



EDFAC

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

June 20, 2019 Meeting Minutes of the Economic Development & Freight Advisory Committee (EDFAC)

<u>Voting Members</u>	<u>Representing</u>	<u>Present</u>
Pamela Bernard	Chatham County Engineering	X
CPT Anthony Moltz	Hunter Army Airfield	
Amanda Clement	Bryan County Planning	
Joseph Drake	Gulfstream	
Jared Downs	Savannah Area Chamber of Commerce	
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	
Jesse Dillon	SEDA	X
<u>Alternate</u>	<u>Representing</u>	<u>Present</u>
Jamie Bowes	Gulfstream	X
Barry Stanton	City of Savannah	X
<u>Others</u>	<u>Representing</u>	<u>Present</u>
Mark Wilkes	CORE MPO	X
Wykoda Wang	CORE MPO	X
Stephanie Rossi	CORE MPO	X
Matt Thompson	VHB	X
David Pickworth	VHB	X
Tommy Crochet	VHB	X
Pat Smeeton	POND	X
Vivian Canizares	GDOT Planning	X
Ned Green	GDOT Planning	X

I. Approval of Agenda

Mr. Brandt Herndon motioned to approve the June 20, 2019 EDFAC meeting agenda; seconded by Mr. Jamie Bowes. The motion was passed with none opposed.

II. Action Items

- [Approval of April 11, 2019 EDFAC meeting minutes](#)
 @ [EDFAC April 11 minutes.pdf](#)

Ms. Jesse Dillion motioned to approve the April 11, 2019 meeting minutes; seconded by Mr. Jamie Bowes. The motion was passed with none opposed.

[2.Approval of the DRAFT Financially Constrained Mobility 2045 Project List](#)

📎 [June 2019 Project List Staff Report.pdf](#)

Ms. Stephanie Rossi presented the Draft Financially Constrained Mobility 2045 Project Lists. Staff is requesting the EDFAC to endorse the draft financially constrained project lists and will present the final lists and the full 2045 Metropolitan Transportation Plan for adoption in August.

The financially constrained 2045 MTP highway project list was presented to the EDFAC in April for initial review. All projects currently under development in the TIP are included in the 2045 Plan. Other projects included in the 2045 MTP were identified through advisory committees, travel demand modeling results, needs identified through planning studies, the TCC, and projects in the 2040 MTP with high prioritization scores. From the anticipated highway revenues in the 2045 Plan, four policy-based set-asides are defined. Those are Maintenance, Non-motorized Improvements, Operational Improvements, and Transit Improvements (bus replacement). Map-able projects have been identified in an interactive map. These are primarily capacity adding projects. Projects that are not mapped are from anticipated set-aside categories that are not specifically identified.

The other financially constrained project list for the 2045 MTP is for transit projects. These transit projects have been identified as priorities by Chatham Area Transit and Chatham County SPLOST funding. These projects will be funded by the 2045 MTP Transit Anticipated Revenues from FTA and local sources. Those projects include the ferry and facilities construction.

Ms. Pamela Bernard stated that many of the projects are large in scope. If they do not have a specific project identified but improvements are desired for an area, is there room to do improvements for those projects? Ms. Rossie stated that there is more room in the Operational Improvements and Maintenance sections of the budget because the dollar amounts aren't applied to specific projects in these set-aside categories. Ms. Bernard asked that in the vision list, or un-financially constrained list, if money became available for one of these projects, would staff be able to make improvements. Ms. Rossi stated that in this case it would be an amendment to the financially constrained 2045 MTP and the amendment must go before the MPO board for approval.

Concerning the pre-construction project on I-16 at Dean Forest Rd, Mr. Jamie Bowes asked if the project is projected to be completed this year. Ms. Bernard stated that it is believed that the contract will go out for bid in October.

Ms. Wykoda Wang stated that there may be TIP changes where both revenue and cost estimates for the first 2 years of the 2045 MTP are tied to the current FY 2018 – 2021 TIP. If there are any changes between now and August 7th, the financial table for the 2045 MTP may change, but the project list will not.

Mr. Brandt Herndon motioned to endorse the DRAFT Financially Constrained Mobility 2045 Project Lists; seconded by Mr. Jamie Bowes. The motion was passed with none opposed.

III. Other Business **NONE**

IV. Status Reports

[3. 2045 Metropolitan Transportation Plan Update](#)

📎 [June 2019 MTP Update Staff Report.pdf](#)

Ms. Stephanie Rossie presented the 2045 Metropolitan Transportation Plan Update. Besides the financially constrained project lists that have been presented in the previous agenda item, we are now in the public comment period for the 2045 MTP which started on June 17th and would end on July 16th. The draft plan is out for review and posted on the CORE MPO website.

The first step in the process is to send the DRAFT plan to GDOT, FTA, and FHWA for a 30-day review. Staff

received comments back on May 30th. Most of the comments were concerning structure and flow of the document. Staff satisfied all content requirements by addressing the GDOT/FHWA/FTA comments on the report and advertised in local newspapers and via email blast for the public comment period for the revised DRAFT Plan.

Staff has been working on public outreach and have scheduled community open house meetings throughout the month of June. MPO staff has presented to Gulfstream staff, Richmond Hill City Council, the Coastal Georgia Indicators Coalition, the Effingham Transportation Advisory Board, and the West Side Community Neighborhood Association. After the public comment period ends, staff will review, summarize, and address the comments. These comments will be shared at the August meetings. Staff created an interactive map that outlines project information.

The draft plan includes 7 sections and an appendix.

- Section 1 is an overview of the document.
- Section 2 includes the regional goals that were adopted in October 2018 and the performance measures used in the performance-based planning process.
- Section 3 covers the regional transportation network. It illustrates the different modes of transportation we have in the region and what we do operationally.
- Section 4 reviews public engagement, illustrating what has been done to spur engagement and what has been covered at the community open house meetings.
- Section 5 covers the project selection process and includes the technical analysis, modeling review, and the TCC working group project prioritization process.
- Section 6 outlines the financial plan and project recommendations including cost estimates, inflation factors, revenue projections, and forecast. This section also includes the vision project list information.
- Section 7 includes the impact analysis and mitigation factors. This includes Environmental Justice information and various mitigation factors as they relate to transportation projects.
- The appendix includes more information about projects that is not outlined in the 7 sections - information concerning performance-based planning, information related to contributing studies and plans, greater details on the financial plans, technical modeling analysis, level of service maps, and public outreach information including all 300+ comments received thus far.

Staff will go before the MPO Board on August 7th requesting the adoption of the 2045 Metropolitan Transportation Plan.

[4. I-95 / Airways Avenue Interchange Study](#)

Mr. Mark Wilkes stated that in order to make changes in access to an interstate system, an Interchange Modification Report (IMR) or IJR must be completed depending on the situation. The I-95 and I-16 studies are for existing interchanges requiring an IMR. While conducting the studies, they are not officially IMRs but the requirements to submit an IMR are being followed with the hopes of the studies being transitioned into IMRs in the future upon successful completion.

Mr. Pat Smeeton with POND Consulting gave an update on the I-95 / Airways Avenue Interchange Study. The purpose of the project is to improve access, and support tourism and economic growth. POND intends to host public stakeholder meetings and present to the Savannah Airport Commission and MPO Board.

Mr. Brandt Herndon asked POND staff if they were doing this study to evaluate future improvements of the interchange, not improvements that have already been done. Mr. Smeeton stated that there have been improvements done over the past few years. This study looks at the long range needs to improve the interchange and the adjacent roadways, and address congestion, safety, and access. Per federal guidelines, POND staff must evaluate the upstream and downstream interchanges to determine what effects this interchange can have on the overall operation of the freeway and adjacent interchanges. POND conducted a crash analysis for Pooler Parkway and Airways Avenue. As congestion continues to rise, crash rates continue to rise also.

Mr. Smeeton presented the following alternatives.

- Traditional Widening: This alternative will widen the bridge and ramps by extending the existing improvements already made by GDOT and creating triple left turn lanes and widening the bridge to

the North and South. POND is recommending 3 lanes East and West bound and adding more left and right turns. This is a long-term solution allowing us to utilize the existing bridge. This is more expensive than a diverging diamond and requires more build time.

- Diverging Diamond: With a diverging diamond, this alternative will utilize the existing bridge and add more capacity to the interchange without requiring major widening and improvements. This alternative avoids many left turning movements and allows more capacity and efficiency while using the existing lanes. This is a relatively lower cost option with a cost estimate of \$9.6 million. This is the least expensive option and can be implemented relatively quickly. This is a low-cost improvement, not a long-term solution because it lacks bridge widening and lane additions.
- Single Point Urban Interchange: This would remove the two East and West intersections and combine them creating one intersection in the middle. This alternative makes left turning traffic move more efficiently. Much of the existing bridge will be utilized but most of the interchange will have to be rebuilt, including new ramps and widening the bridge by nearly double. Widening the bridge will add 3 through lanes in each direction. This will accommodate most of the ramps which will be above much of the interstate. This is an efficient long-term solution allowing more capacity and reducing congestion at the commercial intersections near the interchange. This alternative is expensive and will add a lot of disruption during construction.
- Directional Ramps: This will provide free flow access to the East in-and-out of the airport and Gulfstream facilities. There will be a South bound flyover that avoids the interchange and allows access to the East. This will remove all turning movements from the interchange. It will utilize the existing bridge and allow 3 through lanes. This provides ample free flow movement providing access to and from the East. This will require extensive construction. This alternative is very expensive with much of the cost associated with the flyover ramps. Utility cost is higher due to the utilities present on the bridge and the complicated construction. The contingency for this option is roughly 20%-25%. This is considered a long-term solution that will allow direct access to the airport and Gulfstream.

POND staff is beginning the detailed analysis which should be completed near the end of August. They are currently refining interchange concepts and cost estimates, scheduling public meetings, and preparing to meet with stakeholders to evaluate alternatives and present a recommended alternative. The final report will be in a format suitable for FHWA and GDOT as an Interchange Modification Report (IMR).

Ms. Bernard asked POND staff if they intend to quantify aspects of the alternatives to determine the cost benefit and life cycle cost. Mr. Smeeton stated that GDOT will conduct a benefit cost analysis and POND staff will quantify the cost and traffic benefits. They will include an evaluation matrix that will cover all levels and measures of effectiveness. The evaluation matrix will be completed in September. The preferred alternative will be presented to the MPO Board in October and the final report will be completed near the end of the year.

Mr. Wilkes stated that each study has its own committee that will act as the first point of review. The August MPO Board meeting will be early due to the Long-range Plan update. By having the meetings for the projects in October, this will allow staff enough time to meet with steering committees and sponsors. The project experienced some delays due to the airplane crash and hurricane. The forecast methodology was sent to GDOT, and when this is approved, we will begin to run the numbers and generate results.

Mr. Tom McQueen stated that the simulations shown does not consider volume and traffic conditions. He suggested the model consider the relocation of the proposed airport facility that will account for the increase in truck traffic in the future. Mr. Smeeton stated that the overall numbers associated to the air cargo facility operation is small compared to the numbers being considered in developing the models. POND projections are adding 20,000+ vehicles per day.

Mr. McQueen mentioned the impacts of traffic congestion on the main-line and how it should be discussed in the pros and cons of the Directional Ramps alternative. He suggested further study be done on the congestion and potential fatalities on the main line surrounding the Directional Ramps alternative.

Mr. Jamie Bowes asked how we address the West bound Airways Avenue/Pooler Parkway traffic. Mr. Smeeton stated that the study includes the entire segment past Park Avenue. POND's recommendations will include what needs to be widened into and along Pooler Parkway, including the entire interchange to South of the commercial and residential areas. These areas need to be 6 lanes rather than the 4 lanes that it is today. This will be included in the recommendation to FHWA. The goal is to offer a solution that will clear congestion

without causing more congestion in another area further down.

5. I-16 / Little Neck Road Interchange Study

Mr. Mark Wilkes stated that the I-16/Little Neck Road Interchange Study is being sponsored by Chatham County. The study is being conducted through the MPO because we are using Federal Highway Planning funds that go to the MPO. The MPO acts as the project manager and works closely with the project sponsor who provides the local match portion of the project.

Mr. David Pickworth of VHB Consulting presented on the purpose of and status update on the I-16/ Little Neck Road Interchange Study. VHB is reviewing existing travel data, crash analysis, and using the existing CORE MPO travel demand model. They are evaluating where trips are coming and going today and well into the future. VHB has conducted environmental surveys and looked at the pavement conditions and bridge ratings on the current structure.

There is substantial growth on the North end of Bloomingdale Rd. This is the Jimmy DeLoach Parkway extension. There is also a lot of growth to and from the West towards Macon, Ga. It is expected to be 380% growth from today to the year 2050. The truck percentage of traffic coming off Jimmy DeLoach Parkway is roughly 22%. Economic growth and expansion in the surrounding areas were studied verifying that the MPO model took economic growth into consideration.

Mr. Matt Thompson presented the three alternatives for the project.

- Conventional Diamond: Dual lefts have been added off the East bound off ramp and dual lefts to get on to the East bound to Savannah. The cost is roughly \$24 million with construction cost and utility relocations. This alternative will have 4.1 acres of wetland impact.
- Diverging Diamond: A through left lane was added down the East bound on ramp, creating 2 left bound lanes getting on the interchange. One free flow lane was added off the West bound off ramp. This was done to prevent right turn lanes to turn on red on the diverging diamond. The cost for this alternative is roughly \$26 million. This alternative will require a wider bridge and expanded footprint. It will have 4.42 acres of wetland impact due to the additional free flow lane. The community impact is minimal due to the lack of development in the area.
- Partial Clover Leaf Interchange: Due to the large amount of left turns going East bound in the mornings, this interchange removes that conflict point. It does present some issues with driver expectation. The cost for this alternative is roughly \$25 million. At 6.1 acres, this alternative has a larger wetland impact due to the increased size of the loop. The alternative calls for a 30-mph design speed. If the speed is increased to 35-mph, it will require a larger loop and have a greater impact on the wetlands possibly requiring a greater wetland impact permit.

In making these recommendations, VHB staff assumed that the bridge will be replaced over I-16. The sufficiency rating is not that low, but it does have vertical clearance issues that are not up to standards. All ramps will be replaced as well. With the anticipated amount of truck traffic, the existing ramps will be inefficient.

Mr. David Pickworth spoke on the operational efficiencies of the alternatives. The three alternatives reduce traffic delays over time, but the Diamond tends to cause a higher delay, and this is attributed to the South bound left turn into Savannah. VHB staff is developing a left turn lane North of the interchange resulting in 3 lanes approaching the interchange, crossing over, and one turning into a left turn lane. This will decrease the delay significantly and puts it on par with the other alternatives. This would be a subset of the Conventional Diamond alternative, causing a minimal change in cost. With the change, this will more than likely be the lowest in overall cost.

VHB staff will be taking comments and will include them in the alternatives screening and produce an alternatives document. From that, they will determine the recommended alternative, conduct an environmental screening and detailed cost analysis for the recommended alternative, and create the final report. VHB staff will schedule the public meetings where the alternatives will be presented to the public. This is expected to be completed in August.

Ms. Pamela Bernard asked if there were more alternatives VHB explored. Mr. Pickworth said they reviewed other alternatives including roundabouts, but the level of service wouldn't be feasible.

V. Information Reports (verbal)

The committee reviewed the Chatham County and GDOT Projects lists.

Mr. George Fiddler of the Savannah Airport Commission stated that they hope to have the new international arrivals facility completed in July. The bag handling improvements upgrade to inline bag screening is nearly complete.

Mr. Barry Stanton stated that the DeRenne widening project is moving into Preliminary Field Plan Review (PFPR). The DeLesseps project is currently in the Right-of-Way acquisition phase. The Truman Linear Park Trail phase 2B public information open house will be held on August 1, 2019.

VI. Other Public Comments (limit to 3 minutes)

NONE

VII. Announcements

Mr. Mark Wilkes stated that this committee was set up in conjunction with the Freight Plan development. This committee is not on the same cycle of meetings as the other advisory committees. It is up to this committee to determine how often they decide to meet. Next year the MPO will begin the development of the FY 2021 – 2024 TIP. This is the short-range programming document for the MPO. Staff feels it will be beneficial to have at least one EDFAC meeting during the development of that planning document. The TIP prioritization is conducted in April. It is recommended that the EDFAC consider meeting in the early spring of 2020.

Mr. Jamie Bowes asked what happens next after the interchange studies are complete. Mr. Wilkes stated that we will be presenting the recommended alternatives in October. It will be the discretion of the EDFAC committee to determine if it is important to have a committee meeting during this time. There will be additional outreach between now and then.

VIII. Other Non-Agenda Information for Reference

NONE

IX. Adjournment

There being no further business, the June 20, 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.