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TRANSPORTATION UPDATE

Covid-19 has impacted commuters across the state. Many who can are now working from home. School buses that are not delivering meals are parked. Commuter transit options have reduced operating schedules. It would seem that in the absence of daily rush hour traffic to contend with, the Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) would have the ability to accelerate project delivery and potentially recognize cost savings in order to offset any negative impact on the collection of motor fuel revenues.

Florida announced several weeks of acceleration to \$2 billion worth of road and bridge projects due to the lull in major traffic. In Maryland, a westbound lane of the Chesapeake Bay Bridge near Annapolis reopened to traffic ahead of schedule due to repairs being completed during the pandemic.

In Georgia, this is not yet the case. While the GDOT may have certain areas where a crew could work during the day, in the majority of places daytime lane closures would have a negative impact on freight movement and the traffic of essential commuters. During this uncertain time, the department does not want to negatively impact the timely delivery of essential deliveries to stores, restaurants, health care centers, and other critical services. The construction division at the department continues to work with industry leaders to identify areas where daytime closures would provide minimal impact to freight routes and essential employment centers.

Because the opportunities to speed project delivery are small, they will not likely be major 'game changers' as far as finishing quickly enough to provide cost savings large enough to buffer any revenue impacts sustained by the reduced consumption during this pandemic. At this point, any reliable buffer to lost state revenue is federally provided support to be offered to states.

Nationwide, state transportation leaders have petitioned Congress for an immediate \$50 billion to prevent major cuts to road and bridge projects over the next year, in addition to the request for a long-term plan that doubles spending that would go to state transportation departments. Last month's enacted stimulus package provided \$2 trillion, a portion of which went to public transit providers, commercially-owned airports, and Amtrak to offset the major decline in riders as a result of the coronavirus outbreak. Georgia received \$522.24 million in total Federal Transit Administration (FTA) funds. These are 100 percent federal and require zero state match. The allocation priority is for operating costs to maintain service, making up for lost revenue due to the pandemic, the purchase of personal protective equipment for employees, and the payment of administrative leave of operations personnel. The Atlanta urbanized area received \$370.94 million in Large Urban Program Funding to be allocated to the region's operators. The allocations for the Atlanta urbanized area are below:

Atlanta UZA - FY20 CARES Act Suballocation	
Operator	CARES Act Total
Cherokee	\$2,777,825
Cobb	\$18,039,756
Douglas	\$2,523,816
Gwinnett	\$19,821,538
Henry	\$2,755,867
Xpress	\$25,731,752
CPACS	\$145,918
MARTA	\$298,641,024
ARC	\$510,264
Total Atlanta UZA	\$370,947,760

While the department has not been given indications on federal help, the GDOT is still moving forward on planned and underway projects as scheduled. There are no immediate projections for revenue shortfall and project delays, but department staff will continue to communicate with the Department of Revenue to monitor collections and the impact, if any, those numbers will have on current project lists.