



<u>Others Present</u>	<u>Representing</u>	<u>Present</u>
Michael Adams	MPO Staff	X
Bob Coffey	SATCC/GIMTCA	X
Steve Cote	Reynolds, Smith & Hills	X
Beverly Davis	Reynolds, Smith, & Hills	X
Denise Grabowski	Interested Citizen	X
Alison Gramza	Safe Kids Savannah/PACE	X
Chris Hutton	LRTA	X
Jane Love	MPO Staff	X
Kyle Mote	GDOT	X
Stu Rodman		X
Teresa Scott	GDOT-Jesup	X
Barbara Settzo	for MPO	X
Radney Simpson	GDOT	X
Thomas Thomson, P.E., AICP	MPC Executive Director	X
Susan Trimble	Interested Citizen	X
Larisa Varela	Savannah Bicycle Campaign	X
Wykoda Wang	MPO Staff	X
Randy Weitman	GA Ports Authority	X
Mark Wilkes, P.E., AICP	MPO Staff	X

### **Call to Order**

Chairman Pete Liakakis called the August 26, 2009 CORE Board Special 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 August 26, 2009 meeting carried with none opposed.**

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

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

Mr. McArthur Jarrett reported that the ACAT committee endorsed the two amendments to the FY 2008-2011 Transportation Improvement Program. They also heard reports from First Transit/Telcide and Chatham Area Transit.

##### **B. Citizens Advisory Committee**

Mr. John Bennett reported that the CAC committee endorsed the amendment to modify the description of the Back River bridge replacement with the recommendation that GDOT explore the possibility of barriers along the shoulders to protect cyclists. The committee

also endorsed the amendment to add a new CAT ferry boat to the fleet with the recommendation that the new ferry boat be both a “green” and durable boat, i.e. fuel and environmentally friendly and that it have a long life expectancy. The committee also made the recommendation that a spur be created from the northbound Truman Parkway exit at Victory Drive directly into the adjacent shopping center (where Home Depot and Target are located). The committee asked that the city encourage the use of the 311 hotline by those who are in a position to see and report necessary road improvements or repairs. The committee also discussed the draft Framework Mobility Plan and recommended swapping out the two Jimmy DeLoach projects (extension and new interchange) in favor of the Bull River and Lazaretto Creek bridges in the funded list of projects.

### **C. Technical Coordinating Committee**

Mr. Mark Wilkes reported that the Technical Coordinating Committee endorsed the two amendments to the FY 2008-2011 Transportation Improvement Program as presented by staff.

### **D. Executive Director’s Report**

Mr. Tom Thomson reported that he was working on an outline for a letter to legislators for the MPO Board to endorse. Then the letter would be drafted. The Chairman had requested this at the August 3<sup>rd</sup> meeting.

## **III. Action Items**

### **A. Approval of the June 24, 2009 CORE MPO Board Meeting Minutes and the August 3, 2009 CORE MPO Board Special Meeting Minutes**

It was moved and seconded to accept the minutes of the June 24, 2009 CORE MPO Board Meeting.

**CORE Board Action: the motion to accept the minutes of the June 24, 2009 CORE MPO Board Meeting carried with none opposed.**

It was moved and seconded to accept the minutes of the August 3, 2009 CORE MPO Special Board Meeting.

**CORE Board Action: the motion to accept the minutes of the August 3, 2009 CORE MPO Special Board Meeting carried with none opposed.**

### **B. Amendments to the FY 2008-2011 Transportation Improvement Program**

#### **i. Modification to project information for PI #522920 Back River Bridge replacement**

**ii. Addition of CAT Ferry Boat (ARRA Ferry Boat Discretionary Award)**

Ms. Wykoda Wang reported on the modifications to the project description requested by the Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT). The Back River Bridge was originally a 4-lane concept but was later changed to a 2-lane concept, because of coordination with the South Carolina Department of Transportation (SC DOT) on the timing of funding for four lanes on the South Carolina side. This 2-lane concept has been approved by Federal Highway Administration. Now the Transportation Improvement Program needs to reflect the concept changes and the right-of-way cost changes. The right-of-way phase needs to be programmed for FY 2010.

Mr. Matthew Fowler confirmed that an additional 2-lane bridge is planned for the future to provide the four lanes eventually. At this time South Carolina DOT does not have sufficient funding sources for the 4-lane bridge or 4-lane highway on the South Carolina side of the bridge. Mr. Brad Saxon confirmed that the vision for the Back River Bridge is two parallel 2-lane bridges, one structure now and another one in the future. Ms. Wang noted that the modified concept being considered today includes bikeable shoulders.

Mr. Michael Brown requested that this concept include a dedicated bicycle/pedestrian lane. Mr. Fowler noted that addition would significantly increase the cost of the replacement bridge. It would fall to this body to identify the funding source for the increased costs.

Mr. Russ Abolt asked if this bridge replacement concept was consistent with the Coastal Georgia Greenway Plan. Ms. Wang responded that the Coastal Georgia Greenway Plan includes using the ferry to Hutchinson Island and then connecting to the Back River Bridge.

Mr. Thomson explained that the 2035 Long Range Transportation Plan includes a policy statement that, for all facilities that are not limited expressways, there shall be a full analysis of issues such as this.

Mr. Brown moved to accept the staff recommendation to amend the FY 2008-2011 Transportation Improvement Program to include the modified project information for PI #522920 Back River bridge replacement with the recommendation that every effort be made to provide four lanes in the future and to include a separate bicycle/pedestrian lane. The motion was seconded.

Mr. Saxon noted that this recommendation was within the scope of this committee but a separate bicycle/pedestrian lane is above and beyond what GDOT generally provides for these types of projects. Funding is an issue.

Ms. Diane Schleicher suggested using the old bridge for cyclists as has been done in other communities. Mr. Thomson said it seems like good idea, but expressed concern about the cost of maintaining the old bridge for that purpose. Those costs would fall to local government and could be a significant burden. He believes it would be better to have the facilities as part of the new bridge.

**CORE Board Action: the motion to accept the staff recommendation to amend the FY 2008-2011 Transportation Improvement Program to include the modified project information for PI #522920 Back River bridge replacement with the recommendation that every effort be made to provide four lanes in the future and to include a separate bicycle/pedestrian lane carried with none opposed.**

Ms. Wang reported that CAT was awarded a \$1,000,000 ARRA grant to purchase a new ferry. No local match is required. Mr. Bob Coffey, General Manager of the Trade Center described the new ferry as similar to the existing ferries but larger, faster, and “greener.” It has a life expectancy of 35 years and is expected to be 20% more fuel efficient while being 50% larger. This new ferry will replace the original 149-passenger catamaran.

It was moved and seconded to approve the amendment to the FY 2008-2011 Transportation Improvement Program to include the addition of the CAT Ferry Boat under the ARRA Ferry Boat Discretionary Award.

Mr. Pete Liakakis reminded all parties to monitor the construction of this new ferry closely to ensure the specifications are outlined and followed to avoid problems that arose the last time. Mr. Coffey assured him that this would be done.

**CORE Board Action: the motion to approve the amendment to the FY 2008-2011 Transportation Improvement Program to include the addition of the CAT Ferry Boat under the ARRA Ferry Boat Discretionary Award carried with none opposed.**

- C. Resolutions in support of applications for ARRA TIGER Discretionary Grants**
  - i. Truman Parkway Phase 5**
  - ii. CAT Transit Projects**
  - iii. Coastal Georgia Greenway**
  - iv. Jimmy DeLoach Connector**

Mr. Thomson explained that these resolutions are requested to support the grant applications for the above mentioned projects. Mr. Liakakis recommended that individuals lobby our legislators to approve these ARRA TIGER discretionary grant applications.

It was moved and seconded to execute resolutions in support of ARRA TIGER Discretionary Grants for Truman Parkway Phase 5, CAT Transit Projects, Coastal Georgia Greenway and the Jimmy DeLoach Connector.

Mr. Thomson explained that each executed resolution would be given to the project sponsor to include with their grant application.

**CORE Board Action: the motion to execute resolutions in support of ARRA TIGER Discretionary Grants for Truman Parkway Phase 5, CAT Transit Projects, Coastal Georgia Greenway and the Jimmy DeLoach Connector carried with none opposed.**

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

##### **A. CORE Connections 2035 Long Range Transportation Plan Draft**

Mr. Steve Coté from Reynolds, Smith & Hills, distributed a printed handout of Chapter 8 of the draft plan and a DVD containing all the chapters of the draft plan. Currently, the process is in the 30-day comment period. Mr. Coté reviewed the general structure of the draft plan. Phase I, the Framework Mobility Plan, sets the ground work for Phase II, the Total Mobility Plan, which elaborates on the projects in greater detail. They are looking for approval of Phase I at the September 17<sup>th</sup> meeting. Phase II will take 18-24 months to complete. The Total Mobility Plan will include the Framework Mobility Plan, a Streetcar Plan, a Transit Vision Plan and a Non-motorized/Amenities Plan as described on page 1 of Chapter 8 of the draft plan.

Mr. Coté continued to review the Framework Mobility Plan. He reviewed the six major elements, a list of project activities including public outreach efforts, revenue sources and anticipated expenditures. Revenue and expenditures have been inflated to year of expenditure. Mr. Coté's presentation included graphics showing the allocation of funding to the various project categories.

Mr. Thomson commented that the non-motorized/amenities portion is for stand-alone and retro-fit projects. The policy of "Complete Streets" is a part of all other project development.

Mr. Coté concluded that expanded advertising and public outreach is being conducted to invite public participation at today's meeting and the September 17<sup>th</sup> meeting.

CORE Board discussion followed Mr. Coté's presentation.

Mr. Patrick Shay expressed appreciation for the inclusion of the "Complete Streets" policy in all projects. He asked that a definition of "Complete Streets" and "Context-sensitive Design" be included in all of the design processes going forward and with Table 8.1.

Mr. Brown asked staff how to ensure that these policies are incorporated into projects at the right time. Mr. Brown then referenced his letter previously sent to Mr. Thomson regarding the following specific projects:

- DeRenne Project - asked staff to use the same project description with the same terminology that the city is using for such projects as DeRenne Project. This particular project is citizen driven and the citizens are looking for particular language in describing the proposed improvements. This is also true of improvement projects along the southern portion of Abercorn Street.

- Traffic Control Center - spoke in support of the proposed Traffic Control Center noting that traffic control is more than synchronization of traffic lights. He would like to see an integrated, mechanized system for the region moved forward.
- Whitfield Ave - questioned the value of the Whitfield Avenue widening project.
- Language/Terminology - believes that citizens are unclear about the definition and use of the terms "Complete Streets" and "Context-Sensitive Design". He asked that those terms be humanized, put in layman's language for the sake of effective communication.
- MPO Planning - asked that even if funding was not available for a project, that the planning be accelerated in an effort to avoid multi-year delays for projects. He used the US 80 to Tybee Island project as an example.

Mr. Thomson explained that the next phase of this Long Range Transportation Plan development is to select the priority projects and to look at these projects at the planning level. The MPO does not implement projects; they set a policy level for projects. Projects are implemented by GDOT, or the City, or the County. It is his goal that this plan development will include a formulation of policy statements that local governments can adopt, a technical manual with specific guidelines, and a translation of these standards into various agencies' standards. There will be some difficult decisions to be made along the way and these will be referred back to the policy makers for resolution, but this will put the implementation mechanism in place. Projects ready to be let are best left alone, but other projects could be held to this new process under development now.

Mr. Brown suggested the use of policy to cap the amount of traffic that a given roadway will be designed to accommodate.

Mr. Abolt cautioned that the Whitfield Ave project should not be dismissed without fully understanding the relationship between that project and the Truman Parkway.

Mr. Thomson agreed that if more money could be used for early planning then less money would be spent on the next steps of a project. Unfortunately, SAFETEA-LU includes a rescission of highway planning funds, reducing the amount for Georgia by \$2 million. Mr. Matthew Fowler added that the rescission will affect FY 2011, if at all.

Mr. Liakakis opened the public hearing portion of the meeting.

Ms. Susan Trimble of Savannah offered support for the \$98 million bikeway allocation. It is her hope that Savannah can become a premier bicycle-friendly community for residents and visitors alike. She also encouraged the placement of bicycle paths around schools. Ms. Trimble asked what safeguards are in place to protect this funding allocation of \$98 million and to ensure it is used for what it is currently allocated for.

Mr. Thomson responded that adopting this Long Range Transportation Plan for 2035 and including the projects in the Transportation Improvement Program is the first step for protecting this funding allocation. He also noted that they will be prioritizing the list of bicycle projects and developing a list of pedestrian projects. For pedestrians, the focus will be around bus stops and schools to ensure connectivity.

Mr. Abolt requested that Ms. Trimble be contacted about future participation on the Citizens Advisory Committee.

Denise Grabowski spoke as a resident of Savannah and as a member of Chatham Environmental Forum. The Forum is working on a plan to make Chatham County a "green" county. She noted that the Forum's plan and the proposed Long Range Transportation Plan are consistent, and offered the Forum's assistance to move forward and affect change on the state level. On a personal level, she mentioned that she uses her scooter as her means of transportation in the downtown area, but never south of DeRenne Avenue where the environment is not conducive to such alternate means of transportation. Additional amenities to our transportation system are needed to accommodate such transportation alternatives.

Larisa Varela expressed appreciation for specific funding for bicycle projects. She stated that it is also important to integrate transportation with land use and urban design. At intersections, the pedestrian signal button should be located where a disabled person can reach it.

There being no further public comments, the public hearing was closed.

Mr. McArthur Jarrett asked how the transit funding portion was allocated as it relates to para-transit. Ms. Wang noted that replacement vans are scheduled. This TIGER grant was endorsed at today's meeting. CAT will also be using federal dollars through JARC and New Freedom funds. Mr. Jarrett asked about the overall effect for transit. Mr. Thomson explained that no new funding sources for transit have been identified yet, so in this phase of the plan, only current service will be maintained. There is no federal funding for transit operating expenses. He is hopeful that the state will step up and participate more in the future in transit funding. If there was more local money available for a local match of federal funding it could be used to increase service. CAT is analyzing their service to make it more efficient.

## **V. Agency Reports**

### **A. Georgia Department of Transportation i. Chatham County Projects**

Ms. Teresa Scott referred the committee members to her report previously distributed. She highlighted the Ocean Highway project in Port Wentworth (project was let), Diamond Causeway project (environmental document approved, letting anticipated in the next couple of months), SR 307 overpass (FFPR was held), and the two road projects related to Gulf Stream (concept reports have been submitted), Abercorn Ext @ Harmon Canal (right-

of-way authorized, working on plans for FFPR) . There were no questions from the committee members.

## **ii. Liberty County Projects**

Mr. Sonny Timmerman, representing the Hinesville Area MPO, noted that his MPO is addressing very similar issues as this committee is working through in regard to updating the Long Range Transportation Plan. He mentioned the need for further regional planning across the counties.

### **B. Chatham County**

No report at this time.

### **C. City of Savannah**

Mr. Mike Weiner reported on the two newly designated right turn lanes from the Truman Parkway onto Victory Drive. Signals and signage have been changed indicating that right-turn-on-red is only permitted from the extreme right lane and not from the center lane which also is right turn only.

He also reported on upgraded travel control equipment and installation of traffic signals. The city is also progressing on the stimulus projects.

Mr. Brown expressed his desire to have all ambulances use the pre-emption system when traveling on DeRenne Avenue to reach the hospitals. He noted that he is not getting the cooperation from other counties that he expected. It is imperative that this regional issue be solved. Mr. Brown believes it is time for the city to be more aggressive in requiring other county ambulance services to use the new technology of the pre-emption service, even if it takes passing an ordinance requiring such compliance.

Mr. Liakakis offered his support and commented that this is for the safety of our city residents and for the patients being transported. He offered to sign a letter to other county commissioners to bring this to resolution. Mr. Weitman suggested including with such a letter a statement of requirements.

### **D. Chatham Area Transit**

No report at this time.

### **E. Georgia Ports Authority**

Mr. Randy Weitman had nothing further to report at this time. He expressed appreciation for the support on the Jimmy DeLoach connector project.

### **F. Savannah-Hilton Head International Airport**

No report at this time.

**VI. Other Business**

**VII. Other Public Comments**

**A. Current ferry service, Savannah to Hilton Head Island via Daufuskie Island**

Mr. Stu Rodman offered a presentation of a regional marine transportation network. His presentation highlighted regional ferry ridership, ferry opportunities for workers and for tourists, mainland landings, the breakdown of activity between Hilton Head and Savannah, and the pros and cons of such ferry service for Savannah/Chatham County. It was estimated that ridership on the current service was split 50/50 between Savannah and Hilton Head Island as trip origins. Developments on Daufuskie Island are struggling. Lack of enough transportation to Savannah is being cited as the problem. Mr. Rodman believes support of the ferry service from Savannah will be more beneficial than detrimental for the City of Savannah and Chatham County.

**B. Regional Hovercraft**

Mr. Mikell Cates offered to return to the October CORE Board meeting due to time constraints at this meeting.

Mr. Thomson explained to the committee that there will be the opportunity to consider these ideas in the Transit Vision Plan, as part of the Total Mobility Plan, which is Phase 2 of the 2035 CORE Connections Long Range Transportation Plan.

**VIII. Adjournment**

There being no further business to come before the August 26, 2009 CORE Board meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

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