



**Others Present:**

**Representing:**

Allan Black, P.E.	Chatham County	x
Linda Carpenter	Wilbur Smith Associates	x
Betty Carter	GDOT – Jesup	x
Billy Hair	Chatham County, Former Chair	x
Jack Lewis	ACAT	x
Peter Plumeau	Wilbur Smith Associates	x
Theresa Scott	GDOT – Jesup	x
Thomas Thomson, P.E., AICP	MPC Executive Director	x
Mike Weiner, P. E.	City of Savannah	x
Robert Wilder	Interested Citizen	x
Mark Wilkes, PE, AICP	MPO Staff	x
Wykoda Wang	MPO Staff	x

Mr. Liakakis called the meeting to order.

**I. Approval of Agenda**

Mr. Liakakis stated that the agenda had been revised and he would proceed with the revised agenda.

**II. Committee Reports (verbal)**

**A. Advisory Committee on Accessible Transportation**

Mr. Lamar reviewed the action items from the April 20, 2005 ACAT meeting. He stated he is also trying to improve the diversity of disability representation. He also stated his concerns regarding access issues with curb cuts.

**B. Citizens Advisory Committee**

Mr. Mundell reported the only motion before the committee was to urge the Policy Committee to move Truman Pkwy Phase V back to 2005 from its current status as 2008. This is viewed as a priority issue.

**C. Technical Coordinating Committee (TCC)**

Mr. Thomson addressed items before the Policy Committee. The Committee endorsed the draft FY 2006 Unified Planning Work Program. The current year program was also amended. The draft FY 2006-2008 Transportation Improvement Program is on the agenda for open discussion.

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### III Action Items

#### A. Approval of February 23, 2005 Policy Committee Meeting Minutes

Mr. Abolt **moved** to approve the minutes of the February 23, 2005 Policy Committee Meeting Minutes. Mr. Mackey seconded the motion.

**Policy Committee Action:** The motion to approve the February 23, 2005 Committee Meeting Minutes carried with none opposed. Voting were: Mr. Holbrook, Mr. Hungerpiller, Mr. Cannon, Mr. Brown, LTC Goble, Mr. Mackey, Mr. Abolt, Mr. Capell, Mr. Fowler, Mr. Parker, Mr. Fidler, Mr. Tollison, Mr. Winger, Mr. Lamar, Mr. Shonka and Mr. Mundell.

#### B. Approval of Amendment to FY 2005 Unified Planning Work Program

Mr. Wilkes reviewed the 2005 UPWP Amendment. He stated that the purposed amendment to the current 2005 Work Program is to include a project budget of \$150,000 for Chatham Area Transit to conduct Transit Development Plan (TDP). Initially, the TDP was described in the 2005 Work Program but due to administrative requirements staff developed the work program before the budget figures were available. Now that the exact funding amount is known, the UPWP can be amended in order for CAT to start the project.

Mr. Abolt **moved** to approve the amendment. Mr. Mackey seconded the motion

**Policy Committee Action:** The motion to approve the amendment to the FY 2005 Unified Planning Work Program carried with none opposed. Voting were Mr. Holbrook, Mr. Hungerpiller, Mr. Cannon, Mr. Brown, LTC Goble, Mr. Mackey, Mr. Abolt, Mr. Capell, Mr. Fowler, Mr. Parker, Mr. Fidler, Mr. Tollison, Mr. Winger, Mr. Lamar, Mr. Shonka, and Mr. Mundell.

#### C. Approval of 2006 Unified Planning Work Program

Mr. Wilkes reviewed an updated draft of the FY 2006 UPWP. Several of the Work Elements were adjusted in order to be responsive to recommendations from the Federal Highway Administration and Federal Transit Administration. Handouts showing the key changes were distributed.

Mr. Abolt asked if there was anything in this document at odds with the TIP if modified as indicated in the paper.

Mr. Wilkes's response was no.

Chairman Liakakis asked if there were any citizens with questions for Mr. Wilkes regarding this program.

No one came forward.

Mr. Abolt **moved** to approve the Unified Planning Work Program document. Mr. Mundell seconded the motion.

**Policy Committee Action:** The motion to approve the Unified Planning Work Program was carried with none opposed. Voting were Mr. Holbrook, Mr. Hungerpiller, Mr. Cannon, Mr. Brown, LTC Goble. Mr. Mackey. Mr. Abolt, Mr. Capell, Mr. Fowler, Mr. Parker, Mr. Fidler, Mr. Tollison, Mr. Winger, Mr. Lamar, Mr. Shonka, and Mr. Mundell.

#### **D. Approval to hold a public meeting for proposed strategies for the Connecting Savannah process.**

Mr. Thomson announced that the status report would be given first on the Connecting Savannah process and then he would address the action items.

#### **IV. Status Report: Connecting Savannah**

Peter Plumeau, Wilbur Smith Associates, introduced the process and the steps that have been taken to date. This has been a citizen driven process, with the focus on critical transportation problems and East-West connectivity. Mr. Plumeau stated he anticipates a direct action plan to present before the Board in June 2005.

Linda Carpenter, Wilbur Smith Associates, highlighted the concepts that would be taken out to the public. The policies are short term, mid term, and long term solutions. Regarding the policies, more detail will be an added to zoning and subdivision regulations. Action is taking place on several of the policy options.

Mr. Abolt asked if the corridor protection is in step with the roadway amenities.

Mr. Thomson replied yes, staff is taking this to the next level of detail developing standards and policy procedures. The City and County are helping with a grant to match the state to continue that effort.

Mignon Allen, Dovetail Consulting, described working with citizens and what residents believe is necessary to take the Connecting Savannah concept and make it into a reality..

**Speaking on the issue:** Ardis Wood, resident, believes the problem is lack of planning. Ms. Wood described developments along the subject corridor within the past 10 years and feels there is a need to change transportation habits.

Sue Gouse, Victory Drive resident, is hopeful the Connecting Savannah process can go forward allowing neighborhoods to stay neighborhoods and to maintain tree canopies.

Brian Leighton, stated the Connecting Savannah project is good for the visually impaired to voice their concerns and feels the American Disability Act must be followed.

Ms. Pamela Oglesby, West Savannah resident, stated her concerns were the East-West connection of traffic and feels the new traffic signals should be audible. Ms. Oglesby commends the MPC and CUTS for allowing her the opportunity to have input into what is happening in the city.

James Weaver, Kensington Park resident, shared his views on the Connecting Savannah process. His primary interest is the balance of transportation needs.

Ron Kolman, area resident, described the origin of the Connecting Savannah process over the past 3 years. He is appreciative that citizens are having a voice in the decision making process.

## **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 study.

Mr. Mackey asked at what point business owners along DeRenne Avenue would be assembled for a meeting.

Mr. Kolman replied that business owners were invited to a meeting at Pulaski Elementary School and some of them are still involved by serving on an appointed committee. The area included the area from Abercorn Street to the west.

Mr. Thomson added that Connecting Savannah has been working on outreaching to area businesses to invite them to participate in the continuing process.

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.

Mr. Mackey moved to approve holding a public meeting for the Connecting Savannah Process. Mr. Abolt seconded the motion.

Mr. Lamar suggested looking at creative ways of enhancing the announcements to the public by using the Georgia Radio Reading Service.

**Policy Committee Action:**        **The motion carried with none opposed.** The motion was to approve holding a Public meeting for the Connecting Savannah process. Voting were Mr. Holbrook, Mr. Hungerpiller, Mr. Cannon, Mr. Brown, LTC Goble. Mr. Mackey. Mr. Abolt, Mr. Capell, Mr. Fowler, Mr. Parker, Mr. Fidler, Mr. Tollison, Mr. Winger, Mr. Lamar, Mr. Shonka, and Mr. Mundell.

Chairman Liakakis responded to Mr. Lamar's remarks by asking that television stations, area newspapers, and radio stations allow information access to all citizens especially those concerned with the ADA Regulations.

B.        Federal Planning Certification Review

Mr. Wilkes stated that CUTS underwent its first Triennial Certification Review. The review is a requirement for continued eligibility for federal transportation funds. As a result of the review, CUTS received several commendations for current planning practices and recommendations for improving the process. There were no corrective actions. This is an excellent result for CUTS' first certification review. Handouts were distributed to the Board for review.

C.        Transportation Amenities Plan

Mr. Wilkes gave a brief update on the Transportation Amenities Plan. The MPO has received a grant from the Department of Community Affairs with matching money from the City and the County. Staff is currently developing a scope of services to begin developing design criteria.

D.        Chatham County Intermodal Freight Study

Mr. Weitman gave a brief update on the Intermodal Freight Study.

E.        GDOT Interstate Improvement Study

Mr. Fowler stated that GDOT is continuing work scope development. He has met with a consultant and anticipates a contractual agreement within the next month.

F. CAT Downtown Transit Station

Mr. Capell reviewed the sites under consideration. A Subcommittee meeting will be held on April 28, 2005 to discuss current events with regard to the transit center.

G. FY 2006-2008 Transportation Improvement Program

Mr. Wilkes stated the Transportation Improvement Program is a work in progress. The current status is reflected in the April 19, 2005 letter. A draft document will be available at the next Policy Committee meeting.

Chairman Liakakis asked if anyone in the audience wanted to speak out on Connecting Savannah.

**Speaking on the issue:** William Davenport, Kensington Park resident, voiced concerns regarding DeRenne corridor expansion. He is in support of the plan that is before the Committee. The plan allows a buffer that creates a zone of protection.

Beth Kinstler, president of Magnolia Park Neighborhood Association, is not in favor of widening DeRenne, nor having homes taken. People need to change behavior and their way of thinking. She implored the board to take this issue off the table.

Dwayne Simpson, Kensington Park Community Association, expressed thanks for a voice in what happens to the neighborhood. He supports the linear park concept.

Diana M. Thibodaux stated that she has worked closely with the Connecting Savannah process and that the linear park concept is a compromise. People may want to move sooner rather than later. Residents want to be treated fairly and given a fair market value on personal property.

Damian Sancraft, asked for a list with names indicating who was contacted and what they said. The majority of people he has spoken to are opposed to the proposed widening.

Chairman Liakakis discussed looking at priorities involving the Transportation Improvement Program where there are lives at risk. This was related to a situation such as Skidaway Island and an old drawbridge that has broken down many times. He has discussed the issue of these older bridges with senators, state representatives, and GDOT Commissioner Harold Linnenkohl. This project needs to be placed on a priority list. Other

areas in the state face similar problems. The use of pontoon bridge might be a possibility in an emergency situation.

Patrick Farrell, County Commissioner for the Fourth District, echoed the concerns of the Chairman. Anything that could be done to expedite bridge improvements would be appreciated by the residents in his district.

Arthur Walter, resident of Skidaway Island, stated that those who work on the island are also affected.

Mr. Abolt stated that improvements to the bridges is a matter of safety.

Mr. Brown noted that if the island must be evacuated, there are other chokepoints in this community. It is important to look at all problems in this light. There are a limited number of exit points. Other areas must be added to the priority list.

### **Informational Reports**

#### **A. Georgia Department of Transportation**

Ms. Scott gave a brief update on the status of the delays at State Route 204 and Ogeechee River. The contractor's intention is to get out at the Wal-Mart intersection to begin work there.

In response to an earlier request, Ms. Scott gave a progress report on the Ogeechee Road widening project.

Mr. Brown stated that Victory Drive and Ogeechee Road is a choke point. The environmental process takes time; however, neighborhoods in this area, the department, and the City Council need to come to a conclusion that would allow this project to move forward.

#### **B. Chatham County**

Mr. Black reviewed the status of One Percent Sales Tax projects. A report was distributed at the meeting. He also updated the committee on the state of the Truman Parkway Phase V.

#### **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.



D. Chatham Area Transit

Mr. Capell stated that ridership has increased. The process to obtain new Teleride buses is underway. CAT expects at least eight more buses by the end of the year.

E. Savannah Airport Commission

Mr. Fidler stated that double digit growth continues. A federal funded grant has provided for new security access control system. Parking expansion was described.

**VIII. Other Public Comments**

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

LTC Goble announced that this would be his last meeting. He has been transferred. Hunter Army Airfield is projected to grow by 1500 people by 2006. The military wants to work with the community.

**IX. Adjournment**

There being no further business, the April 27, 2005, Policy Committee meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted

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