



METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION

**CORE MPO BOARD  
MEETING SUMMARY**

**MPC Arthur A. Mendonsa Hearing Room  
112 E. State Street**

**April 27, 2011**

**10:00 AM**

**Voting Members**

**Representing**

**Present**

Russ Abolt	Chatham County	x
LTC Jose Aguilar	Hunter Army Airfield	
Jason Buelterman	City of Tybee Island	
Shedrick Coleman	Chairman, MPC	x
Mark Egan	Chairman, CAC	x
Curtis Foltz	Georgia Ports Authority	
Patrick S. Graham	Savannah Airport Commission	
Tennyson Holder	City of Garden City	
William W. Hubbard	Savannah Area Chamber of Commerce	
James Hungerpiller	Town of Vernonburg	
McArthur Jarrett	Chairman, ACAT	
Otis Johnson	City of Savannah	x
Glenn Jones	City of Port Wentworth	
Mike Lamb	City of Pooler	
Pete Liakakis	Chairman Chatham County Commission	x
Chad Reese	Chatham Area Transit	x
Patrick Shay	CAT Board of Directors	x
Rochelle Small-Toney	City of Savannah	x
Vance Smith	GDOT	
Anna Maria Thomas	Town of Thunderbolt	
Wayne Tipton	City of Bloomingdale	
Steven Weathers	Savannah Economic Development Authority (SEDA)	x

**Voting Member Alternates**

**Representing**

**Present**

Teresa Brenner	ACAT	x
George Fidler	Savannah Airport Commission	x
Brian Johnson	City of Garden City	x
Tim Kassa	GDOT	x
Diane Schleicher	City of Tybee Island	x
Hugh "Trip" Tollison	Savannah Area Chamber of Commerce	x

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<u>Regional Coordination Guest</u>	<u>Representing</u>	<u>Present</u>
Sonny Timmerman	Liberty County	
<u>Others Present</u>	<u>Representing</u>	<u>Present</u>
Michael Adams	MPO Staff	X
Jason Crane	GDOT	X
Jessica Hagan	MPO Staff	X
Terri Harrison	CAT/Veolia	X
Jane Love	MPO Staff	X
Tom McQueen	GDOT Planning	X
Kaycee Mertz	GDOT Planning	X
Larry Nesbitt	Tybee Island citizen	X
Brad Saxon	GDOT	X
Barbara Settzo	for MPO	X
Thomas Thomson, P.E., AICP	MPC Executive Director	X
Wykoda Wang	MPO Staff	X
Mike Wiener	City of Savannah	X
Mark Wilkes, P.E., AICP	MPO Staff	X

**Call to Order**

Chairman Pete Liakakis called the meeting to order.

**I. Approval of Agenda**

It was moved and seconded to approve the agenda.

**CORE Board Action: the motion to approve the agenda for the April 27, 2011 meeting carried with none opposed.**

**II. Committee Reports**

**A. Advisory Committee on Accessible Transportation**

Ms. Teresa Brenner reported that the committee endorsed all the action items.

**B. Citizens Advisory Committee**

Mr. Mark Egan reported that the committee endorsed all the action items.

**C. Technical Coordinating Committee**

Mr. Mark Wilkes reported that the committee endorsed all the action items.

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

Executive Director Tom Thomson asked Tim Kassa, from GDOT, to introduce the new GDOT representatives who will be working with the MPO. Tom McQueen will begin attending the MPO Board meetings, representing the GDOT vote, instead of Mr. Kassa. Kaycee Mertz will replace Jason Crane as a GDOT voting member on the TCC and the contact for the MPO staff.

Mr. Thomson reported the approval of bonds at the recent State Transportation Commission Meeting which includes funding for the Jimmy DeLoach "Last Mile" project and other port projects.

He reported that there was not much activity at the federal legislation level. There is less money available.

The update on the Transportation Investment Act of 2010 is that final version of the unconstrained project lists will be sent to the Executive Committees by June 1, 2011. The three MPO's in our area are prepared to assist the Executive Committee with the list. Mr. Liakakis commented that the project list originally submitted to GDOT greatly exceeded the amount of money expected to be generated by the regional sales tax. All cities and the county were asked to reduce their request in order to more closely match the monies available.

Mr. Russ Abolt commented that the number of capital projects and the dollar value of projects that are underway in our area is outstanding for area community with our population. These projects offer us great opportunities for economic growth. This good news should be recognized by all.

#### **III. Action Items**

##### **A. Approval of the February 23, 2011 CORE MPO Board Meeting Minutes**

It was moved and seconded to accept the minutes of the February 23, 2011 CORE MPO Board Meeting.

**CORE Board Action: the motion to accept the minutes of the February 23, 2011 CORE MPO Board Meeting carried with none opposed.**

##### **B. Approval of the FY 2012 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP)**

Mr. Wilkes reported that this is the program which outlines the staff projects and budget for FY 2012, and its approval is necessary in order to ensure funding for the year's work. Projects included are some current projects being carried over. Mr. Wilkes highlighted such projects as the Transit & Paratransit Planning, Streetcar Planning, 2040 Total Mobility Plan (Long Range Transportation Plan [LRTP]). This work program also includes studies

underway on SR 204, SR 21, US 80, the I-16 flyover removal, and non-motorized plan. Strategic planning studies are also part of this UPWP.

It was moved and seconded to approve the FY 2012 Unified Planning Work Program.

**CORE Board Action: the motion to approve the FY 2012 Unified Planning Work Program carried with none opposed.**

### **C. Approval of proposed amendments to FY 2011-2014 TIP**

Ms. Wykoda Wang presented the staff report. These amendments are necessary so that CAT may access these funds in April and obligate these funds in June. Amendment to Section 5307 funds is to roll funds from previous fiscal years to this current fiscal year. Amendment to Section 5309 is to replace estimated allocation figures with actual allocation figures. Amendment to Section 5317 is to roll FY 2009 funds to FY 2011. A fourth amendment is necessary so that CAT can be reimbursed for funds already spent on the Savannah Water Ferry. These funds were from federal earmarks and were very difficult to locate and track.

Ms. Wang briefly reviewed how these funds would be used for various transit improvements or projects. She also reported that the required public comment period has not generated any major questions.

Mr. Otis Johnson asked why CAT didn't expend the funds in the year that they were available. Mr. Patrick Shay offered some background on the issue. He credits the cooperation between the Trade Center Authority, CAT, and the MPO for bringing this problem to light and for making the funds available before they expire. Mr. Thomson noted that CAT has been in transition for about three years with uncertain leadership and he confirmed how difficult it is to move the federal money from one column to the next. Mr. Johnson stressed how difficult it is for local governments to receive and keep federal funds, and then how important it is to use awarded funds efficiently so that we can get more.

Chairman 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 approve the proposed amendments to the FY 2011-2014 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP).

**CORE MPO Board Action: the motion to approve the proposed amendments to the FY 2011-2014 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) carried with none opposed.**

### **D. Approval of the proposed Priority Projects for FY 2012-2015 TIP development**

Ms. Wang presented the staff report. She reviewed the projects contained in the FY 2012-2015 Priority Project List in different categories and by priority level. Categories include highway projects, bridge projects, transit projects, and non-motorized projects. Priorities are first, second, and third priority. First priority is for projects previously programmed. Second priority is for projects with regional significance. Third priority is for projects with high cost/benefit ratios. She noted that this list used to be very long, but now the list is considerably shorter. She referred the members to the end of the staff report which listed the projects that have been implemented and thus removed from the priority list. There is also a listing of projects that the CORE MPO does not prioritize but they are programmed in the TIP. This includes Transportation Enhancement Projects, Lump Sum Projects, and Earmark Projects.

Ms. Diane Schleicher reported that Tybrisa Streetscape transportation enhancement project has been completed and should be removed from the list of active Transportation Enhancement Projects.

Mr. George Fidler asked about the Victory Drive widening that has been much discussed by the board in the past. It was confirmed that he is referring to the Ogeechee Rd. widening project, which includes a portion of W. Victory Drive. The project is still identified as a priority.

Ms. Wang noted that specific non-motorized transportation projects will be identified. Some funding has been reserved. The actual draft of the TIP, which will be available in June, will include these specific projects.

Mr. Egan asked whether the Jimmy DeLoach Parkway Extension included the issue of the interchange. Ms. Wang noted that the interchange project would be separate but of equal priority. She agreed to show it in the 3<sup>rd</sup> Priority group.

It was moved and second to approve the proposed priority projects for FY 2012-2015 TIP development.

**CORE MPO Board action: the motion to approve the proposed priority projects for FY 2012-2015 TIP development carried with one abstention.**

#### **IV. Other Business**

##### **A. Presentation from Tybee Island regarding US 80**

Ms. Schleicher noted that the bridge replacement study and the wave ecology study are appreciated and indicate a step in the right direction.

Ms. Schleicher spoke in favor of this board continuing active support of bridge improvements along US 80. The bridge project has regional importance and addresses significant public safety issues. She also asked for board support for improvements to the causeway. She asked what the current time line is for bridge replacement. She also asked

what happens if the T-splost doesn't pass or if the bridges are not included in the final approved list. What do Tybee officials have to do to insure that the bridge replacements stay on this list and that this project moves forward? How do they remove any impediments?

Mr. Thomson confirmed that all her issues are being addressed in the Wave Ecology study and in the US 80 Bridges Replacement Study. He noted that in regard to the Transportation Investment Act, a project must be on the list. This list is made up by the Executive Committee and approved by the Round Table. If it gets in the list, it is funded over the 10-year period, assuming the referendum passes and the anticipated revenue stream is collected. If not, then this project gets in line for federal funds. This project is estimated around \$60 million and would probably be spread over 10-12 years of programming. This is still faster than the 4-lane widening of the entire roadway. The current bridge study will bring forth defined projects that can be moved forward for programming.

Mr. Liakakis asked Mr. Thomson to explain the penalty phase the county will be subject to if the Round Table doesn't approve the list or if the public does not vote for the tax. Generally, the penalty is a greater local matching share requirement for the Local Maintenance and Improvement Grant (LMIG) program.

## **V. Status Reports**

### **A. Non-motorized Transportation Plan Update-Networks & Focus Areas**

Ms. Jane Love presented the staff report. This update is an intermediate step in this plan. At this time they are identifying a bicycle network and pedestrian focus areas in order to evaluate conditions there and identify needed projects.

The proposed bicycle network is based on public participation, information from bicycle groups, and the 2000 Bikeway Plan.

She presented various density maps – population density, employment density, bus routes & stops, and school locations – to show where pedestrian demand is expected.

Work on the Plan will continue, and a recommendations will be made in October for the Board's approval.

### **B. Update on Wave Ecology Study**

Ms. Wang reviewed the staff report. The county directed MPO staff to coordinate this study with Tybee Island. In multiple meetings four major areas of concern were defined: congestion/lack of access, narrow bridges, inadequate parking, and emergency evacuation. Four study groups were created. Each of the four groups developed three possible recommendations. The whole group identified the top five recommendations

which will be studied and developed for implementation. The group hopes to complete their work in May and create a technical report that can be used as a reference. She referred the board members to the dedicated website on this study.

## **VI. Agency Reports**

### **A. Georgia Department of Transportation**

Mr. Brad Saxon reviewed the project list. He reviewed numerous projects that are ready to be let in the very near future. He also highlighted projects that are expected to be let out by the end of the year. Mr. Liakakis spoke about the urgency of the Gulfstream-related projects in light of Gulfstream's expansion.

### **B. Liberty County Projects**

No report at this time.

### **C. Chatham County**

No report at this time.

### **D. City of Savannah**

Mr. Mike Wiener reported that on April 15<sup>th</sup> the Anderson St. curve was paved and it was opened to traffic.

### **E. Chatham Area Transit**

Mr. Chad Reese reported that programs moving forward are CAT Freedom program (an accessible taxi service), a new AVL system, and passenger amenities & shelter program. Ridership is still up about 10% year-to-date. Government employee pass program should be rolling out in the fall.

### **F. Georgia Ports Authority**

No report at this time.

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

Mr. George Fidler reported that Gulfstream's expansion work has begun. The airport is developing new land to the north with new taxiway and a tunnel/bridge over Gulfstream Rd. The airport is closing part of McKenna Drive and making improvements to move the traffic across the airport property. They have also made terminal improvements. They are also adding sidewalks and bus shelters. This past season they used a newly developed recycled street paving method which has proven to be successful.

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**VII. Other Public Comments**

Mr. Larry Nesbitt, a citizen from Tybee Island, spoke about the safety issues involved with the bridges and US 80. He believes that the Tybee city government is unified behind this issue, and questioned where the idea came from that there is a “lack of consensus” on Tybee about this issue. He acknowledged there is a small group who do not want change, but he believes they do not represent the majority. There is frustration among the citizenry concerning this. He asked for the board’s help and to please make this the highest priority.

Mr. Thomson responded that projects of this size take a great deal of time. Progress was delayed in the past but over the last year a strategy was developed that would move safety improvements forward. This smaller project should move faster, but if you don’t have money, it moves slowly. He suggested the project would move a lot faster if the Tybee residents would approve a toll road that collected tolls from everyone who went to the beach. A toll road would also address the “wave” issue by collecting some revenue.

Mr. Nesbitt asked again where the idea of no consensus originated. He believes the last five Tybee councils were unanimous in their support of these safety improvements.

Mr. Thomson noted in 2005, at the public information meeting for the 4-lane widening concept, GDOT reported that comments showed a 50/50 split in interest for such improvements. Staff also has informed him that results from a 2007 survey, conducted by the City of Tybee Island in the community master planning process under the Department of Community Affairs, showed 51% were against 4-laning US 80. Now, in 2011, we are moving forward to find acceptable solutions. The use of federal money requires many steps that make for a long process.

**VIII. Announcements**

Next meeting will be June 22, 2011.

**IX. Adjournment**

There being no further business the April 27, 2011 CORE Board meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

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