



**Newton County Comprehensive Transportation Plan (CTP)
Inaugural Stakeholders' Advisory Committee Meeting
Tuesday, June 12, 2007
The Center for Community Preservation and Planning
Covington, Georgia**

Attendees:

Kevin Walter, Newton County
Aaron Varner, Newton County BoC
Mort Ewing, Newton County BoC
Wanda Cummings, Newborn City Council
Joe Nichols, Newton County Sheriff's Office
Bob Rutland, Greyland Real Estate
Bobby D. Hamby, City of Porterdale
Tommy Hailey, Newton County Recreation
Greg Richardson, Newton Medical
Steve Horton, City of Covington
Hoyt Oliver, City of Oxford
Sabrina Renee Sanford, Newton County DFCS
Theodosia Wade, Oxford College
Cheryl Delk, Newton County

Tres Thomas, City of Covington
Frank Turner, Newton County Land Trust
Craig Espeseth, Home Depot
Vicky Giles
Mary Horton
Linton R. Lovett
Marsha Anderson Bomar, Street Smarts
Jay Scott, Street Smarts
Andy Anderson, Street Smarts
Kay Lee, The Center
Hosanna Fletcher, The Center
Lauren Oldja, The Center
Lauren Hubbard, The Center
Ruth Miller, The Center

Consultant Team:

Faye DiMassimo, URS
Jim P. Brown, URS
Kristen Wescott, URS
Janide Sidifall, URS
Joel Stone, URS

Stakeholder Advisory Committee

The purpose of the Stakeholder Advisory Committee (SAC) is to advise and guide the CTP process and provide ongoing input to the Study Team. SAC members include elected and appointed Newton County Officials, interested organizations, major planning partners, and business and community leaders. The SAC goals are to:

- ◆ Review information and provide input on study process;
- ◆ Help build consensus on project goals and issues; and
- ◆ Share information and promote awareness of CTP.

AGENDA

Welcome & Introductions

CTP Overview and Discussion Presentation

Given by Mr. Jim Brown of URS Corporation

1. Background
 - ◆ CTP funding assistance provided through ARC in 18-county region
2. CTP Purpose
 - ◆ Understand existing and future multimodal transportation needs
 - ◆ Establish Newton County's priorities for mobility, safety, connectivity, and accessibility
 - ◆ Provide long-range guide for efficient transportation system investments
 - ◆ Develop transportation policies and program of projects
3. CTP Process and Schedule
 - ◆ 18-month process that will include technical analysis and public involvement
 - ◆ Target for completion September 2008
4. CTP Task Elements
 - ◆ Public Outreach/Project Management
 - ◆ Existing Conditions
 - ◆ Needs Assessment
 - ◆ Recommendations
 - ◆ Documentation
5. Vision, Goals and Objectives
 - ◆ Newton County Comprehensive Plan Transportation Goal - Maintain an efficient and reliable multi-modal transportation network to support efficient land use, minimize traffic congestion, and facilitate community-wide and regional circulation.
 - ◆ Regional Transportation Plan Goals
 - Improve accessibility and mobility for people and goods
 - Provide the most cost effective system performance given available funding
 - Enhance environmental quality and the quality of life for the region's citizens
 - Enhance the safety and security of the transportation system
6. Coordination with the Cities
 - ◆ Provides forum for jurisdictional participation
 - ◆ Promotes unified approach to planning process
 - ◆ Ensures all jurisdictions are represented in the CTP
7. Public Involvement
 - ◆ Guided by a public involvement plan (PIP)
 - ◆ Includes community participation activities and communication tools such as:
 - Public information meetings
 - Stakeholder Advisory Committee
 - Project website
 - Informational materials
 - Media materials
 - ◆ Target Public Meeting Dates
 - August 2007 - *Community Issues*
 - November 2007 - *Identified Needs*
 - May 2008 - *Draft CTP*
8. Opportunities and Challenges
 - Opportunities:
 - ◆ Establish joint county and city priorities for transportation improvements
 - ◆ Define transportation plan for inclusion in regional process

- ◆ Increase awareness of transportation planning and funding process
- Challenges:
- ◆ Attaining meaningful public involvement and agency coordination
 - ◆ Accurately identifying needs and opportunities
 - ◆ Moving projects to implementation

Community Issues

SAC members were shown the results from the Community Survey Results (Newton County Community Agenda, Draft March 2007).

Community Issues

Issues	Low	Medium	High
Mitigating Increasing Congestion			X
Lack of Adequate Traffic Signals			X
Lack of Public Transportation	X		
Poorly connected/incomplete sidewalks		X	
Improving Street Connectivity		X	
More Mixed Use Development			X
Access to Greenway/Bicycle Facilities		X	
Other: Maintenance of Roads, Signage, and Trucks	X		

SAC members were then asked to fill out their own Community Issues, ranking the same issues as Low, Medium, or High priority areas. SAC members' responses are presented below in an aggregate table.

Community Issues

Issues	Low	Medium	High
Mitigating Increasing Congestion	0	5	18
Lack of Adequate Traffic Signals	2	10	15
Lack of Public Transportation	6	6	6
Poorly connected/incomplete sidewalks	6	13	1
Improving Street Connectivity	5	11	8
More Mixed Use Development	5	8	8
Access to Greenway/Bicycle Facilities	7	11	4
Other: Maintenance of Roads, Signage, and Trucks	7	13	3

Break-Out Sessions/Group Discussion

SAC members were divided into three groups. Each of the three groups were charged with answering the following four questions:

1. What needs and deficiencies currently exist on the transportation system?
2. What are the major transportation related issues that must be addressed over the next 30 years?
3. What should the Comprehensive Transportation Plan accomplish?
4. Are there any obstacles that you foresee in developing and implementing the Plan?

Group One

Needs/Deficiencies:

- ◆ Walkability/ bike trails
- ◆ Too many cars on the road
- ◆ No alternative to driving to Atlanta
 - a. GRT
 - b. Park n Ride
 - c. BRT
- ◆ Too few traffic signals
- ◆ More Park n Ride vans, lots
- ◆ Inadequate arterials between dev. Nodes (i.e. Salem Rd)
 - d. More lanes
 - e. Turn lanes
 - f. Dedicated HOV lanes
 - g. Storage lanes...
- ◆ Enough lanes near churches, schools, malls, etc.
- ◆ Prevent residential "cut-throughs"
- ◆ Is connectivity good?
- ◆ Widen main roads; constrict residential roads
- ◆ Restrict using Newton County as a thorough-way

30 year Needs:

- ◆ Current congestion
- ◆ Future growth
- ◆ Air quality, water quality
- ◆ Run-off (permeable streets?)
- ◆ Address "shopping center developments"
- ◆ Public transportation

CTP Accomplishments:

- ◆ Support planned growth
- ◆ Accurately ID transportation needs
- ◆ Become part of the ARC funding plan
- ◆ Coordinate with water/sewer, land use, school board
- ◆ Be forward-thinking, as well as mitigating

Obstacles:

- ◆ Division of growth consensus
- ◆ Lack of money
- ◆ Development pressures
- ◆ Do government interests agree?
- ◆ Existing zoning, standards, ordinances, building code

Group Two

Needs/Deficiencies:

- ◆ Funding
- ◆ More lanes (i.e. 36, 278)
- ◆ Congestion (school hr, lunch, weekends)
- ◆ Lack of traffic signals
- ◆ Alternative routes/ connectivity
- ◆ Need creative intersections
- ◆ Adding lanes is not always the answer
- ◆ Public transit for those without cars

30 year Needs:

- ◆ Trolley system for municipalities
- ◆ Zoning requirements revised
- ◆ Rapid transit to/from Atlanta (100-200 mph train)
- ◆ Manage pollution

- ◆ Promote increased density for mass transit
- ◆ Coordinate with surrounding communities
- ◆ Smaller block sizes
- ◆ Infrastructure for support (i.e. utilities)
- ◆ Everything should not feed to Covington (communities within communities!)
- ◆ Connect communities
- ◆ Rail system, common factor for connection

CTP Accomplishments:

- ◆ Prioritize
- ◆ Must be comprehensive
- ◆ Ingenuity in funding (i.e. matching funds)
- ◆ Look at rezoning

Obstacles:

- ◆ Elected official buy-in
- ◆ Money
- ◆ Attitudes toward density
- ◆ Mindset of population (need education)
- ◆ Keeping sight of what is best for the whole community, not just vocal groups
- ◆ "Selling" the plan

Group Three

Needs/Definiciencies/30 year Needs:

- ◆ Lack of public transportation (to Atlanta)
- ◆ Signalized lights
- ◆ Connectivity (particularly Westside)
- ◆ Bottlenecks
- ◆ Cross-county connectivity (city to city)
- ◆ Bike lanes/ trails
- ◆ Strategic land use (preservation)
- ◆ Mixed Use development
- ◆ Concentrating development

Priorities:

- ◆ Mixed trails
- ◆ Demonstration areas
- ◆ Acquiring R-OW's
- ◆ Citizen approval

Obstacles:

- ◆ Money
- ◆ Not in my Backyard
- ◆ Current zoning code
- ◆ Better coordination among Commissioners, School Board
- ◆ Lack of regional collaboration

Next Steps

- ◆ Stakeholder Interviews
- ◆ Complete Project Goals and Objectives
- ◆ Complete Baseline Conditions Assessment
- ◆ Conduct Public Meeting
- ◆ Next SAC meeting in September – *Date to be determined*