

# CAT State of Good Repair and Capacity Expansion Ferry Projects

FTA 5307(h) PASSENGER FERRY GRANT APPLICATION

OCTOBER 20, 2017



## Applicant Information:

Applicant Name: Chatham Area Transit Authority  
FTA Recipient ID#: 1103  
Contact Name: Curtis Koleber  
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## SECTION I: Applicant Information

**Organizational Legal Name:** Chatham Area Transit Authority

**FTA Recipient ID Number:** 1103

**Applicant Eligibility:** Designated recipient of 5307 Urbanized Area Formula Program

**Population Served by the Project:** Urbanized over 200,000

### **Description of services provided:**

Chatham Area Transit (CAT) is a regional transit agency that provides service to the Savannah, Georgia urbanized area. Covering 438 square miles with a population of 265,000, CAT offers a fare-free water ferry service that connects the Trade Center on Hutchinson Island with Historic River Street. CAT also provides traditional fixed-route bus service, county-wide paratransit service, and a downtown bike-share program, reaching major tourist destinations, employers, universities, and hospitals in the greater Savannah area.

### **Description of areas served:**

CAT's primary service area falls within unincorporated Chatham County and the City of Savannah, Georgia. As the state's northernmost coastal area, Savannah includes the site on which General James Edward Oglethorpe landed in 1733 to establish the Georgia Colony. Today, the county and the city have a population of nearly 300,000 residents encompassing a 632 square mile area, which includes 194 square miles of water.

Thanks to large-scale port expansion and a growing tourism industry, Savannah is undergoing an unprecedented development boom. Construction is underway on a number of new hotels and mixed use developments on both ends of River Street, design work has commenced for a new west side arena, and the City of Savannah is in the planning stage of developing a new municipal complex on the west side of downtown. Private investment in these projects exceeds \$1 billion and public investment is topping \$300 million.

Adapting to meet this changing environment, CAT has spent the last year developing short and long-term strategies for providing more user-friendly and cost-effective services. A key component of this strategic plan is to provide seamless multimodal connections in and around the downtown area. The projects described in this application will not only address future growth and mobility needs on the west end of downtown, but will also enhance the ferry system's ability to maintain a state of good repair for years to come.

### **Water Ferry**

CAT's popular ferry system, known locally as the "Savannah Belles Ferry," provides fare-free service between the Savannah International Trade & Convention Center on Hutchinson Island, the Savannah City Hall in the heart of historic River Street, and the Waving Girl landing on the eastern end of River Street. The ferry runs seven days a week from 7:00 a.m. until midnight and provides service to more than 750,000 passengers annually. CAT offers 20-minute peak and 30-minute off-peak frequencies between stops. All water ferry vessels and docks are ADA-compliant.

## **Fixed Route**

CAT operates 71 fixed route vehicles and provides 3.25 million trips per year with the largest concentration of service located in the downtown and midtown areas of Savannah. As the second largest transit provider in the state of Georgia, CAT offers 20 fixed routes, including a high-frequency downtown circulator that connects with the City Hall ferry landing.

## **Paratransit**

Known as "Teleride," the CAT paratransit service is offered throughout Chatham County. Designed to transport eligible persons with disabilities in compliance with the ADA, Teleride provides 100,000 trips per year.

## **CAT Bike**

CAT Bike is a bike share program which is owned and operated by CAT. There are two bike share stations currently in operation, and CAT has secured funding to expand the program to seven stations and 100 bikes.

# **SECTION II: Project Information/Evaluation Criteria**

## **About the Project**

**Project Title:** CAT State of Good Repair and Capacity Expansion Ferry Projects

### **Project Executive Summary:**

In an effort to attract more passengers and simultaneously enhance its ability to provide safe, reliable, and efficient ferry service, CAT proposes two major upgrades to the Savannah Belles Ferry system. The first project proposes the construction of a much-needed ferry maintenance facility on Hutchinson Island, which will allow ferry staff to perform more complex preventative maintenance tasks. Since inception of the ferry service in 2003, marine staff have used 1,200 square-feet in the Trade Center's underground parking garage to store supplies and perform basic maintenance tasks, but the lack of adequate office and shop space threatens the system's capability of providing high-quality service to the community. The second project proposes the construction of a new ferry dock on the growing west end of historic River Street. Total public and private investment on the west end of downtown exceeds \$1.3 billion, and CAT foresees a significant need to address existing and future ridership demands in this area.

CAT requests \$2,070,577 of federal assistance for these projects. CAT will match this funding with a local match of \$1,148,056 or 35.7% for a total project cost of \$3,218,633.

**Is your ferry operation subject to the safety inspections and oversight jurisdiction of the U.S. Coast Guard?** Yes

**Will you need a Buy America waiver?** No

**Type of Service:** Passenger only

**Project Type:** New facilities

**Total Ferry Fleet Size:** 4

**Average Fleet Size (Age):** 12.5 years

**Average Fleet Size (Miles):** 17,896 miles

*Figure 1: Fleet Details*

	Florence Martus	Juliet Gordon Low	Suzie King Taylor	Mary Musgrove
Year Built	2000	2003	2003	2012
Passenger Capacity	129	86	86	149
Vessel Length	65 ft	55 ft	55 ft	65 ft
Construction	Aluminum Catamaran Hull	Steel Displacement Hull	Steel Displacement Hull	Steel Displacement Hull
Classification	Subchapter T	Subchapter T	Subchapter T	Subchapter T

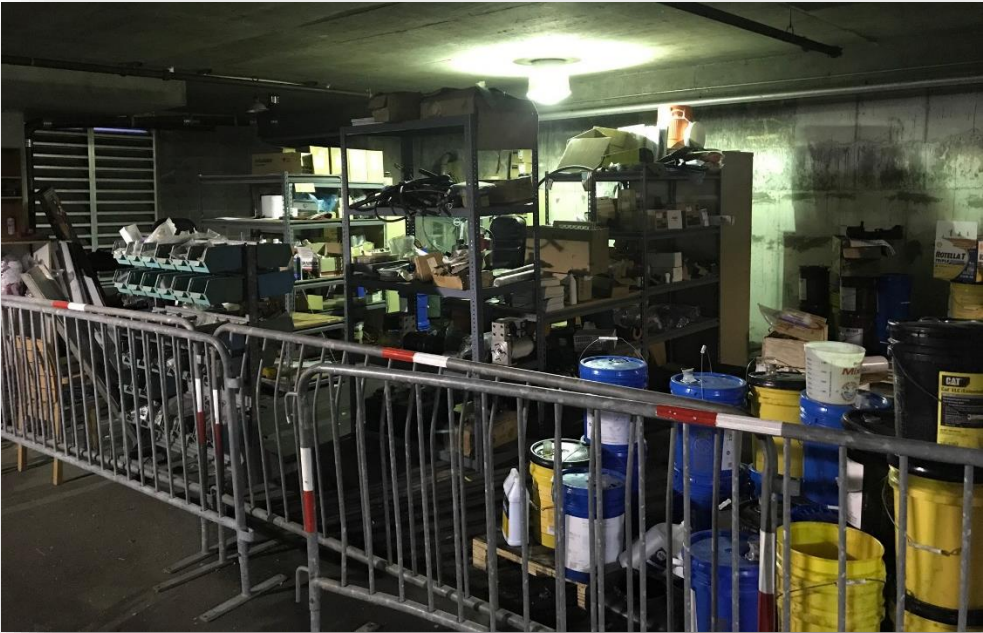
## Demonstration of Need

### *Maintenance Facility*

The area dedicated to ferry maintenance on Hutchinson Island exists as eight parking spaces in the Savannah International Trade and Convention Center’s underground parking garage. This space was dedicated to CAT marine staff back in 2003, at the time the ferry system first launched, but it was never intended to be a long-term area for ferry maintenance staff to work. The site is currently exposed to parking garage users and is blocked off with temporary fencing, thus creating significant safety and security risks (see Figure 2). The existing garage offers inadequate space to perform even the most routine maintenance tasks and safety inspections, and is located more than a quarter mile away from where out-of-service vessels are tied up for repair. Too often, marine staff send its vessels offsite to a shipyard for repair due to a lack of space.

The new and improved maintenance facility will sit 500 ft. from the ferry tie-up location and will provide ferry staff with a secure area to store parts and equipment, as well as give staff the space needed to perform regular preventative maintenance tasks and safety inspections, monitor weather conditions, and conduct general business. The facility will come equipped with a parts cleaner, air compressor, grinding and cutting wheels, and welding equipment, which will allow CAT staff to improve the condition of the Authority’s fleet in a more safe and timely manner. Without this equipment and workspace, CAT’s ability to provide reliable ferry service depends largely on outside vendor availability.

Figure 2: Photos of Existing Ferry Maintenance Area

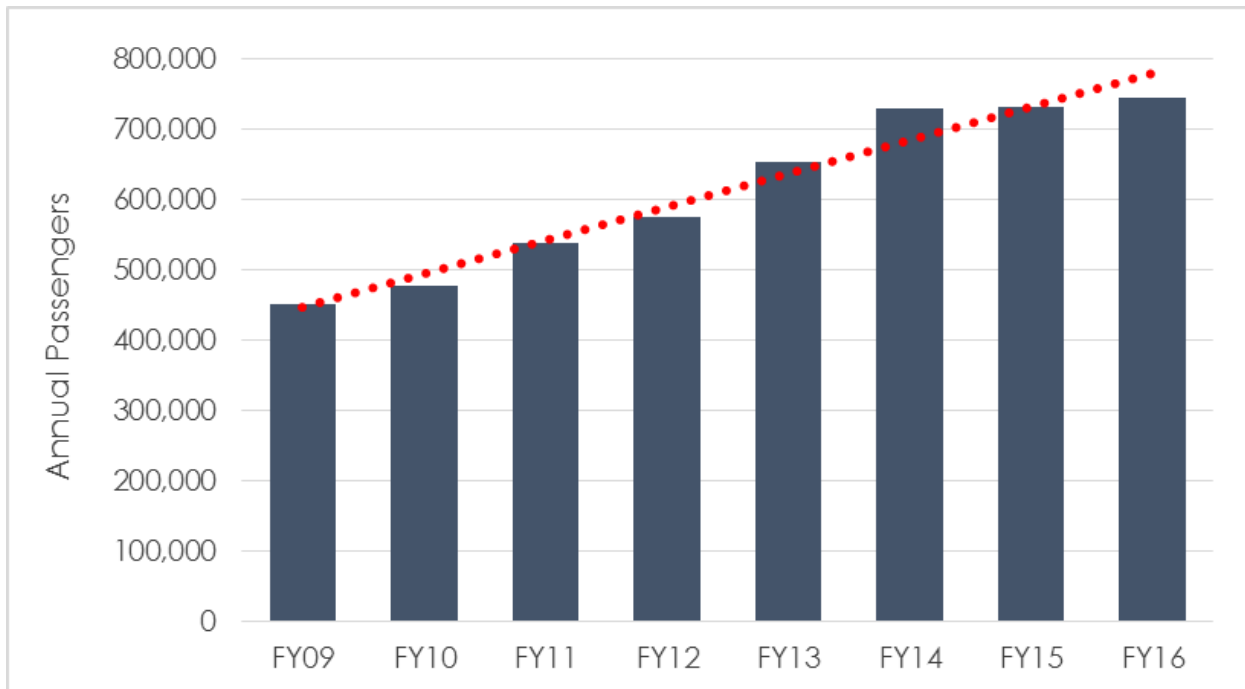


### Ferry Dock

The proposed new ferry dock on the west end of historic River Street will help address a capacity constraint in a rapidly growing part of town. Anchored by a \$270 million mixed-use development known as "Plant Riverside" and a \$72 million boutique hotel, the west end of River Street will have more than 600 guest rooms and suites, a large meeting space, more than a dozen shops and restaurants, and a live music and entertainment venue. Combined, the two massive developments are expected to create more than 800 new jobs over the next 18 months. Unfortunately, CAT does not offer ferry service to this area.

The construction of a new ferry dock on the west end of River Street will allow CAT to meet the growing demand for ferry service. Annual ferry ridership has steadily increased since the system's inception. In FY09, the ferry system provided 452,000 passenger trips. That figure has grown to 745,000 passenger trips in FY16, a 65% increase (see Figure 3). The growing demand for ferry service is a direct result of the increased activity at the Trade Center on Hutchinson Island, which regularly hosts conventions with thousands of attendees. The majority of those attendees rely on the ferry service to transport them to and from the Trade Center. With the system already nearing maximum capacity and with the anticipated new developments on the west end of downtown, a dire need exists to expand this popular service.

Figure 3: Annual Ferry Ridership



## Demonstration of Benefits

### *Maintenance Facility*

The construction of a true ferry maintenance facility will greatly improve the safety and state of good repair of the ferry system. Providing marine staff with a more suitable work environment will allow CAT to make more in-house repairs. Currently, if a vessel experiences any malfunctions that require space to perform maintenance tasks, CAT marine staff must have it transported (under power or tow) to a local shipyard for outside repairs. This process usually involves significant downtime as staff wait for the vessel to be repaired, resulting in scheduling and resource allocation challenges. A new maintenance facility will limit CAT's dependence on this outsourced work, thus improving downtime and system reliability. CAT also anticipates a significant savings on routine operational and preventative maintenance costs by performing more in-house work. Those additional resources can be repurposed toward more service and better passenger amenities, ultimately enhancing the quality of the ferry system.

### *Ferry Dock*

In 2016, downtown Savannah attracted more than 13.4 million visitors, a number that continues to grow year after year. The Savannah Chamber of Commerce estimates that these visitors added more than \$2.4 billion to the local economy, spurring the development of new hotels, restaurants, and shops. This growth, however, has led to significant mobility challenges due to a lack of automobile parking.

The City of Savannah, CAT, and Savannah Mobility Management, Inc (SaMMI) have partnered on solutions to help address these challenges. In 2016, the city completed a mobility study known as *Parking Matters*, which looked at alternative transportation options in the downtown area. The study recommended the rollout of a new, fare-free downtown shuttle service that connects all of the major employment areas and tourist destinations to the fare-free ferry service. That shuttle service launched in September 2017 and has been an immediate success, transporting 1,000 passengers per day. The study also recommended the expansion of CAT's bikeshare system. CAT and the city have secured funding through the local MPO to purchase five new bikeshare stations and forty bikes within the year and another five stations and forty bikes in two years.

The development of a new ferry dock will improve on the mobility projects that have already been completed by providing more multi-modal connections in the downtown area. As the new developments on the west end come online, CAT plans to divert its fare-free downtown shuttle to make a direct connection with the proposed ferry dock. CAT will also install one of its new bikeshare stations nearby. These linkages will not only provide hotel guests with an assortment of alternative transportation options, but it will also allow give workers a seamless transfer location to get to their final destination. A map of the existing and proposed downtown mobility options can be found in Figures 4 and 5.

Figure 4: Existing Downtown Savannah Mobility Map

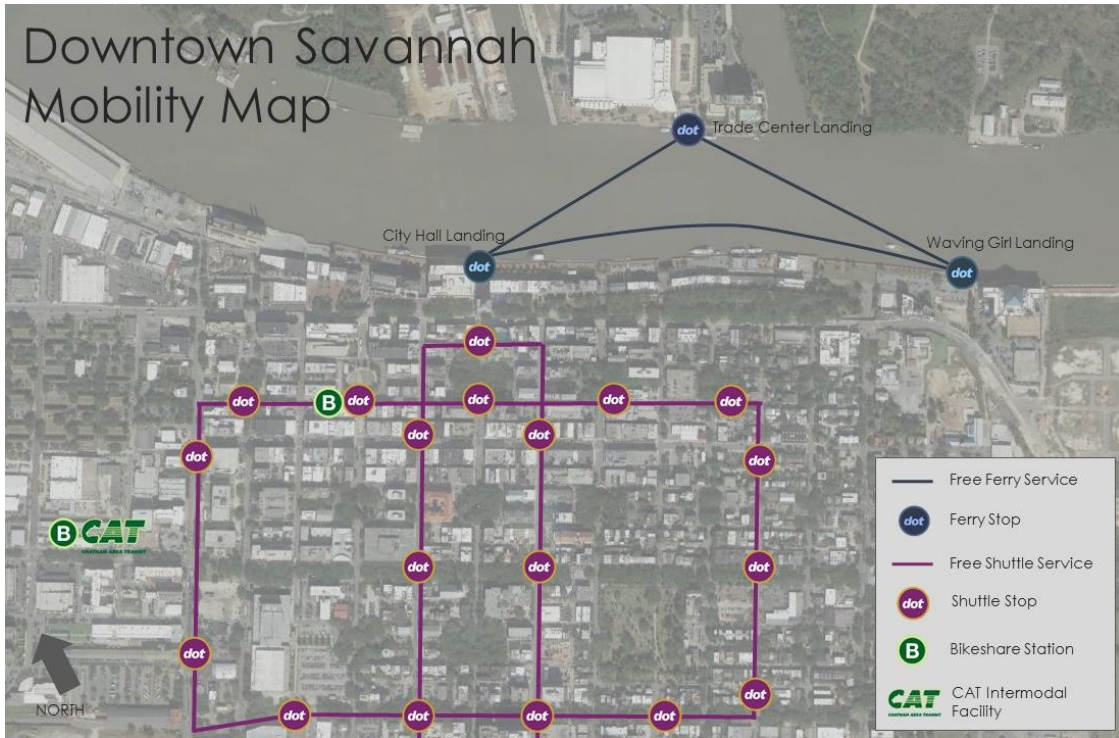
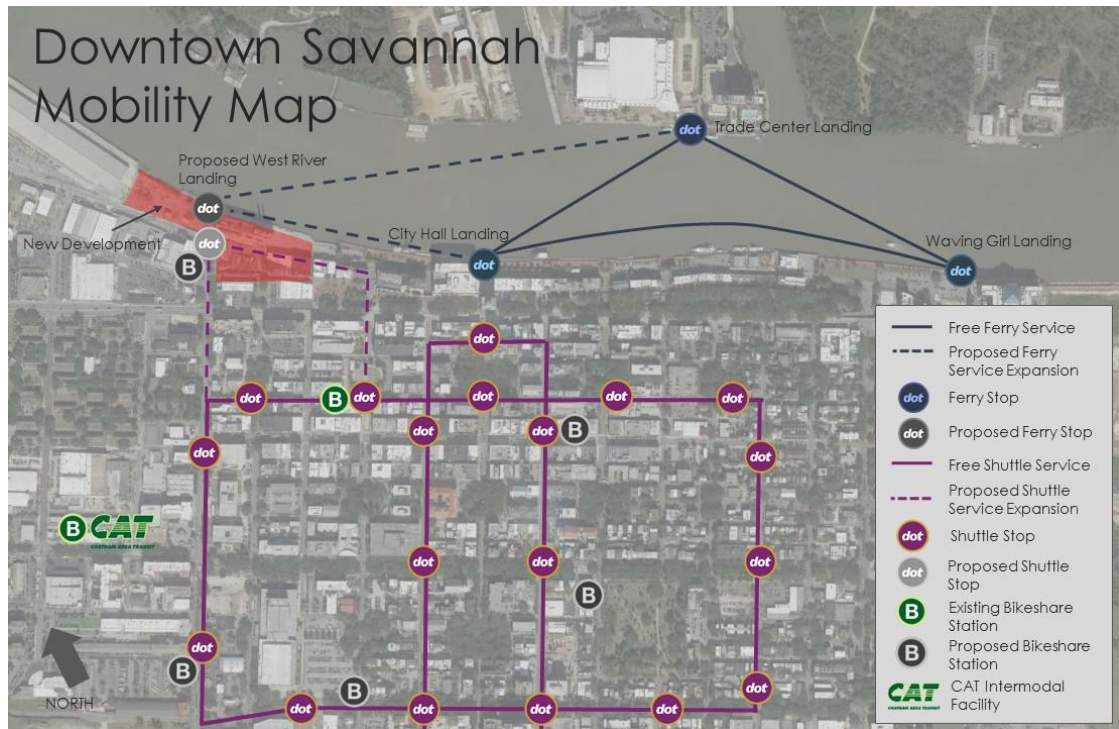


Figure 5: Future Downtown Savannah Mobility Map





## **Planning and Local/Regional Prioritization**

**Is this project in the STIP or TIP?** No, but it will be added within 60-days of award announcements. The Coastal Region Metropolitan Planning Organization (CORE MPO) has provided a letter of support for this project and will work with CAT planning staff on those efforts.

### **Planning and Local Prioritization Justification:**

CORE MPO identified seven over-arching goals in their most recent long-range plan:

- 1) Intergovernmental coordination
- 2) Accessibility, mobility, and connectivity
- 3) Ensure and increase the safety of the transportation system
- 4) Ensure and increase the security of the transportation system
- 5) Support the economic vitality of the region
- 6) System management and maintenance
- 7) Protect and enhance the environment and quality of life

The projects proposed in this application support all seven of these goals (see Attachment 1 for the full long-range plan document).

### **Intergovernmental coordination**

Savannah's fare-free mobility services, including the water ferry and the downtown shuttles, are made possible through a partnership between CAT, the City of Savannah, the Savannah International Trade and Convention Center, and Savannah Mobility Management Inc. (SaMMI). The projects identified in this application look to build off an already successful service partnership, which includes more than 1 million fare-free passenger trips each year.

### **Accessibility, mobility, and connectivity**

With sparse vehicular parking in downtown Savannah, the addition of a new ferry dock on the west end of River Street will provide a critical mobility connection to downtown's fare-free services. All of CAT's vehicles, vessels, and facilities are ADA-compliant, and the new ferry maintenance facility will help make sure that those assets stay in good working order.

### **Ensure and increase the safety of the transportation system**

Safety has always been the number one priority of CAT. The construction of a new maintenance facility will provide ferry mechanics with a vastly improved work environment to perform safety inspections and routine preventative maintenance tasks on all of CAT's vessels and equipment. The new dock will include all required safety signage and securements.

### **Ensure and increase the security of the transportation system**

All ferry maintenance equipment and supplies are currently stored in an exposed public parking garage, posing a significant security threat. A new facility will eliminate those threats by providing a secure location for marine staff to store their equipment and supplies.

## **Support the economic vitality of the region**

Widespread port expansion and a growing tourism industry have helped propel a recent development boom in and around downtown Savannah. Anchored by a massive mixed use development on the western end of River Street, Plant Riverside will be the largest project in decades for downtown Savannah. The new dock proposed in this application will be constructed at the base of this development, offering water transportation for workers and tourists alike.

## **System management and maintenance**

The existing ferry maintenance area was never intended for long-term use. A new facility will significantly improve overall system management and maintenance by providing mechanics with better tools and equipment.

## **Protect and enhance the environment and quality of life**

As a historic coastal community, Savannah has a rich history of protecting its natural beauty and resources. Part of that effort includes the promotion of public transportation options to both residents and visitors. The water ferry, with more than 750,000 passenger boardings per year, offers a cleaner alternative to go between Hutchinson Island and downtown Savannah than a personal vehicle. Expansion of this service will enhance Savannah's environment and quality of life.

CAT has received letters of support for this project from the City of Savannah, the Savannah International Trade and Convention Center, CORE MPO, and SaMMI (see Attachment 2).

## **Readiness Justification**

This project can be obligated within 12-months and implemented within 18-months.

### **Project Readiness Justification:**

The design plans for both the ferry maintenance facility and the new ferry dock have been completed (see Attachment 3). Neither project will require a Buy America waiver. Because the local match will come in the form of in-kind land donation, no match availability issues exist.

The ferry maintenance facility will consist of a building and associated site work. The facility will be located on property owned by Chatham Area Transit on Hutchinson Island within the City of Savannah. There are no freshwater wetlands on the property and it is presently cleared. A land disturbance permit from the State of Georgia and a development and building permit from the City of Savannah will be required prior to construction.

The West River Ferry Dock will consist of a 20 ft. by 100 ft. floating dock to allow moorage of the existing Savannah Belles Ferry system owned and operated by CAT. The dock will be connected to a concrete platform currently under construction by an ADA accessible aluminum ramp. As the dock is located on the Savannah River, a US Army Corps of Engineers and Georgia Department of Natural Resources permit will be required prior to construction.

## **Technical, Legal, and Financial Capacity**

As a Georgia governmental agency, Chatham Area Transit has the technical, legal and financial capacity to implement the proposed projects. CAT has demonstrated its capabilities in the wide variety of capital projects that they have successfully executed and fulfilled in recent years, including a FY16 5339b award for paratransit vehicles, which has successfully been executed and is currently underway. CAT maintenance, finance, transportation, planning, and IT staff are more than capable of performing the coordination necessary for this type of project.

CAT recently completed its Triennial Review and does not foresee any constraints to its ability to carry out this project in terms of technical, legal, or financial capacity.

## **Connectivity to Other Modes of Transportation**

### **Does the ferry system connect with other modes of transportation?**

Yes. The Savannah Belles Ferry offers connections with various transportation modes in Savannah. In September 2017 CAT rolled out a new downtown shuttle service that makes a connection with the ferry service, CAT's Intermodal Transit Center, CAT's bikeshare program, and many of the downtown parking garages. The goal of this service is to get visitors and residents out of their personal vehicles and navigate the downtown area via alternative modes of transportation. These downtown services are expected to generate more than 1 million passenger trips each year. If awarded funding for the new ferry dock, CAT will divert the shuttle route to make another direct connection with the ferry and will install a bikeshare station nearby.

## Project Budget

Figure 6: CAT FY17 5307 (h) Budget

Line	Project	Description	Line Item Total	CAT Match (Value)	CAT Match (%)	Fed Request (Value)	Fed Request (%)
1	New Maintenance Facility	Land Value	\$ 160,180	\$ 160,180	100.0%	\$ -	0.0%
2	New Maintenance Facility	Pre-Engineered 35' x 50' Building and Supplies	\$ 399,301	\$ -	0.0%	\$ 399,301	100.0%
3	New Maintenance Facility	Architecture and Engineering Site Work	\$ 125,678	\$ -	0.0%	\$ 125,678	100.0%
4	New Maintenance Facility	Utility Work	\$ 117,678	\$ -	0.0%	\$ 117,678	100.0%
5	Dock Expansion	Land Value	\$ 987,876	\$ 987,876	100.0%	\$ -	0.0%
6	Dock Expansion	Dock and Ramp Materials and Installation	\$ 992,671	\$ -	0.0%	\$ 992,671	100.0%
7	Dock Expansion	Passenger Shelter	\$ 244,013	\$ -	0.0%	\$ 244,013	100.0%
8	Dock Expansion	Architecture, Engineering, and Utilities	\$ 191,236	\$ -	0.0%	\$ 191,236	100.0%
<b>Total</b>			<b>\$ 3,218,633</b>	<b>\$ 1,148,056</b>	<b>35.7%</b>	<b>\$ 2,070,577</b>	<b>64.3%</b>

## Project Scalability

**Is project scope scalable:** Yes

**If Yes, specify minimum Federal Funds necessary:** \$400,000

**Provide explanation of scalability with specific references to the budget line items above:**

CAT proposes two scaled-down project options in addition to the full project. Alternative #1 removes the ferry dock project (lines 5 through 8) from the full budget. The total project cost of Alternative #1 is \$802,837 of which CAT will provide a \$160,180 match, or 20%. The federal request in Alternative #1 is \$642,657 or 80%. See Figure 7 for details. The minimum amount of federal assistance necessary to complete this project is \$400,000.

Figure 7: CAT FY17 5307(h) Budget – Alternative #1

Project	Description	Line Item Total	CAT Match (Value)	CAT Match (%)	Fed Request (Value)	Fed Request (%)
New Maintenance Facility	Land Value	\$ 160,180	\$ 160,180	100.0%	\$ -	0.0%
New Maintenance Facility	Pre-Engineered 35' x 50' Building and Supplies	\$ 399,301	\$ -	0.0%	\$ 399,301	100.0%
New Maintenance Facility	Architecture and Engineering Site Work	\$ 125,678	\$ -	0.0%	\$ 125,678	100.0%
New Maintenance Facility	Utility Work	\$ 117,678	\$ -	0.0%	\$ 117,678	100.0%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 802,837</b>	<b>\$ 160,180</b>	<b>20.0%</b>	<b>\$ 642,657</b>	<b>80.0%</b>

Alternative #2 removes the ferry maintenance facility project (lines 1 through 3) from the full budget. The total project cost of Alternative #2 is \$2,415,796 of which CAT will provide a \$987,876 match, or 40.9%. The federal request in Alternative #2 is \$1,427,920 or 59.1%. See Figure 8 for details. The minimum amount of federal assistance necessary to complete this project is \$1,183,907 (no passenger shelter included).

Figure 8: CAT FY17 5307(h) Budget – Alternative #2

Project	Description	Line Item Total	CAT Match (Value)	CAT Match (%)	Fed Request (Value)	Fed Request (%)
Dock Expansion	Land Acquisition	\$ 987,876	\$ 987,876	100.0%	\$ -	0.0%
Dock Expansion	Dock and Ramp Materials and Installation	\$ 992,671	\$ -	0.0%	\$ 992,671	100.0%
Dock Expansion	Passenger Shelter	\$ 244,013	\$ -	0.0%	\$ 244,013	100.0%
Dock Expansion	Architecture, Engineering and Utilities	\$ 191,236	\$ -	0.0%	\$ 191,236	100.0%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 2,415,796</b>	<b>\$ 987,876</b>	<b>40.9%</b>	<b>\$ 1,427,920</b>	<b>59.1%</b>

## Matching Funds Information

**Matching Funds Amount:** \$1,148,056

### Source of Matching Funds:

Matching funds for both projects will come in the form of in-kind land donation. For the ferry maintenance facility project, the landed needed for the project is estimated to be \$160,180. CAT has already been conveyed this land. For the ferry dock project, the City of Savannah will convey the land upon completion of the Plant Riverside development. The estimated land value is \$987,876.

### Supporting Documentation of Local Match:

The total cost of this project is \$3,218,633 of which \$1,148,056 (35.7%) will come from local sources. The remaining \$2,070,577 (64.3%) will be covered through the 5307h ferry boat

program, if successful. CAT is a designated recipient of the Federal Transit Administration (FTA).

## **Other Federal Funds**

**Has this project been submitted for other Sources of federal funds?** No

## **Project Timeline**

The project plan includes nine primary phases:

1. FTA Award Notification (1/1/2018)
2. Project Planning & Initiation (1/1/2018 – 2/1/2018)
3. Project Permitting (2/1/2018 – 1/1/2019)
4. Project Procurement (10/1/2018 – 1/1/2019)
5. Project Obligation (1/1/2019)
6. Contracts Awarded (1/1/2019)
7. Project Facilities Build and Completion (1/1/2019 – 6/1/2019)
8. Project Close-out (6/1/2019)

## **Congressional Districts**

**Congressional District:** GA-001

**Congressional Representative:** Earl "Buddy" Carter

## SECTION III: Attachments

Attachment 1: CORE MPO Long Range Plan

Attachment 2: Local Letters of Support

Attachment 3a: Design Documentation for New Maintenance Facility and Ferry Dock

Attachment 3b: Design Documentation for New Ferry Dock