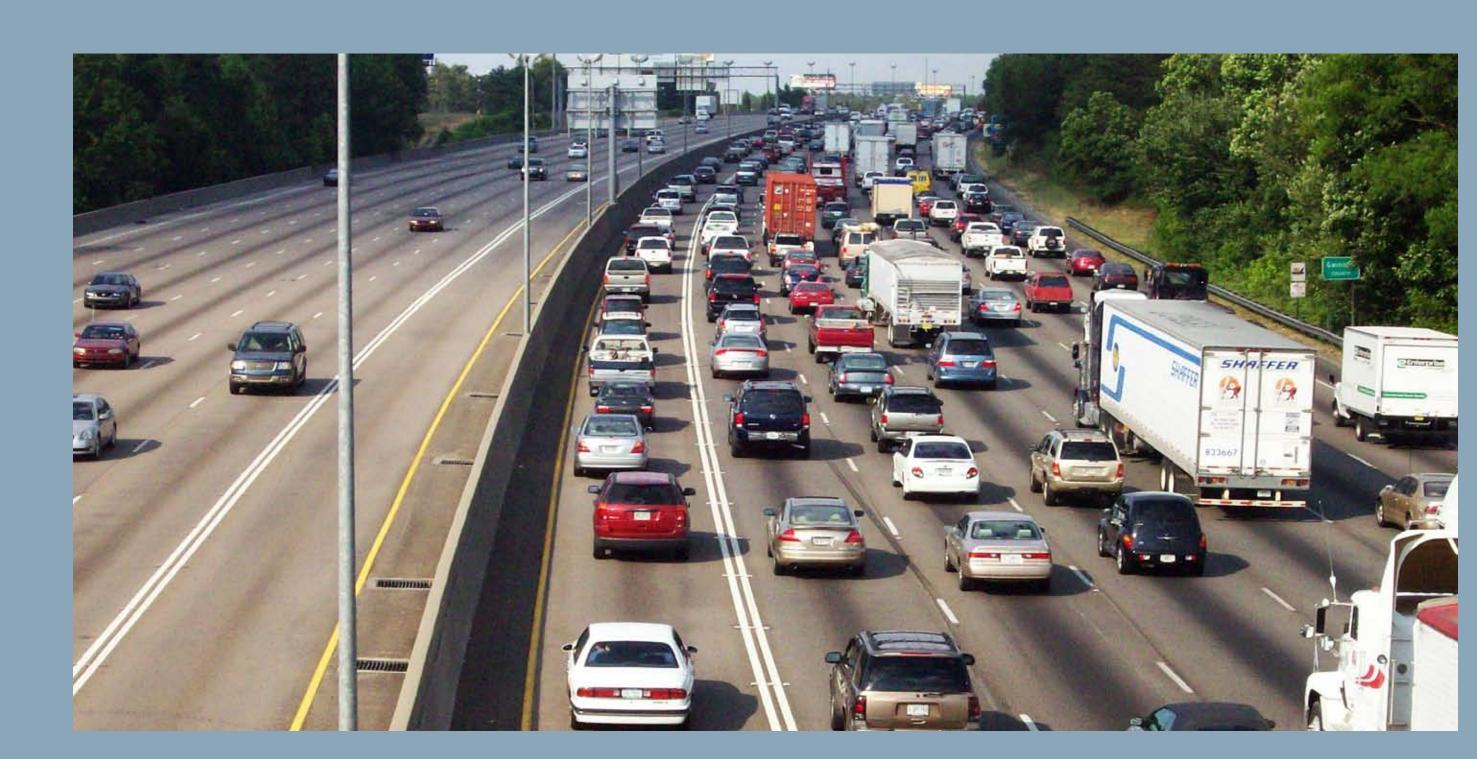
MOVING FROM HOV 2 TO HOT 3: UNDERSTANDING THE IMPACTS TO GEORGIA COMMUTERS ON 1-85

"I see it as

expediting travel

Georgia's First HOT Lane



In November 2008, Governor Sonny Perdue and then Transportation Secretary Mary Peters announced a federal grant of \$110 million to the State of Georgia to implement Phase I of a long-term plan for an integrated system of dynamically priced High Occupancy Toll (HOT) lanes, enhanced transit service, and innovative technologies. Phase I will demonstrate this multimodal congestion reduction strategy on approximately 16 miles of the I-85 corridor.

A key challenge and innovation for the new I-85 HOT lanes will be the change in occupancy requirements for carpoolers to use the lane for free. To gain the greatest benefit from the HOT lanes, the

GDOT Board changed the occupancy from HOV 2 to HOT 3 so only three person carpoolers are eligible to use the lane without paying a toll. In order to mitigate the impacts of this change in eligibility, it is necessary to understand the perspective of the current users.



Focus Groups Provide Key

In late 2008 and early 2009, two rounds of focus groups were conducted that totaled more than 75 participants. They revealed what I-85 commuters knew, liked, or disliked about the HOT lanes concept, its perceived benefits and concerns, and key messages that resonated with key messages that resonated with focus group participants. Participants were recruited using a random sampling of I-85 commuters that were stratified by single drivers and carpoolers. Each 90-minute discussion consisted of eight or nine participants and one facilitator.



Perceived Benefits

During the focus group sessions, several benefit themes regarding HOT lanes emerged, including that they:

• provide drivers with a sense of control over traffic

- are easy and convenient to use
- get you where you need to be in a timely manner
- make for a more enjoyable commute by reducing travel times
- provide a <u>choice</u> and are optional "You do not HAVE to use it"

Perceived Issues and Concerns

Participants provided feedback on issues and concerns, including:

- How is the HOT lane monitored and enforced for drivers who break the rules?
- Will I get a refund for having to get out of the lane if there is an
- If I move in and out of the lane am I charged twice?
- How is the money from my toll going to be used?
- What is the maximum toll that will be charged?
- How do you enter/exit the HOT lanes?

Surveys Differentiate between the Needs of User Groups

In the Spring of 2009, an extensive quantitative survey of transit riders, carpoolers, and single drivers was conducted. The quantitative study was an email survey conducted in partnership with the Clean Air Campaign, a non-profit agency and



project partner that promotes commute alternatives throughout the state of Georgia. By targeting commuters, particularly carpoolers and transit users through the Clean Air Campaign's database, a 30 percent response rate was achieved. This data provided profound insights into the attitudes and behaviors of these potentially impacted groups.

Key Carpooler Findings

- Carpoolers have adopted ridesharing as an integral part of their routine
- Carpooling is a practical, economic decision
- Demonstrating value of HOT lanes is critical
- Position HOT as an innovative solution addressing congestion before it becomes intolerable
- Carpoolers are a key audience for outreach and promotion need to set up a program just for them
- Unique opportunity for promotion of transit

Profile of the I-85 Carpooler

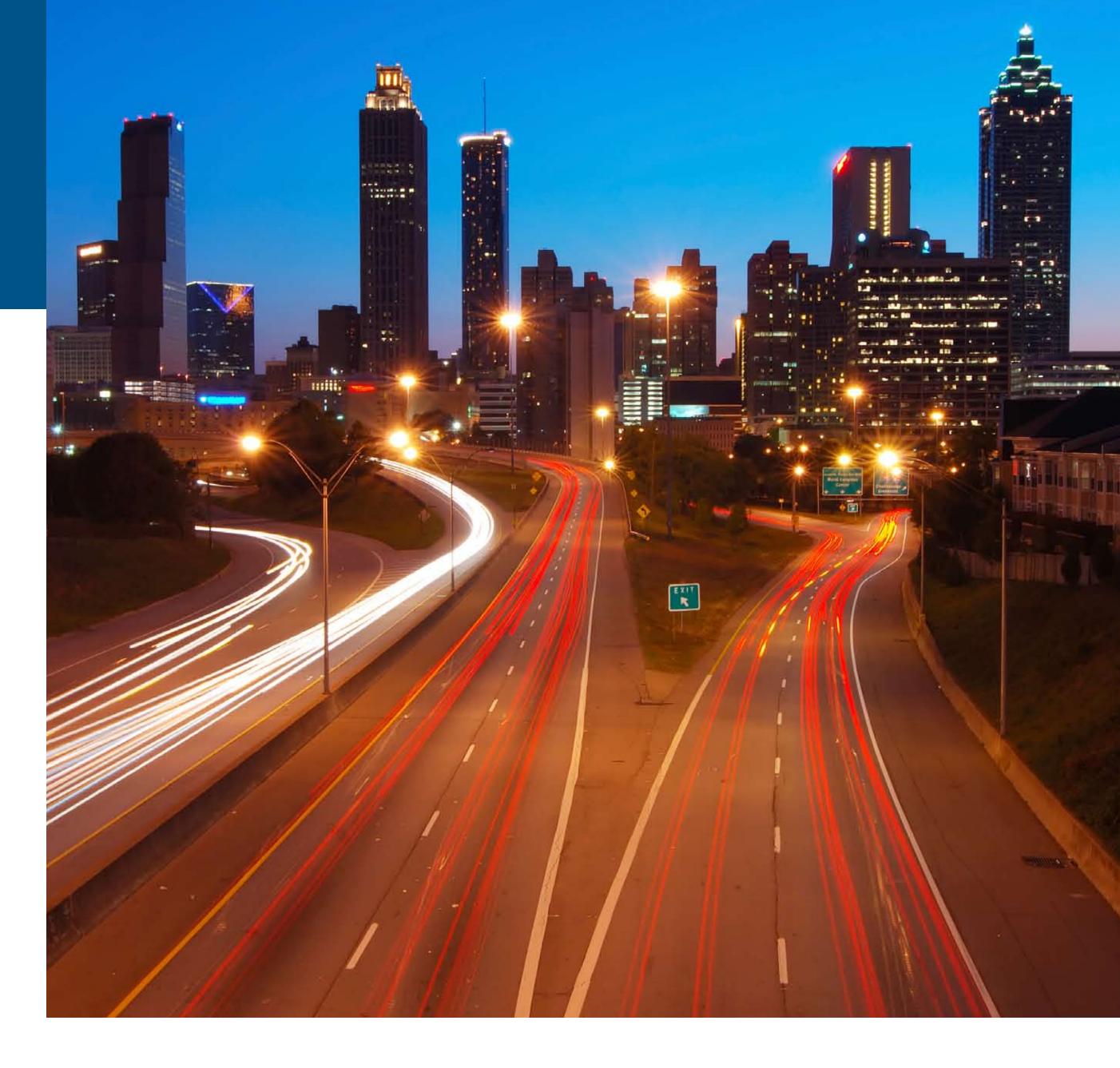
- Member of 2 or 3 person carpool
- Carpool at least 3 times per week, for the last 6 months or more
- Employed as a professional or administrative support
- Earn \$50,000 or more (household income)
- Cite cost savings as primary motivation • Rarely stop for a personal errand
- Commute at regional peak periods
- Reside in Gwinnett County or surrounding areas

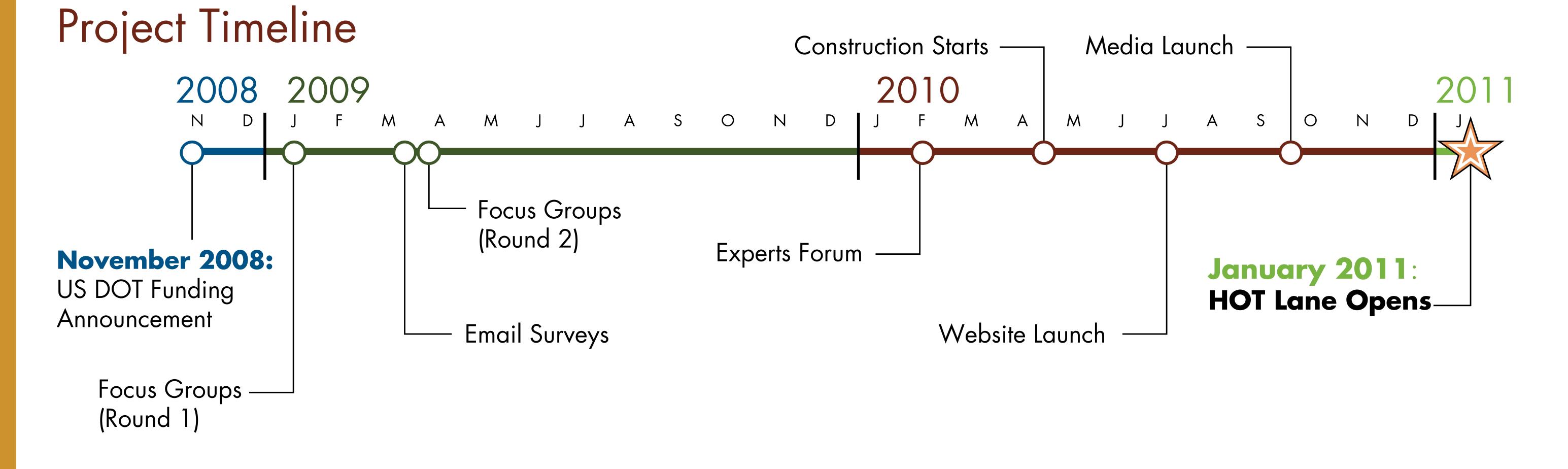
Use of the HOV lane by I-85 carpoolers

- 63% are in 2-person carpools
- 45% use the HOV lane 3 or more times per week
- 40% never or only occasionally use the HOV lane
- 64% would continue to carpool if HOV lane did not exist

Next Steps

The email surveys and focus group sessions findings are being used by the project partners to inform implementation of the I-85 HOT lanes. Specifically, the market research is helping to formulate strategies to best communicate project benefits and identify project concerns specific to various stakeholder groups. In addition, project partners are using this understanding to develop the best methods of public outreach and the key messages that would resonate with stakeholders.







For more information, visit the project website or contact: www.dot.ga.gov/185hotlanes

Cherie Gibson Communications Director, State Road and Tollway Authority 404.893.6103 cgibson@georgiatolls.com

La Detra White President Noble Insight 404.373.6944 ladetra@nobleinsight.com

John Doan Senior Associate SRF Consulting Group, Inc. 763.475.0010 jdoan@srfconsulting.com