



CHATHAM URBAN TRANSPORTATION STUDY

TECHNICAL COORDINATING COMMITTEE MEETING SUMMARY

MPC Conference Room
110 East State Street

August 19, 2004

3:00 P.M.

Members Present:

Allan Black, P.E.
John Broderick
Tom Cannon
Phillip Claxton
MaRonde Lumkin-Lotson
Helen McCracken
Keith Melton
Teresa Scott
Peter Shonka, P. E.
Thomas L. Thomson, P.E., AICP
Mike Weiner, P.E.
Randy Weitman, P.E.
Mark Wilkes, P.E., AICP

Representing

Chatham County Engineering
CAT
City of Garden City
City of Port Wentworth
Town of Thunderbolt
Vice Chair, CAC
GDOT - Atlanta
GDOT – Jesup
City of Savannah, City Engineer
Executive Director MPC, Chair
City of Savannah
Georgia Ports Authority
MPC

Others Present:

Leo Beckmann
LeRoy Crosby
Andy Edwards
Zoe Hardenbrook
Chris Simons
Wykoda Wang

Representing

GPA, Manager of Legislative Affairs
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
FHWA
GDOT – Jesup
PBS&J
MPC

I. Approval of Agenda

Mr. Thomson called the August 19, 2004 meeting of the Technical Coordinating Committee to order. Those present were asked to introduce themselves and state the agency they represented.

Hearing no comments, Mr. Thomson stated that the agenda would stand approved as presented.

II. Action Items

A. Approval of Minutes – June 17, 2004 CUTS TCC Meeting Minutes

Mr. Black **moved** to approve the minutes. Mr. Weiner seconded the motion.

TCC Action: **The motion carried with none opposed.** The motion was to approve the minutes of the June 17, 2004 meeting. Voting were Mr. Black, Mr. Broderick, Mr. Cannon, Mr. Melton, Ms. Scott, Mr. Weiner, Mr. Weitman, Mr. Wilkes, Ms. McCracken, and Mr. Shonka.

B. Review of Draft 2030 Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP)

Mr. Thomson stated that the goal for this meeting is to decide which projects need to be moved in or out of the LRTP. The cost estimates need to add up to the amount of money that is projected to be available. It is also important the group is comfortable with the projects in order to speak with one voice about the plan.

Mr. Wilkes provided an overview of the LRTP and the elements of the plan. The distribution of funds was also highlighted. In an attempt to prioritize the plan, three tiers were proposed. Those tiers are: Priority I, reflecting in process projects, or those projects that have received some form of funding; Priority 1a, reflects fully funded projects with PE, right-of-way, and construction; Priority 1b, which is PE and right-of-way only and Priority 1c which is PE only; Priority 2 are mid-term projects; and, Priority 3 are long-term projects.

Mr. Thomson stated that the proposal for an improvement at U. S. Highway 80 at Johnny Mercer is still in the conceptual stage.

Mr. Melton added that this project is on hold because the traffic has not met the requirement of DOT standards for a fly-over bridge. Since the CMS, it may be beneficial to try the signalization approach.

Ms. Scott stated that she would review the cost estimates from her report and give that information to Mr. Wilkes for a cross-check.

Mr. Thomson stated that he is concerned about whether the scopes match what they should.

Ms. Scott replied that most of her estimates are updated.

Mr. Melton stated that Mr. Simons obtained his numbers from elsewhere in GDOT. There are five or six that we need to talk about.

Mr. Simons stated that he started with TIP '04 numbers. GDOT was in the midst of doing '05 and cost estimates changed.

Mr. Cannon, City of Garden City, stated that there is an area between Brampton Road, between 21 and 25, and we are talking literally right at $\frac{3}{4}$ of a mile but that single road gets several thousand trucks a year. That is at the south end of the oldest residential area in Garden City. There is a plan to have another entrance into the ports that would take Brampton Road traffic out. That project is essential. The project is to finish the entrance way that would reroute the traffic that is going on Brampton Road right now.

Mr. Wilkes stated that this is a Priority One project.

Mr. Cannon added that there are no other hot button projects for Garden City.

Mr. Claxton, Town of Port Wentworth, stated that the main project that has not been talked about regularly is to get Grange Road on the National Highway System.

Ms. Scott added that the road had been approved as part of the National Highway System.

Mr. Weiner, City of Savannah, would like to have the widening of Gwinnett Street and LaRoche Avenue from Skidaway Road to the south city limits included.

Mr. Wilkes stated that the Gwinnett Street project is in the TIP for local funding.

Mr. Melton suggested that the LaRoche project be removed from the Long Range Plan list because it would not be eligible for federal funding. The same could be said of the Skidaway Road project. GDOT has some problems with federal funding of those two projects. They both have a low level of service.

Ms. Lotson, Town of Thunderbolt, stated that the intersection at U. S. Highway 80 and River Drive is a five point intersection with 4 points managed by a signal. There have been numerous accidents there. Public outcry asks for something to be done. GDOT has done a study of that intersection about two years ago although the outcome of that study is not known. Also U. S. Highway 80 and Whatley Avenue, if you are traveling east there is a left turn lane however there is no left turn signal.

Mr. Weitman, Georgia Ports Authority, stated that Brampton Road connector is a primary. Grange Road as well. Both projects were mentioned by neighboring community representatives earlier in the meeting.

Mr. Melton stated that when he learned of the shortfall and one of the projects that might be removed is the widening of Interstate 95 from Interstate 16 to the South Caroline state line. Is that project in or out?

Mr. Wilkes replied that it is not in the published draft. With recent information from Ms. Scott, the funding shortfall may be smaller.

Mr. Melton added that the three projects we wanted to be removed to make room for the 95 widening are the SR 307 Dean Forest extension to Veteran's Parkway, LaRoche and

Skidaway. Together this would equal about 50 million dollars of savings which would allow the I-95 widening to be put back into the plan.

Mr. Black disagreed with elimination of Skidaway Road.

Mr. Melton suggested that intersection improvements could be utilized on Skidaway Road in order to save some money. The Department feels as though this project needs to be reinvestigated.

Mr. Thomson asked if the scope of the project in the LRTP was changed initially to intersection improvements would the environmental document be sufficient to move forward with a lesser improvement.

Mr. Weiner provided history on the project.

Mr. Edwards stated that it would be good to focus on the needed project and look at the CMS travel demand model and prioritize things from that aspect.

Mr. Black stated that the Dean Forest Road project has been a hot topic because of development in that area.

Mr. Simons added that the travel demand model for Dean Forest Road does not indicate a four lane road.

Mr. Weitman stated that if an opportunity comes to fund the Grange Road project in addition to what we already have funded he wants to make certain that the project is in the plan.

Mr. Thomson stated that the Technical Committee would have to get a sense of what is agreed to in order to review the arithmetic and send out a revised sheet before the next meeting.

Mr. Black suggested that a subcommittee meeting may be necessary to resolve some of these matters prior to the next full TCC meeting.

Mr. Thomson stated that he is comfortable if this group wants to make a recommendation about a slightly higher assumption about the revenue from SPLOST and to specifically address that in the plan indicated that is a direction that the Policy people should go the next time or as SPLOST is continued as a direction from the MPO to the local government.

Mr. Broderick **moved** that the list of projects that people laid out here are the projects staff should be reevaluating. Staff will recalculate the revenues making a little higher assumption about SPLOST and staff also needs to look at some more detail about numbers to make sure that the plan is not getting too aggressive there and that staff would bring all that back to the next round of meetings. Mr. Black seconded the motion.

TCC Action: **The motion carried with none opposed.** The motion was that the list of projects that were laid out at this meeting are the projects staff should be reevaluating.

Staff will recalculate the revenues making a little higher assumption about SPLOST. Voting were Mr. Black, Mr. Broderick, Mr. Cannon, Mr. Claxton, Ms. Lotson, Ms. McCracken, Mr. Melton, Ms. Scott, Mr. Shonka, Mr. Weiner, Mr. Weitman, and Mr. Wilkes.

Mr. Thomson asked that any editorial comments or changes be submitted to staff prior to September 6, 2004 in order to be included in material for the next mailing.

C. Review of Draft FY 2005-2007 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)

Ms. Wang presented an overview of the draft TIP. This draft was published on August 11, 2004. The public review period has started.

Mr. Melton stated that the TIP is federally constrained in the past. If the group wants to add local funding project to it for illustrative purposes, there is no problem with that. There will be no construction or right-of-way funds assigned to the project.

Mr. Edwards stated that there is time to add a project information sheet to the plan.

Mr. Melton agreed that a full vetting of this from a Policy Committee perspective might be in order before the group starts adding project pages to the TIP.

Mr. Thomson stated that if the intent for a project is some day to use local money to develop a project that would some day have state or Federal money on it that should be a discussion where the project begins. This body should say which projects are in the first five years.

Ms. Wang stated that funding for local projects was not included because information was not provided.

Mr. Thomson asked if the TCC would put before the Policy Committee something like locally funded projects that the local government desires to eventually request state or federal participation that are scheduled and funded to be started within the three years of the TIP that should be included in the TIP and evaluated in terms of priority. It would not be solely a local government decision to have them show up in the TIP. The priorities would be vetted against other projects. The CAC and the Policy Committee would have a chance to comment and the people would know it is out there.

Mr. Melton stated that there should also be some GDOT departmental review of these projects. If in the case of some that we are turning down for federal funding we would respectfully request that they not be included in the TIP.

Mr. Edwards stated that including other projects would be beneficial to show what projects are being done to reach out.

Mr. Thomson stated that at the next meeting staff would be asking for a recommendation to the Policy Committee. Is there anything seriously wrong with the draft that should be

worked out before the next meeting? Any editorial comments or questions should be submitted to staff prior to September 6, 2004.

Hearing no major flaws, Mr. Thomson stated that staff would move forward.

III. Status Reports

A. Connecting Savannah

Mr. Thomson stated that a Kick-Off Conference is being planned for September 13, 2004 at the Coastal Georgia Center. The purpose is to invite people to participate and to start organizing break-out groups for parts of the process. Space would be available for informational booths. The goal of the study is to end up with project concepts that could be incorporated within the community to move toward more detailed engineering processes. At some point the project list coming out of this will come to the MPO for prioritization and funding. Money has been left in the plan for things that might come from this.

Mr. Thomson asked that a Technical Review group advise the process. Does this group as whole want to do that or form a subcommittee?

It was consensus to use a group of the whole and to utilize normal meeting times to facilitate travel.

IV. Information Reports

Due to the length of the meeting, Information Reports were dispensed with except for the following items.

A. City of Savannah

Mr. Weiner stated that General McIntosh would open on September 1, 2004.

B. Chatham County

Mr. Black stated that Stephenson Avenue would be opened on November 30, 2004

C. Federal Highway Administration

Mr. Edwards stated that a new Safety Conscious package will be available. This includes crash information and other data that would be beneficial for MPOs around the area.

V. Other Business

It was determined that there was no additional business to report.

VII. Adjournment

There being no further business, the August 19, 2004, meeting of the Technical Coordinating Committee was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Mark A. Wilkes, P.E., AICP
Director of Transportation Planning
Metropolitan Planning Commission