



CORE MPO Board

February 28, 2024, at 10:00 am

February 28, 2024, CORE MPO BOARD MEETING

Voting Members	Representing	Present	On-Line
Asia Hernton	Advisory Committee on Accessible Transportation	X	
Steve Scholar	City of Richmond Hill		
Tim Callanan	Effingham County Commission		X
Nick Palumbo	City of Savannah	X	
Karen Jarrett	Metropolitan Planning Commission	X	
Bruce Campbell	City of Garden City		
Jim Aiello	Savannah Airport Commission	X	
Deidrick Cody	Chatham Area Transit Board of Directors	X	
Brian West	City of Tybee Island		
Dana Williams	Town of Thunderbolt		
James Hungerpiller	Town of Vernonberg		
Faye DiMassimo	Chatham Area Transit Authority	X	
Karen Williams	City of Pooler	X	
Jay Melder	City of Savannah	X	
Vivian Canizares	Georgia Department of Transportation		X
Jamie McCurry	Georgia Ports Authority		
Armand Turner	Citizens Advisory Committee		
Gary Norton	City of Port Wentworth		
Dennis Baxter	City of Bloomingdale		
Chester Ellis	Chatham County Commission (Chairman)	X	
Michael Kaigler	Chatham County		
Chairperson	Economic Development & Freight Advisory Committee		
Tanya Milton	Chatham County		
Voting Alternates	Representing		
Robert Milie	Town of Thunderbolt		
Ted Hicks	Georgia Department of Transportation	X	
Others	Representing		
Katie Proctor	GDOT District 5		X
Habte Kassa	GDOT		X
Kaniz Sathi	GDOT		X
Joseph Longo	FHWA		X
Sally Helm	CORE MPO/MPC	X	
Genesis Harrod	CORE MPO		
Wykoda Wang	CORE MPO	X	
Kieron Coffield	CORE MPO/MPC	X	
Pamela Everett	MPC		
Melanie Wilson	MPC	X	
Anna McQuarrie	MPC – Special Projects	X	
Hind Patel	MPC/IT	X	
Subhashi Karunaratne	MPC		X
Joseph Shearouse	City of Savannah	X	

Mary Moskowitz	Chatham Area Transit	X	
Deanna Brooks	Chatham County	X	
Leon Davenport	Thunderbolt – consultant	X	
Ashley Goodrich	Thunderbolt – consultant	X	
Jeff Ricketson	LCPC		X
Beverly Dumas			X
Brandon North			X
Katie Dunnigan			X
Paul Teague			X
Ran Xu			X
Tom Hutchinson	City of Pooler	X	

I. Approval of Agenda

Mr. Nick Palumbo motioned to approve the agenda; seconded by Ms. Faye DiMassimo. The motion passed with none opposed.

II. Committee Reports (verbal)

TCC - Ms. Deanna Brooks stated the TCC met on February 15th and all actions items were endorsed.

ACAT - Ms. Asia Hernton stated the ACAT met on February 26th and all actions items were endorsed.

CAC - Ms. Asia Hernton stated the CAC met on February 15th and all actions items were endorsed.

Executive Director - Ms. Melanie Wilson stated that we will be moving forward with a final vote on the CORE MPO MPA Boundary and will be sending out notices with the changes in dues.

III. Action Items

[1. Approval of the CORE MPO Board December 13, 2023, Meeting Minutes](#)

Mr. Nick Palumbo motioned to approve the December 13th, 2023, CORE MPO Board Meeting minutes; seconded by Ms. DiMassimo. The motion passed with none opposed.

[2. 2045 MTP Amendment](#)

Ms. Wykoda Wang, CORE MPO Director, said GDOT requested an amendment be made to the 2045 MTP to add the Right-of-Way phase of SR 404 SPUR/US 17 at the Savannah River Crossing into 2028, which is our Cost Band 2. For the MPO's consideration, we are concerned with the fiscal constraint. If inclusion of this project impacts other projects, meaning kicking other projects out, we have to conduct a two-step amendment. If it does not impact other projects, then we will do a one-step amendment. The GDOT request is attached to the agenda.

Currently GDOT is doing a short-term fix of tightening the cables to raise the Talmadge Bridge up, which they consider as a short-term solution. The long-term solution would be to explore what options we have to replace the bridge. GDOT is conducting a feasibility study. In order for the feasibility study deliverables to be accepted by FHWA for review, the prerequisite is to include the Right-of-Way phase, which is about \$500,000 into our Cost Band 2. GDOT indicated they have additional funds because it is not much money. We don't want the feasibility study recommendations to sit on the shelf, so we want the FHWA to review the study alternatives. Our concerns are fiscal constraint; since GDOT has enough money to cover this project phase, the money is considered additional revenue beyond our 2045 MTP revenue projections. We are okay to process the one-step amendment. We did advertise for a 15-day public comment period; so far, we have not received any written comments. We also advertised for a public hearing to be held in conjunction with today's meeting.

Mr. Nick Palumbo, City of Savannah, stated he knows the public has many questions about the future of the Talmadge Bridge and what direction we are going to head. Where can the public access the available information, and who will be the decision makers as we decide the solution moving forward?

Mr. Ted Hicks, GDOT, said GDOT will present the findings of the scoping phase and the feasibility studies to the public and will have opportunities for public comment to go over the options for short- and long-term solutions to make sure the clearance of the bridge is adequate for the Port needs in the foreseeable future.

Ms. Melanie Wilson, MPC Executive Director, said we partner with GDOT. We will have those meetings and information available on the MPO website for public access.

Ms. Vivian Canizares, GDOT Assistant Office Head, stated the feasibility study is being carried out by the Office of Program Delivery. We are doing this amendment precisely to adjust to the Federal requirements, to allow us to have a complete look and include NEPA and all the Federal parts, and to include a very robust public input as part of the process. With that we are guaranteeing the participation of the public and there will be plenty of opportunities for anyone to participate. This is the step to allow us to hear from anyone and also to see what alternatives we have looking towards the future.

Chairperson Chester Ellis said he hopes everyone understands this is a two-step phase for the bridge. The first is the short-term solution of tightening the cables to raise the bridge. The second phase is the long-term planning, to do a study on what solution is best and how to implement it.

PUBLIC HEARING

Mr. Nick Palumbo motioned to open the Public Hearing; seconded by Mr. Tom Hutcherson. The motion passed with none opposed.

NO PUBLIC COMMENTS

Mr. Jay Melder motioned to close the Public Hearing; seconded by Mr. Nick Palumbo. The motion passed with none opposed.

Mr. Karen Jarrett motioned to approve the 2045 MTP amendment; seconded by Mr. Tom Hutcherson. The motion passed with none opposed.

[3. FY 2024 - FY 2027 TIP Amendments February 2024](#)

Ms. Wykoda Wang stated we are making the FY 2024 - 2027 TIP amendment for one project, the Truman Linear Park Trail Phase II-B. This project's construction phase was included in the previous FY 2021 - 2024 TIP. We had construction programmed in FY 2023, and at that time we had about \$6.4 million for this project with the CRRSAA funds which were lapsing, the Y301 funds and Earmark funds. GDOT was ready to authorize the construction funds and were only able to authorize the funds based on the most up-to-date cost estimate. The City of Savannah provided a cost estimate of about \$3.9 million at that time. GDOT decided they could authorize no more than \$3.9 million, and the sequence would be Earmark funds 1st, CRRSAA funds 2nd, and then Y301 funds last. This project has lost some of the Y301 funds because of the cost estimate update.

The City of Savannah put the project out for bid but received no bids in the first round. In the second round the lowest bid was about \$7.8 million including the 5% contingency. The City decided to use the 10% contingency cost to the base bid in the construction contract, so the total cost is more than \$8 million, which makes us \$4 million short.

The City of Savannah asked if the CORE MPO could come up with additional funds. After coordinating with GDOT, we agreed to add the new construction phase to FY 2024 – 2027 TIP before programming any federal funds. We are adding the new construction phase into fiscal year 2024. We checked the balance and found out that we have about \$16,000 in federal funds from the Carbon Reduction Program and \$231,000 from the Y230 funds. The City of Savannah will provide the local match for the Carbon Reduction Program and Y230 Program funds. This is all the federal funding the MPO has available. We will provide about \$250,000 and the City of Savannah will come up with the local match as well as the rest of the funding. The City's funds come from the Tide to Town account.

We are also applying for other grants funds for this project. If we do get those funds, the Tide to Town account will be replenished. The federal dollars would be like a reimbursement program. If we receive that grant, then we process another TIP modification to replace the funds. If we don't get it, then the City of Savannah will have to come up with about \$4 million additional local funds. The City Council has awarded the contract and construction will start soon.

Mr. Jay Melder, City of Savannah, stated he supports everything Director Wang has said. The City of Savannah is prepared to cover the cost of Phase II-B. They are very appreciative if the CORE MPO Board would approve the additional dollars. This is a transformation multimodal project that the City is undertaking and they appreciate the

support of the MPO. The City of Savannah has budgeted and will cover any additional costs they are not able to access from the federal government or from this process.

Mr. Nick Palumbo, City of Savannah, wanted to add his appreciation to the CORE MPO for their diligent work on finding multiple streams of revenue to accomplish this goal.

Ms. Wykoda Wang said the lesson learned is that we need to have an up-to-date cost estimate. If we kept the \$6.4 million, we would not have this problem.

Mr. Jay Melder stated point well taken.

Mr. Jim Aiello, SAV/HHI Airport, stated he agrees with the cost estimate, but he is seeing cost estimates at 30-40% higher lately. He foresees in the future we will have short falls. When you speak to your designers and engineers, please tell them to pit 30-40% on top of that.

Chairperson Chester Ellis said he believes the estimates seem to change every 15 days or so, as they add something new. Dealing with construction in Chatham County please take the high road.

Mr. Jay Melder said to give some background on the project, we had two very long procurement processes that extended the time between the first cost estimate that GDOT approved and the final estimate. It was not that they had an estimate that was half the real cost, it was that it took a long time to get the contract in place.

PUBLIC HEARING

Mr. Nick Palumbo motioned to open the Public Hearing; seconded by Mr. Dederick Cody. The motion passed with none opposed.

NO PUBLIC COMMENTS

Ms. Faye DiMassimo motioned to close the Public Hearing; seconded by Mr. Nick Palumbo. The motion passed with none opposed.

Mr. Faye DiMassimo motioned to approve the FY 2024 - 2027 TIP amendment; seconded by Mr. Nick Palumbo. The motion passed with none opposed.

4. Adoption of the MPA Boundary

Ms. Wykoda Wang stated last June the CORE MPO Board adopted a new Metropolitan Planning Area (MPA) boundary that includes the southern half of Effingham County and all of Bryan County except for Fort Stewart. Staff received a letter from Bryan County in January 2024 indicating that "Bryan County objects to the expansion of the CORE MPO boundaries and does not agree to being included within the MPO". The letter is attached to this agenda and it gives the reasons. They passed the resolution in November of 2023, and the reasons are that North Bryan County is not an urbanized or urbanizing area, the population is small and rural, the major population growth is in South Bryan County, etc.

We were coordinating with GDOT to develop the revenue projections for the 2050 MTP for the new boundary when we received the news. Now that Bryan County doesn't want to be a part of the CORE MPO MPA boundary, we have researched what to do. According to federal laws, "at a minimum, the MPA boundaries shall encompass the entire existing urbanized area (as defined by the Bureau of the Census) plus the contiguous area expected to become urbanized within a 20-year forecast period for the metropolitan transportation plan." A lot of areas in Bryan County are already included in the Savannah Urban Area, so Bryan County has no choice but to be included.

Thus, the MPO staff coordinated with Bryan County on revising the MPA boundary within the county and proposed three scenarios that all focus on South Bryan County and do not include North Bryan County (all 3 scenarios are attached to this agenda). Richmond Hill is already in our boundary and they are already a voting member. The pink areas shown on the scenario maps of unincorporated Bryan County are located in Savannah Urban Area, so by law these areas have to be included in the CORE MPO MPA Boundary. Since Bryan County has chosen Scenario 1, we ask the CORE MPO Board for adoption of Scenario 1 for the CORE MPO MPA Boundary.

Ms. Faye DiMassimo asked how did GDOT and FHWA respond to the 3 scenario alternatives?

Ms. Wykoda Wang stated we coordinated with GDOT and FHWA. Bryan County sent the letter to GDOT and FHWA first, before sending it to the CORE MPO. GDOT contacted us indicating a problem developing the revenue due to problems with our boundary. We didn't know as we had adopted the boundary last June, and then GDOT let us know Bryan County sent them a letter stating they did not want to be included in the boundary.

Ms. Faye DiMassimo asked will FHWA and GDOT accept any of these 3 scenarios as eligible under the federal regulations.

Ms. Wykoda Wang believes FHWA's and GDOT's take is that we cannot force Bryan County to join the MPO.

Ms. Melanie Wilson stated it was a surprise to everyone. Based on her conversations, they would be okay with Scenario 1 which Bryan County chose as they get to decide what part of the MPO they want to be a part of. We need to make sure to vote on the amended boundary today, so that we get those revenue projections.

Ms. Faye DiMassimo stated the only reason she asked is because it impacts our eligibility for federal aid. She wanted to make sure it would be acceptable to GDOT and FHWA, therefore the federal aid would not be impacted.

Ms. Melanie Wilson said she believes it will be okay as the population is over 11,000 in that area. So, we are still in good standing with regards to being able to participate, and we are still a TMA. That continues to help as we are applying for grants and opportunities.

Ms. Wykoda Wang wanted to clarify that we cannot use the federal funding on anything in Bryan County that is outside of our boundary. Even if we include the limited area in Bryan County, the population is still over 13,000.

Mr. Jim Aiello stated that Bryan County does not want to allow us to expand our boundary. As we know, this area is expanding rapidly. In 2030 we will have another census. When 2030 comes around, will they come back and say even though by law we can accept them as a boundary, that Bryan County still does not want to be involved. Will we fight the same battle again?

Ms. Melanie Wilson said one of the situations where Bryan County doesn't have a choice is in the Savannah Urbanized Area. If that area expands, then whatever is covered in that area will be captured with the new boundary. She is hoping that with all the development taking place, when the next census comes up in 2030, there will be enough understanding about the benefits of having the additional areas in the MPO Boundary and we will get some support. She believes part of it is Bryan County having some uneasiness, although we have spent time going over MPOs and the benefits of the Northern section of the county included in the MPO boundary. She does believe we will be in a better position.

Ms. Wykoda Wang stated she believes it is also a learning curve, as we encountered this problem with Effingham County during the last reapportionment. Effingham County initially was only willing to join a tiny area, and then we had the Old River Road project, which they had to come up with their own money for. The US 80 Corridor Study we did last year, in which Pooler took the lead on, Effingham County couldn't join as they were not in our boundary, so we could not use our money for them. Effingham County has learned through the process the benefits of joining the MPO, but Bryan County will have a learning curve. If they go through the process and realize the benefits of joining the MPO, they might be more willing to join, but right now Bryan County is not seeing it that way.

Mr. Jim Aiello said to clarify we are not setting precedent, as it seems it already has been set with Effingham County. He is worried about the future because we all know that area will become an urban area.

Ms. Melanie Wilson said she believes the Effingham County situation is a good example. Previously Effingham County only wanted to do the minimum requirement of the urbanized area. When they realized there were projects they wanted to participate in but could not, they got on board to expand their boundary. The federal government does have a process that we have to follow, we are following that and will continue to follow. It is not about precedent setting, it's about being consistent with the federal policies. That is why that urbanized area in South Bryan County has to be in the MPO boundary.

Mr. Nick Palumbo asked will Bryan County have the ability to opt back in before the next census?

Ms. Wykoda Wang stated they will not. Federal law requires us to update the boundary every ten years based on the census urbanized area or urban area. She believes they cannot opt in between censuses.

Mr. Nick Palumbo asked will this affect their dues, or impact other members of the CORE MPO dues?

Ms. Wykoda Wang said she will recalculate the membership dues based on the new population of about 13,000 in unincorporated Bryan County.

Chairman Chester Ellis asked to clarify, will the dues be affected? The dues will be different than what was proposed in June, and the numbers have to be recalculated as the boundary has changed.

Ms. Wykoda Wang stated yes. Previously the population of Unincorporated Bryan County in the MPO boundary was below 400, so Richmond Hill offered to pay their dues. Now she does not believe Richmond Hill would be willing to pay for 13,000 population.

Mr. Jay Melder said going back to if Bryan County could opt in before the next census, the census was in 2020 and released in 2021, to clarify, we are just now changing the maps on our boundary?

Ms. Melanie Wilson stated the census data came out late. Normally we would have done it sooner, but the delay is due to the census information coming very late. The boundary will change again in 2030 and hopefully we get the information from the census earlier.

Mr. Jay Melder stated it was his understanding that we had adopted a boundary earlier this summer?

Ms. Melanie Wilson said that is correct, and that is why we had concern especially when talking with GDOT and Bryan County. Even Bryan County was a little concerned, as they were initially excited about being a part of the MPO and participated in workshops. There was a change of heart politically and that is when the letter was sent to GDOT.

Mr. Jay Melder stated to clarify, his question was on the process of adopting a map and member jurisdictions can opt out but they cannot opt back in? There is a process to opt out, so is there a process to opt back in?

Ms. Faye DiMassimo said she believes Ms. Wang is correct that every ten years we must update the boundary. However, in between the census she believes we can choose to do an update, so Bryan County could opt back in, and we as the CORE MPO Board would choose to accept it.

Ms. Wykoda Wang stated she needs to check with GDOT.

Ms. Faye DiMassimo stated when unusual circumstances come up, GDOT has already been amenable to allowing Bryan County to opt out. She believes there is an opportunity to allow Bryan County back in with the full support of the MPO and the process being followed and so forth.

Ms. Melanie Wilson wanted to clarify the reason Bryan County was able to opt out is because we have not sent the packet to the officials to be signed yet. Everything needs to be in place before we send it to be signed by the Governor. The boundary that was adopted by the CORE MPO Board in June was what we were going to use to come up with the dues formula. That's why Bryan County was able to opt out. With regards to whether they can opt back in, we do have Ted Hicks from GDOT here and several GDOT representatives online. Our bylaws are set up to follow the guidelines and procedures set by the state. Is it possible we would have to get information from a census standpoint. That is why it's not as easy to opt back in and why we do the boundary update every ten years because of the fresh data and all the information needed to be assessed.

Mr. Jay Melder said he believes it would be worthwhile to get clarification on whether or not Bryan County can opt back in before the next census, before submitting this amendment to the state. Ten years from now, even if we do get the census early, it will be several years too late to catch up with the infrastructure. What will happen if the MPO does not approve this amendment?

Chairman Chester Ellis stated the MPO was not part of the conversation. This was done in November and GDOT alerted the MPO. The MPO didn't alert the Chairman until yesterday. He defers to GDOT, FHWA and Bryan County. He agrees with Ms. Wykoda Wang, we cannot force them to come in.

Ted Hicks, GDOT, stated it is his understanding what Ms. Wykoda Wang and Ms. Melanie Wilson said was correct. We cannot force them to join but the part of Bryan County in the Savannah Urbanized Area has to join. As to making changes later on, he needs to check on that. As far as he knows, every ten years GDOT updates these, but he is not aware of any interim updates. He believes the issue at hand is delaying the adoption of the boundary because it delays data for calculations for the 2050 MTP.

Ms. Wykoda Wang stated GDOT is going to develop the revenue projections for the 2050 MTP, which needs to be adopted on August 7th, 2024. If we delay adoption of the boundary, we don't have the revenue projections, then we don't have the 2050 MTP ready by August 7th and we will receive zero federal funding.

Mr. Jay Melder stated he wants to be clear on the vote, essentially this is a proforma vote. If the vote failed, all it would do is harm our MPO, and it would not change the boundaries of our MPO. Therefore, the only beneficial vote would be to vote yes to approve the amendment.

Ms. Wykoda Wang said voting no would not only affect the MPO but all of our jurisdictions. The City of Savannah would not receive any federal funding, CAT would not receive any federal funding, etc. if we don't adopt the 2050 MTP.

Ms. Faye DiMassimo requested that the MPO Staff and GDOT do some research on Bryan County opting in before the 2030 census, as it is an unusual situation. To Ms. Melanie Wilson's point about educating Effingham County, later they were able to see the benefits that weren't so readily discernible before. If this action we will take today is respecting the process for Bryan County to opt out, the opportunity for Bryan to opt in before the ten years would be good information for everyone to have.

Ms. Melanie Wilson stated to please note Bryan County did submit feedback and they chose Scenario 1 which included additional area. We do have something that we can agree on. Whether it's MPO staff continuing to do education with Bryan County or talking to them again in 2030, we can continue to have discussions about it. She wants to be clear Bryan County choose Scenario 1, which is the minimum amount they can participate with because it's in the Savannah Urbanize Area. All of this was happening in January without clear conversations and we are moving as quickly as we can.

Mr. Nick Palumbo said he and most members of the Board have also just become aware of this in the last 24 hrs. He would like to point out to the Board that the large areas opting out are some of the most critical pieces of infrastructure and may be the ones who need the most help. Highway 80, Highway 280 and I-16 are all opting out and will be ineligible for assistance.

Ms. Wykoda Wang clarified GDOT will do that planning for Bryan County.

Mr. Nick Palumbo stated we should try to reach out to help Bryan County reconsider, as we may have to wait a decade to be able to provide assistance. Is there any way to reach out and build a bridge to assist them in opting back in?

Mr. Tom Hutcherson asked what is the one major obstacle that is preventing Bryan County from moving forward?

Chairman Chester Ellis stated the first thing we need to do is get the adoption of the boundary in place, so it does not hinder our funding. Since we don't want our funds to be hindered, let GDOT, federal and Bryan County work out their situation. They were given options and told they can't opt completely out due to the 2020 census data. They selected Scenario 1 which is most convenient for them. He does not want the funding to stop at the Bryan County line, but this rests in the hands of GDOT, federal and Bryan County. If Bryan County has to learn a hard lesson, they will learn a hard lesson. To not infringe on our ability to receive federal funding, let's adopt the boundary and move on.

Ms. Melanie Wilson stated Paul Teague from Bryan County is online. He has participated with the TCC and learning more about the MPO process, which is a benefit. Tim Callanan from Effingham County is online and would like to speak.

Mr. Tim Callanan, Effingham County, stated he has one example of how this negatively affects things. The corridor study for US 80, logically it would go to the intersection of US 80 and US 280; unfortunately due to the boundary, we have to cut it off at an illogical point of the Effingham/Bryan County border. For clarification, is Bryan County agreeing to be a paying member, or are they saying fine if these areas are in there because they have to be in there?

Ms. Wykoda Wang said based on the population of 13,000 in unincorporated Bryan County, they probably will get a voting seat, but they have to pay their memberships dues.

Mr. Tim Callanan asked did Bryan County agree to paying dues?

Ms. Wykoda Wang stated yes.

Mr. Habte Kassa, GDOT, stated he completely agrees with the Chairman for now to adopt the boundary as it was accepted by Bryan County. He completely understands and is on board that Bryan County is growing and it is for the benefit of Bryan County that they join the CORE MPO. He does not think the federal regulations will prohibit us to revisit this boundary expansion and not necessarily to wait until 2030. He has not seen anything that would prohibit Bryan County if they wanted to opt in two or three years down the road, as long as there is agreement between the two parties. He will research more, speak with his federal partners and report back. He does completely agree to adopt the boundary now as it was accepted by Bryan County.

Mr. Joseph Longo, FHWA, said he wanted to reiterate what Mr. Habte Kassa just said. These proposals do meet the minimum requirements. FHWA just wants to see a cooperative process after that minimum, which is what is

being carried out. He will research more and get back as well. Something to consider is the impact on the MTP, which will need to reflect that full boundary.

Chairman Chester Ellis asked that GDOT and FHWA please share their findings with the MPO.

Ms. Faye DiMassimo motioned to approve the adoption of Scenario 1 for the CORE MPO MPA Boundary; seconded by Mr. Nick Palumbo. The motion passed with none opposed.

Ms. Wykoda Wang stated we will send the Chairman the resolution to sign, then send it to GDOT. GDOT will use this boundary to develop the revenue projections to prevent delay on our 2050 MTP.

Ms. Faye DiMassimo asked if MPO staff would please let them know if the unincorporated Bryan County area will be participating financially.

Chairman Chester Ellis stated they have to pay, as the feds didn't let them out of that.

5. FY 2025 UPWP Adoption

Ms. Wykoda Wang presented the preliminary draft for the FY 2025 UPWP back in December. The UPWP is the CORE MPO staff work program for Fiscal Year 2025 (July 1, 2024 - June 30, 2025). It outlines our budget and details what staff does and how much funding we allocate to each task in support of the federally mandated 3-C (Continuing, Cooperative and Comprehensive) transportation planning process. It includes the following.

- Funding
- Staff work
- Budget (allocation of specific funding amounts to specific staff work projects)

We have 3 funding sources, all requiring a local match:

- PL grant from Federal Highway Administration
 - 20% local match from membership dues
- Y410 grant from Federal Highway Administration – bike and pedestrian planning
 - 0% local match currently due to federal waiver
- Section 5303 grant from Federal Transit Administration
 - 20% local match - GDOT pays 10%, and the other 10% comes from membership dues.

The funds can only be used for planning. If we don't spend all of the PL funds, GDOT will put the unincumbered funds into a pulled account (Discretionary PL Funds). We can apply for additional funds needed for studies from this account.

We received the updated funding amounts from GDOT in early February. The PL funding has increased by about \$8,000, so now the Federal portion is about \$444,000 and the total PL funding is about \$555,000. For the Y410 grant, the funding was reduced by about \$300, and the total is \$11,386.20. The Section 5303 funds do not change - the total is still at around \$236,000. Based on the updated numbers, the total budget for the MPO operation in FY 2025 is about \$802,000.

There are some changes to the Major Tasks.

- For the next fiscal year, we will still focus on the 2050 MTP related updates and Title VI Plan and Participation Plan updates.
- We added a new subtask for TIP. In addition to maintenance and update of the current TIP, we want to research on the E-TIP. Currently we have something called Interactive TIP on our website. It is a database where you can search projects by sponsors or fiscal year. We received notification from the provider, DTS Solutions, that they are no longer supporting this application. We want to research and get a new software to help us disseminate information about projects. Occasionally we do Calls for Projects to support TIP updates. Currently we post the manual and received applications on the website, and send the scoring sheet in excel spreadsheet to the TCC members to score the applications. When the TCC scores come back, staff compile the results. With the new software or tool, we want to be able to submit everything online, which will be automatically put in the database. So, when TCC members score the applications, they can do so directly from the database online.
- We will go through the Federal Certification Review, because if we don't get certified, our region won't receive any of the Federal funding.
- For the Performance Based Planning and Programming, we have added a new program - Green House Gas Emission (GHG). Due to a delay, the GHG targets will be adopted by GDOT at the end of March. CORE MPO will have 180 days to adopt the GHG targets as part of our 2050 MTP.
- We will continue to implement IJA/BIL.

- We will continue to work on special studies – coordinating with project sponsors for ongoing studies and applying for funding for some of the unfunded studies.

Ongoing Studies – We received some comments from FHWA and GDOT about adding consultants and schedules. City of Savannah

- I-16 Exit Ramp Removal IMR Update
 - GDOT has taken the lead. When they acquire the consultants and develop a schedule, we will update the UPWP.
- Chatham County – When we developed the preliminary draft UPWP, Chatham County was still in the procurement process, so we did not have the consultant and schedule information available. Now that the projects are moving, we have updated the consultants and schedules.
 - SR 204 Access Study
 - US 17/SR 25 Corridor Study
 - President Street Railroad Crossing Elimination Study
- CAT
 - AOPP Funded Study
 - ARP Funded Study

Unfunded Studies - TCC has had two rounds of discussions for the Unfunded Studies. We should have recommendations for funding applications by August. We will choose possibly 2 or 3 projects from this list.

- CORE MPO
 - Regional Truck Parking Study
 - Resilience Improvement Plan (RIP)
 - Urban Flooding Model Study Phase II
 - **NEW** - Bike/Pedestrian Plan Implementation Tool
 - We did talk about this at the last meeting, but we did not have the information available yet.
 - Bike Walk Savannah and Coastal Georgia Indicators Collation have provided the information for the implementation Tool.
 - We will also have a Bike Pedestrian Advisory Committee to oversee the project.
- Chatham County
 - Islands Expressway Between Truman Parkway and US 80
- Effingham County
 - **NEW** - US 80 Corridor Study Phase II – Limit and Cost Change
 - Mr. Tim Callanan has already talked about US 80 Corridor Study Phase II.
 - Last time we mentioned the Limit should go from Effingham/Chatham County line all the way to the intersection of US 280. Since Bryan County opted out of the MPO, we cut the Bryan County portion, which was about 1.5 miles.
 - We have revised the cost estimate in the UPWP to about \$220,000.
- CAT
 - Transit Oriented Development Study
 - Bus Stop Amenities Study
 - Mobility Hub Study and Program
 - Bus Rapid Transit Feasibility Study

These are the unfunded studies for which we might apply for PL funds. We will come back to the CORE MPO Board in August for resolutions in support of the funding applications.

Some other updates since December 2023 include the following.

- We have to include the CORE MPO MPA boundary in the UPWP. Now that we have adopted the boundary, we will update that portion in the UPWP.
- The updated financial information for Tasks 1 and 6 has already been discussed.
- The FHWA and GDOT comments have been incorporated.
 - FHWA wants us to show the correlation between the Federal requirements and the MPO planning tasks regarding Planning Emphasis Areas. We have a table showing the correlation. They wanted us to add the non-voting members to the roster, so we did add that. The voting members have also changed, so there are other updates to the voting member roster as well. They wanted us to update the staff members under each task and we have made the updates.
 - GDOT wanted us to add language including the Green House Gas Emissions (GHG) performance targets and we did.

We hope to have the UPWP adopted at this meeting by the CORE MPO Board. Then we will forward the document to FHWA and GDOT. They will start the approval process and GDOT will develop the contracts. All the changes are highlighted in red in the revised draft 2025 UPWP.

Chairman Chester Ellis asked is our funding based on the June boundary, or the boundary that was approved today?

Mr. Ted Hicks, GDOT, stated these revenues projections are based on the census urbanized areas totals and will not be affected by the boundaries.

Ms. Faye DiMassimo motioned to approve the revised 2025 UPWP; seconded by Mr. Nick Palumbo. The motion passed with none opposed.

6. GDOT Coastal Region (CORE) MPO Travel Demand Model 2024 Update

Mr. Habte Kassa, GDOT, gave the presentation on the Travel Demand Model:

Background:

- Federal legislation requires Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) updates every five years.
- The MTP covers a minimum 20-year planning horizon.
- The next CORE MPO MTP should be adopted by August 23, 2024.
- MAP-21 / FAST Act (Invest in America) requires incorporating performance-based planning and transportation system access into project selection.

Travel Demand Model **Major Activities:**

- Review and Update Traffic Analysis Zones
- Prepare socio-economic data (MPO)
- Update trip rates based on 2017 NHTS data
- Update and validate model base year to 2020
- Develop 2050 Do-Nothing Scenario (Projects provided by MPO)
- System performance evaluation

Base Year (2020) Model Outputs

- 2020 Total Daily Traffic Volumes – shows the bandwidth on the roadways.
- Daily Level of Service (LOS) = Modeled Daily Traffic divided by Daily Capacity; LOS F and E shown in red and orange are problem areas.

Future Year (2050) Model Outputs – The Socio-economic Data provided by MPO Staff shows more than 52 percent of growth between 2020 and 2050 in terms of total population, households, employment, and students (both K-12 and University).

So far GDOT has completed the 2050 “Do-Nothing” scenario, which includes the output on the following.

- 2050 “Do Nothing” Total Daily Traffic Volumes
- 2050 “Do Nothing” Daily Level of Service (LOS)

The results show that between 2020 and 2050,

- Daily Vehicle Miles Travelled (VMT) by Facility Type all increased with an overall growth of 49%;
- Daily Vehicle Hours Travelled (VHT) by Facility Type all increased with an overall growth of 241%; and
- Daily Vehicle Miles Travelled (VMT) Level of Service (LOS) E and F increased by big percentages.

NEXT STEPS

- MPO staff provides project lists for the remaining 2050 MTP scenarios.
- Evaluate remaining future year MTP scenarios.
- Analyze system performance.
- Provide outputs to MPO planners to prioritize projects.

Mr. Nick Palumbo thanked GDOT for presenting the '2050 Doing Nothing Scenario', and he would like to share it with his colleagues. He asked "Do you have information available for the background on methodology and metrics", as he is sure he will get many questions about how it is developed.

Mr. Habte Kassa stated that GDOT has detailed documentation and methodology. He had a more detailed slide show and presentation for the TCC meeting. It had notes on all the methods used and details on the validation, calibration, and statistics. He shortened his presentation for the CORE MPO Board due to time constraints. He would be happy to provide information. He is also preparing a presentation on how the model was developed. There is a socio-economic preparation guide available on GDOT's website for MPOs to use.

Ms. Wykoda Wang stated the Travel Demand Model methodology and Socio-Economic data development methodology will be appendix to the 2050 MTP. We will have detailed documentation.

Mr. Nick Palumbo said please distribute that to the Board members. He would also like to request any underlying data related to Land Use development assumptions, your inputs, and how the model was achieved. He believes the public needs to see if we choose to do nothing, how bad this will be well into our future.

Mr. Habte Kassa stated the Land Use data is supposed to be used while developing the Socio-Economic data. GDOT is helping out for the actual technical work which requires a lot of money. He has developed about 14 MPO models in Georgia and they all cost about \$70,000-\$80,000. We are not charging the MPOs, as we are providing support to our MPO partners. We are asking MPOs to provide us with the underlying Socio-Economic data. The Land Use data is supposed to be included in that Zonal Socio-Economic data. GDOT does not develop that Socio-Economic data, and Ms. Wykoda Wang can speak about that. When provided with the Socio-Economic data, we made comments and those comments were addressed, therefore GDOT feels confident about the underlying data.

Ms. Wykoda Wang stated we did use the Land Use as part of the input for Socio-Economic data development. We do have documentation of our methodology used.

Mr. Jim Aiello, SAV/HHI Airport, stated we use something similar when we have a Call for Projects. This is really good information. Moving forward when we do a Call for Projects, he is not sure how the weighting works, but for Ms. Faye DiMassimo with CAT, this is good information for her to remove cars from the streets and also to indicate where we need to improve future capacity. This is a good thing to look at weighting-wise when scoring projects.

Chairman Chester Ellis stated when looking at the cost of Doing Nothing, he does see that GDOT listed all the major thoroughfares. What is that going to do to the Traffic Demand Model, when all the new subdivisions and warehouses being planned now are built? Using Little Neck Rd as an example, how would we get this roadway to green (which is C or better) when there are 9 new subdivisions going in? Is there a way for GDOT to come and share this information with Bloomingdale, Pooler, Garden City and Savannah? He believes it is two tiers. GDOT is interested in moving freight to the highways -Ogeechee Rd, Effingham Pkwy, Pooler Pkwy, etc. Our responsibility is getting our citizens and cars in and out of the subdivisions, whether it be timing of the lights, right or left hand turns only, etc.

Ms. Wykoda Wang said we are showing the 2020 Base Year data and the 2050 Do Nothing data. MPO staff will provide GDOT with projects in the TIP with Right-of-Way programmed and projects in the TIP with Preliminary Engineering programmed. GDOT would develop the next model which is 'Existing + Committed' (existing constructions funds and newly committed projects). Then there is the Right-of-Way model network 4, then Preliminary Engineering model network 5. By this step you might see less red (congestion) on the map. If the last model still shows a lot of red, then we would come up with projects recommendations.

Mr. Habte Kassa stated the next scenario would be 'Existing + Committed', meaning all of the projects that have construction dollars in the current state. When GDOT adds those projects in, the red will not necessarily go away, but it will change as you see some improvements. Then the 4th network, the TIP with those projects' Right-of-way and Preliminary Engineering programmed, you will see some of the reds and yellows go away. He cannot speak to that until he receives the list.

Chairman Chester Ellis stated Mr. Habte Kassa answered his question. They cannot do anything until they receive the updated project list. Does that list include anything that needs to go before the MPC to re-zone?

Ms. Wykoda Wang stated most of the projects revolve around projects that are already in the TIP. We will check the TIP to see which projects have Construction programmed, Right-of-Way programmed, and Preliminary Engineering programmed.

Ms. Melanie Wilson stated to get to the heart of your question, with regards to development and growth, we are still dealing with this on a Macro level. A lot of this is incumbent upon each one of the jurisdictions to look at what the requirements are for the subdivisions with regards to more road improvements. Making sure they are looking at it for their capital improvement elements, because we look at that as well. In order to address some of the rapid growth we are seeing in some jurisdictions that expand out into the unincorporated areas, it's going to take them also looking at what their development standards are and upping those as well, in order to address concerns in the local community.

Chairman Ellis stated if you don't get it in the MPO, you'll receive it in the MPC?

Ms. Melanie Wilson stated yes, or at the local jurisdictions like Pooler, Bloomingdale, Savannah. It has to be something that is part of the localized plan. For example, for Savannah, we did their comprehensive plan. We basically had an area where we talked more specifically about transportation. We did that at a certain level and will continue to have more discussions with Savannah about taking it further down. We did Pooler's comprehensive plan as well. She pushed for a nodal development policy, and that is why you've got the now nodes in which you can look at, where growth is happening. This has nothing to do with whether this is at a large level, it is 'Pooler, you are wanting to grow here, Savannah, you are wanting to grow here', based on the information that we have, this is what we know you have for infrastructure, capital funds, etc. It is up to the jurisdictions to look at their internal policies for capital budget, engineering, etc. to move forward, to see if they need to strengthen their developmental standards. MPC does not automatically do that for them; we do it in partnership with them.

Ms. Wykoda Wang stated regarding the model, we developed the first network and second network base on project development status and they are vested by the TCC. We do account for some additional projects, like Chatham County's Quacco Road widening project. We added that in and submitted it to GDOT. This model only covers roadways classified as Collectors and above; it does not involve local roads. So if you have a local subdivision, that is a local road and cannot be accounted for in the Travel Demand Model unless the development is accounted for in the Socio-Economic data.

Chairman Chester Ellis stated if he is dealing with a subdivision that has created local roads, and there are 5 or 6 different streets in that subdivision, in order to get out of the local roads in the subdivision, he would have to go through one of the roads that is collector or above. For another example, there is a subdivision with 900 houses off of HWY 80. Those 900 cars will have to get to HWY 80 to get anywhere else. As we plan to move the traffic, we are not only talking about the throughfares, but also how do we get people in and out of their houses or subdivisions.

Ms. Karen Jarrett asked can 'what-if' scenarios be run?

Chairman Chester Ellis stated according to GDOT, they are going to need the information first. If they don't get the information, they can't input it. For example, Savannah permits a new subdivision, if the information about all the traffic coming out of the subdivision is not given to the MPO or to GDOT, then it is not calculated.

Ms. Wykoda Wang said that is correct. If we know the subdivision population, the Travel Demand Model has a Trip Generator which can estimate the amount of traffic created by this subdivision that will impact the collector road. So it is important that we have this information.

Chairman Chester Ellis stated please make sure we can provide the MPO, MPC, and GDOT with the information. Without the information, they cannot come up with a solution.

Ms. Karen Jarrett stated that with subdivisions the more connections you make between the subdivisions and adjacent roads like connectors and other local roads, the less the traffic and subdivision gets impacted. It's something we need to be aware of as planners and officials when approving subdivisions. In the 'what-if' scenarios, are we able to look at one road and say, 'this road isn't impacted very much, let's make the improvement over here instead'? Do we look at all of the road systems?

Ms. Wykoda Wang said she believes the Travel Demand Model is more general and region wide. For a specific location, that would normally be a Traffic Impact Analysis.

Mr. Habte Kassa agreed with Ms. Wykoda Wang and clarified that the Regional Travel Demand Model can be used to do specific sub area analysis. The model is regional in nature; it shows you the capacity issues and the problems, but it does not necessarily show these very localized issues.

Mr. Jay Melder said since we were using Savannah as an example, he wanted to make it clear that Savannah uses the MPC for all rezoning and site plan reviews for new subdivisions as well. Therefore, he believes that data should already be available for the MPO.

Chairman Chester Ellis stated he knew it would go to the MPC when talking about zoning. But to clarify, there are places where zoning doesn't change because the current zoning already allows for the subdivisions and then the City of Savannah permits the subdivisions.

Mr. Jay Melder said yes and we should be monitoring our permitting. For the vast majority of new subdivisions, those are going to be required.

Chairman Chester Ellis said both GDOT and Ms. Wykoda Wang want to make clear that if we have the information to input, then we can answer the question better.

Ms. Faye DiMassimo stated she would be very remiss if she didn't point out that all of this work needs to fully consider our brand new MTP with very detailed analysis, modeling, and forecasting of how we can help address the demand and take burden off of our communities and existing facilities. This Travel Demand Model forecasting work needs to also consider the work that is in the MTP and a multimodal solution to the improvements that are going to be brought forward to meet our future.

Ms. Melanie Wilson said to be clear, one of the things the MPO has done since she has been here is to put CAT on the review panel, so they can give that type of input. We have a lot of discussions with regards to anything that has come forward for site plan review. In addition to that, we have pushed to get additional data when there is a subdivision before it is approved so that we can look at the road connections. Not only for the roads connections but for opportunities to see there is ability to do a greenway trail, etc. We are still getting information from the jurisdictions and we try to get as much information as we can so that we can factor that in, especially when working with Savannah's site plan review in the areas where they connect to Pooler. It would be great to get information from Pooler, before those site plans are approved, so that we can get comments and feedback which we can get developer to comply.

PUBLIC SPEAKER Ashely Goodrich stated she has a question for citizen's comment. The Do Nothing plan presented today - that is just all of the current and previous TIP projects that have all been under construction in the past ten years? None of the current TIP or next future short term fiscal year projects are listed? She asks because at least in what's on the screen right now, there is nothing about the Talmadge Bridge or I-95 projects as they go north. In our boundary for the model, in every direction but north while we do have an expansion of territory, the June boundary was changed this morning. Where are we looking at in those population demand models where things are coming from outside of the boundary?

Chairman Chester Ellis said when looking at this going forward, how do we include those things in the TIP and other projects in the Do Nothing Model?

Ms. Wykoda Wang stated the Travel Demand Model is a 3 County model (Chatham, Bryan, and Effingham) and not based on the MPO boundary. The model has its limitations. The Talmadge Bridge is a maintenance project and the model only accounts for capacity projects like widenings and new roadways. It does not account for intersection improvements or maintenance projects like repaving.

Chairman Chester Ellis asked if that has to come from the jurisdictions themselves to the MPO staff? For the example of the Talmadge Bridge, when they start work, the traffic will dump out onto Oglethorpe, which will get you to West Boundary, connects to I-16, connects to Gwinnett St, and connects to Louisville Rd. Now at Louisville Rd the traffic is coming out of the Georgia Ports.

Ms. Wykoda Wang said to clarify, that information is already coded in the Travel Demand Model. If you just raise the cables of the Talmadge Bridge, it will not increase capacity as the road would remain two lanes on each side. GDOT wants us to approve the 2020 Base Year Model and the 2050 Do Nothing Model before they can move on to the 3rd, 4th, and 5th network models.

Mr. Nick Palumbo motioned to approve the 2020 Base Model and 2050 Do Nothing Model; seconded by Ms. Karen Jarrett; The motion passed with none opposed.

III. Other Business

Ms. Wykoda Wang said we are coordinating with GDOT on updating the roadway functional classification. If you have roadways that need an upgraded classification, like Benton Blvd, we are coordinating through the TCC to submit the information to GDOT. If you have something, please let us know.

V. Status Reports

7. 2050 MTP Update

Ms. Wykoda Wang stated we have already adopted the CORE MPO MPA boundary this morning, so we will be forwarding that boundary to GDOT so that they can provide us the revenue projections and Travel Demand Model output. The Non-Motorized Transportation Plan will be presented by Ms. Asia Hernton. For the CMP, we have the preliminary draft attached to this agenda and Ms. Genesis Harrod sent the second draft this morning. This will be the source of our project selection for the 2050 MTP. Resiliency Planning is managed by Ms. Anna McQuarrie, and we have had several meetings about vulnerability assessment. We are still targeting August 7th, 2024 for 2050 MTP adoption, to ensure the funding comes to our MPO area.

Ms. Anna McQuarrie, CORE MPO Staff, gave an update on the Resilience planning for the 2050 MTP. More information can be found on her slide presentation, which is attached to this agenda.

FHWA Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Performance Measure Final Rule:

- Published 12/07/2023, Effective 1/8/2024
- The rule requires State departments of transportation (State DOT) and metropolitan planning organizations (MPO) to establish declining carbon dioxide (CO2) targets for the GHG measure and report on progress toward the achievement of those targets.
- The rule does not mandate how low targets must be. Rather, State DOTs and MPOs have flexibility to set targets that are appropriate for their communities and that work for their respective climate change and other policy priorities, as long as the targets aim to reduce emissions over time. The FHWA will assess whether State DOTs have made significant progress toward achieving their targets.
- State DOT submission was originally due on 2/1/24 and deadline is now 3/29/24. MPOs must submit 180 days after the State DOT submittal date.

GDOT Key Parameters that Impact GHG Measure:

- Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT) - Future VMT – increase due to population and economic growth
- Mode Share - Transit share, future % of work trips carpooling / transit vs. % of work trips driving alone
- Fleet Composition - Future electric vehicle (EV) % of fleet - EV incentives, EV charging infrastructure
- Fuel Efficiency - Future low carbon fuels, auto fuel efficiency, CAFÉ standards

GDOT MPO Requirements:

- Establish declining 4-year target for the metropolitan planning area (MPA).
- MPO Targets are due 180 days after State DOT targets.
- When the MPA boundaries of two or more MPOs overlap any portion of an UZA with populations of 50,000 or more, the MPOs must establish unique joint targets. (This does not currently apply to us.)

GHG and Biennial Performance Reporting Schedule:

- 2nd Performance Period (2022-2025) Phasing in GHG measures (2024-2025)
- 3rd Performance Period (2026-2029)

More information is to come, but we do want to bring to your attention this is happening and will be a requirement for us.

Mr. Nick Palumbo asked if this is a gateway to become eligible for grant funding? Do you see any possibilities in the near future that we may be able to tap into?

Ms. Anna McQuarrie answered resiliency planning is really important and we are also required to do it. A lot of the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law grant programs require resiliency planning. You do get a reduction in cost share if you have a Resiliency Improvement Plan, those can include Greenhouse Gas declining targets, etc. This presentation does include information on a vulnerability assessment we are currently working on. Those can be used to be more attractive in grant programs; this is also in combination with our urban flood model. Having programs like this does make us an attractive candidate for grants programs by the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law and other DOT or FHWA programs.

Mr. Nick Palumbo asked if there is anything the City of Savannah can do to assist in providing information or details to help move this along?

Ms. Anna McQuarrie stated yes, for our vulnerability assessment we do have an assessment team of representatives that were recommended by some of our CORE MPO committee members. We are working with GDOT and our representatives. As for the Greenhouse Gas Target, we are waiting for GDOT's report and then we will move forward and contact everyone with what we might need.

Ms. Karen Jarrett asked if this is in place or affiliated with the CMAQ program (Congestion Management and Air Quality)?

Mr. Habte Kassa clarified that it is related but not entirely the same. It is different, as it's a different pile of money. The Resiliency Improvement Program came out of IJJA, where CMAQ has been around for more than 3 decades and is a mature program. They are different but related.

8. CMP Update

Ms. Wykoda Wang stated the preliminary draft is attached to this agenda. We did receive the second draft this morning, and we will post the second draft after reviewing and send the information to everyone. This second draft has new information and has identified where the congestion areas are.

9. Non-Motorized Transportation Plan Update Status Report

Ms. Asia Hernton, CORE MPO Staff, presented the Non-Motorized Transportation Plan Status Update. Staff is continuing work on the Non-Motorized Transportation Plan. This plan is a document that addresses the development of bike and pedestrian infrastructure in the CORE MPO planning area. The goal of the Non-Motorized Transportation Plan update is to identify new projects, assess the needs of the community, and set new goals for bike and pedestrian infrastructure.

Current Activities:

Mapping the Projects - First, we identified some of the projects we would like to add to the plan.

- The map (on the slide attached to the agenda) shows the projects that are being added to the Non-Motorized Transportation Plan. Some of the features are dots instead of lines because they do not yet have an alignment.
- We will provide an updated map as we have identified more projects to add.

Reviewing and Attempting to Update the Scoring Criteria and Methodology - Staff has been reviewing the original scoring methodology to make changes for a few reasons:

1. To add more equity measures to the scoring methodology.
2. To make protected bike and pedestrian paths a higher priority.
3. To account for shared use paths, in which both bike and pedestrian activity can occur on the pathway.
4. Account for increased development in the Savannah area.
5. Simplify the scoring process.

Staff met with members of the Steering Committee twice in the beginning of January to discuss possible additions and updates that can be made to the scoring methodology. Staff also received great feedback on different equity measures and data sources that can be used to prioritize each project.

From these meetings, a new possible scoring criteria was drafted, with much of the original scoring criteria being kept and with the addition of some new factors. For reference, the 2014 methodology is listed on the slide attached to the agenda.

The notable difference between the 2014 and the proposed new methodology is that bike and pedestrian are split into two separate categories. There are separate criteria for scoring bike projects and for scoring pedestrian projects. With the proposed draft we think a merged category would work, but this is just a draft so we can split them up if wanted.

After an additional meeting on February 8, it became clear that the old criteria have some measures that are in need of updating, so it has been officially decided to do a major update of the scoring system, criteria, and methodology. The goal is to complete the scoring of projects by the end of May.

Barriers to updating the scoring criteria:

- Time: To adopt this plan in June, all major products of the plan must be completed by the end of May. Changing the scoring criteria at this stage may be a roadblock to the timely completion of this plan.
- Complexity: Changing the scoring criteria would lead to re-scoring all 400 existing projects to ensure consistency.

Because of this, staff is reviewing other methods to update the scoring process and methodology to aid the process, such as using GIS to aid in the prioritization process.

Additionally, the scoring methodology is not the only place in the document where these conversations are prioritized. This is how we can add the importance of equity, protected paths, and development opportunities to the plan outside of the scoring criteria:

- Detail them throughout the plan using maps and data to illustrate their importance.
- Create a recommendations section which puts an emphasis on the newly identified important factors for non-motorized transportation.

10. MOU and Bylaws Updates

Ms. Wykoda Wang stated since we adopted the new CORE MPO MPA boundary, we have to update the MOU and the Bylaws. Here are some updates (please note all updates can be found on the MOU update report attached to this agenda.)

Exhibit A – The CORE MPO MPA boundary map has been revised to reflect the new boundary within Bryan County.

MOU Document - Since Bryan County has preferred Scenario 1, the MOU language regarding the MPA boundary within Bryan County has been revised. The current language is "...and the portion of Bryan County outside of Fort Stewart". We corrected the language to "...Richmond Hill, the portions of the 2020 census defined Savannah Urban Area that fall within unincorporated Bryan County, and the areas that are connecting Richmond Hill and the Savannah Urban Area in Bryan County".

MOU Document - CORE MPO staff received some feedback from Effingham County on the MOU language regarding the MPA boundary within Effingham. The current language is "...the portion of Effingham County south of SR 119...". Effingham County pointed out that the language is not accurate - "If following SR 119, it would include an additional portion". We corrected the language to "...the portion of Effingham County south of SR 119 - Indigo Road - Bethany Road...". The County Manager confirmed the revised language is OK.

MOU Document - All references to Pembroke have been deleted from the MOU – both text and the signature page as the municipality is located in North Bryan County which will no longer be included in the CORE MPO MPA boundary.

Exhibit B - Effingham County provided a comment regarding the membership dues for the county. The current language is "Effingham County – TBD". The County indicated that "Effingham County's portion is 100%." We corrected the language to "Effingham County will pay 100% of the county's share of the membership dues, covering all of the Effingham municipalities located within the MPA boundary".

Exhibit B – Now that Pembroke will not be a part of CORE MPO, the language for Bryan County regarding membership dues has been updated. The current language is "Bryan County – TBD". We corrected the language to "Bryan County and the City of Richmond Hill will split the county's share of the membership dues based on their respective population within the MPA boundary".

Exhibit B – Currently the Chatham County Commission Chair serves as the CORE MPO Chair, and the Mayor of Savannah serves as the Vice Chair. Based on the current methodology, Chatham County contributes to the MPO membership dues based upon their unincorporated population plus 25% of the municipalities' population. Municipalities' proportional contributions are based upon 75% of their population. Since the proposed Bylaws update includes having elections for both Chairman and Vice Chairman on the CORE MPO Board, Chatham County indicated that they will not contribute to the municipal share if the County Chairman does not hold the CORE MPO Chairman's seat. Staff sent a letter in December 2023 to poll all of the existing and new members on two scenarios – 1) Chatham County contributes to municipal share with the County Chairman remaining the CORE MPO Chairman; and 2) having elections for the CORE MPO Board without Chatham County contributing to the municipalities' share. Based on the responses, having elections seems to be the preferred option for the majority of the Chatham County municipalities. The language for Chatham County regarding membership dues has been revised. The current language is "Chatham County would contribute based upon their unincorporated

population plus 25% of the municipalities' population. Municipalities' proportional contribution would be based upon 75% of their population". We updated the language to "Chatham County and its municipalities will split the county's share of the membership dues based on their respective population within the MPA boundary".

We will send the MOU document and recalculate the membership dues after today's discussion.

Exhibit B - One input we received is to differentiate the Chatham Area Transit (CAT) from the other two modal representatives (the Georgia Ports Authority (GPA) and the Savannah Airport Commission) due to CAT's fiscal capacity in dues contribution. As a result, staff proposes to use the 60th percentile for CAT and keep the 70th percentile for GPA and the Airport. The language for modal share of the membership dues has been revised. The current language is "Chatham Area Transit Authority, Georgia Ports Authority and Savannah Airport Commission - would contribute a fixed amount based upon the 70th percentile of the counties and municipalities contributions". We updated the language to "The Chatham Area Transit Authority would contribute a fixed amount based upon the 60th percentile of the counties and municipalities contributions; and the Georgia Ports Authority and the Savannah Airport Commission would contribute a fixed amount based upon the 70th percentile of the counties and municipalities contributions".

Exhibit B – the table for the 2020 Census CORE MPO Planning Area Population has been updated.

Bylaws Updates:

- Election for CORE MPO Board - Staff polled the current and new CORE MPO members regarding elections for the MPO Board. The majority favors elections. We will revise the CORE MPO bylaws accordingly.
 - We will add that only elected officials can be candidates for the CORE MPO elections.
- MPA Boundary Map and Description – Updated based on Scenario 1 for Bryan County.
- Other – Staff will continue to work with each advisory committee and the MPO Board to finalize the bylaws in the next couple of months.

We hope to have the MOU adopted in April and the Bylaws adopted in June. After this meeting we will send everyone the boundary, calculated fees, and the updated MOU draft, all for you to review. When we meet again in April, we hope to adopt the MOU; if adopted, we will send it to all the members for signatures.

VI. Information Reports (verbal)

[11. GDOT Project Status Update Report](#)

Ms. Katie Proctor, GDOT District 5, presented the GDOT report.

Preconstruction Status

- PI# 0019219, SR 404 SPUR @ Talmadge Bridge – preconstruction services began this quarter and collaboration between the general contractor will occur throughout the year as GDOT prepares for construction in Q1 of 2025.
- PI# 0015151, SR 204 from SR 21 to CS 1201/RIO Road @ 23 LOCS – safety improvements, PFPR is anticipated in September.
- PI# 0015675 I-16 @ CS 647/CS 2289/Chatham PKWY – safety improvements, remains on schedule for January 2025 LET.
- PI# 0015704 and PI# 0015705, SR 404 SPUR/US 17 @ Back River and SR 404 SPUR/US 17 FM NE of Savannah Harbor Pkwy to Back River – bridge replacement and widening, preliminary design is on-going and working towards the PFPR.
- PI# 0017414 and PI# 0017415, SR 26/US 80 @ Bull River and SR 26/US 80 @ Lazaretto Creek – bridge replacements, still waiting on environmental tech studies and working on the draft environmental document, anticipated in September.
- PI# 0018023, SR 30 @ CS 673/Hodgeville Rd – Roundabout, continues in preliminary design, PFPR will be submitted in January 2025, proposing the Right of Way authorization is in September 2026 and LET in December of 2027,

Construction Reports – everything is progressing, nothing is outstanding.

To address the earlier question about the Talmadge Bridge and public outreach, the Department is now gathering the PIOH package materials. They anticipate dates for a public information open house to be held sometime in May, and this will be in person and they will also have a virtual meeting for public comments.

Ms. Wykoda Wang stated when you have that information available, please forward it to us. We received a question about the Ogeechee Rd widening - during the construction, will you close the roadways and the bridge or have a detour? How will it be handled?

Ms. Katie Proctor stated she needs to look into that and get back to Ms. Wykoda Wang.

[12. Chatham County Project Status Update Report](#)

Ms. Deanna Brooks, Chatham County, presented updates on some of the federally funded projects.

- PI# 0017515, I-16 at Jimmy DeLoach Pkwy Interchange – currently undertaking valued engineering study.
- PI# 0017975, Chevis Road Improvements – working towards public information open house, anticipating sometime in May.
- PI# 0017976, Garrard Avenue Improvements – getting ready for preliminary field plan review, which will be next week and we will move forward with the final design.
- PI# 0019015, Green Island Road Path – developing the conceptual report.
- PI# 0019011, SR 25 Corridor Study; PI# 0019010, SR 204 Access Study; PI# 0019012, President St at Truman RR Study – all still at the information gathering process.

There is also information of the Local preconstruction projects which is attached to this agenda.

[13. City of Savannah Project Status Update Report](#)

Mr. Joseph Shearouse, City of Savannah, presented Projects Status Updates.

- PI# 0008358, Project DeRenne, I-516 @ CS 1503/DERENNE AVE Update: City of Savannah and GDOT leadership met on January 31 to discuss operational and safety improvements along DeRenne Avenue. City continues to work with FHWA and GDOT to clarify schedule and NEPA requirement and increase capacity along the corridor.
- PI# 0010028, CS 1097/DELESSEPS/LA ROCHE AVE FM WATERS AVE TO SKIDAWAY RD Update: Construction is ongoing between Waters Avenue and Truman Parkway. Underground utility work continues to progress on schedule and will continue for the next two months. The installation of storm and water lines is about 9% complete on the project. Vehicle detour is in place along DeLesseps Ave. from Costa Rica Street to Cuba Street.
- PI# 0015306, TRUMAN LINEAR PARK TRAIL PHASE II – B Update: the contract has been awarded, City is working through the contract award now and estimate construction to begin in Q2 March or April of 2024. The company JCH has a long history of working on the Atlanta Beltline.
- PI# 0019016, Middle Ground Road - Tide to Town Segment, MIDDLEGROUND ROAD FM MONTGOMERY CROSS ROAD TO SCIENCE DRIVE Update: A design RFP for Middleground Road-Tide to Town has closed. Project team is scoring the submittals and expect award within next 30 days.
- PI# 0011744, I-16 Ramp Removal Project, I-16 @ MONTGOMERY ST & @ MLK JR BLVD - RAMP & OVERPASS Update: An MOA between the City of Savannah and GDOT was awarded at the December 7, 2023, City Council meeting. This MOA outlines the cost sharing and project management role of GDOT in updating the Interchange Modification Report for the interchange removal and integration back into the urban street grid. GDOT has completed a preliminary review of previous studies and is taking the next steps to procure services for the IMR and concept study report.

Mr. Nick Palumbo wanted to add that the City of Savannah has brought on a Full-time Tide to Town Coordinator. We recognize that there are more available funds (especially from the MPO) out there. We are examining connections south, from Lake Mayer to Georgia Southern University. Also willing to provide technical assistance to neighboring municipalities. The City of Savannah is in a special condition that we can fund this position. We are all going to do better when we all do better, certainly the needs for mobility do not end at the City of Savannah's boundaries. If you need any assistance, please reach out to Mr. Palumbo.

Ms. Karen Williams stated Pooler just had a meeting last week with Tide to Town. Pooler is on board, and we will get in touch with Mr. Palumbo.

[14. Savannah Hilton Head International Airport Project Status Update Report](#)

Report attached to the agenda.

[15. Chatham Area Transit Project Status Update Report](#)

Ms. Mary Moskowitz, CAT, presented Projects Status Updates:

- Intelligent Transportation System (ITS)-Clever Devices (5339/Z230/M301)
 - Status remains on hold. One vessel (Florence Martus) remains without installation of Clever devices ITS System.
 - Project Status: Hold
- Ferry Boat Maintenance Facility & Ferry Dock (5307h)
 - The Maintenance Facility is in final engineering. Ferry Dock is awaiting issuance of award.
 - Project Status: Ongoing
- Savannah Belles Hybrid Electric Ferry Replacement
 - Invitation to bid went to Chatham Area Transit in January.
 - THUD Complete
 - Georgia Transit Trust Fund (GTTF) complete. Award of 3 million dispersed.
 - Currently finalizing the FHWA flex funding
 - Project Status: Ongoing
- Electric Bus Replacement (Z230) and (5339c)
 - Scheduled for January CAT Board approval.
 - Project Status: On hold
- Installation of Charging Stations (Georgia Power)
 - Installation of charging stations at CAT Central construction anticipated to begin February 2024
 - Project Status: Ongoing
- American Rescue Plan (ARP) Route Restoration Analysis
 - Expected completion end of FY 2024. The project will allow CAT to provide accessibility to under-served communities with service across jurisdictions. Performed in conjunction with other planning and analysis efforts.
 - Project Status: Obligated (Funds Awarded in 5/2022 with 100% Federal match)

[16. LATS-SCDOT Project Status Update Report](#)

Report attached to the agenda.

[17. TIP Funding Tracking Report](#)

Report attached to the agenda. All project sponsors have provided updates.

VII. Other Public Comments (limit to 3 minutes)

VIII. Notices

[18. Grant Opportunities](#)

Ms. Wykoda Wang stated that as soon as the MPO Staff becomes aware of the funding opportunities, we send them to our member agencies. The City of Savannah is applying for SS4A grant funding, but there are also some RAISE grant, Large Bridge Improvement, Bridge Improvement Grant available. Please take a look if you are interested. Many of these are available to smaller municipalities and some are related to GDOT.

[19. Next CORE MPO Board Meeting April 24, 2024 at 10:00am](#)

IX. Adjournment

There being no further business, the February 28, 2024 CORE MPO Board meeting was adjourned.

The Chatham County- Savannah Metropolitan Planning Commission provides meeting summary minutes which are adopted by the respective board. Verbatim transcripts of minutes are the responsibility of the interested party.