



CHATHAM URBAN TRANSPORTATION STUDY

**TECHNICAL COORDINATING COMMITTEE
MEETING SUMMARY**

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

October 18, 2007

3:00 P.M.

Voting Members

Representing

Present

Russ Abolt	Chatham County	
Brannyn Allen	City of Tybee Island	
Allan R. Black, P.E.	Chatham County Engineering	x
Robert H. Bonner Jr.	LDH Corporation	
Daniel Bostek	Norfolk Southern Railroad Industry	
Michael Brown	City of Savannah	
Al Bungard, P.E.	Chatham County Engineering	
Robbie Byrd	City of Pooler	
Phillip Claxton	City of Port Wentworth	
Scott Conner	CSX Transportation	
Anne de la Sierra	Fort Steward/Hunter Army Airfield	
Glenn Durrence	GDOT – District 5	
Patrick S. Graham	Savannah Airport Commission	
Brian Leighton	CUTS Advisory Committee on Accessible Transportation	
Doug J. Marchand	Georgia Ports Authority	
Kyle Mote	GDOT – Atlanta	x
Russ Peterson	CUTS Citizens Advisory Committee	
Tricia Reynolds	Coastal Georgia RDC	
Joe M. Rivers	Chatham Area Transit Authority	x
Peter Shonka, P. E.	City of Savannah Engineering	
Bob Thomson	Town of 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 Traffic Engineering	x
Mark Wilkes, P.E., AICP	MPO	x

Voting Member Alternates

Representing

Sean Brandon	City of Savannah	x
George Fidler	Savannah Airport Commission	x
Teresa Scott	GDOT – District 5	x

Others Present

Susan Broker
Lotoya Jones
Jane Love
Radney Simpson
Wykoda Wang

Representing

City of Savannah X
FHWA X
MPO X
GDOT- Planning X
MPO X

Call to Order

The October 18, 2007 meeting of the Technical Coordinating Committee was called to order by Chairman Tom Thomson.

I. Approval of Agenda

The agenda was accepted as presented.

II. Action Items

A. Approval of the August 16, 2007 Technical Coordinating Committee Meeting Minutes

Mr. Thomson called for the approval of the minutes. It was moved and seconded to approve the minutes of the August 16, 2007 Technical Coordinating Committee.

TCC Action: the motion to approve the minutes of the August 16, 2007 Technical Coordinating Committee carried with none opposed.

B. Endorsement of the CUTS/MPO Coordinated Public Transit Human Services Transportation Plan

Ms. Wykoda Wang presented the plan to the committee. She defined the plan as a locally developed coordinated plan that identifies transportation needs of individuals with disabilities, the elderly, and those with low incomes, and then provides strategies to meet those needs. This plan is a requirement of SAFETEA-LU. Ms. Wang also explained the three funding categories. CAT will be the Designated Recipient for the 5316 (Job Access and Reverse Commute) funds and 5317 (New Freedom) funds. The Georgia Department of Human Resources (DHR) administers the 5310 funds. At this time the 5310 program is not included in this plan, though it is the intention to coordinate with DHR and incorporate the 5310 program into the future plan.

This plan outlines the goals and objectives, outlines the public involvement process of plan development, studies where the target populations are located, identifies potential human services destinations of these target populations, identifies the existing and expected service gaps, and proposes strategies/projects to meet the transportation needs.

Strategies/projects were evaluated by four criteria:

- Is it an existing service or does it meet a need?
- Quality of service
- Implementation
- Coordination

Based on the criteria, the projects were sorted into four tiers:

- Tier #1 – existing and planned projects already in the TIP
- Tier #2 – short range expansion of services projects
- Tier #3 – medium range expansion of services projects
- Tier #4 – long range expansion of services projects

The next steps are to use this plan for the following:

- Apply for 5316 and 5317 funding
- Develop a Memorandum of Understanding between CAT & MPO for administration and planning
- Coordinate with DHR for 5310 program
- Ensure consistency with the Long Range Transportation Plan and Transportation Improvement Program

Mr. Thomson reminded everyone that this plan is a requirement of SAFETEA-LU with a deadline of November 1, 2007.

Mr. Sean Brandon asked how this plan fits into the Long Range Transit Plan. Will it be an amendment to that plan or a separate plan? Mr. Thomson responded that this is a highly specialized component of the transit system to address congressional goals of job access and transit for elderly and handicapped. At this point, with four tiers, it does look into long range.

Mr. Joe Rivers is concerned about new stations, new fixed routes and new equipment that this plan anticipates. Several questions will need to be addressed while implementing the plan.

Ms. Jane Love reported that ACAT did not have a quorum at their recent meeting, but there was discussion about this plan.

It was moved and seconded to endorse the CUTS/MPO Coordinated Public Transit Human Services Transportation Plan.

TCC Action: the motion to endorse the CUTS/MPO Coordinated Public Transit Human Services Transportation Plan carried with none opposed.

C. Endorsement of requested amendment to the FY 2008-2011 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) to include construction for bridge replacement over Skidaway Narrows in FY 2008

Ms. Wang presented the staff report. This amendment is requested by GDOT. The current bridge has been rated deficient so it will be replaced with a two-lane, high level bridge. This is a major amendment so a public comment period is required. This project is separate from the bridge/Diamond Causeway widening project already listed in the TIP. The project in this amendment is not taking funds away from any other project in Chatham County. GDOT is moving ahead with this bridge project as a design-build project in order to expedite it. At a later date Whitfield Ave. and Diamond Cswy. will be widened to four lanes and a second two-lane high level bridge will be built to provide four lanes over the Skidaway Narrows.

Mr. Thomson noted that this is a very high-profile project. He requested a full description from GDOT of the 2-lane bridge as outlined in this amendment, the widening to four lanes, and the second bridge. He would like a clear time line and description of the phases, as well as who is building what portion.

Ms. Teresa Scott confirmed that GDOT is going to build a 2-lane high-level bridge to the north of the existing bridge. This will take all the traffic off of the existing bridge. The County was going to do the paving on the island side, but now it's going to be all GDOT. When the bridge is finished, they will close the existing bridge. The 4-lane widening will not occur until they are ready to build the second 2-lane high-level bridge. That project's schedule has not changed as a result of the new project.

Mr. Thomson asked why four lane widening is necessary. Ms. Scott believes it is because it is a designated evacuation route and the only way off the island. In the end there will be two separate 2-lane bridges providing 4-lanes on and off the island. She believes they may tear the old bridge down as they go, but is not sure. She is certain they will close the old bridge.

Mr. Thomson would like to re-evaluate the necessity for widening Whitfield Ave. to four lanes once the Bascule bridge is replaced.

Mr. Sean Brandon asked what was included in the \$18,000,000. Is demolition of the old bridge included? Ms. Scott explained that it will cover whatever is in the contract. She will check on whether demolition is included in the contract.

Ms. Scott confirmed that this project will only include the roadway necessary to get on and off the new bridge they are building. Further road widening to 4-lanes is part of the future improvements, not this bridge project. She will try to obtain more details for the Policy Committee meeting.

It was moved and seconded to endorse the requested amendment to the FY 2008-2011 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) to include construction for bridge replacement over Skidaway Narrows in FY 2008.

TCC Action: the motion to endorse the requested amendment to the FY 2008-2011 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) to include construction for bridge replacement over Skidaway Narrows in FY 2008 carried with none opposed.

III. Status Reports

A. Traffic Impact Analysis Process

Mr. Mark Wilkes presented the staff report to the committee. A detailed flow chart was distributed, highlighting the responsibilities of the MPC, the City or County, and the developer. Mr. Wilkes reported that this process is proposed in order to standardize a procedure for developers and plan reviewers at both City and County levels to use for reviewing traffic impact studies for various types of development. The extent of the study area in a given analysis will relate to the trip generation levels of the proposed development. The MPO's goal is to develop a process that makes requirements and standards clear to developers and reviewers. It also sets development thresholds that will trigger the need for any traffic impact analysis. The City and County remain the ultimate decision makers on approving developments. The meeting on methodology of the traffic study, early on, is a key element of this process. It is difficult to make a recommendation to the City or County when the reviewer does not agree with the methodology used. In developing the proposed process, MPO staff and consultants reviewed several other communities processes, as well as recommendations of the Institute of Transportation Engineers.

Mr. Thomson noted that there are many inconsistencies in the process being followed now. This is an attempt to get traffic impact studies moved up earlier in the review process, and assign costs to either the developer or the public sector, depending on the impact of the development.

Mr. Mike Weiner confirmed it was a good thing to have the same guidelines so that all parties know what to expect. Mr. George Fidler added that developers are more accepting of regulations if everything they need to do is made clear.

Mr. Thomson wants the traffic impact study to come in with the development plan, not after the development plan. Mr. Wilkes noted that many times the traffic study comes in after the MPC has taken action on the development proposal.

B. Effingham Parkway

Mr. Wilkes reported that MPO staff has received the study, conducted by Effingham County's consultants, for the proposed Effingham Parkway terminus in Chatham County. The consultants have identified their preferred alternative (Alternative 2). He presented a large map for all to view the alternatives. Mr. Thomson would like to request that GDOT fund on a possible connector from the planned Effingham Parkway to the planned Northwest Tollway. MPO staff has suggested a route for such a connector, indicated in purple on the map. Scott stated that the yellow highlighted route is the one that she believes all parties are on board with. She said the final concept meeting is coming, though a date has not yet been set. Mr. Weiner believes the City has some concerns about the design of the connection of Benton Blvd. and Highlands Blvd. in the consultants' proposal. Mr.

Thomson said he would like to know more of what GDOT and the Georgia Ports Authority are considering for the Port's connector project to Jimmy DeLoach Parkway. Ms. Scott answered that only the portion from Jimmy DeLoach Pkwy to SR307 is programmed currently, and it is first priority. The rest of it is not in stone at this time.

IV. Agency Reports

A. CUTS Advisory Committee on Accessible Transportation

Ms. Love reported that the Advisory Committee on Accessible Transportation did not have a quorum for their October 17th meeting. The Teleride director, Mr. C.J. McCampbel, had reported to the Committee, answered questions, and described what they are doing to improve operations. Mr. Bill Oakley, from Goodwill, who is a CAT Board member in addition to being an ACAT member, reported on recent CAT Board discussions that would be of interest to ACAT.

B. CUTS Citizens Advisory Committee

No report at this time.

C. Federal Highway Administration

Ms. Latoya Jones reported that there are new changes occurring within the FHWA office structure that may result in a rotation of staff. She reminded everyone that the year-end expenditures tele-conference is on Wednesday, October 24, 2007 from 9:00 – 10:00 AM. This will address cost inflation for the projects in the Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP). This update of the LRTP financial plan has a deadline of December 11th. Projects in the State's 6-year Construction Work Program already have inflation incorporated into the estimates, so this update only concerns the longer range projects. She asked if there were any outstanding issues in this area. Mr. Wilkes commented that as of now they will be staying close to the recommendation. Projects may drop out if the inflated costs are too high. Ms. Jones asked what methodology the MPO plans on using. Mr. Wilkes said that the MPO is still finalizing with their consultant.

D. Federal Transit Administration

No report at this time.

E. Georgia Department of Transportation

Ms. Scott referred committee members to the written report and highlighted the following projects:

- Projects 1-4 - were let last month and awarded this month to APAC.
- Projects 5 & 6 - GDOT is incorporating Project 40 (intersection of SR 21 & Gulfstream Rd) into these.
- Project 7 (Largo Rd) - will be designed in-house.
- Project 9 - Ms. Scott asked Mr. Weiner for any information on the Gwinnett St. project. Mr. Weiner reported that the canal issue is still undecided.

- Project 42 - Mr. Weiner asked about the status of Victory Drive. Mr. Scott confirmed that GDOT is working on preliminary plans, hopefully for later this year. This project is basically two right lanes off of the exit ramp onto Victory Dr, and lengthening the left-turn bay that feeds onto Wallin St.. It is a Lump Sum project, and the Department tries to get those turned around in one year.

F. Chatham County

Mr. Al Black referred members to the written report that was distributed at this meeting. He reviewed the report and asked for questions. There were no questions at this time.

G. City of Savannah

Mr. Weiner distributed a written status report and highlighted the recent test drive of the new DeRenne Ave. Ambulance Pre-emption System. He reported that it worked well, though the public can present a problem since many drivers do not know what to do when an ambulance is approaching. Ms. Wang asked about traffic backing up on the side streets, i.e. Abercorn St., when the lights change on DeRenne Ave. for an ambulance. Mr. Weiner answered that they could install some flashing red lights on poles on the side street that would inform drivers of the reason for their delay. It will take some time for the public to be educated about this change.

H. Chatham Area Transit Authority

Mr. Joe Murray Rivers reported the following:

- CAT received one bid on the ferry project.
- CAT is under a great funding strain. They are pursuing funding with State Bill 146.
- CAT is short of equipment and short of manpower. Some equipment is past its life expectancy.
- He sees a need to address in the future how CAT will link with the rural transportation system being promoted by Coastal Georgia RDC. The planning and coordination will be fruitless unless the funding problem is resolved.
- CAT staff had a meeting with the owners of Savannah Mall regarding the use of parking spaces for users of a future express bus on Abercorn.
- He's excited about discussing regional mobility between counties, but the prospects for transit expansion is little bleak right now due to funding shortages.
- A CAT bus was involved in a crash last night at 37th St. and Barnard St. The bus driver had to swerve to avoid a driver who had run a red light, and the bus hit a utility pole, sending it against the adjacent house. No one on the bus was seriously injured.

Mr. Brandon said that he thinks it's very possible that the transit system will fracture into little systems, each serving the narrower needs of sub-sets of the populations, such as downtown hotel guests, if more support is not given to CAT.

Mr. Rivers expressed the need to look at light rail, express buses, and park & ride lots as solutions for commuters. We need to move more people by some means other than cars.

CAT is working on a Memorandum of Understanding with Greyhound for the Greyhound site for the Transit Center. This site, while not officially selected, is the most probable choice.

I. Georgia Ports Authority

No report at this time.

J. Savannah-Hilton Head International Airport

Mr. George Fidler reported that five new gates are open and operating. Growth continues in number of flights, number of destinations, and number of passengers. The new parking garage is open offering covered parking connected to the terminal. There are now 3,800-3,900 paid parking spaces; over half of them are covered.

The new traffic signal at I-95 and Airways Avenue has helped congestion but not the rear-end collision problem. GDOT recommended a right turn acceleration lane be added. The airport will submit that project.

The road to Gulfstream's new facility is open, and the new traffic signal at Dean Forest Road is now in operation.

A re-paving project for the roads around the terminal will begin at the end of this year.

V. Other Business

Mr. Wilkes announced that the 2009 AMPO national conference will be in Savannah in late October 2009.

He also announced that, at the recent fall conference of the Georgia Planning Association, CUTS/MPO received the 2007 award for Innovative and Effective Planning Process for the Transportation Amenities Plan and Context Sensitive Design Manual.

VI. Other Public Comments

No other public comments at this time.

VII. Adjournment

There being no other business, the Technical Coordinating Committee adjourned the October 18, 2007 meeting.

Respectfully submitted,

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