



CONTACT:
Thomas L. Thomson, P.E., AICP, Executive Director
Telephone: (912) 651 - 1446
thomsont@thempc.org

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
September 24, 2004

MEDIA ADVISORY

**MPO PLANS “CONNECTING SAVANNAH” CONFERENCE
TO EXPLORE TRANSPORTATION ISSUES AND SOLUTIONS**

WHAT: The *Connecting Savannah* Stakeholder Conference is the first meeting in what the MPO anticipates to be a series of discussions to listen and search for real understanding on what the transportation challenges and potential solutions are for the Savannah metropolitan region. The conference has three main objectives:

- To introduce the purpose, approach and desired outcomes for the *Connecting Savannah* project and how it fits into the regional transportation planning process;
- To create a forum for open discussion with other interested stakeholders to identify and discuss common transportation issues and related concerns; and
- To identify the most pressing issues that must be addressed in order to create viable transportation solutions for the Savannah-Chatham County area.

The conference agenda includes small group discussions where participants will identify favorable transportation attributes of the Savannah area as well as the most critical transportation problems and needs. The discussions will be facilitated by the *Connecting Savannah* consultant team of Wilbur Smith Associates, Dovetail Consulting, Lott+Barber Architects, and McMillan & Associates with student assistants from the Savannah State University Political Science program.

While the meeting is open to the public, participants have been *invited* to represent a diverse set of interests including neighborhoods, trucking/transportation, business/commerce, local government, economic development, historic preservation, environmental, manufacturing and a host of others. Individuals or groups desiring to attend may send a request to connectingsavannah@lottbarber.com or may call (912) 234-5230. Requests will be accommodated based on availability of space.

WHO: The Chatham Urban Transportation Study (CUTS) is the *Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO)* responsible for Chatham County transportation planning and will host the conference. The federal government requires that an MPO be established in urbanized areas of over 50,000 people to conduct regional transportation policy-making and planning. The MPO is comprised of representatives of local, state and federal government and transportation authorities and ensures federal spending on transportation occurs through a comprehensive, cooperative and continuing process involving both the public and policy-makers. The Metropolitan Planning Commission (MPC) provides staff services to the CUTS/MPO Policy Committee, which is chaired by the chairman of the Chatham County Board of County Commissioners, Dr. Billy Hair.

WHEN: *Connecting Savannah* Stakeholder Conference
Monday, September 27, 2004
Coastal Georgia Center
5:30 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.

WHY: According to Tom Thomson, MPO Executive Director, “this meeting is the opportunity for anyone with an idea about transportation to participate in a meaningful way toward the development of long-term solutions.” When asked what he hoped the stakeholder conference would achieve, Mr. Thomson responded, “we hope the conference energizes stakeholders to work cooperatively with us throughout the *Connecting Savannah* process.”

FOR MORE: Please write thomsont@thempc.org or call (912) 651 – 1446.

