attract the public to use the trail.

Q: Regarding the green alignment, how is it working in other jurisdictions where lanes were removed for bike and foot traffic? Several in downtown/midtown Atlanta. Any data available?

A: We do not have that data readily available but there are two sides of that coin. First you consider the street and whether or not it is over built – is there excess capacity and into the future, will there still be capacity? When there is not a need for these excess lanes, they can be taken for trail use. On the other hand, you can look at an area and see that, while there is a lot of vehicular traffic, taking a lane still may not impact the level of service of that street that badly. If we're trying to encourage a different behavior, then the level of service for vehicles may be allowed to suffer in order to give more opportunities for other means of travel like bike/ped.

C: I love the design of PATH Parkway at Tech.

R: I agree, that is a good example where a road was way over capacity and a lane was turned into a multi-use corridor.

City of South Fulton

City Of South Fulton Model Mile Q & A Session

Q: How will the trailhead in the purple alignment connect with Wolf Creek Amphitheater?

A: Our thinking is to construct a separate trailhead and not utilize Wolf Creek Amphitheater. People will be able to still access the venue, but there are other areas that would make good trailheads as well. The trail will be treated as a park and will have park hours, so this could conflict with the hours and operation if it is tied to the amphitheater where activities could extend beyond trailhead hours. Because of these management challenges, we are recommending a separate trailhead that would not be in conflict with venue operations.

Q: Why was Butner Road/Camp Creek chosen versus other locations around the city in the purple alignment?

A: I cannot speak to why the city specifically chose this segment but there are many potential trail segments in South Fulton that could have been chosen. This Model Mile is a good starting point as it will eventually connect to popular areas such as Camp Creek and beyond. Current destinations in this area were likely considered when selecting this segment.

Q: What is the selected start date of this project?

A: This plan will conclude with a document and report that provides guidance on construction costs, materials, and the alignment. It will be up to the City to find money and move forward. Generally, the timeline for a locally funded project like this could see construction beginning in about a year.

Q: What is the estimated cost of the purple alignment?

A: We do not have defined costs at this time, but we generally use an estimate of \$1M per mile. It can be lower in rural areas and higher in urban areas. This will be a higher priced trail because of the challenges we will have to navigate.

Q: When you mention boardwalk, is that the style of the path?

A: Yes, the boardwalk design is recommended here because it helps to minimize environmental impacts to areas such as wetlands and streams.

Q: Are there any considerations for art installations or use of local artists to create artwork?

A: Yes, we've begun to identify potential public art locations, shown as yellow stars on the map. This will be a significant conversation to make this a destination and will be decided upon during construction.

Q: Has anyone reached out to Chattahoochee Hills or Serenbe?

A: Yes, Chattahoochee Hills is aware of the project. All of the cities in south Fulton County and Clayton County who sit on the Aerotropolis Atlanta Alliance board were given the opportunity to participate in the study, including Chattahoochee Hills. They did not opt into the process at that time. Our hope is that, as the trails get developed, we will connect many miles of trails throughout the south metro region including to Chattahoochee Hills, and others around south Fulton County.

Q: Does Aerotropolis also do this work for subdivisions?

A: We are an alliance of public and private partners in south Fulton. As for neighborhood associations or subdivisions, we don't work at that hyper local level but we can have conversations with you and your jurisdiction to talk about how we may be able to support and help develop trails in your subdivision.

Q: It appears that this trail is designed for pedestrian use only. Will there be space to allow for bikes and peds to use the trail at the same time?

A: Yes, this is a multi-modal trail that will accommodate bikes and pedestrians.

Q: Regarding the tunnel, when using the trail would you be underground for the entire distance from Butner to Merk Road?

A: No, the tunnel is just to get under Merk Road, a total of about 50 feet.

Q: What type of materials would be used to construct the boardwalk?

A: There are multiple ways to construct a boardwalk. We prefer a concrete boardwalk because it is easier to maintain over time. Lumber is another alternative. Over time, lumber requires more maintenance but is a lot less costly.

Q: Will there be lighting?

A: Typically, trails like this one are dawn to dusk trails, so they operate and function as park spaces. The trail segments that are along the street may incorporate lighting, however, in the more park like spaces, lighting may not be utilized.

Q: How do we see the layout and presentation documents after the meeting?

A: Visit the Aerotropolis Atlanta Alliance website at <https://aeroatl.org/special-projects/aeroatl-greenway-model-mile/>

Q: What amenities will be considered?

A: Yes. There are many opportunities for restrooms and perhaps a building or picnic areas at the trailhead. Along the trail, there could be overlooks, seating, signage and educational plaques, public art, and other amenities.

Q: What happens next? How can we help ensure that the trail is built?

A: It all comes down to prioritization at the local level. It's important to let your elected officials know that you're behind this project. We're providing all cities with an implementation strategy which helps to secure

funding. In South Fulton, we want to also influence the plans that are in the pipeline for this area. We are coordinating improvements as a strategy to ensure that this trail can be built easily and quickly. We advocate for local and state level dollars which come with quicker timelines for construction, as well.

C: Re: the cross sections shown for Butner in the green alignment, my preference would be a completely separated trail. This would be safer with the speeds that I see on Butner.

Q: Regarding the traffic from motorized vehicles (ATV, golf carts), what can we do to discourage this type of use?

A: The City can prohibit the use of motorized vehicles on the trail. You can also incorporate bollards or other design elements to prevent access to ATVs and carts. This goes back to how the City will manage, operate, and police the space. The more heavily used it is, the less likely you are to see these prohibited uses.

Q: Are there thoughts of adding a dog park?

A: This has not come up but can be considered and would be another way to activate the space and add value.

City of Union City

City of Union City Model Mile Q & A Session

Q: How will inadequate lighting be addressed in the purple alternative?

A: We will look at ways to address lighting. There are light poles on the corridor, but we will recommend improved lighting as a part of the conceptual trail design.

Q: Will the MARTA lot be the only access point in Union City via parking?

A: Right now, that is the location of the trailhead but it would be possible to park in other locations or to access the trail on the north end at Buffington Road. At the MARTA lot location where the trailhead is proposed, we are looking at taking advantage of the corner of that lot as it would be the safest point on the property, since no street crossings would be required to access the multi-use trail.

Q: What about safety? The purple alignment is close to a school. Will you be working with law enforcement to develop a safety plan?

A: A full safety plan would be developed during the implementation phases and would be included in the final design. The City will reach out to the school to make sure that student crossings are safe. There is a potential to add additional crossings and signals near the school as well.

Q: Is the property owned by MARTA or Union City?

A: The lot where the potential trailhead is located is owned by Georgia DOT but is managed by MARTA.

Q: If the property is owned by MARTA, if users park there, will they be in any violation?

A: Since the City will need to purchase the property from MARTA to construct the trailhead, the property would be City owned and users would be able to park there without consequence. The City may also work to coordinate an agreement with MARTA to operate a trailhead on that site, allowing citizens to park on the property.

Q: Regarding lighting, currently there is no lighting on Royal South Parkway especially on the side of the street adjacent to the freeway. Will the plan be to install lighting at certain intervals to ensure safety? There are a number of schools and safety must be a main concern.

A: Yes, that will be a part of the final conceptual design. We will propose more pedestrian scale lighting in this area so that users will feel safe along the corridor. Safety and lighting were the very first asks that the City had of the consultant team. It is at the top of the list and we will not move forward with any plan that does not consider safety as a priority.

Q: Would emergency call boxes be considered?

A: Yes, that is something that can be considered to improve safety and can be included in the conceptual design.

Q: When is implementation expected to occur?

A: This is the feasibility study phase, and we will help the City identify funding sources. Once funding is secured, the City can move forward with construction.

Q: How can I find out more about the project going forward?

A: Please be sure to follow the City of Union City's social media accounts and visit the City's website as well to stay up to date.

Q: If funding cannot be located, is it incumbent upon the cities to implement the trails?

A: For these types of endeavors, there are many funding sources available. The City will find the sources that work best for this particular project. We are confident that we will find the funding sources to implement without relying upon the citizens. Completing a feasibility study opens the City up to many sources of funding as well and will help align funding sources with the project.

Q: On the green alignment, you mention that the trail can use different sides of Royal South Parkway to take advantage of different aesthetics. In the design, will any of the trail have to cross over the entry/exits of some of the warehouses?

A: Yes, that is one of the constraints that we are looking at. Luckily, there are very wide crosswalks in these new properties and the sight distance is appropriate, however, there are large driveway aprons that we have to cross.

Q: How will the trail remain safe with big-rigs coming through this area and children in the area?

A: We agree. On the typical sections, we show a buffer. We will also recommend high visibility crosswalks and intersections and different treatments that make crossings very visible to drivers and potential conflict points. There are also traffic calming measures that can be used to reduce the speed limit and to improve safety and cautionary protections for the pedestrians and drivers.

C: I would not be in favor of any alignment that would require the user to cross from one side of the street to the other.

Q: If the trails go off road, how will safety be addressed in that scenario for children or anyone using the trail?

A: Safety is one of the biggest concerns that the City has regarding the trail. Lighting, traffic calming, and education will all be considered. We will partner with the school and businesses on this plan. This is still in the conceptual phase so there is still an opportunity to make these adjustments. We will bring all of the players to the table. Nothing is foolproof but this is something that we should continue the conversation about to be sure that we have addressed all of the potential concerns.

Q: On the Silver Comet Trail, at certain points where it crosses roads there are flashing beacons that stop traffic. Is that considered?

A: Yes, these are some of the traffic calming measures that are being considered for any alignment where crossing will be required.

Q: Typically, trails are open from dawn to dusk, is that correct?

A: Technically, yes. Trails are usually considered park spaces and are open from dawn to dusk. This determination would be up to the City. If there is an off-road portion, there could also be a gate that closes the trail. All options will be considered to improve safety.

City of Atlanta

City of Atlanta Model Mile Q & A Session

Due to a technical error, the question and answer session discussion is not available.