
| <u>Others Present</u> | <u>Representing</u> | <u>Present</u> |
|-----------------------|--------------------------|----------------|
| Michael Adams | MPO Staff | X |
| Tamara Chrision | FHWA | X |
| Rob Gregg | CUTR/CAT | X |
| Jessica Hagan | MPO Staff | X |
| Rachel Hatcher | HAMPO | X |
| Karen Jenkins | Savannah Tree Foundation | X |
| Jane Love | MPO Staff | X |
| Nathaniel Panther | Chatham County | X |
| Brad Saxon | GDOT | 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 |

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 June 26, 2013 meeting carried with none opposed.

Mr. Scott recognized and introduced Caroline Nguyen, Town Administrator, who will represent Town of Thunderbolt at these meetings.

II. Committee Reports

A. Advisory Committee on Accessible Transportation

Mr. James Aberson reported that the committee voted to endorse the resolution naming the Department of Human Services (DHS) as the designee for funds. They also endorsed the TIP amendment and the 2035 LRTP addendum. Comments at the ACAT indicated there are still problems with the Teleride phone system. Mr. Pete Liakakis believes the new phone system that CAT will have with the new transit center should solve the problem of callers getting trapped in continuous loop with no answer.

B. Citizens Advisory Committee

Ms. Wykoda Wang reported that the committee endorsed the TIP amendment and the

2035 LRTP addendum, but tabled the resolution in support for the Department of Human Services (DHS) to be the designated recipient of Section 5310 funds until August. They would like some provision that DHS coordinate with GDOT and MPO, since in the past coordination has been lacking.

C. Technical Coordinating Committee

Mr. Mark Wilkes reported that the committee endorsed the TIP amendment and the 2035 LRTP addendum. They also endorsed the resolution in support of the Department of Human Services (DHS) as designated recipient of Section 5310 funds.

D. Executive Director's Report

Mr. Tom Thomson commented on some agenda items. The TIP amendments are on the agenda but he mentioned that a separate staff report in the materials notes administrative modifications to the TIP. He also mentioned that usually the new TIP would be adopted at the MPO's June meeting, but the financial plan was not available until just recently, so the new TIP will be on the August agenda. Regarding the findings on the MPO's re-certification, he directed the committee to the executive summary portion of the Federal Highway Administration's (FHWA's) report. Ms. Wang and Mr. Wilkes helped put together an MPO Re-apportionment Process brochure. He is in the process of talking with all members about re-apportioning this MPO to include Bryan and Effingham. Other information in the meeting materials also includes the summary of feedback on the proposed pedestrian and bicycle prioritization criteria. He noted that even though CAT is presenting their Transportation Development Plan today, the MPO has not seen the actual document. He requested an opportunity to review the actual document before this board endorses it. Mr. Wilkes will be attending the upcoming meeting of all the MPOs statewide, which is the Georgia Association of MPOs (GAMPO).

He reported DOT lettings this year to date for the state of Georgia at \$935.6 million. Collections of the motor fuel tax are down 2.5% from last year and a little under the budget this year.

Mr. Thomson presented a letter to Mr. Sonny Timmerman in recognition of his pending departure from the Liberty County Consolidated Planning Commission and the Hinesville MPO, expressing appreciation of his work and the coordination between the Hinesville and Savannah MPOs.

III. Action Items

A. Approval of the April 24, 2013 CORE MPO Board Meeting Minutes

It was moved and seconded to accept the minutes of the April 24, 2013 CORE MPO Board Meeting.

CORE Board Action: the motion to accept the minutes of the April 24, 2013 CORE MPO Board Meeting carried with none opposed.

B. Approval of resolution in support of the Department of Human Services as the designated recipient of Section 5310 Funds

Ms. Wykoda Wang reported that with the passing of the new federal MAP-21 transportation legislation, Section 5310 program funds have been consolidated with the New Freedom program. The Governor has designated the Department of Human Services (DHS) as the designated recipient for these combined funds. DHS has previously managed the Section 5310 funds, but New Freedom funds used to be separate and were allocated in a competitive selection process managed by MPO staff. In order for DHS to receive these funds they need concurrence from the public transportation agencies and local governments. Since the MPO is composed of local government representatives and of CAT board representatives, a resolution from the MPO will fulfill this requirement.

It was moved and seconded to approve the resolution in support of the Department of Human Services as the designated recipient of Section 5310 funds.

CORE Board Action: the motion to approve the resolution in support of the Department of Human Services as the designated recipient of Section 5310 funds carried with one abstention.

Ms. Edna Jackson raised a parliamentary procedure question about abstaining from a vote. Mr. Thomson explained that on this board it is expected that members will vote unless they have a conflict of interest. Today, understandably, it was the new board member who abstained as she felt she had insufficient awareness to vote on the issues.

C. Approval of FY 2013-2016 TIP Amendments and 2035 LRTP Addendum

Ms. Wang reported on the two TIP Amendments. One project is the Gwinnett St. Project. Because of scope changes, the construction schedule was updated. GDOT needs funding for oversight and has requested \$40,000.00. To accommodate this funding, staff proposed reducing the planning funding on the SR 204 Corridor Improvements Project from \$850,000 to \$810,000.

The second amendment is for the bridge replacement project at Montgomery Crossroad and Casey Canal. There are increased costs along with scope changes and re-design. GDOT has requested \$140,000 to do the re-design work. This funding will be coming from the Grange Road project which had a cost reduction.

FHWA requires that any change in the TIP must be consistent with the LRTP or an addendum is required. In this case the PE phase must be added to the LRTP by an addendum. Staff requests the board adoption of the two amendments to the TIP and the addendum to the 2035 LRTP.

There has been a 15-day comment period for the two amendments with a public hearing scheduled for this meeting today. During the comment period, comments were received from the Savannah Tree Foundation.

Mr. Scott opened the public hearing.

Mr. Thomson read the following statement into the record:

“The CORE MPO is responsible for transportation planning within the Chatham County area. The MPO ensures 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. Karen Jenkins, Director of the Savannah Tree Foundation offered two comments of importance on the Gwinnett Street improvement from I-16 to Stiles Ave. The first comment is that during the preliminary engineering phase of this project an ISA-certified arborist should evaluate the trees in this project corridor particularly those on the south side of Gwinnett St and determine the economic value of these very mature trees that will likely be removed in this corridor. The value of those trees should be mitigated by planting new trees in this project corridor. The second comment centered on how to do this. In this project there is a proposed two-foot grass strip on either side of the road. A two-foot grass strip is not sufficient for tree planting. The strip should be wide enough to plant trees. If both sides cannot accommodate a sufficient tree lawn, then at least one side, preferably the south side, where there are no power lines, should be made wide enough for a new tree lawn. Street trees will shade the sidewalk and roadway and increase the likelihood of pedestrian and bicycle traffic.

Ms. Jackson asked if those in the city who would do this are aware of these suggestions. Mr. Mike Weiner confirmed he had a copy of her request.

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

It was moved and seconded to approve the FY 2013-2016 TIP amendments and the 2035 LRTP addendum.

CORE Board Action: the motion to approve the FY 2013-2016 TIP amendments and the 2035 LRTP addendum carried with one abstention.

IV. Other Business

No other business at this time.

V. Status Reports

A. CORE MPO 2013 Federal Certification Review Findings

Ms. Tamara Christion, from FHWA reported. In conjunction with the FTA, FHWA conducts a certification review every four years to insure that federal policies and proper procedures are followed by the MPO. She reviewed all planning documents prior to the site visit on February 27 and 28, 2013. The final report was issued April 4, 2013. Based on findings, CORE MPO met all qualifications and is certified until 2017. Recommendations she made to the CORE MPO are detailed in the report.

Mr. Thomson noted the recommendations in the executive report are suggestions to enhance what the MPO is already doing or are about to do. He thanked Ms. Christion for a smooth process and he thanked his MPO staff for all the work involved to prepare for this review.

B. CAT Transportation Development Plan (TDP)

Mr. Ramond Robinson introduced Rob Gregg from the Center for Urban Transportation Research at the University of South Florida. The Transportation Development Plan (TDP) is a 5-year strategic plan outlining how CAT can move forward.

Mr. Gregg noted that this is not a typical TDP because it is not just a plan for CAT but is a mobility plan for the Savannah region. He reviewed the purpose, the process, and the strategic initiatives. There is another series of public workshops scheduled.

What are the mobility challenges of the future? Where does this community want to go? Who is the customer today and tomorrow? What are the opportunities for partnership?

An in-depth study of the present system (fixed route and para-transit) was conducted and compared with peer systems. Public involvement included an Advisory Review Committee, surveys, workshops, and coordination with the MPO. His report includes a sampling of base data analysis. He reviewed issues with the current system that were discovered from the survey results. The Situation Appraisal section of the report is a unique section in the TDP. A clear message was that CAT has existing stakeholders, but CAT needs to break out of its bubble and expand its stakeholder box. Partnerships with cities, counties, economic development agencies, business community, and the housing authority were suggested. They considered the existing vision plans for the city and county in the development of this TDP.

Mr. Gregg discussed the following:

Service hours on weekend are much less than on weekdays.

Address East/West service – he offered 5 different alternatives to connect east/west.

Flex routes – identified specific zones for this option

Regional commuter markets – commuter express service or commuter van/car pooling

Technology Information – one-stop customer services coordinating with other transit services

Strategic Goals – Image, Services, Partnerships, Capital Infrastructure, Finances

Strategic Initiatives – he outlined numerous potential partnerships

Mr. Abolt asked how handicapped is the CAT system because it is not county-wide? Mr. Gregg sees an image issue coming from not being united. A true coordination with all the municipalities would be a win/win for everyone.

Mr. Liakakis asked about the level of interest from the various municipalities and those invited to participate? Mr. Gregg encouraged the Advisory Review Committee (ARC) to continue to meet and grow and discuss issues. Why won't more municipalities participate? State law allows them to opt out of the program and not fund it. But we want to help them because many have low income populations that need this type of transit. Mr. Gregg did not directly ask why they won't participate, but the answer is implied in the response, "What's the deal for me?"

Ms. Jackson commented that bus riders are not limited to Savannah residents. New business development is outside of Savannah and requires transportation. We need to show the benefits and value of being a regional service to other municipalities. The more regional our participation is the more likely we are to get a TIGER grant.

Mr. Scott asked how the peer groups were selected and how they compare to CAT. What is the board composition of the peer groups versus CAT? Have you prepared any talking points for board members to use when talking about transit? How are the peer groups funded compared to CAT? Do you have any recommendations for the CAT board about funding?

Mr. Gregg replied that peer groups were selected through an analytical approach that considered service area, operating level, and ridership. They did not compare board composition. The most successful transit systems have a business representative on the board. Every level of CAT, not just the board, needs to buy into the plan for CAT. Most transit systems rely on annual begging to the local government but there is a lot of competition for those limited dollars. Some have dedicated funding, split between ad valorem and sales tax. Sales tax is a growing source of transit funding. Currently, the CAT Board prepares an annual budget. He suggested they approach it as a 5-year business plan and the plan should illustrate the return on investment.

Mr. Scott noted that this plan is very visionary but he is looking for some specific directives. Is there any system out there that is doing it right and if so, what are the ingredients? Mr. Gregg replied that business & economic community involvement on the board is the key ingredient.

Mr. Liakakis asked what successful techniques have been used by others that we can do, and what is that dynamite message that we can put out. Mr. Gregg related the experience of Orlando, FL where they emphasized re-imagining their service, added different types of

services, emphasized the function of marketing and sales, and brought in the president of the Chamber of Commerce to be on their board. Those are the elements. Implementation has to be from the top down and inward to outward, and include the business community.

Mr. Thomson commented on the presentation and discussion. He believes CAT needs to reconstitute itself at the legislative level with new authority from the state to operate in all of Chatham County with the ability to expand regionally when the time is appropriate. Membership on the board should reflect a new legislative structure. A transit system cannot move forward if it has to beg local governments for funding on a yearly basis. Other transit systems have their own taxing authority.

Mr. Thomson noted that he has been talking with the business community about re-apportionment of the MPO. There is a lot of interaction going on. He believes this TDP will help fill a large hole that has existed for years. He asked for more time to digest the document.

Mr. Robinson commented that the Charlotte, NC system became a regional system when they extended service outside the county and they had a dedicated funding source.

Mr. Scott asked Mr. Robinson to put together a white paper with all the details on that system for the Chatham County board and the CAT board and the legislature to consider.

Mr. Aberson asked the national average cost per trip for para-transit. Mr. Gregg replied that it is in the report but he would need to look it up. Fixed route cost is competitive with other systems. Mr. Robinson commented that the Teleride fare here is at the lower end of the scale.

C. Presentation of MPO Freight Study (Phase 1)

Mr. Thomson commented that the purpose of this study is to explain the big picture about freight. The second study will dig down deeper into details. After today's meeting the CORE MPO staff is meeting with HAMPO staff to begin the coordination of these studies.

Rob Wayson from the consulting firm, CDM Smith, presented the report. A freight plan contributes to development and will coordinate with a state-wide freight plan. Freight planning is guided by the MAP-21 federal legislation which includes a federal freight plan. Local plans will help you have a voice at a higher level. He outlined what can be done on a local level that will impact the local area as well as contribute to a state and national plan.

Phase I is a data collection phase – current freight transportation assets, existing freight related policies, strategies, and institutions, and freight modes and commodity flows. What generates freight? What are freight attractors? Where are the freight corridors? Land use designation? They considered the impact and guidance of current legislation and a review of current and future stakeholders. Freight is regional and does not know of political boundaries.

VI. Agency Reports

A. **GDOT**

Mr. Brad Saxon reported on the project list as follows:

#1 – SR 204/Abercorn St. (King George Interchange) – everything is on schedule to deliver by this fiscal year.

#3 – Gulfstream Rd./RB Miller Rd.– let to contract last week. Project improvements included in related Gulfstream projects are complete and open to traffic.

#4 – Grange Rd. – all certifications have been made; they are awaiting funds transfer to begin ROW acquisition.

#13 – US 80 Bridge and Road Project scoping – mapping and surveying is underway. Consultant procurement is ongoing and is expected to have a consultant working by this fall. Mr. Jason Buelterman asked if this mapping/surveying covered the causeway. Mr. Saxon explained that the mapping is of the entire corridor. This is related to the recent study's proposal for shoulders throughout, not the older four-laning proposal. Mr. Thomson confirmed that the scoping included the bridges and the roadway between the bridges. Later, the project can be broken down into sections as money becomes available. This environmental document will be for the whole corridor. Mr. Buelterman asked why 2016 is the completion date for this phase. Mr. Saxon said that the environmental approval process is driving the schedule and the 2016 date. He will send any schedule updates when he has them..

Mr. Buelterman then asked the County for additional police help on US 80 for traffic control on busy weekends.

#31 – Safe routes to schools – to be let in July.

#36 – Tybee Island pedestrian safety improvements. These are pedestrian safety beacons at intersections of US 80 with McKenzie St. and US 80 with Tybrisa St. – work has just begun and could possibly be completed in the next 18 months.

Wallin St. & Victory Dr. – the traffic light is on. They will double the capacity of the left turn lane.

Also, a new quick response project is planned on Apache Rd. to extend the left turn lane.

Skidaway Bridge project – latest update is that it will be open to traffic later this summer; old structure removed by the end of this calendar year.

B. Liberty County

Mr. Sonny Timmerman reported they are meeting with the CORE MPO today to coordinate the freight plan between the two MPOs. He introduced Rachel Hatcher who may be attending these future meetings to report on activity.

C. Chatham County

Mr. Nathaniel Panther reported. Jimmy DeLoach Pkwy. projects have signed funding agreements with GDOT, and the Bay St. Widening project is underway with ROW acquisitions.

D. City of Savannah

Mr. Mike Weiner reported. In response to the earlier comments about trees on Gwinnett St., he explained that the project is funded with federal funds, but there is not federal funding for landscaping. For that portion, he has contacted the City's Park and Tree Department to work out a landscaping plan and preservation of trees. The environmental document is still in process. Preliminary design will begin upon completion and approval of the environmental document. It is at that time that the city will get the Park & Tree Department involved.

There was a stakeholder's meeting on June 6th for the DeLessups Ave./LaRoche Ave. Project to make residents and stakeholders aware of this pedestrian improvement & bicycle connectivity project. Due to severe weather, only 20 people attended. Interest was positive, but the main concern from attendees was drainage in the area.

A revised project agreement was received for the President St. project. This project is for the construction of an overpass over the CSX railroad crossing. When signed, the project will get started.

Traffic light at Dixie St. and Victory Dr. is now operational.

E. Chatham Area Transit

Mr. Robinson announced the public workshop for the Transit Development Plan to be held tomorrow.

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 CORE MPO meeting will be August 28, 2013.

IX. Non-agenda items

Mr. Thomson reported that he met with the City of Bloomingdale about the proposed CORE MPO re-apportionment.

Ms. Jane Love explained that the other item here was the summary of feedback on the pedestrian and bicycle prioritization criteria, for information.

X. Adjournment

There being no further business, the June 26, 2013 CORE Board meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

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