



March 6, 2020

Commissioner Josh Rowan
Atlanta Department of Transportation
55 Trinity Ave SW
Atlanta, GA 30303

Re: DeKalb Ave resurfacing and safety concerns

Dear Commissioner Rowan,

I'm writing to provide the Atlanta Bicycle Coalition's comments on the "DeKalb Avenue Safety Improvements" project. While replacing the reversible lane and addressing ADA issues are important safety improvements, we do not believe the design presented at the February 27th open house would fulfill the City's commitment to improving safety for everyone on this key corridor.

We appreciate all the staff and consultants who worked hard on this project and who have listened to our hopes and concerns about the project over the years. We hope you'll keep listening as we share our critique of the project.

One of our 2020 priorities is to hold the City accountable to complete projects in existing City transportation plans. DeKalb Avenue was identified as a high priority for the Renew Atlanta Bond in 2015, and the TSPLOST program approved in 2016 included a multi-use trail from Inman Park to Rocky Ford Road. After the Renew and TSPLOST projects were cut back due to funding constraints, a short cycletrack appeared in the [Mayor's Action Plan for Safer Streets](#). Among the plan's goals were to "expand access to MARTA stations, city parks, and schools by providing first/last mile connections."

I think you share our conviction that all City projects should strive to achieve this statement from the City's [Strategic Transportation Plan](#): "a transportation network can only be successful if it is accessible to all Atlantans." The Mayor's letter goes on to say "transportation is about so much more than infrastructure. It is about building connections between communities, people and opportunities... It is also about bringing new vitality and new life to streetscapes that for too long stood as barriers between communities instead of safe public spaces for our most vulnerable residents."

We believe Atlanta is entering a new phase in its transportation systems, in which people using roadways should be prioritized starting with the most vulnerable, so our street design begins to reflect our city's values. First people using wheelchairs/strollers, then people walking, biking or scooting, deliveries and loading, and then cars and parking.

As the first highly visible project to come out of the new Atlanta Department of Transportation, DeKalb Avenue must fulfill these objectives.



Speed limit

While changes to the street design *may* result in slower speeds, that's not assured. Meanwhile, the safety of vulnerable users must be a top priority. In order to achieve this, the plan should include a reduction of the speed limit on DeKalb Ave to 25 mph.

Design changes

1. Fix the Moreland intersections: As DeKalb crosses over Moreland, it widens substantially. The current design prioritizes that space for the movement of cars, and sandwiches the cycletrack in between a through lane and a turn lane. This intersection is already complicated for all users and this would make it almost impassable.

- Place the cycletrack adjacent to the curb
- Remove the right turn lanes and close the slip lane
- Create a wider radius turning right onto Moreland using the extra width
- Use highly durable and visible materials, increase the density of flex posts, and include maintenance in the ATL DOT budget. For an example of more robust delineators, see Qwick Kurb:

www.qwickkurb.com/bike-lanes.

2. Create a safe first- and last-mile connection to transit and the neighborhoods south of DeKalb Ave:

- Extend the cycletrack by three blocks to reach the Oakdale/Whitefoord and Edgewood/Candler Park MARTA station. This is essential to the project's utility for connecting with transit on both sides of the tracks as well as neighborhoods south of DeKalb Ave, including Edgewood, Kirkwood, and East Lake. It's also a commitment in the [Mayor's Action Plan for Safer Streets](#), a goal of which is to "expand access to MARTA stations, city parks, and schools by providing first/last mile connections."
- Extend the proposed LIT lane at the Arizona intersection to reach Clifton, an important connection for commuters using active transportation to get to the Emory and CDC area.

3. Reduce potential conflicts between turning cars and the cycletrack by prohibiting some left turns.

4. Ensure a safe transition at the cycletrack termination at Hurt St. The intersection of Hurt with DeKalb is notorious for crashes - just ask the owners of Proof Bakeshop, who have supported our calls for a safe and complete street. This intersection needs extra attention to make it safe for people on foot, bikes, wheelchairs,



and scooters. We suggest continuing the cycletrack along the east side of Hurt, next to the MARTA station. This would eliminate 3 to 5 free parking spaces, but free on-street parking is available on Edgewood Avenue. In addition, this would reduce the danger to drivers making an unprotected crossing outside the crosswalk after parking their cars. If there is no political support for this concept, allow people to enter and exit the cycletrack through the MARTA parking lot and improve the crosswalk from Edgewood across Hurt to the MARTA parking lot.

5. Create a consistent cross-section of two through lanes and center left turn lane throughout the corridor. Currently, the design shows DeKalb widening back to four lanes east of Rocky Ford Road. The Decatur section of this corridor, West Howard Street, was recently redesigned to a 2-lane street without turn lanes by adding planters to buffer the narrow multi-use trail and slow traffic to safer speeds. Leaving the four-lane section would encourage drivers to speed up just before they approach what should be the safest part of the entire corridor. There is a short block owned by DeKalb County, so coordination would be needed to make this portion safer as well by aligning either with Atlanta's three-lane configuration or Decatur's two-lane.
6. Ensure a safe crossing for pedestrians where the sidewalk abruptly stops as it crosses the Boulevard bridge.
7. Seek funding for Phase 2, the Complete Street, as soon as possible. Our vision is of a multi-use trail along the MARTA tracks connecting to the existing PATH trail that runs from Rocky Ford Road into the City of Decatur. One option for funding is a new bond or extending the TSPLOST. While we would like to support new funding for transportation, we need to see that existing funds are being programmed in a way that puts safety first.

Thank you for your attention to this project and your commitment to getting it right. As the City programs new projects I know you share our belief that each one should make the roadway safer - for everyone.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Rebecca Serna".

Rebecca Serna

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