



**CORE MPO BOARD
MEETING SUMMARY**

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

February 22, 2012

10:00 AM

Voting Members

Russ Abolt
Jason Buelterman
Mark Egan
Curtis Foltz
Keith Golden
Patrick S. Graham
Tennyson Holder
William W. Hubbard
James Hungerpiller
Edna Jackson
McArthur Jarrett
Glenn Jones
LTC Edward Kovaleski
Mike Lamb
Pete Liakakis
J. Adam Ragsdale
Chad Reese
Patrick Shay
Rochelle Small-Toney
Anna Maria Thomas
Wayne Tipton
Steven Weathers

Representing

Chatham County
City of Tybee Island
Chairman, CAC
Georgia Ports Authority
GDOT
Savannah Airport Commission
City of Garden City
Savannah Area Chamber of Commerce
Town of Vernonburg
City of Savannah
Chairman, ACAT
City of Port Wentworth
Hunter Army Airfield
City of Pooler
Chairman Chatham County Commission
Chairman, MPC
Chatham Area Transit
CAT Board of Directors
City of Savannah
Town of Thunderbolt
City of Bloomingdale
Savannah Economic Development
Authority (SEDA)

Present

x

x

x
x
x

x

x

Voting Member Alternates

Brian Johnson
Tom McQueen
Linton Smith

Representing

City of Garden City
GDOT
Town of Thunderbolt

Present

x
x
x

Regional Coordination Guest

Sonny Timmerman

Representing

Liberty County

Present

x

<u>Others Present</u>	<u>Representing</u>	<u>Present</u>
Michael Adams	MPO Staff	X
Leon Davenport	Chatham County	X
Jessica Hagan	MPO Staff	X
Patricia Hawkins	CAT	X
Rob Hume	Kimley-Horn	X
Jane Love	MPO Staff	X
Fran McCutcheon	Kimley-Horn	X
David Moyer	GDOT	X
Sarah Rayfield	CAT	X
Brad Saxon	GDOT	X
Teresa Scott	GDOT	X
Barbara Settzo	for MPO	X
Thomas Thomson, P.E., AICP	MPC Executive Director	X
Wykoda Wang	MPO Staff	X
Mark Wilkes P.E., AICP	MPO Staff	X
Ettajane Williams-Robbins	Chatham County	X
Julie Yawn	MPC 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 February 22, 2012 meeting carried with none opposed.

Chairman Pete Liakakis recognized new members Edna Jackson, Mayor of Savannah and Adam Ragsdale, Chairman of the Planning Commission.

II. Committee Reports

A. Advisory Committee on Accessible Transportation

Ms. Jane Love reported that the main point of discussion at the ACAT meeting was Teleride services and the operations of the integrated call center for Teleride and the fixed routes. CAT is addressing the comments raised at the meeting.

B. Citizens Advisory Committee

Mr. Mark Egan reported that the Citizens Advisory Committee endorsed all action items. He also reported writing and now submitting a letter to this committee concerning the line of sight and poor visibility at the interchange of I-16 and I-516. CAC would like this board

to consider this item and forward it to GDOT for action. Mr. Liakakis will forward this letter to staff for investigation and follow-up.

C. Technical Coordinating Committee

Mr. Mark Wilkes reported that the TCC endorsed all the action items which are the same action items before the board today.

D. Executive Director's Report

Mr. Tom Thomson reported that Mr. Keith Golden is the only candidate remaining for the Commissioner of GDOT position. It is likely that he will be appointed. He is currently the Interim Commissioner.

Mr. Thomson reported on the current status of the renewal of the surface transportation act. The House, the Senate, and the President all have different versions under study. The implications for our CORE MPO are: 1. less funding, 2. structural changes for MPO's, 3. elimination of the Transportation Enhancement program as a set-aside program, and 4. the House bill raises mass transit funding but eliminates dedicated transit funds thereby making requests for transit funds highly competitive. Deadline for renewal is March 31, 2012.

When asked, Mr. Thomson confirmed that an MPO that is eliminated, as a result of the MPO definition in the new act, does not need to be absorbed into an existing MPO.

Mr. Thomson reported that a discussion had taken place concerning the lighting project at I-16 & I-95 interchange. Mr. Brian Johnson confirmed that a remaining sticking point was the ownership of the lights. It might be possible to obtain predictability of operational costs through a "fixed price contract" with Georgia Power, averaging costs. It was also determined that the poles can be insured for catastrophic damage. Mr. Johnson is seeking to avoid unforeseen expenses. Local governments involved in this project are Garden City, Pooler, Savannah and unincorporated Chatham County.

When asked about solar energy lighting in this location, Mr. Brad Saxon of GDOT reported that these lights will be of a normal power service type. Solar lights are experimental right now, although the Federal Highway Administration does have some guidelines.

Mr. Thomson will send the latest report on the surface transportation act to the board members with the understanding that this information changes constantly.

III. Action Items

A. Approval of the October 26, 2011 CORE MPO Board Meeting Minutes

It was moved and seconded to accept the minutes of the October 26, 2011 CORE MPO Board Meeting.

CORE Board Action: the motion to accept the minutes of the October 26, 2011 CORE MPO Board Meeting carried with none opposed.

B. Resolution of Concurrence on Designation of Jimmy DeLoach Parkway Extension in National Highway System and Highway Functional Classification System

Ms. Mertz requested that the board approve the resolution to add the Jimmy DeLoach Parkway Extension, currently underway, to the National Highway System as an inter-modal connector and to the Highway Functional Classification System as an urban minor arterial. This means that the Parkway will be eligible for federal funds for future improvements. With the MPO Board's agreement, GDOT will submit this request to FHWA for approval.

It was moved and seconded to approve the resolution of concurrence on designation of Jimmy DeLoach Parkway Extension in the National Highway System and in the Highway Functional Classification System.

CORE Board Action: the motion to approve the resolution of concurrence on designation of Jimmy DeLoach Parkway Extension in the National Highway System and in the Highway Functional Classification System carried with none opposed.

C. Amendment to the FY 2012 Unified Planning Work Program

Mr. Wilkes reported that this amendment was necessary in order to bring funds totaling \$150,801.37 from the previous fiscal year into this fiscal year's budget so that the funds may be accessed.

It was moved and seconded to bring funds from the previous fiscal year into this fiscal year's budget.

CORE Board Action: the motion to bring funds from the previous fiscal year into this fiscal year's budget carried with none opposed.

D. Approval of proposed TIP amendments regarding Project DeRenne and the Transit section

Ms. Wykoda Wang presented a report on the TIP amendments. One amendment is for the Transit section. Section 5307 transit improvements, Section 5316 Job Access Reverse Commute (JARC) and LY 60 JARC Earmark are the three sections that require amending.

Section 5316 amendment is to move funds from the previous fiscal year to FY 2012.

Due to being an earmark, the LY 60 projects for JARC were confusing until many agencies working together determined what the actual amount was and the procedures for accessing it. The amount is \$990,000.

Section 5307 amendment is to move funds from previous years into FY 2012. Also, CAT wants to apply in advance for some funding and this requires an amendment. There are also some changes to the projects. Some of the funds have been moved to the Transit Center and Capital Maintenance/Fuel projects.

Mr. Chad Reese offered further explanation for moving of funds to the Transit Center project.

Ms. Wang reported that a public comment period and public hearing was advertised for this amendment.

Ms. Wang then went on to explain the amendment to the highway section of the TIP. The amendment is for Project DeRenne. To insure future federal money, GDOT needs to be involved, as part of the Plan Development Process (PDP) which starts in the Scoping and Preliminary Engineering phases. To include GDOT staff, oversight money must be added to the project. Ms. Wang explained the actual cost of oversight and the amount already allocated and the amount still required for each of the three Project DeRenne projects (DeRenne Blvd. option, East DeRenne Ave. improvements, and West DeRenne Ave. improvements). Also, after consultation with all parties there is a better sense of the project schedule. In conclusion, this amendment covers the addition of oversight funding, changing the preliminary engineering phase in FY 2012 to the scoping phase, and moving the right-of-way phase to FY 2015.

A question about when construction was scheduled led to a discussion of timing of the three projects. Rob Hume, the consulting manager, gave a review of these. GDOT has these identified as three projects, but the City of Savannah is working all three together in a parallel fashion, although some are simpler than others. Many expressed concern that the public has become impatient about lack of visible progress of the DeRenne Project. Mr. Hume assured the board that there is considerable activity on this project but it is the type of activity that is not obvious to the public. The project is in a very good place. The current SPLOST funds are insufficient to fund the whole project but these same funds are a very good source for the local match of the federally funds needed eventually to complete the project. He suggested reconnecting with the citizens about the status at this time would be helpful. This project is well beyond the study stage. Currently, all three projects are being worked together. There was concern expressed that without visible progress soon, the next SPLOST vote may not pass.

Mr. Thomson concluded the discussion by noting that this project is in an excellent place. This amendment will help the projects move forward.

Mr. Thomson introduced this amendment to the public hearing with the following statement:

“The Coastal Region Metropolitan Planning Organization (CORE MPO) is responsible for transportation planning within the Chatham County area. The MPO ensures federal spending on transportation for urbanized areas of over 50,000 people occurs through a comprehensive, cooperative and continuing process involving the public, a wide range of agencies, and policy makers.

The Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) is the Metropolitan Planning Organization’s short-range programming document and is a staged, multi-year listing of surface transportation projects proposed for federal, state and local funding within the metropolitan area. All transportation projects must appear in an approved long-range transportation plan and TIP before they may receive federal funds for implementation.”

As Ms. Wang had already presented the MPO staff report, Chairman Liakakis opened the public hearing on the amendments to the FY 2012-2015 TIP.

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

It was moved and seconded to endorse the amendments to the Transit Section and to the Project DeRenne projects in the FY 2012-2015 TIP, as presented by staff.

CORE Board Action: the motion to endorse the amendments to the Transit Section and to the Project DeRenne projects in the FY 2012-2015 TIP, as presented by staff carried with none opposed.

E. Authorization for further study of amendments to the 2035 Long Range Transportation Plan

Ms. Wang reported that many projects have progressed and need to be properly described in the current Long Range Transportation Plan. She reviewed the numerous projects that are ready to be moved along, but moving them impacts the financial balance of some of the three cost bands. An analysis is necessary to determine whether these projects can be moved into a different band and if so, what projects will need to be moved out.

At this time staff is requesting authorization to do a detailed cost analysis of these projects and the costs involved.

Mr. Russ Abolt and Mr. Leon Davenport expressed concern about protecting the corridor in the Jimmy DeLoach Pkwy. Phase II project. Mr. Abolt, Mr. Davenport and Mr. Thomson explained to the board that the County has the funds to purchase right of way, but they can’t do that until the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) approves the documents. FHWA won’t review the documents unless the next phase of the project is in the TIP or in the two years beyond that in the State’s Construction Work Program. The County would prefer to keep the project moving, but a TIP amendment in April would mean FHWA review would not occur until probably May, thus delaying the project several months.

Mr. Thomson said he believes a shorter-term solution while the MPO processes the LRTP and TIP amendments would be a letter from the County to the GDOT Commissioner explaining that the County desires FHWA to go ahead and review the documents so the County can spend its own funds on the current phase, with the assurance that the MPO will be amending the LRTP and TIP in April to show the next phase of the projects. Mr. Tom McQueen said a letter from the MPO would indicate its commitment.

Mr. Abolt moved that the CORE MPO board approve such a letter to the GDOT Commissioner as described by Mr. Thomson and signed by the CORE MPO board chairman so that Chatham County may continue to move forward on right-of-way acquisition for the Jimmy DeLoach Pkwy. Phase II interchange project. The motion was seconded.

CORE Board Action: The motion that the CORE MPO board approve a letter to the GDOT Commissioner as described by Mr. Thomson and signed by the CORE MPO board chairman so that Chatham County may continue to move forward on right-of-way acquisition for the Jimmy DeLoach Pkwy. Phase II interchange project carried with none opposed.

It was moved and seconded to authorize further study of the amendments to the 2035 Long Range Transportation Plan for various projects.

CORE Board Action: the motion to authorize further study of the amendments to the 2035 Long Range Transportation Plan for various projects carried with none opposed.

IV. Other Business

No other business at this time.

V. Status Reports

A. Update on the Georgia Freight and Logistics Plan

Mr. Tom McQueen, GDOT representative, presented the Georgia Freight and Logistics Plan which is the culmination of a multi-year study. He presented the mission statement for this study, reviewed current facts about freight movement, trends and needs, and then concluded with plan recommendations and strategies for movement of freight by rail, water, air, and highway.

Mr. Thomson commented that GDOT makes investments based on studies such as these.

B. Update on GDOT High Speed Rail Study

It was moved and seconded to defer the status report on GDOT High Speed Rail Study to a future meeting.

CORE Board Action: the motion to defer the status report on GDOT High Speed Rail Study to a future meeting carried with none opposed.

VI. Agency Reports

A. Georgia Department of Transportation

Ms. Teresa Scott reported on the following projects:

#1 – SR 21 @ Gulfstream Rd. – scheduled to be let next month.

#19 – I-95 @ SR 21 – scheduled to be let next month.

#8 – Gulfstream Rd. @ Robert B. Miller Rd. – information meeting last night; just received approved revised concept; moving forward on environmental. Further discussion confirmed the need to expedite this project. GDOT staff confirmed that GDOT and Gulfstream officials are in constant communication concerning this project. Construction is still expected in 2013.

B. Liberty County Projects

Mr. Sonny Timmerman reported focus is on studies to provide improved access to areas of Fort Stewart and studies on future expansion of urban transit system.

C. Chatham County

No additional report at this time.

D. City of Savannah

Mr. Mike Weiner reported that the city is updating the design schedule on the Gwinnett St. project. Bidding on the Tatemville wall project on the northside side of I-516 between Montgomery St. and the residential neighborhood will begin on June 1, 2012. The re-striping of Price St. to accommodate bicycles has just been completed, though there is still some confusion among motorists. There was a discussion about expanded signage. It was noted that the signage and pavement printing is per prescribed federal standards. On the question of why parking is prohibited at certain locations along Price St., Mr. Weiner explained that the fire department requires adequate space to turn into and out of the side streets.

E. Chatham Area Transit

Ms. Sarah Rayfield reported recent accomplishments of CAT. This includes route adjustments, increase in ridership, increase in on-time performance, and launching “Cat Freedom” (wheel-chair accessible taxis). She reported statistics about the CAT website. New construction projects include the downtown inter-modal transit facility and improvements to the existing operations & maintenance center. Proposed projects are transit development plan update, small vehicle program for lower performance routes,

senior shuttle, expanding the U-pass program to universities, and expanding the DBE program.

Mr. Reese reported that the Savannah State route was doing well and the Express Abercorn route has increased ridership.

At this point in the meeting, Chairman Liakakis requested that board members make every effort to arrange their schedules so that they may attend the MPO Board meetings. It is important that a quorum is present so that action items can be voted on.

F. Georgia Ports Authority

No report at this time.

G. Savannah-Hilton Head International Airport

No report at this time.

VII. Other Public Comments

No public comments at this time.

VIII. Announcements

The next meeting will be April 25, 2012

IX. Non-agenda items

Mr. Thomson reported that Chatham County is covered by Congressional District 1 only now. This seat on the State Transportation Board is now vacant and this board should consider encouraging a Savannah candidate for this seat.

X. Adjournment

There being no further business the February 22, 2012 CORE Board meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

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