



EDFAC

Virtual Meeting
April 22, 2021 at 10am

**APRIL 22, 2021 Economic Development & Freight Advisory Committee
(EDFAC) Meeting**

| Voting Members | Representing | <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 | X |
| Tom McQueen | GDOT Planning | |
| Mark Denmark | Savannah Airport Commission | X |
| Brandt Herndon | Effingham Industrial Development Authority | X |
| Michael Brown | City of Savannah | |
| Trip Tollison | SEDA | |
| Dennis Jones | CEMA | X |
| | | |
| Alternate | Representing | <u>Present</u> |
| Tom Caiafa | GDOT Planning | X |
| Michelle Strickland | City of Savannah | X |
| | | |
| Others | Representing | <u>Present</u> |
| Wykoda Wang | CORE MPO | X |
| Sally Helm | CORE MPO | X |
| Ann-Marie Day | FHWA | X |
| Vivian Canizares | GDOT Planning | X |
| Ned Green | GDOT Planning | X |
| Tyler Graham | GDOT | X |
| Christy Lovett | GDOT | X |
| Mark Wilkes | CORE MPO | X |
| Alicia Hunter | CORE MPO | X |
| Asia Herndon | CORE MPO | X |

I. Approval of Agenda

A motion was made and seconded to approve the Agenda. The motion passed. There were none opposed.

II. Action Items

1. Approval of the December 3, 2020 CORE MPO EDFAC meeting minutes.

A motion was made and seconded to approve the December 3, 2020 CORE MPO EDFAC Meeting Minutes. The motion passed with non-opposed.

2. Amendment to FY 2021 UPWP

Mr. Mark Wilkes stated this amendment reflects the funding status of the SR 307 Corridor Study. The corridor study was added to the FY 2021 UPWP last June as an unfunded illustrative study. This is a full corridor study of the route from US 17 to one of the Georgia Ports Authority's main gates. The funding contract is now in place with GDOT. This change reflects that the study is now fully funded.

The MPO staff is asking for a motion to endorse the amendment to the CORE MPO Board.

Mr. Tom Caiafa motioned to approve the Amendment to the FY 2021 UPWP; seconded by Ms. Michelle Strickland. The motion passed with non-opposed.

3. Draft FY 2022 Unified Planning Work Program

Mr. Mark Wilkes stated the FY 2022 UPWP is the MPO's staff work program and budget for the upcoming fiscal year which begins on July 1st. The MPO is working under two primary federal planning grants, the FHWA PL grant and the FTA Section 5303 grant. Both grants require a 20% local match. The funds are designated for planning and they are allocated to the MPO by formula which is primarily based on population. The funds may only be used for planning. Any funds that are not spent by the end of the fiscal year are forfeited. The FY 2022 planning funds that are available total \$628,420. Of that \$360,143 comes from the FHWA PL grant with a local match of just over \$90,000. The FTA Section 5303 grant is \$142,593 federal with the state and local match each equaling \$17,824.

Unspent PL funds are pooled at the state level. There are currently \$4 million with \$3 million reserved for MPO long range plan updates. Each spring and fall the MPO is eligible to apply for this funding. The SR 307 Corridor Study and the SR 21 Access Management Study are currently using this funding. To be eligible, the studies need to be in the MPO's UPWP. The applications take place twice a year and are screened by GDOT and FHWA staff as well as the PL Funds Review Committee. These funds also require a 20% local match and are usually provided by the project sponsor.

The Discretionary Section 5303 funds can be applied for each year. These applications must be submitted by the MPOs in December. They are applied for at the time the annual transit planning grant is applied for. These funds require a 20% local match as well. The MPO will apply for this funding to help the Chatham Area Transit purchase software in FY 2023.

The MPO has received Discretionary Section 5303 and PL awards in previous work programs.

- FY 2018 – MPO Interchange traffic studies at I-16/Little Neck Road and I-95/Airways Avenue with Chatham County and Savannah Airport Commission as project sponsors respectively.
- FY 2020 – Chatham Area Transit for purchase of software and data.
- FY 2021 – SR 21 Access Management Study at Garden City and the SR 307 Corridor Study.

The UPWP development began when the MPO conducted a Call for Plans and Studies in October 2020. In the fall of 2020, the Transit Planning tasks were reviewed by the MPO Board and committees. The FTA Section 5303 grant application was submitted in December 2020. From December 2020 to January 2021 the MPO staff developed the first draft of the FY 2022 UPWP. It was submitted to GDOT and FHWA for review and comments on January 8th. The draft received substantial comments and has been under redevelopment. Revised drafts have been published on the MPO website.

The UPWP contains Staff Work Priorities for FY 2022 which include the 2050 MTP plan update. The last plan update was adopted 1 ½ years ago. These updates are done every 5 years. The Congestion Management Process update will begin in FY 2022. Other priorities include the MPO Freight Plan update, SR 21 Access Management Study, SR 307 Corridor Study, addressing Federal Certification Review recommendations, and the 2020 Census Urban Area Delineation.

The major tasks are Administration, Public Involvement, Data Collection Analysis/Forecasting, Systems Planning and Operations, Transit Planning and Special Studies. There are subtasks for each of these categories.

For Special Studies, two of the studies in the document are funded - the SR 21 Access Management Study and the SR 307 Corridor Study. For the unfunded projects, if the project sponsors are ready, the MPO could apply for funding in FY 2022.

- Chatham County has mentioned SR 204, Islands Expressway and Old River Road.

- A task has been put in to potentially cover data purchases if the MPO decides it is needed to do the CMP update. A data assessment will be done to determine if data purchase is necessary and will be discussed at future meetings.
- The Freight Transportation Plan could be done in two tiers - a smaller update that could be accomplished in house with existing staff resources and a full plan update. The MPO staff will start discussing what the scope of this will look like. We will discuss this at future meetings and see if additional funding is needed to conduct this study.

The MPO staff is asking for an endorsement of the draft FY 2022 UPWP.

Ms. Pamela Bernard motioned to endorse the Draft FY 2022 UPWP; seconded by Ms. Michelle Strickland. The motion passed with non-opposed.

4. 2045 MTP Vision Plan Amendments

Ms. Wykoda Wang stated the City of Pooler proposed to add two projects into the 2045 MTP Vision Plan - the Pine Barren Road Improvements and the South Roger Street Improvements. Pooler wanted to have these projects included in the TSPLOST. If the projects are included in the Vision Plan, they have the possibility of moving into the fiscally constrained long-range transportation plan, then eventually into the TIP to receive federal funding. MPO staff felt if TSPLOST was going to be voted on this fall, there were possibly other projects from other municipalities that would need funding as well. The MPO Board authorized the staff to proceed in contacting all jurisdictions to compile one list including all municipalities.

The staff has received a comprehensive project list. Several of the projects submitted are resurfacing, sidewalks, trails, safety signal upgrades, operational improvements, TIDE TO TOWN, and bikeways.

- MPO staff requests that if the project is a sidewalk or bicycle project, that the municipalities coordinate with the MPO staff to incorporate the specific segments or specific projects into the MPO's Non-Motorized Transportation Plan. There is a policy statement in the 2045 MTP - if the project is consistent with the Non-Motorized Transportation Plan of the MPO and has a local sponsor (and the sponsor wants to pursue implementation), it would be considered consistent with the 2045 MTP and eligible for federal funding. When the MPO conducts the Call for Projects for the Transportation Alternative funds, the local sponsor can apply for those funds. These projects will not be considered for this Vision Plan amendment.
- For the operational improvements, the MPO staff is not going to include those in the Vision Plan amendment either. There is a policy statement in the 2045 Long Range Transportation Plan – if a project is an operational improvements project and the local sponsor is pursuing the project and willing to provide the 20% local match, this project will be considered consistent with the 2045 MTP and eligible for the Z230 funds during Call for Projects.

To be eligible for federal funding, the project needs to be located within the MPO's planning boundary. The highway projects need to be located on functionally classified roadways. If the project is on a local street, it is not eligible for federal funding. The local government should take care of the local street improvements.

The list of projects for 2045 MTP Vision Plan amendment consideration is shown below.

- Bloomingdale – projects did not meet criteria.
- Garden City
 - Telfair Road Improvement
 - Old Louisville Road
- Pooler
 - Pooler Pkwy Widening - MPO needs a more detailed project description.
 - Pooler Pkwy Widening from I-95 to South Godley Station.
 - Quacco Road
 - South Roger Street
 - Pine Barren Road
 - Old Louisville Road from Garden City extending to the City of Pooler.
- Pt. Wentworth – The Gulfstream Widening project is in the fiscally constraint 2045 Plan as well as Vision Plan. The Pt. Wentworth segment is north of SR 21.
- City of Savannah
 - Gulfstream Rod Widening
 - Montgomery Cross Road Bridge / Casey Canal
 - Skidaway Road Widening
- Thunderbolt- No major Roads to be included.

- Tybee Island – No eligible projects.
- Vernonburg – No eligible projects.
- Chatham County
 - Quacco Rd and Little Neck Rd Bridge Replacement over I-95 (if these two projects overlap, they will not be included).
 - John Carter Rd Improvements
 - Quacco Road Widening
 - Truman Parkway Improvements
 - Islands Expressway Improvements

Ms. Pamela Bernard stated the Quacco Road and Little Neck Road Bridge Replacements are separate projects even though in the same location. The project would be either or, not both. The County would have to do a study to see if these were feasible. Mr. Wilkes asked if this was the project that was included as a study in the previous plan update. Ms. Wang responded this is in the unconstrained Mobility 2045 project list, or Vision Plan.

Ms. Wang stated the MPO needs more project information for the Quacco Road Widening project. Ms. Bernard stated they are currently doing another widening project and unsure about being able to get the funding for this project. Ms. Wang asked about the Truman Parkway Improvements, the cost appears to be low. Is this operational Improvements? If so, it does not need to be included in this section. The Islands Expressway improvements cost appears low too. The MPO needs more details on these projects to determine if these projects need to be included in this amendment.

Ms. Wang stated she contacted Effingham County and Bryan County. They both have passed TSPLOST. Effingham County only has a small portion of the county included in the CORE MPO planning area boundary. The project manager stated the projects they have are not in the MPO area and they will not be pursuing federal funding. Bryan County stated they do have projects located in the MPO's planning boundary, but they will not be seeking federal funding. They are locally funded projects.

The MPO is compiling a clear list from all jurisdictions so there are no duplicate projects in the Vision Plan. The MPO is asking for the EDFAC committee to endorse the proposed project list for inclusion in the 2045 MTP Vision Plan subject to the corrections to be made.

A motion was made and seconded to endorse the 2045 Vision Plan Amendments. The motion passed with non-opposed.

[5. Amendments to FY 2021 - 2024 TIP](#)

Ms. Alicia Hunter stated the document known as the TIP is the MPO's short-range programming document that can be modified to ensure updates to projects, revenue, cost estimates and development schedules are incorporated. In January and February of 2021, the MPO received project updates from GDOT along with new funding and programming information.

All current listed highway and transit fund revenue projections have been updated and additional fund revenue projections have been added along with three proposed highway project updates and three proposed transit project updates.

The three highway project updates include the following.

- Chevis Road Improvement – Chatham County was awarded lapsing TAP funds and Z301 funds. The cost estimate for the PE phase has been updated to reflect the changes in funding.
- Feasibility study for the Savannah River Crossing- GDOT added a scoping phase for the new study which will help identify strategies for bridge improvements.
- Lump Sums - There were two lump sum categories added - Freight Operations and Rural Development. One Lump Sum category was removed - Construction Management.

The three transit project updates include the following.

- Section 5339 Coastal Region Capital & Operations Funds - This is a new fund in programming that is currently not in the FY 2021-2024 TIP but will be programmed in.
- Z950 FHWA Ferry Boat Funds - There is update to the funding in FY 2021 and FY 2022. GDOT requested funding from previous years be flexed from FHWA to FTA at the same time, which resulted in all the funds being programmed for FY 2021.
- Section 5311 Coastal Region Capital & Operation Funds - GDOT provided updates for cost estimates for FY 2022 and FY 2024.

The staff report includes an appendix which has all the updated TIP project pages and tables. Today the MPO staff is asking the committee to endorse the proposed amendments to the FY 2021 – FY 2024 TIP.

Ms. Wang stated the MPO needs GDOT to provide more information on the feasibility study for the Savannah River Crossing (more descriptive details). Mr. Tom Caiafa stated they will get back to the MPO about this project. He asked when this project was first programmed. Ms. Wang stated the MPO is unsure of any details concerning the project. Ms. Christy Lovett stated they currently have the project listed but will get back with the MPO. Mr. Caiafa stated the project is being funded by the Georgia Ports Authority. Since it's all local funding, it is not required to be in the TIP. According to Georgia Ports Authority, the funding will not be disbursed or available until FY 2022. Chandra Brown is the current project manager. Ms. Wang stated that since this is a local project, we do not have to include the project in the TIP amendment. Mr. Caiafa answered, yes, anything that is 100% locally funded is not going to be required to be in the TIP because it's not utilizing federal funding. Mr. Wilkes, Ms. Bernard, and Ms. Wang agreed that the project might need to still be listed (with more details) for documentation purposes, making everyone aware of this project.

Ms. Pamela Bernard motioned to endorse the amendments to the FY 2021- 2024 TIP; seconded by Ms. Michelle Strickland. The motion passed with non-opposed.

III. Other Business

6. Freight Plan Update Discussion

Ms. Wykoda Wang stated the last freight plan was completed in FY 2016. Freight Plan is not a requirement for the MPO. It is a requirement for the State DOT. However, the CORE MPO area is a freight centric area with the Port and a lot of truck and rail development, so we will update our freight plan. The recommendations from this freight plan will be incorporated into the next long range transportation plan - 2050 MTP.

The previous freight plan scope of work included the following.

1. Established Freight Advisory Committee (FAC).
2. Freight Analysis using the FHWA Freight Analysis Framework (FAF3) data.
 - o Existing and Future Freight Assessment
 - o Freight Performance Measures
 - o Forecasting Future Freight Growth
 - o Regional Freight Network Profiles
 - o Freight Network Bottleneck, Safety and Security Issues
 - o Freight Needs Assessments
3. Freight Land Use Assessment and Analysis
4. Economic Development Market Assessment
5. Environmental and Community Impact Scan and Analysis
6. Freight Recommendation
 - o Policy Recommendations
 - o Freight Land Use Recommendations
 - o Freight Infrastructure Recommendations
 - o Funding for Freight Improvements

With the next freight plan update recommendations being incorporated into the 2050 long range transportation plan, the MPO needs to begin working on it now. The MPO will look to see if the staffing is adequate to perform the duties in-house.

- At the previous EDFAC committee meeting the MPO staff was asked to map out the truck restrictions. This work has been started. The staff can evaluate the previous freight plan implementation and develop a report card to show the progress and stage they are in. The staff will also evaluate data needs for the freight plan update - if the MPO wants to use a consultant, which freight data to use. FAF3 is out of date. FHWA has FAF5 currently. The commercial data has Transearch and GPS related data. There will be a data needs assessment to see if data purchase is needed as well as if consultant work is needed.
- The MPO will apply for PL discretionary funds if consultant work is needed. There will be detailed discussions over the next few committee meetings about the scope of the freight plan update. The MPO will use RFP if funding is granted. The process would take approximately 6 months for contracting and 1 year to start the freight plan update process. (April 2022 to June 2023).

There are freight data needs. FHWA has FAF5. NPMRDS data is used for Congestion Management Process update but is useful for freight plan as well. Other data sources include the Bureau of Transportation Statistics and Census. GDOT is starting a freight plan development process. The MPO will see what the state is doing and if we are able to use some of the state freight data. The local agencies/municipalities, GPA, and Savannah Airport will have freight data that the MPO will include.

Mr. Wilkes mentioned data sharing and the possibility of using discretionary PL funds to do a consultant-led study and having to get a local match. If there can be some cost sharing with other data collection efforts, that would be helpful. Additional local matching has not currently been built into the funding that would be needed for consultant studies.

Ms. Wang continued with what's missing from the last freight plan.

- Conversion from Freight Volumes (e.g., highway tonnage) to number of trips. The MPO wanted tonnage to be converted into trips (i.e., how many rail cars and trucks are needed).
 - Impact on rail traffic
 - Impact on highway traffic
- Truck Parking Inventory
- Truck Restrictions
- Impact from Emergencies
 - COVID-19 (new development) and other emergencies

The scope of the new freight plan will include what was missing from the last one. The MPO wants to coordinate with the GDOT statewide freight plan development efforts, and update any changes in the comprehensive plan, zoning code, and land use. The freight plan will also coordinate with the newly completed studies and ongoing studies.

- SR 307 Corridor Study and SR 21 Access Management Study are both freight corridors. The MPO will incorporate the study findings.
- Evaluate and incorporate freight related recommendations from completed studies (I-95/Airways Avenue Study, I-16/Jimmy DeLoach Interchange Study).
- Evaluate and incorporate trucking restrictions.
- Develop a truck parking inventory for the Savannah region.
- Evaluate freight impacts of COVID-19 and other unforeseen incidents and identify potential solutions.
- Re-assess the existing freight plan and make updates based on new data and development.

Some of the strategies and recommendations can be carried forward from the previous plan. Each category needs to be reevaluated. Ms. Wang asked for input from this committee - what they would like to see accomplished by the new freight plan since EDFAC will be guiding the plan development and update.

Ms. Ann-Marie Day asked for the outline to be sent out so that it can be reviewed in better detail and be able to provide any additional feedback. Ms. Wang stated the outline is available on the website for anyone to view. If there are any comments after viewing, please email the MPO. There will need to be more discussion at the June and August meetings.

Ms. Day asked if this was in the unfunded section of the FY 2022 UPWP since the MPO is going to apply for discretionary PL funds in September? Mr. Wilkes stated yes, it is in the funded and unfunded section. The section the MPO felt staff could perform is in the funded section. There is an unfunded illustrative special study for a more extensive freight plan update effort. If the MPO pursues this, it would go in front of the PL Funds Review Committee in the fall and it would take approximately 6 months to procure a consultant team. The MPO would have some options in getting the local match. The MPO is asking for discussion and feedback as to what the committee would like to see in this plan. Ms. Bernard stated this is a good idea and it would be good if the PL funds could bring a consultant in to do the larger scale study. Ms. Vivian Canizares asked about the application for the PL funds for the freight plan update being ready for September 2021. Mr. Wilkes stated this is what the MPO staff was planning, pending further discussion and additional working group meetings if needed, to get this ready for September 2021. Ms. Day stated it would be a good idea to use consultant services for the freight plan update. There is a procedure to go into that funding, so a decision needs to be made stating the MPO will be going to the PL Funds Review Committee. There needs to be several iterations of meetings going through the various MPO meetings (which meet bi-monthly). There is a process leading to the resolution to take to the PL Funds Review Committee. Ms. Day asked for a decision at this meeting or in the very near future - if yes, the MPO is going after the PL funding for this so the discussion and process can begin. The process of securing the match, the process of coming up with a scope of work where the partners are reviewing that scope of work to get the MPO ready for this September PL funds application. Mr. Wilkes stated this is what the MPO is beginning today.

Ms. Bernard asked for more details about adding to the dues and stated this would benefit everyone if there was a way to share the match. Mr. Wilkes stated the way the MPO has funded discretionary planning studies in the past

if a qualified government project sponsor has come forward with the interest to do the study. The MPO entered into an MOU. Since freight is an area-wide issue, it should be a shared cost. If it is decided to share the cost among the MPO members, the staff would need to build that into the future dues structure. The kickoff would be around a year from now. Ms. Bernard asked if this could be presented as an action item at the next committee meeting. Ms. Wang stated before kicking off the process and deciding on the amount of the local dues, the specific scope needs to be discussed to have a cost estimate to know the total cost of the study.

Ms. Day stated the MPO just completed the Transportation Management Area Certification and one of the recommendations was for the MPO to complete a freight plan. The importance of having the freight plan, whether in house or through consultant services, is important that a Freight Plan comes out of this MPO before the next certification.

IV. Status Reports

7. Truck Restrictions Mapping

Ms. Wykoda Wang stated at the last meeting the EDFAC committee directed the MPO staff to develop a truck route restriction map. The MPO staff has contacted the different municipalities. The previous CORE MPO Freight Plan used the functional classification as the indicator for the truck usage of the commercial movement. The highways, expressways, and principal arterials are heavily used by the trucks. For the truck restrictions the MPO staff contacted the different municipalities.

- Bloomingdale - there was no information received.
- Garden City does have a weight limit restriction of 6000 pounds (mostly on local streets).
- Pooler - the restrictions are primarily on the local streets. There are two functionally classified roadways that have truck restrictions - Pine Barren Road and Old Louisville Road.
- Port Wentworth restricts the trucks on the Crossgate Road which extends on Gulfstream to the North. There is a weight limit restriction of 6000 pounds on all local streets.
- The City of Savannah is more comprehensive. Bull street between Broughton Street and Gaston Street is functionally classified as local street but is heavily used by delivery trucks. Benton Blvd is a local street on the west side connecting to Jimmy DeLoach Parkway. The City of Savannah is in the process of reclassifying Benton Blvd into a higher functional classification. Most of the restrictions are found on local streets.
- Thunderbolt - there was no information received.
- Tybee Island has truck restrictions on Jones Avenue.
- Chatham County has no truck restrictions in the County code or ordinance. There could be restrictions in the residential areas (which are local streets).
- Effingham County restricts all trucks on all streets except the State Routes.
- Richmond Hill restrictions are primarily on local streets. There is a load limit of 10,000 pounds.

The map shown is a preliminary draft map. This is subject to change. The functional classification map will be the basis. Most of the trucks do not operate on the local roadways. Ms. Wang asked if the local streets that might be relevant to the truck usage should be included on the map. MPO staff is asking for direction from the EDFAC committee as to what they would like to see on the map.

Ms. Strickland stated some of the streets like Oglethorpe and Liberty Streets, there are low tree canopy that get hit with tractor trailers. Regarding Bull Street around the squares, the trucks do not always make the turn and end up driving over the squares and damaging them. A lot of the restrictions are related to infrastructure. Ms. Strickland suggested creating two layers, one showing restrictions on roadways that are functionally classified and a separate layer showing the local streets that restrictions may be the result of commercial vehicles using them as "cut thru".

Ms. Wang stated staff would be starting with restrictions on functionally classified roadway, Weight limit on functionally classified roadways, and Restrictions on local streets (the majority will be in the City of Savannah).

V. Information Reports (verbal)

Ms. Bernard asked if there were any questions regarding the SR 307 Corridor Study. Mr. Wilkes stated both the SR 307 Corridor Study and SR 21 Access Management Study are just kicking off. If there are any members that are not already on the project advisory committee for either study but are interested in being on one, please contact him.

VI. Other Public Comments (limit to 3 minutes)

None.

VII. Notices

[8. Special Studies Project Advisory Committee Volunteers Needed](#)

[9. FHWA and FTA Issue Certification Review Final Report CORE MPO TMA Certification 3-31-2021 \(002\).pdf](#)

Mr. Wilkes stated the report was issued on March 31, 2021 and was attached to the electronic agenda for EDFAC review. The report is posted on the website as well.

[10. Signup for Neighborhoods and Faith Based Organization Meetings for Input on the Update to Comprehensive Plans for Chatham, Garden City, Pooler and Savannah](#)

Ms. Asia Hernton stated for the Plan 2040 Comprehensive Plan Update, the neighborhood associations and churches are invited to set up meetings with the MPC to discuss the current chapters that are currently drafted. If you would like to set up a meeting, please contact us with an email to Plan2040@thempc.org or you can call 912-651-1480.

IX. Adjournment

There being no further business, the April 22, 2021 EDFAC meeting was adjourned.

The next EDFAC committee meeting will be on June 17th, 2021.

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.