

April 15, 2010

Rep. Henry C. "Hank" Johnson

Testimony before the House Appropriations Committee, Subcommittee on Transportation, and Housing and Urban Development, and Related Agencies

Re: Member's Requests to the Subcommittee Hearing

Chairman Olver and Ranking Member Latham, thank you for allowing me to testify today on behalf of some of the important projects I have requested in the FY11 Transportation, and Housing and Urban Development, and Related Agencies appropriations bill. I requested these projects to help better the quality of life for my constituents and others who might benefit from these projects across the Atlanta area. I strongly urge the committee to fully fund my FY11 Transportation, and Housing and Urban Development, and Related Agencies appropriations requests.

I chose to submit projects on which work could begin quickly, putting Georgians back to work. All of my requests have significant local support, from mayors and county commissioners to area residents and business owners.

Though I have included the full list of my requests with my testimony, I would like to call certain projects to your attention today.

First, the Glenwood Road Pedestrian Safety Improvements Project. Pedestrians use Glenwood Road to access the Metropolitan Atlanta Rapid Transit Authority (MARTA) bus stops, go shopping, and attend church. Unfortunately, the Glenwood Road corridor has a long and serious history of pedestrian accidents. I requested this project to upgrade the facilities in the entire corridor. The project will include sidewalks, a continuous left turn lane, new traffic signals, and additional lighting to provide safe access to the corridor. I strongly urge the committee to support full funding for this project.

Second, the Metropolitan Atlanta Rapid Transit Authority (MARTA) Bus, Bus Facilities and Security Improvements project. MARTA, like many public transportation agencies, is facing a severe budget shortfall in FY11. This project will allow MARTA to sustain and improve a State of Good Repair for its bus infrastructure and rolling stock, and also to enhance the safety and security of its bus transit system. The funds requested will be used for needed MARTA bus facilities and equipment modernization at several locations, bus vehicle rehabilitation and replacement, and for the planned On-board Bus Security Camera System. The bus security camera system will include the acquisition and installation of up to eight digital cameras per bus on the existing MARTA bus fleet. This project is a top priority for Georgia's largest public transit agency, serving hundreds of thousand of Georgians daily, many of whom are my constituents. I strongly urge the committee to support full funding for this project.

Third, the Bouldercrest Road Improvements project, which would build additional lanes and improve sidewalks and safety in this growing area of southwest DeKalb County, Georgia. Making these

improvements to this busy road would increase economic development opportunities in the area. I strongly urge the committee to support full funding for this project.

Finally, the Metropolitan Atlanta Rapid Transit Authority (MARTA) I-20 East Transit Corridor project. This proposed high capacity transit expansion project will begin in downtown Atlanta and extend eastward along the congested and growing Interstate 20 corridor into south DeKalb County, in the heart of my congressional district. Anyone who has been to Atlanta will tell you that access to high quality public transportation is a challenge, and that is particularly true for this part of south DeKalb County, Georgia. That is why this fixed guideway transit project is extremely significant and, when completed, will significantly improve the quality of life for thousands of people who live, work, and play in this area. Additionally, the project address national and Federal Transit Administration goals to increase mobility and enhance the quality of life for our citizens; while creating jobs, relieving traffic congestion, conserving energy and improving air quality, lowering greenhouse gas emissions, providing access to jobs and promoting economic development and more livable communities. I strongly urge the committee to support full funding for this project.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today. While I have highlighted a few of the important projects I have requested, I hope that the committee will choose to fund all of my projects, and to help facilitate that I have included a full list of my projects below.

Thank you again.

PROJECT REQUESTS

ART Station, Inc.

5384 Manor Drive

Stone Mountain, GA 30083

Project: Art Station

Designated recipient: ART Station, Inc.

Funding Request: \$125,000

Background: \$125,000 of the request would be used for facility improvements.

DeKalb County , GA

330 W. Ponce de Leon

4th Floor

Decatur, GA 30030

Project: Bouldercrest Road Improvements

Designated recipient: DeKalb County, GA

Funding Request: 2,000,000

Background: This is a road improvement project that involves additional lanes, safety improvements and sidewalks from I-285 to the Clayton County line. The north end of the project will tie into a future interchange improvement project at I-285 being designed by the Georgia Department of Transportation. The project will alleviate congestion in this growing area of southwest DeKalb County, assist with economic development opportunities and provide an improved link between I-285 in DeKalb County and a rapidly growing area in Clayton County.

City of Conyers, GA
1184 Scott Street, SE
Conyers, GA 30012

Project: Central Conyers Park Initiative

Designated recipient: City of Conyers, GA

Funding Request: \$900,000

Background: Federal funding will be used to acquire the land necessary to construct the park. The City will also use the requested funding to restore and dam a lake at the park, as well as provide the necessary amenities associated with parks of this caliber for the edification and enjoyment of present and future generations. Given the explosive economic growth occurring in the northern reaches of Henry County, the southern and eastern portions of DeKalb County and Rockdale County over the last three decades, this project would provide a much needed increase to the amount of parkland and open space in the region. The presence of the Central Conyers Park will increase the foot traffic for commercial venues in downtown Conyers, as well as encourage future commercial activity and increase demand for housing within walking distance of the park. The Central Conyers Park is an integral part of a larger initiative to encourage residential and commercial development, investment in the region, and to enhance public safety, health and welfare for the residents of Conyers and surrounding communities.

Rockdale County, GA

962 Milstead Avenue

Conyers, GA 30012

Project: Commerce Crossing Bridge

Designated recipient: Rockdale County, GA

Funding Request: \$1,000,000

Background: "Commerce Crossing" is a proposed non-access bridge across Interstate 20 connecting the community's most significant retail tax base with State Route (SR) 138. As Rockdale's primary north-south artery, the SR 138 corridor is the most heavily traveled and congested corridor in Rockdale County with daily traffic at the I-20 interchange in excess of 55,000 vehicles. With this level of traffic the interchange is currently operating at level of service F and will continue to get worse with a projected 50% increase in traffic over the next 20 years.

The non-access bridge would provide access to the community's primary retail district and provide circulation improvements by redirecting 10,000 vehicles per day from the I-20 interchange to the retail district when the bridge is opened to traffic. By 2030, the bridge will accommodate in excess of 18,000 vehicles per day. The "Commerce Crossing" bridge will provide user benefits through improved traffic flow and circulation and by increasing opportunities for pedestrian travel to the retail district. The annual travel time benefit associated with these improvements is \$1,727,000 with a fuel cost savings of \$216,000. This equates to a twenty year benefit of \$30,220,000 (2005 dollars).

City of Conyers, GA
1184 Scott Street, SE
Conyers, GA 30012

Project: Complete Streets Initiative

Designated recipient: City of Conyers, GA

Funding Request: \$3,720,000

Background: The Complete Streets Design Concept emphasizes safely accommodating automobiles, bicyclists, pedestrians and public transit riders while using design standards sensitive to those with disabilities.

The adoption of the Complete Streets concept on Hardin Street and O'Kelly Street will significantly improve the mobility, accessibility and safety of walking trips to, from and within the Central Conyers community through separating bicycle and pedestrian traffic from vehicular traffic.

In separating bicycle and pedestrian traffic from vehicular traffic, both bicyclists and pedestrians will feel safer using biking and sidewalk facilities, which will significantly increase the usage of both facilities.

With the adoption of the complete streets treatment along Hardin Street and O'Kelly Street, members of the Central Conyers neighborhood will gain improved access to the regional network of parks, open space and trails.

Dekalb County , GA
330 W. Ponce de Leon
4th Floor
Decatur, GA 30030

Project: Glenwood Road Pedestrian Safety Improvements

Designated recipient: DeKalb County, GA

Funding Request: \$1,500,000

Background: The project will involve the implementation of pedestrian safety improvements along Glenwood Road from Candler Road to Covington Highway. A county funded phase 1 project west of Candler Road has already been completed. Improvements being considered include sidewalks, a continuous left turn lane, new turn signals, additional street lighting, and mid-block crossings. Preliminary design of the project is underway.

City of Decatur
509 North McDonough Street
Decatur, GA 30030

Project: Historic Decatur Recreation Center Rehabilitation Project

Designated recipient:

Funding Request: \$7,000,000

Background: The project will rehabilitate, modernize and restore the historic Decatur Recreation Center in downtown Decatur. This facility has been home for many years to Decatur's diverse recreational community as well as Decatur High School's athletic teams. It will be a showcase and national example of the sensitive rehabilitation of a local historic building while modernizing and improving the building to meet new recreational needs and changing community goals. The project includes master planning, project design and construction of improvements, including improvements to the existing office and classroom spaces, new recreational space for seniors, improved locker rooms, new lighting, gym floor and bleachers, new mechanical systems and a new roof.

The construction cost estimate for this project is \$7 million. The City of Decatur has employed architectural and engineering consultants to bring the project to the 100% level of design. The City will have spent \$385,000 in local funds by the end of this fiscal year for design at which point it will be shovel ready.

Gwinnett Village Community Improvement District
5855 Jimmy Carter Boulevard
Norcross, GA 30071

Project: I-85 / Jimmy Carter Boulevard Bridge Replacement and Interchange Improvement (Gwinnett County, GA)

Designated recipient: Gwinnett Village Community Improvement District

Funding Request: \$2,000,000

Background: The proposed interchange improvements include replacement of the existing bridge that carries Jimmy Carter Boulevard over I-85 and reconstruction of the intersections with the existing I-85 on and off ramps. The new bridge will carry 11 lanes, 4 lanes wider than the existing 7 lane bridge. The project will increase both the number of through lanes along Jimmy Carter Boulevard as well as the number of turn lanes onto I-85 (north and south). Currently, the interchange causes extreme delays along Jimmy Carter Boulevard. Due to capacity limitations, queuing often occurs along the on and off-ramps to I-85 creating safety concerns along the interstate.

The current bridge at Interstate 85 and Jimmy Cater Boulevard was built in 1973. In June 2009, the Georgia Department of Transportation's Office of Bridge Design recommended replacement of the existing Jimmy Carter Boulevard Bridge due to its poor geometry, current sufficiency load rating values, and overall need for a range of maintenance items. The bridge's sufficiency rating was 48.39; the Georgia Department of Transportation considers bridges with sufficiency ratings below 50 to be in need of replacement.

In addition to safety concerns, the bridge is a source of significant congestion. This interchange currently supports nearly 60,000 vehicles per day, and a 2005 crash report by Gwinnett County revealed that a large number of incidents occur at this location. Furthermore, in a 2006 congestion report by the Atlanta Regional Commission, the I-85 at Jimmy Carter Boulevard interchange ranked a the 7th most heavily congested arterial roadway in the metro-Atlanta region.

Metropolitan Atlanta Rapid Transit Authority
2424 Piedmont Road, NE
Atlanta, GA 30324

Project: MARTA Bus, Bus Facilities and Security Improvements

Designated recipient: Metropolitan Atlanta Rapid Transit Authority

Funding Request: \$12,000,000

Background: This overall project will both help to sustain and improve a State of Good Repair for MARTA bus infrastructure and rolling stock, and also enhance the safety and security of the bus transit system. The funds requested will be used for needed MARTA bus facilities and equipment modernization at several locations, bus vehicle rehabilitation and replacement, and for the planned On-board Bus Security Camera System. The bus security camera system will include the acquisition and installation of up to eight digital cameras per bus on the existing MARTA bus fleet.

Metropolitan Atlanta Rapid Transit Authority

2424 Piedmont Road, NE

Atlanta, GA 30324

Project: MARTA Fare Collection System Improvements

Designated recipient: Metropolitan Atlanta Rapid Transit Authority

Funding Request: \$15,400,000

Background: This project will build upon MARTA's innovative Breeze Fare Collection System, by providing funding for two (2) major enhancements: Variable Base Fare capability and the Community Breeze Vending Program. The Variable-Based Fare System Module will enable distance-based and/or time-of-day fares to be implemented. The Community Breeze Vending Program will provide for the acquisition and installation of remote Breeze fare media vending machines in communities throughout the MARTA bus service area. These Breeze Vending Machines will be strategically placed at major retail establishments (e.g., supermarkets) and community facilities (e.g., public libraries) in corridors primarily traversed by MARTA bus service. This combined project will provide the riding public with a more accessible, convenient and regionally integrated transit system.

Metropolitan Atlanta Rapid Transit Authority

2424 Piedmont Road, NE

Atlanta, GA 30324

Project: MARTA I-20 East Transit Corridor

Designated recipient: Metropolitan Atlanta Rapid Transit Authority

Funding Request: \$4,500,000

Background: FY 2011 funding is requested to complete the Alternatives Analysis (AA) and a Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) for the I-20 East Corridor High Capacity Transit Line. This proposed high capacity transit expansion project will begin in downtown Atlanta and extend eastward along the congested and growing Interstate 20 corridor into south DeKalb County. This is the next phase in the FTA's New Starts project development process. This fixed guideway transit project is extremely significant and, when completed, will address national and Federal Transit Administration goals to increase mobility and enhance the quality of life for our citizens; while creating jobs, relieving traffic congestion, conserving energy and improving air quality, lowering greenhouse gas emissions, providing access to jobs and promoting economic development and more livable communities.

DeKalb County , GA

330 W. Ponce de Leon

4th Floor

Decatur, GA 30030

Project: Panola Road Improvements from Brown's Mill Road (GA 212) to Covington Highway (US 278)

Designated recipient: DeKalb County, GA

Funding Request: \$4,000,000

Background: This project is the widening of Panola Road from Covington Highway (US 278) to Brown's Mill Road (GA 212). A four lane or six lane divided highway with a raised median is proposed. Bike lanes and sidewalks will also be added. In the middle of the project is the Panola Road at I-20 interchange. A separate project will upgrade that interchange.

Rockdale County, GA
962 Milstead Avenue
Conyers, GA 30012

Project: Sigman Road Extension Project
Designated recipient: Rockdale County, GA
Funding Request: \$1,000,000

Background: The Sigman Road Extension project is a new four lane parkway that connects Sigman Road at Interstate 20 (I-20) with State Route 124 (Turner Hill Road) in Dekalb County. As a link between I-20 and several state routes, the Sigman Road corridor is a critical transportation artery for Rockdale and surrounding counties. The Sigman Road Extension project will also provide an economic benefit to Rockdale County by directly connecting Stonecrest mall in Dekalb County with land available for commercial development in Rockdale County.

The existing Sigman Road corridor serves as a major artery in the region's transportation network by providing connectivity between I-20, State Route 20, State Route 138 and State Route 162. The Sigman Road Extension will create a new link to State Route 124 in Dekalb County. Sigman Road and these state routes are the primary arterial roads providing access to I-20 for residents of northern Rockdale, southern Gwinnett, Walton and Newton counties.

Dekalb County , GA
330 W. Ponce de Leon
4th Floor
Decatur, GA 30030

Project: South Stone Mountain Lithonia Road Bike Lanes
Designated recipient: DeKalb County, GA
Funding Request: \$2,000,000

Background: The project consists of constructing bike lanes on both sides of South Stone Mountain Lithonia Road from the City of Stone Mountain to the City of Lithonia. Sidewalks will also be added on the east side of the road. Design of the first phase of the project from Main Street in Stone Mountain to Rockbridge Road is currently underway.

PROGRAM LEVEL REQUEST

Program Level Request: Fair Housing Initiatives Program
Funding Level Request: \$52,000,000
Agency: Housing and Urban Development (HUD)

Program Level Request: Federal Transit Administration
Funding Level Request: \$14,880,000,000
Agency: Federal Transit Administration (FTA)

Background: The President's FY11 Budget Request includes only \$10.8 billion for federal transit programs; a .6% increase over FY10 enacted levels. Also of note, this request includes only \$8.27 billion for transit capital formula programs and \$1.82 billion for New Starts, which are decreases from the FY10 enacted levels. While I recognize that we are facing a difficult budget climate, I fear that

\$10.8 billion is simply not enough to maintain the current system, and to continue the proper investments in our public transportation system.

Program Level Request: HOPWA Program

Funding Level Request: \$410,000,000

Agency: Housing and Urban Development (HUD)