



CHATHAM COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF ENGINEERING

124 Bull Street, Room 430
P.O. Box 8161
Savannah, Georgia 31412-8161
FAX 912-652-7818
912-652-7800

Leon Davenport, P.E.
County Engineer

Suzanne Cooler, P.E.
Assistant County Engineer

November 3, 2015

Karen Jenkins
Savannah Tree Foundation
3025 Bull Street
Savannah, Georgia 31405

Subject: Skidaway Road Improvement Project

Karen:

This letter is a response to your letter dated October 15, 2015. Your questions/concerns are reiterated below, and include a response from the Chatham County Department of Engineering.

- What are the project design criteria and how were these factored into the project?

The project is being developed to improve the safety and operation of the Skidaway Road corridor from Montgomery Cross Road thru the intersection of Norwood/Ferguson Avenue for vehicles, pedestrians and bicycle traffic. .

- What data were used to justify the proposed action, i.e., were traffic survey data compiled along with the interpretation of them used in the project design?

Traffic counts were obtained in 2013 and compared to counts previously obtained for the project. Based on historical data, a 1% growth rate per year was used to project volumes out to the year 2035. These counts, as well as the traffic accidents, were compiled in a Traffic Analysis report prepared by Thomas & Hutton in May 2013. As requested, the report is attached.

- What was the no action alternative? Was it considered in the design?

Yes, a no build alternative was developed and used to compare traffic operations to the proposed alternatives for the 2035 design year.

- Why is the slip lane to Skidaway heading south necessary, as well as the one heading west to Montgomery Cross Road? Roundabouts function best when all traffic enters the circle, and slip lanes (especially this type of context) tend to reduce their safety and functionality. Eliminating those slip lanes would significantly reduce the size of the project that would aid in protection of existing trees and community character.

Due to the high volume of right turning vehicles at these approaches, the bypass lanes will reduce delay and increase the overall operation and safety of the intersection.

Statements about reduced safety and functionality of the intersection caused by the bypass lanes are unfounded and contradict published research by the Transportation Research Board and the Federal Highway Administration.

- Was an option considered for a sidewalk only on the east side of Skidaway Road, and none on the west side? Since the right of way is very constrained, we'd like for the County to consider an option that would allow for a sidewalk with a more generous tree lawn along the east side, which would by necessity eliminate the sidewalk on the west side. If development proceeds with the parcels on the west side, the County could negotiate with property owners to also have a sidewalk and tree lawn along that side as well.

One of the goals of the project is to improve pedestrian safety and provide connectivity for pedestrians. An option to install a sidewalk on only one-side of the road would not provide a safe, connected pedestrian facility for those living on the west side of Skidaway Road. And the suggestion to install a sidewalk on the west side of Skidaway road at a later date creates a piecemealed project. There are drainage improvements required on the west side of Skidaway Road that will require right of way to be acquired even if a sidewalk is not installed on the west side of Skidaway Road.

- Has a tree survey been completed by a certified arborist?

Yes. Thomas & Hutton performed a tree survey and the County Arborist did a field review to verify the survey.

- Was the Georgia Conservancy's Blue Print for Sandfly considered during the planning of this road project?

Yes, staff has reviewed this document in conjunction with the re-development of the concepts and construction plans for the project.

- What new trees will be planted, and where?

The final location of new tree plantings will be determined when right of way acquisition and final plans are complete. The County Arborist will assist in developing any new tree planting plans.

Thank you for your questions related to the Skidaway Road Improvement project. If you have any other questions or concerns, please let us know.



Nathaniel Panther, P.E.
Senior Transportation Engineer

Attachment

cc: Lee Smith, County Manager w/o attachment