



## Economic Development & Freight Advisory Committee (EDFAC) Meeting

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MPC Mendonsa Hearing Room -- 12:00 p.m.  
110 East State Street, Savannah  
Minutes

### February 7, 2019 Meeting minutes of the EDFAC

<u><b>Voting Members</b></u>	<u><b>Representing</b></u>	<u><b>Present</b></u>
Pamela Bernard	Chatham County Engineering	X
CPT Anthony Moltz	Hunter Army Airfield	X
Amanda Clement	Bryan county Planning	X
Joseph Drake	Gulfstream	X
Jared Downs	Savannah Area Chamber of Commerce	X
Tom McQueen	GDOT Planning	X
George Fidler	Savannah Airport Commission	X
Brandt Herndon	Effingham Industrial Development Authority	X
Steve Henry	City of Savannah - Traffic Engineering	
<u><b>Alternate</b></u>	<u><b>Representing</b></u>	<u><b>Present</b></u>
Michelle Strickland	City of Savannah – Traffic Engineering	X
Lee Smith	Chatham County – County Manager	X
<u><b>Others</b></u>	<u><b>Representing</b></u>	<u><b>Present</b></u>
Mark Wilkes	CORE MPO	X
Wykoda wang	CORE MPO	X
Stephanie Rossi	CORE MPO	X
James Small	CORE MPO	X
Vivian Canizares	GDOT Planning	X
Ned Green	GDOT Planning	X

#### I. Introductions

#### II. Election of Chairman

Mr. Lee smith nominated Ms. Pamela Bernard for Chairperson. Nominations were closed, the vote was taken, and Ms. Pamela Bernard was elected Chairperson by a majority of those present.

#### III. Election of Vice chairman

Mr. Lee Smith nominated Mr. Brant Herndon for Vice Chairperson. Nominations were closed, the vote was taken, and Mr. Brent Herndon was elected Vice Chairperson by a majority of those present.

#### **IV. Approval of Agenda**

Mr. Joseph Drake motioned to approve the February 7, 2019 EDFAC meeting agenda; seconded by Ms. Pamela Bernard. The motion was passed with none opposed.

#### **V. Briefing on Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) Update**

Ms. Stephanie Rossie gave a briefing on the 2045 Metropolitan Transportation Plan Update. CORE MPO is in the process of updating the MTP, also known as the Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP). We currently have the 2040 Total Mobility Plan and will be updating that to the Mobility 2045. The MTP covers the region's investments in transportation priorities over a time span of 20 plus years. The plan is evaluated every 5 years and will have various amendments over time. We are focused on a system level that is intermodal and multi-modal in nature. The process of the plan update requires staff to evaluate land use patterns and socio-economic data. Staff updated the socio-economic data and analyzed existing conditions to perform a forecast of future needs. Staff also conducted vision exercises with the public to identify issues and to obtain community's input on how to improve the regional transportation system. The MTP aligns with the State transportation plan and is fiscally constrained. The 2045 MTP Project recommendations in the financially constrained plan will be available for review late spring or early summer of 2019 with the plan adoption in August.

#### **VI. Briefing on Current MPO Studies**

Mr. Mark Wilkes gave a briefing on two studies, I-95 at Airways Avenue/Pooler Parkway and I-16 at Little Neck Road/Future Jimmy DeLoach Parkway interchange. The purpose of the interchange studies is to produce a high-grade analysis that will meet federal requirements for making a change to the interstate system. The formal study is called an Interchange Modification Report (IMR). When changes are made to the access points on the federal interstate system, agencies must go through this process. Federal Highway Administration and GDOT prefer that formal IMRs not be done at the MPO level. Staff and consultants are doing the studies and analyses to the same standards as an IMR including review or deliverables by GDOT. The ultimate goal is to convert these studies into IMRs without major rework of the analysis.

Mr. Wilkes then presented the studies' needs and purpose, study areas, traffic analyses, crash analyses and preliminary improvement recommendations.

##### **a. I-95 at Airways Avenue/Pooler Parkway Interchange Study**

Many of the project challenges include traffic congestion, residential and commercial growth, proximity of intersections, environmental restrictions, State and Federal approvals, and funding. There is a great need to improve access to support tourism and employment growth. This area includes the Savannah Hilton Head International airport and Gulf Stream Aerospace, who employ over 10,000 people. Much of the congestion is driven by rapid commercial and residential growth in the area. The population in Pooler has grown from 6,000 in 2000 to nearly 23,700 in 2016. The analysis area includes Exit 106: Jimmy DeLoach Pkwy, Exit 104: Savannah Hilton Head International airport, and Exit 102: US 80/Pooler Garden City. The traffic study analysis includes one-way and uninterrupted freeway segments, ramp junctions consisting of merge and diverge junctions, and signalized and un-signalized intersections. Interchange options including bridge and ramp widening, diverging diamond, single point urban interchange (SPUI), and flyover interchange options are being considered. The primary goals of the study are to identify short and long-term transportation improvement needs, develop preferred alternative concepts including planning level cost estimates, and prepare interchange study report that can be re-packaged into an Interchange Modification Report.

##### **b. I-16 at Little Neck Road/Future Jimmy DeLoach Parkway Interchange Study**

This project involved an evaluation of the short and long term traffic needs of this interchange in light of the completion of the Jimmy DeLoach Parkway Extension and Georgia Ports Authority growth and expansion. Extensive review was done on existing traffic volumes and operations, crash data, origin-destination flows, and environmental surveys. Consultants are evaluating potential short and mid-term improvements, including traffic signals, bridge widening, ramp widening, addition of turn lanes and full interchange reconfiguration. Refinement of these concepts will include consideration of operational analysis with design year traffic and environmental resource impacts. Initial interchange options including a conventional diamond, partial cloverleaf, and diverging diamond interchanges are being considered. This study will lay the groundwork for an Interchange Modification Report.

## **VII. Status Report on Priority Projects in the CORE MPO Freight Plan**

Ms. Wykoda Wang gave an update on the status of the Freight Plan. The current Freight Plan was adopted in 2016 and staff intends to incorporate the Freight Plan recommendations into the 2045 MTP. The plan was completed in 2 phases. Phase I identified Chatham County only, and Phase II addressed the needs for Chatham, Bryan and Effingham Counties, and incorporated socio-economic, economic development, and market analysis. This committee is focusing on the infrastructure improvements and recommendations. The infrastructure recommendations include policy recommendations corresponding with state of good repair and performance-based planning, and project specific recommendations.

The project recommendations include bridge replacements, interchange reconstructions, road widenings, new roadways, other improvements, as well as operation improvements. Ms. Wykoda Wang presented the specific list of transportation projects under each category. These projects are grouped by their development status; projects under development and plan improvements. The next step is for EDFAC to provide input on which projects should be included in the fiscally constrained 2045 MTP.

## **VIII. Roundtable Discussion of Freight Priorities for the MTP Update**

- a. Projects in current MTP
- b. Member lead projects
- c. Unmet needs
- d. Potential freight policies and strategies

EDFAC had a discussion concerning current and future projects. Ms. Pamela Bernard stated that the State route 21 culvert project is being expanded and not replaced. There are currently 4 box culverts and Chatham County is adding 2 more.

Mr. George Fiddler stated that the airport has outgrown its air cargo facility. The facility will be moved from its current location at the Southeast end of the airport to a new area on the Northwest portion of the airport. This will include road modifications.

Ms. Pamela Bernard asked if considerations have been made to address the semi-truck traffic on Bay St. Mr. Mark Wilkes stated that some studies have been done in the past. An effective alternative route would require effective mandates and enforcement by the City of Savannah. Members shared concerns about alternate ways of getting semi-trucks west of the viaduct without having to go down Fahm St. to MLK Blvd. Mr. Tom McQueen asked if there was a list or a map showing semi-truck prohibitions on local streets. Ms. Michelle Strickland stated that the city does not have very many semi-truck prohibitions, but they are prohibited on Victory Dr. and Oglethorpe Ave. Mr. Brandt Herndon stated that in March 2017, the City of Savannah created a list of streets that restricted semi-truck traffic, and Benton and Highlands Blvd. were included. Mr. McQueen suggested that a document be created that illustrates streets with restricted and unrestricted semi-truck access. He mentioned that all state routes allow truck traffic.

Ms. Pamela Bernard stated that Old River road is a growing corridor experiencing a lot of development and needs improvements, especially for semi-truck traffic.

Mr. Jared Downs asked if staff has explored the possibilities of widening US-80 to US-280 in Bryan County due to the increased semi-truck traffic. Mr. Mark Wilkes stated that a portion of this will be outside of our planning area, but staff will review it. Ms. Amanda Clement stated that Bryan County is currently updating their land use plan by monitoring future development and determining how it will impact the area.

Mr. Mark Wilkes, in response to a question about Base access, stated that Hunter Army Airfield is making major changes on the primary gate on Montgomery St. in conjunction with Project DeRenne.

CPT Anthony Moltz stated that the Rio Road gate will undergo enhancements due to the increased traffic in that area.

Concerning the Hampstead Connector, I-516 to Derenne Ave., Mr. Mark Wilkes stated that the new interchange and the area outside the gate down to White Bluff Rd. will be a significant improvement to HAAF access. Mr. Wilkes has spoken to the project manager at Kimley Horn who intends to have a public hearing as early as late this summer. The project is in the plan and currently being monitored.

#### **IX. Next Steps**

#### **X. Other Business**

The next meeting is scheduled for **April 11<sup>th</sup> at 12:00 p.m.**

#### **XI. Adjourn**

There being no further business, the February 7, 2019 meeting of the EDFAC 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.