



METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION

**CORE MPO BOARD
MEETING SUMMARY**

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

August 27, 2014

10:00 AM

Voting Members

Representing

Present

James Aberson	ACAT	x
LTC Clarence Bowman III	Hunter Army Airfield	
Jason Buelterman	City of Tybee Island	
Shedrick Coleman	MPC	
Stephanie Cutter	City of Savannah	
Mark Egan	CAC	
Curtis Foltz	Georgia Ports Authority	
Beth Goette	Town of Thunderbolt	
Keith Golden	GDOT	
Tennyson Holder	City of Garden City	
William W. Hubbard	Savannah Area Chamber of Commerce	
James Hungerpillar	Town of Vernonburg	
Edna Jackson	City of Savannah	x
Glenn Jones	City of Port Wentworth	
Gregory Kelly	Savannah Airport Commission	
Mike Lamb	City of Pooler	
Pete Liakakis	CAT Board of Directors	x
Chad Reese	Chatham Area Transit	x
Ben Rozier	City of Bloomingdale	
Al Scott	Chatham County Commission	x
Lee Smith	Chatham County	x
Trip Tollison	Savannah Economic Development Authority (SEDA)	

Voting Member Alternates

Representing

Present

Wanda Doyle	City of Tybee Island	x
Ron Feldner	City of Garden City	x
George Fidler	Savannah Airport Commission	x
Tom McQueen	GDOT	x
Peter Shonka	City of Savannah	x

<u>Regional Coordination Guest</u>	<u>Representing</u>	<u>Present</u>
Nils Gustavson	Liberty County	X

<u>Others Present</u>	<u>Representing</u>	<u>Present</u>
Brent Buice	GA Bikes	X
Ted Clarke	Citizen	X
Beverly Davis	RS&H	X
Beverly Dumas	CAT	X
Jessie Gatti	CAT	X
Jessica Hagan	MPO Staff	X
Rachel Hatcher	RS&H	X
Jo Claire Hickson	Coastal GA Greenway	X
Karen Jenkins	Savannah Tree Foundation	X
Jane Love	MPO Staff	X
Nathaniel Panther	Chatham County	X
Melissa Ralph	Citizen	X
Ramond Robinson	CAT	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 as presented.

CORE Board Action: the motion to approve the agenda for the August 27, 2014 meeting carried with none opposed.

II. Committee Reports

A. Advisory Committee on Accessible Transportation

Mr. James Aberson reported that the committee endorsed the amendment to the FY 2015 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP). They also endorsed the 2040 Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) and the FY 2015-2018 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP).

B. Citizens Advisory Committee

Ms. Jane Love reported that the committee endorsed all the action items. A public hearing was held for the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) and comments were received related to the Georgia Coastal Greenway and the Savannah Ogeechee canal trail.

C. Technical Coordinating Committee

Mr. Mark Wilkes reported that the committee endorsed the three action items that came before the committee: the FY 2015 UPWP amendment, the 2040 Metropolitan Transportation Plan and the FY 2015-2018 TIP.

D. Executive Director's Report

Mr. Tom Thomson reported that Congress extended the MAP-21 highway program to May 2015 and transferred funds to the highway trust fund. He is not sure how that will funnel down to projects at the state level. At the state level, Mr. Thomson reported that 378 projects, valued at \$1.3 billion, were let in the just-completed fiscal year. Motor vehicle fuel tax revenue for the year was up about 1%. Overall trending on collections is positive. GDOT board has elected Don Grantham as the new chairman and Emily Dunn as the new vice chair.

Joint Study Committee on critical transportation infrastructure funding is going around the state conducting public meetings. Steve Green is the Savannah representative on this committee. The committee will be in Savannah October 1. Mr. Thomson will send out the details when they are available.

MPO's reapportionment update – successful working group meetings have produced a final draft to bring forward. Instead of a workshop, he is going to speak one-on-one with the different parties.

Today marks an important day for MPO as they present two significant documents - the Metropolitan Transportation Plan and the Transportation Improvement Program. Both documents required extensive collaborative efforts in order to complete this work.

Mr. Lee Smith asked about alternative revenues other than fuel tax for transportation projects. Mr. Thomson noted that discussion on the federal and state level is still underway. He expects more interest in a vehicle miles traveled concept as an alternative funding measure in the future.

Mr. Scott asked for the list of the committee members on the Joint Study Committee on critical transportation infrastructure funding. Mr. Thomson read the list of names. He will copy and forward this list to board members.

III. Action Items

A. Approval of the June 25, 2014 CORE MPO Board Meeting Minutes

It was moved and seconded to accept the minutes of the June 25, 2014 CORE MPO Board Meeting.

CORE Board Action: the motion to accept the minutes of the June 25, 2014 CORE MPO Board Meeting carried with none opposed.

B. Approval of the FY 2015 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) Amendment

Mr. Mark Wilkes presented the staff report. This is a routine type of amendment which happens each year. The amendment is necessary in order to move the remaining \$64,251.56 in unspent FY 2014 FHWA PL formula funds from the FY 2014 UPWP to the FY 2015 UPWP so that staff can then access these funds through a supplemental contract with GDOT.

It was moved and seconded to approve the amendment to the FY 2015 Unified Planning Work Program.

CORE Board Action: the motion to approve the amendment to the FY 2015 Unified Planning Work Program carried with none opposed.

C. Adoption of the Total Mobility Plan/2040 Metropolitan Transportation Plan

Mr. Wilkes reported that the Total Mobility Plan is the proposed 2040 Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) for the MPO which is intended to serve as the MPO's defining vision for transportation for the next twenty-five years.

The Board will recall that the draft Total Mobility Plan including the list of projects and financial analysis were presented in June, concurrent with the start of a 60-day public comment period. On July 25th, the technical summary document was published. The extended comment period closed on August 24, 2014. All comments are being documented and responded to in the final plan documents. The draft plan has been reviewed and fully vetted with Federal Highway Administration and GDOT. The administrative deadline to adopt the plan update is September 17, 2014. Today, we will be asking the Board to adopt the Total Mobility Plan/2040 MTP following the public hearing.

The Total Mobility Plan is more comprehensive than previous plans in a number of ways. As the Board will recall from earlier presentations, for the first time we have integrated a Thoroughfare Plan. The recommendations of the Thoroughfare Plan and the recently

updated Non-Motorized Transportation Plan have been incorporated into the financially constrained project list, and into a comprehensive Vision Plan.

Mr. Wilkes introduced Beverly Davis, of RS&H.

Ms. Beverly Davis updated the board members on the Metropolitan Transportation Plan. This plan builds on the 2035 Framework Mobility Plan and expands the multi-modal approach with the inclusion of a non-motorized plan, a vision plan, and a thoroughfare plan. The 2040 update initiates the complete streets approach and incorporates all studies.

Ms. Davis reviewed the goals of the plan, the financial plan, the projects that were removed because they are under construction or completed, and changes made to the plan since the June status report. This included administrative changes and some additional projects. She then reviewed the entire plan project list, one by one.

There were four specially called public meetings. They used newspaper advertising, government cable TV channels, on-line surveys and paper surveys. Many comments were received and some additional projects were suggested. She reported on many of the comments. There was also significant input from their planning partners. All comments have been addressed. Today is the final public hearing. A final public involvement appendix will be included that will note any comments from today's public hearing.

Mr. Pete Liakakis asked about attendance at the public meetings. Ms. Davis replied that attendance was low, but they did capture significant input from the surveys. Municipalities were consulted and their comments were addressed.

Mr. Aberson asked at what stage of development people may voice their concerns about such things as placement of audible signal crossings. This is a concern of the blind community. Ms. Davis and Mr. Thomson replied that the appropriate time would be to consult with the project sponsor at the design level. These decisions are made at the local level, not at this long-term planning stage. Mr. Thomson offered the services of the MPO to help the ACAT members reach out to the appropriate agencies at the proper time.

Mr. Ron Feldner expressed appreciation to Mr. Thomson and Mr. Wilkes for coming to Garden City to present this Plan.

When asked about inflation factors, Ms. Davis noted that GDOT's office of financial management provided the inflation factors that were used in the Plan. Mr. Lee Smith asked for a clarification of the language in the plan so that the general public will understand.

In advance of the public hearing, Mr. Thomson made the following statement:

"The Coastal Region Metropolitan Planning Organization (CORE MPO) is responsible for transportation planning in 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 Total Mobility Plan is the MPO's 2040 Metropolitan Transportation Plan and it serves as a guide for comprehensive, cooperative, and continuing transportation planning throughout the MPO planning area. The purpose of the plan is to identify existing and anticipated transportation problems and to propose solutions that are both financially feasible and supportive of community aspirations."

Mr. Scott opened the public hearing.

Ms. Jo Claire Hickson spoke on behalf of the Coastal Georgia Greenway. She commended the Total Mobility Plan for its inclusion of all modes of transportation including complete streets and context sensitive design. The Georgia Coastal Greenway supports this plan as a huge step forward for pedestrians and cyclists. Her organization works as a public/private partner working with communities and private sector funding. Her organization is designed to support the trail building effort in coastal Georgia. She presented a map of the entire Georgia coastal greenway route and showed where the Chatham portion of the trail fits into the whole. The Coastal Georgia Greenway is part of a national trail running 3,000 miles from Maine to Florida.

Ms. Melissa Ralph, citizen of Savannah, noted that there is no mention in the plan of clean, safe rail travel for passengers. Even buses are subject to traffic congestion. She put forth rail travel as another option to consider.

When Ms. Jackson asked why rail travel was not considered, Mr. Thomson mentioned that there is a state rail plan and a high-speed rail alternative with Savannah as a hub. There is rail planning going on but it is beyond our local scope and resources. Mr. Tom McQueen agreed with Mr. Thomson and also mentioned the difficulty in balancing the needs of freight and passengers sharing the same rail lines.

There was discussion and questions about a rail line between Atlanta and Savannah. Mr. Thomson suggested that in terms of long-range planning, staff can add a narrative section about the status of light rail in our area in the future. Money is an issue.

Mr. Smith encouraged a Chatham County rail system. Ms. Jackson supported inclusion of that idea. Mr. Thomson reminded all of the park and ride lots and CAT's express routes within Chatham County. Mr. George Fidler reported that the airport's master plan shows a rail corridor to airport. Mr. Wilkes commented that the Total Mobility Plan is updated every five years so incorporating rail projects is possible at a later date. Today's financial realities dictated the project choices included here at this time.

Mr. Scott closed the public hearing.

It was moved and seconded to adopt the Total Mobility Plan with any corrections or additions that staff needs to make as the 2040 Metropolitan Transportation Plan.

CORE BOARD action: the motion to adopt the 2040 Total Mobility Plan with any corrections or additions that staff needs to make as the Metropolitan Transportation Plan carried with none opposed.

D. Adoption of the FY 2015-2018 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)

Ms. Wykoka Wang reported that the TIP is the short-range transportation improvement program which includes a portion of the multi-modal projects contained in the Metropolitan Transportation Plan. The public comment period ended yesterday, but some late comments were received and will be addressed. She reviewed the specific projects listed in the TIP. Projects fall into three main categories: Highway/Bridge projects, Non-motorized projects (including the Transportation Alternatives Program projects), and Transit projects.

Any comments received today will be included in this TIP.

Mr. Thomson commended the board's policy of prioritizing projects and sticking with it through to completion. GDOT has come through with major funding on certain projects. In the near future (2019 and 2020) some major projects will be coming forward – the bascule bridge on Islands Expressway, DeRenne Avenue improvements, Brampton Road Connector, and Gwinnett Street improvements.

Mr. Thomson read the following statement in advance of the public hearing:

“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 metropolitan transportation plan and TIP before they may receive federal funds for implementation.”

Mr. Scott opened the public hearing.

Ms. Jo Claire Hickson, with the Coastal Georgia Greenway, thanked Chatham County for seeking TAP funds for the Canebrake Rd. path and the MPO for funding it and putting it in the TIP. Also thanks to the City of Savannah for upgrading local road facilities and for signage on part of the Coastal Georgia Greenway route.

Ms. Karen Jenkins, with the Savannah Tree Foundation, offered general comments and reminders for the consideration of trees. She expressed thanks for the Thoroughfare Plan and complete streets policy. She reminded everyone of the importance, during the PE stage in every project, of having an arborist assess the trees in these project areas to determine whether the trees can be retained, relocated, or eliminated & replaced. Bay St. widening is one such example, as is the I-95 & I-16 interchange. Trees have value to our entire community.

Ms. Jackson noted that in city discussions with GDOT, the city has been assured that project planning will consider existing trees.

Ms. Melissa Ralph expressed concern about pedestrians crossing bridges. Will there be safe walkways across the bridges in our area?

Mr. Scott closed the public hearing.

Ms. Wanda Doyle expressed thanks for including the US 80 bridges in the TIP. She hopes for continued forward progress.

Mr. Liakakis raised the question of participation at the public hearings for the TIP. There was a discussion of how to best use the Savannah Morning News to get the word out and how to motivate the public to participate. Mr. Liakakis suggested the "Announcement" section.

It was moved and seconded to adopt the FY 2015-2018 Transportation Improvement Program with any additions or corrections staff needs to make.

CORE BOARD action: the motion to adopt the FY 2015-2018 Transportation Improvement Program with any additions or corrections staff needs to make carried with none opposed.

IV. Other Business

No other business at this time.

V. Status Reports

A. Non-motorized Transportation Plan Update

Ms. Jane Love presented the status report. She expects to ask the Board to adopt this plan in October. This plan will replace the 2000 Chatham County Bikeway plan. It is also expanded to include pedestrian projects. Ms. Love reviewed the public participation process, the goals for the plan, and identification of needs. She explained the project criteria and the ranking process of projects. Some projects have a shared bicycle/pedestrian element. This plan lists stand-alone projects as well as some projects that are also included in the thoroughfare plan. The next steps are to complete the draft report, conduct a public hearing in September, a public comment period in Sept/Oct, and expected adoption by this Board in October. If there are any changes that impact the Metropolitan Transportation Plan, an amendment to the latter plan will be proposed.

VI. Agency Reports

A. GDOT

Ms. Maggie Yoder reported on the following projects:

- #1 SR 25 Conn./Bay St. – Final plans are 95% complete; ROW acquisition is on-going.
- #2 CS 650/Grange Rd. – ROW funds authorized at the end of June; final design work is 75% complete and ROW acquisition is underway.
- #3 Ogeechee Rd. – consultant selected; contract is signed. Preliminary design will get started. Design is expected to take about a year. The Environmental is estimated to take 30 months. Work has begun on the Environmental. Ms. Jackson wants to know how many months are left of the 30 before this stage is complete. Mr. Liakakis spoke in support of Ms. Jackson. Ms. Jackson asked GDOT to work with city staff to develop a specific calendar for this project. Ms. Jackson stressed the urgency of this project.
- #6 Islands Expwy. – Environmental is concluding and approval is expected soon.
- #9 Effingham Pkwy. – concept report was routed and comments received; consultant addressing the comments.

Ms. Jackson asked about the intersection of Crossroads Blvd. and Jimmy DeLoach Pkwy. Mr. Mike Weiner reported that GDOT approved funding to help with this. GDOT will be sending a letter to the city.

- #10 – SR 26/US 80 bridges – consultant selected; issued notice to proceed, mapping and surveying is complete.
- #11 – I-95 NB Ramp/Airways Ave. – final field plan review last week; final plans are 80% complete; designer is addressing comments.
- #13 Brampton Rd Conn. – Environmental is 30% complete; conceptual stage; doing a practical alternatives report now.
- #18 SR 21(SR 30 to I-95) – Environmental 30% complete; open house on Aug 12.
- #21 rapid flashing beacon (Tybee) – final plans are 85% complete; preparing for a final field plan review. Ms. Doyle asked if 2015 was reasonable completion date. Ms. Yoder replied in the affirmative.

Under Active Construction projects:

- #2 Intersection SR 204 & Largo Dr. – work began end of June.
- #4 King George Blvd. at SR 204 interchange – 10% complete.
- #5 Safe Routes to Schools – final field inspection held in August; wrapping this up.
- #9 Jimmy DeLoach Connector – 35% complete; continuing to drive piles, etc.

Ms. Jackson asked for any word about a meeting with GDOT and Federal Highway on the DeRenne Ave. project. The concept report has been reviewed and consultant is addressing comments.

B. Liberty County

Mr. Nils Gustavson reported that they are about 40% complete with their Metropolitan Transportation Plan. Their deadline is October 2015.

C. Chatham County

Mr. Nathaniel Panther reported on the following preconstruction projects:

- Jimmy DeLoach Pkwy. Extension - right-of-way authorization was granted and ROW acquisition is underway
- Jimmy DeLoach Pkwy. /US 80 Interchange – waiting for location and design approval from GDOT
- Bay St. widening – ROW acquisition continues. 82 of the 86 parcels have been acquired.

D. City of Savannah

Mr. Mike Weiner reported on the following project:

- Temporary traffic signal installation on Ogeechee Rd. – work will begin shortly at the Ogeechee Rd./Stiles Ave. intersection.
- DeRenne Ave. Project – concept report submitted; working on a presentation to City Council.
- DeLesseps Ave. sidewalk – Environmental is progressing; open house meeting will probably be held in early November.

Mr. Thomson highlighted the city's quick response to the Abercorn St. at Gwinnett St. public safety project (curb extensions and enhanced crosswalks). Mr. Weiner reported unanticipated drainage issues which complicated the project. Work should be completed by mid-September

E. Chatham Area Transit

Mr. Ramon Robinson reported that CAT just completed public meetings for upcoming service changes that will begin October 20, 2014. CAT has established a monthly meeting for the purpose of hearing from customers regarding CAT service.

Ms. Jackson commented that the addition of bicycles to the transportation resources is exciting. She is still concerned about transportation needs to Gulfstream. They want transit for their employees. She suggested a survey to assess the need. CAT is working with SEDA to reach out to employers on the west side. Response to surveys is slow. The express bus to the airport is raising the fare to \$5.00 as of October 1, 2014.

F. Georgia Ports Authority

No report at this time.

G. Savannah-Hilton Head International Airport

Mr. George Fidler reported that the interim improvements at the I-95/Airways Ave. intersection have begun with anticipated completion in November. This work is done mostly at night. This project is in advance of GDOT's larger improvement for this area.

VII. Other Public Comments

No public comments at this time.

VIII. Announcements

The next CORE MPO meeting will be October 29, 2014.

IX. Non-agenda items

Mr. Thomson noted that the upcoming stakeholder's meeting for the park & ride study will review recommendations such as servicing the Gulfstream area with CAT service.

He also commended on the Ms. Wang in the Roadway Functional Classification Update. It was handled very efficiently.

X. Adjournment

There being no further business, the August 27, 2014 CORE Board meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

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