



METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION

**CITIZENS ADVISORY COMMITTEE
MEETING SUMMARY**

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

August 22, 2013

5:00 p.m.

<u>Members</u>	<u>Representing</u>	<u>Present</u>
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	
John Getty	City of Tybee Island	
Phyllis Hardeman	Town of Thunderbolt	
Elizabeth Hilliard	City of Savannah	
Paula Kreissler	City of Savannah	x
Larry Longo	City of Port Wentworth	x
Helen McCracken	Town of Thunderbolt	x
Christopher Middleton	City of Savannah	x
Larry Miles	City of Savannah	
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	x
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	

<u>Others Present</u>	<u>Representing</u>	
Michael Adams	MPO	X
Jessica Hagan	MPO	X
Rachel Hatcher	RS&H	X
Jane Love	MPO	X
Barbara Setzto	for MPO	X
Wykoda Wang	MPO	X
Mark Wilkes	MPO	X
Julie Yawn	MPO	X

Vice Chairman Tony Abbott 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 June 20, 2013 meeting minutes

It was moved and seconded to approve the minutes of the June 20, 2013 meeting.

CAC Action: the motion to approve the minutes of the June 20, 2013 meeting carried with none opposed.

B. Endorsement of FY 2014-2017 Transportation Improvement Program

Ms. Wykoda Wang presented the staff report. She explained what the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) is and how it must be consistent with the Long Range Transportation Plan. The TIP is a multi-modal plan developed in conjunction with CAT, GDOT, Federal Highway, and Federal Transit. Public input was considered from the April project prioritization exercise. A 30-day public comment period is required. Today is the last day. Two public hearings are also required. This meeting is the first and the CORE MPO Board meeting next week will be the second. A lot of comments on the draft TIP have been received, mostly from Coastal Georgia Greenway and from Federal Highway Administration. Coastal Georgia Greenway requested that bikeways be included in projects. Staff contacted project managers and sponsors to see if bikeways were included in their projects. All of the comments are documented in Chapter 2 of the draft TIP.

Ms. Wang reviewed in detail the list of projects included in the FY 2014-2017 TIP in the following categories:

- Highway and Bridge Projects
- Non-motorized Projects
- Transit Projects

Earmarked Projects

She concluded that staff recommends CAC endorsement of the TIP for MPO Board adoption.

Ms. Wang noted that the Department of Human Services (DHS) has begun to coordinate with the MPO regarding the New Freedom funding. She believes that DHS does not understand how the Department of Transportation operates or the role that the MPO plays in the process of accessing federal funds.

There was a discussion of the New Freedom program in years past and now.

As part of the TIP adoption it is also necessary to adopt the 2035 Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) addendum that will include any projects or changes not currently in the 2035 LRTP so that the FY 2014-2017 TIP is consistent with the 2035 LRTP. She reviewed updates and corrections that were received since the initial report was sent out to members. Staff recommends endorsement of the FY 2014-2017 TIP.

Ms. Rauers asked why the President Street project to elevate the roadway was not in the TIP. Ms. Wang explained that if federal money is not requested, the city does not need to go through the MPO.

Ms. Love commented that the city did submit some plans to the MPC staff for comment early this year. Those elevation plans started on General McIntosh and ended at the city limits.

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

It was moved and seconded to endorse the TIP to the CORE MPO Board.

Ms. Rauers asked for an update on the US 80 bridges. Ms. Love reported that the project is currently in the environmental process. The preferred alternative is not confirmed yet, but that is what they are working on. Paved shoulders will permit emergency vehicles access.

Mr. Abbott asked about traffic volumes. Ms. Love noted that on some days in the summer the roadway is at capacity and sometimes over, but four-laning is not recommended at this time. On most days of the year, additional capacity is not needed and Tybee Island is built out, with limited parking capacity. Ms. Wang commented about the limited funding and that there are competing projects for this limited funding.

Ms. Rauers asked about the funding years for the Brampton Rd connector project, given the Port's need. Ms. Wang explained that a project's necessity is only one consideration when programming a project. The time required to complete the earlier phases of project development is another factor. The funding years in the TIP reflect expectations for the readiness of the phase receiving the funding. This project is the Georgia Ports Authority

project. Georgia Ports Authority is paying the preliminary engineering (PE) funding but they want the federal funds for right-of-way and construction. GDOT will not “hold back” money for a project that is not ready. They are always balancing funds and projects. Ms. Wang guessed that maybe it would be ready for construction in 2017 if there are no problems and there is enough money. She believes with confidence that construction will not occur before 2017. What is included in the TIP is based on GDOT’s schedule.

CAC Action: the motion to accept the staff recommendation to endorse the FY-2014-2027TIP to the CORE MPO Board carried, with one opposed.

III. Status Reports

A. SR 21 Corridor Study

Mr. Mark Wilkes introduced project consultant, Jeff Netzinger from Hussey, Gay, Gell & DeYoung, who presented the status report on the SR 21 Corridor Study. Mr. Netzinger briefly reviewed the study overview, the public involvement process, and the Tier II alternatives. He explained the Tier II process and how they arrived at the preferred alternative. Issues considered in the decision included volume, safety, car & truck conflicts, car and rail conflicts, school zone volume, environmental impacts, displacements, and cost. He reviewed the benefits and costs for each of three alternatives. Alternative 10 is the recommended alternative because it offers the greatest congestion relief, greatest safety improvements, greatest opportunity for redevelopment, and lowest cost. He reviewed Alternative 10 in detail.

When asked about connecting with West Bay St in Savannah, Mr. Netzinger confirmed that those coming from West Bay may choose to stay on the traditional I-516 or go up the ramp to the newly elevated highway.

When asked about reconstruction of the I-16/I-516 interchange, Mr. Netzinger replied that Alternative 11 included a reconstruction of this interchange but Alternative 10 does not.

When asked about bike lanes or paths, Mr. Netzinger clarified lanes versus paths and noted that the elevated lanes can allow room for multi-modal improvements on the existing at-grade roadway in the commercial section of SR 21 in Garden City. Pedestrian crossing will be in two-stages, from curb to median and then median to curb. Planting in the median would be determined later in the development. Alternative 10 recommends bike lanes through the commercial part of Garden City, and then, beginning at Smith Avenue, continuing with a multi-use path to the Effingham County line.

B. Total Mobility Plan: Thoroughfare Plan Element

Mr. Wilkes commented that this will be the first in a series of updates on the Total Mobility Plan until it is adopted next year. The Total Mobility Plan is designed to meet more than the federal minimum requirements for a Long Range Transportation Plan so that it truly meets the needs of the citizens. The Total Mobility Plan incorporates many elements – Framework, Streetcar, Transit, Non-motorized, Thoroughfares, Corridors & Concepts, and

Freight – that are not required to be in the Long Range Transportation Plan. He introduced Rachel Hatcher, consultant with RS&H.

Ms. Hatcher explained that the Total Mobility Plan is a fully multi-modal plan and incorporates context-sensitive design. The Thoroughfare Plan sets the standards for cross-sections of streets and roads. She proceeded to review the phases in the development process of the Thoroughfare Plan. The plan will be presented to the MPO for adoption and then recommended to the city and county for incorporation into their ordinances.

While the planning horizon for the Long Range Transportation Plan is 2040, Mr. Wilkes noted that this plan will function beyond that period, but can still be updated and re-evaluated as needed.

When asked about requiring a complete streets policy, it was confirmed that neither city of Savannah nor Chatham County has adopted a complete streets policy so far. The Thoroughfare Plan, if adopted and incorporated into ordinances, would actually accomplish the step that would logically come after a Complete Streets policy. A good time to request such a policy resolution from local governments would be at the same time that they consider action on the Thoroughfare Plan. A complete streets policy would be a useful tool, but it is the City and County that must put it into their ordinances. The City and County staff have been involved in the Thoroughfare Plan development, but the smaller municipalities were not responsive to the MPO's outreach.

C. Proposed Selection Criteria for Project Selection in the MPO's Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP)

Ms. Jane Love presented the status report. The new TAP was created by the federal MAP-21 transportation legislation in 2012. TAP is for projects similar to the old Transportation Enhancement (TE), Safe Routes to Schools, and recreational trails programs. Now the MPO has a role in selecting projects for this urbanized area's portion of this money. A competitive selection process is required. Ms. Love reviewed the steps in this process. Winning applicants will work with the GDOT to get their projects completed. The MPO is combining two fiscal years of funding in one call for applications so as to offer more funding with less administrative effort. The combined amount, including the local match, is about \$1 million. The applicant needs to locally fund at least 20% of their total project cost. At this meeting, Ms. Love shared possible eligible activities and the proposed selection criteria. Applications will be measured by feasibility, public support, level of local match, impact on non-motorized access and connectivity, safety of transportation system, efficient use of resources and existing systems, long-term economic vitality, improvements to the community, and urgency.

When asked, Ms. Love said she has no idea how many applications to expect, as this process is new for the MPO. The MPO did not have a role in project selection in Georgia under the previous, similar programs.

IV. Agency Reports

No reports at this time.

V. Other Business

The question of the opening of the Diamond Causeway Bridge could not be answered with any definite answer. Ms. Wang said that today's report from GDOT listed completion as "summer 2013".

VI. Public Comments

There were no other public comments at this time.

VII. Announcements

The next CAC meeting will be on October 17, 2013 at 5:00 PM.

VIII. Other non-agenda information

IX. Adjournment

There being no other business to come before the committee, the August 22, 2013 Citizens Advisory Committee Meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Jane Love
Transportation Planner