



METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION

**CORE MPO BOARD
MEETING SUMMARY**

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

October 29, 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	x
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 Hungerpiller	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	
Chad Reese	Chatham Area Transit	x
Ben Rozier	City of Bloomingdale	
Al Scott	Chatham County Commission	x
Lee Smith	Chatham County	
Trip Tollison	Savannah Economic Development Authority (SEDA)	

Voting Member Alternates

Representing

Present

Ron Feldner	City of Garden City	x
George Fidler	Savannah Airport Commission	x
Tom McQueen	GDOT	x
Diane Schleicher	City of Tybee Island	x

Regional Coordination Guest

Representing

Present

Jeff Ricketson	Liberty County	x
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<u>Others Present</u>	<u>Representing</u>	<u>Present</u>
Jessica Hagan	MPO Staff	X
Jo Claire Hickson	Coastal GA Greenway	X
Jane Love	MPO Staff	X
Ramond Robinson	CAT	X
Barbara Settzo	for MPO	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 MPO action: the motion to approve the agenda for the October 29, 2014 meeting carried with none opposed.

II. Committee Reports

A. Advisory Committee on Accessible Transportation

Mr. James Aberson reported on the recent passing of ACAT member, Bob Habas, and offered a eulogy highlighting Bob's continuous efforts to improve life for the physically disabled.

B. Citizens Advisory Committee

Ms. Jane Love reported that the committee endorsed all the action items. A public hearing was advertised but there were no people present for the public hearing.

C. Technical Coordinating Committee

Mr. Mark Wilkes reported that the committee endorsed all the action items that came before the committee.

D. Executive Director's Report

Mr. Thomson reminded committee members to watch their e-mail for notification of upcoming meetings on the Victory Drive Corridor Study. He also announced that US 17 improvements in South Carolina were given the nod to proceed. He has been coordinating with the MPO director in South Carolina.

III. Action Items

A. Approval of the August 27, 2014 CORE MPO Board Meeting Minutes

It was moved and seconded to approve the minutes of the August 27, 2014 CORE MPO Board Meeting.

CORE MPO Board action: the motion to approve the minutes of the August 27, 2014 CORE MPO Board Meeting carried with none opposed.

B. Approval of the CORE MPO 2015 Meeting Schedule

It was moved and seconded to approve the CORE MPO 2015 Meeting Schedule.

CORE MPO Board action: the motion to approve the CORE MPO Meeting Schedule carried with none opposed.

C. Approval of the Amendments to the FY 2015-2018 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)

Ms. Wykoda Wang presented the staff report. There are three amendments proposed; one from GDOT and two from CAT. The GDOT amendment is a cost adjustment for the SR 21 @ I-95 Diverging Diamond project. Now that the concept report is done, the cost estimate of the construction phase has increased from \$3,641,400 to \$6,698,955. GDOT will fund this increase.

The CORE MPO has set aside \$750,000 for special transportation studies. CAT has requested \$82,220 from this portion for two special studies for transit. The amendment reduces the \$750,000 by that amount and creates a new project for CAT. CAT will provide the matching funds.

As per the public participation plan, there was a 15-day comment period and today is the public hearing.

Mr. Scott opened the public hearing. Mr. Thomson read the following statement prior to public comments: "The Coastal Region Metropolitan Planning Organization (CORE MPO) is responsible for transportation planning in the Savannah region. The purpose of an MPO

is to ensure 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 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 long-range transportation plan and TIP before they may receive federal funds for implementation. Staff has summarized the amendments to the FY 2015-2018 TIP."

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

It was moved and seconded to approve the amendments to the FY 2015-2018 Transportation Improvement Program as presented.

CORE MPO BOARD action: the motion to approve the amendments to the FY 2015-2018 Transportation Improvement Program as presented carried with none opposed.

D. Adoption of the Non-motorized Transportation Plan

Ms. Jane Love presented the staff report on this bicycle and pedestrian plan which is to replace the current Bikeway Plan. Many of these projects are in the Total Mobility Plan, although mostly in the list of unfunded needs. A non-motorized transportation plan is not required as a stand-alone document, but it does help the MPO fulfill the federal requirement for multi-modal planning. Projects in this plan will be eligible for federal funding. Some of these projects are relatively inexpensive and could be funded totally with local funding, if a local government decides to do it.

Ms. Love reviewed the process for developing this plan, including the public participation. She reviewed projects included in the pedestrian section of the plan by quadrant – northwest, southwest, central, and east portions of the county. After reviewing all the pedestrian projects she noted the top five scoring projects and reviewed the criteria used to score the projects.

She also reviewed bicycle needs and projects in the same quadrants and how those were ranked.

Ms. Edna Jackson asked if White Bluff Rd, all the way to Coffee Bluff, was included and Ms. Love responded that the southern segment to Coffee Bluff is in the plan. Ms. Jackson also asked about Ogeechee Road from Chatham Parkway traveling east. Ms. Love replied in the affirmative.

Ms. Love also noted that all of the segments identified in Tybee Island's bikeway plan have been recognized as part of the regional network in this Non-motorized Transportation Plan.

She reviewed all the public comments that have been received thus far on pedestrian projects and bicycle projects. Regarding project rankings, she explained that the Coastal Greenway project is a large project and will probably be developed in sections. However, scoring the sections instead of the whole route means most of it does not score very high. But when treated as one project it ranks tied for first on the bicycle list and sixth on the pedestrian list. MPO staff has added text within the plan, highlighting the potential usefulness of the Coastal Georgia Greenway when complete. Ms. Love encouraged board members to recognize the future greenway as an economic development asset. There is another type of tourist out there looking for cycling and hiking vacations.

Most of the projects in the Non-motorized Transportation Plan are not funded. Thirteen of the projects are advanced by current TIP projects. She reviewed the various funding sources ranging from federal funds to local funds and various grants. Most projects will not be funded for many years.

Ms. Jackson asked about different means of protection for cyclists on the road, i.e. a barrier or buffer to separate the cyclists from the motorists. Ms. Love responded that some of the recommended treatments in the plan involve newer ideas for buffering, as seen in the design guide from the National Association of City Transportation Officials (NACTO). However, designs in this plan are not set in stone; they could change once a given project gets funded, and the engineers start to look closer at the potential solutions.

Mr. Scott opened the public hearing. Prior to any public comments Mr. Thomson read the following statement into the record: "The Coastal Region Metropolitan Planning Organization (CORE MPO) is responsible for transportation planning in the Savannah region. The purpose of an MPO is to ensure 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 Non-motorized Transportation Plan identifies bicycle and pedestrian improvements for the CORE MPO planning area. Projects in the plan are, or will be, incorporated into the 2040 Total Mobility Plan, making them eligible for federal funding, if not already among the funded projects. Local governments and other planning partners are encouraged to use the Non-motorized Transportation Plan as a guide when funding opportunities arise."

Ms. Jo Claire Hickson with the Georgia Coastal Greenway commended staff and board for working with the Georgia Coastal Greenway. She wholeheartedly supports this plan as it considers how the trail can be built in increments and also in a timely fashion in its entirety. The Georgia Coastal Greenway, Inc. is working with the state to conduct a feasibility study to see how the state could lead the implementation of the Georgia Coastal Greenway. She recognized Chatham County for passing a resolution this month, making the Georgia Coastal Greenway a top priority for construction. She would be happy to work with the City of Savannah if they wish to do a similar thing. This would help her organization in dealing with the state. The local jurisdictions would be relieved of implementing the greenway in segments, if a state agency could take the lead in its implementation. The trail will extend to Tybee Island as part of the greenway. She supports the full adoption of the plan as presented.

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

It was moved and seconded to adopt the Non-motorized Transportation Plan.

Ms. Schleicher emphasized the potential economic benefit of the Georgia Coastal Greenway.

Mr. Tom McQueen requested clearer statements in the policy section that talks about the interpretation of the state's Constitution regarding how motor fuel tax revenue can be used; it shouldn't imply that the GDOT Complete Streets policy could cancel out Attorney General's interpretation. Ms. Love said that it wasn't the intended message and that she would clarify the wording.

CORE MPO BOARD action: the motion to adopt the Non-motorized Transportation Plan carried with none opposed.

E. Park and Ride Lot Study

Ms. Wang presented the staff report. She reviewed the time line of this study and the goals of the study. Today she is presenting the concluding report. She reviewed the seven identified park and ride lot sites in three different corridors. Her review included the lot development alternatives, development costs, and maintenance costs. She also reviewed possible transit service potential and costs. There are two main employment centers – downtown Savannah and the Crossroads/Gulfstream area – where transit service potential is greatest.

The recommended implementation strategy begins with park and ride lot development, then implementation of a carpool/vanpool program, and lastly development of regional commuter transit service.

It was moved and seconded to accept the Park and Ride Lot Study for distribution.

CORE MPO Board action: the motion to accept the Park and Ride Lot Study for distribution carried with none opposed.

IV. Other Business

No other business at this time.

V. Status Reports

A. CORE MPO Re-apportionment Update

Mr. Thomson presented the status report. He identified why this re-apportionment is necessary, what must be done to make it happen, and when it will happen. It is necessary because the metropolitan planning area has been extended into Effingham and Bryan counties. Staff has been developing a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), revising Bylaws, and updating all the transportation plans and documents. It is a priority to integrate the new areas into the long range plan and into the TIP.

He reviewed the time line for completing this re-apportionment. The first step will be to obtain board approval of the MOU and hopefully the bylaws in December 2014. Then all the jurisdictions and relevant agencies involved (local, state, federal) need to sign on, hopefully by July 2015, so that the new CORE MPO can begin the new fiscal year on July 1, 2015.

The proposed MOU defines the contracting parties, defines the MPO boundaries, roles, responsibilities, organization, and staff support, defines each jurisdiction's role and responsibilities in support of the CORE MPO, and concludes with signatures by all parties. He reviewed in detail a sample of a local jurisdiction's responsibilities section. A new item in this proposed MOU is that every CORE MPO member pays dues. All of Richmond Hill is included and only a small portion of Effingham County. He also presented an exhibit of a funding agreement and explained the funding formula. His chart displayed two funding options, one based solely on population and the other based on a minimum fee of \$2,000 for each jurisdiction. He asked for input from the committee. Lastly, he reviewed the proposed bylaw changes. The bylaw format has been standardized and all committee bylaws have been combined into one document. One new committee would be formed, Economic Development and Freight Advisory Committee. The new proposal calls for 23 MPO Board members, each one personally designated by the governing body or agency. This is to establish continuity. Hunter Army Airfield and the MPC have been moved to non-voting members. CAT will be represented by their Executive Director and their Board Chair.

Ms. Schleicher raised an issue with the member attendance requirement. The mayor of Tybee is the representative but he cannot be here. So she attends most of the meetings on behalf of Tybee Island, but at times even she cannot attend so the Mayor pro tem represents Tybee Island. They would like to retain flexibility to have alternates. She also asked how the UPWP was funded in the past. Has there been a change in the law that requires funding be spread among all participants? She would have a hard time persuading the Tybee residents of the value of this added expense. She also questioned the different budget cycles and how they would match up.

Mr. Thomson asked for other comments about membership. He explained that current local match on the MPO planning program is split between the city of Savannah and Chatham County. He emphasized each community's return on investment, (the benefit from annual dues) as a way to sell it to councils and citizens.

Ms. Jackson would like to receive the current funding and the proposed funding. She is also concerned about the budget cycle matching with the CORE MPO budget cycle.

Mr. Shedrick Coleman noted that the MPC has expressed a desire to be more involved in the MPO process, therefore having the MPC member as a non-voting member runs counter to the desires of the MPC. He asked that the MPC chairman be a voting member of the CORE MPO board. What incentive would there be for the MPC chairman to attend if he or she could not vote?

Mr. Thomson is open to it. He asked the other members for further ideas.

Ms. Jackson wants to do a more thorough review and talk with the city manager.

Ms. Schleicher explained that Tybee Island residents already ask what they get from their *county* taxes and she replies that they get regional planning as part of their county taxes. Charging an additional MPO fee for regional planning will be difficult for her residents to accept.

Mr. Ron Felder commented that the challenge in Garden City is to explain and itemize the benefits received from various fees and taxes. He needs tangible benefits to show to his council such as plans and projects that relate directly to Garden City.

Mr. Thomson noted that the "big picture" is that this area is eligible for federal funds. More documentation than ever before is required for every federal dollar used in our planning area.

Mr. Thomson returned to his explanation of bylaw changes. The new bylaws propose that the meeting quorum be 50% plus 1. Another change proposed is that every member of the CORE MPO board would appoint one member to the Citizens Advisory Committee.

The next step is to get a consensus from the members on these changes and then go out to the various jurisdictions for discussion and approval.

Ms. Schleicher spoke on behalf of Vernonburg regarding a \$2,000 minimum dues figure. Mr. Scott suggested lowering the minimum to \$1,000 for communities like Vernonburg. Mr. Thomson noted that they can re-calculate a third funding scenario using the \$1,000 minimum.

Mr. Thomson noted that his funding model parallels the model used in Liberty County. Another model used in Hillsborough County, FL has the county funding regional planning in full.

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 CS650/Grange Rd. – final plans are about 90% complete; just had final field plan review and a public detour open house meeting; ROW acquisition is underway.
- #3 Ogeechee Rd. – onsite team kickoff meeting was held in Oct.; concept development is underway.
- #7 & #8 – Jimmy DeLoach Pkwy. (extension to southwest) and interchange (at US 80) projects – ROW plans approved; ROW funds are authorized for the extension portion and they are working towards authorization for the interchange project.
- #10 – US 80 at Bull River & Lazaretto Creek – initial team concept meeting scheduled for this afternoon on Tybee Island.
- #11 – Airways Ave. – final field plan review and designer has finished addressing all the comments he received; awaiting utility and environmental certification; final plan is ready to go.
- #13 – Brampton Rd. connector – in concept stage; ongoing practical alternatives process.
- #18 – SR 21 from SR30 to I-95 (diverging diamond) – concept report routed for signature; awaiting final approval.
- #21 – rapid flashing beacon project on Tybee Island – final field plan review and design office has addressed the comments received.

Under Active Construction projects:

- #1 – 11 miles of concrete rehab – just newly let in September. No work has begun.
- #3 – Largo Dr. intersection – completed asphalt and milling work; signal and striping remain.
- #5 – King George Blvd. at SR 204 interchange – continuing utility relocation; building up retention pond; installing needed drainage.
- #7 – Back River Bridge replacement – majority of piles have been driven; continuing with concrete pours for the decks.

Ms. Yoder announced that she has changed her position within GDOT. Until a new person is found she or Will Murphy will be the contact.

Ms. Jackson asked about a county SPLOST project on Skidaway Rd. – the part from Montgomery Cross Rd. to Ferguson Ave. There has not been any meeting or activity for nearly two years. Mr. Thomson responded that they will look into it.

B. Liberty County

Mr. Jeff Ricketson reported that they are about to develop a non-motorized transportation plan. They intend to complement the CORE MPO's efforts in regard to the Georgia Coastal Greenway.

C. Chatham County

Mr. Thomson noted that there was a written county report but no county representative today.

D. City of Savannah

No report at this time.

E. Chatham Area Transit

Mr. Ramond Robinson reported that CAT had a service change on October 20, 2014 to add additional service for Route 31 on the Skidaway Rd. corridor. They had a "Try Transit" week with lots of promotions to encourage trying transit. They did see an increase in ridership that week. CAT had their Board meeting last week. September showed a significant increase in ridership in both fixed route and para-transit services. Para-transit service continues to increase. The airport service has now added Sunday service and a fare change. The fare is \$5.00 one way and \$8.00 round trip. There has been no significant drop in ridership since the fare change. In addition to the CAT Board two new committees have been added – the Transit Advisory Committee and the Business Advisory Committee.

Ms. Jackson asked about the transfer station that was at Bull and Broughton. Is CAT thinking of returning that stop? Mr. Robinson noted that the stop was reinstated in October for getting *off* the bus only.

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 December 10, 2014. Mr. Thomson reminded everyone that this date is earlier than usual. Please check your calendar.

IX. Non-agenda items

X. Adjournment

There being no further business, the October 29, 2014 CORE Board meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

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