



ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON ACCESSIBLE TRANSPORTATION MEETING SUMMARY

Wednesday, June 20, 2007
The Armstrong Center

2:00 p.m.
13040 Abercorn Ext.

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

Walt Simmons
Clealice Timmons
Staff Representative

Savannah Assn for the Blind
Coastal Center for Development
Services
Chatham County

<u>Member Alternates</u>	<u>Representing</u>	<u>Present</u>
Russell Jennette	Chatham Area Transit Authority	x
Tyrone Palmer	National Federation of the Blind	x

<u>Others Present</u>	<u>Representing</u>	<u>Present</u>
Marvin Green	Laidlaw	x
Barbara Setzto	MPO	x

Call to Order

Chairman McArthur Jarrett called the June 20, 2007 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. Status Reports

A. SR 204/Abercorn Extension Improvements

The Committee met in the ballroom of the Armstrong Center in order to review and discuss the public open house materials for the SR204/Abercorn Extension improvements. Mr. Tommy Crochet of McGee Partners made the presentation to the Committee. Mr. Crochet stated that the purpose of the improvements was two-fold: 1) to reduce congestion, particularly during peak hours, and 2) to reduce the crash rate which is currently 50% higher than the state

average. This is the second open house forum for public participation. The first was in November 2006. Since the first open house, some proposed alternatives have been eliminated. Mr. Crochet reported that the entire length for improvement (US 17 to Wilshire Blvd/Truman Pkwy Phase V) is divided into two projects. One project is from Rio Road to the Truman Parkway Phase V, and the other project is from US 17 to Rio Road.

Mr. Crochet spoke on the Rio Rd to Truman Pkwy section first. He reported that three of the four original alternatives have been eliminated. They are now working with the concept of a freeway with frontage roads on either side of the freeway. Mr. Bill Oakley asked if the frontage roads would include pedestrian and bicycle traffic. Mr. Crochet confirmed that pedestrian needs were included in the plan but provision for cyclists was not considered in this section, as this part of Abercorn Street is not designated as a bikeway in the Chatham County bikeway plan. A pedestrian bridge at certain locations would need to be warranted by a high volume of pedestrian traffic. Audible signals are a possibility. Sidewalks will be on both frontage roads along the outside of the frontage road.

Mr. Jarrett asked about the impact of this plan on the area around Holland Drive, where ramps will connect Truman Parkway Phase 5 with the new frontage roads, since this is primarily a residential area with a lot of pedestrian traffic. Mr. Crochet said that GDOT was struggling with this issue and he suggested that the public make their feelings known about it to GDOT. Pedestrians on the south edge of Abercorn will likely need to cross to north side of Abercorn in order to proceed beyond the Parkway connection. Engineers are reluctant to imply, with the installation of crosswalks, that a crossing of ramps is safe.

Mr. Crochet also mentioned the impact of this road improvement on the existing bus routes, particularly bus route #6 and #14.

Opportunities to cross the street will be limited and he suggested that changes in the bus routes may be necessary, such as a looping route that uses the free-flow U-turns under the overpasses. This idea would allow the bus to drop off the riders on the appropriate side of the street. The consultants will talk with the Chatham Area Transit Authority (CAT) about the impact of the roadway design on transit.

Mr. Crochet explained that there will be elevated freeway bridges over the current intersections along Abercorn.

Mr. Crochet reviewed the plans for the interchange at King George Blvd. They are still working on alternatives for routing the traffic from Pine Grove Rd and Grove Point Rd.

When asked about a timetable for construction of this project, Mr. Crochet stated that the US 17 to Rio Rd portion may be scheduled for construction in 2012, but will probably be pushed out further. His company will prepare and submit one environment document for both sections and it usually takes 1 to 1-1/2 years to get an environmental document approved. Funding for this project is 80% federal monies and 20% state monies.

When asked about the effect of this project on DeRenne Ave. traffic volume, Mr. Crochet said that this design alternative for Abercorn could result in an average of 6,000-7,000 fewer vehicles per day on DeRenne in the year 2035, compared to projected year-2035 traffic on DeRenne in the No-Build scenario. He emphasized that he is talking about the year 2035, not a reduction from current traffic volume on DeRenne.

Following this status report, the Committee moved to the meeting room to continue Committee business. Ms. Jane Love recommended moving to Action Items on the agenda to accommodate those members who had to leave early.

III. Action Items

A. Approval of the April 18, 2007 Advisory Committee on Accessible Transportation Minutes

It was moved and seconded to approve the April 18, 2007 Advisory Committee on Accessible Transportation Minutes.

ACAT Action: the motion to approve the April 18, 2007 Advisory Committee on Accessible Transportation Minutes carried with none opposed.

B. Endorsement of the SAFETEA-LU Interim Plan Revision

Ms. Love reported that it was necessary to bring the 2030 Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) into compliance with the new SAFETEA-LU regulations. The revisions concern the process for conducting regular updates of the plan. This addendum for SAFETEA-LU compliance explains these changes, which include:

- An eighth planning factor (“security of the transportation system for motorized and non-motorized users”) and expansion of the planning factor for environment and quality of life in the planning process.
- Expansion of the list of agencies and organizations to be consulted in the planning process.
- Expansion of the Public Involvement Plan into a Participation Plan.
- Identification of potential conflict between projects in the plan and environmental assets (natural & cultural), as well as potential mitigation activities.
- Key issues from the Governor’s Strategic Highway Safety Plan (SHSP) which are relevant to the MPO.

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- Operations and management strategies to improve the performance of existing transportation facilities.

She reported that there will be two public hearings on this draft. One is tomorrow (6/21/07) at the CAC meeting and the other is next Wednesday (6/27/07) at the Policy Committee Meeting.

Mr. Oakley moved and Mr. Brian Leighton seconded to endorse the SAFETEA-LU Interim Plan Revision draft as presented.

ACAT Action: the motion to endorse the SAFETEA-LU Interim Plan Revision draft as presented was carried with none opposed.

C. Endorsement of FY 2008-2011 Transportation Improvement Program

Ms. Love reminded the Committee that each year the MPO adopts a program outlining federal transportation money expenditures for the next four years. In order to maintain continuity the staff has recommended that the previous TIP priorities be continued in this new TIP.

Ms. Love confirmed to Mr. Jarrett that the project for the widening of the Gulfstream road, addressed at the April meeting, is included in this TIP. Mr. Jarrett is bothered and concerned with the comment by the Chairman of the Policy Committee that ACAT's concern about sidewalks would be taken "under advisement".

Ms. Love explained that the project development process requires that funding be approved before the design is complete since some of this money is needed to develop the design and study alternatives. Federal monies are distributed for three phases of a project – preliminary engineering, acquisition of right of way, and construction.

Mr. Jarrett is concerned that the Policy Committee approved this amendment for widening with no stipulation about sidewalks.

Ms. Love reported that traditionally the MPO does not get involved in the details of the design of a project. She also believes that the Policy Committee members are used to the process in which these details get worked out later. There will be other opportunities for public input into the design, and this is where the issue of pedestrian and transit user needs could be raised again.

Ms. Love explained the MPO's effort to change the process with the introduction of context-sensitive design guidelines. This brings up design issues and user issues earlier in the process. As the project goes into concept design and public meetings are held on the concept design, the issue of sidewalks can be raised again.

Mr. Oakley reported that at the last CAT Board meeting, the local match for bus purchases in FY 2008 were eliminated, but they show up on page 67 of the TIP. Can the Federal portion of the funding be moved to another year? Ms. Love would follow up with Ms. Wykoda Wang on this issue.

Mr. Oakley moved to endorse the TIP with reservations with respect to proper and accessible pedestrian amenities for the Gulfstream area and with proper treatment of whatever the implications are from the most recently adopted CAT budget, regarding the allocation of the monies for the funding of CAT capital projects as indicated in the TIP.

The motion was seconded.

ACAT Action: the motion to endorse the TIP with reservations with respect to proper and accessible pedestrian amenities for the Gulfstream area and with proper treatment of whatever the implications are from the most recently adopted CAT budget,

regarding the allocation of the monies for the funding of CAT capital projects as indicated in the TIP carried with none opposed.

IV. Agency Reports

A. Laidlaw/Teleride

Mr. Jarrett introduced Mr. C.J. McCampbel as the new project manager for Teleride with Laidlaw. Mr. McCampbel has just begun in his position with Laidlaw, and did not present a formal report, but attended as a courtesy call to introduce himself.

Mr. Jarrett stressed the importance of reciprocal dialogue and cooperative spirit between all parties. He recommended that Mr. McCampbel meet with him or Mr. Leighton periodically in addition to ACAT meetings.

B. Chatham Area Transit

Mr. Russell Jennette reported on the progress of bus shelter installation. Of the 25 that are planned, 8 installations have been completed.

He explained that they were prevented from installing some shelters by GDOT because of pending turn lanes. He is seeking county approval for some installations and city approval for others.

Ms. Love expressed concern about the impact of the SR 204 changes on transit users. Due to the grade separation of the freeway at key intersections, the visibility of destinations across the freeway will be limited for transit users on the frontage roads. She asked that CAT keep this in mind in their discussion with the consultants regarding the SR 204 project. Mr. Jennette said he would take these comments to

Mr. Hakim, who should be one of the CAT staff included in discussions with GDOT consultants.

Mr. Jarrett would like ACAT members to have a copy of CAT's Transportation Development Plan (TDP). Ms. Love mentioned that she had checked with Ms. Iaderosa and Mr. Palmer while developing this month's agenda, and they had said the draft TDP is not quite ready. She said that it is MPO staff's intention to bring the Plan before all the CUTS committees when CAT is ready to share the draft.

Mr. Leighton asked for improved accessibility, specifically a shelter, at the White Bluff & Montgomery Crossroads intersection. Mr. Jennette will follow up.

VI. Other Business

There was no other business before the committee.

VII. Public Participation Opportunities

There were no comments from the public.

VIII. Adjournment

There being no other business to come before the Committee, the June 20, 2007 ACAT Committee Meeting adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Jane Love
Transportation Planner