



**CORE MPO BOARD
MEETING SUMMARY**

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

February 26, 2014

10:00 AM

Voting Members

James Aberson
Russ Abolt
LTC Clarence Bowman III
Jason Buelterman
Shedrick Coleman
Stephanie Cutter
Mark Egan
Curtis Foltz
Keith Golden
Tennyson Holder
William W. Hubbard
James Hungerpillar
Edna Jackson
Glenn Jones
Gregory Kelly
Mike Lamb
Pete Liakakis
Chad Reese
Al Scott
Anna Maria Thomas
Wayne Tipton
Trip Tollison

Representing

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

Present

x
x

x
x

x
x
x
x
x
x
x
x
x
x
x
x
x
x
x
x
x

Voting Member Alternates

Tom McQueen
Diane Schleicher

Representing

GDOT
City of Tybee Island

Present

x
x

Regional Coordination Guest

Jeff Ricketson

Representing

Liberty County

Present

x

<u>Others Present</u>	<u>Representing</u>	<u>Present</u>
Michael Adams	MPO Staff	X
John Chapman	CAC	X
Beverly Davis	RS&H	X
Megan Dunn	Savannah Airport Commission	X
Sylvester Formey	Savannah Airport Commission	X
Jessica Hagan	MPO Staff	X
Rachel Hatcher	RS&H	X
Jane Love	MPO Staff	X
Nathaniel Panther	Chatham County	X
Barbara Settzo	for MPO	X
Michele Strickland	City of Savannah	X
Thomas Thomson	MPC Executive Director	X
Wykoda Wang	MPO Staff	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 February 26, 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 2014-2017 Transportation Improvement Program, as recommended by staff.

B. Citizens Advisory Committee

Mr. Mark Egan reported that the committee endorsed staff's recommendation for the amendment to the FY 2014-2017 Transportation Improvement Program.

C. Technical Coordinating Committee

Mr. Mark Wilkes reported that the committee endorsed the amendment to the FY 2014-2017 Transportation Improvement Program, as recommended by staff.

D. Executive Director's Report

Mr. Tom Thomson reported that upon the retirement of Al Bungard, Leon Davenport has been promoted to the position of County Engineer.

He reminded board members of the ribbon cutting ceremony for the Truman Parkway Phase 5 this coming Friday. Access is from White Bluff Rd.

Report on the last GDOT Commission Meeting: 207 projects on the letting list YTD for a total of \$531,000,000, and motor fuel collections YTD are 5.7% over budget and 6.2% over last year at this time.

On the Federal level, appropriations bill summary for transportation: there was \$17.8 billion in discretionary appropriations and \$53.5 billion in non-discretionary. This is considerably less than last year and less than the President's request. Project funding will continue to be tight.

The MPO has a new contact person in the GDOT Planning Department. Her name is Aries Little.

Mr. Thomson said that staff is still working on tasks for the reapportionment, related to the Census urbanized area expansion and the MPO planning boundary. MPO members can expect a memo soon about a series of meetings will be scheduled to review the draft reapportionment document.

III. Action Items

A. Approval of the December 18, 2013 CORE MPO Board Meeting Minutes

It was moved and seconded to accept the minutes of the December 18, 2013 CORE MPO Board Meeting.

CORE Board Action: the motion to accept the minutes of the December 18, 2013 CORE MPO Board Meeting carried with none opposed.

B. Approval of the FY 2014-2017 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) Amendment

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. This amendment is at the request of CAT. The funds were granted in 2012 but the funds were not accessed at that time. CAT is ready to access these funds in FY 2014 for new buses. The first step is to include the request in the TIP and then CAT can begin the application process.

Mr. Mark Egan asked what the minimum requirement for public notice is for public meetings such as this. Ms. Wang responded that notice goes into the Savannah Morning News 10 days prior to the public meeting, also to other local newspapers and magazines, to consultation agencies, neighborhood associations, and local TV channels. This is outlined in the participation plan as approved by this board. The first advertisement is prior to the 15-day public comment period. The second notice was 10 days prior to the first public hearing (CAC Meeting). Mr. Liakakis suggested putting the notice in the “Announcements” section of the Savannah Morning News and continue to run it there until the meeting date.

Ms. Wang and Mr. Thomson confirmed that notices are sent to neighborhoods. Mr. Thomson assured the committee that staff will look into Mr. Liakakis suggestion.

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

It was moved and second to approve the FY 2014-2017 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) amendment.

CORE Board Action: the motion to approve the FY 2014-2017 Transportation Improvement (TIP) amendment carried with none opposed.

IV. Other Business

No other business at this time.

V. Status Reports

A. Airport Master Plan

Mr. Thomson introduced Mr. Greg Kelly, Executive Director of the Savannah Airport Commission. Mr. Scott acknowledged the Commission chairman, Sylvester Formey, in the audience.

Mr. Kelly introduced Megan Dunn as the newest member of the airport staff.

He reported that the last time a master plan was done was 1983. The Airport Master Plan is a 20-year vision of what the airport should look like in short-term, mid-term, and long term increments. The plan is used to communicate with the community, the region, the airport customers, and the FAA about where the airport is headed in the future. Forecasts, selection critical aircraft, and the airport layout plan are the key elements of the plan that interest the FAA. Facilities on the ground today show how closely the 1983 Master Plan has been followed over the years.

As an example, Mr. Kelly shared the history of the development of the Interstate 95 interchange and highlighted the economic impact of that new interchange today.

Critical issues that he elaborated upon are landside access, future air cargo, aviation expansion, future runway development, international federal inspection service, and obstructions.

Mr. Kelly acknowledged the current congestion problem at the I-95 interchange. While the state has a project in development for this, it is too far off in the future. The airport cannot be choked by this congestion, so the airport is putting together a public-private partnership with Gulfstream, the airport, and Ben Carter (developer of one quadrant there) to improve the I-95 interchange. This will be an interim solution, and they are coordinating with GDOT, given the relationship to the future project.

A third runway is likely not needed until about 50 years out. Demand has leveled somewhat in recent years, and airlines business plans are going towards larger craft with less frequency. Mr. Kelly mentioned that sequencing technology also increases the capacity of existing runways.

The Master Plan is important for making sure surrounding development does not create limitation on future airport use. For instance, building heights must be limited in the approach of desired future runways, not just existing runways. Mr. Wilkes asked about the new Embassy Suites Hotel, which was recently built near the potential third runway. A somewhat similar situation occurred in Broward County, and that hotel is now being demolished. Mr. Kelly admitted that the project had slipped through the review process. The Airport Commission works constantly with the municipal neighbors to insure compliance with the height restrictions. Committee members expressed concern about this issue and wish to avoid any other such errors. One suggestion was that all the surrounding municipalities have overlay districts, if they don't already.

Mr. Kelly reported on the new service from JetBlue and how that affects fares of other airlines serving Savannah and Hilton Head.

Mr. Abolt noted that SPLOST is an important component in airport growth and development. He also suggested forming a mobility vision for water ferry, in partnership with CAT, in which a transfer could be provided from the airport to a loading point on the Savannah River (Houlihan Bridge vicinity possibly) to provide a water ferry to downtown Savannah and on to Hilton Head Island.

Mr. Egan asked what specific kind of improvements the Airport is proposing at the I-95 interchange. Mr. Kelly responded that they will shrink the existing lane width, extend asphalt out to the guardrails to fit additional turn lanes, and reduce the median to expand the left edge. GDOT could approve this plan as an interim solution. It is not intended to be a long-term solution.

Dr. Chad Reese commented that CAT made their changes in bus service to the airport a couple months ago, including the express route. 90% of the users are using the service for job access.

Mr. Sylvester Formey, the chair of the Airport Commission, requested to speak, and said he is very concerned about the I-95 interchange congestion. He is not prepared to accept GDOT's proposed 2 year schedule. He asked all agencies and municipalities to work together to make this the top priority.

Ms. Jackson recommended that the Airport Commission coordinate a meeting of all the area mayors to support a joint effort to move this project forward.

Mr. Thomson noted that this board can advance this project once we know the details of the project. Mr. Tom McQueen recommended that it get into the Long Range Transportation Plan as a first step.

Mr. Thomson also noted the MPC partnership with the airport and with Hunter Army Airfield. In addition to flight safety issues, the new zoning ordinance has proposed "noise zones" to ensure that whatever is built in the noise zone is compatible.

B. Total Mobility Plan/2040 Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) Status Report

Mr. Mark Wilkes introduced Ms. Beverly Davis. A draft of the LRTP will be brought to this board for their approval in June.

Ms. Davis reviewed tasks completed, tasks currently underway, and tasks yet to do. The prioritization factors that will be used to measure projects have been identified.

Ms. Jackson asked about the time frame for the Victory Dr./Skidaway Rd. project. This project has been reviewed and will be included in the priority list.

There are two screening filters; the first screen is need and the second screen is sustainability. Ms. Davis elaborated on the factors included in these two screens. They will be applying these factors to the projects. The result will be a prioritized project list.

Mr. McQueen commented on how important it is to create a prioritization list of the projects. He uses this list as his “play book” whenever he is asked about the priorities in Savannah. He appreciates these updates.

Mr. Thomson noted that we have a current LRTP with a list of projects that are termed “financially feasible”. That list is going to get shorter due to financial limitations. Creative funding will be necessary. We cannot depend on traditional funding sources any longer.

Mr. Scott commented on the importance of SPLOST funds that are voted on every six years. Mr. Wilkes commented that SPLOST funds are included in the financial plan of the LRTP. If the voters ever do not pass SPLOST, those funds will need to be withdrawn.

Ms. Jackson addressed the critical nature of the Victory and Ogeechee Rd. project. Safety should be a priority factor to push projects forward.

Mr. Thomson explained that this project is a priority; the need is to match the funding year with the production schedule. Ms. Jackson requested more information from the MPO so that she is ready for her next meeting with GDOT. Mr. Wilkes explained that projects that have been started, such as Ogeechee Rd, are top priorities. Most of what Ms. Davis is referring to are projects that have not been started. Regrettably, as financial sources are cut, projects get delayed.

C. Schedule for CORE MPO’s Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) to fund bicycle, pedestrian, or other projects

Ms. Jane Love presented the status report. In review, she explained that this new program in MAP-21 rolled in some of the older programs such as Transportation Enhancements. Per the legislation, larger MPOs have input in the project selection. The project sponsor needs to put up 20% of the project cost. CORE MPO’s available federal funding in this round is \$814,396. This is two years’ allocations combined. Ms. Love reviewed eligible applicants, eligible activities, and the call for projects schedule. The opening date is March 18th for project submission. Recommendations from the selection committee will be brought to this board at the June meeting for Board approval. The selected projects need to be included in the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP).

Ms. Schleicher asked if this was a potential way for the City of Tybee to address a construction funding shortfall on the Marsh Hen Trail project that they’ve been working on with a previous TE grant. Ms. Love confirmed this program was for actual funding, not just to get on the list. Mr. Thomson explained that project selection and inclusion of the projects in the TIP will happen simultaneously.

Ms. Love explained that the MPO staff will do the review of projects and bring the projects to this board for approval. MPO staff is coordinating with GDOT throughout this process.

VI. Agency Reports

A. GDOT

Ms. Maggie Yoder reported on the following projects:

- #1 SR 204 from Pine Grove Rd. to Veterans Pkwy. – Let on 1/17/14. This will come off this list.
- #2 SR 25 Conn/Bay St. – right-of-way acquisition is on-going; final plans on track.
- #6 SR 26/Ogeechee Rd. - preliminary draft layouts are available; working on the schedule.
- #12 SR 204/Largo Dr. – construction funds authorized; to be let next month.
- #14 I-95 NB Ramp at Airways Ave. – preliminary plans are 50%; designers' meeting tomorrow.
- #16 I-95 SB Welcome Center – GDOT to submit plans to GA State Financing Investment Commission next week and they will award the project this spring.
- #30 SR 21 from SR 30 to I-95 – approved for the Design-Build program.
- #23 SR-56 from McKenzie St. to Tybrisa St. – awaiting historical clearance; preliminary plans are ready to go.

Under Active Construction projects:

- #2 – Safe Routes to Schools – starting work this month.
- #7 – SR 204 spur – project still on schedule.
- #10 – Truman Pkwy. Phase 5 – ribbon cutting this week; open to the public next month.
- #11 – Jimmy DeLoach connector – starting to work on the first bridge.
- #12 – Dean Forest Rd. – complete except for some punch list items.

Quick response projects:

- SR 204 at Apache Dr. – work is done except for some striping.
- Bonny Bridge Rd. and SR 21 – awarded and work should begin soon.
- Elongated refuge island at Pine Grove Rd. – work just began.

There was discussion about when the Truman Parkway will be open to traffic. Mr. Abolt noted that the police need to know for certain if the road will be open or closed after the ribbon cutting. Ms. Yoder will confirm.

Mr. Thomson asked about the Jimmy DeLoach connector funding amount. Is there extra money that we can use for other port projects?

Ms. Jackson asked GDOT about the I-516/DeRenne/Hampstead projects. The public needs to know that federal input has shifted the alignment because of historic determination. Residents along that stretch are not happy that their property will be intact along a road they believe they don't want to live on, especially since they were led to believe they would be able to relocate as part of the project.

B. Liberty County

No report at this time.

C. Chatham County

Mr. Nathaniel Panther reported on the following preconstruction projects:

- Jimmy DeLoach Pkwy., Phase II – public information open house in January 2014.
- Jimmy DeLoach/US 80 Interchange – public hearing open house for the environmental approval also in January, 2014.
- Bay St. widening – 40 of the 86 parcels have been acquired.

D. City of Savannah

Ms. Michele Strickland reported on the following projects:

- Project DeRenne – the interchange justification report has been submitted to GDOT. In a few weeks, it will move to FHWA Atlanta office and then to FHWA in Washington. The final concept report is complete, but GDOT cannot approve it until the interchange justification report has been signed by FHWA.

E. Chatham Area Transit

Dr. Reese reported as follows:

- “Super Stop” is under construction at Waters & 37th.
- Contract awarded for construction of intermodal facility on Hutchinson Island.
- Open house for new operations center will be in March.
- Contract awarded for new accessible taxi program beginning in March.
- Running all four ferries for St. Patrick's Day.
- New technology programs will be unveiled this summer.

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 April 23, 2014.

IX. Non-agenda items

X. Adjournment

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

Respectfully submitted,

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