



<u>Others Present</u>	<u>Representing</u>	<u>Present</u>
Michael Adams	MPO Staff	X
Dick Anderson	GA Regional Transit Board (GRTA)	X
Will Bersen	GA Conservancy	X
Susan Broker	City of Savannah	X
Leon Davenport	Chatham County	X
Michael Jordan	Savannah Wheelmen	X
Jane Love	MPO Staff	X
Nathan Mai-Lombardo	Garden City	X
Mike Maynor	Savannah Bicycle Campaign	X
C.J. McCampbel	CAT-Teleride	X
Chris Morrell	City of Savannah	X
Kyle Mote	GDOT	X
Teresa Scott	GDOT-Jesup	X
Barbara Settzo	for MPO	X
Radney Simpson	GDOT	X
Thomas Thomson, P.E., AICP	MPC Executive Director	X
Wykoda Wang	MPO Staff	X
Mark Wilkes, P.E., AICP	MPO Staff	X

### **Call to Order**

Chairman Pete Liakakis called the February 25, 2009 MPO Meeting to order.

#### **I. Approval of Agenda**

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

**CORE Board Action: the motion to approve the agenda for the February 25, 2009 meeting carried with none opposed.**

#### **II. Committee Reports**

##### **A. Advisory Committee on Accessible Transportation**

Mr. McArthur Jarrett reported that his committee met and discussed the amendments to the FY 2008-2011 Transportation Improvement Program, endorsed the amendment to the FY 2009 Unified Planning Work Program and endorsed the Chatham Area Transit Paratransit Update Plan. The committee also discussed moving the committee meeting date to the third Monday every other month. The committee was advised of the MPO's 2009 Calendar of Activities. Reports from the Teleride Manager and CAT Director were heard. Discussion is underway on changes to the Teleride Handbook.

Mr. Jarrett commented that ACAT has a vested interest in, and asks that the MPO acknowledge, the necessity for all these committees to come together jointly to discuss issues related to persons with disabilities and transportation in the Chatham County area. The purpose of this meeting will be to give information and access to those who need a greater understanding of all issues related to paratransit and the transit situation in general. He asked for the MPO's assistance with this.

Mr. Pete Liakakis will get together with Mr. Tom Thomson to move this forward.

**B. Citizens Advisory Committee**

Mr. John Bennett reported that the committee endorsed the amendment to the FY 2009 Unified Planning Work Program and endorsed the Chatham Area Transit Paratransit Plan Update. The only other major topic of discussion was that of the Lazaretto Creek Bridge and Bull River Bridge.

**C. Technical Coordinating Committee**

Mr. Mark Wilkes reported that the committee met twice within the last week. At the first meeting they endorsed the amendment to the FY2009 Unified Planning Work Program and endorsed the Chatham Area Transit Paratransit Plan Update. Last night they participated in a joint meeting with the Citizens Advisory Committee to refine a list of proposed projects for inclusion in the Transportation Improvement Program in order to access the stimulus funds.

**D. Executive Director's Report**

Mr. Thomson made introductory remarks on the amendments to the FY 2008-2011 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). Today he would like to address FY 2009 and FY 2010. There has been a lot of last minute work and will probably be some more, and he thanked all the staff for the extra work put in on this project.

Projects eligible for stimulus money must be put into the FY 2008-2011 TIP so that the projects can be funded with the stimulus money. He noted that because of the Truman Parkway the stimulus funding request is very high. The state and federal agencies will use a "reasonable" test to determine our area's share. We should not expect to get everything that is on the list since the total amount requested is disproportionately high.

Mr. Thomson defined the term "shovel-ready" as "ready to commit". This may include preliminary engineering projects, right-of-way projects, or construction projects that are ready to go. The highway portion and the transit portion are controlled by different "clocks" or time-frames for action. On the highway side you have 120 days to obligate 50% of the funding that the state gets for highway. The clock starts when the appropriation is published in the federal register. Whatever portion of the 50% is not obligated is returned to the pot and re-apportioned. All projects must meet all requirements and standards to be

eligible. Many projects do not qualify. Including a project in the TIP is just the beginning of the process. Project sponsors, i.e. the individual municipalities, need to aggressively present their project(s) for agency review to move it along.

On the subject of state legislation, Mr. Thomson mentioned a bill called "Transforming Transportation Investment Act" sponsored by the Governor, Lt. Governor and Speaker of the House. This creates a state transportation authority with appointments made by the sponsors and a state transportation agency (this may be a re-vamped State Road and Tollway Authority). He referred committee members to the state website for more details. Secondly, there is a Senate version of the regional T-Splost which is on hold now. Thirdly, there is a House version that is a state-wide sales tax and would create a committee responsible for reviewing projects and distributing the money. All three of these are very important to us locally.

Mr. Liakakis commented that a regional T-SPLOST is highly unlikely to pass in most areas.

Mr. Russ Abolt asked for clarification of Mr. Thomson's comment about municipalities pushing their own projects forward. Mr. Thomson explained that the Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) is going to be swamped with projects that need attention in order to be ready within the 120 day window. Each municipality needs to keep their projects in front of the GDOT project manager. Mr. Matthew Fowler from GDOT confirmed that each local sponsor needs to maintain communication with the GDOT project manager assigned to any specific project.

Ms. Dianne Schleicher, from Tybee Island, noted that Bull River Bridge and Lazaretto Creek Bridge are located in Chatham County and not in the City of Tybee Island proper, but directly affect the City of Tybee Island. This is a GDOT project due to its location. Mr. Thomson agreed with Tybee Island Mayor Buetlerman to put them in the list and it would be up to the City of Tybee Island, with MPO assistance, to convince GDOT to break the bridges out from the US 80 widening project into separate projects. If successful, the bridge projects can move ahead and he assumes a GDOT staffer would take on the projects. Mr. Abolt also offered the county's expertise to assist smaller municipalities to keep their projects moving. Mr. Abolt does not want to lose the opportunity due to confusion.

### **III. Action Items**

#### **A. Approval of December 17, 2009 MPO Meeting Minutes**

It was moved and seconded to approve the December 17, 2009 MPO Meeting Minutes.

**CORE Board Action: the motion to approve the December 17, 2009 MPO Meeting Minutes carried with none opposed.**

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## **B. Approval of the amendments to the FY 2008-2011 Transportation Improvement Program**

Mr. Thomson presented the staff report and staff's recommendation to the committee. At this time of year we would normally be reviewing projects for regular funding. Today we are focusing on regularly funded projects and stimulus funded projects for FY 2009 and FY 2010.

For highway projects in FY 2009 there are regularly funded projects totaling \$43,694,907. GDOT is proposing an additional \$123,738,269 worth of projects for FY 2009, as candidates for stimulus funding. Of that amount about \$100,000,000 is for the Truman Parkway. The Summary Chart also includes total amounts for County priority projects, City of Savannah priority projects and Tybee Island's proposal. The \$60,637,000 for the Savannah projects includes President St. at approximately \$40,000,000. A large portion of the County request is right-of-way acquisition funds. The Tybee proposal of \$11,500,000 is preliminary engineering funds for Lazaretto Creek and Bull River bridges. In conclusion, the stimulus funding requests are about 5.5 times greater than the regular funding request.

In transit, only capital projects are eligible and total about \$24,324,000.

In FY 2010 the highway request for regular funding is \$9,344,413 and the stimulus funding is \$11,570,516.

Mr. Fowler confirmed that moving projects and funding between years would require a full amendment.

Mr. Joe Murray Rivers is preparing his 2010 request to the congressional delegation which will include a request for 15 buses (\$8,000,000 for 2010). He asked if this needs to be amended into the TIP in April. Mr. Thomson confirmed that it does need to be in the TIP, but there is still time for 2010 requests.

Mr. Rivers pointed out that, in response to a suggestion by a member of the Citizens Advisory Committee at the joint meeting on Tuesday night, 100 bus shelters had been added in the transit portion of the stimulus candidates for FY 2009.

Ms. Jane Love clarified the differences in cost estimates between GDOT and Chatham County on the Truman Linear Park project. She confirmed that this is the same project and that the county is requesting \$600,000 of stimulus funding to make up the difference between the original earmark and the new cost estimate that includes a pedestrian bridge over DeRenne Avenue.

Ms. Love also reported that the Assistant County Manager told her that Slip 1 and Slip 3 Riverwalk projects are a "shovel-ready" project and could be ready within 120 days.

Mr. Abolt asked Mr. Thomson "when motions are made that we give you the maximum carte blanche on this to include stuff, and whatever staff might be recommending is so

crafted so we don't require another special called meeting, and you have enough discretion to make these modifications without waiting on us."

Mr. Thomson noted to the committee that regular funded projects are listed in the white section of the list and stimulus funded projects are in the colored section.

Mr. Patrick Shay asked for definitions of terms used in the "MPO TIP Priority" column – "First, Second, Top, Transit." Mr. Thomson defined the terms. "Top" is anything ahead of "First." The Transit process is so different from highway that prioritizing has been left to CAT.

Mr. Randy Weitman confirmed that the Port's "last mile" project is not a candidate for stimulus funds because it will not be ready within 120 days.

Mr. Thomson noted that county staff, city staff, MPO staff, and CUTS committees have all reviewed this list of projects line by line.

Ms. Schleicher questioned the "no" shown for readiness for the Lazaretto Creek and Bull River bridges. Mr. Thomson commented that for GDOT to spend time on the PE phase it must be authorized by the Federal Highway Administration. He agreed to change it to "yes." It was agreed that these bridge projects be coded similarly to the PE project SR204 Corridor Study on page 2 of the TIP Amendment proposals. Mr. Thomson confirmed the bridges are in the Long Range Transportation Plan as part of the US 80 road project, but not in the Transportation Improvement Program yet.

Mr. Abolt asked how this list of TIP amendment proposals would be used. Mr. Thomson replied that if this list is approved by the committee today, it will constitute the changes made to the FY 2008-2011 TIP.

Mr. Trip Tollison asked how much Chatham County will actually get of the stimulus funding. Mr. Thomson explained that the State of Georgia is getting just under \$1 billion. Mr. Thomson believes that in the end the Chatham County area will probably get 15-20% of the total available. If you have a project that needs to go through the NEPA process you will be out of the stimulus window since the NEPA process takes about 18 months. He commented that the entire 15% would likely go towards the Truman Parkway project.

Mr. Shay asked about the need for lobbying for funding for the Diamond Causeway/Skidaway Narrows Bridge projects. Mr. Thomson explained that you can combine regular money and stimulus money for a project but in this case the bridge project is bridge money and is programmed in the current year, so it is going to happen. There is no need to lobby for these dollars on that project. Mr. Fowler confirmed that there is real money tagged for this project and doesn't recommend using stimulus funds for it.

Mr. Liakakis asked Mr. Thomson how this stimulus package will be presented. Mr. Thomson replied that the MPO will send this listing, if approved today, to GDOT. Then the project sponsor needs to get GDOT, FHWA, or FTA approvals on whatever stage of the project they are in.

Mr. Fowler confirmed that the state of Georgia will get approximately \$1 billion for highways and bridges. The list we are discussing today is a "wish list." The total cost of this area's stimulus projects being considered for amendment to TIP today represents about 30% of the \$1 billion for the entire state. Typically your request list must be realistic, but since this stimulus business is new they have agreed to stretch it and add projects. As the dollar amounts firm up for allocation around the state, some projects will need to be removed. He seriously doubts that 30% of the total will be allocated to Savannah/Chatham County. It will need to be pared down and made financially constrained.

Mr. Liakakis opened the public hearing portion of the meeting. There being no public comments, the public hearing was closed.

It was moved and seconded to authorize staff to begin a Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) amendment to ensure that any stimulus project that should be or could be consistent with the LRTP is in the LRTP; and that the board approves the proposed Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) amendments as shown in the summary of TIP amendments with any corrections or any other projects that need to be updated based upon the conversation today.

Mr. Bennett raised the issue that stimulus money was to be used for innovative transportation design. Are we thinking innovatively? Also, he will talk to Ms. Love after the meeting for further clarification on the Truman Linear Park project.

He took issue with project #0007258, speaking against the implementation of rumble strips since the federal government does not advocate rumble strips. Rumble strips are one of the biggest barriers to non-vehicular transportation. He advocates innovative thinking to get people out of their cars, and he believes that is what the stimulus money is meant to encourage and accomplish.

Ms. Teresa Scott reported that the earmarked money for the Truman Linear Park was reduced upon receipt of an actual estimate. She also noted that the rumble strips were deemed a safety issue. Mr. Thomson commented that rumble strips were to be used on roads with speed limits of 45 mph or greater. They are looking at rumble stripes in lieu of rumble strips. Mr. Jon Todd noted that other states have used the new technology of rumble stripes and would like our community to look at it again and improve upon the current rumble strip. Mr. Thomson noted the concern.

**MPO Action: the motion to authorize staff to begin a Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) amendment to ensure that any stimulus project that should be or could be consistent with the LRTP is in the LRTP; and that the board approves the proposed Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) amendments as shown in the summary of TIP amendments with any corrections or any other projects that need to be updated based upon the conversation today carried with none opposed.**

### **C. Amendment to the FY 2009 Unified Planning Work Program**

Mr. Wilkes asked the committee to approve the amendment to the FY 2009 Unified Planning Work Program. The purpose of this amendment is to move unobligated funds in the amount of \$90,674.14 from the FY 2008 to the FY 2009 Unified Planning Work Program. He explained that they are now doing contract amendments in order to streamline the process and free up the money earlier.

It was moved and seconded to approve the amendment to the FY 2009 Unified Planning Work Program.

**MPO Action: the motion to approve the amendment to the FY 2009 Unified Planning Work Program carried with none opposed.**

### **D. Chatham Area Transit Paratransit Plan Update**

Mr. Joe Murray Rivers reported that CAT has met to revise the paratransit plan of 1992, and that this update has been submitted to the three other committees. He believes this is a good core plan but expects to make yearly updates until FTA is fully satisfied. This update is being done to comply with federal regulations.

Mr. Jarrett asked what the target date was for plan implementation. Mr. Rivers confirmed that April is the target date for plan implementation. Mr. CJ McCampbel noted that the route matching overlay, for the change in Teleride service area, is approximately 80% complete. There are six routes that needed corrections for left and right turns. When it is corrected and complete then they can determine the  $\frac{3}{4}$  mile limits for the paratransit routes. Route match is the software component of the scheduling system.

It was moved and seconded to approve the Chatham Area Transit Paratransit Plan Update.

**MPO Action: the motion to approve the Chatham Area Transit Paratransit Plan Update carried with none opposed.**

Mr. Rivers continued his report. He has requested \$24 million in the stimulus package and expects they may get \$4.4 million for capital funds. This does not include buses which are funded through 5309 funds. He is seeking clarification about using stimulus funds together with 5309 funds for buses. He is hoping for an increase in the 2009 appropriation but that requires a match.

Mr. Thomson noted that FTA allows for supplemental funding but it must be done through a separate grant.



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#### **IV. Status Reports**

##### **A. MPO 2009 Calendar of Activities**

Mr. Liakakis referred committee members to the chart of activities included in the advance packet of meeting information. There being no questions nor any request for details, the committee dispensed with the verbal report from staff.

##### **B. CUTS/MPO Federal Certification Review**

Mr. Wilkes notified the committee that the MPO is currently undergoing a re-certification process with FHWA and FTA which occurs every four years. This is a 2-3 day audit process with FHWA and FTA which covers all aspects of the planning process. Currently the desk audit is underway. On March 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> the on-site interview portion of the review will be conducted. The final report should be ready one month later. There will be a public meeting on March 10<sup>th</sup> at the MPC at 5:00 PM, as part of the certification review. Mr. Wilkes asked if this board would like a separate meeting with FHWA and FTA prior to the public meeting. It is currently not on the agenda. Mr. Liakakis noted that any of the committee members can attend the public meeting. No request for a special meeting was made at this time.

##### **C. CUTS/MPO Long Range Plan Kick-off**

Mr. Thomson reviewed the process for the development of the next Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP). He also announced a new name for the MPO: Coastal Region MPO, or CORE MPO. The current name, Chatham Urban Transportation Study (CUTS) has been used since 1963, and in the 1970s, CUTS was designated the MPO for the area. Staff had discussed many options for a new name. He said that it was time for a change because, among other reasons: the MPO has set a direction for planning on a regional level that goes beyond Chatham County; the name CUTS did not indicate that it was the MPO; and finally the name CUTS has negative connotations.

He further described the significance of the entire Coastal Region MPO logo.

Mr. Abolt asked if the Congress on Racial Equality was still in existence. They are known as CORE. Mr. Jon Todd stated that a search on the internet revealed that Congress on Racial Equality (CORE) is still in existence as well as seven other "CORE" organizations. Mr. Thomson believes that with the "MPO" attached, the name and logo will be unique.

Mr. Thomson announced that the LRTP Update will be called "CORE Connections 2035". It will be structured in two phases. Phase I will be the "Framework Plan" which will meet all the state and federal requirements that they are obligated to meet in terms of the planning process and content in order to remain eligible for federal funding. This will include the policy framework to move on to Phase II.

Phase II will include more project detail. This will include developed concepts that are specific, integrated and measureable. This phase will also identify areas where there may be a blend of land use and transportation issues to consider. There are few MPO's that have access to staff dealing with both land use and transportation, but this MPO does, which is very beneficial.

Mr. Thomson noted that the 2035 LRTP Update will include a transit plan, a revised bicycle plan, and a pedestrian plan. Currently there is neither a transit plan nor a pedestrian plan.

Mr. Thomson reviewed the plan update schedule. Phase 1 should be finished by September 2009 and Phase 2 should be completed by October 2010.

Packets were distributed to all members that included the information about the name change.

**V. Agency Reports**

It was moved and seconded to suspend Agency Reports until the April meeting.

**MPO Action: the motion to suspend Agency Reports until the April meeting carried with none opposed.**

**VI. Other Business**

No other business at this time.

**VII. Other Public Comments**

No public comments at this time.

**VIII. Adjournment**

There being no other business to come before the Committee, the February 25, 2009 MPO Meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Mark Wilkes, P. E., AICP  
Director of Transportation Planning