



METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION

**CITIZENS ADVISORY COMMITTEE  
MEETING SUMMARY**

**Arthur A. Mendonsa Hearing Room  
112 East State Street**

October 18, 2012

5:00 p.m.

<b><u>Members</u></b>	<b><u>Representing</u></b>	<b><u>Present</u></b>
Tony Abbott	Chatham County	x
Daniel Brantley	Chatham County	x
John Chapman	City of Savannah	x
Gerald Cook	City of Bloomingdale	
Philip Cooper	Chatham County	
Mark Egan	Chatham County	x
John Getty	City of Tybee Island	x
Phyllis Hardeman	Town of Thunderbolt	x
Elizabeth Hilliard	City of Savannah	x
Larry Longo	City of Port Wentworth	x
Paula Kreissler	City of Savannah	x
Helen McCracken	Town of Thunderbolt	
Christopher Middleton	City of Savannah	x
Larry Miles	City of Savannah	x
Patrick J. O'Brien, Jr.	City of Savannah	
Harris Odell	Chatham County	
Deborah Rauhers	City of Savannah	x
Linda M. Smith	City of Port Wentworth	
Joe Steffen	Chatham County	
Martin Sullivan	Chatham County	
Dale Thorpe	Chatham County	
Vacant	City of Bloomingdale	
Vacant	Chatham County	
Vacant	City of Garden City	
Vacant	City of Garden City	
Vacant	City of Pooler	
Vacant	City of Pooler	
Vacant	City of Tybee Island	
Vacant	Town of Vernonburg	
Vacant	Town of Vernonburg	

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<u>Others Present</u>	<u>Representing</u>	
Michael Adams	MPO	X
Jessica Hagan	MPO	X
Ellen Harris	MPC	X
Jane Love	MPO	X
Jeff Netzinger	HGBD	X
Barbara Settzo	for MPO	X
Wykoda Wang	MPO	X
Julie Yawn	MPO	X

Mr. Mark Egan called the meeting to order.

**I. Approval of Agenda**

It was moved and seconded to approve the agenda as presented.

**CAC Action: the motion to approve the agenda carried with none opposed.**

**II. Action Items**

**A. Approval of August 16, 2012 meeting minutes**

It was moved and seconded to approve the minutes of the August 16, 2012 meeting.

**CAC Action: the motion to approve the minutes of the August 16, 2012 meeting carried with none opposed.**

**B. Endorsement of the FY 2013-2016 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) Funding Adjustments due to MAP-21**

Ms. Wykoda Wang presented the staff report. After giving a brief review of what the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) is, she explained that these funding adjustments are based on the new federal legislation known as Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, or MAP-21. The change in expected funding has created a \$4,000,000 shortfall for projects over the next four years. This change in funding will not affect the existing projects but it will affect any new projects. She reviewed the projects that would be affected by this funding. Lump sum program funds are affected and will impact future GDOT projects. Ms. Jane Love told the committee that the Safe Routes to Schools awards and Transportation Enhancement awards that had been granted in the area would not have their awards reduced, but any project in the lump sum category, like those, could be delayed a couple of months if the project is ready to let near the end of the fiscal year and those annual funds are used up for that year.

Ms. Wang reported on the rollover funds and L230, or urban attributable, funds. Because of less funding there will be less that can be rolled over to the next fiscal year. After all the changes are made, the TIP is still balanced.

The public comment period is underway now and will end on October 26, 2012. Committee discussion followed about the amounts of money rolled over from year to year. Ms. Wang pointed out that the funds for 2013 are known, but the funds for 2014, 2015, and 2016 are GDOT estimates. It's typical that the sum of programmed projects' costs per year do not add up to exactly the same amount that is estimated to be available, so it is not unusual to have a little rolled over to the next fiscal year.

Mr. Egan opened the public hearing. There being no comments, the public hearing was closed.

It was moved and seconded to endorse the FY2013-2016 TIP Funding Adjustments.

**CAC Action: the motion to endorse the FY2013-2016 TIP Funding Adjustments carried with none opposed.**

#### **C. Amendment to the FY 2013 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP)**

Ms. Love presented the staff report. She began by defining the Unified Planning Work Program. It was adopted in April 2012 and went into effect in July 2012. The document needs to be amended to include the rollover funds from the previous fiscal year. The UPWP also needs to be amended to reflect full apportionment of funds for the Job Access Reverse Commute (JARC) program and New Freedom program. The full amount of that funding was not known in April when it was originally adopted.

In response to a question, Ms. Love stated that this money is regular, federal formula funds, not stimulus funds. Regarding the use of JARC funds, certain bus routes and the water ferries are supported with this funding to provide commute services for those who don't have the typical "into town" commute.

It was moved and seconded to endorse the amendment to the FY 2013 Unified Planning Work Program.

**CAC Action: the motion to endorse the amendment to the FY 2013 Unified Planning Work Program carried with none opposed.**

#### **D. Savannah Urban Area Boundary Adjustment for Roadway Functional Classification**

Ms. Wang presented the staff report. Her report focused on the Savannah Urban Area Boundary Adjustments. She emphasized there are three types of area: Savannah Urbanized Area is defined by the Census and does not change until the next census; Savannah Urban Area, today's topic, reflects a slightly expanded and smoothed out area for the purpose of defining roads as rural or urban in the functional classification system;

and finally the MPO planning area is a still bigger area including the urbanized area plus whatever is expected to be urbanized within 20 years. That latter one will be a future topic, since the Savannah Urbanized Area in the 2010 census has spread outside of the current MPO planning area, requiring the MPO to expand its planning area.

She reported that the census-defined Savannah Urbanized Area is based on population density and on certain rules about how much lower-density space can exist between the higher densities and still be considered the same urbanized area. These criteria create a very uneven boundary for the Savannah Urbanized Area. She reported that the MPO can submit adjustments to these boundaries for the purpose of simplifying roadway classification. The adjusted area is called the Urban Area to distinguish from the Urbanized Area. The reason an MPO would propose this is to avoid having a single road alternate between classifications of "urban" and "rural" every few miles, which happens in some locations due to the jagged, population-based boundary. It is permissible to adjust the boundaries up to 2.5 miles beyond the Savannah Urbanized Area boundaries when defining the Urban Area. She used SR 204 as an example. Because of unpopulated marsh areas, it crosses through urban designated area and then rural and then back again into urban. The MPO proposal is to make SR 204 part of the adjusted Savannah Urban Area, out to a point west of I-95.

Ms. Wang noted that the current CORE MPO Planning boundary will change and therefore the make-up of the CORE MPO Board will need to be modified in the near future. Inclusion of parts of Effingham County and Bryan County will expand the CORE MPO Planning boundary.

Today's issue is limited to adjusting the Savannah Urban Area Boundary by the 2.5 mile extension. She presented a map to the committee with the proposed adjusted boundaries.

When asked about funding, Ms. Wang explained that transportation funding comes through the FHWA and FTA, and it is still based on the census-defined Urbanized Area, not the adjusted boundaries.

The Committee discussed possible competition for funds if an area is categorized as urban or rural. There is always competition for funding regardless if it is urban class or rural class. Some were concerned that existing projects in the urban would have funding threatened by needs in that outlying areas that are newly added to the urban area.

After GDOT and FHWA approve the proposed adjusted boundaries, then they will classify roadways as arterials, collectors, or locals in both Urban and Rural areas.

Some implications of the urban and rural classifications are in aspects of road design. This is one reason to avoid toggling between classifications. There are different design and construction standards for urban and rural roadways, such as width of the shoulder, median design, etc. Also, there are different criteria for speed limits and traffic signal spacing between urban roadways and rural roadways. The classification does not have any effect on road maintenance.

When asked how “complete streets” policy would relate to urban or rural classification, Ms. Love commented that the urban/rural distinction is not quite as important as it used to be before GDOT adopted a Complete Streets policy. It used to be that rural roads would categorically not have sidewalks, but now Complete Streets adds other considerations for that decision. The urban/rural distinction is still a factor. Ms. Wang noted that it is easier to incorporate “complete streets” elements on urban projects.

It was moved and seconded to endorse the Savannah Urban Area Boundary Adjustment for roadway functional classification.

**CAC Action: the motion to endorse the Savannah Urban Area Boundary Adjustment for roadway functional classification carried with two opposed.**

### **III. Status Reports**

#### **A. Georgia Planning Association award for the Reclaiming Old West Broad Street**

Ms. Ellen Harris announced the award from the Georgia Planning Association award for outstanding planning document for a large community for “Reclaiming Old West Broad Street”.

She presented an update on this project. The project was originally known as “I-16 Exit Ramp Removal Study”. It has now been rebranded as “Reclaiming Old West Broad Street” to emphasize what is gained rather than what would be removed. She noted the various partners in this project and explained why it is desirable to remove the exit ramp and reclaim this section of present day MLK Jr. Blvd., and reconnect to areas west of the boulevard. Public input contributed to the development of three design concepts. Then a preferred design concept was selected and that is what they are developing now. There should be approximately 8.2 acres of developable new land with the removal of the exit ramp. This design pushes the terminus of I-16 back to Gwinnett St. The study also included an economic analysis and a transportation analysis. Cost of the project is estimated at \$38 million. Of that total, \$22 million will be used for demolition and reconnection of the local streets. This project is in the Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) and one phase is in the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), but it is also a good candidate for a future SPLOST or special service district or a tax allocation district. There are also other federal grants that may be pursued. The next phase is the required documentation and approval phase. The land is owned by FHWA and GDOT, and the project proposes to modify an interstate, so their approval is required. As for a time frame, she predicts you could see it come to pass in 2018-2020 if everything, including funding, falls into place with no delay. She noted that this is a very optimistic version of the schedule.

Discussion followed. It will take 4-5 years to get necessary funding and approval before work could begin. She explained that it is possible to leave a section of the flyover in place for a while, but they cannot leave it all in place and still reconnect the local streets.

In response to a question about how other cities have turned old freeway into parks, Ms. Harris said that one alternative considered a bigger park area on part of the flyover right-of-way, but then the opportunity for re-development and those associated economic benefits would be reduced.

Economic impact was discussed. The 8.2 acres is the net area that would be available for development, meaning the streets are not part of that tally. Development would be guided by a master plan that the City of Savannah would have for the area, and could happen through public/private partnerships. In response to a question on who decided the flyover was a barrier, Ms. Harris noted the evidence: north of the flyover investment has continued and rental rates are nearly double those in the south. Not much investment has occurred south of the flyover. There have been plans for revitalization as far back as 1996. Could development be incentivized without removing the flyover? The area is already designated an enterprise zone but that apparently has not overcome the effect of the flyover.

Some committee members expressed skepticism that the area would become attractive for development or that the area available would be as much as 8.2 acres. Ms. Harris confirmed that the 8.2 acres is net, not gross.

There was additional discussion of the purpose and use of the flyover today. It is useful for getting into the city in a car, but there has been a philosophical shift about urban design and access versus strictly motor vehicle mobility in the decades since the flyover was built. The study team also had done a hypothetical exercise applying current criteria for interchanges, and had found that today, if the flyover did not already exist, it would not be built. Ms. Harris confirmed that traffic studies were conducted and they indicate that existing traffic and future projected traffic can move efficiently through the city. Ms. Harris confirmed that there was a great deal of public involvement with the current stakeholders in the immediate area. All the details are available on the website.

One member said he believed the area could become vital. This amount of money is spent all the time on other things with no complaint. It's time for the project to move forward.

The Metropolitan Planning Commission conducted the study and Ms. Harris served as Project Manager. Mark Wilkes, MPC Transportation Director, prepared the Traffic Analysis for the study report. Consultants on the project included Wilbur Smith Associates (prime), Sottile & Sottile, Urban Partners, Grice and Associates, McMillan and Associates, and Gilbert & Lattimore. Partners in the study included Chatham County, the City of Savannah, SDRA and CORE MPO.

## **B. 2013 CORE MPO Certification Review Schedule**

Ms. Wang presented the update. The MPO has a certification review every four years by Federal Highway Administration and Federal Transit Administration to certify that the MPO is capable of conducting planning activities as outlined in the planning documents. The site visit will be on February 27, 2013 at 5:00 PM and the public is invited. Staff is currently preparing documents for the agencies.

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**C. SR 21 Corridor Study Update**

Mr. Jeff Netzinger presented the update on this corridor study. He reviewed the schedule, evaluation criteria, and the proposed strategies for each section of the corridor. The corridor was divided into a northern section, central section, and southern section. For each section he showed which ideas were rejected as not helpful and which ideas have been selected for further study.

Discussion included the impact of traffic from Effingham County and the impact on Effingham County, the different types of traffic congestion (commuters, GA Port, access to Interstates and airport), and consideration of mass transit options. One member said she is not in favor of building more roads or wider roads, as that continues to promote less sustainable modes.

Mr. Mark Wilkes, MPC Transportation Director, is the project manager for the SR 21 Corridor Study.

**IV. Agency Reports**

There were no agency reports at this time. Committee members are reminded to submit questions in advance to the MPO staff if they wish any report or information from an agency about any project.

**V. Other Business**

No other business at this time.

**VI. Public Comments**

There were no other public comments at this time.

**VII. Announcements**

The next CAC meeting will be on December 6, 2012 at 5:00 PM.

**VIII. Other non-agenda information**

**IX. Adjournment**

There being no other business to come before the committee, the October 18, 2012 Citizens Advisory Committee Meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Jane Love  
Transportation Planner