



CHATHAM URBAN TRANSPORTATION STUDY

**TECHNICAL COORDINATING COMMITTEE
MEETING SUMMARY**

**MPC Jerry Surrency Conference Room
110 East State Street**

October 19, 2006

3:00 P.M.

Voting Members

Representing

Present

Russ Abolt	Chatham County	
Allan R. Black, P.E.	Chatham County Engineering	x
Robert H. Bonner Jr.	LDH Corporation	
Michael Brown	City of Savannah	
Al Bungard, P.E.	Chatham County Engineering	
Robbie Byrd	City of Pooler	
Phillip Claxton	City of Port Wentworth	x
Scott Conner	CSX Transportation	
Anne de la Sierra	Fort Steward/Hunter Army Airfield	
Patrick S. Graham	Savannah Airport Commission	
Bill Hendricks	Norfolk Southern Railroad Industry	
Brian Leighton	CUTS Advisory Committee on Accessible Transportation	
Doug J. Marchand	Georgia Ports Authority	
Keith Melton	GDOT – Atlanta	x
Carl Palmer	Chatham Area Transit Authority	x
Russ Peterson	CUTS Citizens Advisory Committee	
Tricia Reynolds	Coastal Georgia RDC	
Diane Schleicher	City of Tybee Island	
Teresa Scott	GDOT – Jesup	
Peter Shonka, P. E.	City of Savannah Engineering	
Bob Thomson	Thunderbolt	
Thomas L. Thomson, P.E., AICP	Executive Director MPC, Chair	x
Hugh "Trip" Tollison	Savannah Area Chamber of Commerce	
Mike Weiner, P.E.	City of Savannah Engineering	x
Mark Wilkes, P.E., AICP	MPO	x

Others Present

Representing

Tommy Crochet	McGee Partners	x
Jo Hickson	Coastal Georgia Greenway	x
Latoya Jones	FHWA	x
Jane Love	MPO	x
Fonda Moss	Chatham Area Transit	x

Barbara Settzo	MPO	x
Wykoda Wang	MPO	x

I. Call to Order

The October 19, 2006 meeting of the Technical Coordinating Committee was called to order by Mr. Tom Thomson followed immediately by brief self-introduction of those attending. The first item was to approve the final agenda. Mr. Mark Wilkes requested that an item be added to section III, Status Reports. He will report on an item dealing with Context Sensitive Design federal highway case study.

II. Action Items

A. Approval of the August 17, 2006 CUTS TCC Meeting Minutes

Mr. Thomson called for the approval of the August 17, 2006 minutes. There being no corrections, it was moved and seconded to approve the minutes of the August 17, 2006 Technical Coordinating Committee as written.

TCC Action: the motion to approve the minutes of the August 17, 2006 Technical Coordinating Committee as written carried with none opposed.

B. Endorsement of Amendment to the MPO Bikeway Plan and the 2030 LRTP to include Phase One of the Back River Bridge Bikeway

Ms. Jo Hickson reviewed the amendment before the committee. She traced the route between Florida and North Carolina, particularly the portion that runs through Chatham County and the City of Savannah. The consultant, Sottile & Sottile will determine the route as it crosses Hutchinson Island, as part of their master plan for Hutchinson Island. At this time Ms. Hickson is asking the committee to consider the amendment to include a bikeway on the new Back River Bridge so that GDOT will include a bicycle facility in the design of the bridge structure and ramps to and from the Island. Ms. Hickson took questions from the committee. She affirmed that most of the route of the Coastal Georgia Greenway through Chatham County is off-road trail.

Ms. Wykoda Wang reported that the staff and Ms. Hickson did field work on Hutchinson Island, but the staff cannot determine the final route across Hutchinson Island at this time. MPO staff recommends the inclusion of the bikeway on the Back River Bridge, which is Phase One of the bikeway, in the MPO Bikeway Plan and the 2030 LRTP. The public involvement period for the amendment to these plans is currently open and will close on October 25, 2006. So far, no comments have been received.

Ms. Hickson reported to the committee that she had received an e-mail from Kari McCallister of South Carolina. Ms. McCallister had attended a meeting of the SCDOT when the subject of the bikeway on the bridge came up. The SCDOT did not seem to be aware of the possibility of a bikeway, so Mr. Hickson requested that this amendment include coordination with SCDOT. Mr. Melton mentioned that GDOT is participating at a 90% share

on this project. Because SCDOT is responsible for the other 10%, he felt sure the coordination would be there as the project progresses.

It was moved and seconded to endorse the amendment to the MPO Bikeway Plan and the 2030 LRTP to include Phase One of the Back River Bridge Bikeway.

TCC Action: motion to endorse the amendment to the MPO Bikeway and the 2030 LRTP to include Phase One of the Back River Bridge Bikeway carried with none opposed. Mr. Palmer abstained because he had arrived after most of the presentation was over.

III. Status Reports

A. SR 204/Abercorn Ext. traffic projections and PIOH

Mr. Tommy Crochet (present) and Mr. David Kasbo (via conference call) presented an update of the study to the committee. Mr. Crochet distributed a handout on traffic projections and shared with the committee some specific areas of concern. Mr. Kasbo mentioned the King George Blvd south of SR204 as an area of concern. The model appears to be under-estimating the projected number of trips in this area for 2030, compared to previous projections. Another area of concern is Middleground Rd. north of SR204. The projections suggest that Middleground will be used as a bypass around SR204. Mr. Mike Weiner pointed out that before construction on Middleground Rd. began traffic volume was 12,000 – 13,000. Mr. Kasbo felt that was more reasonable than the current volume of 6,000. Mr. Kasbo believes the other traffic volume numbers along the corridor appear to be reasonable and consistent.

Mr. Thomson asked if any assumptions about improvements were being made for the section west of US 17. Mr. Crochet said they assume no improvements will be made in this section since it is basically a freeway from Gateway Blvd. to US 17. He acknowledged that improvements are necessary at Gateway Blvd. and I-95, but there is no need to add basic freeway lanes in this segment. Mr. Wilkes also questioned the low traffic numbers west of US 17. A discussion of potential expansion for the area around US 17 and south of SR 204 followed. The conclusion was to refine the zone, manually adjust the numbers assuming a healthy growth rate for the area. Mr. Wilkes questioned the projected drop in volume around the Oglethorpe Mall. Mr. Kasbo explained that the model shows a negative growth rate on SR 204 north of Truman Pkwy because Truman Pkwy would take a lot of the traffic. Mr. Wilkes recommends assuming a zero growth rate or moderate increase, rather than a negative growth rate as the model does. Mr. Thomson questioned the absence of any traffic numbers displayed for White Bluff Rd. since White Bluff Rd. takes a lot of traffic. Mr. Crochet agreed to display the projections for White Bluff Rd on a revised map.

Ms. Wang questioned the existing volume of DeRenne Ave. east of Abercorn as being low. The CUTS model had shown 38,000 to 42,000 for a 6-lane version. A discussion of what is a “committed project” followed. The “No Build” scenario consists of existing road supply plus committed projects. Committed projects are construction projects in GDOT’s 6-year

work program. Thus, although the projections are for 2030, the model does not assume all projects in the 2030 Long Range Transportation Plan are committed.

Mr. Crochet mentioned that this is the type of display he will be using at the public open houses.

The next topic for discussion was the K&D factors. Mr. Crochet explained that the A.M. peak hour volume is calculated by splitting the average daily volume into directional distribution (D-factor) then multiplying by the K-factor, which is the percentage of daily volume occurring in the peak hour. During the morning peak hours along the corridor there is a K-factor of 6-7% currently observed. During the evening peak hours the currently observed K-factor is 7-9%. Mr. Kasbo asked for input from the committee on selecting K-factors to use in the analysis. It was agreed by all that these K-factors seemed low. Mr. Crochet explained that Savannah's K-factor should probably be somewhere between 9-12%. The low K-factor observed currently could indicate an extended peak period. Using the wrong K-factor can result in either under building or over building. Mr. Crochet would usually recommend at least a K-factor of 10%. They will talk with DOT and Federal Highway Administration because they don't want to over-project and over-design. Mr. Kasbo said they could do a sensitivity analysis to see what the impact would be for different K-factors.

Discussion of future expansion closer to I-95 included such topics as future business expansion, future residential expansion, and the prospect of reverse commuting. Mr. Melton asked if the model incorporates the recent revision of the Traffic Analysis Zones (TAZs), which GDOT had done due to expected growth in western Chatham. Mr. Kasbo said he would check on that. Mr. Thomson would like to see some numbers for the stretch between King George Blvd. and Veterans Pkwy.

Mr. Carl Palmer asked how plausible is the inclusion of an HOV lane in one of the alternatives under analysis. Mr. Crochet said that it takes a long stretch (in miles) of congested roadway in order to make the public change their driving habits and use HOV. It is his belief that Savannah is not there yet. Discussion continued regarding express bus, future of HOV lanes, carpooling, cost to the commuter, and future development.

Mr. Kasbo concluded with a chart showing growth rates along the corridor. Mr. Crochet wants to know from the TCC if these numbers make them comfortable; are they reasonable and realistic. They don't want to recommend overbuilding. After the clarification that the growth rate is based on the 2001 model counts, the TCC members had no further comments on the growth rate.

Mr. Crochet announced the first open house on November 14, 2006 at the Armstrong Center from 4:00-7:00 PM. This open house will be repeated at Southwest Middle School on November 15, 2006 from 4:30-7:30 PM. He showed the committee some of the materials he plans to use at the open houses. He explained the set-up of the room and shared proto-types of what he plans to share with the public. This will include boards of all the various proposals, alternatives, processes involved, comparisons, and statistics. There will be no formal presentation.

Ms. Jane Love raised a question on terminology in the materials. Is “TDM” being properly used in this case? Mr. Crochet will confirm, but he believes the National Environmental Protection Act (NEPA) specifies the use of “TDM”, rather than “TSM” as the term for intersection and signal timing improvements in the evaluation of alternatives.

B. Port Priority Projects

Mr. Thomson reported that he had attended the State of the Port address. In that presentation Mr. Doug Marchand included four priority projects for the Port. The four projects are:

- SR 307 Overpass over Norfolk Southern Track
- Brampton Road Connector
- Grange Road Improvement
- Study of Savannah Northwest Tollway (Jimmy DeLoach Pkwy Extension segment)

Mr. Thomson’s purpose for including this report to the committee is informational. Mr. Thomson questioned the last project since the Port’s drawing of it was different than the MPO’s, and he asked the committee if this was correct. Mr. Thomson asked all committee members to review the report for errors and notify him by Monday so they can correct it.

C. I-95 Lighting Improvements at I-16

Ms. Wang reported that at the August 23, 2006 meeting of the Policy Committee, Mr. Trip Tollison mentioned to GDOT District 5 representative, Teresa Scott, that the interchange of I-95 and I-16 needs better lighting. GDOT investigated and found that GDOT was ready to go with the lighting project in 2004 but were waiting to receive the signed lighting agreements from Chatham County, City of Savannah, and City of Pooler. The lighting agreement specifies that GDOT will cover 50% of the installation costs (not to exceed \$100,000) and the City of Savannah will pay for the other 50% of the installation costs. GDOT will cover the cost of the materials. The operations and maintenance costs of the project are to be shared – 50% by city of Pooler, 25% by city of Savannah, and 25% by Chatham County. As of now the agreement has not been signed by all parties. The question was raised as to why the City of Savannah is involved at all since it’s not within the city limits. Ms. Wang mentioned that the project had been a priority for the local government during preparations for the G8 Summit, but that has passed. GDOT will re-issue the contract.

D. Tybee Island requests to GDOT for pedestrian improvements on Hwy 80

Ms. Love reported on the current status on the correspondence between Tybee Island City Manager and GDOT. She recounted Ms. Schleicher’s request to GDOT:

- Install crosswalks and pedestrian signage on Hwy 80 at four intersections;
- Lower the speed limit from 35 to 25 mph in the business district;
- Install a flashing warning light at intersection of Hwy 80 and McKenzie St.; and
- Install raised crosswalk or speed tables at each of the Tybee Island crosswalks on Hwy 80.

GDOT had responded in a letter with the following:

- GDOT will install a crosswalk of the traditional type on Hwy 80 and 12th St.;
- GDOT will perform a signalization study for the intersection of Hwy 80 and Spanish Hammock;
- GDOT will perform a speed study along Hwy 80 in Tybee Island;
- GDOT does not want to use raised crosswalks on a road that is classified as a major arterial or perceived as a thoroughfare; and
- GDOT will notify the city manager's office if and when GDOT approves in-pavement LED crosswalks. GDOT would require a special encroachment permit if Tybee Island decides to implement this type of control.

GDOT had offered, in an e-mail, that Tybee Island could assume maintenance responsibility of the portion of Hwy 80 that is on the island, and thereby have the authority to implement whatever road treatments they prefer, as this segment would no longer be in the State system.

Ms. Schleicher had informed MPO staff on September 20 that GDOT had added the traditional crosswalk on Hwy 80 at 12th St.

Next week Ms. Schleicher will attend a GDOT bike/ped conference.

Mr. Melton mentioned that the Department of Community Affairs had recently completed a report for Tybee Island recommending a number of bicycle and pedestrian improvements, among other things. He also mentioned that Ms. Teresa Scott, of GDOT District 5, is gathering estimates of the cost for the City of Tybee Island, if they were to assume maintenance of Hwy 80 in the city limits.

Mr. Thomson reported that a status report on Benton Blvd was not ready in time for this meeting, but will be ready for the Policy Committee meeting next week.

E. Context Sensitive Design Case Study

Mr. Wilkes reported that he was contacted this week by the Federal Highway Administration. The Center for Transportation & Environment of North Carolina State University has been working on a publication for FHWA about context sensitive design and has requested to use the MPO transportation amenities plan as a case study example. Mr. Wilkes plans to respond in the affirmative. He added that FHWA is interested in the integration of the conservation corridors into the long range plan. He will also recommend that they document our handling of constrained corridors in the Congestion Management System (CMS). He will send them the CUTS logo for the publication.

IV. Agency Reports

A. Federal Highway Administration

Ms. Latoya Jones reported that the final edition of new regulations should be available January 19, 2007. There are significant changes from the proposed draft to the final edition. No speaker will be available for a state-wide MPO conference to preview the changes.

B. Federal Transit Administration

No report at this time.

C. Georgia Department of Transportation

Mr. Melton referred the committee to the handout entitled "GDOT/Chatham County Projects Status Report". He had nothing to add at this time.

D. Chatham County

Mr. Al Black reported that progress is being made on design of Truman Parkway Phase V. In regard to Bay Street widening, the draft EA was approved by FHWA in October 2006. Mr. Thomson indicated some dissatisfaction expressed by the city of Savannah over the Bay Street widening. Mr. Black commented that the City has been included in this project all along.

E. City of Savannah

Mr. Mike Weiner distributed a written status report which included the following:

Henry St. & Anderson St. Signal system – The last new signal at East Broad St. and Gwinnett St. was turned on August 25, 2006. The fiber optic communication cable has been installed and tested. Wheelchair ramp installations have been completed. Twenty of the 25 intersections have been re-striped. Project is 95% completed and completion is projected for November 30, 2006.

Gwinnett Curve Reconstruction –Monitoring wells were tested at 105 W. Gwinnett St and low levels of contamination were found, therefore, a release notification will need to be submitted to the GA EPD.

Gwinnett St. Widening – Consultant is working on the environmental study.

LaRoche Ave. Widening – Consultant was directed to develop other alternatives that would be less disruptive and minimize the loss the trees.

E Anderson St. Curve Reconstruction – Consultant developed four alternative concepts for review. A neighborhood meeting should be sometime next month.

DeRenne Ave./Hampstead Connector – Perspective consultants for the project will be requested to provide more detailed information on completed projects similar to DeRenne Ave. before a final selection is made.

F. Chatham Area Transit Authority

Mr. Carl Palmer reported that the Transportation Development Plan (TDP) was progressing. He reported that there are two sites under consideration for the Transit Center. One site is on Louisville Rd. and the other is the old Tybee Station site at President and MacIntosh. The board removed the Visitor Center site from consideration for numerous reasons. The Louisville Rd. site presents issues due to the presence of the railroad track and an overpass.

G. Georgia Ports Authority

No report at this time.

H. Savannah-Hilton Head International Airport

No report at this time.

I. CUTS Advisory Committee on Accessible Transportation

No report at this time.

J. CUTS Citizens Advisory Committee

No report at this time.

V. Other Business

There was no other business at this time.

VI. Adjournment

There being no other business, the Technical Coordinating Committee adjourned the October 19, 2006 meeting.

Respectfully submitted,

Mark Wilkes, P.E., AICP
Director of Transportation Planning