



CHATHAM COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF ENGINEERING

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RE: Responses to Community Meeting Comments for Green Island Road Path

Thank you for attending the Community Meeting for the proposed Green Island Road Path, PI Number 0019015 and for your feedback. We appreciate your participation and the questions and comments received at the meeting and through the project's website.

Every comment provided during the project's comment period beginning on *December 5, 2024*, and ending on *January 3, 2025*, will be made part of the project's official record. Of the **378** respondents who formally commented at the meeting, mailed formal responses, or completed the online survey, **106** were in **support** of the project, **210** were **opposed**, **17** were **uncommitted**, and **45** expressed **conditional support**.

Chatham County has prepared a single response letter that addresses questions and comments received during the comment period which are summarized below followed by a response in *italics*.

1. General concern regarding the path alignment, including the path crossing across Green Island Road located south of Westcross Road

The path crossing was initially proposed to minimize impacts to several environmentally sensitive areas along the west side of Green Island Road in accordance with National Environmental Protection Act (NEPA) policy. However, based on additional analysis completed after the Community Meeting, this crossing has been removed, and the path is proposed to remain on the west side of the roadway within the project limits.

2. General concern regarding the safety of the proposed path crossing at the intersection of Green Island Road at Diamond Causeway.

In response to stakeholder feedback in September, the path crossing was relocated to the west side of Green Island Road, and existing medians will be leveraged as a pedestrian refuge/cut-through to minimize crossing distances on Diamond Causeway. Further, one of the two crossings at Diamond Causeway has been removed from the current alternative, and the proposed path ties to the existing path network located on the north side of Diamond Causeway in accordance with NEPA requirements.

Based on traffic analyses completed in October 2024, a new traffic signal and auxiliary turn lane improvements are being designed at the intersection, including a right-turn lane from Diamond Causeway onto Green Island Road. Pedestrian signal equipment will be installed with this project to enhance safety. Additionally, a path extension to the intersection of Lake Street at Diamond Causeway is also under consideration to provide an alternate route for users traveling to and from The Village on Skidaway and to minimize crossings at the Green Island Road/Diamond Causeway intersection.

3. General concern regarding the safety of the path, including the proximity of the path to Green Island Road and to adjacent residencies.

Due to the existing speeds on Green Island Road, the path is located as far from the roadway as possible to enhance user comfort and safety while avoiding impacts to adjacent properties. However, there are some locations (e.g., Westcross Road) where existing constraints require the path to be located close to the roadway, and separative barriers will be evaluated during preliminary design in these locations. The updated path alternative is now located on the west side of the roadway to maximize the distance from residencies on the east side as described in Comment No. 1.

4. General concern regarding project justification, cost, and other needs within Chatham County.
Following public input and agency support in 2020, the project was added to the Coastal Region Metropolitan Planning Organization (CORE MPO) Non-Motorized Transportation Plan (NMTP) to provide alternative transportation options for bicyclists and pedestrians and to enhance connectivity between adjacent residential communities, recreational facilities, and commercial development. In 2021, the project was added to the CORE MPO Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) following additional public input. The project was awarded Transportation Alternative (TA) funding after review by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) in 2022, and FHWA will cover approximately eighty percent of the project costs. Finally, the project meets Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) criterion for pedestrian and bicycle warrants in accordance with GDOT's Complete Streets Policy and complies with FHWA TA funding requirements.
5. General concern regarding future path drainage, maintenance, and security, including potential for access to private subdivisions along the corridor.
The proposed project will include storm drainage improvements and regrade existing ditches as necessary, and existing drainage patterns will be maintained. Further, the path will be sloped towards the ditches to help contain stormwater runoff, and the project will be designed to comply with Chatham County stormwater quality requirements. The path and its associated drainage will be located within the existing public Right-of-Way and will be maintained by Chatham County. The Landings Association (TLA) is planning to install gate arms and security checkpoints to control access to and from various subdivisions along the project corridor, and coordination with TLA will continue through project development.
6. General concern regarding construction impacts, including tree clearing, increased noise, and loss of privacy and natural character along the corridor.
The path alignment includes gentle meanders throughout the project limits to improve aesthetics and to discourage higher speeds, thereby minimizing noise. Additionally, field visits have been completed to identify specimen trees that should be preserved during construction, and these trees have been considered in the proposed location of the path. In areas where tree trimming may be required to construct the path, restorative landscaping or protective fencing will be considered during preliminary design to help maintain the existing buffer and natural feel along the corridor.
7. General concern regarding potential for intermixing of bicyclists, pedestrians, and golf carts along path, including high speeds of golf carts.
The proposed path will be primarily designed for bicyclists and pedestrians and with widths that will not prohibit use by golf carts. However, the geometry of the path will only be designed for speeds up to 18 miles per hour (mph) in accordance with guidance published by FHWA and GDOT.
8. General concern regarding environmental and utility impacts.
Multiple environmental studies were completed in 2024 in accordance with GDOT requirements, including Ecology, Archaeology, History, and Geotechnical. Although no historical or archaeological resources were identified, ten ecological resources under the jurisdiction of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) were identified within the project study area. Accordingly, a "best-fit" path alignment has been selected to avoid or minimize impacts to these resources as well as existing utilities, including Georgia Power distribution facilities.