

NO NEW TOLLS

By- John Albers



It doesn't take an engineer to figure out that traffic is terrible in Atlanta, especially north Fulton County. A recent study ranked Atlanta as having the 3rd worst traffic congestion in the entire country, but we already knew that because we have to live in it every day!

The facts about the absolute failure of transportation policy and planning in Georgia are astounding. A recent state audit revealed what the Governor called "Enron like accounting" and \$2 billion in accounting fraud at the Georgia Department of Transportation. The situation is so bad there are calls for criminal investigations.

Meanwhile, the DOT Board and political insiders engage in endless petty fighting over who controls what instead of focusing on solutions. Miraculously, they do seem to agree on new tax increases to pour more money into their pit of ineffectiveness.

Now, the State Road and Tollway Authority is planning to convert the HOV lanes on I-85, I-75 and I-575 into toll lanes..

Where is our return on our investment? How can we trust our money is being spent well?

Before we consider new taxes and new tolls, I propose a very simple solution. The state should honor its word on the GA400 toll.

When the state established a toll on GA400 to pay for its expansion, the citizens were promised that the toll would be removed when the road was paid for. Today, the State Road and Tollway Authority have collected \$15 million MORE than is needed in GA400 toll revenues. However, there is no plan, no discussion, not one finger being raised to do what the state originally promised and remove the toll.

The residents of north Fulton have paid the heaviest part of this road tax, so we have been on the receiving end of our state breaking its word. Forgive us if we are a bit skeptical when transportation leaders come along and promise grand solutions and new plans. We have heard it all before. We (tax paying citizens) are the shareholders of the Georgia Department of Transportation and it is time for a house cleaning.

It is true that transportation solutions are complicated. I am a strong proponent of building more roads, quality traffic management programs, mass transit, light rail, bike paths, etc. It will take a combination of all of these to solve our traffic gridlock problem. However, the foundation of any effective plan is trust and good management.

However, if it is just more politics as usual from our transportation “leaders”, you can expect strong opposition from me and the thousands of my fellow Georgians who have signed up at TearDownTheToll.com. But the foundation of any solution starts with two simple things – trust and a plan. I am building a coalition of people all across north Fulton who share a common vision of lower taxes and honest government. I need your help!

Join me in signing a petition that demands our state government honor its word and TEAR DOWN THE GA 400 TOLL! Go to www.TearDownTheToll.com to learn more.

I will collect these petitions and deliver them to the General Assembly during their next legislative session and to the State Road and Tollway Authority. The GA400 toll represents 3 glaring problems in our state. They are trust, traffic gridlock and fiscal responsibility.

If they turn a deaf ear to our concerns, then I will bring our petitions to the Senate floor on the first day of my service as your State Senator and demand they listen and make sure our voices are heard at the State Capitol.

I would like to wish everyone a very Happy Thanksgiving. I am very blessed in my life with wonderful family, friends, career and church. I would like to especially give thanks for our Teachers, Police Officers, Firefighters, active Military and Veterans. Our freedom, safety and children’s future are in your hands. God Bless you!

For more information about John, go to www.votealbers.com.