



METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION

CORE MPO BOARD MEETING SUMMARY

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

February 23, 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	x
Pete Liakakis	Chairman Chatham County Commission	x
Chad Reese	Chatham Area Transit	x
Patrick Shay	CAT Board of Directors	
Rochelle Small-Toney	City of Savannah	
Vance Smith	GDOT	
Anna Maria Thomas	Town of Thunderbolt	
Wayne Tipton	City of Bloomingdale	
Steven Weathers	Savannah Economic Development Authority (SEDA)	

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
Linton Smith	Town of Thunderbolt	x
Hugh "Trip" Tollison	Savannah Area Chamber of Commerce	x
Randy Weitmann	Georgia Ports Authority	x

<u>Regional Coordination Guest</u>	<u>Representing</u>	<u>Present</u>
Sonny Timmerman	Liberty County	X
<u>Others Present</u>	<u>Representing</u>	<u>Present</u>
Michael Adams	MPO Staff	X
Erin Brinton	Hussey, Gay, Bell & DeYoung	X
Melvin Brown	Wilbur Smith Associates	X
Jason Crane	GDOT	X
Tommy Crochet	McGee Partners	X
Leon Davenport	Chatham County	X
Glenn Durrence	Thomas & Hutton	X
Abby Ebodaghe	GDOT	X
Denise Grabowski	Symbioscity	X
Jessica Hagan	MPO Staff	X
Doyle Kelley	Thomas & Hutton	X
Jane Love	MPO Staff	X
Jeff Netzinger	Hussey, Gay, Bell & DeYoung	X
Brad Saxon	GDOT	X
Teresa Scott	GDOT- District 5	X
Barbara Settzo	for MPO	X
Greg Smith	Jacobs Engineering	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 MPO Board Action: the motion to approve the agenda for the February 23, 2011 meeting carried with none opposed.

II. Committee Reports

A. Advisory Committee on Accessible Transportation

Ms. Teresa Brenner reported that there was no report from the committee at this time.

B. Citizens Advisory Committee

Mr. Mark Egan reported that there was no report from the committee at this time.

C. Technical Coordinating Committee

Mr. Mark Wilkes reported that the Technical Coordinating Committee reviewed and endorsed the amendment to the Unified Planning Work Program. They also endorsed the HB277 list of projects subject to acceptance of additional projects up until this meeting today.

D. Executive Director's Report

Executive Director Tom Thomson reported that the recently submitted federal budget includes a reauthorization of the surface transportation act. He will report specifics at the April CORE MPO board meeting.

III. Action Items

A. Approval of the October 27, 2010 CORE MPO Board Meeting Minutes

It was moved and seconded to accept the minutes of the October 27, 2010 CORE MPO Board Meeting.

CORE MPO Board Action: the motion to accept the minutes of the October 27, 2010 CORE MPO Board Meeting carried with none opposed.

B. Approval of the amendment to the FY 2011 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP)

Mr. Wilkes reported that this amendment is necessary to bring the unspent balance from FY 2010 forward into the current FY 2011 budget.

CORE MPO Board Action: the motion to approve the amendment to the FY 2011 Unified Planning Work Program carried with none opposed.

C. Approval for staff to submit proposed projects for the HB277 Regional Funding

Mr. Thomson presented an all-inclusive project list for the potential regional sales tax. Mr. Thomson reviewed the process for the committee. Phase I included criteria development for the 12 taxing districts around the state, each district represented by a Roundtable. Our taxing district Roundtable, comprised of 10 coastal counties, has met and selected a chairman and a 5-member Executive Committee. Mr. Pete Liakakis and Mr. Michael Lamb are our representatives to the Roundtable. The chairman of the Roundtable is Mr. Jimmy Burnsed.

Mr. Thomson noted that we are currently in Phase II of the process. GDOT Director of Planning has called for submission of projects to be included in an unconstrained list of projects. Today, staff is presenting the MPO's list and asking for the board to approve the list that is due to GDOT Director of Planning by March 30, 2011.

Phase III is the stage where a constrained list of projects will be created by the Executive Committee from the unconstrained list that GDOT will give to them. The Executive Committee will present this constrained list to the Roundtable for approval or modification. If approved it is sent to the public for a vote in August 2012.

Mr. Thomson referred the committee to a list of all the sources that staff used in gathering the projects for this list. He also highlighted the total estimated revenue that would be anticipated from this regional sales tax (\$1.9 billion) and how it would be distributed.

Mr. Thomson confirmed that the various municipalities and authorities have offered projects and/or comments in this selection process. If this board authorizes it, staff could add more projects, deemed appropriate, prior to the March 30 deadline.

In describing the actual projects on the proposed list, Mr. Thompson noted the percent allocation for different categories of projects.

When asked if it would be helpful to include additional documentation that may be available for any particular projects, it was agreed that it would not hurt to include any positive support about a project that would help to build the case and be consistent with the criteria.

It was noted by committee members how important it is to educate the voting public about the penalties for not approving the regional sales tax. The period of time from the Roundtable approval until the public vote will be the time to inform the public about the regional sales tax and the projects to be funded by it.

Mr. Thomson confirmed that most of the projects on this list have already been fully vetted, but at this point he wants to be more inclusive than exclusive. Any additional projects submitted prior to the March 30 deadline will be evaluated by MPO standards before being added to this list.

Mr. Trip Tollison requested that a cruise ship terminal be added to the list now. Mr. Tim Kassa confirmed that "terminal" was eligible, but he wasn't sure about cruise ship terminal.

It was moved and seconded to approve the list as presented and to give staff authority to add other qualified projects submitted prior to the March 30, 2011 deadline.

CORE MPO Board Action: the motion to approve the list as presented and to give staff authority to add other qualified projects submitted prior to the March 30, 2011 deadline carried with one abstention.

IV. Other Business

There was no other business at this time.

V. Status Reports

A. Update on US 80 Bridges Replacement Study

Ms. Jane Love reported that this study centers on safety improvements, bicycle/pedestrian access and flooding issues along US 80 towards Tybee Island. She then introduced Mr. Melvin Brown, the consultant for Wilbur Smith Associates, who offered a presentation of alternatives for the subject area.

Mr. Brown's presentation featured ranges of alternatives for the roadway, the bridges and the Fort Pulaski and McQueen's Island Trail access points. The public open house will be March 8, 2011 to gather feedback on these alternatives. In the next step of this study, a preferred alternative will be selected and a concept design with cost estimates will be developed.

Mr. Brown confirmed that the main issues are safety, access, outdated design standards, and flooding.

Mr. Russ Abolt asked about environmental impacts. Mr. Brown confirmed that, in this area, just about any type of project would have some amount of environmental impact. Mr. Abolt asked that the public be fully educated about the time it will take to satisfy environmental regulations.

Mr. Mark Egan requested a barrier separating the roadway from the bicycle/pedestrian shoulder. Mr. Brown noted that one alternative proposes connections to the McQueen's Island Trail for bicyclists and pedestrians who want to get away from the roadway. One of the bridge alternatives includes a barrier separated multi-use path.

Mr. Linton Smith asked about 4-laning US 80. Mr. Brown noted that GDOT has developed a concept for that, but it is not funded in the MPO Long Range Transportation Plan out to 2035. This study is trying to identify something desirable and more readily implemented while not conflicting with the widening concept. Mr. Thomson added that this study for the bridges is an attempt to provide some relief now and is a step in the right direction.

B. Update on SR 21 Corridor Study

Mr. Wilkes reported that the goal of this study is to identify solutions to improve conditions for freight and commuter traffic between I-516 terminus and Effingham County and enhance the communities in the corridor. To date, data collection, traffic analysis, and the first stakeholder and public meetings have been completed.

Mr. Jeff Netzinger of Hussey, Gay, Bell & DeYoung presented a list of alternatives. These alternatives will be narrowed down to three before the next public meeting later this spring. Goals are to improve operation at intersections, improve connectivity, improve access to the port, accommodate alternate modes of transportation, and maintain or improve access to local businesses along the corridor. Context-sensitive design and complete streets concepts are part of this process.

In response to a question about tolling, Mr. Netzinger confirmed that they will conduct a "level 2" analysis looking at the feasibility of tolling after this universe of alternatives has been narrowed down. He expects to have a draft concept report ready by the end of December 2011.

Mr. Brian Johnson expressed concern about CSX grade crossings project, which is in the regional tax list, possibly conflicting with the recommendations of this study. Mr. Thomson said that the railroad grade separation project is still a worthwhile shorter-term project, given that it would take many years to implement the recommendations of this study.

C. Update on SR 204 Corridor Study

Mr. Michael Adams reported that the alternatives for this corridor will be limited to three by the time they are presented at a public meeting this spring. Mr. Grady Smith from Jacobs Engineering presented the current alternatives. This corridor presents two challenges – dealing with commuter traffic and dealing with business access. He presented a range of alternatives and noted pros and cons for each alternative. Right-of-way and pedestrian crossings are major issues to be considered. Mr. Smith also included a list of the evaluation criteria that would be used to measure each project. Next step is to narrow the choice to three, do in-depth study of the three, and then select a preferred alternative for concept development.

Mr. Thomson noted that GDOT is proceeding with an interchange improvement at King George Blvd. which will be consistent with future plans for the entire corridor. He also mentioned that the County has an improvement project for the corridor section between Veterans Pkwy. and Rio Rd.

D. CAT Comprehensive Operations Analysis, Phase 1

Mr. Chad Reese reported that the CAT staff is reviewing all the routes with the objective to improve performance, improve quality of service, route integration, maximize value, and improvement of the overall system. Public hearings will begin tomorrow. CAT will be reporting public recommendations to the CAT Board in April. Among the things they are considering are express bus service on route #14 and improving cost efficiency by eliminating route #11 and covering that area with revisions to route #14 local.

E. CAT Intermodal Transit Center

Mr. Reese reported that the Transit Center will make use of the current Greyhound facility. CAT, Greyhound, future trolley service, and bicycle parking will all be served by this facility. Mr. Reese presented slides showing the improvements to the existing facility. When asked, Mr. Reese confirmed that Coastal Coaches and Teleride will also be served by this facility.

VI. Agency Reports

A. Georgia Department of Transportation

Ms. Teresa Scott answered questions from committee members. There is a public hearing coming up on the Port "Last Mile" project in March. The lighting project at I-95 and I-16 has some issues that are being dealt with, but hopefully it should be let in April. Widening of SR 307 from Robert B. Miller Rd. to SR 21 (Project #7) should be let by the middle of 2011.

B. Liberty County Projects

Mr. Sonny Timmerman referenced his project list for the HB277 regional funding. He expects it to be approved and submitted to GDOT. His MPO (Hinesville Area MPO) has been working with the CORE MPO on the transit vision plan.

At this point in the meeting, Mr. Liakakis had to leave and turned the chairmanship over to Mr. Otis Johnson.

C. Chatham County

Mr. Leon Davenport commented that the Truman Parkway is coming along. The Truman Pkwy. Phase 5, the Skidaway Narrows bridge replacement, and Whitefield Ave. roadway projects are all underway and should all be completed in 2013.

Mr. Tommy Crochet from McGee Partners reviewed the history of the West Bay St. improvements project. At this point they are re-evaluating options for the corridor at the request of the State Historic Preservation Office and developing new alternatives. Public input will be requested in the next 3 or 4 months. This additional scrutiny by all the agencies will increase the time needed to complete the project. It will probably be 2013 before this project will move forward again.

D. City of Savannah

Mr. Mike Wiener reported the status of city projects:

The City's traffic stimulus projects are basically complete. The signal preemption for emergency vehicles is complete and final adjustments to the signal timing are in the final phase. Installation of GPS units for emergency vehicles is 80% completed.

W. Gwinnett St. Widening – Consultant has submitted responses to GDOT’s comments. Final approval of the environmental study is expected from the Federal Highway Administration in the near future.

Curve realignment safety projects - Gwinnett St. is nearly finished, with street paving scheduled for this week. E. Anderson St. curve reconstruction began in late January and is scheduled for completion in April.

E. Chatham Area Transit

No additional report at this time.

F. Georgia Ports Authority

No report at this time.

G. Savannah-Hilton Head International Airport

Mr. George Fidler reported that Gulfstream’s expansion begins soon. To accommodate this expansion the airport will extend taxiway A and build a new taxiway H. Bids open soon. The airport is closing McKenna Drive and making improvements to move the traffic across the airport property. This construction is just beginning and will continue through May 2011.

VII. Other Public Comments

No other public comments at this time.

VIII. Announcements

Next meeting will be April 27, 2011.

IX. Adjournment

There being no further business the February 23, 2011 CORE MPO Board meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

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