



METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION

**CORE MPO BOARD
MEETING SUMMARY**

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

October 31, 2012

10:00 AM

Voting Members

Russ Abolt
Jason Buelterman
Stephanie Cutter
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
Anna Maria Thomas
Wayne Tipton
Trip Tollison

Representing

Chatham County
City of Tybee Island
City of Savannah
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
Town of Thunderbolt
City of Bloomingdale
Savannah Economic Development
Authority (SEDA)

Present

x
x

x
x

x

Voting Member Alternates

George Fidler
Brian Johnson
Tom McQueen
Ramond Robinson

Representing

Savannah Airport Commission
City of Garden City
GDOT
Chatham Area Transit

Present

x
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
Andrew Edwards	FHWA	X
Denise Grabowski	Symbioscity	X
Jessica Hagan	MPO Staff	X
Ellen Harris	MPC Staff	X
Jane Love	MPO Staff	X
Morgan Malley	FHWA	X
Charles McMillan	McMillan & Associates	X
Jeff Netzinger	HGBD	X
Brad Saxon	GDOT	X
Barbara Settzo	for MPO	X
Christian Sottile	Sottile & Sottile	X
Thomas Thomson	MPC Executive Director	X
Jeff Walters	FIGG	X
Mike Weiner	City of Savannah	X
Mark Wilkes	MPO Staff	X
Julie Yawn	MPC Staff	X
Maggie Yoder	GDOT – District 5	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 October 31, 2012 meeting carried with none opposed.

II. Committee Reports

A. Advisory Committee on Accessible Transportation

Ms. Jane Love reported that the committee endorsed the action items and discussed the Teleride service.

B. Citizens Advisory Committee

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

C. Technical Coordinating Committee

Mr. Michael Adams reported that the committee reviewed and endorsed the action items.

D. Executive Director's Report

Mr. Tom Thomson introduced two representatives from FHWA. MPO staff is preparing for the periodic MPO certification by FHWA. FHWA personnel will be on site in February 2013.

He reported that the GDOT Commission adopted a "complete streets" policy. When asked for a definition of "complete streets policy", Mr. Thomson noted that it starts with the establishment of a policy and then filters down to local engineering manuals which outline specific criteria and features to be considered when planning transportation projects. This would include bicycle lanes, sidewalks, landscaping, etc. The policy has been approved. Now they are working on the process with the goal being to develop a model for local engineering departments to adopt.

Mr. Thomson explained that the Complete Streets policies are expected to be incorporated in the MPO's thoroughfare plan, which is under development as part of the next long range transportation plan, called the Total Mobility Plan.

Ms. Edna Jackson requested a copy of the state's Complete Streets policy.

Mr. Thomson reported that GDOT reports fuel tax collections year-to-date are down 4.6% from last year at this time. This means less funding for transportation projects.

Mr. Liakakis introduced Stephanie Cutter, Acting City Manager.

III. Action Items

A. Approval of the August 22, 2012 CORE MPO Board Meeting Minutes

It was moved and seconded to accept the minutes of the August 22, 2012 CORE MPO Board Meeting.

CORE Board Action: the motion to accept the minutes of the August 22, 2012 CORE MPO Board Meeting carried with none opposed.

B. Approval of the FY 2013-2016 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) Funding Adjustments due to MAP-21

Ms. Jane Love presented the staff report.

In September staff was notified of funding changes due to the passage of the congressional transportation authorization, called Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century, or MAP-21. The TIP is still financially balanced and no particular project has been impacted by these changes, even though there is a little less money available throughout the four year period. L230 (urban attributable) funds and lump sum funds are a

little less. These adjustments need to be included in the TIP. At the end of the four years the L230 category still has a small balance.

Ms. Love reported that staff checked with Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) staff on how the reductions in lump sum funding might affect awarded projects in the area under the Transportation Enhancement or Safe Routes to School programs, which are implemented as lump sum by GDOT. Staff does not anticipate any reduction in the awards, but since lump sum funds are provided as any given project becomes ready, any project that is ready near the end of a given fiscal year could be delayed until the next fiscal year, if lump sum is exhausted for the given fiscal year.

Mr. Thomson explained that the discretionary funding is called "Urban funds." GDOT has said that no project that is ready will be delayed, but for future projects there may be less money available.

It was moved and seconded to approve the FY 2013-2016 Transportation Improvement Program amendment for funding adjustments.

CORE Board Action: the motion to approve the FY 2013-2016 Transportation Improvement Program amendment for funding adjustments carried with none opposed.

C. Amendment to the FY 2013 Unified Planning Work Program

Mr. Mark Wilkes presented the staff report. He explained that now that the prior year's contract has been closed out, this amendment is necessary to roll over the small balance of funds remaining from the prior year into the current year.

It was moved and seconded to approve the amendment to the FY 2013 Unified Planning Work Program.

CORE Board Action: the motion to approve the amendment to the FY 2013 Unified Planning Work Program carried with none opposed.

D. Savannah Urban Area Boundary Adjustment for Roadway Functional Classification

Mr. Thomson explained that today's discussion is about smoothing out the boundaries determined by the 2010 Census definition of an Urban Area. These adjustments are for the purpose of defining the functional classification of roadways.

Mr. Wilkes reported that this is a usual process after each census comes out. He illustrated the proposed boundary smoothing through various maps. The MPO staff is proposing shifting boundaries out to the next major roadway or current natural boundaries. These changes do not affect funding.

“Urbanized area” refers to the area defined by the 2010 Census which cannot be changed. “Urban area” refers to the adjusted (smoothed out) area being proposed today.

When asked how this affects the composition of this CORE MPO board since it appears to reach into other counties, Mr. Thomson explained the 2010 census results, not the smoothing exercise, mean that discussions are in order about expanding the MPO planning area and thus the representation of the board to include these new areas. The MPO has four years to present an organization plan with a memorandum of understanding that would address an expanded CORE MPO board. Issues such as representational voting would be addressed in any new board structure. The Governor must approve any new organizational structure.

Mr. Wilkes offered a definition of “smoothing” the boundaries. The MPO is permitted to fill in gaps or take the boundary to the next roadway or natural boundary like a river. All expanded boundaries are within 2.5 miles of the original urbanized area boundary.

When asked about any effect on CAT, Mr. Thomson confirmed that the CAT service area is independent of this map. CAT service area is defined by state legislation, and service areas are taxed for transit service.

It was moved and seconded to approve the Savannah urban area boundary adjustments for roadway functional classification.

CORE board action: the motion to approve the Savannah urban area boundary adjustments for road functional classification carried with none opposed.

IV. Other Business

There was no other business at this time.

V. Status Reports

A. GPA award for Reclaiming Old West Broad St. Project

Ms. Ellen Harris, on behalf of the CORE MPO, acknowledged receiving an award from the Georgia Planning Association for outstanding planning document on the “Reclaiming Old West Broad Street: I-16 Ramp Removal” project. She recognized the various individuals and organizations who partnered on this project.

She referred the board members to the website to view the document. She noted that they are now moving into the technical documents phase.

Ms. Jackson requested a meeting early in 2013 with the new city council about this project.

The Metropolitan Planning Commission conducted the study and Ms. Harris served as Project Manager. Mark Wilkes, MPC Transportation Director, prepared the Traffic Analysis

for the study report. Consultants on the project included Wilbur Smith Associates (prime), Sottile & Sottile, Urban Partners, Grice and Associates, McMillan and Associates, and Gilbert & Lattimore. Partners in the study included Chatham County, the City of Savannah, SDRA and CORE MPO.

B. 2013 CORE MPO Certification Review Schedule

Mr. Wilkes reported that staff has begun preparing for the periodic federal review of the MPO and the planning practices in order to maintain eligibility for funding. Many planning documents have already been submitted to Federal Highway and Federal Transit offices Atlanta for review. The on-site interview will take place on February 27 and 28 and will include a public meeting on February 27 at 5:00 PM, here at MPC.

C. SR 21 Corridor Study Update

Mr. Mark Wilkes, MPC project manager for the SR 21 Corridor Study introduced Jeff Netzinger, HGBD project manager, he, presented an update on the study for corridor improvements. His report highlighted the short list of three alternatives for this corridor.

Mr. Netzinger reviewed the public participation schedule and the evaluation criteria. He explained that this is a 10 mile long corridor which they have divided into three sections – Northern, Central, and Southern. He reviewed the alternatives that were considered for each section and which alternatives were selected for the short list. Eleven alternatives were considered and then reduced to three. One type of solution carried forward for all three sections was elevated lanes. Another alternative for the Central section was to connect to the “Last Mile” project. Another alternative for the Southern section was to build a new highway to I-16 near I-516. He then compared the three in terms of travel time, number of vehicles, right of way required, displacements, and cost.

Mr. Thomson confirmed that landscaping around the elevated lanes is included. Elevated lanes permit more choices for the at-grade improvements under and around the elevated portion.

When asked about the roadway being tolled to offset the costs, Mr. Thomson explained that it would be part of the finance plan. It is likely that a toll for the elevated portion will be included. He hopes to see one end of this project tie into the proposed Effingham Parkway.

There was discussion about the relationship of US 80, Bay Street, I-516 and SR 21 and how the SR21 corridor improvements will affect travel on these other roadways.

Mr. Tom McQueen, of GDOT, noted that the Jimmy Deloach Extension “Last Mile” project would improve commuter travel on SR 21. Mr. Netzinger said that the committed projects such as that one, were included in the modeling of the potential solutions. Mr. McQueen would like to see the technical reports when available.

D. SR 204 Corridor Study Video Update

Mr. Adams reported that after starting with eight alternatives the study has now a single recommended alternative for the SR 204 Corridor. He introduced a video which was presented to the board.

Discussion followed the video. It was confirmed that this video will run on the government TV channel. It is currently on the MPO website.

When asked about the possibility of studies on rail transportation solutions, Mr. Thomson noted that rail is very expensive to build. Rubber-tired transportation is more immediate and more likely because buses can run on the roads, as well as automobiles. Rail is being considered for the downtown area in conjunction with CAT.

Mr. Ramond Robinson of CAT agreed regarding the greater feasibility of rubber-tired transit, and added that there have been advances in rubber-tired transit, such as with Bus Rapid transit, which can include rail-like amenities and some fixed guideway to allow buses to avoid congestion of regular streets.

Mr. Thomson reported that the next steps are public participation and then a much more detail of financial plan and land use impacts. As noted in the video, the project for the interchange at King George is already coming close to construction.

VI. Agency Reports

A. Georgia Department of Transportation

Mr. Brad Saxon introduced Ms. Maggie Yoder as the new GDOT district planning and programming engineer in the Jesup office. He reported on the following projects:

- Project #1 - Back River Bridge – scheduled to be let in this fiscal year which ends in June 2013
- Project #2 - King George Blvd. interchange- right of way acquisition is underway
- Project #3, 4, 5 – These are related to Project DeRenne. GDOT executed Project Framework Agreement with City of Savannah and value engineering studies have been held.
- Project #20 – lump sum safety project certified for letting in next few months
- Project # 7 – Gulf Stream Rd. – awaiting right of way authorization money. Re-evaluation of environmental document was necessary and it took place in less than three weeks. Money should be available soon. A lighting agreement for the roundabout is still necessary. There is a question of ownership which is delaying this agreement. Mike Weiner reported that it has been determined that this land is not in the city of Savannah, therefore the city of Savannah does not need to sign any agreement on this issue.

- Update on Ogeechee Rd. project (from east of Lynes Pkwy. to Victory Dr.) – Ms. Jackson wants to make this a priority that will be addressed before 2016. Mr. Thomson confirmed it was an MPO priority and the GDOT project manager is aware of the local concern to move this forward. Mr. Saxon believes the stated time frame is realistic in light of the environmental document process. Mr. Thomson confirmed that this project has everyone's attention.

B. Liberty County Projects

Mr. Sonny Timmerman reported that they, too, are going through the process of smoothing their urban boundaries. Their big issue is constraints on local funding. Funding mass transit and maximizing transit service for the funding available is the challenge.

C. Chatham County

Mr. Leon Davenport reported on the Bay St. widening project. They are in the process of right of way acquisition. It should start up again in December. Also, the County is working with the Airport to determine ownership of the land in question around the Gulfstream Rd. project, which is relevant to the lighting agreement.

D. City of Savannah

Mr. Mike Weiner reported as follows:

- MLK Blvd. signal installation is operational.
- Noise barrier along I-516 – Consultant determined that noise barrier, as designed, will be effective.
- DeRenne Ave. project – FHWA has selected this project for full oversight. Any reviews by GDOT will also have a review by FHWA. The consultant is working on a revised schedule in light of these necessary reviews.
- Gwinnett St. – GDOT approved revised traffic data. Consultant has submitted revised concept report for approval. City officials are on the agenda for the next meeting of the Carver Heights neighborhood association to explain the project changes. Revised traffic data does not justify a four-lane improvement.

E. Chatham Area Transit

Mr. Ramond Robinson reported that public meetings are underway on the Transit Development Plan. The plan is on the website. CAT had a service change on October 15, 2012 and so far no negative feedback. Additional services to the airport have been implemented, particularly to places of employment in that area. Data is being collected for the Transit Development Plan.

F. Georgia Ports Authority

No report at this time.

G. Savannah-Hilton Head International Airport

Mr. George Fidler reported two new signals going up on Airways Ave. Road improvements are being made to facilitate traffic moving back and forth between the Gulfstream facilities. The re-location of Gulfstream Rd. for the taxiway should be finished in the first quarter of next year.

Rush hour traffic on northbound off ramp at I-95 is so congested that improvements are necessary. Mr. Thomson noted also that a new outlet mall is being proposed for this area. Staff will be involved in studying the traffic impact and making sure there are private infrastructure improvements made to accommodate this development.

VII. Other Public Comments

No public comments at this time.

VIII. Announcements

The next meeting will be December 12, 2012.

IX. Non-agenda items

X. Adjournment

There being no further business the October 31, 2012 CORE Board meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

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