



CHATHAM URBAN TRANSPORTATION STUDY

**JOINT MEETING OF CUTS/MPO TECHNICAL COORDINATING COMMITTEE
AND CITIZENS ADVISORY COMMITTEE
MEETING SUMMARY**

**Arthur A. Mendonsa Hearing Room
112 East State Street**

February 24, 2009

5:00 p.m.

Members or Voting Alternates

Representing

Present

Tony Abbott	CAC - Chatham County	X	
Sean Brandon	TCC - City of Savannah	X	
Teresa Brenner	TCC – ACAT representative	X	
Leon Davenport	TCC – Chatham County	X	
Jason House	CAC - City of Savannah	X	
Beth Kinstler	CAC - City of Savannah	X	
Jack Knops	CAC – City of Savannah	X	
Henry Levy	CAC - City of Tybee Island	X	
Joe Murray Rivers	TCC – CAT	X	
Brad Saxon	TCC – GDOT, District 5	X	
Bob Scanlon	TCC – City of Savannah		X
Joe Steffen	CAC – Chatham County	X	
Tom Thomson	TCC – Executive Director-MPC	X	
Randy Weitman	TCC – Georgia Ports Authority	X	
Mark Wilkes	TCC – MPO	X	

Others Present

Representing

David Acuff	Savannah Bicycle Campaign	X
Michael Adams	MPO	X
Jason Buelterman	City of Tybee Island	X
Karen Gramey	Interested citizen	X
Jane Kahn	Coastal Bicycle Touring Club	X
Jane Love	MPO	X
Michael Maynor	Savannah Bicycle Campaign	X
CJ McCampbel	First Transit/Teleride	X
William McIntosh	Savannah Bicycle Campaign	X
Barbara Settzo	for MPO	X
Beth Thulin	CAT	X
Drew Wade	Savannah Bicycle Campaign	X
Wykoda Wang	MPO	X

Mr. Tom Thomson called the special joint meeting of the Technical Coordinating Committee and the Citizens Advisory Committee to order and began with self-introductions from those present. He noted that there are three handouts for the discussion at this special meeting – a summary of proposed amendments to the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), a summary of other proposed projects, and a copy of an e-mail letter.

A great deal of work has gone into re-working the spreadsheet of proposed TIP amendments. Local governments had been asked to review their projects and note priorities for stimulus funding. With Truman Parkway alone, Chatham County would be getting 15% of the total stimulus funding allocated to the entire state.

Mr. Thomson began the review of the Summary of Proposed TIP Amendments. Regular highway funding for FY 2009 totals \$43,694,907 and stimulus highway funding requests for FY 2009 totals \$240,215,269. This includes the projects proposed for stimulus funding by the Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT). A combined total of about \$110,000,000 of stimulus funding is requested by City of Savannah and Chatham County.

Mr. Thomson noted that the MPO will be doing its part by making sure appropriate projects are in the TIP, but project sponsors need to be aggressive with GDOT to ensure the project is ready, i.e. all documentation signed off by someone at GDOT.

Transit projects are also listed; mostly CAT projects.

FY 2010 includes a little stimulus money, but they are pushing as much as possible into FY 2009.

Mr. Thomson reviewed the FY 2009 non-stimulus projects one by one noting that the phase code, fund code and description column are important for understanding.

There was brief discussion and clarification on Project #550560 (SR204 spur from Haneys Creek to CR767/Ferguson Ave, also known as Whitfield Avenue widening). It currently has L230 (MPO discretionary) funding. Mr. Leon Davenport confirmed it was for right-of-way. Mr. Thomson questioned if it should be stimulus funded in order to free up some of the L230 funds. The conclusion was to leave funding category as L230 since there is already an excess demand for stimulus funds on the list.

There was discussion and clarification on Project #0007631 (Truman Linear Park Trail Phase 2). Mr. Drew Wade noted that GDOT is proposing to reduce existing funding on this project in the TIP from about \$1.2 million to about \$1.1 million, but he had a letter from the County last spring indicating that the estimate for the project was \$2 million. Mr. Thomson suggested that there was an earmark, making local government responsible for the difference. He agreed that there was a gap and that it needed to be clarified.

Mr. Thomson reviewed the list presented by GDOT for stimulus funding for FY 2009. The major project is the Truman Parkway Phase 5.

Page 3 is the short list of Chatham County projects, pared down from a much longer County list. Mr. Thomson briefly reviewed the list.

Mr. Henry Levy protested that the Lazaretto Creek and Bull River Bridges were not listed. This issue may be raised again after the group concludes its overview of the whole list. There was confusion regarding the Truman Linear Trail project that needs to be clarified. Three concerns about this project:

- Is the project on GDOT's TIP request list the same as the project in the County's letter from last spring, but with different cost estimates?
- If they are the same, the funding gap needs to be explained.
- If they are different projects, there is bigger funding question to be addressed.

Mr. Thomson moved on to review of the City of Savannah projects. The majority of funding is for the President St. project. Mr. Bob Scanlon noted that this project is a reach, but it is also the city's #1 priority. There are some items in this project that could be pulled out because the city can probably fund them with other programs, so the amount of the transportation stimulus request could be reduced to \$36,745,000. The canal and sewer line relocations could possibly be funded from other sources.

Mr. Scanlon and Mr. Sean Brandon do not believe all the city projects are listed in priority order, but they agreed that President Street is definitely #1. Mr. Brandon commented that the next two projects listed, Ogeechee/Victory Dr improvements and MLK median/streetscape improvements are next in the city's prioritization.

Mr. Thomson had questions about how many of the CAT projects listed already had other funding sources. Mr. Rivers and Ms. Beth Thulin confirmed that all needed stimulus funding. During the review, it was decided to amend the amount for fare box replacement from \$1 million to \$650,000. It was also noted that more checking was needed on the item of Administration & Maintenance Building repairs (\$650,000). Mr. Rivers prioritized the first three listed transit projects (15 hybrid buses, transit center, 5 paratransit vans) as Priority 1, 2, and 3. Mr. Thomson noted that it would be CAT's responsibility to pursue each project as they see fit.

Ms. Beth Kinstler asked about any provisions for bus stop shelters. She suggested giving more priority to those who ride the buses by providing more shelters.

Mr. Thomson reviewed projects for FY 2010, beginning with regularly funded projects suggested by GDOT. Mr. Randy Weitman noted that the SR307 overpass over new Port Authority rail line is ready to go. Mr. Brandon noted that the Heritage Bike Trail has grant money. The funds requested here are for hardscape of the trail.

A representative from the Savannah Bicycle Campaign advised the group of the negative impacts on bicyclists that the district-wide rumble strip project would have. Mr. Saxon confirmed that the rumble strips mentioned in the proposed stimulus project #0007258 are in the stripe not in the shoulder. Rumble strips are put on routes that have a high incidence of drivers going off the road. They are only put on routes with speed limits in

excess of 45 mph. Mr. Buelterman asked if cyclists are considered with all the planned road widenings and bridges. Mr. Saxon responded that if a road is on a state or local bike plan, then bicycle accommodations will be included in road projects. The state may ask for funding if the route is only on a local plan. Mr. Thomson explained the standards used in planning bicycle accommodations.

Mr. Thomson wants to focus on FY 2009 and FY 2010 and then deal with FY2011, FY2012 and FY2013 at a later date.

Mr. Levy spoke of four projects (Skidaway Narrows Bridge, Truman Parkway, Lazaretto Creek Bridge and Bull River Bridge) that he believes to be the most urgent projects. He objects that they aren't even listed here. Mr. Thomson corrected him regarding Skidaway Bridge replacement and the Truman Parkway, which are both proposed for some type of funding on this list.

Mr. Thomson pointed out that several municipalities stimulus requests are shown in the "Summary of Other Proposed Projects". Ms. Wang commented that the two Pooler projects listed might be ready in time for stimulus funding.

Mr. Buelterman questioned the funding for Broughton streetscape improvements when there is no money for the Tybee Island bridges. Mr. Brandon noted that the Broughton St project has TE funding. Ms. Wang noted that no one has provided her with details about the Tybee bridge projects. Mr. Thomson explained that they would add preliminary engineering for the Tybee bridges to the list of proposed TIP amendments and then try to persuade GDOT to pull the bridges out of the US 80 project and move them along.

Mr. Joe Steffen commented that stimulus money is to be used for shovel-ready projects that fit the stimulus criteria. The Truman Linear Trail project is such a project. The goal of cyclists is to get as much funding as possible for the community and this project is the best candidate. It fits the direction articulated by the new federal administration: alternative transportation, "green." He also mentioned that a high-speed rail project between Atlanta and Savannah should be a priority. Mr. Thomson asked Mr. Saxon to follow up on funding for high-speed rail.

Mr. Thomson recapped the following issues that need resolution:

- Sort out the Truman Linear Bridge and Bull River Bridge
- Include something for bus shelters
- Provide estimates for preliminary engineering on the Tybee bridge projects
- Check on high-speed rail status

Mr. Brandon asked if once this amendment is sent to the Policy Committee and the total amount is too high, is there still time to re-calculate. Mr. Thomson believes they can adjust it administratively, or possibly make it part of the motion at tomorrow's meeting.

Mr. Scanlon commented that the President St. project is a city project that has a much wider impact. It will also help residents of the eastern part of the County. The big ticket

item is the construction of a bridge over the widened canal and the rail line. Stimulus money is the only funding that can make this part of the project work. He recommended changing the name from "President St Widening" to "President/McIntosh Corridor Improvement and Truman Parkway Interchange Improvement".

Mr. Levy would like to see a connection between the north end of Skidaway Island and Wilmington Island. He believes another bridge over the Savannah River is necessary and that the north end of the Truman Parkway is a good place for it. He hopes that all the improvements being made there now will not eliminate this future possibility.

Mr. Thomson repeated that the sponsor of the project is responsible for pushing the project. When the Policy Committee is over and they approve this amendment, the MPO work is finished. At that point all the municipalities and/or agencies sponsoring any project need to take action to move their project(s) forward.

Mr. Levy made a motion the the CAC approve the proposed TIP amendments including the PE for the two bridges to Tybee Island.

CAC action: the motion to approve the proposed TIP amendments including the PE for the two bridges to Tybee Island carried with none opposed.

The TCC committee proposed a motion to approve the proposed TIP amendments including the PE for the two bridges to Tybee Island.

TCC action: the motion to approve the proposed TIP amendments including the PE for the two bridges to Tybee Island carried with none opposed.

There being no other business to come before the joint meeting of the Technical Coordinating Committee and the Citizens Advisory Committee, the February 24, 2009 meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Jane Love
Transportation Planner