

I. Approval of Agenda

Mr. Tony Abbott, serving as CAC Chairman in the absence of Russ Peterson, called the June 29, 2008 Citizens Advisory Committee to order. Ms. Jane Love outlined the changes to the agenda since the mailing. It was moved and seconded to approve the agenda as presented.

CAC Action: the motion to approve the agenda for the June 19, 2008 Citizens Advisory Committee meeting as presented carried with none opposed.

II. Action Items

A. Approval of April 17, 2008 Citizens Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes

It was moved and seconded to approve the April 17, 2008 Citizens Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes.

CAC Action: the motion to approve the April 17, 2008 Citizens Advisory Committee Meeting minutes carried with none opposed.

B. Election to fill vacant office of CAC Vice Chairperson

Mr. Abbott reminded the committee of the news of CAC Chairman Clint Murphy's resignation, as had been delivered to the committee in a memorandum from Ms. Love in their package. As former Vice Chairman Russ Peterson is now the Chairman, the CAC must elect a new Vice Chairperson to serve the remainder of the term, which ends in two months. Ms. Love added that current officers would be eligible for reelection in August. He opened the floor for nominations. Mr. Jack Knops and Mr. Tony Abbott were the nominees. Each nominee summarized for the committee the reasons they felt suited to fill the position of Vice Chairperson. Since Mr. Abbott is a candidate, he temporarily turned over the chairmanship of the meeting to Mr. Henry Levy for the purpose of conducting the election for CAC Vice Chairperson. A secret ballot was conducted. Ms. Love collected and counted the votes. The committee elected Mr. Abbott to the position of Vice Chairperson with a vote of 6 to 3 with two abstentions.

C. Requested Amendment to the 2030 Long Range Transportation Plan for Georgia Ports Authority/Norfolk Southern Project

Ms. Love directed the members's attention to the staff report that was distributed today. MPO staff received this amendment request after the mailing. Ms. Love explained the amendment process for the Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP). At the first hearing today, staff is asking the committee to endorse further study of the request. At the August meeting staff will report the results of the further study and make a recommendation on whether to amend the Plan..

Mr. Randy Weitman from Georgia Ports Authority reported to the committee. The funds for this project were provided through a SAFETEA-LU grant of \$5,000,000; \$1,000,000 per year for 5 years. At this time they would like to spend \$1,500,000 for this railroad project for intermodal freight, which is designed to relieve congestion and promote safety. The total construction cost for the project is \$7,024,000; Norfolk Southern would pay the majority (\$5,524,000).

Mr. Weitman's presentation included photos and drawings of the proposed "wye" to be construction. With the completion of the "wye", the long, intermodal trains will be able to access the transfer facility without going through residential area and crossing numerous local roads. Crossings are in Savannah, Garden City, Port Wentworth and unincorporated portions of Chatham County. Mr. Weitman showed numerous slides illustrating the current route and the proposed route. The proposed route will reduce the total blockage time at the crossings by an average of seven hours a day. These funds are earmarked and therefore this project would not take away funds from any other project that is currently in the Plan.

No tracks are being abandoned. This route will not eliminate all rail traffic on the current route, but it will reduce traffic. The land for the new proposed route is already owned by Norfolk Southern. The funds will be used for the purchase of rail and equipment. No new property needs to be acquired for this project.

It was moved and second to endorse further study of the amendment to the 2030 Long Range Transportation Plan to include the Georgia Ports Authority/Norfolk Southern Project.

CAC Action: the motion to endorse further study of the amendment to the 2030 Long Range Transportation Plan to include the Georgia Ports Authority/Norfolk Southern Project carried with none opposed.

- D. Amendments to the FY 2008-2011 Transportation Improvement Program**
- **Staff Presentation**
 - **Public Comments/Public Hearing**
 - **Close Public Hearing**
 - **CAC Discussion and Action**
 1. **Action on TIP Amendment for Transit Section**
 2. **Action on TIP Amendment for Hutchinson Island Projects**
 3. **Action on TIP Amendment for additional planning (L230) funds (PI 0008964)**

Regarding the requested amendment to the Transit Section, Ms. Beth Thulin, the new finance director for Chatham Area Transit (CAT), reported that several funds had failed to be incorporated in the TIP. She is now requesting that these funds be added to the current TIP. The funds are for operating expenses, capital projects, Job Access Reverse Commute grants, and New Freedom grants. The operating portion will assist with the shortfall in operating costs. Capital funds will be for new buses. The Job Access Reverse

Commuter is a program for helping people get to work. The New Freedom program is to assist those who are physically challenged.

Regarding the requested amendment for the Hutchinson Island projects, Ms. Wang reported that there were earmarked funds from Federal Transit Administration to be used for the Riverwalk Extension on Parcel 7/Slip 3. To access the funds it must be in the TIP because these are federal dollars. The 20% local match will come from the convention center. CAT will be the recipient of the federal transit funds.

Mr. Jack Knops asked if the money could be used elsewhere. Ms. Wang explained that these are earmarked funds, so the funds can only be used for this specific project. Congress has designated the \$1,670,000.00 for this project and this project only.

Ms. Love explained that this Riverwalk extension is planned along Slip 3 is part of the Master Plan for Hutchinson Island. The area is intended to become more urban, less industrial, and therefore sidewalks will be appropriate for future uses. Ms. Love said that we can accept it into the TIP or reject it, but we cannot reassign it.

Ms. Wang also presented the third requested amendment to incorporate additional Highway Planning funds, which staff had pursued through the Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) for the MPO's strategic planning study.

Ms. Wang noted that the staff advertised a 15-day public comment for these amendments.

With the conclusion of staff presentation, Mr. Abbott opened the public hearing. There being no public comments, Mr. Abbott closed the public hearing.

There being no further discussion, Mr. Abbott ruled that the committee vote on each amendment separately.

CAC Action: the committee voted unanimously to endorse the TIP Amendment for the Transit section.

CAC Action: the committee voted to endorse the TIP Amendment for the Hutchinson Island Projects. There were three opposed.

CAC Action: the committee voted unanimously to endorse the TIP Amendment for additional planning (L230) funds (PI 0008964).

E. Amendment to the FY 2009 Unified Planning Work Program for additional planning (L230) funds and revised Commuter Program activities

Mr. Mark Wilkes explained that this amendment is a formality to incorporate the L230 planning funds just approved into the TIP into the FY 2009 Unified Planning Work Program, and to amend the description of the Coastal Commuters program activities to include registering the trademark for Coastal Commuters so that funds will be accessible

for such action. Ms. Love said that she had solicited comments from planners at the Federal Transit Administration, regarding this change, and had received none so far.

It was moved and seconded to endorse the amendment to the FY 2009 Unified Planning Work Program for additional planning (L230) funds and revised Commuter Program activities.

CAC Action: the motion to endorse the amendment to the FY 2009 Unified Planning Work Program for additional planning (L230) funds and revised Commuter Program activities carried with none opposed.

III. Status Reports

A. **Bicycle Policies and Design Guidance**

Ms. Love referred members to a report in their packet. She noted that staff reviewed the existing GDOT policies for accommodation and design. The GDOT accommodation policy is not as broad as those from the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO), the South Carolina DOT, and the MPO's own county-wide Bikeway Plan. A few of AASHTO's design recommendations are also included in the report. GDOT and local agencies use these guidelines currently.

Mr. Levy said that separate bikeway paths along roadways should be considered. Europe has many of these. Ms. Love explained that a truly separate bikeway could be paid for by Transportation Enhancement funds, but that GDOT would refuse to include that type of bikeway in their projects, since the Department apparently interprets the State constitution as barring the use of motor fuel tax revenue for off-road paths. Ms. Love said that there is a difference of opinion within the bicycling community about the desirability of off-road bicycle facilities. Operational conflicts are a problem at the intersections of the path with the roadway.

Mr. John Bennett asked if any of GDOT's funding came from sources other than the gasoline tax. Ms. Love was not sure and will look into this.

B. **Proposed Lazaretto Creek Bridge Bikeway cross-section and examples of alternatives**

Ms. Love reported in response to discussion at the last Policy Committee meeting regarding a barrier-protected bikeway in the proposed bridge replacement project. Ms. Love showed diagrams of GDOT's proposed ten-foot bikeable shoulders on the bridge. She also showed photos of alternatives, which exist in other parts of the country. To provide a barrier and still conform to GDOT's horizontal clearance policy would require a ten-foot shoulder, a barrier, and a minimum five-foot bikeway beyond the barrier on each side of the bridge, thus increasing the total width of the proposed bridge by more than ten feet.

Mr. Levy pointed out that the Lazaretto Creek Bridge is only one point away from being deemed "unsafe". He also noted that whatever improvements are being considered for the Lazaretto Creek Bridge should be applied to the Bull River Bridge.

It was moved and seconded to convey to the proper authority, in writing, that the Lazaretto Creek Bridge and the Bull River Bridge have a protective barrier between the bicycle traffic and automobile traffic.

Mr. Bennett believes that a barrier would also solve the problem of debris on the roadway. Mrs. Helen McCracken expressed concern that an emergency vehicle lane is still very important and that it not be sacrificed.

CAC Action: the motion to convey to the proper authority, in writing, that the Lazaretto Creek Bridge and the Bull River Bridge have a protective barrier between the bicycle traffic and automobile traffic carried with none opposed.

C. Gwinnett Street Widening Project

Ms. Wykoda Wang reported on the widening of Gwinnett St. between I-16 west to Stiles Ave. One reason for the project is to elevate the portion of the roadway that is subject to flooding. The other reason for the project is to widen the roadway from two lanes to four lanes. SCAD is proposing a development on the north side of the roadway, which is expected to increase traffic. Ms. Wang referred the members to the written report. City of Savannah held a public information open house on the project. They will also replace the signals at Gwinnett and Stiles. The city declined to give a presentation at this time, but encouraged any comments. The environmental document is about 90% finished and then the city will acquire right-of-way with federal dollars.

Mr. Levy moved that the City staff present to this committee why they need this project and show the design and drawings for this project. Ms. Wang noted that MPO staff had requested a presentation from City staff. Ms. Love noted that this project description, including the drawings, has been put before the public at the Public Information Open House. Ms. Wang encouraged members to send comments.

There was no second to the motion and no vote on the motion.

D. CUTS/MPO Project Prioritization for input into GDOT's Project Prioritization report to the Commissioner

Ms. Wang explained that staff had reviewed the status of projects in the 2030 LRTP to determine their construction-readiness status and whether a project had funding programmed in the TIP. She reviewed Table 1, 2 and 3. Because of the state-wide funding shortage, staff is attempting to prioritize those projects that are ready for construction in the belief that GDOT will avoid cutting funds for projects that are ready.

Mr. Levy asked if any studies are underway to determine how many of these roadways will no longer be needed now that gas is so costly. Ms. Wang noted that some projects have

already been moved to the Vision Plan, due to the updated cost-estimates in the so-called Year-of-Expenditure Update of the Plan this spring. When the LRTP is fully updated, she believes that many projects will be cut out and only the absolutely necessary projects will remain. Mr. Levy wants staff to examine “need” and not just “readiness”. He’s concerned that some projects that are ready may not be as needed as other projects that are not ready. Ms. Wang noted that each project is ranked by a point system which considers these issues. She also reminded the committee that there are certain political projects that staff cannot control.

.IV. Subcommittee Reports

A. Short Term Improvements Committee

Mr. Stephen Traub referred the members to the printed report that he had distributed at the meeting and asked for any questions. Mr. Levy spoke to item #2 (median curbs on President St.). Mr. Traub explained that item #10 is proposed to improve the exit from northbound Truman Pkwy onto Victory Drive.

V. Agency Reports

Ms. Love responded to a question that Mr. Jack Knops had sent to her concerning the purchase of the AASHTO “Greenbook.” AASHTO has an online bookstore. Mr. Knops said that it appears that only agencies or association members can purchase it, not individual citizens. Mr. Knops will investigate further.

VI. Other Business

Mr. Abbott reminded the committee of elections for Chair and Vice Chair at the August meeting. Mr. Abbott and Mr. Levy will serve on the Nominating Committee. Mr. Abbott asked that staff assist them with process. Ms. Love noted that the bylaws do not require a nominating committee. Mr. Abbott will bring a report from the Nominating Committee to the August meeting. Ms. Love added that nominations also may be received from the floor at the August meeting.

VII. Other Public Comments

Mr. Bennett reminded all about the upcoming “Dump the Pump” day.

Ms. Linda Smith noted that the CAT bus system does not go to Port Wentworth. She would love to be able to take the bus. She has spoken to the Port Wentworth city officials. Mr. Bennett suggested she look into the new Coastal Commuters program. Ms. Kinstler recommended looking for a ride match through Craig’s List.

Ms. McCracken suggested that when CAT purchases new buses that they purchase smaller buses. She always sees the buses empty. She also asked if anyone knew the significance of the logo for the downtown DOT buses.

Ms. Love reminded the committee that the public information meeting for Chatham Area Transit's environmental assessment document for the proposed Transit Center will be held on Thursday, June 26 at 124 Bull St. at 5:00 PM.

VIII. Adjournment

There being no other business to come before the Committee, the June 19, 2008 Citizens Advisory Committee was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Jane Love
Transportation Planner