



CHATHAM URBAN TRANSPORTATION STUDY

**TECHNICAL COORDINATING COMMITTEE
MEETING SUMMARY**

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

December 13, 2007

3:00 P.M.

Voting Members

Representing

Present

Russ Abolt	Chatham County	
Brannyn Allen	City of Tybee Island	
Allan R. Black, P.E.	Chatham County Engineering	x
Robert H. Bonner Jr.	LDH Corporation	
Daniel Bostek	Norfolk Southern Railroad Industry	
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	
Glenn Durrence	GDOT – District 5	
Patrick S. Graham	Savannah Airport Commission	
Brian Leighton	CUTS Advisory Committee on Accessible Transportation	
Doug J. Marchand	Georgia Ports Authority	
Kyle Mote	GDOT – Atlanta	x
Russ Peterson	CUTS Citizens Advisory Committee	
Tricia Reynolds	Coastal Georgia RDC	
Joe Murray Rivers	Chatham Area Transit Authority	
Peter Shonka, P. E.	City of Savannah Engineering	
Bob Thomson	Town of 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 Traffic Engineering	x
Mark Wilkes, P.E., AICP	MPO	x

Voting Member Alternates

Representing

Sean Brandon	City of Savannah	x
George Fidler	Savannah Airport Commission	x
Teresa Scott	GDOT – District 5	x

Others Present

Leon Davenport
Latoya Jones
Jane Love
Brad Saxon
Bob Scanlon
Barbara Settzo
Wykoda Wang

Representing

Chatham County x
FHWA x
MPO x
GDOT – District 5 x
City of Savannah x
for MPO x
MPO x

Call to Order

The December 13, 2007 meeting of the Technical Coordinating Committee was called to order by Chairman Tom Thomson. Mr. Thomson congratulated Mr. Allan Black on his eminent retirement, after nineteen years with the Chatham County and welcomed Leon Davenport as Mr. Black's future replacement on the Technical Coordinating Committee. Mr. Brad Saxon introduced himself as the new District 5 Construction Engineer for GDOT. Ms. Latoya Jones announced that her new boss at the Federal Highway Administration, Ms. Sabrina David, would be making the rounds, visiting all the MPOs in her area.

I. Approval of Agenda

The agenda was accepted as presented.

II. Action Items

A. Approval of the October 18, 2007 Technical Coordinating Committee Meeting Minutes

Mr. Thomson called for the approval of the minutes. It was moved and seconded to approve the minutes of the October 18, 2007 Technical Coordinating Committee.

TCC Action: the motion to approve the minutes of the October 18, 2007 Technical Coordinating Committee carried with none opposed.

B. Endorsement of the CUTS/MPO 2008 Meeting Schedule

Mr. Thomson noted that the proposed schedule for 2008 was similar to the current 2007 schedule. The Policy Committee meetings will be the fourth Wednesday and the Technical Coordinating Committee meetings will be the third Thursday. An exception occurs in December 2008 when all meetings are moved up one week to accommodate the holidays. It was moved and seconded to endorse the CUTS/MPO 2008 Meeting Schedule as presented.

TCC Action: the motion to endorse the CUTS/MPO 2008 Meeting Schedule as presented carried with none opposed.

III. Status Reports

A. Financial Plan Update of the 2030 Long Range Transportation Plan

Mr. Thomson advised everyone that the MPO would not be able to amend the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) until the Financial Plan update for the 2030 Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) is finished. Mr. Mark Wilkes reported that MPO staff and consultant RS&H are currently updating the status and costs of CWP projects since the last LRTP update and anticipates completion for the next MPO meetings in February. A memorandum on methodology will be provided to Latoya Jones of FHWA for review and concurrence.

Ms. Wykoda Wang explained the methodology used for revising estimated revenues and expenditures. Each project was assigned to a specific cost band time-frame, and the inflation rates recommended by GDOT were used to estimate costs for the mid-point of each band.

Mr. Wilkes confirmed that the MPO is also updating the actual costs of every project that was authorized since the Plan was adopted in September 2004.

Ms. Wang reported that they do not know yet if the inflated costs balance with the inflated revenues. There is a possibility that some projects may fall out of the financially-constrained 2030 Long Range Transportation Plan.

Ms. Jones reminded them that if projects do fall out it will trigger a required public comment period.

Mr. Thomson suggested that the TCC and members of the CAC be invited to a briefing session on this topic alone.

B. Skidaway Narrows Bridge Replacement Concept Meeting

Ms. Jane Love reported to the committee about the concept meeting that GDOT held in November, for the bridge replacement project at Skidaway Narrows. GDOT's initial proposal is for an alignment to the north of the existing bascule bridge, but the major concern is the close proximity of the power lines. Georgia Power is investigating the cost of moving the power lines. The alternative of a southern alignment was considered, but that would impact the existing boat ramp and also have greater impacts on wetlands. In the future, when the old bridge is replaced with another two-lane high-level bridge, to provide a total of four lanes, the power line issue will come up again.

Mr. Thomson asked if moving the power lines was a GDOT cost or a Georgia Power cost. That question has not yet been answered. What effect will moving the power lines have on the start of construction?

Ms. Scott does not anticipate moving the lines will delay the design-build process on this project.

Mr. Wilkes noted that the cost of removing the old bridge is not included in the cost figures for the current bridge replacement project.

Mr. Thomson asked the GDOT representatives to come to the Policy Committee meeting fully prepared to answer questions regarding another evacuation route of concern – Victory Drive at Ogeechee Road – including environmental issues, draft documents, public hearings, and a projected time line for the project.

C. Safe Routes to Schools

Ms. Love reported that the topic of Safe Routes to School (SRTS) came up at the Policy Committee meeting in October. While the concept is not new, federal funding is new with the authorization of the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act – a Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU) in 2005. GDOT will administer the program for Georgia. They are currently developing a resource center for non-infrastructure activities related to education, encouragement and enforcement. Schools, districts, or local governments should enroll in this resource center in order to be eligible for infrastructure funding. Enrollment will be possible later this winter. GDOT's call for applications for infrastructure projects is expected this spring or summer. Individual schools, school districts, or state, regional, and local governments may apply. Georgia is receiving a total of approximately \$17 million in federal funds between 2005 and 2009; no less than 70% is to be spent on infrastructure projects. As of now, Ms. Love has not determined if the local school board has a plan or if individual schools will compete for the funding. Mr. Mike Weiner believes that "Safe Kids Savannah" will be coordinating the local efforts for this program. The City would be interested in using SRTS funds for sidewalks near schools. Ms. Jones commented that an applicant must have a plan in place before applying for funding. Ms. Wang commented that this funding is not allocated through the MPO planning process and GDOT is managing it, similar to the Transportation Enhancement program. She would hope that applicants for funding would let the MPO know of their intentions.

IV. Agency Reports

A. CUTS Advisory Committee on Accessible Transportation

Ms. Love reported on behalf of the Advisory Committee on Accessible Transportation. The committee endorsed the proposed 2008 meeting schedule. Ms. Love added that Mr. Jeff Felsler told the ACAT members that the City Council had resolved that City staff should do whatever engineering is needed to allow a bus shelter at the corner of Bull St. and Broughton St. Mr. Weiner, Mr. Bob Scanlon, and Mr. Sean Brandon were all aware of this issue.

Mr. Brandon commented that City staff was instructed to work with Chatham Area Transit (CAT) on this project, taking all engineering problems into consideration as well as all streetscape improvements.

Mr. Thomson asked why this was brought up as an issue. Mr. Brandon explained that this is a very busy bus stop and many people are exposed to all the various weather elements while waiting for the bus.

Mr. Scanlon said that the problem is that the basement of the building at that corner extends under the sidewalk to the curb. The sidewalk along Broughton St. right there is essentially the roof of the basement of the property, making physical support for a bus shelter problematic.

B. CUTS Citizens Advisory Committee

Mr. Thomson reported that things are going well in this committee.

Ms. Teresa Scott questioned a comment by Ms. Beth Kinstler recorded in the minutes of either the August or October CAC meeting, stating that GDOT was unresponsive. She wants to assure them that GDOT will respond, though it may not be with the information they want to hear. The minutes showed that Ms. Kinstler had made this comment at the August meeting, during the presentation about SR 204 improvements.

Mr. Wilkes stated that he believes she was referring the fact that GDOT prefers an alternative to which Ms. Kinstler and some other citizens objected at the public information open houses. He noted that MPO staff encourages the CAC members to send their comments to GDOT whenever they have an issue.

C. Federal Highway Administration

Ms. Jones reported no new information at this time.

D. Federal Transit Administration

No report at this time.

E. Georgia Department of Transportation

Ms. Scott referred committee members to the written report and highlighted the following projects:

- A concept meeting is scheduled for the Effingham County Parkway project
- A concept meeting is scheduled for SR307/Dean Forest Rd. Extension project.

Mr. Thomson reported that MPO staff has arranged a meeting with Mr. Tommy Crochet and other consultants on the SR 204 improvement project, following the Policy Committee Meeting next week. Mr. Thomson had requested more documentation from them. There will be no Regional Planning meeting this month.

F. Chatham County

Mr. Al Black referred members to the written report that was distributed at this meeting. He reviewed the report and highlighted the following:

- Truman Pkwy. Phase V – final field plan review by February 2008
- Whitfield Ave. widening – revised preliminary plans by January 2008
- Bay St. widening – drainage is the main focus of work at this time

G. City of Savannah

Mr. Weiner distributed a written status report and highlighted the following:

- Chatham Pkwy./Chatham Center Dr. – hope to install signal poles by the end of March 2008
- Bay St. Corridor – purpose of this re-timing project was to improve pedestrian safety and reduce speeding. It has been effective in reducing speed. They have installed the audible pedestrian signals at four more intersections along Bay St.
- The City received a list from an organization representing the blind, asking for audible pedestrian signals at various intersections throughout the City. This project will be incorporated into the City's annual work program for the next five years.
- There is also a new signal at Boundary St. and Louisville Rd.
- Waters Ave. is open to traffic again.

Mr. Thomson asked about the progress of the ambulance pre-emption project.

Mr. Brandon reported that the contracts between the ambulance services and the city are being finalized. There had been disagreement about who pays for the equipment to be installed on each ambulance. Mr. Brandon reported that the city has been willing to assist with start-up costs but the pre-emption equipment should be part of the regular costs for new ambulances in the future.

Mr. Scanlon noted that the City is planning to conduct a transportation study of DeRenne Ave., as well as conduct an intensive public involvement process regarding transportation, as well as neighborhood preservation.

Mr. Brandon anticipates a very intensive public comment period where the transportation study will be just one component of the plan.

It was Mr. Thomson's intention to send out an update on all Connecting Savannah strategies, using the mailing list gathered from that time. Connecting Savannah was only to identify DeRenne Ave. as a problem, not solve it.

Mr. Brandon commented that there will be a dedicated website and branding for the DeRenne study process.

H. Chatham Area Transit Authority

No report at this time.

I. Georgia Ports Authority

No report at this time.

Mr. Thomson asked GDOT representatives if they had any additional information on the Jimmy DeLoach Pkwy. Connector, in which the Port is involved.

Ms. Scott reported that the Port is going to fund some of the preliminary engineering, and they hope to find other private funding for the construction.

Mr. Thomson has some concerns. He doesn't believe the Port Authority is following a legal process to procure consultants. They are not advertising for bids, thereby shutting out some interested parties. His second concern is that the Port Authority is not looking at different concepts. If we are going to have a new corridor, the connection to the bigger network should be considered, so that other future projects, such as the NW Tollway, are not obstructed.

Ms. Scott commented that if no federal or state funds are involved, then the process doesn't have as many requirements. She assured Mr. Thomson that he would be notified whenever they schedule a meeting on this issue.

J. Savannah-Hilton Head International Airport

Mr. George Fidler reported that a third passenger screening checkpoint has been added inside the terminal. They are also widening the ramp between the waiting area and the concourse. Construction is now underway.

K. Other

No other agencies reported.

V. Other Business

Regarding the Regional Transportation discussions, Mr. Thomson reported that the next step will be to gather the technical planning people to talk specifics, create an action plan, and agree on regional priorities. This would include Chatham, Liberty, Effingham, and Bryan counties. A meeting will be scheduled sometime in January.

Mr. Scanlon asked about including Jasper and Beaufort counties from South Carolina.

Mr. Thomson affirmed that they have been participating so far. He has yet to identify the proper person from SC DOT to participate. This will be an informal gathering. An example of a good outcome of the regional meetings would be a corridor plan, or thoroughfare plan, as it is sometimes called.

Next, Mr. Thomson raised the question about roadway ownership issues between the City and the County. If roadway responsibility were defined by roads' functions and not by their locations relative to city limits, there would be no argument when an annexation situation comes up. He may bring this up, with more detail, at a future meeting.

Mr. Scanlon said he'd be willing to talk to him about it sometime outside of the meetings.

VI. Other Public Comments

No other public comments at this time.

VII. Adjournment

There being no other business, the Technical Coordinating Committee adjourned the December 13, 2007 meeting.

Respectfully submitted,

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