



STAKEHOLDER CONFERENCE



The Connecting Savannah: Moving People – Making Neighborhoods

process took a major step by identifying what transportation improvements will strengthen the quality of life in the Savannah region. On Tuesday, October 12, over 75 concerned neighborhood and business representatives, elected officials, university students and representatives of government groups met at a Stakeholder Conference at the Coastal Georgia Center for the purpose of creating a forum for open discussion to identify the most pressing transportation issues in the Savannah-Chatham County area.

Tom Thomson, Executive Director of the Metropolitan Planning Commission, welcomed the participants. He explained that the *Connecting Savannah* process is an initiative of the Chatham Urban Transportation Study (CUTS) which is the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for the area. He told the group how pleased he is at the interest being shown in this open, public process. He introduced Linda Carpenter, Project Manager for *Connecting Savannah*, who gave a 10-minute PowerPoint presentation outlining the goals of *Connecting Savannah* and the intended outcomes of the Stakeholder Conference.

HIGHLIGHTS INCLUDE:

- Connecting Savannah is a process with the goal of bringing people and projects together through pro-active public outreach to identify potential acceptable solutions that can be advanced to the next stage of project development;
- Key words are PROCESS, PRO-ACTIVE, EVOLUTIONARY and ON-GOING; and
- Purpose of the Stakeholder Conference is to identify the transportation assets of the region as well as its needs and problems, and then form working groups to identify potential alternatives to address the most critical issues.



Conference participants

divided alphabetically into five breakout groups to develop lists that addressed two questions. Consultant Team members served as facilitators and Savannah State students wrote down the comments. The lists for each group are included on pages 3-7. Each group was asked to vote to determine the Top 3 on each list (also indicated in the group summaries) and this information was shared with the entire conference when attendees reconvened. After viewing the Top 3 problem lists of each group, participants were asked to list the problem(s) they were most interested in being involved in resolving.

• **ASSETS:**

If you were to describe the Savannah area to friends or relatives who have never been here, what favorable transportation attribute would you tell them about?

• **PROBLEMS/NEEDS:**

What is Savannah's most critical transportation problem or need? Be as specific as you can be.

RESULTS ARE:

PROBLEM/ISSUE	NUMBER
East-west connections/trucks on Bay Street	34
Alternate modes of transportation/transit	19
Amenities/pedestrian improvements/bicycle improvements	18
Peak hour traffic control/traffic signal synchronization	10
Land use sustainable design	9
Extension of Truman Parkway	9
Regional connections	7
Parking, particularly downtown	5
Others (each with one vote)	1



Speeding, driver awareness of pedestrians, truck rerouting regulations, traffic on islands, congestion on Abercorn on southside, connect Richmond Hill-Hilton Head Rt 17, reduce cut-through traffic, curb cuts, statewide transportation

GROUP 1 RESULTS

ASSETS

1. **Grid System: minimizes choke points, and provides order**
2. CAT bus service to outlying areas: bus service is adequate, frequent, reliable; provides extensive service for disabled; provides access to jobs
3. **Squares: eliminate need for traffic lights, respects pedestrians, slows traffic, provides order**
4. Bus tours for visitors: allow visitors to see City in a day and fare is free
5. Water taxi: tourist attraction, provides transportation
6. Cobblestones: historic value and tourist attraction
7. Transportation planning process: is at a point where Savannah can avoid non-attainment designation



8. **Established, stable neighborhoods**
9. Access throughout County very convenient during off-peak hours
10. Walkable city and downtown
11. Airport taxi service
12. Proximity of major thoroughfares to I-16, I-95 and Airport
13. Tree-lined streetscape canopy roadways
14. Parkway system

TOP 3 ASSETS

1. Squares
2. Neighborhoods
3. Grid system

PROBLEMS/NEEDS

1. Traffic congestion: to Georgetown during AM and PM peak travel times
2. **East/West and North/South mobility and connectivity: plan light rail system**
3. Unrestrained commercial development and inappropriate land use along DeRenne Avenue
4. Traffic congestion: along President Street and Victory Drive (which provides access to the Islands)
5. Trucks on Bay Street: dangerous for pedestrians, damaging to buildings, potentially hazardous, and incompatible with historic/tourism atmosphere
6. East/West travel: limited beyond MLK and E. Broad
7. Pedestrian and motorist safety on River Street (particularly at dinner time)
8. No bike trail
9. Traffic lights: need to improve synchronization

10. Speed limits on US 80 and President Street
11. Need driver education to enforce traffic laws
12. **Traffic control and flow during peak times**
13. **Need extension of Truman Parkway from Holland/Abercorn to I-95**
14. Traffic congestion: segments of Truman Parkway and impact of new residential and commercial development at President Street and E. Broad Street
15. Pedestrian and disabled unfriendly
16. Need alternative modes of transportation beyond automobiles
17. Need transit education
18. Lack of downtown parking

TOP 3 PROBLEMS/NEEDS

1. **EW travel (is limited), traffic congestion (Truman Parkway and impact of new developments), alternative modes of transportation**
2. **Traffic control and flow during peak travel times**
3. **Need extension of Truman Parkway to I-95**

GROUP 2 RESULTS

ASSETS

1. Live oak/canopies
2. Ease of walking
3. Squares-historic nature
4. Green spaces
5. Beauty of access
6. Numbered streets
7. Options for people with disabilities
8. Grid pattern
9. Compactness of downtown
10. Waterfront/water taxi
11. Mixed-use development
12. Free shuttle
13. Minimum of visual pollution
14. Ease of beach access
15. Preserving neighborhoods
16. Easy tourist access
17. Access to a variety of shopping opportunities



TOP 3 ASSETS

1. Canopy roads/live oaks/palms
2. Walkability/squares
3. Beauty of scenic drive to beach

PROBLEMS/NEEDS

1. East/West commercial traffic in historic areas
2. Confusing traffic patterns around squares
3. Confusing intersection design (Liberty & Oglethorpe)
4. Faster moving traffic at the expense of live oak/palms
5. Speeding in congested areas
6. Lack of transit service to major employment areas (airport)
7. Lack of parking/parking rules
8. No transit to beach
9. Disjointed bicycle networks/lack of facilities
10. Lack of sidewalks/conditions
11. Lack of wayfinding
12. No seating/cover at bus stops

13. Lack of shuttles to satellite parking
14. Need safer pedestrian crossing (Bay)
15. Need more pedestrian orientation of Broughton
16. Over reliance on single occupant vehicles
17. Need more frequency of transit service
18. Inconsistency of speed limits with adjacent land uses
19. Drainage

TOP 4 PROBLEMS/NEEDS

1. East/West commercial traffic in historic areas
2. Speeding in congested areas
3. Disjointed bicycling network
4. Need more frequency of transit service

GROUP 3 RESULTS

ASSETS

1. Pedestrian-oriented streets
2. One-way streets into squares
3. Tree canopy over roads
4. Regional potential for transportation
5. Human-scaled roadways and associated land use (human-scaled buildings)
6. Building of a beltway
7. Ability to travel expeditiously
8. Accessibility of CAT
9. Human-scale through landscaping and trees
10. Opportunity for tourist attraction
11. Scenic drive from Savannah through Thunderbolt to Tybee
12. Historical character and beauty of Abercorn Street
13. Connectivity of Savannah roads



14. Free downtown shuttle
15. Multi-modal aspects
16. Airport and connections

TOP 3 ASSETS

1. Pedestrian-oriented streets
2. Ability to travel expeditiously
3. Airport and connections

PROBLEMS/NEEDS

1. Lack of metropolitan planning commission to plan effectively for transportation
2. Lack of connections for alternative mode of transportation (bike lanes do not connect, etc.)
3. Poor community awareness of cycling rights/safety
4. Lack of good curb cuts
5. Need for more active leadership to pursue funding opportunities (leverage state/fed dollars)
6. Congestion on West DeRenne
7. Congestion on Abercorn south of Savannah Mall
8. Community misperception that building more/wider roads eases congestion
9. No identification of the problems
10. Poorly synchronized traffic signals
11. Trucks and buses in the historic district
12. Modernization of Augusta Avenue
13. Lack of effective public transportation
14. Need driver awareness of pedestrians

15. Lack of east-west connectivity
16. Transportation planning is too heavily auto-oriented
17. Need for context sensitive design
18. Need for audible pedestrian signals
19. Lack of political will to implement plans
20. Poor connections of frontage roads (Abercorn south of Tibet Ave.)
21. Savannah's awkward size
22. Lack of complete beltway
23. Impatient drivers
24. Notification of traffic problems/accidents
25. Loss of real estate to parking lots
26. Bad drivers
27. NIMBYism – Not In My Back Yard
28. Loss of tree canopy

TOP 3 PROBLEMS/NEEDS

1. Transportation planning is too heavily auto-oriented
2. Need driver awareness of pedestrians
3. Lack of east-west connectivity

GROUP 4 RESULTS

ASSETS

1. **Public transportation/bus system**
2. Easy to get around
3. Well mapped
4. Grid system
5. **Pedestrian friendly – downtown area**
6. Not as bad as other urban areas
7. Traffic flow
8. Public transportation – access for elderly and disabled
9. Bridge
10. I-95
11. Highway signage
12. No charge downtown shuttle
13. **Airport/Amtrak rail system connection**



TOP 3 ASSETS

1. **Public transportation/bus system**
2. **Pedestrian friendly**
3. **Airport/rail system**

PROBLEMS/NEEDS

1. Downtown parking
2. Traffic light timing
3. Flooding
4. Planning
5. Infrastructure for buses (physical accessibility)
6. Lack of bus transfer station
7. **Lack of sidewalks**
8. Timely completion of traffic related construction projects
9. No timely bus schedule from outlining area
10. **East/West connection (Bypass)**
11. Need reservation of the tree canopy
12. Bicycle un-friendly
13. Undeveloped greenway facilities
14. Maintenance of greenway
15. Signage for storm evacuation
16. Not pedestrian friendly outside of downtown
17. Auto-dependent outside of downtown
18. Industrial traffic on Bay St.
19. Tourist vehicles impeding traffic
20. Adequate connection of the Interstate
21. I-95, I-16 congestion
22. Construction projects that divide the city
23. Flow of rush hour traffic
24. **Regional connections**
25. Location of passenger rail system
26. Lighting outside downtown area
27. Safety of traffic around industrial zones
28. Need other modes of regional public transportation
29. Information regarding public transportation is not user friendly

TOP 3 PROBLEMS/NEEDS

1. **Lack of sidewalks**
2. **East/West bypass**
3. **Regional connections**

GROUP 5 RESULTS

ASSETS

1. Taxi
2. Bus
3. Pedicabs
4. Few transportation problems
- 5. Grid system**
- 6. Truman Parkway to downtown**
7. Excellent transportation (good facilities)
- 8. Rail, seaport, airport**
9. Tour guides, shuttles, water taxi
10. Auto rental

TOP 3 ASSETS

- 1. Rail, seaport, airport**
- 2. Grid system**
- 3. Truman Parkway to downtown**



PROBLEMS/NEEDS

1. (Schedule) Geographically limited transit systems
2. Unregulated hours for truck operations (routes)
3. Overloaded arterials (outside the grid area)
4. Geographic limitations to road construction
5. Widespread recurring congestion (at certain times)
6. No light rail transit
- 7. Need better synchronization of traffic lights**
8. Street flooding
9. Pedestrian and bikeway facilities (need more and connected)
- 10. Land use relationship to existing transportation**
- 11. Downtown parking**



TOP 3 PROBLEMS/NEEDS

- 1. Downtown parking**
- 2. Need better synchronization of traffic lights**
- 3. Land use preferably limited to existing transportation**



NEXT STEPS



The **Connecting Savannah** Team is processing the input received at the Stakeholder Conference and forming Working Groups to address specific needs.

Please do not hesitate to pass this information along to others.

Non-conference attendees can become part of the process by contacting Allison Chumley at **(912) 234-5230**, or by e-mail to

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THANK YOU THANK YOU

