RUDY BRUNER
AWARD FOR
URBAN
EXCELLENCE
2003

Downtown
Pedestrian Bridge
City of East Point, GA

December 16, 2002

The city of
EAST POINT
Georgia
PROJECT DATA

Please answer questions in space provided. Applicants should feel free to use photocopies of the application forms if needed. If possible, answers to all questions should be typed or written directly on the forms. If the forms are not used and answers are typed on a separate page, each answer must be preceded by the question to which it responds, and the length of each answer should be limited to the area provided on the original form.

Project Name: East Point Pedestrian Bridge
Location: 1569 Cleveland Ave.
Owner: The City of East Point
Project Use(s): Pedestrian crossing to access public/private services
Project Size: 210' long, 8' wide, 27' height
Total Development Cost: $2.2 million

Annual Operating Budget (if applicable): $0
Date Initiated: April 29, 2001
Percent Completed by December 1, 2002: 100%
Project Completion Date (if applicable): December 18, 2001

Attach, if you wish, a list of relevant project dates

Application submitted by:
Name: Ms. Erica Rocker
Title: Main Street/CDBG Coordinator
Organization: City of East Point, GA
Address: 777 East Point St., East Point, GA 30347
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Weekend Contact Number (for notification): 770-309-5171

Key Participants (Attach an additional sheet if needed)

Organization
Public Agencies: Fulton County Govt. Cathy Smith 404-335-2519
MARTA Laura Massello 404-848-5577
Architect/Designer: Prime Engineering Tom Gambino, P.E. 404-425-7100
Developer: City of East Point Erica Rocker 404-209-5143
Professional Consultant: Prime Engineering Lee Harrop, P.E. 404-425-7100

Community Group

Other

Please indicate how you learned of the Rudy Bruner Award for Urban Excellence. (Check all that apply).

☐ Direct Mailing ☐ Magazine Advertisement ☐ Previous RBA entrant ☐ Other (please specify)
☐ Professional Organization ☐ Newsletter ☐ Previous Selection Committee member National League of Cities

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Signature: Erica Rocker
ABSTRACT

Please answer questions in space provided. Applicants should feel free to use photocopies of the application forms if needed. If possible, answers to all question should be typed or written directly on the forms. If the forms are not used and answers are typed on a separate page, each answer must be preceded by the question to which it responds, and the length of each answer should be limited to the area provided on the original form.

1. Give a brief overview of the project, including major project goals.

The East Point Pedestrian Bridge was a concept 2 and a half years in the making. Recognizing the inherent need for a friendlier and safer crossing from the commercial to the residential side of the City, the Pedestrian Bridge Project was born. The bridge spans 210 feet long, 8 feet wide and 27 feet in height. It crosses 4 active freight rail lines (1 CSX and 3 Norfolk Southern), and 2 MARTA lines. The crossing is heavily trafficked in the mornings and afternoons by students that use the MARTA line to get to school. Commercial and government office developments on both sides of the tracks generate additional foot traffic for the crossing. The existing crossing was not ADA compliant and produced an endless list of hazards and difficulties for pedestrians. Physically disabled persons or those using a stroller had to take the longer route around the street to access school or home. The bridge would hopefully improve pedestrian access in and around the downtown area and piggyback the City’s efforts to revitalize the downtown Main Street District, ultimately giving rise to increased retail, residential, and commercial development, while simultaneously reconnecting a community.

2. Why does the project merit the Rudy Bruner Award for Urban Excellence?

The East Point Pedestrian Bridge is a creative solution to an urban problem. Reconnecting a severed street. The project is the epitome of what the Rudy Bruner Award endorses: Complexity, Design, Preservation and Use. Complexity: Coordinating 4 rail line schedules and 2 Rapid Transit Authority lines while working in a very old part of the City with underlying and abandoned utilities; couple that with the management of over 1.2 million dollars in federal funds. Design: East Point takes its name as it was the east terminus point on the Atlanta and Westpoint Railroad. Founded in 1887, our history is ingrained in rail operations. The design preserves the rich railroad history of East Point. Constructed of weathered steel, timeless brick towers and metal roofing to emphasize a turn of the century railroad town appeal. It is in essence, ‘yesterday’ – ‘today’. The project renews the old, creates the new, and preserves our historic fabric while offering a creative solution of smart growth, smart development, smart use of taxpayers dollars, and an instant benefit to the community that needed it. Use: The day the project was completed and opened there were citizens proudly taking a stroll to the other side of the tracks but this time with ease, convenience and safety. Cities must begin to think outside the box to develop ways of financing urban projects. Re-directing CDBG funds for economic development use was a premier decision and not a common one for small municipalities like East Point. Our city has become a catalyst for other cities to aspire to use municipal grants to resolve a community issue without taxing the purse strings of its dear citizens.
PROJECT DESCRIPTION

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1. How has the project impacted the local community?

The Bridge has provided access to public and private services, retail, and public transportation. Since the opening of the Pedestrian Bridge, East Point has become a renaissance city. People have come to realize the value of traditional neighborhoods and the convenience of East Point’s location to Hartsfield International Airport and all of the major highways. Plans are already underway for a proposed multi-modal station project that will connect MARTA with a new north-south commuter rail line. Four mixed-use developments have spawned in the heart of downtown since opening the bridge. Residential lofts, professional services, and retail establishments have nestled into a once vacant corridor. Within the next four years, it is projected that East Point’s population, retail, and commercial areas will nearly double in size. The bridge in its functionality has added a tremendous aesthetic appeal to the architecture of the downtown district while providing a safer and friendlier crossing to over 17,000 residents who live within a 10-minute walking radius of downtown. In addition, students at Tri-Cities High School, the only high school that serves students from the East Point, College Park, and Hapeville communities, can now cross the tracks without train delays or risking their lives.

2. Describe the underlying values of the project. What, if any, significant trade-offs were required to implement the project?

The underlying values of the project were to provide a functional safe pedestrian crossing, while adding to the architectural character of the Main Street District and promoting an economic development boost.

Because of the demands of a project this size, the City had to create a staff position strictly to manage the CDBG program. This required a commitment from Management to formulate the position and finance it within a departmental budget. Also, due to the cost of the project exceeding initial estimates, the City petitioned the County to restructure CDBG funding allocated to the project. The restructuring included the following:

- Reallocating funds from other City CDBG activities to the Pedestrian Bridge Project
- Extending the CDBG fund expenditure deadlines to accommodate initial design delays and the construction schedule; and entering into Pre-Award Agreements for fiscal year 2002 and 2003 CDBG funding allowing the City to incur costs which will later be repaid with future year CDBG allocations.
3. Describe the key elements of the development process, including community participation where important.

One of the Key elements of the development process was applying for permission from Fulton County to use CDBG funds for a project of this type. The next challenge was to meet HUD procurement criteria for Project management and construction contracts. The City reviewed 13 schematic designs before deciding on the plans for the bridge. Securing funding from the Georgia DOT in a Transportation Enhancement Grant was a vital element in financing the project. Once construction got underway, there were weekly progress meetings with the Engineer, Contractor, MARTA, City Staff, and the Consultant. This kept the completed project in the forefront of all of those involved and resulted in the project finishing ahead of schedule just 6 months from Ground Breaking.

4. Describe the financing of the project. Please include all funding sources and square foot costs where applicable.

The City of East Point receives annually Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funding from HUD via Fulton County, Georgia. We were able to combine and reallocate funding from several years to contribute toward the project. A breakdown of block grant dollars is as follows:

- FY1998 $160,000
- FY1999 $111,000
- FY2000 $179,000
- FY2001 $222,500
- FY2002 $150,000
- FY2003 $150,000

The City received a TEA Grant from the Georgia DOT for $356,000 toward the bridge project. MARTA waived flagman fees during the construction process which is equal to a $8500 contribution. The remainder of the budget was paid out of the City of East Point General Fund.

5. Is the project unique and/or does it address significant urban issues? Is the model adaptable to other urban settings?

The Pedestrian Bridge project is unique in its design being that 210’ is quite long for a pedestrian bridge. The bridge had to be raised at 3:45 am to comply with construction activity laws over active rail lines. The project addresses the urban issues of walkability, functionality and providing a focal point of our community’s revitalization and modernization efforts. There are many towns and cities that grew out of the Railroad expansion in America. Any City that has experienced a severed corridor where residential and commercial establishments exists, can consider a project of this sort. In 2000, our city adopted a Master Town Plan that promotes a live work environment for the Main Street district. The bridge project helps to support the goal of City government to increase pedestrian traffic downtown. We encourage other cities to evaluate their need for a pedestrian bridge.
ARCHITECT DESIGNER PERSPECTIVE

Please answer questions in space provided. Applicants should feel free to use photocopies of the application forms if needed. If possible, answers to all questions should be typed or written directly on the forms. If the forms are not used and answers are typed on a separate page, each answer must be preceded by the question to which it responds, and the length of each answer should be limited to the area provided on the original form.

This sheet is to be filled out by a design professional who worked as a consultant on the project, providing design, planning, or other services. Copies may be given to other professionals if desired.

Name: Thomas D. Gambino, PE
Title: President
Organization: Prime Engineering, Inc.
Telephone: 404-425-7102
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Signature: [Signature]

1. Describe the design concept of this project, including urban design considerations, choice of materials, scale, etc.

The main motivation for constructing the bridge hinged around safety and liability issues of pedestrians crossing active CSX and Norfolk Southern freight rail lines to access two downtown areas. The Metro Atlanta Rapid Transit Authority (MARTA) rail station and City Hall are located on the west side of the crossing, while a high school and several office buildings sit on the east side. The crossing is heavily trafficked in the mornings and afternoons by students that use MARTA to get to school. Commercial and government office developments on both sides of the tracks generate additional foot traffic throughout the course of a day. To accommodate safe and efficient crossing of 6 sets of active rail lines (2 MARTA, 1 CSX, and 3 Norfolk Southern), and in compliance with railroad permitting requirements, a 210 foot long free-span steel bridge was installed between two steel and masonry bridge towers. Wheelchair accessible elevators were equipped in both towers ensuring a completely ADA compliant crossing.

To address conformity with the spirit of the Community Development Block Grant funding, efforts were taken to tie the overall “envisioned” look that City had for the downtown area into the bridge design. This entailed creative material selection and adoption of architectural features that would convey an “old town” feel, and reflect the City’s history as a rail town. Prime conceived the appearance of the steel and masonry towers rising at each end of the bridge with distinctive “peaked roof” features to help define the town’s center. The red brick tower facades are consistent with the ongoing downtown revitalization efforts and impart a sense of tradition and renewal.

In compliance with the City’s architectural overlay and urban revitalization efforts, red brick proved to be expensive. Research was performed into alternative materials that would convey the same “look” while being more aligned with the project budget. In the end, red brick colored concrete masonry units (CMUs) were selected which were affordable and carried the same attractive appearance as red brick.

2. Describe the most important social and programmatic functions of the design.

Community safety and liability issues were primary concerns that bridge project sought to address. The new bridge is completely ADA compliant. Each tower is equipped with a wheelchair accessible elevator and allows easy crossing for physically challenged citizens.

The bridge also gives cause to celebrate the revitalization of the community and recognize those committed to the East Point Community. In April 2002, the bridge was dedicated as the James L. Jackson Community Bridge. A long-standing pillar of the East Point community, Mr. Jackson was instrumental in bringing CDBG funding to the City of East Point in the early ‘80’s. Funded largely in part by a CDBG grant, the bridge is a direct result of his several years of efforts and commitment to community development.

Project approach engaged the buy-in and support of additional parties including State and Regional agencies, and the media. The bridge project was highlighted on two evening broadcasts of the local CBS news affiliate. Positive bridge publicity helped boost community pride and gained the attention of the Georgia Regional Transit Authority (GRTA). GRTA has placed East Point and the site of the bridge as prime candidate for location of the north terminus of the proposed Macon-Griffin-Atlanta commuter rail line. The prospect of being home to a commuter rail station is generating great enthusiasm among City officials and citizens. Great promise is held for the future economic development linked to the influx of commuter traffic.
ARCHITECT DESIGNER PERSPECTIVE (CONT'D)

3. Describe the major challenges of designing this project and any design trade-offs or compromises required to complete the project.

Funding proved to be extremely complex. A large portion of the project cost was funded by a Community Development Block Grant (CDBG). The federal grant required specific performance criteria and deadline compliance. Project performance deadlines resulted in an expedited delivery schedule which prevented time for organizing a greater number of public meetings to gain feedback from the community during the design phase. Although the bridge is serving its purpose effectively, greater involvement of the public could have generated additional features that could have served the East Point Public better and generated an even greater sense of community pride.

Technical / Design / Construction Phasing: Due to various right-of-way issues with MARTA, DOT, CSX and Norfolk-Southern rail lines, project sites for both towers were in extremely small spaces and entailed precision in site planning with low error tolerances. The Main Street Tower is positioned within 1-inch to a MARTA concrete retaining wall. Careful engineering calculations and activity coordination with MARTA engineers had to be performed to ensure that this wall's integrity was not compromised. Furthermore, considerable efforts were taken to minimize impact on MARTA train operations. Prime assisted the contractor, Archer Western, in formulating a single lift swing and placement method to install the bridge. This minimized impact on rail operations.

Permitting: The tight deadlines posed by funding agencies, combined with right-of-way issues with MARTA, DOT, CSX and Norfolk-Southern rail lines entailed an extremely challenging permitting process. To alleviate normal review periods of permitting agencies, a hands-on partnering approach was needed to “walk” design submittals through approval. Early contact with individuals reviewing permitting submittals was sought to ensure preparation of comprehensive drawings and documents that addressed reviewer expectations. This greatly expedited standard review and revision routines although, one unfortunate issue of consequence resulted involving the need to relocate Norfolk Southern Rail Road’s signal bridge. Cost associated with this compliance issue resulted in an additional $125,000 to project cost.

Bridge Aesthetics: The architectural concept and final appearance went through various iterations. City officials were all eager for their input to be incorporated into the plans. With a short delivery period, consensus building and keeping in schedule required considerable tact and a collaborative spirit. Collaboration was fostered by engaging City Council in the project throughout its duration. Schematics of each design phase were presented and explained to City Council and their input and suggestions were regularly solicited.

4. Describe the way in which the project relates to its urban context.

In addition to providing for public safety from the hazards of crossing active rail lines, the bridge improves and promotes pedestrian access in and around the downtown area. Because of its central location, bridge design involved conscious efforts to comply with the City’s ongoing downtown revitalization efforts. Citizens can enjoy a pedestrian-friendly environment that is aesthetically pleasing and rich in history.

Furthermore, the bridge is located at the site of a road that was demolished for the construction of MARTA lines. This road once linked two vital areas of East Point’s downtown district. Renovation efforts have been underway to convert two historic buildings on the east side of the tracks for office and loft spaces. Known as the Buggyworks and Wagonworks, these hundred-year-old buildings were experiencing low tenant draw due to accessibility issues to the MARTA rail station and the commercial sector on Main Street. The bridge re-connects a severed community. Residents now have easy access to downtown and the MARTA station and Buggyworks / Wagonworks commercial and residential loft developments hold higher appeal and will attract desirable tenants. Downtown foot traffic will be stimulated as will the need for additional multi-use urban development projects for retail, commercial and residential spaces. Quality of life in downtown district is anticipated to rise.

5. Describe the strengths and weaknesses of the project’s design and architecture.

Strengths:

- Project design aesthetically blends with downtown architectural overlay and serves as a prominent feature for the downtown district.
- The new bridge is completely ADA compliant. Each bridge tower is equipped with wheelchair accessible elevators to accommodate physically challenged citizens.
- Utilization of pre-fabricated steel bridge met project challenges including:
  - the 210-foot long span requirement.
  - clearance and right-of-way issues.
  - stringent project schedule requirements.
  - installation that would minimize interruption of rail service.

Weaknesses:

- Budget constraints prevented the bridge from being entirely sealed from the elements.
PROFESSIONAL CONSULTANT PERSPECTIVE

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This sheet is to be filled out by a professional who worked as a consultant on the project, providing design, planning, legal, or other services. Copies may be given to other professionals if desired.

Name: Thomas D. Gambino, PE  Title: President
Organization: Prime Engineering, Inc.  Telephone: 404-425-7102
Address: 1888 Emery Street, NW; Suite 300  City/State/Zip: Atlanta, GA 30318
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1. What role did you or your organization play in the development of this project?

Prime Engineering served as the prime consultant for overall program development, project management, engineering, permitting, and construction administration activities. Project was delivered via a traditional design-bid-build approach, however, Prime acted as the Owner's agent and assumed responsibility for all coordination activities impacting bridge design, permitting, construction, and post-construction activities. Prime Engineering entered the scene in November 2000 and orchestrated an aggressive work plan that allowed the bridge to be designed in 30 days and constructed and completed over a 9 month period.

Prime lead the design for the construction of the two bridge towers. Site design involved overcoming the challenges of small site areas, minimal work areas, and limited site access. Prime conceived the architectural design for the towers to consist of steel and masonry towers with distinctive "peaked roof" features that help define the town's center and reflect the City's history as a rail town. In addition to coordinating the work of two additional design consultants, Prime spearheaded the complicated process of securing all necessary permits. Prime also closely interfaced with the manufacturers of the 210 foot prefabricated bridge spanning the two towers. Prime coordinated the transport, delivery and final assembly of the bridge for installation.

2. From your perspective, how was the project intended to benefit the urban environment?

The bridge intended to benefit the urban environment by ensuring community safety and stimulating pedestrian activity. The main motivation for constructing the bridge hinged around safety and liability issues of pedestrians crossing active CSX and Norfolk Southern freight rail lines to access two downtown areas. The Metro Atlanta Rapid Transit Authority (MARTA) rail station and City Hall are located on the west side of the crossing, while a high school and several office buildings sit on the east side. The crossing is heavily trafficked in the mornings and afternoons by students that use MARTA to get to school. Commercial and government office developments on both sides of the tracks generate additional foot traffic throughout the course of a day. Prior to the new bridge, traversing the tracks was virtually impossible for physically handicapped individuals in wheelchairs. The new bridge accommodates safe and efficient crossing of rail road tracks and, with wheelchair accessible elevators equipped in both towers, is completely ADA compliant.

The bridge improves and promotes pedestrian access in and around the downtown area. Because of its central location, bridge design involved conscious efforts to comply with the City's ongoing downtown revitalization efforts. Architectural features were adopted to impart a sense of tradition and renewal. Because the bridge allows easier access to MARTA and two downtown areas, recent residential and commercial loft developments hold higher appeal and will attract desirable tenants. Downtown foot traffic will be stimulated as will the need for additional multi-use urban development projects for retail, commercial and residential spaces.

3. Describe the project's impact on its community. Please be as specific as possible.

In addition to enhancing community safety, the new downtown pedestrian bridge is located at the site of a road that was demolished for the construction of MARTA lines. This road once linked two vital areas of East Point's downtown district. Renovation efforts have been underway to convert two historic buildings on the west side of the tracks for office and loft spaces (Buggyworks and Wagonworks). The bridge re-connects a severed community.

In April 2002, the bridge was dedicated as the James L. Jackson Community Bridge. A long-standing pillar of the East Point community, Mr. Jackson was instrumental in bringing CDBG funding to the City of East Point in the early '80's. Funded largely in part by a CDBG grant, the bridge is a direct result of his several years of efforts and commitment to community development. Success of the bridge project has also caught the attention of Georgia Regional Transit Authority (GRTA), who is now seriously considering East Point to be the northern terminus for the proposed Macon-Griffin-Atlanta Commuter Rail Line.
4. What trade-offs and compromises were required during the development of the project? How did your organization participate in making them?

Because of the high visibility the bridge project held for the community, trade-offs and compromises were an integral part of the bridge’s development.

**Bridge Aesthetics:** The architectural concept and final appearance went through various iterations. City officials were all eager for their input to be incorporated into the plans. With a short delivery period, consensus building and keeping in schedule required considerable tact and a collaborative spirit. Collaboration was fostered by engaging City Council in the project throughout its duration. Schematics of each design phase were presented and explained to City Council and their input and suggestions were regularly solicited.

**Budget Constraints:** Upon City approval on the architectural concept for the bridge, challenges arose over costs involved with making the concept a reality. In compliance with the City’s architectural overlay and urban revitalization efforts, red brick was highly desirable. However, brick proved to be expensive. Prime performed some research into alternative materials that would convey the same “look” while be more aligned with the project budget. In the end, red brick colored concrete masonry units (CMUs) were selected which were affordable and carried the same attractive appearance as red brick.

5. How might this project be instructive to others in your profession?

This project demonstrates what can be achieved when the consultant/client relationship is strong. By engaging in a strong partnering role for this project by not only leading design and coordinating construction, but through establishing new and effective avenues of communication between the City of East Point and transit organizations impacted by the project, all parties benefited. These included Georgia Regional Transit Authority (GRTA), Metro Atlanta Rapid Transit Authority (MARTA), CSX Rail Road and Norfolk Southern Rail Road. The City’s new partnerships with these entities will be invaluable for future downtown projects.

Because of the bridge, East Point is the front-runner for the northern terminus of the proposed Macon-Griffin-Atlanta Commuter Rail.

The success of this project advances the importance for the engineering profession to take more staked interests in being part of client solutions as opposed to a means to reaching solutions. Stepping away from a consulting role – and more towards partnering role – enhances credibility of engineers to those outside of industry. Greater visibility of value-added benefits elevates engineering above the perception of being another line item on a project budget. With this improved regard for engineering, less focus will be paid to engineering cost and more on overall quality and value services achieved. Greater acceptance and pursuit of value will discourage the practice of cost cutting and quality undermining. Value practices will encourage more innovation. Greater innovation leads to greater engineering advances and the implementation of newer and better solutions to today’s challenges.

6. What do you consider to be the most and least successful aspects of this project?

**Most Successful:** Within the expedited deliverable period, and ensuring compliance with federal grant requirements, the pedestrian bridge opened to the public according to schedule in December 2001.

Throughout the project, Prime’s partnership approach engaged the buy-in and support of additional parties including State and Regional agencies, and the media. The bridge project was highlighted on two evening broadcast of the local CBS news affiliate. Positive bridge publicity helped gain the attention of GRTA and has placed East Point and the site of the bridge as prime candidate for location of the north terminus of the proposed Macon-Griffin-Atlanta commuter rail line. The prospect of being home to a commuter rail station is generating great enthusiasm among City officials and citizens. Great promise is held for the future economic development linked to the influx of commuter traffic.

**Least Successful:** Because of the expedited project schedule, the design team was not able to conduct as many public meeting and gain feedback and input from the public as it normally would have done. From past experience, gaining input from the public/end-users is invaluable to ensuring project success. Although the bridge is serving its purpose effectively, greater involvement of the public could have generated additional features that could have served the East Point Public better and generated a greater sense of community pride.
DEVELOPER PERSPECTIVE

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This sheet is to be filled out by the person who took primary responsibility for the project financing or is a representative of the group which did.

Name: Erica Rocker
Title: Main Street/CDBG Coordinator
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1. What role did you or your organization play in the development of this project? Describe the Scope of involvement.

This project was a City driven project. Faced with stock piles of unused HUD funds and the need to commit the funds to the best use, the City began to explore the eligible activities to be funded with CDBG funds. The Senior Planner proposed a pedestrian bridge to reconnect the east and west sides of downtown. The City had to take initiative to sell the project to the County for approval. Countless meetings and design review sessions were conducted as the City aggressively sought to make the proposal a reality.

The City remained in the lead position throughout the project. The City procured the Engineering firm to oversee Project Management. The City reviewed change orders that we submitted for approval, the City selected the Contractor, the City controlled the project budget. This was OUR project.

2. What trade-offs or compromises were required during the development of the project?

During one of the design review meetings with the Norfolk Southern Railroad, the City was informed that the proposed bridge would impede the view of the NFS signal bridge. The railroad would not sign an agreement until the City agreed to fund the relocation of a new signal bridge. This was a $175,000 increase in the project budget. The choices were clear—either squash the project or find a way to meet the funding challenge. The City chose to keep pressing forward with the project rather than to see the community disappointed.

3. How was the project financed? What if any, innovative means of financing were used?

The project was financed with $972,000 of Community Development Block Grant Funds; $356,000 GDOT funds, MARTA and the City of East Point.

The City creatively combined multi-year allotments of CDBG funds to offset construction costs. Also the City entered into a Pre-Award Agreement with Fulton County to use its 2002 and 2003 CDBG funding to allocate toward the Bridge.
4. How did the economic impacts of this project on the community compare with or differ from other projects you have been involved in?

The economic impact on the community from the Bridge project became clearly visible even during the construction phase. Developers who were ‘considering’ investing in downtown East Point, began to ‘seal the deal’ and spend substantial dollar amounts on renovating historic buildings in our Downtown. These rather instantaneous results were not seen when the City constructed a Streetscape Project at one of its gateways. Again, it is apparent that functionality, and use, clearly note the value of urban development projects.

5. What about this project would be instructive to other developers?

The most advice we as a City could offer to other developers endeavoring to do a project of this magnitude would be to obtain in depth cost estimates before you come to the design table. The infrastructure is very old in the area of the City where our project is located. Several change orders, resulting in more costs were made due to challenges working in an area where it is not as easy to determine ‘what lies beneath’ the excavation site.

6. What do you consider to be the most and least successful aspects of this project?

The Most successful aspects of this project:

- Sustainable Development in our downtown
- Construction schedule remained on time and completed ahead of predicted date
- The growth and interest in our City since constructing the Bridge

The Least successful aspects of this project:

- Accelerated bid schedule resulting in unforeseen change orders and cost increases.
- Not enough staff to deal with the demands of correspondence between the Federal entities involved. (DOT, HUD, Railroads, Rapid Transit Authority)
PUBLIC AGENCY PERSPECTIVE

Name: Steve R. Cover, AICP  
Title: Director, Environment and Community Dev.  
Organization: Fulton County, Georgia  
Telephone: (404) 730-8079  
Address: 141 Pryor Street, Suite 5001  
City/Stat/Zip: Atlanta, Ga 30303

Fulton County provided Federal Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) dollars as the primary funding source for this project. Requirements related to the use of CDBG funding were imposed on the entire project. These requirements included:

- Specific procurement and contracting procedures for Architecture and Engineering services and construction work;
- Compliance with Federal Labor Standards requirements;
- HUD required environmental assessment;
- Public participation as it related to Fulton County’s Consolidated Plan requirements; and
- Expenditure deadlines for CDBG funding.

2. How was this project intended to benefit your city? What trade-offs and compromises were required to implement the project? How did your agency participate in making them?

The project met the CDBG Program National Objective of serving low- and moderate-income residents by providing safe access from a low- and moderate-income neighborhood to Downtown services and public transportation. The project also provided handicap accessibility. Prior to development, citizens had to access the Downtown area by walking over railroad tracks. There were no signals or safety gates, the path was uneven and a single stairway led to street access on the west side of the tracks.

Because the cost of the project exceeded initial estimates, Fulton County worked with the City of East Point to restructure CDBG funding allocated to the project. The restructuring included the following:

- Reallocating funds from other City CDBG activities to the Pedestrian Bridge Project;
- Extending the CDBG fund expenditure deadlines to accommodate initial design delays and the construction schedule; and
- Entering into Pre-Award Agreements for fiscal year 2002 and 2003 CDBG funding allowing the City to incur costs which will later be repaid with future year CDBG allocations.
3. Describe the project’s impact on your community. Please be as specific as possible.

The Pedestrian Bridge has very successfully connected a low- and moderate-income neighborhood, which had essentially been cut-off by the installation of public transportation (MARTA) tracks and commercial railroad tracks, with Downtown services and public transportation. The safe, handicap accessibility over the tracks provided by the Pedestrian Bridge is a tremendous benefit to the residents and was the primary goal of the CDBG investment by the County.

In addition, however, the Pedestrian Bridge is viewed as an important economic development project. The Bridge has spurred residential and commercial development on both the Downtown and neighborhood sides of the bridge improving the vitality of the City.

4. Did this project result in new models of public/private partnerships? Are there aspects of this project that would be instructive to agencies like yours in other cities?

The fruition of this project is the result of several agencies, often with conflicting needs, working together to develop a project to address far reaching community needs. The multiple effects that this project has produced from safe access across railroad tracks to economic development to improving the overall vitality of the City is an important model. It represents the intricate interplay among the various components of a city; housing, transportation, public services and economic development. It is an important example of how a single project can have multiple effects, some that initially may not be intended. While the Pedestrian Bridge produced very positive multiple effects, cities need to carefully assess all possible effects a project may have on the community to avoid potentially negative impacts.

5. What do you consider to be the most and least successful aspects of this project?

The Pedestrian Bridge required the involvement of several different agencies, each with specific requirements related to development and project implementation. The coordination and ultimate cooperation of so many different agencies should be considered among the most successful aspects of the project. The City of East Point did an exemplary job in managing the project and was able to successfully meet the complex array of requirements to the satisfaction of all agencies involved.

In turn, the involvement of so many different agencies was probably the most difficult and time consuming aspect of the Pedestrian Bridge Project. Agency specific requirements and conflicting needs between agencies resulted in several delays during project development and required a high level of detailed and consistent project management by the City. Not all municipalities of similar size have the capacity for this type of construction management. For other municipalities undertaking similar projects, the assessment of potential construction management needs is critical in the early phases of project development. Where internal capacity is limited, a professional construction manager should be retained.
Before: View of crossing to downtown area & Main Street
Before: View of crossing to downtown area & Main Street
Downtown Pedestrian Bridge  
East Point, GA  

Before: View of crossing to Cleveland Ave over CSX & Norfolk Southern rail lines
Before: Tri-City High School students crossing tracks to Downtown area / MARTA station
Downtown Pedestrian Bridge
East Point, GA

Bridge Rendering

Photo 4
Train passing under completed bridge
Downtown Pedestrian Bridge
East Point, GA

Passing through completed bridge
Project Description

Prime Engineering, Inc. furnished full-service engineering and project management for the design and construction of the East Point’s new pedestrian bridge linking the City’s Main Street, and Cleveland Avenue. The bridge crosses over rail tracks running parallel to Main Street and was funded in part by a Community Development Block Grant (CDBG). The bridge construction had been a City priority to accommodate the safety of community pedestrians including students from a nearby high school and MARTA riders that had to walk across active train tracks to access downtown East Point and MARTA’s East Point Station.

This 210 foot long bridge spans over 2 MARTA rail lines and 4 active freight rail lines (1 CSX and 3 Norfolk Southern). The process of getting the bridge built met many challenges including collaboration with entities including MARTA, Georgia DOT, and CSX, Norfolk Southern Railroads, and more. In addition, creative material selection were required to comply with City’s architectural guidelines and stay within project budget.

Prime Engineering entered the scene in November 2000 and orchestrated an aggressive work plan entailing collaborative initiatives from additional consultants. Together, these firms executed a comprehensive work plan that enabled the bridge to be designed in 30 days and constructed and completed over a 9 month period.

Project Features

- 210-foot 8-foot wide prefabricated steel bridge
- 25 foot vertical clearance over tracks
- Compliant with City’s Architectural Overlay
- ADA compliant elevators in each tower
- Technical challenges of site area constraints
- Complex permitting process
- Challenging schedule & contracting procedures to comply with CDBG funding requirements
City of East Point employees, from left, Helene Laseltine, Katherine Bragdon and Erica Rocker, look over preliminary blueprints of the pedestrian bridge.

East Point preparing to build pedestrian bridge

By Bill Baldowski
Neighborhood News Writer

East Point has moved one step closer to construction of the long-awaited pedestrian bridge to connect Main Street and the Buggyworks area.

At its meeting on Monday, Feb. 5, the council unanimously approved Mayor Patsy Jo Hilliard's execution of two memorandums of understanding, both concerning proposed projects along Main Street.

The first memorandum was the Georgia DOT's award of $476,000 in funding for the proposed pedestrian bridge. The second involved East Point receiving $500,000 for construction of improvements to Main Street later this year.

According to East Point City Manager Michael Miller, the memorandum on the pedestrian bridge is required as it confirms the city's understanding of its agreement to comply with program requirements, including preliminary engineering, environmental and construction supervision services, funding cost overruns and property acquisition in accordance with federal guidelines.

Chuck Taylor, East Point's zoning administrator, said, with approval of this council item, the next step for the city is to open the project up for bids. Once all bids are received, the council will review them and make their selection of the construction company for the work.

This bid and selection process could take about two months, Taylor said. "We are looking for actual construction to begin on the bridge in April and take from six to nine months to complete," he said.

East Point Councilman Russell Widener stated the $476,000 amount quoted from the Georgia DOT is an estimated cost of the project.

Councilmember Brian Twaddell said additional funding sources were available for the bridge project through other block grant sources.

The second memorandum of understanding involved the Main Street Improvement Project.

Miller told council members College Park and East Point were jointly involved in the preliminary engineering and design for the Main Street Scenic Byway Corridor Improvement Project.

Last month, the Georgia DOT announced both south Fulton cities were recipients of $500,000 in funding for these improvements on Main Street. The funds will be available Oct. 1.

The council also unanimously approved a new cab company to operate in East Point, although its headquarters will remain in College Park.

According to Miller, the Five Star Cab Co. will run five taxicabs in the city but will be based in College Park where its owner, Victor Harrison, also operates Ugly Duckling Taxi and Limousine Shuttle Service.

The city manager said the police department had conducted a background check on the company and recommended approval of the company's application.

SCHOOL NEWS

'Love Our School' activities planned

On Valentine's Day, Harriet Tubman Elementary School in College Park will hold its 'Love Our School' celebration to celebrate the school's academic and community spirit.
The City of East Point, Georgia
Prime Engineering, Incorporated
Archer Western Contractors

Pedestrian Bridge Ground Breaking Ceremony - April 30, 2001

The City of East Point, Georgia
Prime Engineering, Incorporated

Pedestrian Bridge Ground Breaking
PLEASE JOIN US FOR THE
GRAND OPENING
OF THE
EAST POINT PEDESTRIAN BRIDGE

DECEMBER 18, 2001
10:30 A.M.
At the Bridge Site - 1569 Cleveland Avenue
(on the Buggyworks Building side)

For more information contact:
The Community Services Department
Erica Rocker (404) 209-5143
Katherine Bragdon (404) 765-1030

The city of EAST POINT
Georgia
East Point Pedestrian Bridge
Grand Opening Celebration
December 18, 2001
10:30AM

Programme

Welcome/Occasion
Mayor Patsy Jo Hilliard

Paul Muldawer, Architect
Muldawer and Associates

Thomas Gambino, President
Prime Engineering, Inc.

David Casey, Senior Project Manager
Archer Western Contractors, LTD

Steven Cover, Director
Fulton County Department of Environment & Community Development

Closing Remarks/Recognition
Erica Rocker, CDBG Coordinator
Community Services Department

"The City of East Point wishes to recognize and acknowledge your contribution in our Pedestrian Bridge Project becoming a reality. We could not have done it without you. May our success on this venture mark the commencement of continued growth and a commitment to quality development throughout this City. Please share in our excitement as we cross over into new beginnings."

Special Thanks to:
HUD, DOT, Fulton County Government, MARTA, Norfolk Southern Railway, CSX Railroad, Williams Russell and Johnson, Tri-Cities High School, Jackson Spaulding Communications, East Point Police Department, City of East Point Staff, East Point Business Community, the citizens of East Point

Refreshments provided by the Braden-Fellman Group
East Point Peninsula Bridge
Grand Opening Celebration
December 18, 2001
10:30 AM

Program

Welcome Remarks
Mayor Patsy Jo Hilliard

Penalty／nulae／Architect
Mulhauen and Associates

Tommy Campbell, President
Prime Engineering, Inc.

David Cass, Senior Project Manager
Archist Western Contractors, LTD

Steven Cerver, Director
Fulton County Department of Environment & Community Development

Closing Remarks

Eva Books, CDB Coordinator
Community Services Department

"The City of East Point wishes to recognize and acknowledge your contribution in our Peninsula Bridge Project Paving a better road. We commend our forces to continue our work. Our success is only the result of the commitment of continuous growth and a commitment to develop a safe and pedestrian friendly infrastructure. Please make your contribution as we cross our new beginning."

Special Thanks to

HUD, DOT, Fulton County Government, MARTA, Atlanta Botanical Gardens, Railroad, Hillwood Russell and Foundation, TVC University, Jackson Elementary, Fulton County Police Department, and the Citizens of East Point.

Rental Penalties Provided by the Brown-Fallan Group
2001

James L. Jackson Community Bridge
City of East Point.

James L. Jackson

Native son, loving husband, devoted father, tireless dedication to the City of East Point.

Dreams are not
Fulfilled by dreamers.
Dreams are fulfilled
By doers.

Dave Myers

Dedicated: April 21, 2002
You are cordially invited to join the
City of East Point
Mayor and City Council in the
Dedication Ceremony of the
"James L. Jackson Community Bridge"
Being named and dedicated on
Sunday, April 21, 2002
3:00 o'clock p.m.
At the East Point Pedestrian Bridge Site
On the Grounds in front of the Buggy Works
1569 Cleveland Ave.
East Point, Georgia

For Information contact: Erica Rocker 404-209-5144