

COMMISSIONERS OF CHATHAM COUNTY

CHATHAM COUNTY COURTHOUSE
124 BULL STREET
P. O. BOX 8161
SAVANNAH, GEORGIA 31412

<http://www.chathamcounty.org>

(912) 652-7869 VOICE
(912) 652-7874 FAX



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County Attorney

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October 12, 2018

Roberto "Rob" Hernandez, City Manager
City of Savannah
P. O. Box 1027
Savannah, Georgia 31412

Dear Rob:

This letter is in regards to our discussion at the Calling all Managers meeting on October 3, 2018. Thank you for taking the time to discuss the Benton Boulevard project and the impacts that it will make to the area's transportation system. Chatham County, as you are aware, is obligated to complete the extension of the roadway to State Route 30 in Port Wentworth as a Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax project. This is a project that precedes much of the development in the Highlands community. The City of Savannah owns property that is required to construction the extension.

The City of Savannah is primarily interested in the widening to 4 lanes the section of Benton Boulevard from Jimmy DeLoach Parkway to Highlands Boulevard. The City of Savannah previously agreed to fund the improvements along Highlands Boulevard at the intersection of Benton Boulevard. To assist in this endeavor, the County is instructing the consultant to begin design work for the widening of Benton Boulevard as discussed. The County is not asking for the City of Savannah to pay for this portion of the design.

Construction funding is still an issue and will be discussed with the Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT). Staff commenced with preliminary dialogue with the GDOT to consider swapping funding to benefit the project and others. The Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) is charged with the allocation of all Federal 230 funds that are spent in the community. There are projects that are holding considerable funds that are not ready to move forward at this time. Staff



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is recommending to the GDOT that 230 funds be moved from the projects that are behind to the State Route 307 / I-16 interchange project. This is one of the top projects that are in the MPO program at this time. This influx of Federal dollars to the interstate improvements will free up other State funds. The Federal funds are not suited for the Benton Boulevard project. State funds would come back to the City or County as Local Maintenance Improvement Grant funds that are well suited for a project like Benton Boulevard.

Design will begin in the coming weeks with the consultant. This will ensure that the plans for the widening are not too far behind the extension project. Hopefully the widening of the section as discussed will be in position to be executed by the contractor on the extension project.

Thank you again for your willingness to discuss the project and its impacts to the Highlands community. Partnerships like this between the City of Savannah and Chatham County are what the citizens expect and deserve from local government. Please contact me at your convenience if you have any additional concerns regarding this information.

Sincerely,

Lee Smith
County Manager

WLS:dbh

Attachment

cc: Michael A. Kaigler, Assistant County Manager
Linda B. Cramer, Assistant County Manager
Leon Davenport, P.E., County Engineer