



# Department of Transportation

State of Georgia

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Thank you for attending the public hearing open house for GDOT Project Number NHS-0002-00(923), P.I. No. 0002923, the proposed improvements to West Bay Street between I-516 and East Lathrop Avenues. In this handout package you will find a need and purpose statement, project description, location map, environmental statement, right-of-way statement and comment card.

As you enter the room, you will notice displays of the proposed project. Department of Transportation (DOT) representatives, who can be identified by the nametags they are wearing, are available to discuss the project and answer your questions. Please take this opportunity to discuss the project with a DOT representative. There will be no formal presentation.

A court reporter will be available for those persons who would like to make a verbal statement about the project. You may also complete a comment card and deposit it into the box provided here or send in written comments about the project until February 1, 2007. Written comments should be sent to Mr. Harvey D. Keepler, State Environmental/Location Engineer, Georgia Department of Transportation, 3993 Aviation Circle, Atlanta, Georgia 30336-1593. Comments can also be made via the web at [www.dot.state.ga.us](http://www.dot.state.ga.us). Click on **Public Outreach** from the list of Featured Links. All comments will be made a part of the project record. We hope you will take advantage of one of these opportunities to let the Department know your view of the proposal.

The displays and plans will be available for review for ten days after the public hearing open house at the Georgia Department of Transportation Savannah Area Office located at 630 West Boundary Street, Savannah, Georgia 31402, and at the Chatham County Engineering Department located at 124 Bull Street, Room 430, Savannah, Georgia 31401. A copy of all comments received will be available for public review at these same locations as soon as compilation is completed.

Again, thank you for attending this public hearing open house and for giving us your comments.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Todd Long/SBK". The signature is written in a cursive style.

Todd Long, P.E.  
Director of Preconstruction

TL/rje/epei

Attachments

## **Need and Purpose**

### **GDOT Project Number NHS-0002-00(923), Chatham County, PI No. 0002923 West Bay Street Improvements**

This project would improve vehicular and pedestrian safety of the portion of West Bay Street (the State Route 25 Connector) located in the City of Savannah between Interstate 516 (I-516) on the west and East Lathrop Avenue and the West Bay Street Viaduct to the east.

The purpose of the proposed project is to improve safety and the operational characteristics of this section of West Bay Street. The project need arises from safety concerns for pedestrians traveling along West Bay Street and to adjoining residential communities. In addition, the current typical section and traffic signalization are resulting in an undesirable operational efficiency for existing and projected traffic volumes.

The existing typical section includes four undivided ten-foot travel lanes with sidewalks adjacent to the roadway. The proposed typical section would include four 12-foot travel lanes with variable width raised medians and five-foot sidewalks separated from the roadway by a grass strip. This section of West Bay Street is classified as an Urban Principal Arterial and is also a designated Hurricane Evacuation Route. This portion of West Bay Street is a designated school bus route but is not designated as a bicycle route.

West Bay Street is a primary east-west corridor that connects downtown historic and business areas to I-516 and Garden City. Local traffic uses West Bay Street to access adjacent residential areas. The two major neighborhoods within the project area are the Hudson Hill community north of West Bay Street and the West Savannah neighborhood south of West Bay Street. This section of West Bay Street is also an important through route for trucks traveling from I-516 to commercial and industrial facilities adjacent to and north of West Bay Street along the Savannah River, including International Paper northwest of the project location, the Port of Savannah northeast of the project area, and the Great Dane Trucking Company at the east end of the project.

Currently, this section of West Bay Street consists of undivided, narrow travel lanes and sidewalks located at the edge of pavement. The proximity of sidewalks to the road and insufficient or inadequate pedestrian crossings make pedestrian travel along West Bay Street unsafe. With continued population growth of the Savannah Metropolitan Area, improvements are needed to this section of West Bay Street to allow for safe and efficient traffic flow to area businesses and residential areas. The proposed project would provide safe corridors for pedestrian travel from residential neighborhoods to retail shopping, mass transit, and employers along West Bay Street.

The proposed project would upgrade the existing roadway section without adding capacity. The purpose of the proposed project is to provide for safe and efficient traffic flow and to improve safety conditions for pedestrians traveling along and across West Bay Street. The proposed project would upgrade existing traffic signals, relocate sidewalks a safe distance from the edge of pavement, improve crosswalks with new striping and pedestrian signals, and enhance the visual aspect of the corridor through the introduction of median and streetscape enhancements. Sidewalks would be constructed in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). The raised median would eliminate mid-block turns and reduce the potential for accidents, as well as provide a safe refuge for pedestrians who wish to cross West Bay Street. Furthermore, the improved turn lanes to businesses along the north side of West Bay Street would facilitate safe movement of traffic, particularly truck traffic.

## **Project Description**

GDOT Project Number NHS-0002-00(923), Chatham County, PI No. 0002923  
West Bay Street Improvements

### **Preferred Alternative (Alternative C-2)**

The existing four-lane section would remain, and lane widths would be widened from ten feet to 12 feet. The existing section is an undivided roadway; the preferred alternative would provide a raised median separating eastbound and westbound traffic. The proposed project would be constructed generally along the existing alignment, shifting only slightly to the north and south. The preferred alternative would consist of four 12-foot travel lanes separated by a variable width raised median, curb and gutter, and six to eight-foot sidewalks constructed within a 16 to 18-foot shoulders. The sidewalks would be separated from the back of curb by a six-foot grass strip. Median width would vary from 20 to 64 feet, with median cuts at the intersections of West Lathrop Avenue, Graham Street, Brittany Street/Tuten Avenue, Fell Street, Carolan Street, and East Lathrop Avenue. The median would be 20 feet wide from the beginning of the project to just east of Fell Street. From Hudson Street, continuing east to about Norton Street, the median would be widened to a maximum of 64 feet. From Norton Street to East Lathrop Avenue, the median would narrow to 20 feet wide. The median width would vary to meet GDOT minimum standards, to accommodate turn lanes at intersections, and to incorporate the live oak trees. Existing oak trees along the Fellwood Homes property would be protected and incorporated into the wider median in this area. Due to the narrow width beneath the I-516 interchange bridges, a barrier wall would separate eastbound and westbound traffic.

Existing traffic signals at West Lathrop Avenue, Graham Street, Carolan Street, and East Lathrop Avenue would remain. No additional signals would be installed along West Bay Street within the project limits. The project would also upgrade and improve pedestrian crossings with new striping and pedestrian signals and upgrade and add bus stops. The proposed right-of-way would increase from an existing 50 to 70-foot width to a 100 to 160-foot width.

The preferred alternative would shift slightly from the existing alignment. From the Graham Street intersection to immediately west of the Kenilworth Street intersection, the proposed alignment would be slightly to the north of the existing alignment. From this point to East Lathrop Avenue, the alignment would be south of the existing alignment, tying into the existing alignment at East Lathrop Avenue. This alignment would result in the fewest displacements and the least impact to employment on West Bay Street, and the alignment would avoid or result in the least amount of impacts to historic resources.

### **No-Build Alternative**

The no-build alternative is one in which the Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) would take no action to construct the proposed project. The need for the project is primarily safety, both for vehicular traffic and pedestrians. The no-build alternative would leave in place the substandard undivided ten-foot travel lanes, and the sidewalks would remain dangerously close to the edge of pavement. However, none of the impacts associated with the preferred alternative would occur.

### **Other Alternatives No Longer Under Consideration**

Several alternatives were considered and evaluated for the proposed project. Generally, Alternative A would shift the new alignment primarily south of the existing alignment, Alternative B would shift the new alignment primarily north of the existing alignment, and Alternative C would shift the new alignment slightly north of the existing alignment on the west end of the project and south of existing alignment for the remainder of the project. The typical section of each alternative is generally the same, with the only difference being the location of the various median widths and median openings. Each of the Alternatives considered were evaluated with regard to their impact on the social,

natural, cultural, and economic environments, as well as horizontal and vertical alignments. Raising the road profile was also considered. However, given the location of the road within the 100-year floodplain associated with the Savannah River, this alternative could result in increased localized flooding and therefore was not selected.

#### **Alternative A**

Alternative A would have constructed the new alignment primarily to the south of the existing alignment. This alternative would have resulted in more displacements of viable businesses, greater adverse employment impacts, and increased right-of-way costs.

#### **Alternative A-1**

Alternative A-1 would follow the same alignment as Alternative A, but would replace the single median opening at Jenks/Cleland Streets with two openings at Brittany and Fell Streets. This alternative would have resulted in more displacements, greater adverse employment impacts, and increased right-of-way costs.

#### **Alternative B**

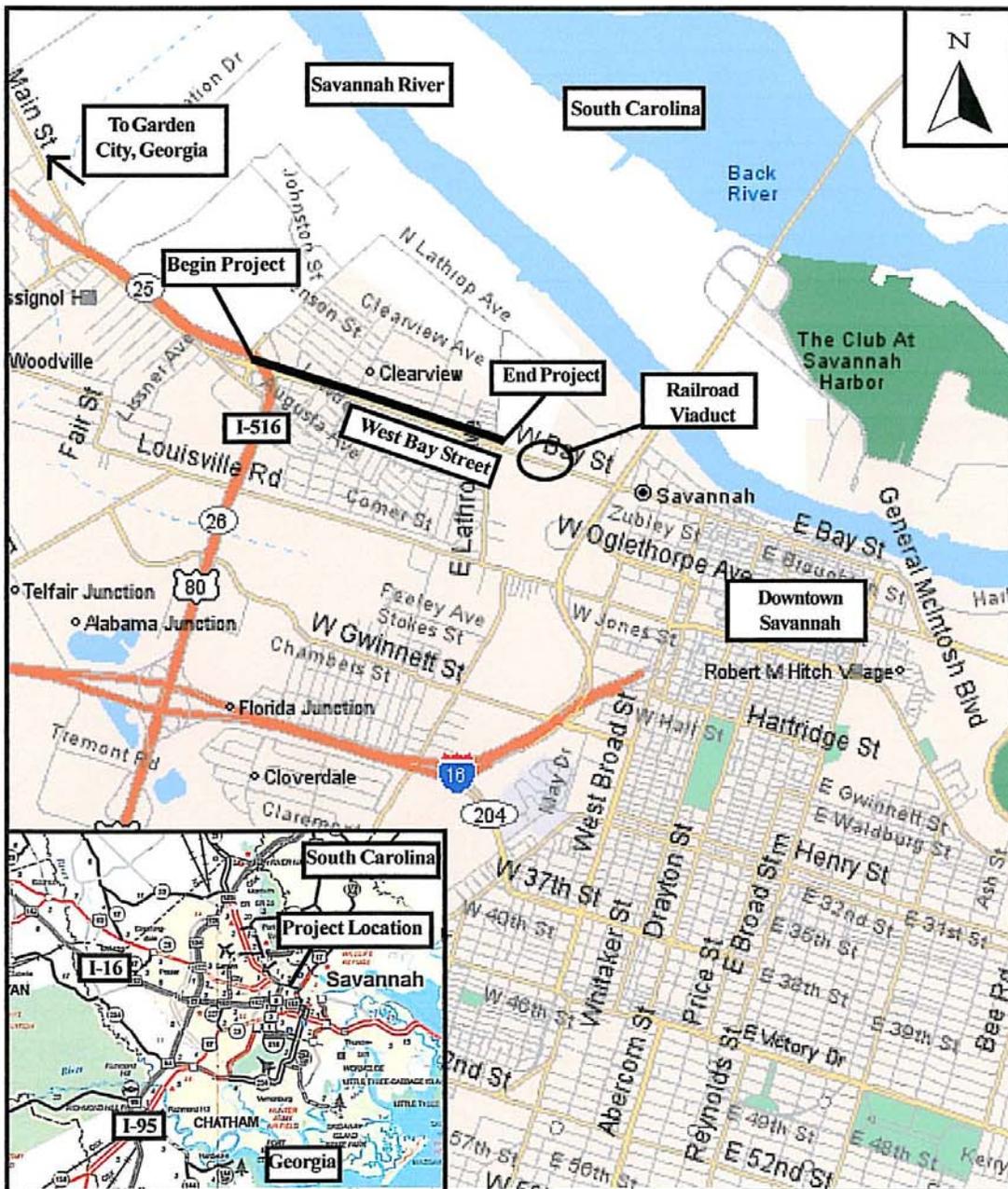
Alternative B would have shifted the entire alignment to the north of the existing alignment. This alternative would have resulted in the greatest number of business displacements and, therefore, the greatest impact to employment. In addition, right-of-way costs would have been the highest of any alternative. This alternative would also have adversely affected a historic resource on West Bay Street.

#### **Alternative C**

The alignment of Alternative C would be the same as the preferred alternative. The alignment would have been north of the existing alignment to approximately Kenilworth Street and then south of the existing alignment for the remainder of the project. There would be one median opening along the alignment at Jenks/Cleland Streets. Also, the median widths, which would have been wider throughout the length of the project than the preferred alternative, would have resulted in more displacements, greater adverse employment impacts, impacts to a potential Section 4(f) resource, and increased right-of-way costs.

#### **Alternative C-1**

Alternative C-1 would be the same alignment as the preferred alternative. The number of median openings in Alternative C-1 and in the preferred alternative were increased from the number of median openings in Alternative C based upon input from the public involvement meetings. The single median opening at Jenks/Cleland Streets, which was shown at the Public Information Open House as part of Alternative C, was replaced with two median openings, one at Brittany Street and one at Fell Street. Median widths in Alternative C-1 would have remained the same as in Alternative C and would have resulted in a greater impact to the eligible historic resource (St. Anthony's School) than the preferred alternative, resulting in a possible Section 4(f) impact.



**FIGURE 1**  
**Project Location**

GDOT Project NHS-0002-00(923), Chatham County  
 P.I. No. 0002923

Source: Yahoo! Maps

NOT TO SCALE

## Environmental Statement

### GDOT Project Number NHS-0002-00(923), Chatham County, PI No. 0002923 West Bay Street Improvements

In compliance with the 1969 National Environmental Policy Act, the Georgia Department of Transportation has conducted an assessment of the social, economic and environmental effects for the proposed improvements to West Bay Street. The total length of the proposed project is approximately 1.2 miles. The following information is a summary of the environmental document.

Two residences and 13 businesses would be displaced by the proposed project. The proposed project would also require right-of-way from approximately 67 residential and commercial parcels. Property owners would be compensated for their losses.

In accordance with Executive Order 11990, the proposed project was surveyed for involvement with Waters of the U.S. No Waters of the U.S., including wetlands and streams, were identified within the project area.

In accordance with Executive Order 11988, the proposed project was surveyed for floodplain involvement. Portions of a tidally-influenced 100-year floodplain associated with the Savannah River is included within the project limits. No regulatory floodways were identified. The proposed project would be designed in such a way that it would have no significant encroachment on this floodplain. The project would not have an adverse effect on water quality within the project corridor.

The proposed project would not exceed state and federal air quality standards, and it is consistent with the State Implementation Plan for the attainment of clean air quality in the state.

The construction of this project would result in a maximum of 74.8 dBA along the project corridor. A total of 33 receivers would be impacted by noise as a result of the proposed project by approaching or exceeding the exterior Noise Abatement Criteria set forth by 23 CFR Part 772. Noise abatement measures, such as barriers and acquisition of rights-of-way, were considered, but none were found to be reasonable and feasible.

In compliance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, the project has been surveyed for existing and eligible National Register properties. As a result of these efforts, no National Register listed or eligible archaeological sites were identified. Five eligible historic properties were identified within the proposed project's area of potential effect (APE):

- Hudson Hill Historic District
- Alamo Plaza Motel
- St. Anthony's School
- Fellwood Homes
- West Savannah Historic District

Implementation of the proposed project would result in a finding of No Adverse Effect to the Hudson Hill Historic District, Alamo Plaza Motel, St. Anthony's School, and the West Savannah Historic District. A small area of grass landscape near West Bay Street would be required from the St. Anthony's School. However, this acquisition is not considered adverse and would not affect elements of the resource that make it eligible for the National Register.

Implementation of the proposed project would result in a finding of Conditional No Adverse Effect for Fellwood Homes property. The Housing Authority of Savannah (HAS) is in the process of redeveloping the property as a new mixed use development. The Housing Authority of Savannah has met environmental requirements of the US Housing and Urban Development to proceed with these plans. The Conditional No Adverse Effect concurrence is based on HAS completing demolition of the structures at Fellwood Homes prior to beginning construction of the West Bay Street Improvement project. The demolition of Fellwood Homes is underway and would be complete before beginning the proposed West Bay Street Improvement project. The large oak trees located on the north side of Fellwood Homes along West Bay Street would be saved and used within the new median proposed for the West Bay Street Improvement project.

The proposed project would not affect any threatened or endangered plant or wildlife species, as none are located in or frequent the project area.

A survey for sites which may contain hazardous materials, including soil and/or water contaminated by leaking underground storage tanks, has been conducted for the proposed project. Ten facilities were identified as potential environmental concerns. Further investigation of these sites for actual contamination will be conducted prior to construction of the proposed project.

Copies of the environmental document are available at this hearing for your review or by sending your request to:

Mr. Harvey D. Keepler  
State Environmental/Location Engineer  
Georgia Department of Transportation  
3993 Aviation Circle  
Atlanta, Georgia 30336-1593

## **Right-Of-Way Statement**

GDOT Project Number NHS-0002-00(923), Chatham County, PI No. 0002923  
West Bay Street Improvements

The Georgia Department of Transportation will assist families or individuals in finding and relocating to decent, safe and sanitary housing which is adequate to meet their needs and within their financial means. Assistance will also be given to businesses in relocating to other quarters. This assistance is provided to families, individuals, and businesses in the form of moving expenses in order for them to relocate. In addition, owner or tenant occupants of residential housing being displaced will be provided financial assistance for increased costs they may encounter in buying or renting. Owner occupants may also be provided financial assistance for certain other incidental expenses such as closing costs and increased interest payments required in their purchase of a replacement home.

The proposed project would displace one owner-occupied and one tenant-occupied residence and 13 businesses.

In making an appraisal, the appraiser will contact each property owner and arrange a convenient time to make an on-site inspection of the property with them. After completion of the appraisal, the appraisal will be reviewed for accuracy to insure that all items relating to value have been considered in establishing the amount to be offered.

Additional housing for sale and rent in the project area of West Savannah appears to be in adequate supply, as there are numerous Realtors and private sector home sales and rentals available. Last Resort Housing would not be required.

The Georgia Department of Transportation is aware of the problems experienced by individuals, families, and businesses when they are required to move. It is our commitment that no family or individual will be required to relocate until comparable decent, safe, and sanitary housing is available or is provided for those who are initial occupants, or adequate decent, safe, and sanitary housing is available or provided for those who are subsequent occupants.

Additionally, the Georgia Department of Transportation will provide assistance to the business in relocating to other sites and will encourage it to remain in the community. There are some undeveloped parcels and vacant commercial buildings located along West Bay Street that would not be affected by the proposed project and could offer relocation potential for businesses.

The information pamphlet "What Happens When Your Property is Needed for a Transportation Facility" is available at the entrance. This booklet outlines the services offered and any payments for which you may be eligible, such as moving expenses and replacement housing benefits for owners and tenants. The brochure also outlines the eligibility requirements for receiving these payments. The Georgia Department of Transportation will be in charge of acquiring the necessary rights of way for this project.

It is our assurance that all displacees will be given sufficient advanced notice of the Department's intention to purchase any property in order to allow them adequate time in which to move.

Georgia Department of Transportation  
Public Hearing Open House Comment Card  
**NHS-0002-00(923), Chatham County, PI No. 0002923**  
**West Bay Street Improvements**

*Please print responses.*

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Do you support the project?       For     Against     Conditional     Uncommitted

Comments \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

How did you hear about this meeting?     Radio     Newspaper     Signs

Word of Mouth     Direct Mail

Was the location of the meeting convenient for you to attend?       Yes       No

If no, please suggest a general location that is more convenient to your community.

\_\_\_\_\_

Was the time of the meeting convenient for you to attend?       Yes       No

If no, please suggest a time frame that is more convenient for you. \_\_\_\_\_

Were your questions answered by the DOT personnel?       Yes       No

Do you understand the project after attending this meeting?       Yes       No

Please share your suggestions on improving the way Georgia DOT conducts public meetings?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Mail To:  
Mr. Harvey D. Keeper, State Environmental/Location Engineer  
Georgia Department of Transportation  
3993 Aviation Circle  
Atlanta, GA 30336-1593