



## CHATHAM URBAN TRANSPORTATION STUDY

### POLICY COMMITTEE MEETING SUMMARY

MPC Arthur A. Mendonsa Hearing Room  
112 E. State Street

October 24, 2007

10:00 A.M.

#### Voting Members

Russ Abolt  
Michael Brown  
Jason Buelterman  
Patrick S. Graham  
William W. Hubbard  
James Hungerpiller  
McArthur Jarrett  
Otis Johnson  
Glenn Jones  
Mike Lamb  
Pete Liakakis  
Harold Linnenkohl  
Doug J. Marchand  
Clint Murphy  
Andy Quinney  
Representative  
Joe Murray Rivers  
Anna Maria Thomas  
Wayne Tipton  
Jon Todd  
LTC Daniel Whitney  
Eric R. Winger

#### Representing

Chatham County  
City of Savannah  
City of Tybee Island  
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  
Georgia Ports Authority  
Chairman, CAC  
City of Garden City  
CAT Board of Directors  
Chatham Area Transit  
Town of Thunderbolt  
City of Bloomingdale  
Chairman, MPC  
Hunter Army Airfield  
Savannah Economic Development  
Authority (SEDA)

#### Present

X  
X  
  
  
  
X  
X  
  
  
  
  
  
X  
  
  
  
  
X

#### Voting Member Alternates

George Fidler  
Matthew Fowler  
Diane Schleicher  
Trip Tollison  
Randy Weitman, P.E.

#### Representing

Savannah Airport Commission  
GDOT  
City of Tybee Island  
Savannah Area Chamber of Commerce  
Georgia Ports Authority

#### Present

X  
X  
X  
X  
X

<u>Ex-officio Members</u>	<u>Representing</u>	<u>Present</u>
Sonny Timmerman	Hinesville Area MPO	X
<u>Others Present</u>	<u>Representing</u>	<u>Present</u>
Allan Black, P.E.	Chatham County	X
Beverly Davis	Reynolds, Smith and Hills	X
Rick Gardner	Bryan County	X
Beth Kinstler	Citizen/CAC	X
Jane Love	MPO Staff	X
Nathan Mai-Lombardo	Garden City	X
Bill Pfeiffer		X
Tyler Plain	Reynolds, Smith and Hills	X
Mary Sallach	GDOT	X
Brad Saxon	GDOT	X
Teresa Scott	GDOT-Jesup	X
Barbara Settzo	for MPO	X
Whitney Shephard	Reynolds, Smith and Hills	X
Terri Slack	SRTA	X
Thomas Thomson, P.E., AICP	MPC Executive Director	X
Patrick Vu	SRTA	X
Wykoda Wang	MPO Staff	X
Mike Weiner, P.E.	City of Savannah	X
Robert Wilder	Garden City	X
Mark Wilkes, P.E., AICP	MPO Staff	X

**Call to Order**

Chairman Pete Liakakis called the October 24, 2007 Policy Committee Meeting to order.

**I. Approval of Agenda**

It was moved and seconded to approve the agenda as presented.

**Policy Committee Action: the motion to approve the agenda of the October 24, 2007 Policy Committee meeting carried with none opposed.**

**II. Committee Reports**

**A. Advisory Committee on Accessible Transportation**

Mr. McArthur Jarrett reported on the October 17, 2007 meeting of the Advisory Committee on Accessible Transportation. Due to the lack of a quorum those present discussed the action items, but did not vote. There was also a discussion with the new director of Teleride regarding the para-transit system. Mr. Jarrett looks forward to citizen participation

at a meeting tomorrow evening at the County Commissioners Building. Other items discussed outside of quorum included sidewalk improvements. Chairman Liakakis thanked the City of Savannah for the crews that were out making the curb cuts.

**B. Citizens Advisory Committee**

No report at this time.

**C. Technical Coordinating Committee**

Mr. Mark Wilkes reported on the October 18, 2007 meeting of the Technical Coordinating Committee. The committee endorsed the two action items: 1) the MPO Coordinated Public Transit - Human Services Transportation Plan; and 2) the requested amendment to the FY 2008-2011 Transportation Improvement Program to include construction for bridge replacement over Skidaway Narrows.

**D. Executive Director's Status Report**

Mr. Tom Thomson reported that most of his items will be covered later in this meeting. The regional transportation luncheon meeting follows this meeting at noon today. He highlighted the agenda for that meeting.

**III. Action Items**

**A. Approval of August 22, 2007 Policy Committee Meeting Minutes**

It was moved and seconded to approve the August 22, 2007 Policy Committee Meeting Minutes.

**Policy Committee Action: the motion to approve the August 22, 2007 Policy Committee Meeting Minutes carried with none opposed.**

**B. Approval of the CUTS/MPO Coordinated Public Transit - Human Services Transportation Plan**

Ms. Wykoda Wang directed the members' attention to the draft Coordinated Plan plus the Program Management Plan, which will be an appendix to the Coordinated Plan. Ms. Whitney Shephard, the consultant on this project, presented the staff report, highlighting plan requirements and progress. She presented an overview of why a coordinated plan is needed, what was done to create the plan, and recommendations from the plan.

SAFETEA-LU legislation requires a coordinated plan be developed for three specific federal funding programs – Sections 5310, 5316 and 5317. In the State of Georgia, the Department of Human Resources is the designated recipient for the Section 5310 funds,

therefore the CUTS/MPO Coordinated Plan currently only addresses the Sections 5316 (Job Access and Reverse Commute program) and 5317 (New Freedom program) funding.

The planning team was led by the CUTS/MPO in partnership with Chatham Area Transit Authority (CAT). They started by creating a public involvement process for this plan. This included state agencies, County and City departments and private sector non-profit groups. Goals were developed. Needs were identified and strategies developed to meet those needs. Strategies were selected based on four designated criteria. The planning process also involved choosing a designated recipient for section 5316 and 5317 funds. CAT was chosen, and as such, CAT is required to develop a program management plan for the Federal Transit Authority (FTA).

Ms. Shephard then reviewed the four tiers of transportation strategies. The Tier #1 projects are those that currently exist and would be in danger of being terminated without grant funding, and are currently included in the current TIP. Tier #2 projects are those that would improve current services or activities. Tier # 3 and Tier #4 are longer term strategies.

The next steps recommended are to:

- Use the plan to apply for section 5316 and 5317 funding.
- Use the plan to develop a Memorandum of Understanding between CAT and CUTS/MPO which would define the role of CAT and the role of CUTS/MPO. While CAT is the designated recipient, CUTS/MPO will continue to lead the planning process and select projects for these two programs. This Memorandum of Understanding would also address the use of funds for planning, administration and technical assistance between CAT and CUTS/MPO.
- Coordinate with the Department of Human Resources
- Update this plan as part of the annual TIP updating process

The CUTS/MPO staff recommends that the Policy Committee adopt this plan.

Mr. Russ Abolt asked how a specific bus route relates to TIP. Ms. Shephard responded that funds from these two programs can be used for capital and operating costs. She believes they are line items within the TIP. He asked if the TIP would have to identify this use. Mr. Thomson said it would list the targeted project and have this section as the allocated funding source. What's in the TIP must match the application.

In response to a question by Mr. Michael Brown, Ms. Shephard confirmed that approval of this plan today includes the existing services as they are. There is no reduction of services in this plan.

Mr. Joe Murray Rivers commented that this is a good plan, but it rests on federal funding. If we decide to go forward with this funding, it is possible that in the future there will be a void. He believes preparations should be made to deal with those voids.

Mr. Thomson commented that this plan has an adoption deadline of November 1, 2007 to ensure that CAT will continue to get the funding they have now. In order to meet the deadline, he's asking that the committee approve it as presented, knowing that amendments can be made to it in the future.

Mr. Brown questioned whether all agencies throughout the region are participating in regional transportation issues, such as contributing to the CUTS costs. Mr. Thomson replied that currently Chatham County and Savannah provide matching funds for federal money. His staff plans to update the agreements between GDOT and MPO and between the MPC and MPO and will be bringing up proposals that may include a change in membership, as well as expecting other jurisdictions that participate in the MPO provide portions of the local share. As it grows to a regional level, the region will have to address who is their MPO and who is their staff. A regional MPO and staffing is a question for the future.

Mr. Brown commented that everyone in the region needs to be at the table – both planning and funding. This includes transit. Mr. Thomson hopes that a first step would be to get a Memorandum of Understanding among the parties stating that we will participate in joint planning and create a regional network of roads and transit projects that we can all agree on.

Chairman Liakakis opened the public hearing. There being no comments from the public, the public hearing was closed.

It was moved and seconded to approve the CUTS/MPO Coordinated Public Transit Human Services Transportation Plan.

**Policy Committee Action: the motion to approve the CUTS/MPO Coordinated Public Transit Human Services Transportation Plan carried with none opposed.**

**C. Approval of requested amendment to the FY 2008-2011  
Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) to include construction  
for bridge replacement over Skidaway Narrows in FY 2008**

Ms. Wang reported that this amendment is for Skidaway Narrows bridge replacement. This is separate from the Diamond Causeway project because that project is tied to the Whitfield Ave. widening where the environmental process is continuing. The current bridge has been rated deficient so it needs to be replaced. This amendment was requested by GDOT and requires a public comment period because it is a major amendment of \$18,000,000 with a 80/20 federal/state split. She presented a map outlining the proposed amendment of the new bridge which is a 2-lane, high level bridge with approaches, totaling 1.2 miles. The two lanes would be 12 feet each with 10-foot shoulders that includes bikeways. In the future when the Whitfield Ave. widening is complete the current bascule bridge will be replaced with a second bridge thereby making the entire roadway and bridge 4 lanes.

Mr. Thomson mentioned that the original project, scheduled for 2011, was a single 4-lane bridge with road widening. Now it will be two separate, parallel bridges and ultimately a 4-lane roadway. He asked GDOT to report in the near future on the effects of what we are doing today on the funding and programming of the rest of the bridge. Mr. Matthew Fowler confirmed that the original project will follow its same current schedule. The estimated cost for the original project will be reduced somewhat, due to the fact that the new project is providing two lanes of the 4-lane capacity of the bridge that was in the original project.

Chairman Liakakis met with the area representatives from the State Transportation Board, Roy Herrington and Raybon Anderson to review projects in our area. This Skidaway Narrows bridge replacement was approved by them. Other projects were discussed at this meeting, as well.

Mr. Brown asked if by moving this project forward we are moving any other project backward. Mr. Fowler responded that this did not affect any project within Chatham County, but rather affected some other part of the Congressional District.

Mr. Abolt appreciated the work done by Chairman Liakakis and others to make this happen.

Mr. Brown is concerned about Victory Dr./Ogeechee Rd. and President St. projects. These are still encumbered by environmental studies as is Whitfield Ave. Major rain storms flood these areas and negatively impact these routes. The populations depending upon these corridors are greater than the Skidaway population.

Mr. Murphy commented that the political influence of the Skidaway Island residents played a considerable role in making this happen, while residents in other areas have not organized to push projects forward for the other corridors.

Chairman Liakakis commented that moving this project forward involved a great deal of state-level lobbying, not simply influence of the residents.

Ms. Diane Schleicher asked if the existing bridge would remain when the new 2-lane bridge was complete. Mr. Liakakis responded that the old bridge would be torn down and only the new 2-lane, high level bridge would be used until the future 2-lane bridge is built.

Mr. Brown requested a special staff report on improvement projects on the other evacuation routes. What is the status and what needs to be done to accelerate progress? He would like this report at the next CUTS meeting.

Mr. Thomson referred committee members to the GDOT report – project #12 and #22 – the Victory Dr./Ogeechee Rd. project and the Bascule Bridge on Islands Expressway at Causton Bluff. Both of these projects are in the 6-year priority list for some level of funding and both are currently being worked on. Mr. Brown asked when the let date was for Victory Dr project. Mr. Thomson referred this to GDOT.

Chairman Liakakis opened the public hearing for comments. There being no public comments, the public hearing was closed.

It was moved and seconded to approve the requested amendment to the FY 2008-2011 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) to include construction for bridge replacement over Skidaway Narrows in FY 2008.

**Policy Committee Action: the motion to approve the requested amendment to the FY 2008-2011 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) to include construction for bridge replacement over Skidaway Narrows in FY 2008 carried with none opposed.**

**D. Report on September 20, 2007 Meeting regarding Innovative Funding for Chatham County projects and Recommendation to direct staff to study the funding alternatives**

Mr. Wilkes introduced Ms. Mary Sallach of GDOT Office of Innovative Finance. She reported on innovative financing options for Chatham County to consider. These options include public/private initiatives, state infrastructure banks, congestion pricing mechanisms, naming rights, toll credits, GARVEE bonds, and concessions. The purpose in looking at these options is to look at congestion relief and expedite project delivery. She used the port truck access facility as an example. Eleven funding alternatives have been identified for the Ports Truck Access Facility project. Currently there is no programmed funding for this corridor within the State's Construction Work Program. Without considering public private initiatives methods, the preferred alternative could take 15 years or longer. The port's requirements could be met and the deadline of 2012 could be met with a public private initiative method. This could also save time and money. She reviewed the steps taken thus far, which were: Pre-Solicitation Screening Activities and the PPI Financial Advisor's review of Draft RFP. Next steps include: Anticipated Notice of Intent to Solicit; Anticipated Public Comment Period; Anticipated Pre-Solicitation Information; and One-on-One Technical Meetings. A Request for Qualifications is expected to be released in November, 2007. Ms. Sallach listed the other projects in Chatham that may be qualified for non-traditional funding sources.

Mr. Clint Murphy stated that he had recently heard of a source of funding, called Safe Routes to School, for bikeways and sidewalks near schools. The funding is 100% federal, requiring no local match. Mr. Fowler commented that this is a new program on the federal level. He said that the State Coordinator would release a call for projects. To date, no projects have been awarded. Mr. Thomson said that MPO staff will provide a status report on Safe Routes to School at the next meeting.

Ms. Sallach explained that a joint study committee has been formed to look at different funding options. They have a website [www.gatransfunding.com](http://www.gatransfunding.com) for further information.

Mr. Weitman asked if naming rights precluded federal funding. Ms. Sallach responded that it would depend on the contract. Mr. Weitman warned caution be used, when considering

naming rights, to ensure that federal funding is not lost completely. Ms. Sallach said that not all financing options are appropriate for every project.

Mr. Thomson commented that most of the financing options are beyond local scope and not even legislated yet. Ms. Sallach confirmed that several options require legislative approval.

Mr. Wilkes noted that MPO staff is recommending that the Policy Committee authorize staff to study these options, not take direct action on any particular project at this time.

Ms. Sallach confirmed a projected funding short fall of almost \$200 billion in the federal program over the next thirty years. Less tax from motor fuels is coming in on the federal level. While the Federal Highway Trust is not going broke, they will need to close the gap, which could begin as early as the end of 2008. Federal shares for project funding will likely be a smaller percentage in the future.

Mr. Abolt noted that the list of Chatham area projects Ms. Sallach presented for possible innovative funding options is a list developed by Atlanta, not by any local agency. This Policy Committee will be looking at a variety of funding choices based on the merits of the projects. Do not lose sight of opportunity based on any particular prejudice or preconceived notion on those projects.

Ms. Sallach confirmed it was a GDOT list of projects that could utilize innovative financing options, but they are seeking any recommendations on any project for any type of innovative financing.

Mr. Murphy asked if it was possible to fund the Truman connector from Veterans Parkway to Truman Phase V as a toll road. Ms. Sallach explained that they would first do a traffic and revenue study. They would look at the revenues over time and see if it was enough to pay for debt financing and capital costs. In essence it would require a feasibility study.

Mr. Rivers recommended considering innovative ways for transit as an option to roadway expansion, such as rail, HOV lanes, waterway traffic, light rail, commuter rail.

Mr. Thomson reminded the Committee that the difference between transit and roads is that transit is 80% local funding while road building is 80% state/federal funding. This is a high-level policy issue that needs to be addressed, but for now, we must take care not to mislead the public about the feasibility of transit.

It was moved and seconded to direct staff to study the innovative funding alternatives.

**Policy Committee Action: the motion to direct staff to study the innovative funding alternatives carried with none opposed.**

## **E. Traffic Impact Analysis Process**

Ms. Beverly Davis presented the staff report on the development of a traffic impact analysis process and how it fits into the current development process, how it fits into the City and County review, and how the City and County retain their decision-making role within this assessment. The goal is to standardize the framework for analyzing transportation impacts that result from development. This process provides a standardized procedure for developers, staff reviewers, and the City and County agencies. It's a tool to manage the growth. The major elements identify standards for specific development types and establish thresholds and reporting techniques. She included a sample list of common land use types and the suggested thresholds that would trigger a traffic impact study. Ms. Davis noted that they have worked closely with City and County staff and the MPO staff. This has been presented to the MPC.

Mr. Thomson commented that meetings with the development community have occurred and another is planned. The first step will be to bring forward an ordinance through the MPC to the City and County before the end of the year. The second part will be the technical manual. We will have a consistent basis for determining when traffic impacts should be addressed by the developer and when it should be addressed by City or County. The MPC staff and other local government staff already reviews traffic impacts for some developments, but this new process will make it clearer where the developer needs to start and what are the various agencies' responsibilities at each step.

Ms. Davis added that a checklist has been drawn up for developers so that they can clearly see what their requirements would be.

It was moved and seconded to endorse this process to the City and County to implement it as part of their development review process.

**Policy Committee Action: the motion to endorse this process to the City and County to implement it as part of their development review process carried with none opposed.**

## **IV. Discussion**

### **A. Status on implementation of the 2004 Congestion Management Process**

Mr. Wilkes made a brief presentation in response to a request by Mr. Brown for a listing of the most congested corridors. Staff had addressed the request at the August meeting, but the Committee had requested more time to look at the data staff had provided. The Committee was provided with a map and table in their packet. Mr. Wilkes reported that in most cases there have been steps taken towards implementing positive improvement.

Mr. Abolt noted that in 2004 it may not have been an issue, but today he asked about the omission of the serious commuting problems along I-16 and I-95. Mr. Wilkes commented

that the interstates are under a separate study. Timing runs were not carried out on the interstates in this 2004 study. The MPO is in the process of updating the Congestion Management Process.

Chairman Liakakis asked the staff to include more street names on maps of this type.

Mr. Murphy asked when the updated congestion report will be completed. Mr. Wilkes commented that study of some congestion hot spots should be completed this year, i.e. East Victory Dr. and SR 21.

## **V. Status Reports**

### **A. Effingham Parkway**

Mr. Wilkes reported that MPO staff has received the traffic studies that Effingham County's consultants performed to help determine the logical termini for the Effingham Parkway. Staff is currently reviewing the study and formulating comments. He displayed a map showing the consultants' preferred alternative. The yellow line is the consultants' recommended route. As a follow-up to this, MPO staff is requesting that GDOT fund a study of an important connection from the Effingham Parkway to I-95 and over toward the Port connector road that is under development now. MPO staff's proposed connection was shown in purple on the map.

Mr. Abolt asked how close the yellow line approximates the recommendations from MPO staff when they had the workshop a couple of months ago. Mr. Thomson reviewed the original concerns that the MPO staff had with the plan at that time, which mainly was the dumping of all the parkway traffic at an intersection with Jimmy DeLoach. In the alternative shown today, the yellow line connecting to Benton Blvd and the yellow line connecting to the Jimmy DeLoach Pkwy along part of the Highlands Blvd alignment will distribute the traffic volume adequately for the short run. What Mr. Thomson calls the continuation of the Effingham Parkway would come off on the purple line and connect with the Northwest Tollway. He believes those three different paths will provide for adequate distribution and also provide a continuous regional roadway to SR 119 (in Effingham) and work with the plan to continue the Northwest Tollway through Chatham County to I-516. Ultimately, he sees a loop coming all the way around to Ft. Argyle Road on the Truman Parkway at some point in the future.

## **VI. Agency Reports**

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

Ms. Teresa Scott introduced the new pre-construction engineer, Mr. Brad Saxon. She reviewed the project report submitted to the committee members. Projects 1-4 (Abercorn intersection improvements) have been let and awarded to APAC. Projects 5 & 6

(Gulfstream Rd. and Robert Miller Rd.) are progressing with concept development and preliminary plans. Project 40 (intersection improvement at SR 21 and Gulfstream Rd.) is being incorporated with these two projects and will be let as one contract. The draft concept report for the Skidaway Narrows bridge is ready for signature. Initial concept meetings are set up for the SR 204 corridors with McGee Partners in November. Project 50 is a new project – truck route from Jimmy DeLoach Pkwy to SR 307 in order to get trucks to the port.

Mr. Murphy asked about sidewalks included in Projects 5 & 6. She does not have preliminary drawings, but there will be sidewalks in order to get people from the bus stop to the facility. Mr. Murphy stated that bikeways are needed on transit routes as well, especially since the buses can carry bicycles.

Mr. Liakakis asked for assurance that APAC will be closely monitored in their work on the four new projects they have received. Ms. Scott commented that the Stephenson Ave. project, which the Chairman is remembering, was not a GDOT project. Middleground Rd project is a GDOT project, and is moving along. She assured the committee that GDOT will monitor APAC on the new projects.

Mr. Murphy asked why GDOT awards contracts to companies with a history of poor performance. Mr. Saxon explained GDOT's qualification program, and noted that it is law that GDOT award to the lowest responsible bidder. APAC has performed well on some other recent projects.

Mr. Trip Tollison asked about Project 11 – the new Welcome Center on I-95. He is concerned that the existing center will be closed completely for 18 months during construction. He requested a temporary facility be provided during this construction since this is a very popular welcome center with visitors to Georgia and local tourism businesses depend upon the advertising at the welcome center. Mr. Saxon responded that this is being coordinated with the Dept of Industry, Trade and Tourism and some things are being discussed regarding a temporary location.

Mr. Russ Abolt recommended contacting the Mighty Eighth Air Force Museum as a possible temporary welcome center.

Ms. Diane Schleicher asked about the status of the resurfacing of US 80 on Tybee Island. This project is not included on Ms. Scott's list. Mr. Saxon responded that it is about to be let. Ms. Scott will check on it and let her know.

## **B. Chatham County**

Mr. Allan Black referred the members to the County's status report distributed today. Right-of-way acquisition and construction plans are proceeding for the Truman Pkwy Phase V. They hope to have everything ready to go at least by June 2008. On the Jimmy DeLoach Pkwy project, the County is awaiting approval of a revised concept report. Whitfield Ave widening has an approved revised concept and preliminary plans should be

ready by the end of the year. Bay St. widening project has an approved environmental document.

### **C. City of Savannah**

Mr. Mike Weiner reviewed the report that he distributed. The highlight this month is the completion of the DeRenne Ave emergency vehicle traffic signal pre-emption system. His test run showed it was very effective.

Mr. Murphy asked, on behalf of the Citizens Advisory Committee, about progress on turn lanes on Waters Ave. Mr. Weiner responded that he had not received the document that Mr. Murphy had mentioned previously. Mr. Murphy will provide it. Mr. Murphy itemized two new requests – one addressing Skidaway Rd and the other concerning Victory Dr. where the Truman ramp ends and the Home Depot entrance begins. He will give Mr. Weiner the information.

### **D. Chatham Area Transit Authority**

Mr. Joe Murray Rivers reported that the RFP is out for Teleride scheduling software and proposals should be evaluated in early November. CAT is still in discussion with Greyhound about the Greyhound site for the Transfer Center. CAT is changing the schedules on some routes, which should improve the efficiency. CAT staff has had discussion with the owners of Oglethorpe Mall regarding parking spaces related to possible express bus service from the mall to downtown Savannah. Staff is reviewing this as a potential pilot program. There is an RFP out on the water ferry. They have two responses that they are negotiating. There is an ear-mark of \$1 million, but it looks like it may cost \$1.8 million. CAT sent the maintenance department head out to California to look at vehicles for the downtown shuttle service between major hotels and parking centers. He doesn't know when the service will come on line. The buses are ready. Some minor changes are required. Delivery time is November or December. Service should be in early part of the new year.

Ms. Jane Love questioned whether the express bus service was with Oglethorpe Mall or with Savannah Mall. Mr. River conceded that it may be the Savannah Mall.

### **E. Georgia Ports Authority**

Mr. Randy Weitman reported that SR 307 overpass will move to final plans next month. They are looking to select a consultant for the final design on the Brampton Rd. connector. Parsons Transportation has been selected to do the environmental and concept for the Jimmy DeLoach connector.

### **F. Savannah-Hilton Head International Airport**

Mr. George Fidler reported that the 5 new gates are operating. The number of flights, destinations and passengers continues to increase. The parking garage is now open with

1,700 covered parking spaces connected to the terminal. They now have over 3,900 paved parking spaces. The new traffic signal at I-95 and Airways Ave is operational. The signal helped the congestion problem but did not solve the collision problem (rear-endings). They requested that GDOT move forward with their own recommendation for acceleration lanes. The new connector road from Dean Forest Rd to Gulfstream's new facility is now open with a new traffic signal. The airport is going to begin re-surfacing some of the older pavement in the next year or two.

## **VII. Other Business**

Mr. Wilkes reported that Savannah was the host city for the Georgia Planning Association (GPA) fall conference. At that conference, CUTS/MPO was presented with GPA's annual award for Innovative and Effective Planning Process for the Transportation Amenities Plan and Context Sensitive Design Manual. He also confirmed that Savannah will be the host city for the 2009 Association of Metropolitan Planning Organizations (AMPO) National Conference in October 2009.

Mr. Thomson reported that he was asked to be a speaker at the Georgia Transportation Summit on November 6, 2007 in Atlanta. His topic will be Savannah projects and problems with implementation. He asked for any comments MPO members would like him to include in his remarks.

## **VIII. Other Public Comments**

Mrs. Beth Kinstler, Savannah citizen, member of Preserving Savannah Neighborhoods and a member of Citizens Advisory Committee cited a study about commuters on DeRenne Ave. She stated that 91% come from out of the county to work at the two major medical centers. She pointed out that citizen members of PSN did a road-side count on west DeRenne Ave. a couple of years ago and observed that 87% of the non-commercial vehicles had out-of-county license plates.

She recently met with Patrick Shay and City and County engineers to discuss the Skidaway Rd. project, between Victory Dr. and Ferguson Rd., which is soon to be let. Comments made at that meeting indicated that this project was necessary for safety or improvement. She does not believe this project is needed for safety or improvement and requests that this project be removed from the table immediately.

Mr. Otis Johnson asked Ms. Kinstler what would be her solution for the congestion on DeRenne Ave. Ms. Kinstler believes that this number of people coming from out of the county requires that the hospitals and commuters be compelled to use ride sharing and/or park and ride, and that the City and/or County government extend CAT to surrounding counties. No matter how much you widen the road, you will still have congestion because of all the single occupancy cars. The cost of road widening, both creating and maintaining it, is horrendous. We, as taxpayers, cannot afford this as a solution. She recommends

that the hospitals offer their employees vehicles for personal emergencies. This would solve a major concern of the commuters who drive to work from out of county.

**IX. Adjournment**

There being no other business to come before the Committee, the October 24, 2007 Policy Committee was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

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