



CHATHAM URBAN TRANSPORTATION STUDY

POLICY COMMITTEE MEETING SUMMARY

February 28, 2007

10:00 A.M.

Voting Members

Russ Abolt
Michael Brown
Jason Buelterman
LTC Carl Coffman
Patrick S. Graham
William W. Hubbard
James Hungerpiller
McArthur Jarrett
Otis Johnson
Glenn Jones
Mike Lamb
Pete Liakakis
Harold Linnenkohl
Stephen R. Lufburrow
Doug J. Marchand
Clint Murphy
Carl Palmer
Andy Quinney
Representative
Anna Maria Thomas
Wayne Tipton
Eric R. Winger

Representing

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

Present

X
X

X

X
X

Voting Member Alternates

Mathew Fowler
Randy Weitman

Representing

GDOT
Georgia Ports Authority

Present

X
X

<u>Others Present</u>	<u>Representing</u>	Present
Allan Black, P.E.	Chatham County	x
Beverly Davis	Reynolds, Smith and Hills	x
Glenn Durrence	GDOT Jesup	x
Chris Henry	Urbitran Associates/CAT	x
Jane Love	MPO Staff	x
Constance Morgan	MPC Staff	x
Kyle Mote	GDOT Planning	x
Teresa Scott	GDOT Jesup	x
Radney Simpson	GDOT Planning	x
Thomas L. Thomson, P.E., AICP	MPC Executive Director	x
Wykoda Wang	MPO Staff	x
Mike Weiner, P.E.	City of Savannah	x
Mark Wilkes, P.E., AICP	MPO Staff	x

Call to Order

In the absence of Chairman Pete Liakakis, Mayor Otis Johnson called the February 28, 2007 Policy Committee Meeting to order.

I. Approval of Agenda

Mr. Stephen Lufburrow **moved** to approve the February 28, 2007 Policy Committee Meeting Agenda as presented. Mr. Clint Murphy seconded the motion.

Policy Committee Action: the motion to approve the agenda as presented carried with none opposed.

II. Committee Reports

A. Advisory Committee on Accessible Transportation

Mr. McArthur Jarrett, Chairman of the ACAT Committee, reported that at the February 21, 2007 Meeting the ACAT Committee approved all agency reports presented and had a brief discussion with one of the owners of the Yellow Cab taxi cab service of Savannah. This discussion was regarding accessible cabs and other accessible issues for the handicapped. The Committee also voted to advise Laidlaw-Teleride regarding its new customer service line with the suggestion that in three months this service would be evaluated and the results of that evaluation given to ACAT Committee. .

B. Citizens Advisory Committee

Mr. Clint Murphy, CAC Chairman, reported the Citizens Advisory Committee met and recommended further study of the Widening of Gulf Stream Road and Robert Miller Road. The main item of discussion was Skidaway Road. One of the CAC members had requested an update on the status of the widening of Skidaway Road. The CAC passed a resolution to recommend that the Policy Committee ask the County of Chatham to consider the Context Sensitive Design Planning Process as it moves forward with Skidaway Road.

C. Technical Coordinating Committee

Mr. Mark Wilkes noted that there had been an agenda change from the initial mail out to address needed LRTP amendments for the widening of Gulf Stream Road and Robert B. Miller Road. The TCC is recommending to the Policy Committee to proceed with the amendments. He stated that more details regarding those amendments will be shared later on the Agenda.

D. Executive Director's report on the Status of Previous Actions and Requests

Mr. Thomson stated that this was a new item on the agenda and that he felt that it was important to give verbal reports on previous actions where they don't appear on the agenda. The MPO gave a directive at the last meeting to solicit other MPOs to see if they were interested in joining in and sending a letter to appropriate agencies, i.e. DOT and the Federal Highway Administration, about streamlining the environmental process. This task was completed and staff has found that the other MPOs are not interested in pursuing this issue. However the draft letter is available and he proposed that that letter be given to the Chairman for his signature and forwarded.

He added the other letter of issue was that of the I-95/I-16 Lighting. He stated he feels that this is the responsibility of local jurisdiction and the Department of Transportation to resolve signing an agreement for the cities that are going to contribute to the labor and maintenance cost.

Teresa Scott noted that GDOT had sent the agreements back to the local jurisdictions; (the City of Pooler, the City of Savannah, and Chatham County), and returned to this Board on January 17th of this year. If the Policy Committee is going to proceed the letter must be signed and returned to GDOT.

Mr. Thomson introduced Joe Lancer, student at Benedictine, who is shadowing him today to learn more about the future opportunities in planning.

Mr. Thomson briefly added that, relating to the Transportation Enhancements process, in the previous application year, the staff and MPO got more engaged in the process of looking at applications and providing input to DOT about what we thought the priorities are and we

plan to engage in a similar process this year. Staff will be providing comments for the MPO to forward to the DOT before it reviews the applications for the State Transportation Board.

III. Action Items

A. Approval of the December 14, 2006 Policy Committee Meeting Minutes

Mr. Stephen Lufburrow **moved** for approval of the December 14, 2006 Policy Committee Meeting Minutes. Mr. Carl Palmer seconded the motion.

Policy Committee Action: the motion for approval of the December 14, 2006 Policy Committee Meeting Minutes carried with none opposed.

B. Authorization of further study on the Request to Amend the 2030 LRTP to include Widening of Gulf Stream Road and Widening Of Robert Miller Road

Mr. Mark Wilkes reviewed the commitments made in conjunction with Gulf Stream expansion. They are the widening of Gulf Stream Road from two to four lanes with turn lanes as needed and the widening of Robert B. Miller Road from two to four lanes with turn lanes as needed. The cost and schedule for Gulf Stream Road is estimated to be: \$100,000 for preliminary engineering in FY2007; right-of-way at \$600,000, in FY2008; and construction at \$6.1million in FY2009. The cost and schedule for Robert B. Miller Road is estimated to be: preliminary engineering at \$100,000 in FY 2007; right-of-way at \$200,000 in FY 2008,;and construction at \$2.1 million in FY 2009. The total cost of the two projects combined is almost \$10 million. He explained the process for long range plan amendments and referred any detailed questions to GDOT representative.

Mr. Randy Weitzman **moved** to approve Authorization of further study on the Request to amend the 2030 LRTP to include Widening of Gulf Stream Road and Widening of Robert Miller Road. Mr. Carl Palmer seconded the motion.

Policy Committee Action: the motion to approve Authorization of further study on the Request to amend the 2030 LRTP to include Widening of Gulf Stream Road and Widening of Robert Miller Road carried with none opposed.

IV. Status Reports

A. SAFETEA-LU Interim Plan Update

Mr. Mark Wilkes explained the Federal Transportation Legislation; the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act-(SAFTEA-LU) that was signed into law in August of 2005 to replace the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21).

This act required some minor procedural changes such as; 1) a stand-alone Public Participation Plan, which will go out in draft form as soon as the first week in March with a 45 day review period and come again before this Committee in April for finalization; 2) expansion of agency consultations; and 3) environmental issues analysis which will be incorporated in the Long Range Plan to be approved by July 1. These requirements must be incorporated by July 1st in order to continue to take planning actions.

B. Chatham Area Transit (CAT) Transportation Development (TDP)

Mr. Carl Palmer briefly gave a few introductory comments on the background of the project. He stated that the TDP is a requirement of the Federal Transit Administration. In the TDP, the transit agency assesses its status in terms of service effectiveness, and reviews potential improvements, efficiencies, and current operations. It will lay the ground work to set forth CAT's long range plans and to crystallize them to be included into the MPO's long range plan as well.

Mr. Chris Henry gave a PowerPoint presentation with a brief summary of the process, a status update on some of the key tasks that have been completed, some ideas for service recommendation, and the next steps. The Transportation Development Plan Overview included: public involvement, service analysis, market research, paratransit evaluation, fare policy, technology review, service expansion, downtown transit station and the financial plan. Handouts were distributed for review.

Mr. Palmer added in closing comments that this document will serve as a source document identifying short term projects (those that require little funding) and long term projects (those that require CAT to obtain funds through the MPO and the MPO process). First and foremost in terms of efficiency is the reallocation of existing resources to ensure that we are getting the maximum effectiveness from what is already out there. This will be the first step.

Mr. Clint Murphy questioned whether or not this information could be made available on line for the public to give feedback. Mr. Palmer replied yes.

C. East President Plan

Mr. Thomson introduced Mr. Marcus Lotson student intern from Savannah State University who is presently working with CUTS and MPC staff. He then gave a brief history on the East President St. Plan. He stated that the City of Savannah asked the MPC to contract with its task order consultant, Reynolds, Smith and Hills, in order to accelerate the study of network alternatives for the East President Street area. The objective of this study is to identify a concept that addresses the regional traffic needs while accomplishing the goal of providing an attractive entrance into Savannah that relates to the adjacent land uses.

Ms. Beverly Davis of Reynolds Smith and Hills, gave a slide presentation outlining the propose features for East President Street. Those features were; 1) six lane E. President for the short-term; 2) curb lanes of President St to have different type of paving for eventual conversion to parking lanes and bike lanes in the long-term; 3) extension of Liberty St. with

new interchange at Truman Pkwy (completion will trigger the conversion of E. President St. to 4 lanes with parking and bike lanes); 4) extension of General McIntosh to Wheaton/Liberty extension; 5) relocation of intersection of Wheaton and Liberty to align with extension of General McIntosh; 6) pedestrian connection between Trustees Garden and new development across General McIntosh; and 7) extension of three streets in the existing grid into new development south of E. President St. (North Point).

Mayor Johnson asked what the time line was on this project.

Mr. Thomson replied that the agreement with the City was to get the study produced in six months and staff is now finalizing the actual report. This should be complete in two weeks. He said that the next question was how to fund the infrastructure improvements there. The City and SDR are working on Tax Allocation District (TAD). The final report includes detailed cost estimates for each external roadway (not within developments). He said that he would like to have most of those funded in the TAD.

Mr. Lufburrow thanked the City of Savannah for its forward thinking and funding on this study. He said that he felt this will promote smart growth in this city.

D. GDOT's Chatham Co. Interstate Needs Study

Mr. Radney Simpson introduced Mr. Kyle Mote, the GDOT planner for the Savannah MPO, and stated that Mr. Keith Milton was no longer with GDOT. He referred Committee Members to their handouts for review and gave a brief status update on the potential needs that have been identified for a horizon year of 2035. Some of these are; I-95 at I-16 Interchange reconstruction; I-95 at SR-307 Dean Forest; I-95 at SR-204; I-95 at SR-21; widening along I-16, and widening of 516. The approach taken in this study was looking at the interstate system and looking at what plans exist and anticipating what could occur by the year 2035.

E. GDOT's Truck Only Lane Study

Mr. Mathew Fowler gave a brief history on the Truck Only Lanes Study. He stated that this study began in June of 2006. It is expected to be completed by October of this year. The first section, updating the Statewide Travel Demand Model, is near completion. Areas that could possibly benefit from Truck Only Lanes would be places such as between Atlanta and Macon, near ports in Savannah, or in climbing sections of the more mountainous highways. GDOT will also do a sub-area study focusing on the area around the Port only.

V. Agency Reports

A. Georgia Department of Transportation

Ms. Teresa Scott reviewed the Chatham County Projects Status Report. She stated that: 1) on Item #11, SR26/Ogeechee Road, work is not completed on the environmental document

but it should be complete in the next month or two and will progress to a public hearing in the summer; 2) Concept Meetings are scheduled for Islands Expressway Bridge and Back River Bridge on March 22, 2007; 3) Diamond Causeway environmental document is in progress; 4) Item # 43, Interstate I-95 and SR-21, is a new project to lengthen exit ramp NB; 5) on Jimmy Deloach Pkwy/US 80 Interchange, a public meeting has been scheduled for April 26, 2007 in Bloomingdale. Those meetings scheduled for March 22, 2007 will be held in the Author Mendonsa Room at 9:00am and at 1:30pm.

B. Chatham County

Mr. Allan Black reported on the status of Chatham County Roadway Improvement Program. Truman Parkway Phase 5 construction plans are continuing and scheduled for completion at the end of the year. ROW acquisitions are continuing and will likely be completed in early 2008 so that the project is ready to go when the funding is available. On Jimmy Deloach Pkwy Phase 2 the consultant has a change order to complete the project. Whitefield Ave widening is proceeding, with a finalization of median width expected soon. For the Bay Street widening, a public information meeting was held and the Federal Highway Administration approved the environmental assessment. On the Skidaway Road widening project, the process is nearly starting over due to changes in criteria since the first concept was developed several years ago.

Mr. Clint Murphy questioned what would have to happen in order to get the County to have the consultant to utilize a more Context Sensitive Design (CSD) guideline.

Mr. Black replied this will be done as the consultant goes through the design process. He said the change from 12' lanes to 11' lanes is one way the Skidaway Road project already fits with Context Sensitive Design.

Mr. Murphy also asked if the County plans to have additional public involvement in this project. Mr. Black replied yes.

Mr. Murphy expressed the concerns of the Citizen Advisory Committee regarding this project. He stated this project has sat dormant for almost 20 years and the residents would like to be informed when public hearing will begin so that they will be able to give voice to some of their concerns. Mr. Black responded that the project has not exactly been dormant. The County has tried using Transportation System Management (TSM) strategies first to address the safety issues, but the accident rate is still high, even though the Truman Parkway was expected to reduce traffic levels on Skidaway Road. That is why the County plans to add a turn lane.

C. City of Savannah

Mr. Mike Weiner distributed handouts on the Traffic Engineering Improvement Projects and reviewed the status on the following projects: on the Gwinnett Street curve reconstruction, the City has one more right-of-way acquisition to make; on the LaRoche Avenue Widening,

the department is reviewing revised concept; on E. Anderson Street Curve Reconstruction, studies confirmed that access to Anderson St from Cabell and 31st Streets must be part of the concept; on the DeRenne Avenue/Emergency Vehicle Traffic Signal Pre-emption System, the department recommended a system and the City is trying to obtain SPLOST funds from the County; and on Bay Street, traffic signal and pedestrian crosswalks will be installed at Jefferson St. The City is also implementing a Pedestrian Safety Program with the assistance of the Police Department and Safe Kids Coalition of Savannah.

D. Chatham Area Transit

Mr. Palmer stated that, regarding the CAT Transit Center, the CAT Board has approved advancing two sites. Those sites are the Greyhound /Citi Trend site and the site on Louisville Road at Boundary and I-16. This is a major step for this project. The environmental process required by the National Environmental Protection Act (NEPA) is expected to take from four to six months to complete.

E. Georgia Ports Authority

Mr. Randy Weitman reported that it had been requested by the State Transportation Board that GPA management staff go to Atlanta and give a presentation on GPA's growth and the projects of interest to the port authority. A group of management went and made a presentation on those items and presented projects that have been discussed in the past. The Brampton Road extension, SR 307 overpass, and the needs for the Jimmy DeLoach connector were projects of interest discussed at that meeting. The Board had stated that they were willing to help with funding these projects but had asked if the Port Authority had any funding toward these projects. Port representatives had told them that the Port's funding would be used inside the terminal and that it is committed through the year 2015. The Transportation Board had also asked whether or not Chatham County would have funding available. It was pointed out to the Board that GPA views these projects as state projects and that the Port does not just support Chatham County. GPA is looking to opportunities that the State Board may find. If it involved talking with the legislature, the Port would be willing to go with them.

Mr. Thomson added that if the Port is truly the number one job generator in the state and economic engine then there should be funding that the state is getting for their general fund revenue (separate from GDOT funds) that should be put back into Chatham County to mitigate the Port-area impacts of having this successful operation. He encouraged the Committee to take this stance and communicate it.

F. Savannah-Hilton Head International Airport

In the absence of an airport representative, Mr. Thomson shared the information he had heard at last week's TCC meeting. He reported that the new terminal is expected to have its ribbon cutting in July and the new parking garage will have its opening this fall and have its ribbon cutting in October.

G. Other Agencies

No other agency representatives were present.

VI. Other Business

There was no other business before the Committee.

VII. Other Public Comments

There were no comments from members of the public.

VIII. Adjournment

There being no other Business to come before the Committee the February 28, 2007 Policy Committee was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted

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