



**CHATHAM URBAN TRANSPORTATION STUDY**

**TECHNICAL COORDINATING COMMITTEE  
MEETING SUMMARY**

**MPC Jerry Surrency Conference Room  
110 East State Street**

**June 22, 2006**

**3:00 P.M.**

**Voting Members**

**Representing**

**Present**

Russ Abolt	Chatham County	
Allan R. Black, P.E.	Chatham County Engineering	x
Robert H. Bonner Jr.	LDH Corporation	
Michael Brown	City of Savannah	
Al Bungard, P.E.	Chatham County Engineering	
Robbie Byrd	City of Pooler	
Phillip Claxton	City of Port Wentworth	
Scott Conner	CSX Transportation	
Anne de la Sierra	Fort Steward/Hunter Army Airfield	
Patrick S. Graham	Savannah Airport Commission	
Bill Hendricks	Norfolk Southern Railroad Industry	
Doug J. Marchand	Georgia Ports Authority	
Helen McCracken	CUTS Citizens Advisory Committee	
Keith Melton	GDOT – Atlanta	x
William Oakley	CUTS Advisory Committee on Accessible Transportation	
Carl Palmer	Chatham Area Transit Authority	x
Gary D. Priester	GDOT – Jesup	
Tricia Reynolds	Coastal Georgia RDC	
Peter Shonka, P. E.	City of Savannah Engineering	
Bob Thomson	Thunderbolt	
Thomas L. Thomson, P.E., AICP	Executive Director MPC, Chair	x
Hugh "Trip" Tollison	Savannah Area Chamber of Commerce	
Mike Weiner, P.E.	City of Savannah Engineering	
Mark Wilkes, P.E., AICP	Metropolitan Planning Commission	x

**Voting Member Alternates**

**Representing**

**Present**

Zoe Hardenbrook	GDOT – Jesup	x
Randy Weitman, P.E.	Georgia Ports Authority	x
Fonda Moss	Chatham Area Transit	x
George Fidler, P. E.	Savannah Airport Commission	x

**Others Present**

**Representing**

Latoya Jones	FHWA	x
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Stephen Henry	City of Savannah -Traffic Engineering	x
Bill Saxman	Savannah Tree Foundation	x
E.R. Winger	SEDA	x
Wykoda Wang	MPO	x
Jane Love	MPO	x
Barbara Settzo	MPO	x
Tommy Crochet	McGee Partners	x
Grady Smith	JJG	x
Jo Hickson	Coastal Georgia Greenway	x

**I. Call to Order**

The June 22, 2006 meeting of the Technical Coordinating Committee Meeting was called to order by Mr. Tom Thomson. The meeting began with brief self-introductions of those in attendance. Since there was no quorum at 3:00, it was decided to begin with Status Reports while waiting for enough members to arrive before moving on to action items requiring a vote. A quorum was reached at 3:15 at which time the committee returned to the top of the agenda. (Status Reports are recorded in agenda order.)

**II. Action Items**

**A. Approval of the April 20, 2006 CUTS TCC Meeting Minutes**

It was moved and seconded to approve the April 20, 2006 Technical Coordinating Committee Meeting Minutes.

**TCC Action: motion to approve the April 20, 2006 TCC minutes carried with none opposed.**

**B. Endorsement of FY 2007 Unified Planning Work Program Amendments**

Mr. Wilkes reported that following the April meeting when the UPWP for FY 2007 was endorsed, the MPO was informed of the actual transit planning funding amount which was greater than originally expected, so at this time he is requesting endorsement of the amended UPWP which captures this additional funding. Mr. Wilkes indicated that there are changes in L230 funds and in 5303 funds. It was moved and seconded to endorse the FY 2007 Unified Planning Work Program Amendments.

**TCC Action: motion to endorse the FY 2007 Unified Planning Work Program Amendments was carried with none opposed.**

**C. Endorsement of FY 2007-2009 Draft TIP**

Ms. Wang gave a slide presentation of the FY 2007-2009 draft TIP. At the request of the Policy Committee at their April meeting a Top Priority category has been added to the FY

2007-2009 TIP. Chatham Area Transit has also provided their priority projects for inclusion in this TIP. Ms. Wang itemized all the projects listed as Top Priority (10 projects), First Priority (6 projects), Second Priority (6 projects), and Transit Priorities (8 projects). Top Priority projects are programmed for construction in the current FY2006-2008 TIP. First Priority projects have regional impact. Second priority projects are priorities from the FY2006-2008 TIP with high benefit/cost ratio.

In response to questions raised by the Policy Committee in April, the MPO staff researched the projects programmed and proposed and how the priority list impacts these projects. Ms. Wang reported that, of all the 22 priority projects, 7 projects have been delayed, mostly due to production schedules, while 4 projects have been advanced due to funding availability. Another question that had been raised by the Policy Committee concerned safety and security, specifically whether any of the priority projects were included in the hurricane evacuation routes. Ms. Wang noted that safety and security is one of five categories for project ranking in the 2030 LRTP. Hurricane evacuation is one sub-category. Ms. Wang then presented a chart that scored the various projects in the 2030 LRTP and concluded that some of the TIP priority projects are part of the hurricane evacuation route while others are not. Some major north/south highways (Rte 95 and Truman Pkwy) are not on the evacuation route because CEMA is encouraging evacuation in a westerly direction.

Ms. Wang further reported that the transit authority's priority list is consistent with the proposed transit projects.

Ms. Wang also reviewed the public involvement process, listing the public meeting dates and the public comments. The period for public comment extends through June 27, 2006. Some written comments have been received and addressed.

Ms. Wang proposed that two projects with earmarked funds be moved from the highway section of the proposed TIP to transit section because they are for the water taxi and the job access projects. It was agreed that where this appears in the TIP is an arbitrary administrative change. Mr. Thomson agreed that it could be moved to the transit section of the TIP.

Mr. Thomson recognized Ms. Wang for her leadership role in preparing this TIP and specifically in dealing with the answers to questions raised by Michael Brown on the Policy Committee.

Mr. Crochet raised the question about whether there was right-of-way authorization or not for project #522870 – Abercorn St from King George Blvd to Rio Rd. After discussion the Committee concluded that the authorization shown on the GDOT/Chatham County project status report referred to an early acquisition.

Mr. Thomson asked that someone be prepared to answer Chairman Liakakis' questions on funding and progress for Diamond Causeway, should he ask at next week's MPO meeting.

The memo by Mr. Al Bungard, County Engineer containing five comments on the TIP draft, and the letter by Mr. Thomson, sent in response, were discussed at length.

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It was moved and seconded to endorse the draft of the FY 2007-2009 TIP as modified.

**TCC action: the motion to endorse the draft of the FY 2007-2009 TIP as modified was carried with none opposed.**

**D. Review request to amend the MPO Bikeway Plan and 2030 LRTP to include Back River Bridge Bikeway**

Ms. Jo Hickson gave a slide presentation highlighting the proposed route from Florida through Georgia for the bikeway. If the future Back River Bridge replacement is signed for bike use in the breakdown lanes, it would allow the trail to cross the river and connect Georgia and South Carolina. The replacement bridge, as currently planned, is wide enough for bike use in the breakdown lanes, but the bikeway plan will need to consider bike access in getting on and off the bridge.

Ms. Hickson addressed questions concerning the bikeway along Route 17 and along Bush Rd.

Mr. Wilkes clarified that this was only asking for authorization for further study. This further study will address specific details including funding and technical details.

It was moved and seconded to endorse the request to study the amendment to the MPO Bikeway Plan and 2030 LRTP to include Back River Bridge Bikeway.

**TCC Action: the motion to endorse the request to study the amendment to the MPO Bikeway Plan and 2030 LRTP to include Back River Bridge Bikeway was carried with none opposed.**

**E. Review request to amend the 2030 LRTP to include language in support of enhancement projects**

Mr. Thomson stated that he believed the issue was whether the MPO needed to list in the LRTP any or all of the enhancement projects approved by the State Transportation Board. He believes it would be better to include a category in the LRTP that would capture any project that the State deems proper instead of modifying the LRTP for each project. The representatives from GDOT expressed unease with the wording that was recommended for inclusion into the LRTP.

Mr. Thomson stated that this document is a policy document not just a listing of projects to authorize.

Ms. Jones and Mr. Melton took exception with the wording presented, particularly "MPOs have no input into project applications or project selections." They recommended that it be rewritten so as to be more diplomatic in tone and content.

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Mr. Wilkes noted that the language in question was lifted directly from GDOT's Transportation Enhancement presentation at the May MPO Conference. If it is not correct, it can be revised.

Mr. Melton isn't convinced that this paragraph is even necessary and he believes that the projects should be included.

Ms. Wang reviewed the steps in the process that are necessary in order to include these enhancement projects in the LRTP. It is lengthy and involved.

**TCC Action: action on this item is deferred until the FHWA and the MPO can discuss this further and come up with language that is acceptable to all.**

### **III. Status Reports**

#### **A. Connecting Savannah Follow up Activities**

This item was discussed at the beginning of the meeting while waiting for enough members to arrive for a quorum.

Mr. Thomson reported that at the close of the proposal submission period, the city had received 4 proposals for the East DeRenne Widening Project and 2 proposals for the West DeRenne/Hampstead Connector Corridor Project. MPO evaluations are due June 26<sup>th</sup>. Regarding the ride sharing solution for DeRenne Avenue congestion, Ms. Love is working on a concept. Regarding ambulance signal pre-emption, there was a meeting with emergency services people.

Mr. Thomson announced that the Federal Highway, Federal Transit and US DOT have recognized the Connecting Savannah process for outstanding transportation and planning excellence. A press release will be issued in the near future.

#### **B. Benton Blvd Transportation Issues**

Mr. Wilkes reported that, at the request of Rep. Buddy Carter, the MPO assisted in convening meetings with property owners and developers to discuss the issue of extending Benton Blvd. from Highlands to SR30. Funding is very limited which makes options for extending Benton Blvd limited. Possible funds include a small amount of anticipated SPLOST funds (\$1,000,000 - \$2,000,000) but more would be needed (up to \$8,000,000). Recent developments in the corridor have been approved without right-of-way dedication, or the requirement to connect to Benton Blvd. As such, right-of-way will most likely have to be purchased. Action on this project is unlikely in the short-term unless additional funding sources are identified. A letter has been sent to Mr. Carter explaining the issues involved.

#### **C. Chatham County Interstate Needs Study**

Mr. Grady Smith with JJG has been hired by GDOT to develop a master plan for the Georgia interstate system through 2035 and to prioritize projects in Chatham. He

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conducted a slide presentation outlining the project. This study is being conducted in three phases. They are now in the beginning of Phase I: Baseline Conditions and Needs Assessment. This is scheduled for completion in November 2006. Phase II: Evaluation of Scenarios/Concept Layouts is scheduled for completion in May 2007. Phase III: Final Project Recommendations Report is due in November 2007.

There is a public involvement component to this program. This includes interviews with stakeholders, project web site, public meetings, and speakers' bureau.

At the end of each phase they will report to the CUTS TCC, conduct public meetings, and update the project web site.

Mr. Fidler recommended using public access television to reach the public. Mr. Smith said they would take it into consideration.

The next step will be for JJG to work with the CUTS staff to refine the model to ensure a sound basis to start from for the study.

Mr. Thomson pointed out that the Coastal Georgia RDC and UGA are undertaking a regional population study. Also, regarding I-16 off ramp at Montgomery, a mini charette was held in which additional major roadway alignments were explored. A report is being prepared to share.

#### **D. Update on SR 204 corridor project**

Mr. Tommy Crochet gave a brief update on the project. Initial team meeting should be in August. Meetings with key stakeholders are underway. He commented that an on-road bikeway is not an option for the area around Veterans Parkway. This area will be a freeway with ramps that will not accommodate bike lanes. He noted that any bikeway in this area would need to be off-road.

Mr. Crochet reported on the traffic counts for April and May 2006. These figures confirm that Route 17 is a natural terminus for this project.

#### **IV. Adjournment**

Members of this committee had to leave for the next meeting, so this meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

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