



CORE MPO Board

Chatham County Commission Chambers -- 10:00 a.m.
124 Bull Street. Savannah, Ga.
Minutes

December 11, 2019 Meeting Minutes of the CORE MPO Board

Voting Members	Representing	Present
James Aberson	Advisory Committee on Accessible Transportation	X
Russ Carpenter	City of Richmond Hill	
Tim Callanan	Effingham County Commission	
Bill Durrence	City of Savannah	
Joseph Ervin	Metropolitan Planning Commission	X
Ron Feldner	City of Garden City	X
George Fidler	Savannah Airport Commission	X
Dr. Michael O'Halloran	Chatham Area Transit Board of Directors	X
Shawn Gillen	City of Tybee Island	X
Beth E. Goette	Town of Thunderbolt	
James Hungerpiller	Town of Vernonberg	
Michael Brown	Chatham Area Transit Authority	X
Mike Lamb	City of Pooler	
Heath Lloyd	City of Savannah	X
Tom McQueen	Georgia Department of Transportation	X
Christopher Middleton	Citizens Advisory Committee	
Gary Norton	City of Port Wentworth	
Ben Rozier	City of Bloomingdale	
Al Scott	Chatham County Commission	X
Dr. Estella Shabazz	City of Savannah	
Lee Smith	Chatham County	X
Pamela Bernard	Economic Development & Freight Advisory Committee	X
Vacant	Chatham County	
<u>Voting Alternates</u>	<u>Representing</u>	
<u>Others</u>	<u>Representing</u>	
Byron Cowart	GDOT-District5	X
Terri Harrison	Chatham Area Transit	X
Brenda Daiss	Chatham Area Transit	X
Brian McCarthy	3 Sea Sons LLC	X
Richard Fangmann	POND	X
Melanie Wilson	MPC	X
Stephanie Rossi	CORE MPO/MPC	X
Wykoda Wang	CORE MPO/MPC	X
James Small	CORE MPO/MPC	X
Mark Wilkes	CORE MPO/MPC	X

I. Approval of Agenda

Mr. James Aberson motioned to approve the December 11, 2019 CORE MPO Board meeting agenda; seconded by Mr. Ron Feldner. The motion was passed with none opposed.

II. Committee Reports (verbal)

ACAT

Mr. James Aberson spoke on behalf of ACAT. The committee met on Monday, December 9, 2019 and voted to endorse the FY 2018 – 2021 TIP Amendments.

CAC

Ms. Wykoda Wang reported that the CAC met on Thursday, December 5, 2019 and voted to endorse the FY 2018 – 2021 TIP Amendments.

TCC

Ms. Pamela Bernard spoke on behalf of the TCC. The committee met on Thursday, December 5, 2019 and voted to endorse the FY 2018 – 2021 TIP Amendments. The committee held elections resulting in Mr. Mark Wilkes being elected as Chairman and Ms. Pamela Bernard being elected as Vice-Chairman.

Director's Report

Mr. Mark Wilkes gave the Director's report.

- The final public meeting on the I-16 Little Neck Rd. Interchange Study was held on Tuesday, December 3, 2019.
- The final public meeting on the I-95 Airways Ave. Interchange Study will be held on Wednesday, December 11, 2019 at the Pooler City Hall from 3:00pm-5:00pm. Staff is reviewing the final report on this study concurrently with GDOT and the project managers. POND consultants will be presenting the final outcomes of the interchange study.

III. Action Items

1. Approval of October 30, 2019 CORE MPO meeting minutes

📎 [October 30 MPO.pdf](#)

Mr. Joseph Ervin motioned to approve the October 30, 2019 meeting minutes; seconded by Dr. Michael O'Halloran. The motion was passed with none opposed.

2. Amendments to FY 2018 - 2021 TIP

📎 [FY 2018 -2021 TIP Amendments Staff Report Nov-Dec 2019.pdf](#)

Ms. Wykoda Wang stated that staff received the TIP amendment request for six projects.

1. PI# 0010560, SR 26 FM JOHNNY MERCER TO OLD US 80; INC BULL RVR&LAZARETTO – increase ROW funding by \$922,500 in FY 2020.
2. PI# 0006328, BRAMPTON ROAD CONN FROM SR 21/SR 25 to SR 21 SPUR –1) move the CST phase from FY 2020 to FY 2021; and 2) move the UTL phase from FY 2020 to FY 2021
3. PI# 0015704, SR 404 SPUR/US 17 @ BACK RIVER – move the CST phase from FY 2021 to long range.
4. PI# 0015705, SR 404 SPUR/US 17 FM NE OF SAVANNAH HARBOR PKWY TO BACK RIVER – 1) move the ROW phase from FY 2020 to long range; and 2) move the CST phase from FY 2021 to long range.
5. PI# 0013741, SR 25/US 17 @ Savannah River in Port Wentworth – 1) move the ROW phase from FY 2020 to FY 2021 with reduced cost; 2) move the CST phase from FY 2020 to long range; and 3) move the UTL phase from FY 2020 to long range.
6. PI# 0013742, SR 25/US 17 @ Middle River in Port Wentworth - 1) move the ROW phase from FY 2020 to FY 2021 with reduced cost; and 2) move the CST phase from FY 2020 to long range.

The Right-of-Way (ROW) phase for PI#0010560, SR 26 FM JOHNNY MERCER TO OLD US 80; INC BULL RVR&LAZARETTO has increased from \$280,500 to \$1,203,000.

Due to the project falling behind schedule, the Construction (CST) and Utility (UTL) phases for PI# 0006328, BRAMPTON ROAD CONN FROM SR 21/SR 25 to SR 21 SPUR have been moved from FY 2020 to FY 2021. There is no cost increase or decrease for the project.

The CST and ROW phases for projects PI# 0015704, SR 404 SPUR/US 17 @ BACK RIVER and PI# 0015705, SR 404 SPUR/US 17 FM NE OF SAVANNAH HARBOR PKWY TO BACK RIVER have been moved out of the TIP to Long Range.

The ROW and CST phases for PI# 0013741, SR 25/US 17 @ Savannah River in Port Wentworth have been moved. The ROW phase has been moved to FY 2021 with a reduced cost and the CST phase has been moved to Long Range. The CST phase for PI# 0013742, SR 25/US 17 @ Middle River in Port Wentworth project has been moved to Long Range and the ROW phase is moving to FY 2021 with a cost reduction. Both projects are considered design build and haven't experienced delays.

A 17-day public comment period was held, and staff received several comments. Most of the comments were in reference to the US 80 Bridges Replacement project, particularly the significant increase in the ROW cost. Many comments asked when the revised concept report will be available for review and where the funding will come from.

Staff received one comment concerning the Brampton Rd. Connector project. The comment received stated that the project's description was incorrect. The description states that Foundation Rd. is a part of the project when it is not. CORE MPO staff is coordinating with GDOT staff to make the correction to the project's description.

Staff received a comment from a TCC member indicating that the Houlihan bridge is nearly a century old and Port Wentworth may consider relocating the bridge due to its historical value.

Mr. Lee Smith asked if Georgia and South Carolina DOTs are aligned in the construction and development of the US 17 Back River Bridge project. Ms. Wang stated that both DOTs are in the process of reaching an agreement concerning funding for the project.

Mr. Shawn Gillen stated that the City of Tybee Island has concerns about why GDOT is making a request for local funds for a State project. Why is the agency requiring an additional \$922,500 from the City of Tybee Island to build a project that is not located in Tybee's jurisdiction? Tybee officials feel this is an attempt to delay the project. Mr. Gillen would like clarifications on the design concepts presented in April of 2019 that illustrated the bridge at Bull River being built south of the current bridge.

Ms. Wang stated that staff will work with GDOT to determine why the cost estimate has increased. GDOT is currently working on the revised concept report. Mr. Byron Cowart stated that the OPD (Office of Project Delivery) executive management is reviewing the north and south alignments of the Bull River bridge. GDOT staff should have a decision by the end of January 2020 on whether they need to revise the approved concept report. When ROW plans are received, GDOT staff will be able to provide a more accurate estimate for ROW cost.

Ms. Wang suggested that Tybee Island apply for the Highway Infrastructure Program (HIP) funds during the upcoming Call for Projects. Currently, it is indicated that Tybee Island is the local sponsor and is responsible for the project's ROW cost. Ms. Wang stated that the money contributed by Tybee could potentially be used as a local match in the HIP funds Call for Projects. Staff will come before the CORE MPO Board in February 2020 with the Call for Projects package. At that point, Tybee can apply for the HIP funds and the TCC will rank the projects. In this case, Tybee Island is competing with other local agencies who also have the option to apply for the HIP funds for their projects. If the US 80 Bridges Replacement project is deemed an emergency, the project may rank higher in getting the funding award. It is also recommended that Tybee reach out to GDOT and inquire if additional HB 170 funds or other federal funds can be allocated to this project. The goal is to explore different funding sources so that the bridges replacement project can move forward.

The 2020 Call for Projects will be conducted for the HIP, Z230, and Z301 funds. These funds will cover Transit, Bike and Pedestrian, and Highway Projects depending on their respective eligibility requirements.

The Public hearing was opened.

Mr. Brian McCarthy of 3 Seas Sons LLC spoke on the US 80 Bridges Replacement project, particularly the bridge replacement at Bull River. They are the property owner to the immediate north side of the bridge. They have plans to build a marina on the property. Mr. McCarthy stated that prior to purchasing the property, they

reviewed the concept plan approved in August 2017 stating that the bridge will be built on the south side and not impact the north side of the bridge. If the bridge is built on the north side of the property, this will be a major impact to the owner's business plans to construct a marina. Mr. McCarthy has concerns about the background of the bridge alignment change and where the ROW changes will take place.

Mr. Al Scott stated that the board is voting to revise the ROW cost for the TIP amendment. The board is not voting for a change in the design or layout of the bridge. By voting to revise the ROW cost in the TIP, it does not indicate that the MPO Board is in support of changes to the ROW or design.

Mr. McCarthy asked if someone could explain why the plans are changing. Mr. McQueen stated that GDOT staff is refining where the alignments will be and referred to the comments of Ms. Wang and Mr. Cowart.

The Public hearing was closed.

Mr. Joseph Ervin motioned to adopt the FY 2018 - 2021 TIP Amendments; seconded by Mr. James Aberson. The motion was passed with none opposed.

IV. Other Business

3. Discussion on Special Studies for UPWP development and amendment

📎 [FHWA Procurement Process.pdf](#)

📎 [Garden City State Route 21 Access Management Plan Study 111819.pdf](#)

Mr. Mark Wilkes stated that at the previous meeting staff announced that we opened a Call for Plans and Studies in conjunction with the development of the FY 2021 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP). The MPO has two opportunities each year to apply for additional unspent PL discretionary funds. Staff received three recommendations for planning studies, two from Chatham County and one from Garden City.

Garden city intends to do an Access Management Study of SR 21 from Minus Avenue to Bourne Avenue with an estimated cost of \$125,000. Garden City intends to amend the current FY 2020 UPWP to include their planning study. CORE MPO staff will complete a work program amendment after the 1st of the year. If amended into the FY 2020 UPWP, staff could pursue funding as soon as March recognizing that the procurement process after this could take nearly six months.

The two planning studies proposed by Chatham County are SR 204 between King George and US 17 and Islands Expressway between Truman Parkway and US 80.

- SR 204 between King George and US 17 is a traffic engineering study to propose concepts to complete the limited access through that section.
- Islands Expressway between Truman Parkway and US 80 is a study to provide a safety and operational review of the corridor that will include traffic counts, a traffic study, review of crash data, and the potential for a bike lane.

The timing on when Chatham County will be able to provide the match for these studies is currently unclear. The TCC elected to have these requests included in the FY 2021 Unified Planning Work Program to allow staff to work through timing and sponsorships for the projects.

The Strategic Planning Studies being discussed will be incorporated into the FY 2021 UPWP or amended into the FY 2020 UPWP in February 2020. Until a funding award is received, all projects will be considered illustrative in the UPWP.

V. Status Reports

4.I-95 / Airways Avenue Interchange Study

Mr. Richard Fangmann of Pond gave an updated presentation on the I-95 / Airways Avenue Interchange Study. Pond has completed the technical analysis and is presenting the results to the CORE MPO Board. The project's need and purposes focus on improving access, addressing congestion, and improving safety in that area. Mr. Fangmann presented the four interchange alternatives developed as a result of the study.

- Alternative #1. Widen Existing Bridge and Ramps

This alternative adds increased capacity along Pooler Parkway providing additional lanes and ramps. This alternative can utilize the existing bridge and does not require additional right-of-way. A challenge

contributing to much of the congestion are the three very closely spaced intersections - Benton Blvd, Mill Creek, and the interchange on the western portion. The base cost of construction is \$15,482,000 with a total project cost of \$19,600,000.

- **Alternative #2. Diverging Diamond Interchange (DDI)**
This alternative allows the traffic to cross over, creating an opposite side of traffic flow, making it easier for motorists to get on and off. The close spacing of the interchanges is a challenge due to the congestion it creates, in addition to the significant through traffic that currently exist. This alternative does not require additional right-of-way and has a base construction cost of \$10,159,000 with a total project cost of \$13,000,000.
- **Alternative #3. Single Point Urban Interchange (SPUI)**
This alternative will require widening the road through the interchange area and reconfiguring the ramps to cross over at the center of the interchange. This creates one intersection in the middle where Northbound and Southbound motorists will turn simultaneously. This will create increased operational efficiency at the intersections with the highest volume. This alternative does not require additional right-of-way and has a base cost of construction of \$30,955,000 with a total project cost of \$38,400,000.
- **Alternative #4. Flyovers from North and South**
This alternative includes flyovers from the north and south going to and from the airport. This alternative does not require additional right-of-way. The base cost of construction is \$31,068,000 with a total project cost of \$43,300,000.

All alternatives were evaluated based on traffic operations, traffic safety, access, environmental considerations, public support, and cost.

- In evaluating traffic operations, POND staff accounted for PM peak hour traffic, average ramp queuing on the northbound and southbound ramps, spacing between the interchange and the retail center, and reduction in conflict points.
- For traffic safety, the criteria include maximum PM ramp queuing and backup.
- Access involved evaluating travel time across the interchange, to and from the airport and the nearby retail center.
- Environmental considerations included the impacts to jurisdictional waters.
- Public support stemmed from the comments received at public meetings and online surveys.
- Cost included a benefit/cost ratio.

All categories receive a score between 1 and 5. Alternative #4, the flyover, scored the highest with 27.7 points.

Mr. Tom McQueen questioned how public support is considered a factor of benefit cost. Mr. Fangmann stated that public support was not included into the benefit cost calculation. It is a separate category.

Moving forward, the draft report will be vetted by MPO and GDOT staff. Ultimately, the project will have to be included in the TIP to receive funding.

VI. Information Reports (verbal)

GDOT

Mr. Byron Cowart, Planning and Programming Engineer for GDOT District 5, presented the GDOT/Chatham County Projects.

Chatham County

Ms. Pamela Bernard, Senior Transportation Engineer for Chatham County, presented the status report for the Chatham County Roadway Improvement Program.

City of Savannah

Mr. Heath Lloyd, Chief Development Officer, stated that there was no report for the City of Savannah.

Garden City

Mr. Ron Feldner, City Manager, stated that there was no report for Garden City.

Tybee Island

Mr. Shawn Gillen, City Manager, presented the status report for the City of Tybee.

Airport Commission

Mr. George Fidler, Director of Engineering, presented the status report for the Savannah Airport Commission.

Chatham Area Transit

Ms. Terri Harrison, Chief Financial Officer, presented the status report for CAT.

No report from...

Effingham County

Richmond Hill

Pooler

Port Wentworth

Bloomington

Thunderbolt

Georgia Ports Authority

Vernonburg

Hinesville Area MPO

Lowcountry Area MPO (South Carolina)

VII. Other Public Comments (limit to 3 minutes)

Mr. Brian McCarthy voiced his concerns with the project planning and approval process.

VIII. Announcements

[5.Next CORE MPO Board Meeting: Wednesday February 26, 2020 at 10:00 a.m. \(Location TBA\)](#)

[6.I-16/Little Neck Road Study Community Open House](#)

[📎 I16_LittleNeck_MtgFlyer.pdf](#)

[7.I-95 at Airways Ave/Pooler Pkwy Interchange Study Public Meeting](#)

IX. Other Non-Agenda Information for Reference**X. Adjournment**

There being no further business, the December 11, 2019 meeting of the CORE MPO Board was adjourned.

The Chatham County - Savannah Metropolitan Planning Commission provides meeting summary minutes which are adopted by the respective board. Verbatim transcripts of minutes are the responsibility of the interested party.