



CHATHAM URBAN TRANSPORTATION STUDY

POLICY COMMITTEE MEETING SUMMARY

Arthur A. Mendonsa Hearing Room
110 East State Street

February 23, 2005

9:00 A.M.

Voting Members

Russ Abolt
Michael Brown
LTC Jeffrey J. Goble
Patrick S. Graham
Tim Holbrook
William W. Hubbard
James Hungerpiller
Otis Johnson
Tom Lamar
Mike Lamb
Scott Lansing
Pete Liakakis
Harold Linnenkohl
Timothy S. Mackey
Doug J. Marchand
Lee Mundell
Walter Parker
James A. Petrea
Andy Quinney
Representative
Ben A. Rozier
Eric R. Winger

Representing

Chatham County
City of Savannah
Hunter Army Airfield
Savannah Airport Commission
City of Port Wentworth
Savannah Area Chamber of Commerce
Town of Vernonburg
City of Savannah
Chairman, ACAT
City of Pooler
Chatham Area Transit Authority
Chairman Chatham County Commission
GDOT
Chairman, MPC
Georgia Ports Authority
Chairman, CAC
City of Tybee Island
Town of Thunderbolt
City of Garden City
CAT Board of Directors
City of Bloomingdale
Savannah Economic Development
Authority (SEDA)

Present

X
X
X

X
X

X
X
X
X

X

Voting Member Alternates

Tom Cannon
George Fidler, P.E.
Matthew Fowler
Jean Iaderosa
Jack Lewis
Peter Shonka, P. E.
Trip Tollison
Randy Weitman

Representing

City of Garden city
Savannah Airport Commission
GDOT – Atlanta
Chatham Area Transit Authority
ACAT
City of Savannah
Savannah Area Chamber of Commerce
Georgia Ports Authority

Present

X
X
X

X
X
X
X

Others Present:

Allan Black
Linda Carpenter
Betty Carter
Billy Hair
Peter Plumeau
Theresa Scott
Thomas Thomson, P.E., AICP
Mike Weiner, P. E.
Robert Wilder
Mark Wilkes, PE, AICP
Wykoda Wang

Representing:

Chatham County x
Wilbur Smith Associates x
GDOT – Jesup x
Chatham County, Former Chair x
Wilbur Smith Associates x
GDOT – Jesup x
MPC Executive Director x
City of Savannah x
Interested Citizen x
MPO Staff x
MPO Staff x

Mr. Liakakis called the meeting to order.

I. Resolution for Dr. Billy Hair

Chairman Liakakis introduced Dr. Billy Hair, the past Chairman of the MPO.

Mr. Thomson was asked to read a Resolution from the CUTS Policy Committee in honor of Dr. Hair's service to the community.

Mr. Abolt **moved** to adopt the Resolution of Appreciation for Dr. Hair. Mr. Lansing seconded the motion.

Policy Committee Action: The motion to adopt the Resolution of Appreciation for Dr. Hair carried with none opposed. Voting were: Mr. Abolt, Mr. Brown, Mr. Cannon, Mr. Fidler, Mr. Fowler, LTC Goble, Mr. Hungerpiller, Dr. Johnson, Mr. Lamb, Mr. Lansing, Mr. Liakakis, Dr. Lewis, Mr. Mackey, Mr. Mundell, Mr. Parker, Mr. Tollison, Mr. Weitman, and Mr. Winger.

II. Approval of Agenda

Hearing no objections or corrections, Mr. Liakakis stated that the agenda would stand approved as distributed.

III. MPO Briefing

Mr. Thomson introduced Peter Plumeau, Wilbur Smith Associates, who was present to lead a workshop on the role of the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO).

Mr. Plumeau outlined the core responsibilities of an MPO. An MPO ensures that federal spending on transportation occurs through a comprehensive, cooperative, and continuing

process. He added that staff would make the presentation available to Policy Committee members following this meeting.

IV. Committee Reports (verbal)

A. Advisory Committee on Accessible Transportation

Dr. Jack Lewis stated that ACAT endorsed the TIP amendments; however, the committee members expressed concerns that so often the disabled in transportation issues appears to be peripheral. The transportation issues that affect the disability community should be given full consideration.

B. Citizens Advisory Committee

Mr. Mundell stated that the CAC has asked that the Policy Committee consider more highly visible directional signs for the driving public and that the MPC consider publicizing a mailing address for citizens to send in ideas for improving traffic flow.

Mr. Thomson stated that the MPC webpage has capability for receiving e-mails from the public on a variety of matters.

C. Technical Coordinating Committee (TCC)

Mr. Wilkes stated that the TCC reviewed the information items that are before the Policy Committee at this meeting. The TCC has endorsed the amendments to the FY 2005-2007 TIP.

V. Action Items

A. Approval of November 18, 2004 Policy Committee Meeting Minutes

Mr. Abolt **moved** to approve the minutes of the November 18, 2004 Policy Committee Meeting. Mr. Mackey seconded the motion.

Policy Committee Action: **The motion to approve the November 18, 2004 Policy Committee Meeting Minutes carried with none opposed.** Voting were: Mr. Abolt, Mr. Brown, Mr. Cannon, Mr. Fidler, Mr. Fowler, LTC Goble, Mr. Hungerpiller, Dr. Johnson, Mr. Lamb, Mr. Lansing, Mr. Liakakis, Dr. Lewis, Mr. Mackey, Mr. Mundell, Mr. Parker, Mr. Tollison, Mr. Weitman, and Mr. Winger.

B. Approval of FY 2005-2007 TIP Amendments

Ms. Wang stated that the TIP is the short-term transportation programming document. The FY 2005-2007 TIP was adopted in September 2004. Since then staff has received requests for six amendments to the TIP. Three requests are for highway projects - requesting \$5,000 of Q23 funds for PE oversight for FY 2005 respectively for: 1) Jimmy

DeLoach Parkway Interchange at US 80; 2) State Route 307 Extension from U. S. Highway 17 to Garrard Avenue; and, 3) Islands Expressway bridge replacement. There are also three Transit requests: 1) Section 5307 Transit to change the scope from "communications" to "passenger amenities"; 2) Section 5309 projects to reduce the funding for "passenger amenities" by 10 per cent; and, 3) a request to add a line item "communications" to section 5309. These transit projects were requested by Chatham Area Transit. The plan is still balanced after the amendments.

Mr. Lansing requested to add a funding code of Section 115 to the Water Ferry Service. Mr. Kish stated that the information is already listed as Ferry Boat Discretionary. Listing it under FHWA Section 115 funds should be sufficient as far as illustrating it in the TIP. Changing the heading to FHWA/115 would work.

Mr. Fowler stated that this would be appropriate.

Mr. Brown asked for clarification on how the plan would be balanced. How much has been taken out of passenger amenities?

Mr. Lansing stated that the change is to add a line item for programs rather than to change the dollar amounts. Projects are moving between funding categories. There is no significant change programmatically.

Mr. Brown asked for clarification on the need for an elevated interchange at Jimmy DeLoach.

Mr. Black replied that the project is listed on the SPLOST. Growth on the Westside would warrant that interchange. This amendment would allow GDOT to review the project.

Mr. Brown asked the traffic volume at that intersection right now.

Mr. Black replied that he does not have that information now.

Mr. Brown asked for information on the traffic volume at that intersection. He does not understand the urgency of having an elevated interchange at US 80 and Jimmy DeLoach.

Mr. Black stated updating the traffic projections for the 20-year period would help to determine the need for the elevated interchange. If necessary, we want to preserve property at that intersection.

Mr. Brown asked staff for an informational profile on that interchange as the amendment proceeds forward. This is not to hold up on the amendment. He asked for a staff report on what is the current and projection in terms of traffic volume at that intersection.

LTC Goble stated in relation to Amendment #2, extension of SR 307 from US Highway 17 to Garrard Street, the Army is currently in the midst of a Joint Land Use Study. Our understanding of the intention of that road extension is to be able to access the land that is

currently not developed in that area. The JLUS takes into consideration of compatible land use and development of that area that is currently not planned with military operations because that land is immediately adjacent to Hunter. He is OK with the road as long as everyone understands that as part of the study of preliminary engineering of the road it considers the purpose of the road being to develop the land around it and that the development needs to be compatible with military operations that take place on Hunter Army Airfield. Residential use would be in the way of the noise attenuation zone of the airstrip at Hunter.

Mr. Thomson stated that staff would consider this as input for the Tricentennial plan. Staff is aware of the concern.

Mr. Brown asked to have a staff report on the Jimmy DeLoach interchange at a future meeting.

Mr. Abolt **moved** to adopt the amendments for the FY 2005-2007 TIP. Mr. Hungerpiller seconded the motion.

Mr. Liakakis asked if there was any public comment on these amendments.

No one came forward.

Policy Committee Action: The motion to adopt the amendments for the FY 2005-2007 TIP carried with none opposed. Voting were: Mr. Abolt, Mr. Brown, Mr. Cannon, Mr. Fidler, Mr. Fowler, LTC Goble, Mr. Hungerpiller, Dr. Johnson, Mr. Lamb, Mr. Lansing, Mr. Liakakis, Dr. Lewis, Mr. Mackey, Mr. Mundell, Mr. Parker, Mr. Tollison, Mr. Weitman, and Mr. Winger.

VI. Status Reports

A. Connecting Savannah

Ms. Linda Carpenter, Wilbur Smith Associates, was present to update the committee on the status of the Connecting Savannah Study. The Connecting Savannah Study is working toward a solution to the east-west travel problems in the community.

Mr. Mackey asked for additional information on the role Wilbur Smith would play in completing the project.

Mr. Thomson replied that the primary task of the project is to reach consensus. Should it come to building new roadways, the normal procurement process would be followed. Decisions related to engineering, etc. would be independent of this body.

Dr. Johnson asked if the final report would include short term, mid-term, and long term solutions.

Ms. Carpenter replied that those types of recommendations would appear in the final document, as would any recommended policy changes.

B. Chatham County Intermodal Freight Study

Mr. Weitman reviewed the status of the process. Following an additional round of committee meetings, it is anticipated that the study would be complete in late April.

C. GDOT Interstate Improvement Study

Mr. Fowler stated GDOT is pursuing an interstate plan for the entire county. The study would review projects to ensure that there is no overlap, or if there is to coordinate the two and to identify projects if necessary. It is anticipated that a contract for this study would be awarded within the next month.

D. 2030 Long Range Transportation Plan Final Report

Mr. Wilkes reviewed the 2030 Long Range Transportation Plan final report. This report serves as the final write-up of the long range plan which was adopted on September 22, 2004. Mr. Wilkes reviewed the content of each chapter, with emphasis on goals and objectives, public outreach and feedback, transportation amenities, project selection and ranking, the financially constrained project list, and unmet needs.

The final report was included in the pre-meeting materials, and can be downloaded from the website.

Mr. Thomson stated that staff will distribute this document to every elected official in Chatham County.

E. 2004 Congestion Management System (CMS) Final Report

Mr. Wilkes presented the 2004 CMS final report and summarized the key findings. Multiple a.m. peak, midday and p.m. peak period travel time runs were conducted on all arterials and major collectors in Chatham County, a total of 531 miles of roadway. Typically, eight runs were made in each direction on each route. One second GPS points were collected, which allowed for computation of travel speed, acceleration, deceleration, LOS, queueing, and congestion index. Digital video was also shot on each route, to better illustrate observed conditions.

About 10 percent of the route segments evaluated experienced congestion. Of the congested segments, about 24 percent will be addressed by planned capacity improvements. About 30 percent of congested segments were on constrained corridors identified in the Transportation Amenities Plan. These constrained corridors will receive only management strategies such as signal retiming and coordination, and small scale TSM improvements as appropriate. An additional eighteen percent of the congested

segments (on non-constrained corridors) were recommended for signal timing and coordination improvements based on observed capacity and progression characteristics.

This is Savannah's first CMS. The CMS became a requirement when the 2000 census designated Savannah as a TMA. Future updates will likely be on a smaller scale and focus on a smaller number of priority corridors.

Chairman Liakakis requested that the Final CMS Report be distributed to specific traffic departments as soon as possible. This would allow the City and the County to determine which recommendations could be implemented now. Those recommendations could include equipment upgrades, synchronization at specific intersections.

Mr. Mackey agreed that it was important to get the information into the hands of those who could implement the changes.

Mr. Thomson added that the Connecting Savannah team has been asked to investigate the traffic signal coordination problem. This item has been mentioned several times in public meetings. The community may be to the point where there a countywide traffic control mechanism might be beneficial in order to focus funding to upgrade and integrate equipment. Other jurisdictions would be included.

Mr. Abolt **moved** to accept the CMS Final Report. The motion included the request that the Final Report be distributed to specific traffic departments as soon as possible. Mr. Weitman seconded the motion.

Policy Committee Action: **The motion carried with none opposed.** The motion was to accept the CMS Final Report. The motion further included the request that the Final Report be distributed to specific traffic departments as soon as possible. Voting were: Mr. Abolt, Mr. Brown, Mr. Cannon, Mr. Fidler, Mr. Fowler, LTC Goble, Mr. Hungerpillar, Dr. Johnson, Mr. Lamb, Mr. Lansing, Mr. Liakakis, Dr. Lewis, Mr. Mackey, Mr. Mundell, Mr. Parker, Mr. Tollison, Mr. Weitman, and Mr. Winger.

F. Federal Planning Certification Review

Mr. Wilkes stated now that CUTS has become a Transportation Management Area, the agency must go through a triennial certification review with the Federal Highway Administration and Federal Transit Administration. The first review will be held in Savannah, March 1-3, 2005. On March 2, at 5:00 p.m. there will be a one-hour meeting with the elected officials, followed by a public meeting at 6:00 p.m. as part of this Certification Review. Both meetings will be held at MPC.

G. Quality Growth Grant Approval for Context Sensitive Design Standards

Mr. Wilkes stated that CUTS has been selected by the Department of Community Affairs to receive a quality growth grant for Phase II of the Transportation Amenities Planning process. Phase I of the Transportation Amenities Planning process is complete. This is

documented in the Long Range Transportation Plan document. Phase II will be to develop design guidelines and standards for new road construction.

H. GDOT Regional ITS Architecture Study

Ms. Wang stated that GDOT has taken the lead in developing Intelligent Transportation System architecture by selecting a consultant to inventory the statewide planned and existing ITS systems. From this information, the consultant would develop standards so that systems from different agencies can talk to each other. After the standards have been determined, Chatham County can develop a regional structure in this area based on those standards. The guidelines have yet to be developed.

I. CAT Downtown Transit Station Study

Mr. Lansing stated that CAT is in the midst of an Environmental Assessment, 67% completion. The documents would be completed and released to the public probably this summer. CAT is looking at two sites, one is the original site near the Civic Center and the other is down between Papy and Fahm Streets, near the Thunderbird Motel. A copy of the report would be made available to the Policy Committee when it becomes available.

V. Information Items

A. Georgia Department of Transportation

Ms. Scott presented a status report on projects that are listed in the Work Program for Chatham County. A written report was distributed at the meeting.

Mr. Abolt asked for an update on the project at U.S. Highway 17 South/Ogeechee Road.

Ms. Scott replied that the contractor is behind schedule. The contractor has stopped work until a supplemental contract has been negotiated.

Mr. Mackey asked about the status of the U. S. Highway 17 to Victory Drive.

Ms. Scott replied that there are still alignment issues. Public input has been a major factor in this project.

Mr. Mackey asked about traffic stacking off the Truman Parkway at Victory Drive. What has been planned for this exit area?

Mr. Weiner replied that the City of Savannah has been working with GDOT on widening that off-ramp and improving traffic control at the subject interchange. There will be a dedicated right turn into the Home Depot shopping area.

Mr. Brown asked that city staff and DOT prepare a report to inform the Policy Committee on the issues at the Victory Drive and Ogeechee Road project.

Ms. Scott replied that she would be glad to prepare a report on this matter.

Mr. Cannon asked for additional information on Project #16, State Route 307 at Old Louisville Road. Is the project still on schedule?

Ms. Scott replied that GDOT is hoping that by the beginning of next year the project would start. That is the target. As soon as the project is ready, the money is there, and the contract could be let.

Mr. Mackey asked whether money has been allocated for the Bay Street widening from Lathrop to the Viaduct?

Ms. Scott replied that the Preliminary Engineering has been authorized. A public meeting on this project was held in October. The county currently has a consultant working on the design.

Mr. Robert Wilder, Garden City, asked for information on Project #33, which is adding lanes on State Route 21 from Smith Avenue/CS 590N to State Route 307.

Ms. Scott replied that a concept report for that project has not been approved yet.

B. Chatham County

Mr. Black reviewed the status of One Percent Sales Tax projects. A report was distributed at the meeting. The County Engineering Department is monitoring work on the Stephenson Avenue project twice a day to document the work status.

Mr. Abolt added that the County is holding back a significant amount of money to cover penalties.

C. City of Savannah

Mr. Weiner reviewed the status of traffic projects currently underway in the City of Savannah. A report was distributed at the meeting.

There were no additional questions.

D. Chatham Area Transit

There was no new information to report.

E. Georgia Ports Authority

There was no new information to report.

F. Savannah Airport Commission

There was no new information to report.

VIII. Other Public Comments

Chairman Liakakis asked if there was anyone else in the audience with a comment on any transportation issue.

No one came forward.

IX. Adjournment

There being no further business, the February 25, 2005, Policy Committee meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted

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