



CHATHAM URBAN TRANSPORTATION STUDY OCTOBER, 2006 MPO MEETINGS

Agenda Item: Proposed Amendment to the MPO Bikeway Plan and 2030 L RTP to include Back River Bridge Bikeway

Summary: At the June 28, 2006 meeting of the Policy Committee, MPO staff received authorization to proceed with a study of the proposed amendment to the MPO Bikeway Plan and 2030 L RTP for inclusion of a Back River Bridge Bikeway. In July 2006 staff worked with the amendment sponsor to collect data on the physical and environmental constraints on Hutchinson Island in order to identify a feasible bike route which would connect the bridge with the Savannah Belles ferry landing. Various stakeholders were also identified, including GDOT, Chatham County, the City of Savannah, the Savannah International Trade & Convention Center, and the Savannah Economic Development Authority (SEDA).

On August 18, 2006 a stakeholder meeting was held and potential bike routes on Hutchinson Island were discussed, including:

- 1) From the existing ferry landing to the plaza in front of the Trade Center, then via Old Hutchinson Island Road to the new US 17 bridge - identified by the MPO staff during the field trip;
- 2) Arrival at the new proposed ferry slip west of the trade center, crossing the ferry slip on a new bridge over it, then through private developments and back to the new US 17 bridge access ramps - proposed by Sottile & Sottile;
- 3) Connecting into the residential area, exiting through the Trade center parking garage; and
- 4) Exiting from the existing ferry slip toward the hotel side and then on Shackelford Blvd.

At this meeting two questions were also raised:

- 1) Will the new US 17 bridge be one structure with 4 lanes, or will a new 2 lane bridge be built adjacent to the existing structure? If so, will the existing structure be replaced? If so, on which side of the existing structure will the new bridge be built?



2) Is South Carolina participating in the design and funding of the new bridge?

These two questions were subsequently forwarded to and answered by the GDOT staff as follows:

1) Currently there are two alternates for the US 17 bridge project: Alt One is a 4-lane structure with four 12-ft lanes separated by a median (24-ft raised median or a 10.5-ft barrier separated median) with 10-ft bikeable shoulders. Alt Two is a 2-lane structure with two 12-ft lanes with 10-ft bikeable shoulders. The existing structure will be replaced under this project. The location of the new bridge is not determined at this time. The chosen alternate will depend upon logical termini in South Carolina. At this time SCDOT does not have a project programmed to widen US17 which will negate the 4 lane bridge and hence the 2 lane bridge will be constructed.

2) SCDOT is participating in the project under a bi-state agreement which they will fund 10% of the bridge construction. GDOT is acting as the project manager and is funding 90% of the bridge construction.

Since Sottile & Sottile will be under contract to conduct a master plan for a portion of the Hutchinson Island and will identify the most feasible bike route as part of that project with the Trade Center, MPC, Chatham County, SEDA, private property owners and the City of Savannah, the amendment sponsor proposes a two-phased approach:

Phase One is to get MPO approval of the bicycle facility on the new bridge and access ramps so that GDOT can put bikeway in the project design; and

Phase Two is to get the concept of the bike trail from the new US 17 bridge to the ferry landing approved, with the final route to be approved later when the most feasible route is determined.

Recommendation: For endorsement and adoption of Phase One.