



METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION

**COASTAL REGION METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION
JUNE 2009 MPO MEETINGS**

**CORE BOARD and TCC AGENDA ITEM III-C-1 and III-D-2
CAC and ACAT AGENDA ITEM II-C-1 and II-D-2**

Agenda Items: Requested Amendment to the 2030 Long Range Transportation Plan for Georgia Ports Authority Rail Tie-in to the Mason Intermodal Container Transfer Facility

Requested Amendment to the FY 2008-2011 Transportation Improvement Program for Georgia Ports Authority Rail Tie-in to the Mason Intermodal Container Transfer Facility

Presenter: Jane Love, MPO staff

Summary: In mid-April, 2009, the MPO received a request from the Georgia Ports Authority (GPA) to amend a new rail project into the FY 2008-2011 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). All projects in the TIP must be consistent with the Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP). MPO staff determined that an amendment to the 2030 LRTP would be necessary before the rail project could be considered for addition into the FY 2008-2011 TIP. The CORE Board authorized staff to proceed with the LRTP amendment process at their meeting on April 30.

At the June 2009 MPO meeting, the CORE Board will first consider the amendment of this project to the 2030 LRTP. If the Board approves that amendment, then later on the agenda, action will be considered for amending the project to the FY 2008-2011 TIP.

Project Description

This project will install connecting tracks from the south end of the Georgia Ports Authority's (GPA) James D. Mason Intermodal Container Transfer Facility (ICTF) to the Norfolk Southern Railroad (NS) Foundation Lead. Currently, intermodal cars are pushed into the ICTF from the northern end. The construction of SR 307 Overpass at Norfolk Southern rail line (PI # 0000345), which is a separate project, will eliminate the at-grade conflicts that otherwise would exist for the southern connection between the

foundation lead and the Mason ICTF. The installation of the south end connection tracks will allow trains to operate through both ends of the facility and will lead to more efficient facility operation and reduced operating times in positioning rail cars on arrival and making up trains on departure from the facility.

The location map and schematic drawing of the project are attached.

Project Funding

Funding for the project would consist of:

Remaining 2005 GPA Congressional Earmark	\$3.5 million
<u>Other GPA funds</u>	<u>\$2.6 million</u>
TOTAL	\$6.1 million

The amendment would not affect the funding of other projects in the 2030 Long Range Transportation Plan or in the FY 2008-2011 Transportation Improvement Program.

Community Impacts of the Proposed Project

The proposed project would be located in industrial area, primarily on the property of Georgia Ports Authority. It would increase freight efficiencies by creating a more direct rail link, which is made possible by the SR 307 overpass project, a separate project that is nearing completion of the engineering phase.

Residences and a church currently are located across the Pipe Makers Canal from the proposed rail link. These properties front on Smith Ave., having lots that run approximately 900 feet back from the road. The lots currently have wooded areas at the rear, which property owners may choose to maintain in order to buffer themselves from the proposed project. Train traffic already passes through the residential area on the Norfolk Southern line.

The proposed rail connection does not negatively impact automobile or truck traffic, passenger transit, or bicycle or pedestrian traffic, because grade separation will be achieved by the separate SR 307 railway overpass project.

Recommendation:

For endorsement and approval of the amendment to the 2030 Long Range Transportation Plan for the Georgia Ports Authority Rail Tie-in to the Mason Intermodal Container Transfer Facility.

For endorsement and approval of the amendment to the FY 2008-2011 Transportation Improvement Program for the Georgia Ports Authority Rail Tie-in to the Mason Intermodal Container Transfer Facility.