



CORE MPO Citizens Advisory Committee

Minutes
June 22, 2023 at 5:30pm

June 22, 2023 CITIZENS ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING (CAC)

Voting Members	Representing	Present
Anthony (Tony) Abbott	Chatham County	
Dr. Daniel Brantley	Chatham County	X
Vacant	Chatham County	
Kevin Glover	Savannah	
Armand Turner	Savannah	X
A'riel Johnson	Savannah	
Vacant	Pooler	
Vacant	Garden City	
Brett Bennett	Effingham County	
Vacant	Port Wentworth	
Vacant	Richmond Hill	
Bill Grainger	Bloomingdale	
Robert Milie	Thunderbolt	
Vacant	Tybee Island	
Vacant	Vernonburg	
Others	Representing	Present
Wykoda Wang	CORE MPO	X
Asia Hernton	CORE MPO	X
Anna McQuarrie	CORE MPO/MPC	X
Sally Helm	CORE MPO / MPC	X
Rhitvika Dara	CORE MPO/Intern	X

I. Approval of Agenda

No quorum, no votes taken.

II. Action Items

1. [Approval of the April 19, 2023 CAC Meeting minutes](#)

No quorum, no votes taken.

2. 2045 MTP Amendment

Ms. Wykoda Wang stated that the 2045 MTP Amendment is for the I-16 Exit Ramp Removal Project IMR. This project was included in the previous MTP and TIP, but it was stopped because the City of Savannah put it on hold since the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) refused to review the IMR report. The City renewed this project last year and applied for and received earmark funds to kick off IMR update. There was a coordination meeting with GDOT where GDOT stated they wanted to take the lead in developing the IMR to prevent the FHWA from refusing to read the report. Some of the benefits of this project include:

- Reclaiming eight acres of developable land, 650 linear feet fronting MLK, and 350 linear feet fronting Montgomery Street;
- Improve safety for all – drivers, pedestrians, cyclists, transit riders, and others;
- Reclaiming MLK as a major economic mixed-use corridor by reinventing it as a gateway to the City instead of as the edge of downtown;
- Establishing additional connectivity between downtown to Greater West Savannah communities, the Savannah Enmarket Arena, and the redevelopment of the civic center site;
- Creating the opportunity to make Montgomery Street a two-way street;
- Improving traffic flow and walkability with a new street grid; and
- Provide civic, business, and affordable housing opportunities in newly created publicly owned land.

In order for GDOT to start the IMR update, the project has to be included in the TIP, which is a subset of the MTP, so we need to amend the IMR update to the current 2045 MTP first. If revenue allows, recommendations from the IMR update can be included in the 2050 MTP.

The total cost of the IMR update will be around \$900,000, the Federal/Earmark funds are about \$720,000 and the City will come up with \$180,000.

Dr. Brantley wanted clarification on what the state wanted that was different.

Ms. Wang stated that in 2015 CORE MPO completed the IMR but FHWA stated that CORE MPO is a planning agency and not an implementing agency, and is not supposed to do the IMR. We could recommend something, but it's not going to move forward because the City does not have all of the money for the project and at the time GDOT did not want to take this up since it would remove the I-16 ramp to Savannah. GDOT now says that if it is feasible, they will take up the project. With GDOT being the implementing agency, the FHWA would have no excuse to not review the IMR.

Mr. Armand Turner stated that his only comment is that he is happy to see that this is still moving forward. Ms. Wykoda Wang stated that the original I-16 Exit Ramp Removal IMR report is still on the MPO website so he can see what it will look like after the project is completed.

3. FY 2021 - FY 2024 TIP Amendments June 2023

Ms. Wykoda Wang presented the FY 2021-2024 TIP amendment and stated that now that the IMR has been amended into the 2045 MTP, we can start to program it into the TIP. CORE MPO is adding the Earmark funds into FY 2024 that starts on July 1st and the funds will be authorized pretty fast. GDOT and the City will develop an MOU and kick-off the IMR update process.

Besides the IMR there are 3 other projects that will be updated, 2 of which are not expected to have funds authorized by June 30, 2023.

- US 17 Back River Bridge - The right of way will be moved from FY 2023 into FY 2025.
- I-95 ITS Project – The construction phase will be moved from FY 2023 into FY 2026.

The 3rd project is the Ferry Vessel Construction. The federal funds were authorized in FY 2022, so that CAT could go out for bid, but the bid came in \$7 million more than expected. The original cost was \$3.2 million. The Federal portion was going to be \$2.56 million, and CAT was going to pay \$640k. The bid

came in at around \$10 million. The federal dollars are still there but CAT has to come up with additional funds. CAT is coordinating with Chatham County to get additional SPLOST funds. This update should be reflected in the TIP to make sure the information is accurate.

Dr. Brantley asked if the bid was too high and could they start the bidding process over.

Ms. Wykoda Wang stated that she's unsure about CAT but for highway projects, they can only select the lowest bid, so she assumes that's how CAT works as well.

Dr. Brantley stated that it's remarkable that it was so much higher.

Ms. Wykoda Wang stated that it is probably because the original cost estimate was too low.

4. Reapportionment MPA Boundary Update

Ms. Asia Hernton presented the MPA Boundary update stating that an MPO must have a defined MPA boundary and that it is based on the Census, with this update specifically being based on the 2020 Census. The CORE MPO is revising the MPA using the Savannah Urban Area as well as areas expected to become urbanized in the next twenty years. Some of the process staff went through to update the boundary was proposing a draft MPA and then meeting with a working group to review the draft as well as Effingham and Bryan County over the last few months. Staff also recently had a workshop on the MPA for further discussion.

After all of the discussion, participants in the process decided on the proposed boundary. The proposed boundary expanded northward and includes about half of Effingham County including Rincon, most of Springfield, and portions of Guyton. In Bryan County, more of Pembroke and Richmond Hill will be included so there will be major gains towards the north and south.

Dr. Brantley asked why Springfield and Guyton were cut off.

Ms. Hernton stated that after discussing the boundary with Effingham County, staff learned that the population above SR 25 was scarce and that there was no water and sewer system in those sparsely populated areas, so representatives of Effingham were okay with the proposed boundary..

III. Status Reports

5. 2050 MTP Update

Ms. Wykoda Wang stated that there were several things being updated in the 2050 MTP. The first thing was the social economic data development. GDOT accepted the base year (2020) SE data already and provided comments on the horizon year (2050) SE data, but at the time there weren't enough staff members. Mr. Edward Morrow will be assisting in the 2050 SE data development process, and it is set to be done at the end of June.

For The Travel Demand Model, Asia completed the TDM link check for Bryan and Effingham County and Dara is working on Chatham County now. We sent GDOT the 1st and 2nd Networks and still owe them 3rd, 4th, and 5th which will be developed with the new TIP.

The proposed MPA boundary has been presented to the MPO Board and advisory committees and once finalized staff will work with GDOT to obtain revenue projections within the boundary, thus kicking off the financial plan development for the 2050 MTP.

For contributing plans and studies, CORE MPO's Regional Freight Transportation Plan, Non-Motorized Transportation Plan, and Urban Flooding Model Study are ongoing. The CAT Master Transit Plan will wrap up in July. Pooler's US 80 Corridor Study should be completed in September. Chatham Counties' 3 studies will kick off in July. And all of this should be included in the 2050 plan. We will also have a new staff member who will work on the Congestion Management Process.

Ms. Anna McQuarrie will be managing the Urban Flooding Model Study and taking the lead in incorporating resiliency into the MTP. Asia will be doing research on affordable housing. Sally will be

planning the second round of public engagement to get feedback on what is going to be added to the 2050 plan.

Mr. Armand Turner asked what the initial comments from GDOT were.

Ms. Wykoda Wang stated GDOT comments would be for the text survey and also got some comments on the virtual map which Asia has presented before, but the public hasn't seen it yet. The survey results will influence the projects that the MPO focuses on, so we need to go back to the public to get more input. This will be included in our Participation Plan as an appendix in the MTP. It will also influence project prioritization.

Dr. Brantley stated that you don't want the public to think that just requesting something will make it happen.

[6. CORE MPO Regional Freight Plan Update](#)

Ms. Wykoda Wang explained that the consultants presented at the TCC meeting today. The consultants are done with the needs assessment and now the focus is on the recommendations. She stated that there was going to be an EDFAC meeting next Monday and the consultant will go in-depth about the project.

[7. Urban Flooding Model Study Update](#)

Ms. Anna McQuarrie presented the Urban Flooding Model Study stating that she met with the project lead and UGA staff, and now MPC staff is reviewing study contracts with the UGA team to ensure timely delivery of expected products. The Storm Water Management Model is expected to be completed on time and we will receive an early draft next week. Other products are expected to be delivered closer to October, such as the social vulnerability metrics, financial stewardship, and project prioritization, at which point the study will be finished.

[8. Non-Motorized Transportation Plan Update June 2023](#)

Ms. Asia Hernton gave a presentation on the Non-Motorized Transportation Plan update, stating the MPO has drafted new chapters relating to pedestrian and bike infrastructure. Some of the chapters include:

- Infill Development as a Tool for Creating a more walkable and bikeable town
- The Impact of Urban Heat on Non-Car Travel
- What is a Stroad and how does it impact street safety.

Additionally, staff are trying to track the status of the projects in the previous Non-Motorized Transportation Plan. In addition to tracking the over 400 projects listed in the previous plan, staff are documenting new trails and bikeways that aren't included in the plan. Staff are also exploring low-cost technology solutions to assist in traffic calming. Additionally, staff have identified common themes in responses from public surveys such as safety, separating, connectivity, and policy and education. There was also a steering committee meeting to discuss the proposed bike network, which most people agreed on except one segment. The steering committee recommends that bike lanes on roads with high traffic and high speeds should be protected by a barrier and a buffer. Some of the next steps in this process is to use satellite images to observe gaps in sidewalk coverage, examine infrastructure characteristics of the most dangerous roadways for cyclists and pedestrians, explore the scoring criteria and methodology used by the Institute for Transportation and Development Policy, examining the factors in the push factor for bike use, harm reduction strategies, and using GIS to monitor crash data.

Mr. Armand Turner asked whether the expansion of the MPA boundary will lead to more projects in the Non-Motorized Transportation Plan. Ms. Hernton stated that more than likely yes.

[9. FY 2024 - 2027 TIP Development](#)

Ms. Wykoda Wang stated that the current TIP covers FY 2021 - FY2024, and FY 2023 ends on June 30th, so the MPO has a year left. Ideally, there should be a new TIP already adopted but it just hasn't

happened due to all the moving targets. The supporting documents such as the revenues, lump-sum project list, project authorization, and proposed project lists have been provided by GDOT. The proposed project list still needs to be worked on since the MPO manages the Y230 and Y301 funds. The MPO adopted the project prioritization approach in April, so now we are working on the development of the FY 2024 – 2027 TIP. There is a lot of out-of-date information, so we are working to get everything updated.

On the highway side, there is a moving target because of the \$1.42 million of the COVID relief funds for funding swap. In theory, \$1.42 million of combined Y230 and Y301 funds have been released due to the funding swap. The cost estimate for the Truman Linear Park Trail Phase II-B is \$3.9 million, but it was programmed at around \$6 million, so that is another \$2 million released. The released funds cannot be automatically added into FY 2024 because GDOT distributes them over multiple years. Right now, staff are waiting for the revenue updates from GDOT to finish Chapter Three and the financial plan. Besides that, Ms. Wang was able to finish all of the other chapters in the TIP. Official public comment period starts on July 19th, so there is some time before it is due, but the FHWA and FTA want to view the preliminary draft before it is brought to the public. If the updates don't work out in time, the MPO will shoot for October to adopt the TIP.

Dr. Brantley asked if this was going to happen again. Ms. Wykoda Wang stated that a lot is out of our control, so the best staff can do is to make sure that all the information is accurate.

10. MOU and Bylaws Updates

Ms. Wykoda Wang stated that if the CORE MPO's planning area boundary gets updated, the MOU and Bylaws will need to be updated, which outline what every department's responsibilities are. She referenced changes to Appendix B of the MOU where it states that Chatham County has to pay 25% of municipality share of the membership dues and stated that if the County doesn't want to pay this amount, the MPO may explore how much the difference will be. She stated that ACAT and CAC need to be restructured since they struggle to make a quorum, have a hard time filling seats, and struggle to have their own mission. Staff is also suggesting adding a bicycle and pedestrian committee, which will have their own bylaws. Staff wants CAC and ACAT to really consider what their mission is and who should be on the board.

Mr. Armand Turner stated that he is in agreeance to possibly merge the CAC and ACAT. He's interested in seeing if ACAT feels the same way.

Ms. Wykoda Wang stated that ACAT has 27 voting members but struggles to even get just 7 people to show up. She goes on to say that the same information is presented to both boards. She thinks every committee should be different.

Mr. Armand Turner stated he imagines that the lack of a clear mission is what may cause the lack of attendance. Having a particular mission would hopefully help more people attend.

Dr. Brantley stated that he's not as accommodating, as people are not getting paid to come to these meetings. The CORE MPO needs to know that these boards approve what is being given to them.

Ms. Wykoda Wang clarified that the MPO wouldn't get rid of the committees, and we would just be defining a mission in role in the process, so the advisory committees can provide input that is more meaningful. She suggested that you can change the way the meeting is held, the meeting time, the format, and the membership would assist in the attendance.

Dr. Brantley stated that the process needs to improve because there is a problem that comes from members not attending, so how the meeting is held should be changed.

Ms. Wykoda Wang stated that there will probably have to be individual meetings with each advisory committee to discuss the new bylaws update in the future since each committee needs to update its own.

Dr. Brantley stated his concerns about staff involvement in developing the committee's processes.

Ms. Wykoda stated that there should be an individual meeting to discuss this because the current way it's set up doesn't work.

Dr. Brantley stated it's not that they don't show up because they don't understand what they are doing, they just don't come at all.

Mr. Armand Turner said the best way to find out is to ask them, so maybe that question can be asked at the upcoming Bylaws meeting.

Ms. Wykoda Wang stated that they just need to find a way to make the committee members show up.

IV. Agency Reports

Attached under Notices.

V. Other Business

VI. Other Public Comments (limit to 3 minutes)

VII. Notices

[11. GDOT Project Status Update Report](#)

Report attached to agenda.

[12. Chatham County Project Status Update Report](#)

Report attached to agenda.

[13. City of Savannah Project Status Update Report](#)

Report attached to agenda.

[14. Savannah Hilton Head International Airport Project Status Update Report](#)

Report attached to agenda.

[15. Chatham Area Transit Project Status Update Report](#)

Report attached to agenda.

[16. US 80 Corridor Study Status Update](#)

Report attached to agenda.

[17. LATS-SCDOT Project Status Update Report](#)

Report attached to agenda.

[18. TIP Funding Tracking Report](#)

Report attached to agenda.

[19. Next CORE MPO CAC Committee Meeting August 17, 2023 at 5:30pm](#)

VIII. Adjournment

There being no further business, the June 22, 2023 CAC meeting 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.