



October 21, 2010

Thank you for attending the public hearing open house for Projects STP00-0155-01(022), STP00-0155-01(023) and CSNHS-0007-00(251), P.I. Nos. 322460, 322470, and 0007251, the proposed widening of State Route (SR) 96. In this handout package, you will find a need and purpose statement, a description of the projects, a description of environmental concerns, a location map, a right-of-way statement, and a comment card.

As you enter the room, you will notice displays of the proposed project. Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) 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 GDOT 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 projects. You may also complete a comment card and deposit it into the box provided here, or send in written comments about the projects until November 4, 2010. Written comments should be sent to Mr. Glenn Bowman, P.E., State Environmental Administrator, Georgia Department of Transportation, 600 West Peachtree Street NW, 16th Floor, Atlanta, GA 30308. Comments can also be made via the web at www.dot.ga.gov. Click on **Public Outreach** from the **Information Center** dropdown menu at the top right side of the page. Choose the county where your project takes place from the dropdown menu and click "Go". Next click the hyperlink named [10/21/10 PHOH for SR 96 widening \(3 projects\)](#). All comments will be made a part of the project record. We hope you will take advantage of one of these opportunities to let GDOT 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 GDOT District 3, Macon Area Office located at 4499 Riverside Drive, Macon, GA 31210. A copy of all comments received will be available for public review at this same location and at the Georgia Department of Transportation, Office of Environmental Services, 600 West Peachtree Street NW, 16th Floor, Atlanta, GA 30308, as soon as compilation is completed.

Again, thank you for attending this public hearing open house and for giving us your comments. If you should have any questions or need additional information, feel free to contact the project manager, Jeremy Busby, at (404) 631-1154 or Sam Pugh at (404) 631-1167 of the Office of Environmental Services.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Bobby Hilliard".

Bobby Hilliard, P.E.
State Program Delivery Engineer

Public Hearing Open House Handout

Projects STP00-0155-01(022), STP00-0155-01(023) and CSNHS-0007-00(251), Houston and Twiggs Counties

What is the Need and Purpose of the proposed projects?

The need and purpose of the proposed projects is to satisfactorily accommodate the existing and future traffic demands, and to correct the operational deficiencies that currently exist within the project corridor. Additional benefits may include a safer driving environment and enhanced travel conditions for motorists utilizing SR 96.

What are the proposed projects?

The proposed projects would widen SR 96 from two to four lanes from just east of Old Hawkinsville Road/Thompson Mill Road in Houston County to just north of the I-16 interchange in Twiggs County. The total length of the project corridor, which includes all three proposed projects, is approximately 14.73 miles long. Descriptions of the proposed projects are as follows:

Project STP00-0155-01(022) (PI# 322460): The widening and reconstruction of SR 96 for this proposed project begins at mile post (MP) 9.3 (0.35 miles east of CR 540/Old Hawkinsville Road/Thompson Mill Road) in Houston County then proceeds easterly along SR 96 to MP 5.03*, just west of SR 87/US 23/US 129 alt in Twiggs County. This proposed project would widen the existing SR 96 from two lanes to four lanes with urban typical sections then would transition to rural typical sections. To accommodate Georgia Bike Route 40, the urban typical section includes a bike lane, and the rural typical section includes a bike shoulder. For the first 0.96 mile, from just east of Old Hawkinsville Road/Thompson Mill Road, the proposed project would provide a 24-foot raised median until MP 10.26, just east of the A&E Golf Inc. property. The section of the proposed project with the 24-foot, raised median would have a posted speed limit of 45 mph (45 mph design speed). The roadway would then transition to a four lane section with a 44-foot depressed median, which remains for the rest of the project. This section will have a posted speed limit of 55 mph (65 mph design speed). This project would also involve the reconstruction of waterway bridges (eastbound and westbound) at five existing locations: MP 10.39, MP 10.70, MP 11.12 in Houston County and MP 0.36 and MP 0.84 in Twiggs County. In addition, the project proposes grade separations over the Norfolk Southern Railroad located at MP 1.39 in Twiggs County and over Westlake Road located at MP 2.94 in Twiggs County. The proposed project is **6.97 miles** long (1.95 miles in Houston County and 5.02 miles in Twiggs County).

Project STP00-0155-01(023) (PI# 322470): The proposed widening and reconstruction of SR 96 for Project STP00-0155-01(023) begins just west of the SR 96 and SR 87 intersection at MP 5.03* and proceeds northeasterly, ending at MP 12.31*, just south of the SR 96/I-16 interchange. The proposed project would widen the existing SR 96 from two lanes to four lanes with a 44-foot depressed median. A bike shoulder would be included throughout the length of the proposed project to accommodate Georgia Bike Route 40, though this route diverges from SR 96 at SR 358 and continues east along SR 358. A frontage road near the south side of the SR 96/I-16 interchange and CR 100 located to the north of the SR 96/I-16 interchange would be

relocated. The roadway with the 44-foot depressed median would have a posted speed limit of 55 mph (65 mph design speed). In addition, the existing pavement from the passing lanes would be utilized where possible. The proposed project is **7.64 miles*** long.

Project CSNHS-0007-00(251) (PI# 0007251): This project begins at MP 12.31 and ends at MP 13.81 in Twiggs County. It proposes to replace the existing SR 96 Bridge over I-16 from two lanes to six lanes with a 12-foot shoulder, a four-foot raised median, two travel lanes and one dedicated turn lane in each direction. Sidewalks would be included and carried over the bridge. The proposed bridge length would be approximately 290 feet. For staging purposes, the existing bridge would be open to traffic while work crews construct the eastern side of the new bridge. Once completed, mainline traffic would shift to the widened portion of the new bridge. The work crews would remove the existing bridge and begin construction of the remaining portion of the new bridge. The on/off ramps for I-16 would be reconstructed to tie in to the new alignment and profile of SR 96. Access rights along SR 96 are proposed to be acquired north and south of the interchange and would extend 1000 feet in each direction. The proposed project is **1.5 miles*** long.

The Draft Environmental Assessment (available for review at the Public Hearing Open House) provides further details about these projects in Chapter 2 under *the Preferred Alternative* section. A project location map is available on page 5 of this handout.

* These lengths and mile posts are slightly different from those described in the draft environmental assessment. These increases are a result of factoring in necessary tie-ins and other design considerations. Where not already addressed, the final environmental assessment will address these differences.

What are the environmental concerns associated with the proposed projects?

In compliance with the 1969 National Environmental Policy Act, GDOT has conducted an assessment of the social, cultural, natural and physical effects for the proposed widening of SR 96. The following summarizes these effects detailed in the Draft Environmental Assessment.

How would the proposed projects impact property owners?

The proposed projects will result in the loss of both residential and business frontage. *Five single family residences* would be displaced as a result of the proposed projects. These displacements all occur along Project STP00-0155-01(023). In addition, throughout the project corridor the roadway would be placed closer to the remaining residences and some loss of yard area would occur. Likewise, the proposed projects would result in the loss of both residential and business frontage as well as some business parking. Owners will be compensated for these losses.

Please refer to page 6 in this handout, entitled "Right-of-Way Acquisition", for details related to GDOT's right-of-way acquisition process.

How would the proposed projects affect cultural resources?

In compliance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, the project corridor was surveyed for properties listed or eligible for the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP). No listed or eligible archaeological resources were found to be located within the projects' area of potential effect. The following historic resources were found within the projects' area of potential effect: *The Macon and Brunswick Railroad, Fitzpatrick Home-Place, Opel Faulk*

House, Mount Olive Church, School and Cemetery, Faulk's Store, Conger House, Floyd Family Homestead, Wimberly Plantation. Georgia DOT received concurrence from the Historic Preservation Division that the proposed projects would have "No Adverse Effect" on historic resources on or eligible for listing on the NRHP.

How would the proposed projects affect wetlands and streams?

Based on current estimates, the proposed projects would impact approximately 1,839 feet of stream and 42.9 acres of wetlands or open waters (ponds). These impacts would require 8,494 stream credits and 419 wetland credits.

In addition, the proposed projects would not adversely affect water quality.

How would the proposed projects affect flood plains?

In accordance with Executive Order 11988, the proposed projects were surveyed for floodplain involvement. Project STP00-0155-01(022) encroaches upon the floodplain associated with the Ocmulgee River. Procedures for Coordinating Highway Encroachments on Floodplains with the Federal Emergency Management Agency are being followed, and Georgia Department of Natural Resources (GADNR) has been notified of the proposed projects involvement. Georgia DOT anticipates that a "No-Impact" study will be submitted to the local floodplain manager and a "No-Rise" certification will be obtained.

How would the proposed projects affect protected species?

Through coordination with resource agencies and surveys of the project corridor, GDOT identified seven species under either state or federal protection. In coordination with the Federal Highway Administration and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, GDOT determined that the proposed projects "may affect but are not likely to adversely affect" the following federally endangered species: wood stork, fringed campion and the relict trillium. The proposed projects have "no effect" on the remaining federally-protected species: the red-cockaded wood pecker and the bald eagle (protected under the bald and golden eagle protection act), and the proposed projects have "no significant adverse effect" on the remaining state-protected species: Georgia aster and spotted turtle.

How would the proposed projects affect the black bear population?

Through cooperation with the GADNR, GDOT determined that the middle Georgia black bear population is a special consideration along the project corridor. Because of available habitat north and south of SR 96, black bears frequently cross the highway creating hazardous conditions for both motorists and the bear population. As a result, the proposed projects would include wildlife underpasses and fencing to provide safe crossings for black bears and other wildlife.

How would the proposed projects affect air quality?

Air quality is not expected to change as a result of the proposed projects. The proposed projects were evaluated for their consistency with state and federal air quality goals, including Carbon Monoxide, Ozone, PM 2.5 and Mobile Source Air Toxins as part of the air quality assessment. Results indicate that the proposed projects are consistent with the State Implementation Plan for the attainment of clean air quality in Georgia and are in compliance with both state and federal air quality standards.

How would the proposed projects affect noise?

There were no receivers along the project corridor predicted to be impacted on the basis of absolute noise abatement criterion established by 23 CFR Part 772 in the build and no-build conditions. In addition, there were no noise increases of 10 dBA or more with a noise level of 57 Leq or higher in the build and no build condition. Therefore, no receivers along the project corridor were predicted to be impacted on the basis of the relative criterion.

Additional Resources of Concern

Churches: Two churches were identified along the project corridor: the New Richland Baptist Church and the Mount Olive Baptist Church. The proposed projects would not require right of way or easements from either church along the project corridor. Because of the proposed median, access to these churches would change as a result of the proposed projects. In addition, the churches that were once along a two lane route would now be along a four lane route.

Boat ramp: Just off SR 96, a boat ramp with a large parking area provides access to the Ocmulgee River. Houston County owns and manages the boat ramp and the parking area for recreational purposes. The access point to the boat ramp would likely be relocated to the north as a result of Project STP00-0155-01(022), but it would still be accessible from SR 96. In addition, the boat ramp and the parking lot near the boat ramp would remain in place. Coordination with Houston County revealed that the boat ramp is frequently used between March and June, particularly on weekends. Georgia DOT has developed a special provision for construction to avoid closures of the boat ramp (particularly closures over 24 hours) during the peak season for the boat ramp's use.

Farmland: In accordance with the Farmland Protection Act, the criteria of 7 CFR, Part 658 have been applied to determine the proposed projects' effect to farmland. Based on the assessment of these effects, no additional alternatives need to be examined.

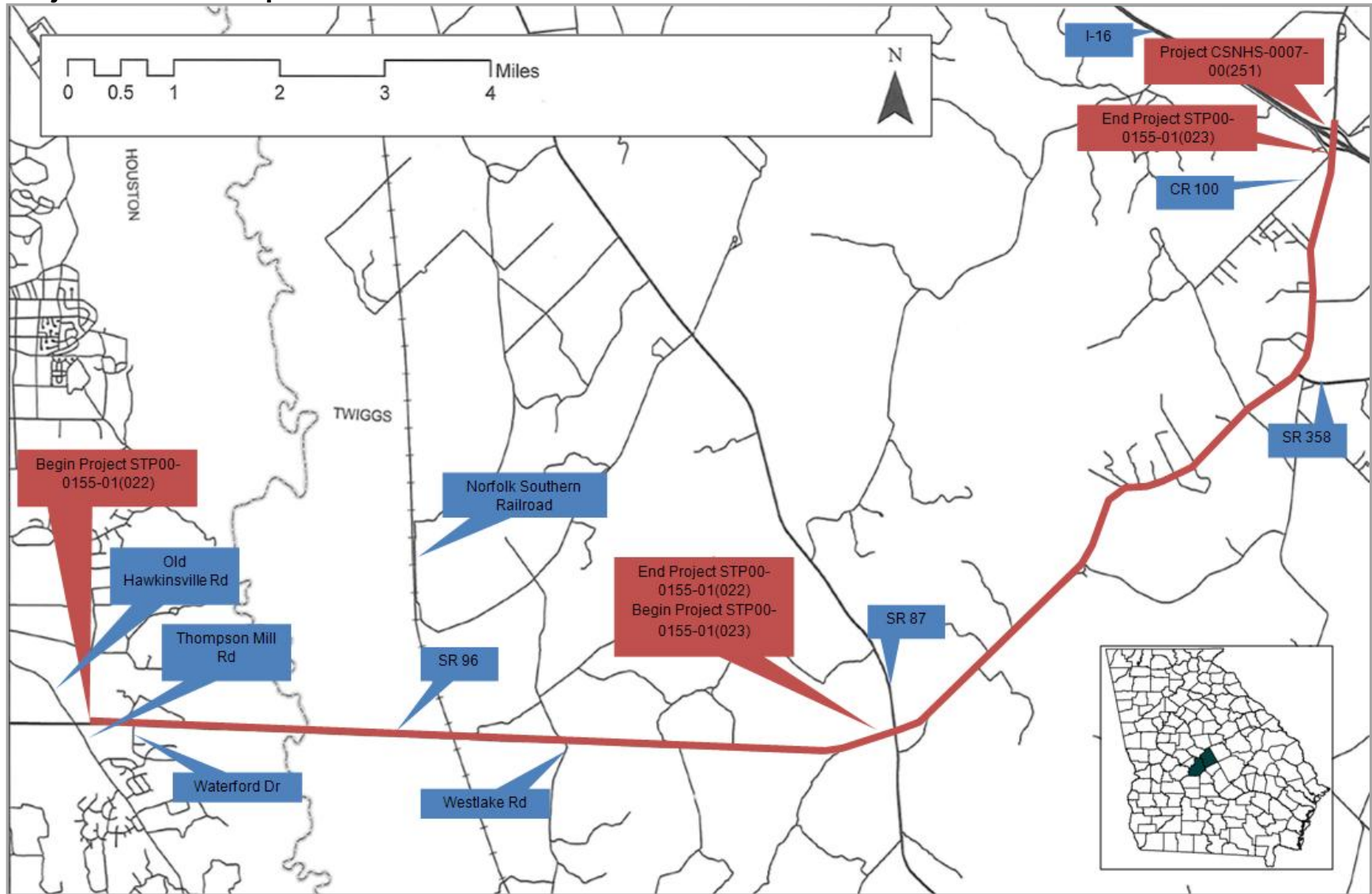
Hazardous materials and leaking underground storage tanks: GDOT surveyed the project corridor for potential hazardous materials sites or leaking underground storage tanks. Prior to right-of-way acquisition, GDOT will conduct subsurface testing for contamination at five locations along the project corridor.

Are copies of the environmental document available?

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

Mr. Glenn Bowman, P.E.
State Environmental Services Engineer
Georgia Department of Transportation
600 West Peachtree Street, NW
Atlanta, GA 30308

Project Location Map



PHOH Handout: Projects STP00-0155-01(022), STP00-0155-01(023) and CSNHS-0007-00(251)
 Houston and Twiggs Counties
 PI numbers 322460, 322470, and 0007251

Right-Of-Way Acquisition

Projects STP00-0155-01(022), STP00-0155-01(023) and CSNHS-0007-00(251), Houston and Twiggs Counties

The Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) has the responsibility, once a project is approved, of appraising, purchasing property and, if required, assisting individuals, families or businesses in relocating. When purchasing property, we desire to pay full market value for the necessary property. This value will be established by using qualified real estate appraisers who will prepare, for GDOT's use, written appraisals using actual sales data in the surrounding community.

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 him or her. After completion of the appraisal, the right-of-way appraisal staff will review and field check the findings for accuracy to ensure that all things relating to value have been considered in establishing the amount to be offered. When only a part of the property is needed, we will purchase that part plus pay for loss of value, if any, to the remaining property. In all cases, when GDOT purchases property, we will make additional payments to property owners for the cost of transferring ownership to GDOT. These costs generally include transfer taxes, deed-recording fees, mortgage pre-payment penalties and the pro-rata share of city or county taxes.

Georgia DOT is aware of the problems experienced by individuals, families, businesses, and nonprofit organizations 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 occupants.

Additionally, GDOT will provide assistance to businesses and nonprofit organizations in relocating to other sites and will encourage them to remain in the community.

The information pamphlet "*What Happens When Your Property is Needed for a Transportation Facility*" is available at the greeter's table at the Public Hearing Open House (PHOH), and 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.

Results of the field inspection by GDOT personnel have revealed that there will be 5 residences required to relocate.

It is important to remember that GDOT is committed to the principle that no one will be required to relocate until housing is available, or, if there is no housing available, until provisions have been made by GDOT to provide housing. It is also important to remember that all displacees will be given sufficient advance notice of GDOT's intention to purchase any property in order to allow sufficient time in which to relocate.

The GDOT District office, located in Thomaston, Georgia, (706) 646-6536, will be in charge of acquiring the necessary right-of-way for this project.

**Georgia Department of Transportation
Public Hearing Open House (Jeffersonville Location) Comment Card
Projects STP00-0155-01(022), STP00-0155-01(023) and CSNHS-0007-
00(251), Houston and Twiggs Counties**

October 21, 2010

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*
 Other _____

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 GDOT personnel? **Yes** **No**

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

Please share your suggestions on improving the way GDOT conducts public meetings.

Mail To:

**Mr. Glenn Bowman, P.E., State Environmental Administrator
Georgia Department of Transportation
600 West Peachtree Street, NW – 16th Floor
Atlanta, Georgia 30308**