



ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON ACCESSIBLE TRANSPORTATION MEETING SUMMARY

Wednesday, October 18, 2006
Georgia Infirmary

2:00 p.m.
1900 Abercorn Street

<u>Members</u>	<u>Representing</u>	<u>Present</u>
Karen Blackard	Kicklighter Resource Center	
William K. Broker	Georgia Legal Service	
Wayne Dawson	Savannah-Chatham County Fair Housing Council	
Jeff Felser	City of Savannah	X
Yolanda Fontaine	Housing Authority of Savannah	
Brian Frank	Laidlaw/Teleride	X
Bob Habas	Living Independence for Everyone Inc. (LIFE)	X
Timamu Hakim	Chatham Area Transit Authority	
Zoe Hardenbrook	GDOT District 5	
Carol Hunt	NAACP-Savannah Branch	
Hunter Hurst	Georgia Infirmary Day Center For Rehabilitation	
McArthur Jarrett	National Federation of the Blind	X
Tom Lamar	Interested Citizen	X
Brian Leighton	Savannah Council of the Blind	X
Jack Lewis	Savannah-Chatham Council on Disability Issues	
Jane Love	Metropolitan Planning Commission	X
Patti Lyons	Senior Citizens Savannah -Chatham Inc.	
Laurie Monroe	Economic Opportunity Authority	
Bill Oakley	Goodwill Industries	X
Greg Schroeder	United Way of the Coastal Empire	

Walt Simmons	Savannah Assn for the Blind	
Clealice Timmons	Coastal Center for Development Services	
Staff Representative	Chatham County	
<u>Member Alternates</u>	<u>Representing</u>	<u>Present</u>
Alphonso Dandy	Savannah Assn for the Blind	x
Russell Jennette	Chatham Area Transit	x
<u>Others Present</u>	<u>Representing</u>	<u>Present</u>
William Gardner	National Federation of the Blind	x
Tyrone Palmer	National Federation of the Blind	x
Barbara Settzo	MPO	x

Call to Order

Chairman McArthur Jarrett called the October 18, 2006 Advisory Committee on Accessible Transportation meeting to order.

I. Approval of Agenda

Ms. Jane Love read the agenda as prepared. Following the reading of the agenda, it was moved and seconded to approve the agenda as prepared. The motion carried with none opposed.

II. Action Items

A. Approval of August 16, 2006 Advisory Committee on Accessible Transportation Minutes

It was moved and seconded to approve the minutes of the August 16, 2006 ACAT meeting as presented.

ACAT Action: the motion to approve the minutes of the August 16, 2006 Advisory Committee on Accessible Transportation carried with none opposed.

B. Endorsement of Amendment to the 2030 LRTP to clarify MPO policy on enhancement projects

Ms. Jane Love presented the staff report on this amendment. She reminded those who had attended the June meeting that the issue of the language regarding transportation enhancement projects (TE projects) had been presented at that time. This committee had endorsed the original language changes, but the Technical Coordinating Committee, in a meeting following the ACAT meeting, requested further changes to the language. Therefore, this amendment, with new language, is before the ACAT today for endorsement.

Ms. Love offered the following background information about the TE program. "Transportation Enhancement is a program that provides funding for a broad range of activities that enhance natural and cultural resources related to transportation. The following activities are eligible for TE funds: design and construction of bicycle, pedestrian or non-motorized facilities; preservation of abandoned railway corridors; acquisition, preservation and rehabilitation of historic sites and structures; and aesthetic improvements, such as landscaping and other scenic beautification efforts. In Georgia, the Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) administers the TE program."

At the present time, GDOT selects the projects for the TE program and notifies the local MPO to include these selected projects in the long range plan. Amending the LRTP to include each project is a cumbersome administrative process involving two reviews before each of the four CUTS committees. Changing the language, as staff

is requesting, shortens the administrative process, but does not reduce input on the decision process since the MPO does not have any input in prioritizing these TE projects. MPO staff is recommending endorsement by this committee. If the committee is dissatisfied with its lack of input in GDOT's selection process, the ACAT chairman could add, in his report to the Policy Committee, that it is the committee's opinion that CUTS committees should have input in prioritizing these TE projects.

Ms. Love read the wording that the ACAT endorsed in June and then read the new language which is now before the committee. The new language reads as follows: "Applications for TE funding are made directly to GDOT, and final project selections are made by the State Transportation Board. TE projects which meet current state and federal requirements for TE projects, have been duly selected for funding by the State Transportation Board are considered to be consistent with the MPO's 2030 Long Range Transportation Plan. The MPO has further adopted the following list of priority transportation enhancement projects and cost estimates for illustrative purposes in order to provide guidance to local project applicants."

Ms. Love summarized that this second draft of the proposed new language, compared to the first draft that the committee endorsed in June, simply de-emphasizes the fact that GDOT makes TE project selections without input from MPOs.

It was moved and seconded to endorse the amendment to the 2030 LRTP to clarify MPO policy on enhancement projects.

ACAT Action: The motion to endorse the amendment to the 2030 LRTP to clarify MPO policy on enhancement projects carried with none opposed.

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

Ms. Love reported that at the June 28, 2006 Policy Committee meeting, the MPO staff received authorization to proceed with a study of the requested amendment to the MPO Bikeway Plan and the 2030 LRTP for inclusion of a Back River Bridge Bikeway. Now that more study has been done and more details are available, the amendment is before you today for endorsement to amend the Plan and the LRTP to include Phase One of the Back River Bridge Bikeway.

Ms. Love informed the committee of the details of MPO staff's research. On August 18, 2006 a stakeholder meeting was held and potential bike routes on Hutchinson Island were discussed. The ideas discussed included:

1. From the exiting ferry landing to the plaza in front of the Trade Center, then via Old Hutchinson Island Rd. to the new US 17 bridge – identified by the MPO staff during the field trip;
2. Arrival at the new proposed ferry slip west of the Trade Center, crossing the ferry slip on a new bridge over it, then through private developments and back to the new US 17 bridge access ramps – proposed by Sottile & Sottile;
3. Connecting into the residential area, exiting through the Trade Center parking garage; and
4. Exiting from the existing ferry slip toward the hotel side and then on to Shackleford Blvd.

At this meeting two questions were raised:

1. Will the new US 17 bridge be one structure with 4 lanes, or will a new 2-lane bridge be built adjacent to the existing structure? If

so, will the existing structure be replaced? If so, on which side of the existing structure will the new bridge be built?

2. Is South Carolina participating in the design and funding of the new bridge?

When asked about these two issues, GDOT staff responded as follows:

1. Currently there are two alternatives for the US 17 bridge project. Alternative One is a 4-lane structure with four 12-ft lanes separated by a median with 10-ft bikeable shoulders. Alternative Two is a 2-lane structure with two 12-ft lanes with 10-ft bikeable shoulders. The existing structure will be replaced in Alternative Two. The location of the new bridge is not determined at this time. The chosen alternative will depend upon the logical termini in South Carolina. At this time SCDOT does not have a project programmed to widen US 17 which will negate the 4-lane bridge, so a 2-lane bridge will be constructed.
2. SCDOT is participating in the project under a bi-state agreement which they will fund 10% of the bridge construction. GDOT is acting as the project manager and is funding 90% of the bridge construction.

Since Sottile & Sottile will be under contract to conduct a master plan for a portion of Hutchinson Island and will identify the most feasible bike route as part of the project with the Trade Center, MPC, Chatham County, SEDA, private property owners, and the City of Savannah, the amendment sponsor proposed a two-phased approach:

Phase One is to get MPO approval of the bicycle facility on the new bridge and access ramps so that GDOT can put the bikeway in the project design and build it with the building of the bridge.

Phase Two is to figure out what the route will be on Hutchinson Island.

At this time, staff is recommending endorsement of Phase One. The exact route on Hutchinson Island has not been determined, and that part will be Phase Two. Ms. Love explained that outlining the route on Hutchinson Island was not as time sensitive as the issue of getting Phase One, the portion that is on the bridge and ramps, into the LRTP and Bikeway Plan so that it can be designed as part of the bridge project.

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

ACAT Action: the motion to endorse the amendment to the MPO Bikeway Plan and 2030 LRTP to include Phase One of the Back River Bridge Bikeway carried with none opposed.

III. Status Reports

A. Port Priority Projects

Ms. Love reported that at the State of the Port address on September 21, 2006, Doug Marchand identified the following as top priority projects in Chatham County:

Project: SR 307 Overpass over Norfolk Southern Track – This is between Garden City and Port Wentworth. The Port favors this project because the bridge will eliminate delays for trucks at the railroad crossing. The Georgia Ports Authority (GPA) is funding preliminary engineering.

Project: Brampton Road Connector – This project will construct a 4-lane highway and State Route Spur to connect Brampton Rd., Georgia Ports Authority Gate 2 and Foundation Dr. to SR 25, SR 21

and US 80. GPA is also assuming responsibility for preliminary engineering on this project. An initial concept meeting has been held and a final concept meeting is to be held on October 20, 2006.

Project: Grange Road Improvement – Grange Rd. serves heavy traffic to and from the port. The improvement will reconstruct Grange Rd from 2 to 3 lanes from SF 21 to SR 25 in Port Wentworth with project length of approximately 1.5 miles.

Project: Study of Savannah Northwest Tollway (Jimmy Deloach Pkwy Extension segment) – Study for a 4-lane limited access northwest tollway from SR 21 (near I-95) to I-16 at I516 to provide a reliable alternative to the SR 21 corridor and to provide a more reliable route for trucks traveling to and from the Port of Savannah. This is the study that CUTS amended to the TIP in August. GPA doesn't like toll roads so they are investigating a certain portion being non-toll.

This report is informational only, requiring no action, but staff wanted the committee to be aware of what the Port Authority considers to be their priority projects.

B. I-95 Lighting Improvements at I-16

Ms. Love reported that, at the August 23, 2006 Policy Committee meeting, Trip Tollison, of Savannah Area Chamber of Commerce, asked GDOT about lighting at I-95 and I-16. Ms. Teresa Scott, the GDOT representative, had reported back that GDOT was ready to go with the lighting project, but were waiting to receive the signed lighting agreements from Chatham County, City of Savannah, and City of Pooler. Mr. Tollison had responded that the local governments had not signed the agreement because they were trying to determine who would pay for the installation of the equipment. In light of the news of GDOT's study of the interchange, he had questioned whether the lighting project should be postponed, as the new lights might soon be

removed during a redesign of the interchange. Ms. Scott had pointed out that GDOT is only beginning a study of the interchange and any possible construction of a redesigned interchange would require at least four years on an aggressive schedule, not counting the time needed for preliminary engineering. She also had mentioned that a section of 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 the other 50% of the installation costs. GDOT will cover the cost of the materials.

C. Tybee Island Requests to GDOT for Pedestrian Improvement on Hwy 80

Ms. Love reported on correspondence between Tybee Island City Manager Diane Schleicher and GDOT on issues that would improve pedestrian safety. Ms. Schleicher had requested the following:

- Install crosswalks and pedestrian signage on Hwy 80 (Butler Ave) at the intersections of Hwy 80 and 3rd St, 11th St, 12th St, and 13th St.
- Lower the speed limit from 35 mph to 25 mph in the section of Hwy 80 from the beginning of the business district at Tybee Oaks to the Park of the Seven Flags.
- Install a flashing warning light at the intersection of Hwy 80 and McKenzie Street.
- Install raised crosswalks/speed tables at each of the Tybee Island crosswalks on Hwy 80 during the already scheduled mill and overlay on Hwy 80.

GDOT's response had included the following:

- Add left turn lanes at three intersections on Hwy 80 during the resurfacing project.
- Install a crosswalk of the traditional type on Hwy 80 at 12th St.

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- Perform a signalization study for intersection of Hwy 80 and Spanish Hammock. (road to Crab Shack)
 - Perform a speed study along Hwy 80 in Tybee Island
 - They are against using raised crosswalks/speed tables on a road classified as a major arterial or perceived to be a thoroughfare.
 - Notify Tybee Island City Manager's office if and when GDOT approved in-pavement LED crosswalks. GDOT will then require a Special Encroachment Permit if the City decides to implement this type of control on a state road.

Another suggestion from GDOT, received by e-mail, was that the City of 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 that segment would no longer be in the State system.

Ms. Schleicher informed the MPO staff on September 20, 2006 that GDOT had added the traditional crosswalk on Hwy 80 at 12th St., but that the City of Tybee Island was still waiting for GDOT to put in appropriate and consistent signage at each of the crosswalks on Hwy 80.

The City Manager will be attending a GDOT Bike/Ped conference. Dialog continues between the Tybee Island and GDOT on these issues. The State Bicycle and Pedestrian Coordinator may have some other ideas for improving pedestrian safety on Butler Avenue (Hwy 80).

IV. Agency Reports

A. Laidlaw/Teleride

Mr. Brian Frank distributed trip reports for August and September. He reported that trip denials were reduced from 15 in August to none in September. The goal is to have no trip request denied. If a customer calls by 4:00 PM the day before, that customer should have a ride.

Mr. Frank commented that the customer cancellation rate of 19% was very high. He is working to reduce this, thereby making it possible to serve others. There was discussion on the nature of these cancellations. Mr. Frank claimed there are a handful of customers who habitually make reservations and then cancel, having never taken a trip. This led to a discussion on the implementation of the complaint line. Such a line has not yet been established. Mr. Jeff Felser suggested there may be a correlation between the high cancellation number and the lack of a complaint line. Mr. Frank had considered using his office number so that complaints would go directly to him, but he was concerned that customers may erroneously use the line for emergencies as well. In such a case, the emergency might remain unaddressed for hours when he is away from his phone. Through extensive discussion it was agreed that emergency calls could be serviced by Teleride's existing service phone lines, but a complaint line is still needed. Mr. Jarrett asked Mr. Frank to come to the committee with an alternative plan if the direct line to his office cannot serve the purpose.

Committee members feel it is essential that clients have a reliable contact number where they can reach someone immediately. Committee members are also concerned about retaliatory action by Teleride staff if they find out a complaint has been lodged against them. Mr. Bill Oakley suggested that an independent third party be hired to handle this complaint line; such companies handle safe driving reports for trucks and buses. Mr. Felser suggested that

Teleride work out an arrangement with the City of Savannah to use the existing 311 line. The 311 line is a non-emergency complaint and customer service line. Mr. Tom Lamar questioned whether this line served only the City of Savannah or all of Chatham County. Mr. Felser said he would look into it. Mr. Frank agreed to investigate the use of an independent third party for the complaint line. Mr. Frank also reported that he has scheduled a series of sensitivity training classes for his staff.

B. Chatham Area Transit

Mr. Russell Jennette reported that 25 new bus shelters are now on hand. CAT is in the process of compiling a list for placement of these new shelters. Placement is determined by ridership and special demands. Mr. Jennette hopes to inform the committee of the selected locations at the December meeting. The approval process for placement of shelters is lengthy, as CAT has to obtain right-of-way permits from the appropriate agency (the City, the County, or GDOT). Permits can be denied for a variety of reasons, such as visibility problems. Once the permit is approved, the contract for putting in the slab must be signed, followed by the installation of the shelter. For some locations, a bench is more likely than a shelter. Mr. Felser asked about the possibility of a shelter at the corner of Bull St. and Broughton St. Mr. Jennette will look into that location.

Mr. Brian Leighton asked about a broken bench on Montgomery Crossroad and Abercorn. Mr. Jennette explained that all benches with red slats and concrete ends are old city benches, not CAT benches. He is working with the city to remove the old ones so that CAT may replace it with a new CAT bench. Mr. Jennette will get a list to Mr. Felser so that he can expedite this project with the City.

At the conclusion of Mr. Jennette's report, Mr. Oakley informed the committee that the CAT Board is united in their determination to have a downtown transfer center.

V. Other Business

Mr. Jarrett introduced a new committee member, Dr. Dandy. He is representing the Savannah Association for the Blind, as an alternate for Walt Simmons.

Mr. Oakley invited all to a free community breakfast meeting at the Trade Center on October 31, 2006 from 7:30 – 9:00 AM.

VI. Public Participation Opportunities

There were no comments at this meeting from other citizens.

VII. Adjournment

There being no other business to come before the Committee, the October 18, 2006 ACAT Committee Meeting adjourned. The next meeting is December 6, 2006.

Respectfully submitted,

Jane Love
Transportation Planner