



Chatham County Department of Engineering
124 Bull Street, Room 430
P.O Box 8161
Savannah, Georgia 31412

August 19, 2025

Re: Responses to October 2024 Public Information Open House Comments for PI No. 0019010, State Route (SR) 204 Corridor Study

Thank you for your feedback concerning the SR 204 Corridor Study. We appreciate your participation in the in-person open house and the questions and comments received through the project's website.

The study has identified proposed improvements along SR 204 from SR 25/US 17/Ogeechee Road to King George Boulevard that will reduce congestion, minimize crash frequency and severity, and maintain reasonable access. Chatham County in cooperation with Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) and the Coastal Region Metropolitan Planning Organization (CORE MPO) intends to program a project(s) to construct the preferred improvements along SR 204 as recommended by the study. Your comments are helping the study team refine the recommended improvements. There will be an additional public open house this summer to present short-term and long-term project recommendations for the corridor.

Every comment provided during the comment period through November 27, 2024, has been made part of the project's official record. A total of **94** people attended the in-person open house on October 29, 2024. Of the comments received during the comment period 13 were in favor of improvements to SR 204, 4 were against, and 8 were in favor with conditions.

Chatham County has prepared a single response letter that addresses all questions and comments received during the comment period. Questions and comments are summarized below followed by our response.

- *Why do we have to remove the traffic signals and close the medians? Residents on Ford Avenue and Pine Grove Drive will not be able to turn left onto SR 204.*

There are excessive delays on weekdays during peak travel periods along SR 204 approaching the traffic signal at Pine Grove Drive. Traffic queues back up onto US 17 in the morning and beyond Veterans Pkwy in the evening. The County has proposed Alternatives intended to reduce traffic congestion and delay at this location.

Some of the Alternatives presented at the October 2024 open house includes closure of median openings. If one of these Alternatives is implemented, drivers traveling to or from Ford Avenue and Pine Grove Drive/Sweetwater Station Drive might need to travel further and make U-turns at US 17 or King George Boulevard for certain routes. However, these trips could be quicker overall, as the removal of the traffic signal at Pine Grove Drive and the closure of median openings at Pine Grove Drive and Ford Avenue would significantly reduce congestion and delays along SR 204.

With median closures, removal of the traffic signal, and a conversion from arterial to freeway operations, this section of SR 204 should also see a significant reduction in crash frequency and severity. Statewide average crash and injury rates for urban arterial roadways are more than triple the rates for urban freeways.

- *This change to SR 204 will create additional traffic congestion along SR 25/US 17/Ogeechee Road.*

Additional congestion along SR 25/US 17/Ogeechee Road is not expected to result from the proposed improvements along SR 204. A separate corridor study is ongoing for SR 25/US 17/Ogeechee Road to evaluate the existing and future capacity, operation and safety conditions of the corridor, as well as to identify and prioritize short-term and long-term improvements aimed at reducing traffic congestion and minimizing crash frequency and severity. Teams for the SR 204 and SR 25 studies are coordinating under the direction of Chatham County Engineering.

- *This project is too expensive and should be paid for by commuters.*

Funding for the improvements has not yet been identified. Expectations for funding include a mix of local, state and federal funds, which are primarily derived from motor fuel taxes paid by users of public roadways like SR 204. The proposed improvements will have sufficient operational and safety benefits to the public to justify their cost.

- *The problem is not the road itself, but the high rate of speed that people travel. This makes it difficult to enter onto and exit from Pine Grove Drive.*

Alternatives D and K propose acceleration and deceleration lanes to reduce crash frequency and severity along the corridor. These types of lanes allow drivers to speed up to match the flow of traffic before entering the roadway and to safely reduce their speed before making a turn onto a side street. These acceleration and deceleration lanes will be like entrance and exit ramps at freeway interchanges. Alternative L proposes a freeway interchange on SR 204 at Pine Grove Drive.

- *Can Grove Point Road be connected across the railroads to allow access from Ford Avenue and Pine Grove Drive to King George Boulevard without getting onto SR 204?*

Reconnecting Grove Point Road with at-grade railroad crossings risks collisions between vehicles on the roadway and trains, leading to potential fatalities, injuries, and property damage. In addition, travel times to/from Pine Grove Drive/Sweetwater Station Drive would typically be longer than the proposed Alternatives. Bridging Grove Point Road over the railroads would be costly, cause excessive impacts to surrounding properties and would conflict with the electric transmission line.

- *The alternatives proposed are looking at the short-term and will shift the problem to another area. Solutions are not big enough or fast enough.*

The short-term Alternative D aims to ease current bottlenecks and increase efficiency on SR 204 by removing the traffic signal at Pine Grove Drive and constructing improvements to reduce congestion and minimize crash frequency and severity while maintaining reasonable access to adjacent properties. These measures are thoughtful steps that will prepare the groundwork for future long-term improvements. Construction of the long-term Alternatives K or L would have minimal “throw-away” of the short-term improvements.

- *We are concerned that once the project starts, the construction will increase traffic accidents and cause more traffic congestion.*

During the construction of the project, the contractor will be required to maintain four lanes of traffic on SR 204 during peak periods. The contractor will have appropriate traffic control to minimize the risk of crashes.

- *Can an interchange be created for SR 204 to go over Pine Grove Drive with on- and off-ramps?*

Alternative L, presented at the October 2024 open house, proposes to construct an interchange by grade-separating SR 204 over Pine Grove Drive and widening SR 204 from four to six lanes between US 17 and King George Boulevard. This alternative includes SR 204 entrance and exit ramps at Pine Grove Drive.

- *What safety measures will be included in the project?*

Proposed safety measures include acceleration/deceleration lanes and continuous median barriers. Median barriers improve safety along a roadway by reducing the number of "conflict points" between cars. Conflict points are locations where the paths of vehicles, pedestrians, and cyclists intersect, leading to potential interactions or collisions.

- *Is it possible to convert SR 204 into a toll lane so those that drive through the area pay for the project?*

The short-term alternatives do not lend themselves to adding toll lanes in this corridor. GDOT has not converted existing general use lanes, that are being used by the public for free, into toll lanes. For long-term alternatives that widen SR 204 to six lanes, tolling the additional lanes could be considered.

- *As noise and traffic continually increase, the residents that live on Don Zipperer and surrounding neighborhoods really need a noise wall.*

Should federal funds be used on the project, a noise study will be completed and sound barriers considered if noise mitigation measures are warranted.

- *Will my property need to be acquired to build the project?*

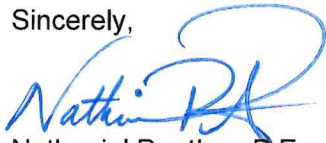
During the design of a project, every effort will be made to minimize and avoid, where possible, impacts to surrounding homes, businesses, and properties. The short-term Alternatives A, B, C and D and long-term Alternatives J and K are likely to have minimal property impacts and no residential or commercial displacements. However, long-term Alternative L would require more extensive property impacts along with some residential and commercial displacements.

- *Proposed short-term solution; stop approving developments that add a lot of traffic without any expansion for the roads.*

The corridor study considers alternatives for corridor improvements that proactively addresses the traffic growth that has resulted from regional economic growth. The Alternatives align with the region's land use plans and other infrastructure improvements. Implementation of these measures would ensure roads remain safe and efficient for current and future needs.

Again, thank you for your feedback. Should you have further questions or comments, please contact the project manager, Mr. Nathaniel Panther, at npantner@chathamcounty.org or Chatham County Department of Engineering, 124 Bull St, Room 430, Savannah, GA 31401.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Nathaniel Panther", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Nathaniel Panther, P.E.
Project Manager
Chatham County Department of Engineering