

**DRAFT FY 2010 – 2013 TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM
FY 2014 – 2015 SECOND TIER OF PROJECTS
PUBLIC COMMENT RECEIVED SEPTEMBER 21 – OCTOBER 21, 2009
SUMMARY**

Note: Draft TIP was posted on the MACORTS Web site in its entirety on September 17, 2009 along with a public comment form that could be printed or e-mailed and a comment form that could be e-mailed directly from the website. All materials were available on CD in pdf format as well as in hardcopy.

Athens-Clarke Co. Public Meeting (September 29, 2009; 5 – 7 pm)	Attendance: 0
Madison Co. Public Meeting (October 7, 2009; 5 – 7 pm)	Attendance: 0
Oconee Co. Public Meeting (October 13, 2009; 5 – 7 pm)	Attendance: 9

Written Comments

Total E-mailed Comments: 36

Forms Turned In At Public Meetings: 5

Comments Mailed In: 1

Comments Faxed In: 0

Other Comments: 0

Total Comments: 42

Organizations / Groups that Submitted Comments Included:

BikeAthens

Athens Grow Green Coalition

Comments Specific to TIP / 1st Tier Projects: (See attachment for exact comments)

Greenway Extension to College Station Road (Section II-2)

- I support this project. (26)

Bike Trail in Athens / Rail to Trail (Section II-3)

- I support this project. (26)
- It would be a good idea to look for ways to extend sidewalk/bike lanes along the railroad from Athens to Watkinsville to connect these 2 population centers. (1)
- The Loop from Atlanta Highway along Epps Bridge Road to Oconee Connector to Butler's Crossing to Watkinsville up the railway to Athens should be accessible to walking or biking. (1)
- MACORTS should look at the potential for additional uses along the railroad between Athens and Watkinsville. (1)

Mars Hill Rd / Experiment Station Road Widening – Phase 1 (Section II-4)

- Consider a 3-lane with a center turn lane.(1)
- A 4-lane will take away from Watkinsville's rural character. (1)
- Need it. Do it. Can't be too soon. (1)
- I do not support this project. (25)
- This road would benefit from better traffic management surrounding schools on the road. (1)
- Will additional stormwater that this additional roadway creates be addressed in this proposal?(1)
- Have turn lanes been considered ? (1)

Jennings Mill Parkway – Athens-Clarke County (Section II-6)

- I do not support this project. (25)

Lump Sum, Safe Routes to School Programs (Section III-15)

- There is a \$120,000 Safe Routes to School portion of the planning document, and parents at Timothy Road Elementary School would like to know if there is room in that grant to put countdown timers at Epps Bridge Road. (1)
- It was a joy to participate in the Safe Walks to School at Timothy Road Elementary last week. (1)

College Station Road Bridge over North Oconee River (Section IV-01)

- I support this project. (25)

Rail Projects (Section VI)

- We must make it efficient and cost effective to kiss-and-ride or to hop a train to Atlanta. (1)

Athens Transit System (Section VIII)

- I do not believe you should expand transit into other counties unless you improve the reliability of ATS in Athens-Clarke County and provide service to the parts of ACC that are underserved or not served currently, like Winterville. (1)
- The buses on routes 25, 26, 27 haven't been anywhere near on time during Fall 2009. (1)
- Service this fall is getting worse. (1)
- By the time I drive to catch a bus, I could have been downtown for 1 ½ hours. (1)
- We must get over this business of county-by-county transit planning and turf battles or we'll keep driving one to a car. (1)

2nd Tier Comments: (See attachment for exact comments)

Simonton Bridge Road (Section IIA-06)

- I am against this project. It would ruin the character of downtown Watkinsville and significantly impact those living along the road. (27)
- Traffic counts do not justify widening or straightening. (1)
- "Improvements" would degrade the most scenic connector between Watkinsville and Athens. (1)
- I see no need to put monies into a project that would speed up traffic. (1)
- Traffic flows smoothly from Athens into downtown Watkinsville. I have never been delayed because of traffic problems. (1)
- Please consider removing this project from the long and short term plans. (1)
- This road needs to be made safer but not 4-laned. (1)
- The road should be contextually sensitive so that it's not broken at every subdivision yet made safer. (1)
- Like a seven-headed hydra, the four-laning of this roadway continues, although it appears to be on its last head. (1)
- I support Wayne Provost's amendment to the project and hope it will be adopted. (1)
- Any intersection improvements should be limited to those that need widening. Turn lanes and decal lanes should be added conservatively and in a way that does not alter the character of the roadway. (1)
- Remove this project or specify that if will not be widened to more than two lanes. (1)
- Why is this road being considered for widening to four lanes under the TIP when the Clarke County side of this corridor is shuffled to the unfunded list of projects in the LRTP ? (1)
- The bridge enhancement over the Oconee River that connects Simonton Bridge Road and Whitehall Road is also on the unfunded list. (1)
- This road needs to be kept at 2 lanes, widened to add bike lanes and turn lanes at major intersections. (1)
- Watkinsville's recent designation of houses along Simonton Bridge Road as historic structures further emphasizes the city's opposition to this plan. (1)

- MACORTS should listen to its citizens and drop this project entirely from the TIP and move it to the unfunded projects within the LRTP. (1)

Daniels Bridge Road Extension (Section IIA-09)

- I am against this project. It is not needed and would negatively impact the neighborhoods along Daniels Bridge Road. (1)
- I do not support this project. (25)
- Remove this project and put in the Daniels Bridge Road widening project. (1)

General / Other Comments : (See attachment for exact comments)

- Motor fuel taxes seem inadequate to funded needed road, bridge or bike projects. (1)
- The use of gas taxes for bicycle facilities is fundamentally problematic to some observers. (1)
- Bicycle facilities can be a viable and legitimate transportation option in more densely populated urban centers. (1)
- Bicycle facilities in some of the more suburban and rural areas remain mostly unused or at best serve a recreational function. (1)
- The funding inadequacy for transportation is not solvable at the local level – a statewide funding option would be needed if significant bicycle facilities are to be developed in a timely and comprehensive way. (1)
- A statewide user-financed funding option would be worth studying – similar to Dingle-Johnson Act and the Pittman-Robertson Act that taxes fishing tackle, sporting arms, and ammunition and other products related to hunting and fishing. Funds are used specifically for fisheries and wildlife habitat conservation and preservation. Taxes on bikes, helmets, auto bike racks, etc could be used for bicycle facilities in the areas where they are collected. (1)
- A annual bike registration tag could be required and displayed on any bicycle operated on a public street or public property, like a car tag. This could generate funds for bicycle facility planning and development and help law enforcement agency in enforcement of traffic laws for the safety of all. (1)
- A user-funded facilities program would generate more support from those who might otherwise object to the use of motor fuel tax for bicycle facilities. (1)
- There should be pedestrian countdown timers at Timothy Rd. and Epps Bridge Road. (3)
- My kids should be able to bike to school, but it is not safe without pedestrian countdown timers at Timothy Rd and Epps Bridge Rd. and because there is a 0.7mile gap in the sidewalk network. (1)
- We need sidewalks desperately in the area of Timothy Rd and Epps Bridge Rd for traveling to school and biking for health. (1)
- It has come to my attention that although MACORTS mission includes provisions for a safe walking environment, these pedestrian safety devices are not part of the 5-year plan. [Timothy Rd. at Epps Bridge] (1)
- The recently added sidewalks down both sides of Timothy Rd. are underused because residents are not willing to cross a 5-lane, divided highway intersection, particularly with children. (2)
- The Timothy Rd / Epps Bridge intersection is difficult to cross even with a crossing guard. Flashing lights at that crosswalk would greatly improve the safety for our children. (1)
- The plan doesn't include any mention of paving the dirt roads in Madison County, especially Broad River Road and White Oak Trail in Carlton. (1)
- Crossing Epps Bridge Parkway is a dangerous venture – walk signal starts flashing its warning before you get half way across the road. (1)
- Crossing Timothy Road in front of Skyline subdivision is very difficult, especially in the early mornings. (1)
- In the face of childhood obesity and health problems, I would like to feel safe walking to my neighborhood school. (1)
- The Draft Executive Summary is 174 pages long ! (1)

- The page numbering system in the TIP makes it hard to navigate. (1)
- A great deal of the Plan either makes no sense to me or is a simple reporting of things like how many buses and how much they will cost. (1)
- A 3 or 4 page summary that the ordinary person could access easily and that summarized proposed plans in plain English would be useful. (1)
- The government can support us with safe sidewalks and crosswalks and stringent law enforcement at school opening and closing time. I believe we do a good job of this, but I still worry about people who don't take school zone speed limits seriously. (1)
- I would love to walk and use public transit, but to do so, I must sell my house and move – that is too high a price to pay. (1)
- Most of our bike paths frighten me. (1)
- The Epps Bridge Parkway bike lane is like the bridge to nowhere. It ends at the county line. (1)
- There is no way I am riding my bike down the Atlanta Highway, Broad Street, or Timothy Road. It is too dangerous. (1)
- The tiny bike lane along Timothy Road appears to be an afterthought, only a few inches wide. (1)
- The municipalities should have representation on MACORTS Committees to address issues specific to the towns. (2)
- There could be a threshold population to have a representation for a town on MACORTS or a revolving rep that would be able to present the municipalities' perspectives. (1)
- Spend money on supplemental funding for the Sidewalk Improvement Program on state roads, revising the Bicycle Master Plan on state roads, reconstruction of the Tallassee Road Bridge, and Tallassee Rd improvements including bicycle and pedestrian facilities and excluding the widening from 2 to 4 lanes. (25)
- Develop more comprehensive and creative advertising for input opportunities from the public at large. (25)
- Establish an explicit procedural framework of standard operating procedures to solicit and present to the Committees public comment, and recommend tangible changes based on this wealth of community knowledge and sentiment. (25)
- Seek out populations currently underserved by and underrepresented in the planning process. (25)
- Direct staff, or contract with outside groups, to undertake region-wide comment solicitation efforts. (25)
- Include BikeAthens as a constituent and active member of the MACORTS Technical Committee. (25)
- Establish an advisory Bicycle and Pedestrian Committee or a Citizens Advisory Committee to obtain the user's point of view about how the non-motorized transportation system operates within the MACORTS boundary. (25)
- In general, I find that the MACORTS committee is unresponsive to public input and continues to incorrectly focus on road building project, even when those projects are opposed by the public. (1)
- MACORTS continues to operate in a non-transparent manner, seemingly using the model of previous GDOT committees (we have now witnessed the undeniable failure of that model). (1)
- I read it but it doesn't work that way. (1)
- Please suggest more activity for educating the general public about bike riders. (1)
- Bike riders usually pay the same amount of taxes since most of them are using also their cars for transportation to and from work, shopping, transporting the kids around, etc in addition to bike riders as an exercise. (1)
- Bike riders have a right to be on the road and recognized as a rightful road user. (1)
- Push for a membership on the MACORTS. (1)
- I oppose road widening. If they must occur, push for separate bike lanes on those roads. (1)
- If Colorado and some other States can separate bike lanes from the roadways on their mountainous roadways, so should Georgia – especially on their country roads used by bike riders. (1)
- Include some form of wording to encourage tree planting along roadways and preservation of existing trees in road projects. (1)

- As suggested by BikeAthens, MACORTS should establish citizen representation through a Bicycle and Pedestrian Committee and /or a Citizens Advisory Committee to obtain additional points of view regarding the non-motorized transportation system operating within the MACORTS district. (1)
- I encourage MACORTS to support projects that emphasize cohesiveness within the represented district. (1)
- The lack of regional planning and cohesiveness simply makes no sense. (1)
- While I concede that at times we may have benefitted from widening roads or adding new ones, those times are coming to a close, and perhaps are of a bygone age. (1)
- I know all of your planning experience have been within that era, but we must begin modifying to accommodate the future and its expectations. (1)
- Autos, and especially as we know them, will not persist. (1)
- Materials to repave roads will not exist much longer. (1)
- World oil production will peak and drop. (1)
- I hope to live in a community that has looked to the future, the real future, and planning accordingly, by building infrastructure that diversifies our transportation methods, and hasn't put all our eggs into one basket, so to speak. (1)
- Autos are not the only method of transportation, and should not consume enormous percentages of our TIP budget, when so much more infrastructure for alternative modes of transit can be built much more cheaply and efficiently. (1)
- I will still be here in 30-50 years, either suffering or benefitting from your decisions today. (1)
- The road widening projects in the TIP detract visitors and area residents from the historic downtowns of Athens and Watkinsville, and they make it less appealing to walk or cycle in these areas due to increased auto traffic from wider roads. (2)
- The widening projects in the TIP create a circle around the intersection of SR 10 Loop and SR 316, with a 4-lane corridor that feeds into the circle for commercial development. (2)
- Rumors exist about a new mall behind the Lowe's in Oconee County, when an existing suburban shopping destination already exists near the Georgia Square Mall. (2)
- Spending 1/3 of the TIP money to fund the suburban Oconee County transportation needs for the 2nd regional mall at the expense of downtown Athens and Watkinsville pits county against county in a battle for business. (2)
- BikeAthens' repeated requests over the past 3 years for a seat on the MACORTS TCC deserve a serious consideration, but have yet to receive any response. (2)
- BikeAthens has aided MACORTS for years, raising public awareness of transportation issues and generating public comment for transportation plans. (2)
- Most importantly, BikeAthens represents a user group with a clear active interest in transportation issues, and is at least as deserving of being a part of Committee deliberations as the Athens Downtown Development Authority, the Athens Area Chamber of Commerce, the Oconee Rivers Greenway Commission, and the US Navy Supply School. (2)
- Unlike many other MPOs across the country, MACORTS has not established a Bicycle and Pedestrian Committee or a Citizens Advisory Committee to obtain the user's point of view about how the non-motorized transportation system operates within the MACORTS boundary. (2)
- A Bicycle and Pedestrian Committee or Citizen Advisory Committee could suggest low-cost projects such as bike lane transitions at intersection or Safe Routes to School improvements and also provide regular feedback on how newly-implemented projects are working or not working for the community. (2)