



METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION

**CITIZENS ADVISORY COMMITTEE
MEETING SUMMARY**

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

October 16, 2014

5:00 p.m.

<u>Members</u>	<u>Representing</u>	<u>Present</u>
Tony Abbott	Chatham County	x
Nicholas Allen-Tunsil	City of Savannah	
Thomas E. Branch III	City of Savannah	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
Phyllis Hardeman	Town of Thunderbolt	
Paula Kreissler	City of Savannah	
Larry Longo	City of Port Wentworth	
Helen McCracken	Town of Thunderbolt	
Christopher Middleton	City of Savannah	x
Larry Miles	City of Savannah	x
Harris Odell	Chatham County	
F. Ryan Sewell	City of Savannah	
Linda M. Smith	City of Port Wentworth	
Joe Steffen	Chatham County	
Dale Thorpe	Chatham County	x
Robert Tully	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>	
Jessica Hagan	MPO	X
Jane Love	MPO	X
Barbara Settzo	for MPO	X
Tom Thomson	MPO	X
Wykoda Wang	MPO	X
Mark Wilkes	MPO	X

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Mark Egan.

I. Approval of Agenda

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

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

II. Action Items

A. Approval of August 21, 2014 meeting minutes

It was moved and seconded to approve the minutes of the August 21, 2014 meeting.

CAC Action: the motion to approve the minutes of the August 21, 2014 meeting carried with none opposed.

B. Approval of the CORE MPO 2015 Meeting Schedule

A proposed 2015 meeting schedule had been included in the meeting package. The CAC dates were specified for the months of February, April, and June, but were to be determined for the second half of 2015. Mr. Robert Tully requested, for the second half of the year, that the committee keep the same future meeting dates as the TCC meeting – August 30, October 15, and December 3. Dr. Daniel Brantley requested that the committee postpone voting on the meeting schedule until the new bylaws were discussed and approved. Discussion followed.

Ms. Jane Love explained that dates for the August, October, and December 2015 were left open because new bylaws will go into effect in July 2015 which could create a new meeting schedule for this committee. The meeting dates for February, April & June of 2015 are fixed because this committee will be operating under the current bylaws.

Ms. Love confirmed that the future meeting dates will be determined later after the new bylaws have been passed.

It was moved and seconded to accept the CORE MPO 2015 meeting schedule as presented.

CAC Action: the motion to accept the CORE MPO 2015 meeting schedule as presented carried with two opposed.

C. Endorsement of the amendments to the FY 2015-2018 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)

Ms. Wykoda Wang presented the two amendments. The first amendment concerns the Diverging Diamond Project at I-95 and SR 21. Since the TIP was first adopted, GDOT has developed a more detailed concept and has arrived at a new cost of \$6,698,955 for this project. The new cost needs to be reflected in the TIP.

The second amendment concerns CAT's funding request for two special studies in FY 2015 – Regional Mobility Management Program and Service Tactical Optimization Process Route Level Profile Analysis. Since the MPO has set aside \$750,000 for special transportation studies in FY 2015, it was decided to split funds from this amount to fund the CAT request for \$82,220 thus creating a new project with a new project number. Creating a new project requires an amendment to the TIP.

Upon discussion, Ms. Wang noted that the GDOT project increase is being funded by state controlled funds, not local funds. She also noted that this meeting was advertised as a public hearing, but no one has shown up.

It was moved and seconded to endorse the proposed Transportation Improvement Program amendments.

CAC Action: the motion to endorse the amendments to the FY 2015-2018 Transportation Improvement Program carried with none opposed.

D. Endorsement to adopt the Non-motorized Transportation Plan

Ms. Love presented the staff request for endorsement of the Non-motorized Transportation Plan. She reviewed the steps taken to develop this bicycle and pedestrian plan. Projects in this plan will be eligible for federal funding. There is a public comment period underway now. This meeting is also a public hearing.

Ms. Love reviewed the content of the plan. She reviewed the plan's pedestrian recommendations and bicycle recommendations in four quadrants of the planning area. She noted that top scoring pedestrian needs are concentrated in the south side commercial area where sidewalk provision has been intermittent. In prioritization, proximity to denser residential areas, employment areas and schools was highly weighted for bicycle and pedestrian projects. She pointed out though that one the ways that

prioritization differed between the two modes was that for bicycle projects, an important criterion was linking new lanes or paths to existing networks, while for pedestrian projects, linking to transit was relatively more important. About 13 of the projects in the plan are in the current TIP. Many projects will not be funded in the foreseeable future, but a small number them might be identified for various types of federal funding; these projects are eligible for funding under most of the highway programs, including the MPO's Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP), and even are eligible for transit funds if the project improves transit access. Some smaller projects could be locally funded.

The total draft document was attached in the meeting package and may be found on the website.

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

It was moved and seconded to endorse the Non-motorized Transportation Plan.

Mr. Tully questioned whether there was a true need for a lot of these projects, given the cost. He said he sees a bike route with practically no one using it. Ms. Love noted that these projects are comparatively low cost compared to roadway projects. Even expensive highways are empty at some times of day. Studies show that cyclists bring economic benefit to an area that is bicycle-friendly.

Mr. Branch asked where projects connecting Tybee and Savannah were ranked. Ms. Love noted that that route is the one most often cited specifically in requests from the public. She said the entire Savannah-Tybee route is divided into several different projects in this plan. The highest ranking of those projects falls at seventh place in the ranking system. These rankings are not a guarantee of implementation or funding order because the willingness of local government participation is also key. They may consider other things like the geographic balancing of expenditures among districts. Nevertheless, this priority list is still a way to start looking at priorities when a funding opportunity comes up.

Dr. Brantley asked about West 52nd Street and the trucks that had been mentioned. What could be done? Ms. Love explained that the trucks would continue to use that route, but the plan proposed widening the roadway to provide bicycle lanes.

CAC action: the motion to endorse the Non-motorized Transportation Plan carried with one opposed.

E. Endorsement of the Park & Ride Lot Study

Ms. Wang presented the report. This study was begun in September 2013 to identify the need and potential for transit services. Three major commuter corridors were the focus of the study with a total of seven park and ride lot sites. She reviewed the three corridors and the sites within each corridor. For each location she reviewed the alternative development options and costs, lot maintenance costs, and the potential transit service plan and the

associated costs of such service. Transit service to downtown Savannah and to Gulfstream has the most potential.

The study addresses the establishment of park and ride lots, the encouragement of carpooling, and instituting regional transit service. A full time coordinator and incentives for commuters to use the system will be necessary.

The current final plan is posted on the website. Staff will ask the CORE MPO board to accept this study so that staff can pass this information on to the implementation agencies so that the implementation process can begin. She asked for this committee to endorse the study to the CORE MPO board.

Mr. Egan asked if any other lot sites had been considered. Ms. Wang explained that initially there were 17 possible locations identified along the three corridors. Each site was evaluated and scored. This evaluation process along with stakeholder input narrowed the site selections to the seven included in this study.

Mr. Branch asked about cost/person. Ms. Wang responded that the fare would be \$2.50/one way. To calculate development costs/person requires a reasonable estimate of projected ridership. Projected ridership in 2040 is 850 people/day. When asked if the goal is to charge what it costs, Ms. Wang replied that the goal is to encourage people to use the park and ride lot and to drive less.

Ms. Wang noted that there is a GDOT park and ride lot at SR 204 & I-95 which is heavily utilized. CAT sent a bus over to pick up potential passengers but found that it was already filled with carpoolers' cars, leaving no room for bus-users to park.

Ms. Wang does not expect that any standardized lots will be grassy fields. These lots will be formalized, structured, safe lots. This study does not cover any design features for these lots.

It was moved and seconded to endorse the Park and Ride Lot Study as presented.

CAC action: the motion to endorse the Park and Ride Lot Study carried with one opposed.

Ms. Wang asked Mr. Branch why he was opposed and he replied that he is not convinced of the need and is therefore not a supporter of the idea.

III. Status Reports

A. CORE MPO Re-apportionment Update

Mr. Egan stated his belief that this re-apportionment issue and the CAC bylaw update are probably the most important issues to come before this committee. These issues will define the CAC in the future. Ms. Wang presented the staff report. Re-apportionment is

necessary because our urbanized area has expanded and our boundaries need to be re-drawn to include parts of Bryan and Effingham County. All our plans will need to address and include this expanded area.

The time line calls for staff to draw up a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), and for the CAC and other committees to complete their bylaw revisions so that the CORE MPO Board can accept these working documents by December 2014. Then the local governments need to review and adopt them, hopefully by March 2015. Lastly, it will go to the Governor, through GDOT, and to FHWA in June 2015 for final adoption.

Once this re-apportionment process is done, then staff will revise all plans and programs to reflect the revised planning area. The projected time line for this is to have the Unified Planning Work Program revised by April 2015, the public participation plan revised by August 2015, and then the Long Range Transportation Plan, the Transportation Improvement Program and the Congestion Management Process all by February 2016.

Seven meetings have already taken place to draft these revised bylaws and working documents. Fundamental topics were: What is the boundary? What is the MPO structure? How does staff support the MPO? How are the roles and responsibilities of participants and the funding formula defined?

Ms. Wang reported that staff has combined the bylaws of all the committees into one document in a single format style. Suggested changes that affect CAC are committee representation, number of meetings (required meetings to coincide with passage of major programs and studies and/or optional meetings), and size of a quorum. Discussion followed on these issues.

Mr. Tom Thomson expanded on the staff's view of these issues. It was clarified that the CAC is not federally mandated. 70% of the MPO's nationwide choose to have a CAC. Mr. Egan would like the committee members to get involved in these projects earlier in the study process and not be just a rubber stamp one week prior to the CORE MPO board approving the project. His desire is to give the CAC more purpose.

The question of residency of the committee members was raised by Mr. Tully. Discussion followed. If the CAC agrees, staff can add a residency requirement to the appointment process.

There was a general discussion of roles and responsibilities of all the committees.

After a general discussion of the current and proposed bylaws of the CAC, it was decided to have a special meeting prior to the December CAC meeting to revise the bylaws. Ms. Wang will send out current and proposed copies to all committee members. Mr. Egan will follow-up to schedule a date and time. Or the December meeting could be a working meeting focused on the bylaws, since members will have time to compare current and proposed bylaws.

Mr. Thomson talked about the current and the proposed representation of CAT on the CORE MPO.

IV. Agency Reports

No reports at this time.

V. Other Business

There was no other business.

VI. Public Comments

There were no other public comments at this time.

VII. Announcements

The next CAC meeting will be on December 4, 2014 at 5:00 PM.

VIII. Other non-agenda information

IX. Adjournment

There being no other business to come before the committee, the October 16, 2014 Citizens Advisory Committee Meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Jane Love
Transportation Planner