



METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION

**CORE MPO BOARD
MEETING SUMMARY**

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

August 28, 2013

10:00 AM

Voting Members

Representing

Present

James Aberson	ACAT	x
Russ Abolt	Chatham County	x
Jason Buelterman	City of Tybee Island	
Stephanie Cutter	City of Savannah	
Mark Egan	CAC	
Curtis Foltz	Georgia Ports Authority	
Keith Golden	GDOT	
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	
Edna Jackson	City of Savannah	
Glenn Jones	City of Port Wentworth	
LTC Clarence Bowman III	Hunter Army Airfield	
Mike Lamb	City of Pooler	
Pete Liakakis	CAT Board of Directors	x
J. Adam Ragsdale	MPC	
Chad Reese	Chatham Area Transit	
Al Scott	Chatham County Commission	x
Anna Maria Thomas	Town of Thunderbolt	
Wayne Tipton	City of Bloomingdale	
Trip Tollison	Savannah Economic Development Authority (SEDA)	

Voting Member Alternates

Representing

Present

George Fidler	Savannah Airport Commission	x
Tom McQueen	GDOT	x
Caroline Nguyen	Town of Thunderbolt	x
Ramon Robinson	CAT	x
Diane Schleicher	City of Tybee Island	x

<u>Regional Coordination Guest</u>	<u>Representing</u>	<u>Present</u>
Jeff Ricketson	Liberty County	X

<u>Others Present</u>	<u>Representing</u>	<u>Present</u>
Michael Adams	MPO Staff	X
Beverly Davis	RS&H	X
Jessica Hagan	MPO Staff	X
Muke Kawasha	MPO Intern	X
Ginnie Kozak	Low Country MPO	X
Jane Love	MPO Staff	X
Jeff Netzinger	HGBD	X
Nathaniel Panther	Chatham County	X
Barbara Settzo	for MPO	X
Thomas Thomson	MPC Executive Director	X
Wykoda Wang	MPO Staff	X
Mike Weiner	City of Savannah	X
Mark Wilkes	MPO Staff	X
Julie Yawn	MPC Staff	X
Maggie Yoder	GDOT	X

Call to Order

Chairman Al Scott 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 August 28, 2013 meeting carried with none opposed.

II. Committee Reports

A. Advisory Committee on Accessible Transportation

Mr. James Aberson reported that the committee voted to endorse the FY 2014-2017 Transportation Improvement Program. He also reported that many of the issues raised at the last meeting concerning telephone calls to CAT have been resolved with the installation of the new CAT telephone system.

B. Citizens Advisory Committee

Ms. Jane Love reported that the committee endorsed the FY 2014-2017 Transportation Improvement Program and heard presentations of status reports.

C. Technical Coordinating Committee

Mr. Mark Wilkes reported that the committee endorsed the FY 2014-2017 Transportation Improvement Program and heard presentation of the status reports as listed.

D. Executive Director's Report

Mr. Tom Thomson mentioned that LTC Clarence Bowman III, the new commander at Hunter Army Airfield, is a new member of the board. When he is able to come to a meeting there will be a more formal introduction.

Mr. Thomson introduced two individuals who are regional partners in the transportation planning process. Ms. Ginnie Kozak is the Chief of Staff Director for the newly formed Low Country Area Transportation Study. Ms. Kozak noted that this is the first new MPO formed in SC in at least 20 years. Establishing a new MPO is a new experience at all levels. Bylaws are completed and the consultant is working on the Long Range Transportation Plan. She looks forward to coordinating with the CORE MPO on existing projects and possibly pooling resources for future projects.

Mr. Thomson introduced Mr. Jeff Ricketson who is the new Executive Director of the Liberty Consolidated Planning Commission. He is taking the seat just vacated by Sonny Timmerman. Mr. Ricketson noted that he looks forward to working with the CORE MPO and that the two MPO's are already working together on their respective freight plans.

Mr. Thomson also introduced a new student intern from SSU, Muke Kawasha. She is in her last semester of her master's program in Public Administration at Savannah State University.

Mr. Thomson reported that the Planning Commission approved the contract for a regional park/ride lot study. Connectics Transportation Group (CTG) will be the consultant. This will get underway in early September.

The I-16 Ramp Removal Interchange Modification Report – Jacobs was selected as the consultant, subject to approval by the Planning Commission on September 17th.

He noted that a grant is pending that includes the Urban Circulator Study for the downtown area in coordination with CAT.

The Victory Drive Study also has a lot of private participation from non-profit groups that are donating the local share. The study will look at Victory Drive from one end to the other and look at a vision for the different character areas of this corridor.

Other items underway are an advanced transit management system and the next phase of the freight plan (part I is completed).

GDOT report – In fiscal year 2013 there were 271 projects let within the state. Motor fuel

tax is down almost 3% this month from last year. There is \$140 million of transportation enhancement projects left on the shelf. It is GDOT's goal to get these funds committed before the Department opts to do a call for projects in the Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP).

Federal Highway is awaiting a budget.

Mr. Thomson sent an informational letter to all local governments about SPLOST and asked for projects they would like included on a SPLOST list.

Mr. Pete Liakakis recommended a follow-up call be made to all the municipalities.

III. Action Items

A. Approval of the June 26, 2013 CORE MPO Board Meeting Minutes

It was moved and seconded to accept the minutes of the June 26, 2013 CORE MPO Board Meeting.

CORE Board Action: the motion to accept the minutes of the June 26, 2013 CORE MPO Board Meeting carried with none opposed.

B. Approval of the FY 2014-2017 Transportation Improvement Program

Mr. Thomson read the following statement into the record:

"The CORE MPO is responsible for transportation planning within the Chatham County area. The MPO insures federal spending on transportation for urbanized area of over 50,000 people occurs through a comprehensive, cooperative, and continuing process involving the public and a wide range of agencies and policy makers. The Transportation Improvement Program is the MPO's short-range planning 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 in the Transportation Improvement Program before they can receive federal funds for implementation."

Ms. Wykoda Wang presented the staff report. The Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) is a 4-year program of projects pulled from the 2035 Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP). Project selection was a cooperative effort between the MPO and various agencies such as GDOT, City of Savannah, Chatham County, CAT, the airport, and Georgia Ports Authority. She reviewed the prioritization process and the public participation process. The 30-day public comment, which has just ended, generated many comments. Two public hearings were advertized; the first was at the Citizens Advisory Committee meeting and the second one is here today. Ms. Wang referred the board members to Chapter 2 in the draft TIP for a listing of all the comments and responses.

Ms. Wang reviewed in detail the projects, by sponsor, in the following categories:

- Highway/Bridge projects (County)
- Highway/Bridge projects (City of Savannah)
- Highway/Bridge projects (CORE MPO)
- Highway/Bridge projects (GDOT)
- Non-motorized projects (City of Savannah)
- Non-motorized project (County)
- Transit projects – Section 5307 (Job Access Reverse Commute is included)
- Transit projects – Section 5310 (DHS receives these funds; New Freedom program included)
- Transit projects – Section 5317 (contains the unobligated funds from previous years which includes the accessible taxi program)
- Transit projects – Section 5337 (State of Good Repair created by Map-21 legislation)
- Transit projects – Section 5339 (Bus & Bus Facilities created by Map-21 legislation)
- Transit projects – 2009 Earmark Fund for water ferry

Since the TIP is a sub-set of the LRTP, if there is project information in the TIP that is not consistent with the LRTP, then an addendum is required to include that new information and any changes.

Ms. Wang explained that updates were received since the board members received their draft TIP. She reviewed the various updates. Comments on the draft TIP have been incorporated, and any comments received today will also be incorporated into the TIP before final submission.

Ms. Wang reported that ACAT, TCC and CAC all endorsed the draft TIP for FY 2014-2017. Staff is recommending that this board adopt it.

Mr. Thomson recognized Ms. Wang and the various agency staffs for all the hard work put into the development of this TIP.

Mr. Scott opened the public hearing. There being no comments from the public, Mr. Scott closed the public hearing.

Ms. Diane Schleicher spoke on behalf of Mayor Buelterman of Tybee Island in regard to the US 80 bridges project. "Why are we delaying the PE and Environmental project design to 2016-2017? Why isn't it in 2014-2015?" Per an agreement with this board, when the Landings bridge project was prioritized, then the next time priorities were set, the US 80 bridges project would be prioritized. This board is setting priorities for state and federal funding through the project listing in the TIP. The US 80 bridges is listed as a second priority and not a first priority. The mayor does not agree that the Montgomery Cross Rd. bridge project should be first priority just because it was not finished in a previous TIP. Why aren't the US 80 bridges a first priority? He believes this is an urgent safety issue.

He does not believe the board's commitment is being upheld by pushing the environmental project design until 2016-2017. He asks that the TIP not be adopted "as is".

Mr. Thomson was not aware of the agreement that the Mayor mentioned but he will look into any documentation about it. The board has the discretion to move this project to Priority #1. But all parties need to understand that because federal funds are required, there is a process that needs to be followed. This process is underway and is fully funded and it will take four years to complete, maybe three, if you're lucky. When you get a record of decision, then you move into design. What was done in the TIP in splitting the engineering funds between two years was the necessity to balance the amount of revenue with project costs. Practically speaking, this could be the end of one fiscal year and the beginning of the next fiscal year, which means it could still be back-to-back. What is important is that the project is in the program. This project is on track and moving as fast as it can go.

Mr. Thomson noted that the only action this board can take is to move this project into the first priority section, which is the board's discretion.

Ms. Wang commented that \$1.8 million had been authorized for the Scoping phase of this project, under the previous TIP. She offered the board definitions that staff uses to place projects in either first or second priority. The current definition for first priority is if a project has had construction funding programmed in previous TIPs. The current definition for second priority is if a project has significant regional impact.

Mr. Pete Liakakis explained why the Landings bridge project had been considered a priority and is underway.

Mr. Russ Abolt asked Mr. Thomson to speak with Mayor Buelterman about how the cash flows and what can be done in regard to this project.

Mr. Thomson noted that numerous briefings and a schedule have been provided. There are three categories of priorities and this project list has shrunk notably since years past. There are now only three projects listed in total. If your project is one of these three then it is a priority. All other projects are not priorities and are not funded. The US 80 bridge project is a priority. If this board wants to move this to first priority, staff has no objection.

Mr. Liakakis proposed putting the US 80 bridges project in first priority for the sake of the safety.

Mr. Thomson added that there are many projects you don't see because they are included in the "lump sum" category.

Mr. Ramond Robinson asked if there was the ability in the TIP to "flex" any funds for capital purchases. Can carry-over or balance funds in the 230 category be used for transit capital purchases? Mr. Thomson noted that can be done by amending the TIP to move highway funds to transit funds. Ms. Wang clarified that MPO does not control 240 funds

and confirmed that Mr. Robinson was speaking about any balance in the 230 category. Mr. Robinson thinks this issue is vague in the TIP. Should it be put in now?

There being no further discussion, Mr. Scott opened the meeting for any motions to be offered.

It was moved and seconded to revise the proposed FY 2014-2017 Transportation Improvement Program to allow the US 80 bridges project to be listed in the first priority category.

CORE MPO Board action: the motion to revise the proposed FY 2014-2017 Transportation Improvement Program to allow the US 80 bridges project to be listed in first priority category carried with none opposed.

It was moved and seconded to adopt the FY 2014-2017 Transportation Improvement Program, as revised.

CORE MPO Board action: the motion to adopt the FY 2014-2017 Transportation Improvement Program, as revised carried with none opposed.

IV. Other Business

No other business at this time.

V. Status Reports

A. SR 21 Corridor Study

Mr. Wilkes introduced Jeff Netzinger from Hussey, Gay, Bell & DeYoung who presented the status report on the SR 21 Corridor Study. Mr. Wilkes noted that no formal action is being requested by the Board at this time.

Mr. Netzinger focused his report on the Tier II analysis and how they arrived at the recommended alternative. This is a 10-mile corridor between Savannah and the Effingham County line running through Garden City and Port Wentworth. He reviewed the top three alternatives. The recommended alternative, Alternative 10, offers the greatest congestion relief, the greatest safety improvements, the greatest opportunity for redevelopment, and the lowest cost. He reviewed this alternative in detail.

When asked if trains will fit under this elevated roadway Mr. Netzinger confirmed that the elevated lanes will sit above SR 21 about 25 feet and go over current rail lines and crossings. Mr. Netzinger confirmed that it is the construction of the approach ramps that take up the right-of-way. He explained the design of the approach ramps to the elevated portion.

When asked if the elevated portion essentially functions as an express lane, he explained that there would be one opportunity near each end to get on or off.

Mr. Thomson offered a history of studies of this corridor. This study analysis does not connect to the Effingham Parkway. The potential for user benefit is even greater than what has been shared with the board today.

Mr. Thomson noted improved safety records on elevated roadways that have been constructed elsewhere and that it would also offers an excellent transit connection.

B. Total Mobility Plan: Thoroughfare Plan Element

Mr. Wilkes reviewed the history of Long Range Transportation Plan development since 1999. Now with the Total Mobility Plan the focus is on providing more detail for the projects and expanding the area of inclusion in the Plan. The Total Mobility Plan exceeds minimum requirements set by the government. This Plan will be ready for adoption in about six months. He listed the elements and studies being included in the Total Mobility Plan.

Beverly Davis, from RS&H, continued the status report on the Total Mobility Plan, focusing on the Thoroughfare Plan Element of the Plan. The focus of that plan is to ensure that all the needs of users are balanced using the “complete streets” and “context sensitive design” approach. She reviewed the steps in the thoroughfare planning process. The community vision phase has been completed. They agreed to use GDOT’s roadway terminology to identify the different types of roadways. The final step will be adoption.

C. Proposed Selection Criteria for Project Selection in MPO’s Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP)

Ms. Love reported that the Transportation Alternatives Program was rolled out with the MAP-21 federal legislation. She reviewed the eligible entities, funding amount, the project selection process, a list of eligible activities, and the proposed criteria that the MPO could use for selecting projects. A project sponsor will need to provide 20% of the project cost. A project selection committee will be established, a program manual written to help applicants understand the process, an application designed, a call for projects announced this fall, Q&A workshops provided, and an application deadline established. The selection committee will score the applications. The MPO board will make the final selections based on the committee’s recommendations.

Ms. Love focused on explaining the proposed criteria for measuring the projects as listed in the staff report provided to the board members. The criteria included: feasibility, public support, level of local match, impact on non-motorized access and connectivity, safety of transportation system, efficient use of resources and existing systems, long-term economic vitality, improvements to the community, and urgency.

VI. Agency Reports

A. GDOT

Ms. Maggie Yoder reported on the following projects:

- #1 SR 204 from Pine Grove Rd. to Veterans Pkwy. – wrapping up right-of-way acquisition, project is on schedule.
- #2 SR 25 Connector/Bay St. – right-of-way acquisition is on-going.
- #3 Grange Rd. from SR 21 to SR 25 – right-of-way authorized the end of June, final design work is underway.
- #5 Gwinnett St. – environmental is almost done, preliminary layout and hydrology study are under review, project is moving along.
- #7 Islands Expwy. Bascule Bridge – preparing for preliminary field plan review.
- #13 SR 204 Veterans Pkwy. to Rio Rd. – final plans distributed for a final field plan review, project is on schedule.
- #14 Abercorn St. @ Largo Dr. - preliminary field plan review was held on July 9.
- #19 President St. – project framework agreement executed by the City; has been sent to GDOT Atlanta for execution.
- #30 Safe Routes to Schools – Authorized for July letting but received no bids; moved to October letting.
- #35 SR 26 from McKenzie St. to Tybrisa St. – pre-construction schedule just approved; concept meeting scheduled for 9/25/13. This project is for flashing signs at all crosswalks.

On the Active Construction Project list, Ms. Yoder noted that project #1, Gulfstream Rd, was let back in June. Notice to proceed was issued earlier in August and the pre-call meeting is scheduled for tomorrow.

She reviewed the following projects that are not on the list:

- Extension of the left turn lane at SR 204 @ Apache Ave. was awarded to Clifton Enterprises and work will begin in mid-September.
- Right turn lane at intersection of SR 30 and Hodgeville Rd. – work should be starting soon

- Reconstruction of SR 26 @ Wallin St. (extending the eastbound turn lane) – work started on Monday.

When asked about the Skidaway Narrows bridge, she replied that they anticipate opening it to traffic at the end of September.

B. Liberty County

No report at this time.

C. Chatham County

Mr. Nathaniel Panther reported. On Islands Expwy. Bridge they are awaiting environmental approval. On the W. Bay St. project, right of way acquisition has begun. They have closed on 11 of the 86 parcels.

D. City of Savannah

Mr. Mike Weiner reported on the following projects:

DeRenne Ave. – concept report meeting on Sept 6. They are incorporating recommendations from value engineering and the public meeting.

Delesseps Ave. - consultant is working on the traffic report and concept report which should be completed by the end of next month.

LaRoche Ave./Tompkins Rd. intersection improvement – public meeting held.

E. Chatham Area Transit

Mr. Robinson announced the opening of the Transit Center will be October 4th. Service changes will begin October 7th. He noted new changes will include airport express service and service to west Savannah. Mr. Liakakis reported the possibility of providing transportation to Hunter Army Airfield.

F. Georgia Ports Authority

No report at this time.

G. Savannah-Hilton Head International Airport

Mr. George Fidler reported the airfield expansion in support of Gulfstream's expansion is complete. Everything is open. Gulfstream has begun construction on the next large hangar on their Airways Ave. campus. A new traffic signal has been installed on Airways Ave. at Gulfstream Rd. Traffic is moving very well. Because of the new outlet mall to be built west of the interchange, the airport interchange on I-95 will be re-built. It will be a joint

effort with the developer, Gulfstream, and the Airport. This work is in the planning stage right now.

VII. Other Public Comments

No public comments at this time.

VIII. Announcements

The next CORE MPO meeting will be October 30, 2013.

IX. Non-agenda items

Mr. Thomson reminded the members of the paper report and a CD copy of the CORE MPO Freight Plan, Phase I

X. Adjournment

There being no further business, the August 28, 2013 CORE Board meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

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