

**COASTAL REGION METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION
FEBRURAY 2024 MPO MEETINGS**

Agenda Item: Amendments to the 2045 Metropolitan Transportation Plan

Presenter: Wykoda Wang, MPO Staff

Summary: The CORE MPO's current 2045 Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) was adopted by the CORE MPO Board in August 2019. The MTP can be amended as project scopes change or new needs are identified.

According to the CORE MPO's Participation Plan, any proposed changes to the MTP can be sorted into three categories.

- Administrative Modification – 1) Making a minor revision (as defined in GDOT's STIP Amendment Process) to a project that is already in the MTP's financially constrained plan; OR 2) Adding, deleting, or modifying a project in the MTP's vision (illustrative) plan, provided that any added projects come from an adopted study accepted by the CORE MPO.
- One Step Amendment – 1) The request is more than a minor revision (i.e. not eligible as an administrative modification); AND 2) The request **would not** affect the funding or timing of other projects in the MTP's financially constrained plan or TIP.
- Two Step Amendment – 1) The request is more than a minor revision (i.e. not eligible as an administrative modification); AND 2) The request **would** affect the funding or timing of other projects in the MTP's financially constrained plan (and TIP in many cases).

The key to any MTP amendment is to make sure that the MTP is financially balanced in the impacted cost band after the amendment, impacting both the total project costs and the expected revenues. The MTP amendment process for the proposed project change varies (either two-step or one-step), so it's important to determine what kind of amendment is being pursued.

GDOT Request

In January 2024, the Planning Office of the Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) requested an amendment be made to the 2045 MTP for a project. The information on the project is listed below.

SR 404 SPUR/US 17 @ SAVANNAH RIVER CROSSING

- Project Identification: PI 0017183
- Sponsor: GDOT
- Request: Include the right-of-way (ROW) phase in Cost Band Two (2028 – 2036).

GDOT PI	Project Description	County	Primary Work Type	Length	Phase	Fiscal Year	Fund Code	Federal Amount	State Amount	Local Amount	Total Amount
0017183	SR 404 SPUR/US 17 @ SAVANNAH RIVER CROSSING	Chatham	Roadway project	0.40 Miles	ROW	2028	Y001	\$400,000	\$100,000	\$0	\$500,000

- Reason for Amendment: A ROW phase is being added in order to begin the federal environmental process and enable FHWA to be the lead agency on federal resource coordination and environmental review.
- Financial Impact: GDOT will provide the funds for this ROW phase that are in addition to the 2045 MTP revenue projections.

CORE MPO Analysis

Needs Assessment: Currently the maintenance project, SR 404 SPUR @ TALMADGE MEMORIAL BRIDGE (PI# 0019219) is programmed in the FY 2024 – 2027 TIP. This project is to replace the cables of the Talmadge Memorial Bridge, raising it so that taller shipping vessels can access the Port of Savannah. However, GDOT indicates that this project is a short-term fix, and longer-term improvements are needed.

A need is included in the 2045 MTP Vision Plan (not an official part of the fiscally constrained plan) as Savannah River Bridge (Talmadge replacement) with no cost estimating information (Appendix E: <https://www.thempc.org/docs/lit/CoreMpo/Plans/TotalMobility/Draft2045/2019/AppE.pdf>). The source of the need is the Georgia Ports Authority (GPA) and the Economic Development and Freight Advisory Committee (EDFAC).

Previous Work: P# 0017183 started as a feasibility study. The project description is as follows. [This is a detailed planning feasibility study in Savannah of an improved US 17 crossing at the Savannah River. It will identify all improvement alternatives and recommend a preferred solution, and then proceed to conduct conceptual engineering/scoping for that preferred solution which will include a detailed estimate of cost and consideration of preliminary environmental issues.](#)

CORE MPO processed an amendment to the FY 2021 – 2024 TIP at the request of GDOT in April 2021 to add the scoping phase of the feasibility study in FY 2021 (<https://www.thempc.org/docs/lit/CoreMpo/Plans/TIP/2021/Apr/AprUpdates.pdf>). Since the funding source was 100% local, this project was not required to be included in the TIP. However, it was incorporated in the TIP for reference as future projects/programming may derive from the feasibility study. Funding authorization occurred in 2021 at \$10 million.

Current Status: The Scoping phase of the project or PE1 continues and is moving into conceptual development and environmental coordination. The right-of-way (ROW) phase is proposed to be included in the CORE MPO's MTP before the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) starts to review the feasibility study report and moves on to the next steps.

Financial Balance Determination: The requested project phase is not included in the 2045 MTP, so it must be amended into the plan. The MTP must be financially constrained in each cost band, meaning the total project costs must be equal to or less than the expected revenues for that cost band. Since GDOT will provide additional revenues for this project phase than the original 2045 MTP Cost Band Two revenue projections, **inclusion of the project phase into the 2045 MTP Cost Band Two will not impact other projects in this cost band.**

CORE MPO Action for February 2024

Based on the analysis above, staff suggest that the CORE MPO Board approve the proposed 2045 MTP amendment to add SR 404 SPUR/US 17 @ SAVANNAH RIVER CROSSING (PI# 0017183, Right-of-Way (ROW) phase) to Cost Band Two.

Public Involvement

Public participation procedures for MTP amendments include public advertisement, a public hearing, a 15-day comment period, and response to all comments, either individually or in summary form. CORE MPO advertised for the comment period (February 14, 2024 – February 28, 2024) and the public hearing (February 28, 2024) on the Sunday, February 11, 2024 Savannah Morning News. Information about the comment period and the public hearing was also posted on the MPO web site and provided to the media contacts, neighborhood associations, and consultation agencies in the MPO contact database. Any comments received will be reported to the CORE MPO Board and advisory committees in February.

Recommendation: For endorsement and approval of an amendment to the CORE MPO's 2045 Metropolitan Transportation Plan to include the SR 404 SPUR/US 17 @ SAVANNAH RIVER CROSSING (PI# 0017183) ROW phase in Cost Band Two.

Appendix

- Appendix A: Excerpt of CORE MPO Participation Plan Regarding MTP Amendments
- Appendix B: Public Notice on Proposed 2045 MTP Amendments
- Appendix C: Request for 2045 MTP Amendments
- Appendix D: Resolution for 2045 MTP Amendments

Appendix A: Excerpt of CORE MPO Participation Plan Regarding MTP Amendments

Participation for Changes to the Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) and the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)

While the MPO updates the Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) and the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) on a regular schedule, there will be many instances during the cycle when either administrative changes or amendments are required. Generally administrative changes are minor changes which do not alter the original project intent or require financial rebalancing of the plan, while amendments are changes that do have those types of impacts on the plan.

Because the TIP focuses on an immediate four-year time frame, it includes the more active phases of projects, and therefore requests for changes tend to focus on the TIP. However, the longer range MTP is the guiding document. As one can infer from the descriptions of the MTP and the TIP above, the TIP is a subset of projects (or certain phases of projects) listed within the MTP's financially constrained plan. In order to qualify for federal funds, new projects must be consistent with the MTP before they are eligible for inclusion in the TIP. Changes to projects that are already in the TIP (and thus also in the MTP) are documented in an addendum to the MTP.

Any person requesting project revisions, additions, or deletions to the CORE MPO TIP or MTP should send to CORE MPO staff written details of the request, including:

- Project description or changes in existing descriptions;
- Project location and termini or changes in existing location and termini;
- Costs of each phase of the project (new projects) or changes in existing costs;
- Expected authorization year of each phase or changes in those (if the request involves the immediate four-year TIP window);
- Funding sources or changes in funding sources (if the request involves the immediate four-year TIP window);
- Reason for change.

CORE MPO staff may request additional information if needed. Once all of the necessary information is received, MPO staff will use the information to determine whether the request is a TIP administrative modification (according to the description in GDOT's STIP amendment process in Appendix K), a TIP amendment that does not entail an MTP amendment, a TIP amendment that does entail an MTP amendment, or alternatively an MTP amendment that does not affect the TIP.

The guidelines below are used to distinguish between administrative modification and amendments. While most TIP amendments can be accomplished in one MPO meeting cycle (a one-step process), note that MTP amendments require MPO Board action at two separate meetings. TIP amendments which also necessitate an MTP amendment, will therefore require at least two meeting cycles in order to accomplish the necessary MTP amendment prior to action on the TIP amendment. The range of processes described below is intended to allow adequate review of requests, while recognizing that flexibility based on the context of the request will improve efficiency at multiple levels of government.

Procedures for Changes to the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) or Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP)

Administrative Modification

The following types of requests are considered administrative modifications to the TIP or MTP, as long as the requested change does not require public review and comment.

- Making a *minor* revision (as defined in Appendix K: GDOT’s STIP Amendment Process) to a project that is already in the MTP’s financially constrained plan;
- Adding, deleting, or modifying a project in the MTP’s vision (illustrative) plan, provided that any added projects come from an adopted study accepted by the CORE MPO.

When the CORE MPO staff determines that the request is an administrative modification, the process consists of the following steps:

- 1) Transmittal of Confirmation: MPO staff transmits a confirmation to GDOT.
- 2) MPO staff posts the updated portion of the document(s) on the MPO web site.
- 3) GDOT sends a monthly list of notifications about administrative modifications to all involved parties, with change summaries sent on a monthly basis to the FHWA and FTA.

Projects that use zero federal funding, and that are not expected to need federal funding in the future, are not required to be included in the CORE MPO MTP or TIP. If a requester nevertheless would like to have these projects listed, then they can be included in an addendum to the MTP, with CORE MPO Board notification. Such projects can be listed in the TIP through an administrative modification.

CORE MPO reserves the right to re-start the change process as an amendment, in cases where it is found that the modification is controversial.

One-step Amendment

The following situations are considered one-step amendments.

- The request is more than a minor revision (i.e. not eligible as an administrative modification); AND
- The request *would not* affect the funding or timing of other projects in the MTP’s financially constrained plan or TIP.

The process consists of the following steps:

- 1) CORE MPO Board Meeting: At a CORE MPO Board meeting occurring no less than 21 days after receipt of the request, the recommendations of the MPO staff and the appropriate CORE MPO advisory committees will be provided to the CORE MPO Board. A public hearing will be held at that MPO Board meeting, unless held at an earlier date or time. The CORE MPO Board will decide at the conclusion of the hearing whether to reject the proposal, approve the proposal, or approve the proposal with modifications.
- 2) In instances where the project costs or other details differ from those listed in the adopted MTP, the updated project information will be noted in an addendum to the MTP.

Public participation procedures for one-step amendments include public advertisement, a public hearing, a 15-day comment period, and response to all comments, either individually or in summary form. Information about the comment period and public hearing also are posted on MPO web site and provided to the media contacts, neighborhood associations, and consultation agencies in the MPO contact database.

Two-step Amendment

The following situations are considered two-step amendments. The second step of the process may include a TIP amendment as well, in many cases:

- The request is more than a minor revision (i.e. not eligible as an administrative modification); OR
- The request *would* affect the funding or timing of other projects in the MTP's financially constrained plan (and TIP in many cases).

The process consists of the following steps:

- 1) First CORE MPO Board meeting: The CORE MPO staff and the appropriate advisory committees will recommend to the MPO Board whether additional review of the amendment to the MTP is warranted. The CORE MPO Board will then decide either to reject the proposal or authorize further review of the proposal.
- 2) Second CORE MPO Board meeting: If further review is authorized by the CORE MPO Board in the step above, the MPO staff will obtain and review additional information and present its findings and recommendation to the appropriate CORE MPO advisory committees. The recommendations of the MPO staff and the committees will then be provided to the CORE MPO Board. A public hearing will be held at that CORE MPO Board meeting, unless held at an earlier date or time. The CORE MPO Board will decide at the conclusion of the hearing whether to reject the amendment to the MTP, approve it, or approve it with modifications. If the proposal also affects the TIP, then the CORE MPO Board may consider the TIP amendment at this same meeting or at a later meeting.

Public participation procedures for two-step amendments include public advertisement, a public hearing, a 15-day comment period, and response to all comments, either individually or in summary form. Information about the comment period and public hearing also are posted on MPO web site and provided to the media contacts, neighborhood associations, and consultation agencies in the MPO contact database.

TIP Amendment Only

If a project or study that is already consistent with the CORE MPO MTP, as determined by the Executive Director, requires a change that does not qualify as an administrative modification, as defined above, then a TIP amendment can be considered without the need for an MTP amendment. The TIP amendment process requires public advertisement, a 15-day comment period and response to all comments, either individually or in a summary form. There is no requirement for a public hearing. The amendment follows the usual MPO Committee process for action.

The use of federal funds requires completion of the environmental process in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). Right-of-way negotiations may not take place until successful completion of the NEPA process. Final location and design of an amended project would be a function of the NEPA process. In Georgia, the Department of Transportation oversees the public participation in the environmental process. The MPO facilitates the participation process by providing early and continuous planning level input and by assisting GDOT in disseminating public meeting notices and project information.

Appendix B: Public Notice on Proposed 2045 MTP Amendments

February 2024

Public Notice for 2045 MTP Amendments

The Coastal Region Metropolitan Planning Organization (CORE MPO), the transportation planning agency for the Savannah urbanized area, is requesting the public to review and provide comments on a draft report titled: Amendments to 2045 Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP). The report includes proposed updates to the 2045 MTP. Copies of the draft MTP amendment report will be available for review at the Live Oak public libraries, the Chatham County - Savannah Metropolitan Planning Commission (MPC) office, the MPC website at <https://www.thempc.org/Core>, and other public review agencies. Any changes to the MTP amendment report will be posted on the website.

The comment period starts on **Wednesday, February 14, 2024**, until the close of business on **Wednesday, February 28, 2024**. Comments are accepted via text, email, or mail. Please send your comments to Wykoda Wang via:

Text: Send texts to wangw@thempc.org

Email: wange@thempc.org

Mail: Metropolitan Planning Commission, 110 E. State Street, Savannah, GA 31401

CORE MPO will host one (1) hybrid public meeting to answer questions and accept comments on the proposed MTP Amendments in conjunction with the February 2024 CORE MPO Board meeting. The public can attend the meeting in person or virtually via Go-To-Webinar. The meeting time, location and link are listed below.

CORE MPO Board Meeting
Wednesday, February 28, 2024
10:00 a.m.
Metropolitan Planning Commission
110 E. State Street, Savannah GA 31401

The virtual meeting will be conducted with Go-To-Webinar, so advanced registration is required. Please register at <https://register.gotowebinar.com/register/3247034194854633824>. After registration, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the webinar.

For a complete list of public review agencies, additional information regarding the draft MTP amendments, and information regarding the virtual public meeting, please call (912) 651-1466.

Disclaimer: The Chatham County-Savannah Metropolitan Planning Commission (MPC) and Coastal Region Metropolitan Planning Organization (CORE MPO) are committed to the principle of affirmative action and prohibit discrimination against otherwise qualified persons on the basis of race, color, national origin, religion, age, disability, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, marital status, familial status, parental status, political beliefs, genetic information, income, or other protected category in its recruitment, employment, facility and program accessibility or services.

MPC and CORE MPO are committed to enforcing the provisions of the Civil Rights Act, Title VI, and all the related requirements mentioned above. CORE MPO is also committed to taking positive and realistic affirmative steps to ensure the protection of rights and opportunities for all persons affected by its plans and programs.

Appendix C: Request for 2045 MTP Amendments

From: Sathi, Kaniz S <KSathi@dot.ga.gov>

Sent: Monday, January 29, 2024 12:42 PM

To: Wykoda Wang <wangw@thempc.org>

Cc: Martin, Kelly <KMartin@dot.ga.gov>; Vivian Canizares <mcanizares@dot.ga.gov>; Hicks, Edward P <EHicks@dot.ga.gov>; Johnson, Robert L <RobJohnson@dot.ga.gov>; Brown, Chandria <chbrown@dot.ga.gov>; Troy Pittman <trpittman@dot.ga.gov>; Martinez, Jonathan P <JoMartinez@dot.ga.gov>

Subject: A small revision on the MTP Amendment Request for CORE MPO

Importance: High

Good Afternoon, Wykoda,

GDOT has a small revision on the MTP amendment request we sent on January 19. The total amount should be \$500,000 and not \$1M, the rest of details remain the same. Please see the **revised** table below. Thanks!

Project Identification: PI 0017183

Description: SR 404 SPUR/US 17 @ SAVANNAH RIVER CROSSING

Sponsor: GDOT

GDOT PI	Project Description	County	Primary Work Type	Length	Phase	Fiscal Year	Fund Code	Federal Amount	State Amount	Local Amount	Total Amount
0017183	SR 404 SPUR/US 17 @ SAVANNAH RIVER CROSSING	Chatham	Roadway project	0.40 Miles	ROW	2028	Y001	\$400,000	\$100,000	\$0	\$500,000

Thanks,

Kaniz S. Sathi

Transportation Planning Specialist



Office of Planning
600 West Peachtree Street, 5th Floor
Atlanta, GA, 30308
Phone: 404.631.1745 office

From: Sathi, Kaniz S <KSathi@dot.ga.gov>
Sent: Friday, January 19, 2024 2:53 PM
To: Wykoda Wang <wangw@thempc.org>
Cc: Martin, Kelly <KMartin@dot.ga.gov>; Vivian Canizares <mcanizares@dot.ga.gov>; Hicks, Edward P <EHicks@dot.ga.gov>; Johnson, Robert L <RobJohnson@dot.ga.gov>; Brown, Chandria <chbrown@dot.ga.gov>; Troy Pittman <trpittman@dot.ga.gov>; Martinez, Jonathan P <JoMartinez@dot.ga.gov>
Subject: MTP Amendment Request for CORE MPO
Importance: High

Good afternoon, Wykoda,

The Planning Office would like to request an amendment to the current MTP to include the ROW phase of PI 0017183 based on the below table information. Please note the description and project type has changed as the project is advancing in the environmental process. Please add the proposed MTP project amendment to the TCC and PC agendas for February.

Project Identification: PI 0017183
Description: SR 404 SPUR/US 17 @ SAVANNAH RIVER CROSSING
Sponsor: GDOT

GDOT PI	Project Description	County	Primary Work Type	Length	Phase	Fiscal Year	Fund Code	Federal Amount	State Amount	Local Amount	Total Amount
0017183	SR 404 SPUR/US 17 @ SAVANNAH RIVER CROSSING	Chatham	Roadway project	0.40 Miles	ROW	2028	Y001	\$800,000	\$200,000	\$0	\$1,000,000

The department will provide the funds for this ROW phase that are in addition to the MTP projections. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me.

Thanks,

Kaniz S. Sathi
Transportation Planning Specialist



Office of Planning
 600 West Peachtree Street, 5th Floor
 Atlanta, GA, 30308
 Phone: 404.631.1745 office

Appendix D: Resolution for 2045 MTP Amendments

Resolution to Amend the 2045 Metropolitan Transportation Plan of the Coastal Region Metropolitan Planning Organization

WHEREAS, the Coastal Region Metropolitan Planning Organization (CORE MPO) desires to adopt an amendment to the 2045 Metropolitan Transportation Plan called Mobility 2045 for the CORE MPO transportation planning area; and

WHEREAS, the proposed MTP amendment is to add the right-of-way (ROW) phase of the SR 404 SPUR/US 17 @ SAVANNAH RIVER CROSSING project (P# 0017183) into Cost Band Two; and

WHEREAS, an analysis was conducted, and it was determined that the proposed plan amendment will not negatively impact the financial balance of the 2045 MTP since the funds for the new project phase come from additional revenues from GDOT beyond the original 2045 MTP revenue projections; and

WHEREAS, CORE MPO, in accordance with the adopted Participation Plan, has completed a 15-day public review and comment period for the proposed MTP amendment and has addressed all received comments; and

WHEREAS, CORE MPO has conducted a public hearing for the proposed amendment, and has taken into consideration comments made at the public hearing; and

WHEREAS, all requirements of the Participation Plan pertaining to MTP amendments have been met.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT, the Coastal Region Metropolitan Planning Organization adopts the amendment to the 2045 Metropolitan Transportation Plan as shown in the summary of MTP amendment report with any corrections based upon the motion of the February 28, 2024 meeting.

Approved this day, February 28, 2024.

Chester A. Ellis, Chairman
Coastal Region Metropolitan Planning Organization