



CHATHAM URBAN TRANSPORTATION STUDY

POLICY COMMITTEE MEETING SUMMARY

April 25, 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

Mark Denmark
Mathew Fowler
Chris Morrill
Shirley Sessions

Representing

Savannah Airport Commission
GDOT
City of Savannah
City of Tybee Island

Present

X

X

X

X

<u>Others Present</u>	<u>Representing</u>	Present
Allan Black, P.E.	Chatham County	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
Karl Stephens	Landings Association	X
Thomas L. Thomson, P.E., AICP	MPC Executive Director	X
Steve Traub	Citizens Advisory Committee	X
Wykoda Wang	MPO Staff	X
Mike Weiner, P.E.	City of Savannah	X
Ebony White	Department of Community Affairs	X
Robert Wilder	Garden City	X
Mark Wilkes, P.E., AICP	MPO Staff	X

Call to Order

Chairman Pete Liakakis, called the April 25, 2007 Policy Committee Meeting to order.

I. Approval of Agenda

It was **moved** and seconded to approve the April 25, 2007 Policy Committee Meeting Agenda as presented.

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 April 19, 2007 Meeting the ACAT Committee approved all agency reports presented. He expressed concerns of the Committee Members regarding the Gulfstream Project Road. He stated that the ACAT Committee Members felt that it was essential that sidewalks and curb cuts are placed on all the areas selected for widening. Transit is an important asset for the disabled, and it is possible that some current or future employees of Gulfstream need or will need sidewalks and curb cuts. He hopes that the endorsement of this project will bring about a positive growth for all citizens in this community.

B. Citizens Advisory Committee

Mr. Clint Murphy, CAC Chairman, reported that the Citizens Advisory Committee met and voted to adopt the CUTS Participation Plan and endorsed the actions to widen Gulfstream Road and Robert Miller, Jr. Road. He stated there was discussion on similar concerns regarding bikeways and sidewalks as it relates to public transportation. He added that the CAC Board Members also encourage that sidewalks and bikeways be included on the Gulfstream/Miller widening project. The Diamond Causeway Action was also endorsed with great concern however, on the continuing delays on the environmental studies. He also reported that concerns regarding the East President Street Plan were discussed and stated that Committee Members have requested that the additional lanes in each direction not be built for automobiles, even in the short-term, because it will be difficult to reclaim for bicycles. In fact, this route is viewed to be unsafe for on-road bicycle facilities due the truck traffic; however the Committee supports off-road bicycle facilities in the corridor,. In closing he stated there is a high demand now for bikeways and that the CAC is very interested in seeing more progress.

C. Technical Coordinating Committee

Mr. Mark Wilkes reported that the Technical Coordinating Committee (TCC) at their last meeting endorsed all the action items on the agenda. The items endorsed were: 1) the Participation Plan, 2) the amendments and resolution for the Gulfstream Road and Robert Miller Road widenings; and 3) the TIP Amendment to shift funding for Diamond Causeway. He added that Mr. Tommy Crochet gave a slide presentation at that meeting on the State Route 204 improvements and that there will be a public meeting on the south side, scheduled for June 2007, informing citizens of these improvements. A presentation will be made to the Policy Committee in late summer or early fall.

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

Mr. Tom Thomson announced the Transportation Enhancement Applicants Workshop provided by GDOT will be held on Friday April 27, 2007 at 9:00 am at 110 East State Street. He gave a status update on; a) the Carpool Program for the hospital areas; b) the I-95/I-16 Lighting letter. At the last meeting, the question came up about the availability of Chatham Area Transit's draft Transportation Development Plan online. The draft is not on the CAT web site yet, but MPO staff received the draft just yesterday and will be sharing with Committee members. He then informed everyone of the Concept Team Meeting for the Islands Expressway Bridge Replacement scheduled for 9:00 am Thursday April 26, 2007 at 112 E. State Street and the Public Information Open House for the Interchange at Jimmy DeLoach Pkwy and Hwy 80, which will be held at Bloomingdale's City Hall at 4:30pm on April 26, 2007.

III. Action Items

A. Approval of the February 28, 2007 Policy Committee Meeting Minutes

Mr. Russ Abolt **moved** for approval of the **February 28, 2007** Policy Committee Meeting Minutes. Mr. Murphy seconded the motion.

Policy Committee Action: the motion for approval of the February 28, 2007 Policy Committee Meeting Minutes carried with none opposed.

B. Adoption of CUTS Participation Plan

Ms Wykoda Wang gave a brief history on the Participation Plan for SAFETEA-LU compliance. She presented a slide presentation outlining the Participation Plan. She explained the revisions made to the previous Public Involvement Plan and reviewed the Participation Plan development process. She stated that neighborhood association leaders and consultant agencies have all been invited to participate in this process. A database was built to include all required contacts. In order to create a more user-friendly document staff has committed to adding visuals and stating the project name instead of acronyms. This will help aid in creating a more interesting document. The CAC Committee, TCC and ACAT have all endorsed this plan.

- Chairman Liakakis opened the floor for public comment.

There were no comments from the public. The public comment period was closed

- Policy Committee Discussion and Action

There was no further discussion from Committee Members. Mr. Murphy moved to adopt the Public Participation Plan. Mr. Abolt seconded the motion.

Policy Committee Action: the motion to adopt the Public Participation Plan carried with none opposed.

C. Requested actions related to proposed widening of Gulfstream Rd (Gruman Rd and William Wilson Dr.) and Robert Miller Jr. Rd

Mr. Mark Wilkes reported that the requested actions were to expedite improvements to Gulfstream Road and Robert Miller Jr. Road in order to serve the Gulfstream expansion. He stated that Gulfstream Road will be widened from two to five lanes at a cost of \$100,000.00 for preliminary engineering, \$600,000.00 for ROW and 6.1 million dollars for construction in fiscal years 2007, 2008 and 2009 respectively. He reported that Robert Miller Road will be widened from two to three lanes for a distance of one half mile at a cost of \$100,000.00 for preliminary engineering, \$200,000.00 for ROW and 2.1 million dollars for construction. He stated that staff recommended that the MPO approve the Long Range Transportation Plan

Amendment. GDOT's representative has verified that new funds will be identified for the project, which would maintain the financial balance of the Plan.

- Chairman Liakakis opened the floor for public comment

There were no comments from the public. The public comment period was closed.

- Policy Committee Discussion and Action on Amendment to the 2030 LRTP to include widenings

Mr. Murphy voiced his concerns regarding bikeways and sidewalks. He was informed that his concerns would be relayed to the project manager at the preliminary engineering stage.

Mr. Abolt questioned whether or not this funding would take the place of any other allocations to the County. Mr. Fowler said no, the money comes from a discretionary fund that GDOT can use in any part of the state.

Ms. Shirley Sessions asked if the Committee could stipulate sidewalks. Mr. Abolt said those details would be worked out at a later stage. Mr. Matthew Fowler said that GDOT would definitely consider including sidewalks.

Mr. Abolt **moved** to approve the Amendment to the 2030 LRTP to include widening. Ms. Sessions seconded the motion.

Policy Committee Action: the motion to approve the Amendment to the 2030 LRTP to include widening carried with none opposed.

- Policy Committee Discussion and Action on Proposed Resolution for the Functional Reclassification of Gulfstream Road (Gruman Road and William Wilson Dr) and Robert Miller Jr. Road

Mr. Abolt **moved** to approve the Proposed Resolution for the Functional Reclassification of Gulfstream Road (Gruman Road and William Wilson Dr) and Robert Miller Jr. Road. The motion was seconded.

Policy Committee Action: the motion to approve the Proposed Resolution for the Functional Reclassification of Gulfstream Road (Gruman Road and William Wilson Dr) and Robert Miller Jr. Road carried with none opposed.

- Policy Committee Discussion and Action on Amendment to the FY 2007-2009 TIP to include widening

Mr. Abolt moved to approve the Amendment to the FY 2007 -2009 TIP to include widening. Mr. Murphy seconded the motion.

Policy Committee Action: the motion to approve the Amendment to the FY 2007-2009 TIP to include widening carried with none opposed.

D. Approval of Amendment to the FY 2007-2009 TIP to shift phase for Diamond Causeway from FY 2007 to FY 2008

Ms. Wykoda Wang gave a brief summary on the request to shift the right-of-way phase for Diamond Causeway from FY 2007 to FY 2008. This regards a phase in the project to widen Diamond Causeway from Ferguson Avenue to McWhorter Drive. The request is to move right-of-way acquisition from FY 2007 to 2008. The reason for the amendment is that this project is not ready for acquisition and GDOT needs to have those funds released so that some of the other projects that are ready to go can be funded. She stated that this is a major amendment because the County officials consider it a high priority project and thus staff is allowing more public dialogue on the proposed change.

Chairman Liakakis commented that the County is working hard to construct the first phase of this project. The bid for this project should be out shortly.

Mr. Abolt emphasized the comments made by the Chairman in the draft letter prepared for his signature as Chairman of this group going to Harold Linnenkohl GDOT Commissioner. This is a number one priority project.

Mr. Abolt moved for Approval of Amendment to the FY 2007-2009 TIP to shift phase for Diamond Causeway from FY 2007 to FY 2008. Mr. Fowler seconded the motion.

Policy Committee Action: the motion for Approval of Amendment to the FY 2007-2009 TIP to shift phase for Diamond Causeway from FY 2007 to FY 2008 carried with none opposed.

Mr. Abolt moved for approval of the letter addressed to Commissioner Linnenhohl requesting financial support to allow advancement of high priority projects in the proposed CUTS FY 2008-2011 TIP. The motion was seconded.

Policy Committee Action: the motion for approval of the letter addressed to Commissioner Linnenhohl requesting financial support to allow advancement of high priority projects in the proposed CUTS FY 2008-2011 TIP carried with none opposed.

E. Approval of FY 2008-2011 TIP Priority Establishment Policy and Priority Projects.

Ms. Wang briefly reviewed the tiers of priority projects. Priorities were listed as Top, First, Second and Transit Priority. She explained how each project was prioritized and reviewed the list of prioritized projects.

Mr. Murphy voiced the concerns of the Citizens Advisory Committee regarding the exclusion of the bikeways in this program. Some CAC members had voted against the proposed

priority policy and priority projects. Ms. Wang said that even though bikeways are not listed as separate projects, GDOT will include them in state road projects if the road is designated as a bikeway in a local, regional, or state plan.

Mr. Abolt moved for Approval of the FY 2008-2011 TIP Priority Establishment Policy and Priority Projects. Mr. Chris Morrill seconded the motion.

Policy Committee Action: the motion for approval of the FY 2008-2011 TIP Priority Establishment Policy and Priority Projects carried with none opposed.

IV. Status Reports

A. SAFETEA-LU Interim Plan Update

Ms. Wang gave a brief progress report on the SAFETEA-LU Interim Plan Update. She stated that staff is working with Reynolds, Smith and Hills (RS&H) to complete the plan update. SAFETEA-LU contains some new requirements for Metropolitan Planning Organizations, including new provisions for the Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP). CUTS/MPO must accomplish an interim update of the 2030 LRTP before July 1, 2007 in order to comply with the new requirements. This update focuses on alterations in the process to be followed in the regular plan update. It does not involve changes to transportation projects in the current plan. She stated that the MPO will provide the public a 30 day review period. The findings and documents will be presented to the MPO and the committees in June. The financial plan update will be presented in December 2007.

B. SPUR 404/US 17 Back River Bridge Replacement

Ms. Jane Love gave a status report on the SPUR 404/US 17 Back River Bridge Replacement. The current Transportation Improvement Program states that construction is in long-range, estimated for FY 2012. GDOT will fund ninety percent of the bridge construction cost, with the remaining ten percent funded by South Carolina DOT. Each bridge approach will be funded by the state department of transportation of the state in which the approach lies. She stated that this project had shifted out two years from the previous TIP which had shown construction in 2010. The current GDOT six year Work Program also shows construction programmed for 2012. However, GDOT is advancing this project to a fast track because the bridge is deficient and will probably need to be weight-restricted by the year 2010. This urgency has necessitated a design change, from four lanes to two lanes. The project had to be scaled down due to the fact that South Carolina currently has inadequate funding programmed for a 4-lane design. Also the 4-lane design would extend further into SC, requiring a larger environmental study, which would add unacceptable delay. A separate, future project can add a parallel 2-lane bridge to provide four lanes total. Because the CUTS 2030 Long Range Transportation Plan was amended last year to include a bikeway on the island and the Back River Bridge, GDOT will include 10' bikable shoulders in this project.

.Mr. Abolt asked how the bikes would be able to safely move across the traffic to get to the bikeway on the new bridge. Ms. Love indicated on the map how the bikeways will connect to the bridge and not require any crossing of Hwy 17.

C. City of Tybee Island's Mayor's letter regarding Lazeretto Creek Bridge and US 80 widening.

Ms. Love gave a quick review of the letter from Mayor Jason Buelterman, of Tybee Island concerning the widening of US Hwy 80 and the design and schedule of Lazeretto Creek Bridge in particular, including requests for a protected bicycle/pedestrian path on the bridge. She directed Committee Members to a copy of the letter in their packages and highlighted the Mayor's questions and the answers that GDOT District Five engineers had provided.

Mr. Abolt said that Chatham County is providing \$400,000 for a bike/ped trail east of Lazaretto Creek, reaching the City of Tybee Island.

Ms. Sessions said that the City of Tybee Island appreciates the good relationship with the County and wishes to have as good of one with GDOT. She asked what Tybee Island can do differently in this relationship and what type of information can be given to have GDOT view these requests more seriously.

Mr. Fowler suggested calling the project manager, Mr. Butch Welch, and gave Ms. Simmons the phone number to his office. Ms Teresa Scott explained the challenges of advancing the schedule for widening the existing bridge and stated that she would be happy to meet with the Mayor of Tybee, and any concerned citizens or groups on this issue.

V. Agency Reports

A. Georgia Department of Transportation

Ms. Scott reviewed the Chatham County Projects Status Report. She stated that: 1) on Item #'s 2 - 5 Abercorn St @ Tibet Avenue, SR 204/Abercorn St @ egress lane/Oglethorpe Mall, SR 204 /Abercorn St @ DeRenne Avenue and SR 204/Abercorn St @ Apache Avenue, these intersection improvements along Abercorn are scheduled for July letting; 2) item # 11, SR26/Ogeechee Road, the environmental document is anticipated to be completed in the next month or two and will progress to a public hearing; 3) item # 20 CR 787/Islands Expressway @ Wilmington River/Bascule Bridge a concept meeting will be held in the Author Mendonsa Room on April 26, 2007; at 9:00am. 4) Item # 47 Jimmy Deloach Pkwy @ US 80, GDOT will hold a public information meeting in Bloomingdale on April 26, 2007 at 4:30 – 6:30 pm; 5) item #'s 23 and 26 SR204/Abercorn Street widening projects have scheduled public information open house meetings for June 19, and June 20, 2007 at the old Publix shopping center, now called Armstrong Center.

Chairman Liakakis commented that initially the SR204 Spur/Diamond Causeway Bridge was scheduled for construction in 2008 but has been rescheduled for 2011. Ms. Scott replied

that funding was an issue and explained that a new 2-lane bridge would be put in for emergency needs, and later the 4-lane capacity will be built and coordinated with widening of Whitfield Avenue.

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 is making progress on updating the field surveys and revising the concept report. Whitefield Ave widening is proceeding, with a finalization of median width expected soon. For the Bay Street Widening Project, the environmental document is being revised following the public hearing and will be submitted in May to the department.

C. City of Savannah

Mr. Mike Weiner distributed handouts on the Traffic Engineering Improvement Projects and reviewed the status on the following projects: on E. Anderson Street Curve Reconstruction, a public information meeting was held on March 21, 2007 and the residents were briefed on the revised concept design. The consultant was directed to proceed with the engineering design phase; on Bay Street /Jefferson Street, the bids for the traffic signal installation have been received. The next step will be to have the bid approved by council; on Chatham Parkway/Chatham Center Drive, a consultant firm has been selected to start a design of the intersection. The City and County are discussing funding of the Ambulance Signal-Preemption system for DeRenne Avenue. City staff will talk with hospitals and southside fire station next week about how it works

Mr. Abolt had a question about the out-of-county ambulances that come through and whether or not this was a universal system. Mr. Weiner replied it was not and the GPS system would have to be purchased.

D. Chatham Area Transit

There was no report given on this item.

E. Georgia Ports Authority

There was no report given on this item.

F. Savannah-Hilton Head International Airport

Mr. Mark Denmark gave a brief update on the two major projects at the airport. The projects were; 1) the parking garage which is scheduled to open in October; and 2) the terminal expansion which is scheduled for completion in either the end of July or the first of August.

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 April 25, 2007 Policy Committee was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

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