



CHATHAM URBAN TRANSPORTATION STUDY

Citizens Advisory Committee Meeting Summary

Mendonsa Hearing Room
112 East State Street

September 16, 2004

5:00 p.m.

Members Present:

Brant Attaway
Harold Burgstiner
Phyllis Hardeman
Ronald Kolman
Joe Laufenberg
Henry Levy
Helen McCracken, Vice Chair
Joyce Murlless
Stephen Traub
Jill Weaver

Representing:

City of Savannah
Chatham County
Thunderbolt
Chatham County
Savannah
City of Tybee Island
Thunderbolt
Chatham County
Chatham County
Chatham County

Others Present:

Al Black, P. E.
Valerie Brown
Marianne Heimes
Beth Kinstler
Pam O'Brien
Teresa Scott
Patrick Shay
Pat Stringer
Thomas L. Thomson, P.E., AICP
Wykoda Wang
James Weaver
Michael Weiner, P.E.
Mark Wilkes, P.E., AICP

Representing:

Chatham County
Chatham Area Transit
Interested Citizen
Interested Citizen
Interested Citizen, Tybee Island
GDOT, Jesup
Interested Citizen
Interested Citizen
MPC, Executive Director
MPC
Kensington Park
City of Savannah Traffic Engineer
MPC

I. Call to Order

Ms. McCracken called the meeting to order and called the roll.

I. Informational Reports (verbal)

A. City of Savannah

Mr. Weiner reviewed the status of projects currently underway in the City of Savannah. There were no questions.

II. Action Items:

A. Approval of August 19, 2004 CUTS Citizens Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes

Mr. Kolman **moved** to approve the minutes of the August 19, 2004 CUTS Citizens Advisory Committee Minutes. Mr. Traub seconded the motion.

CAC Action: The motion to approve the minutes of the August 19, 2004 CUTS Citizens Advisory Committee meeting carried with none opposed. Voting were Ms. Hardeman, Mr. Laufenberg, Mr. Attaway, Mr. Burgstiner, Mr. Kolman, Mr. Traub, Ms. Murlless, Ms. Weaver, Mr. Levy, and Ms. McCracken.

B. Endorsement of Revised Draft 2030 Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) to Policy Committee

Mr. Wilkes stated that the document that is before the CAC differs from the document that was included in the pre-meeting mailing. Several revisions were made to the Highway Project List, the Transit List, and minor revisions to the Financial Plan. A map from the Congestion Management Study, showing existing levels of congestion, was added to the LRTP. Additional comments were added about the Project Prioritization Policy following several public meetings. The Transportation Amenities narrative was added to Section 7 of the LRTP to explain the philosophy of the Amenities Plan, which includes a provision that one percent of construction funds would be set aside for landscaping or other related transportation amenities. At the request of FHWA all of the amenities corridors have been listed. These corridors were identified by the committees.

Mr. Wilkes added that in addition to preserving what we have we will be developing a plan and design guidelines for the facilities and the amenities that would be included in new road construction projects.

Mr. Laufenberg stated that improvements to Abercorn Street are critical. These improvements are more important than the Diamond Causeway.

Mr. Attaway added that moving up the project on Route 204 near King George Boulevard would help the situation.

Ms. Murlless stated that it has long been the position of this committee that the priorities, the Diamond Causeway and Whitfield section were misplaced and that the priority is more on toward Abercorn and taking care of the traffic that would be dumped there from Truman Parkway and to see this deleted from the LRTP, even the long range, after Whitfield and Diamond Causeway were moved up in the priority list is disappointing. What remains in the LRTP for Abercorn Street, in terms of working on alleviating congestion?

Mr. Wilkes replied that when adopted this plan would include an eight lane widening from the terminus of Truman Parkway Phase V to Rio Road.

Mr. Burgstiner stated that the CAC needs to make a recommendation to have this project moved forward rather than waiting five years. The traffic is a big mess.

Ms. Scott stated that this project would have to be evaluated by many other agencies, especially with regards to any impact on the wetlands. Five years sounds like a long time but it takes a long time to do preliminary work. This is just getting started because the preliminary funds have just been authorized. The MPO could ask for the project to be advanced but there is no guarantee.

Mr. Black added that the initial planning takes time. It looks like a long ways off but it is not.

Mr. Thomson indicated that because the project is funded with state funding the process is long. If only local funds were used the process could be shorter.

Ms. Scott added that the Diamond Causeway project shows right-of-way scheduled for 2008, so that project has not been scheduled ahead of the Abercorn improvements.

Mr. Kolman stated that the motion that was passed at the previous meeting should be repassed. He moved to approve the LRTP subject to the condition that the following priorities take precedence over anything else in the LRTP: 1) the completion of the Truman Parkway to Phase V, which is connecting it back to Abercorn Street again; 2) a facilitator to connect the east side of Savannah to the west side of Savannah on the north side of Savannah; and, 3) to relieve the traffic from the end of the Phase 5 of the Truman Parkway to Interstate 95. Mr. Laufenberg seconded the motion.

CAC Action: The motion carried with none opposed. The motion was to approve the LRTP subject to the condition that the following priorities take precedence over anything else in the LRTP: 1) the completion of the Truman Parkway to Phase V, which is connecting it

back to Abercorn Street again; 2) a facilitator to connect the east side of Savannah to the west side of Savannah on the north side of Savannah; and, 3) to relieve the traffic from the end of the Phase 5 of the Truman Parkway to Interstate 95. Voting were Mr. Attaway, Mr. Burgstiner, Ms. Hardeman, Mr. Kolman, Mr. Laufenberg, Mr. Levy, Ms. Murlless, Mr. Traub, Ms. McCracken and Ms. Weaver.

Ms. Wang reviewed the Public Involvement Process for the LRTP. Copies of the comments were distributed at the meeting. Comments not directly related to the LRTP have been forwarded to the appropriate agency for follow-up. The draft plan and comment form were posted on the website.

Public Comments: Pam O'Brien, Tybee Island resident, stated that she and many residents of Tybee Island are opposed to the proposed widening of U. S. Highway 80 to Tybee Island.

Beth Kinstler stated that the Federal government saw the need for this project. However, they do not understand local issues.

Marianne Heimes stated that there was a public hearing on this issue.

Patricia Stringer was seeking information about the proposed transition of CAT from a bus company to a bi-state mobility enterprise. She is also seeking information about several projects under that which are the high speed ferries and downtown trolleys.

Ms. McCracken had to leave the meeting at this point. Mr. Kolman chaired the remainder of meeting.

James Weaver, Kensington Park resident, stated that he would like public comments to be shown as an agenda item. He added that additional traffic is not needed on Abercorn Street.

Ms. Hardeman asked that the bike trail not cross through her backyard. The trail currently travels along a former trolley path, which goes through her backyard.

Mr. Wilkes replied that the bikeway is part of a plan that was adopted in 2000. However, there is no money to implement the plan.

Ms. Hardeman **moved** that the plan be amended to take the bikeway from the old trolley right-of-way to the side of Bonaventure Road. Mr. Burgstiner seconded the motion.

CAC Action. The motion carried. The motion was that the Bikeway Plan be amended to take the bikeway from the old trolley right-of-way to the side of Bonaventure Road. Voting in favor of the motion were Mr. Burgstiner, Ms. Hardeman, Mr. Kolman, Mr. Laufenberg, Mr.

Levy, Ms. Murlless, and Ms. Weaver. Abstaining were Mr. Traub and Mr. Attaway.

C. Endorsement of Revised of Draft FY 2005-2007 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) to Policy Committee

Ms. Wang stated that several changes were made to the TIP since the original document was presented in September. A revised document was sent out in the pre-meeting mailing. Staff also worked with Chatham Area Transit to develop Transit Tier 2 projects. This appears as Appendix B of the TIP. Most of the comments received were addressing the LRTP.

Mr. Wilkes added that Q23 funds are allocated at the discretion of the MPO. In the prior draft an amount was set to supplement the staff budget. Currently staff is under budget and under staffed. The figures for Whitfield Avenue were adjusted accordingly to make up for that shortfall.

Mr. Laufenberg **moved** to approve the draft FY 2005-2007 Transportation Improvement Program subject to the prioritization of the completion of the Truman Parkway to Phase V, which is connecting it back to Abercorn Street and a facilitator to connect the east side of Savannah to the west side of Savannah on the north side of Savannah and also to expedite the connection of Phase V of the Truman Parkway to Interstate 95. That these projects have priority over everything else in the draft. Mr. Traub seconded the motion.

CAC Action: **The motion carried with none opposed.** The motion was to approve the draft FY 2005-2007 Transportation Improvement Program subject to the prioritization of the completion of the Truman Parkway to Phase V, which is connecting it back to Abercorn Street and a facilitator to connect the east side of Savannah to the west side of Savannah on the north side of Savannah and also to expedite the connection of Phase V of the Truman Parkway to Interstate 95. That these projects have priority over everything else in the draft. Voting were: Mr. Attaway, Mr. Burgstiner, Ms. Hardeman, Mr. Laufenberg, Mr. Levy, Ms. Murlless, Mr. Traub, Mr. Kolman, and Ms. Weaver.

III. Status Report

Connecting Savannah

Mr. Kolman stated that the members of the CAC received a notice about a meeting on connecting Savannah to be held Monday, September 27, 2004, in the evening at the Coastal Georgia Center. He urged CAC members to attend this meeting.

IV. Informational Reports

A. Georgia Department of Transportation

Ms. Scott reviewed the status of projects in the Savannah area. Projects are moving forward. A copy of the report was distributed at the meeting.

Mr. Burgstiner asked when something would be done with U. S. Highway 17 South near the Wal-Mart.

Ms. Scott stated that GDOT does not have any control over what a contractor does once he gets out there. It is not known when the project would be completed.

B. Chatham County

Mr. Black reviewed the status of projects in Chatham County. A copy of the report was distributed at the meeting. The extended completion date for the Stephenson Avenue road widening is now November 30, 2004.

C. Chatham Area Transit Authority

Ms. Brown informed the committee that CAT is moving forward to retrofit ten of the older buses with voice enunciators. Also, effective October 4, 2004, the two West Chatham bus routes which now serve the Savannah Airport and the west side of Savannah will also serve the Crosstown Business Center.

Mr. Traub moved that the CAC recommend that serious consideration be given to the former Sears building on Henry Street as a place to locate the transfer center. Ms. Murlless seconded the motion.

CAC Action: **The motion carried with none opposed.** The motion was that the CAC recommend that serious consideration be given to the former Sears building on Henry Street as a place to locate the transfer center. Voting were: Mr. Attaway, Mr. Burgstiner, Ms. Hardeman, Mr. Laufenberg, Mr. Levy, Ms. Murlless, Mr. Traub, Mr. Kolman, and Ms. Weaver.

Mr. Kolman stated that this could be transmitted to CAT in the form of a Resolution, which could be communicated directly to CAT.

Mr. Wilkes stated that staff would be happy to assist and advise the committee, but the first draft of the wording needs to come from the CAC.

Mr. Kolman asked staff to prepare a memo for Mr. Mundell indicating the subject matter of the resolution and to whom it should be sent. The material could be e-mailed to Mr. Wilkes.

VI. Adjournment

There being no further business to come before the Citizens Advisory Committee, the

September 16, 2004 meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Mark A. Wilkes, P.E., AICP
Director of Transportation Planning