



CORE MPO Board

Meeting Minutes
February 26, 2025, at 10:00am

February 26, 2025, CORE MPO BOARD

Voting Members	Representing	Present	On-Line
Chester Ellis	Chatham County Commission (Chairman)	X	
Michael Kaigler	Chatham County	X	
Tanya Milton	Chatham County	X	
Van Johnson	City of Savannah	X	
Jay Melder	City of Savannah	X	
Nick Palumbo	City of Savannah	X	
Dennis Baxter	City of Bloomingdale		
Bruce Campbell	City of Garden City		
Gary Norton	City of Port Wentworth		
Karen Williams	City of Pooler		
Brian West	City of Tybee Island		
Dana Williams	Town of Thunderbolt		
Laura Lawton	Town of Vernonburg		
Tim Callanan	Effingham County Commission	X	
Mona Underwood	Municipalities of Effingham County Rotating Seat	X	
Ben Taylor	Bryan County Commission		
Steve Scholar	City of Richmond Hill	X	
Vivian Canizares	Georgia Department of Transportation		
Deidrick Cody	Chatham Area Transit Board of Directors	X	
Jim Aiello	Savannah Airport Commission		
Jamie McCurry	Georgia Ports Authority	X	
Karen Jarrett	Metropolitan Planning Commission	X	
Chairperson	Economic Development & Freight Advisory Committee		
Voting Alternates	Representing		
Matt Walker	Town of Thunderbolt	X	
Kaniz Sathi	GDOT Planning Office	X	
Katie Dunnigan	Port Wentworth		X
Others	Representing		
Katie Proctor	GDOT – District 5		X
Wykoda Wang	CORE MPO	X	
Kieron Coffield	CORE MPO/MPC	X	
Asia Hernton	CORE MPO	X	
Pamela Everett	MPC	X	
Melanie Wilson	MPC		X
Anna McQuarrie	CORE MPO/MPC – Special Projects	X	
Hind Patel	MPC/IT	X	
Sadie Esch-Laurent	CORE MPO/MPC	X	

Sarah Greenbush	MPC		X
Joseph Longo	FHWA		X
Joseph Shearouse	City of Savannah	X	
Mary Moskowitz	Chatham Area Transit	X	
Gertrude Robinson	Chatham Area Transit		X
Brett Bell	City of Tybee Island	X	
Estella Shabazz	City of Savannah		X
Paul Teague	Bryan County		X
Tony Ploughe	Member of the public	X	
Nathaniel Panther	Chatham County	X	
Tina Bockhold	Chatham County	X	
Teresa Scott	Atlas – Consultant	X	

I. Approval of Agenda

Mr. Jamie McCurry, Georgia Ports Authority, motioned to approve the Agenda, seconded by Mr. Nick Palumbo, Council Person, City of Savannah. The motion passed with none opposed.

II. Committee Reports (verbal)

BPAC - Ms. Asia Hernton, CORE MPO staff, stated the Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee (BPAC) met on February 13th. They endorsed all action items.

TEPIAC - Ms. Asia Hernton stated the Transportation Equity and Public Involvement Advisory Committee (TEPIAC) met on February 13th and endorsed all action items.

TCC – Ms. Wykoda Wang, CORE MPO staff, stated TCC met on February 20th and endorsed all of the action items presented.

Executive Director Updates – Ms. Pamela Everett, Assistant Executive Director, stated Ms. Melanie Wilson, Executive Director and CEO of the MPC, is attending online because she is away for jury duty. There are two things to report. First, we now have a new level of approval for all CORE MPO items from the federal side. Second, we do have several projects where we've accepted proposals. We will be doing the interviews; however, we will not award the contracts until we are fully assured that we will receive funding.

III. Action Items

1. [Approval of the December 18th, 2024, CORE MPO Board meeting minutes](#)

Mayor Van Johnson, City of Savannah, motioned to approve the December 18th, 2024, meeting minutes, seconded by Mr. Tim Callanan. The motion pass with none opposed.

2. [National Highway System Change Request - Chatham County](#)

Ms. Wykoda Wang gave the presentation.

CORE MPO received a letter from GDOT on several National Highway System (NHS) and Strategic Highway Network (STRAHNET) changes, because GDOT received these change requests from the military. The Department of Defense (DoD) explained that the Georgia Port Authority informed the DoD of a change in available port facilities at the Port of Savannah for the military. As a result, they want to add and remove some segments. The GDOT table and map showing the impacted segments are attached to the agenda. The summary is listed below.

Segments removed from STRAHNET:

- North Lathrop Ave
- West Lathrop Ave

Segments added to STRAHNET (already NHS):

- [SR 25 \(Interchange of SR 25 & I-516 to Intersection of SR 25 & Trippe Blvd\)](#)
- [SR 307 \(Intersection of SR 307 & SR 25 to Intersection of SR 307 & SR 21AL\)](#)
- [SR 17 \(Transition from SR 21AL to SR17 to Interchange of SR 17 & I-95\)](#)

Segments added to both NHS and STRAHNET:

- [Gibbons Rd \(Intersection of Gibbons Rd & SR 25 to Beginning of GA Port Authority ownership\)](#)
- [SR 21 AL \(Intersection of SR 21AL & SR 307 to Transition from SR 21AL to SR17\)](#)

The Federal Highway Administration requires that National Highway System revisions be made by each state through its state highway agency in cooperation with the appropriate local officials or Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO). The proposed updates are located in Chatham County, so CORE MPO needs to work with GDOT to make the changes. CORE MPO is comprised of all the local elected and appointed officials, and this is the place for our input.

Ms. Tanya Milton, Chatham County Commissioner, asked is the new exit coming to the Ports from Louisville Road?

Chairperson Chester Ellis clarified no; it is Lathrop off of SR 21. They are taking that one out.

Ms. Wykoda Wang clarified that segments A and B (North Lathrop Avenue and West Lathrop Avenue) are still on the National Highway System but are being taken off the military's Strategic Highway Network (STRAHNET) because the Georgia Port Authority has direct access for the military.

Mr. Jay Melder, Savannah City Manager, stated the City of Savannah is supportive of these changes.

Mr. Jamie McCurry, GPA, clarified the reason for the request is that with the renovations of the Ocean Terminal, which is where the segments A and B (Lathrop Avenue) being removed from, this plan comes into place. We will handle military vessels at the Garden City Terminal instead of at the Ocean Terminal, which is the justification for background for the request. Simply a shift of where military cargo will come to and go from.

Mr. Michael Kaigler, Chatham County Manager, motioned to approve the National Highway System Change Request, seconded by Mr. Nick Palumbo. The motion passed with none opposed.

3. FY 2026 UPWP Adoption

Ms. Wykoda Wang gave the presentation on the FY 2026 UPWP.

The Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) is the CORE MPO's staff budget. It documents how much money we have to do our work and how much money is assigned to each task. The preliminary draft of the UPWP was presented to the CORE MPO Board and advisory committees in December 2024 for review and feedback. CORE MPO then sent the Preliminary Draft to FHWA, FTA, and GDOT for review and comment. The Revised Draft FY 2026 UPWP attached to the agenda has incorporated all comments received from FHWA, GDOT, as well as the CORE MPO members and the general public. It is being presented to the CORE MPO Board and advisory committees for final review and approval in February 2025. CORE MPO Staff have highlighted all the changes since December in red throughout the document. The summary is listed below.

Recent updates to the UPWP:

- Roster – verified and updated. Some examples include:
 - Mr. Paul Teague to represent Bryan County at TCC
 - Mr. Robbie Byrd, Rincon, to represent Effingham County Municipalities rotating seat at TCC
- Development Schedule for FY 2027-2030 TIP – added per comments from FHWA and GDOT. Highlights are listed below.
 - Assuming we receive the revenue projections from GDOT at the beginning of calendar year 2026
 - Conduct Call for Projects in the fall – between August and December of 2025
 - Possible funding sources:
 - Y230 Funds
 - Transportation Alternatives (Y301) Funds
 - Carbon Reduction Program (CRP) Funds – if available
 - Build a project waiting list to help allocate the funding
 - TIP Prioritization – February 2026
 - Public Review of and Comment on Draft TIP – May – June 2026
 - TIP Adoption – June 2026
- Comments and responses have been included in Appendix C. Highlights are listed below.
 - FHWA and GDOT comments regarding the TIP Development Schedule – addressed.
 - City of Savannah's comment on Bay Street Mirco Simulation Modeling

- CORE MPO has to be the responsible party who administers the RFP, due to the Discretionary PL funds regulations.
- Effingham County requested an unfunded study for Old River Road. CORE MPO Staff received this request after we already sent the preliminary draft UPWP to FHWA/FTA/GDOT, so we cannot include this study in the UPWP.
 - We do have an Old River Road Improvement project in our 2050 MTP, so this study might not be necessary.
 - If the study is still needed, we can amend it into the UPWP after two rounds of discussion.
- CAT's Remix software to do their route scheduling
 - CAT had an RFP process, so we updated the language in the Transit section – added “such as” before Remix, to show that it is illustrative, rather than committing to purchasing specific software.

Due to the administration change, we continue to receive updates from the federal government. We were supposed to receive updated USDOT guidance on February 18th, but we still haven't received anything. There are no updates on the USDOT website.

The major tasks that CORE MPO staff will work on do not change. We still have the major planning efforts like MTP maintenance, TIP development, Congestion Management Report Card, holding CORE MPO Board meetings, conducting Public Involvement, and maintaining the CORE MPO website. All of those tasks will not change. The language might be updated, but we have the budget's final numbers and those will not change. Previously FHWA wanted us to include the federal planning emphasis areas in the UPWP, for example Justice 40, equity, resiliency, etc. which are now forbidden words to this new administration as of January 20th, 2025. It seems that the new Deputy Secretary of USDOT is against Vision Zero, Public Transportation and Pedestrian Safety, but everyone in our CORE MPO area is promoting pedestrian safety.

CORE MPO asks the CORE MPO Board to adopt the FY 2026 UPWP keeping in mind the language may need to be updated based on new directives, whenever those come out.

Mayor Van Johnson stated ultimately our end goal doesn't change. It appears that here and throughout the country these words have been weaponized in one way or another. Would it make sense to wordsmith so that we keep the end goal, but the trigger terms are not there? Our goal doesn't change, but how we get there might. This would be a good preemptive issue since we know that documents that contain those words are going to be an issue.

Ms. Wykoda Wang stated yes, we will do some wordsmithing. Pedestrian safety is our goal, no matter what. We will still try to have sidewalks and bike lanes and we will try to tie them into things like economic development and remove trigger words.

Mr. Tim Callanan asked that as soon as CORE MPO receives information, please pass it along to the CORE MPO Board. There are grants and applications that Effingham County has spent time on, and now there is a possibility that funding might not exist anymore.

Ms. Wykoda Wang stated yes, we will try to include as much information as we can. Further down on the agenda, we included some information from AMPO, as they were trying to find out what is happening with the TIP amendments. After the FHWA approves the TIP amendments, they cannot authorize the funds directly because they have an additional layer of review. Yesterday, we received information about the NEPA process change. We will try to keep you updated, but the CORE MPO staff is confused as well as there is so much uncertainty. We can provide the information but don't have an interpretation because we don't know what will happen. GDOT has told CORE MPO to proceed as if nothing happened until told otherwise.

Ms. Karen Jarret, MPC Chairperson, motioned to approve the adoption of the FY 2026 UPWP with the condition that the document is subject to further editing per new guidance from FHWA, seconded by Mayor Van Johnson. The motion passed with none opposed.

IV. Other Business

V. Status Reports

4. US 80 Corridor Study Phase II

Ms. Wykoda Wang gave the presentation on the US 80 Corridor Study Phase II.

This study covers the US 80 segment in Effingham County only. We advertised the RFP on the State of Georgia Procurement Registry website. We also received contact lists from Chatham County and the City of Savannah, which were used to send the announcement for the RFP. Between the Georgia Procurement Registry and the contact lists, this RFP has reached almost 2000 people.

The RFP was issued at the end of December 2024 and we received two proposals, one from Kimley-Horn and the other from Pond and Company. The Review Committee has already completed the written proposal review and scoring. We have compiled the scores and have scheduled the interviews for the consultants on March 4th, 2025. After the interviews, we will compile the written scores and interview scores to determine the consultant selection.

We will develop a contract, but we cannot sign the contract until we have more certainty on the funding due to the administration change.

5. Urban Flood Model Study Phase II

Ms. Anna McQuarrie, CORE MPO staff, gave the presentation for the Urban Flood Model Study Phase II.

Similar to the US 80 Phase II study, we were awarded the discretionary PL funds for this study. However, we are unsure about the funding. We decided to place a 30-day pause starting on February 11th on this RFP. We did send the RFP out and received one submittal. We decided this needed pause to determine the impacts from the changes of the federal government. The 30-day pause will end on March 11th. Then we will decide on how to proceed after that.

6. CORE MPO Bicycle and Pedestrian Facility Study

Ms. Asia Hernton gave the presentation on the Bicycle and Pedestrian Facility Study.

The full RFP and the addendum to the RFP can be found on our CORE MPO website. This is a study that aims to document and create a mapped inventory of our bicycle lanes, sidewalks and crosswalks throughout the entire CORE MPO planning area. The study will also provide an analysis of the gaps and opportunities within our non-motorized transportation infrastructure system.

The RFP was released on January 21st, 2025. We have received several questions. We answered those questions and posted them on the RFP website. The questions and answers table is attached to this agenda. The deadline to submit proposals was February 21st and we received 5 proposals.

The next step is to evaluate those proposals, score them, and then eventually select the consultant. We are putting together a Review Committee. We have four people that have volunteered, but we need one more person. If anyone would like to volunteer or know someone that could help review these proposals and score them, please let CORE MPO staff know as soon as possible. We are aiming to finish the scoring and evaluation of these proposals by March 25th. The project timeline (Start – End) is April 24th, 2025, to March 31st, 2027. We are on schedule, even though there are some funding uncertainties.

Chairperson Chester Ellis asked if Ms. Asia Hernton wanted board members to join or do the jurisdictions need to ask their citizens to be on the Review Committee?

Ms. Asia Hernton stated most people on the Review Committee are from the BPAC. We only need one more person; board members are welcome to evaluate the RFP or the board members can appoint or suggest someone to help evaluate the RFP.

Ms. Pamela Everett asked everyone to remember if a board member joins the Review Committee, he/she must recuse himself/herself from the vote. Board members might want to appoint an employee of that jurisdiction instead.

Chairperson Chester Ellis asked Ms. Asia Hernton if that is the introduction that was written up. It has the word “pedestrian”, which is a trigger word. Do we need to edit this?

Ms. Asia Hernton stated that is on the table, editing where we can. We don’t know the extent to which words are trigger words or not. We’ve noticed that “equity” and “resilience” seem to be really hot trigger words, whereas words such as “poverty” don’t seem to be as much of a focus right now. From her point of view, “pedestrian” on

its own might be safe. But again, we are keeping our ear to the ground. If we have to figure out another way to state this word, we will.

Chairperson Chester Ellis stated he knows that “pedestrian” is a trigger word in the UPWP.

Ms. Tanya Milton asked are we going to have to re-conform our whole program? And so that means we are submitting as a County and a City?

Chairperson Chester Ellis stated whether county or municipality, the one thing we don’t want to happen is to get the funding shut off because of trigger words. We are looking at the best method to keep the funding flowing. For example, for a grant that has matching funds, where money is spent by the jurisdiction and then reimbursed, don’t spend that money until there is certainty in reimbursement, because the reimbursement may not come. We are not sure how sensitive these trigger words are, as it is a guesstimation of what will trigger and what will not trigger.

Ms. Tanya Milton stated that we have been using this terminology forever.

Chairperson Chester Ellis stated yes, but after the chairperson briefing with Ms. Wykoda Wang, we are trying to err on the side of caution. For example, if GDOT, GPA, Chatham County, etc. have already received the federal funds, then we don’t have to worry about it. If anyone is waiting on funding, it could get frozen. He wants to be careful that we don’t trigger something, and that is why he bought up the word “pedestrian”, since it seems to be a trigger word in the UPWP. We have to use the term “people walking”.

Ms. Asia Hernton stated the CORE MPO staff have alternative words to use. She asked Ms. Pamela Everett and Ms. Wykoda Wang whether we are able to edit the wording after the fact for the RFP, since it has already been released and we have received proposals.

Chairperson Chester Ellis stated if the Board gives permission to edit the wording, then it’s legal.

Ms. Pamela Everett stated that typically once we’ve issued the RFP and we’ve received proposals, the way it went out is the way the contract should read. However in this instance, if the federal law changes, we will have to make that change.

Chairperson Chester Ellis asked if that was called the Addendum.

Ms. Pamela Everett clarified it is too late to put out an addendum because we’ve already accepted the proposals. We will work around - if the federal government says to change it, we will change it.

Dr. Estella Shabazz, City of Savannah, stated she wanted to comment about the uncertainties with all the work that has been done and the allocations of the money that was done before January 20th, 2025. The CORE MPO Board and Staff have already answered her question, but we are living in this time of uncertainties. She agrees exactly with what everyone has been saying and everyone has answered her questions about this uncertain time that we’re in now.

Ms. Asia Hernton stated to reiterate, if anyone has someone in mind to review the proposals, please reach out to CORE MPO staff.

7. Non-Motorized Transportation Plan Update

Ms. Asia Hernton gave the presentation on the Non-Motorized Transportation Plan update.

The Non-Motorized Transportation Plan (NMTP) is the bicycle and pedestrian plan for the Savannah region. Included in this plan are bicycle and pedestrian projects, community goals and objectives, and community information regarding non-motorized transportation. This project has been on-going but was originally paused to accommodate the development of other CORE MPO projects, including the 2050 MTP, the Participation Plan, and the Title VI Plan. Since those plans have been completed and adopted, we have restarted the NMTP, aiming to complete and adopt it in June 2025.

The next major step in this process is to score and rank the projects identified. CORE MPO staff have been working on a scoring methodology to rank these projects, because the original scoring framework was made in 2014 and needed to be updated. Additionally, all projects from the previously updated versions of the NMTP have to be rescored, which are around 500 projects. The Steering Committee will come together to create a scoring that is simple enough to score 500 projects, but also effective enough to accurately evaluate the prioritization of these projects. Staff aim to complete that scoring by the end of March and finalize the content of the plan from April to June.

The Steering Committee has been reactivated and has not met yet, and we aim to have a meeting at the beginning of March. We will meet and go over the scoring methodology so we can move on to finally score all 500 projects.

In relation to the Bicycle and Pedestrian Facility Study, the NMTP will be adopted before the completion of this study. When the Bicycle and Pedestrian Facility Study is completed, the results will be used in future updates of the NMTP.

Considerations for the scoring methodology include:

- Create a similar scoring methodology to the 2050 MTP equity scoring method
- Use of map data and descriptive data in scoring
- Include American Community Survey data
- Poverty data
- Zero-Car Households data
- Existing Public Transit
- Existing Bicycle and Pedestrian Infrastructure
- Consider Safety and Crash Data
- Give higher scores to projects with protected facilities

We want to take inspiration from the equity scoring. For those who have seen the equity scoring method from the 2050 MTP, a lot of that was actually inspired by the meeting that we had with the NMTP Steering Committee. So there may be similarities between the 2050 MTP equity scoring and this scoring method, to give everyone a better idea of what it will look like.

8. [PROTECT Grant updates](#)

Ms. Anna McQuarrie gave the presentation on the PROTECT Grant updates.

CORE MPO Staff have been talking about a Resilience Improvement Plan (RIP) for the past couple of months. The CORE MPO Staff were planning to apply for Promoting Resilience Operations for Transformative, Efficient, and Cost saving, Transportation or PROTECT Grant funding. This grant funding came out of the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law. We were planning to apply for the Discretionary Funds to create a Resilience Improvement Plan. So thinking of wordsmithing example of how things might change, Resilience Improvement Plan was changed to Efficiency and Quality Improvement Plan or EQIP and we're managing disruptions. Staff proceeded with the application process until notified on February 12th that the Notice Of Funding Opportunity or NOFO was removed from the grants.gov website as of February 11th for review by the Federal Highway Administration.

The application for PROTECT funding was previously due on February 24th and we did receive actually 15 letters of support. We really thank everyone for submitting those letters of support and we will hold on to them should this grant opportunity reappear. The official notice was that the grant is under review and NOFO was removed. Reopening or reposting of this opportunity will be available on the grants.gov website and will include any updates made as a result of this review. So it's on hold until further notice.

Chairperson Chester Ellis stated as soon as we find out it's off hold, we will get the information out to everyone.

Ms. Anna McQuarrie stated yes, any information we have will be sent out. Again, we're holding on to those letters of support. That language was updated to reflect the USDOT Memorandum sent out on January 29th, so any application would be reflective of the different priorities and wordsmithing so it has the same intent. But we'll keep everyone notified as we try to look out for new information.

9. [President Street Railroad Crossing Elimination Study Update](#)

Ms. Teresa Scott, One Atlas Consultant, gave the presentation on the President Street Railroad Crossing Elimination Study updates.

Project Goals:

- Understand and analyze the existing traffic patterns
- Understand and analyze existing rail operations
- Promote the involvement of all stakeholders and neighborhoods in the study area
- Develop three long term conceptual alternatives and one short-term operational improvement alternative
- Select a preferred alternative

- Evaluate relative cost, feasibility, and constructability of alternative alignments

A reminder that the study area was narrowed down to President Street after looking at the larger area. The map is attached to agenda.

Stakeholder and Public Engagement:

- Web Content
- Social Media
- Public Meetings
 - Industry Specific
 - Community Meetings – 3
 - Public Information Meeting

Preferred Alternative 1: Additional West Bound Lane (Short Term)

- Description:
 - Construct 3rd westbound lane between Truman Pkwy ramps
 - Extend through crossing, tie into existing roadway
- Benefits
 - Provides additional 1,100 feet for westbound queued vehicles
 - Canal bridge and East President Street can accommodate this lane, no additional construction necessary
 - 50% increase capacity to expedite westbound post-blockage dissipation
 - Additional lane for hazmat/busses to stop at crossing without affecting moving queue
 - Smoother westbound morning peak flow from Truman Pkwy, no merge required

Preferred Alternative 3: Bridge with Truman Parkway Green-T Trumpet Interchange (Long Term)

- Description:
 - Grade separate E President St over RR, return to grade west of bridge overpass
 - 6-lane E President Street typical section (3 lanes each direction)
 - Double EB / SB Left-turn lanes to/from Truman Pkwy
 - Continuously moving eastbound thru lanes, signal control for left-turns to and from Truman Pkwy
- Benefits
 - Eliminates blocked crossings
 - Consolidates existing two intersections into one
 - Provides continuous free-flow movement for heavy morning inbound traffic to Savannah
 - Can be constructed at two separate projects for easier phased implementation

Mr. Jay Melder asked if Ms. Teresa Scott could speak about the CSX involvement, when and what they'll have to approve. Also, what potential challenges we may have with moving forward with some of these preferred options as it relates to the railroad?

Ms. Teresa Scott stated that CSX is one of our stakeholders. One Atlas Consulting has constantly kept in contact with CSX. Originally there were some rail options that we looked at, but CSX was not crazy about those options and it really didn't make sense in the long term. CSX is favorable of leaving them alone and building over them. She believes the biggest hurdle would be getting railroad Right of Way. One Atlas has worked with CSX before. If this is federal funding, then GDOT may be involved and GDOT has a lot of experience working with CSX. She doesn't see a lot of problems with CSX as we are not reconfiguring their track and not impacting them.

Mr. Jay Melder believes the crossing elimination would be something particularly interesting to CSX. In terms of the construction itself, he is not an engineer, could Ms. Teresa Scott help the CORE MPO Board to understand how that impacts the railroad and whether or not there would be an impact that CSX would want, or anything else potentially standing in our way on this project?

Ms. Teresa Scott answered we do have to get permits for their Right of Way. The construction company would have to be permitted to be there on the Right of Way and follow all of CSX's rules. Other than that, she is not sure there would be a lot of kickbacks from CSX. She thinks they would be happy to accommodate and help us build this bridge, as it would also help CSX to free flow and not have to worry about traffic. She doesn't see any big issues; it's just getting through the CSX network. The federal process is hard, but working with the railroad is a little bit harder.

Chairperson Chester Ellis stated we have a Chatham County Engineering employee, Mr. Nathaniel Panther, here today. Could Mr. Nathaniel Panther give the CORE MPO Board members an idea of the conversation Chatham County Engineering had directly with CSX in the meeting yesterday?

Mr. Nathaniel Panther, Chatham County Engineer, stated from a CSX standpoint, what they're going to be concerned about is the clearance height from the bottom beam of the potential bridge to their track. CSX has minimum clearance for any railroad or any of their cars. As far as hurdles, the only thing is from a constructability standpoint. When we are setting the beams, we don't want the trains running underneath at that time. So we will have to coordinate the timing of setting the beams with the train crossings. Short of that, we don't see any hurdles that make this an impossible project.

Chairperson Chester Ellis stated he has concerns about the train loading back and forth underneath the overpass. If the train engine stopped right under the overpass, what would be the emissions effect on the motorist above from the train's smokestack? He was told by Chatham County Engineering this will already be addressed by the time we get this whole project together for implementation. He wanted to share this information.

Mr. Jay Melder stated he is sure that Chatham County Engineering and One Atlas have thought about the Bilbo Canal. Would the new President Street bridge that goes over the train tracks go over the Bilbo Canal as well?

Mr. Nathaniel Panther answered yes, it would fly over the canal. The critical part is getting the minimum clearance to the train track, then we have to taper down to get back underneath the Truman Parkway. We might have to raise the bridges on the Truman Parkway a little. It's all possible but costs money. One Atlas has done an excellent job looking at the constructability of the project and coming back with a concept that's feasible to carry forward to preliminary engineering, to move this project forward.

Mr. Jay Melder made a recommendation that the City of Savannah Water Resources and Stormwater Team also be a stakeholder, whenever they are involved.

Mr. Nathaniel Panther answered yes, absolutely.

Mr. Jamie McCurry asked what is the clearance and grade of the bridge that's proposed? He believes it depends on the type of train car needed to clear.

Mr. Nathaniel Panther answered for the Jimmy Deloach project, he believes it was 23 feet. He will have to check and send that information of the minimum clearance height to Ms. Wykoda Wang. CSX will be a partner throughout this process, so we will not do anything without CSX being aware.

Ms. Karen Jarrett stated the Non-Motorized Transportation Plan was a hot topic when we discussed the President Street corridor before. Can Ms. Teresa Scott share how this will affect the non-motorized transportation options?

Ms. Teresa Scott answered that non-motorized transportation is important through this corridor. On this drawing, the yellow depicts possible sidewalks, shared used path, etc., so non-motorized transportation was a consideration.

10. Potential Impacts from Federal Funding Freeze

Ms. Wykoda Wang gave the presentation on the Potential Impact from the Federal Funding Freeze.

CORE MPO Staff prepared this information trying to tentatively evaluate what impacts we would have with all of this uncertainty. This information is listed just for reference, and detailed tables and lists are attached to the agenda.

Current FY 2024-2027 TIP - all projects highlighted in yellow have funding related to Carbon Reduction Program, PROTECT, or Resiliency related funding. These funds might be impacted or disappear completely.

- Chevis Road Improvement Project
- Garrad Avenue Improvement Project
- SR 404 SPUR/US 17 from NE of Savannah Harbor to Back River
- SR 26/US 80 @ Lazaretto Creek

- Truman Linear Park Trail – Phase II B
- NEVI Charging Station – I-16 from Gwinnett Street to Chatham Pkwy

Federal Grant Funded Projects – might be stopped or delayed as electric vehicles and pedestrian safety are no longer priorities for the federal government.

- I-16 Ramp Removal Project
 - Reconnecting Communities and Neighborhoods Program Grant
 - City of Savannah has already signed the contract with FHWA.
 - Still subject to review by the federal government
- Volterra Electrification of American Ports (VEAP)
 - Reduction of Truck Emissions at Port Facilities Grant
 - Mr. Jamie McCurry stated that GPA is not involved with this project, even though it has port facilities on there. He is not sure what the status of the Volterra project is.
- Port of Savannah Renewable Fuel Project
 - Reduction of Truck Emissions at Port Facilities Grant
 - Mr. Jamie McCurry stated the contract is fully negotiated and waiting for someone else's signature.
- 37th Street Safety Improvement and Supplemental Planning
 - Safe Streets and Roads for All Program
 - The contract hasn't been signed yet.

Highway Projects Under Construction – These might be impacted. If GDOT has the funds already in their bank account, then the funding might be safer. If not, GDOT will still need to be reimbursed by the federal government, and the projects might get delayed. After speaking with Ms. Kaniz Sathi of GDOT this morning, we were told that every project that has funding authorized should be okay. Construction projects should be okay, because they already have construction funds authorized.

- SR 404 SPUR @ Talmadge Memorial Bridge
- I-16 from I-95 to I-516
- SR 25 @ Savannah River in Port Wentworth
- CR 787 /Islands Expressway @ Wilmington River Bascule Bridge
- Widening and Reconstruction to construct 4 lanes on US 801/516 (Brampton Rd Conn) Beg at SR 21/SR 25 & ext S of SR 21
- Widening and reconstruction on US 80/SR 26 (Ogeechee Road) beginning from I-516/SR 421 extending to Victory Drive (CS 188); includes construction of a bridge and approaches over CSX Railroad
- 2 Lane Roadway on Effingham Parkway beginning at SR 30 and extending to Blue Jay Rd. Construction of 6 Bridges and Approaches

Transit Projects and CAT – Public transit seems to be considered a local service and not of national significance based on the new directions. We expect some CAT funding delays, including the fixed route and ferry program. CAT's paratransit will probably be okay, as it is totally funded by Chatham County. The Ferry Boat program and Micro-transit will probably be impacted.

Mr. Jay Melder asked to clarify which ferry dock or specific project?

Ms. Mary Moskowitz answered there are two projects, Plant Riverside dock and the maintenance facility. Both of those RFPs are out right now. Those funds have been executed and CAT anticipates to receive those funds.

Mr. Jay Melder stated he's heard there is potentially a gap in funding, especially for the Plant Riverside dock. What's the gap in the funding needed? What is the total amount of the grant fund?

Ms. Mary Moskowitz answered that is correct. CAT has not received the final bids yet. This is a bid they had to reissue because they only had one bidder. At that time the funding gap needed was \$1.5 million. CAT hopes by reissuing the RFP, the cost might be reduced as they may get other bidders. She believes the total amount of the grant fund is \$2.5 million and there are two projects associated with this grant, Plant Riverside dock and the maintenance facility. She is not sure of the exact division between those two projects. She will get back to Ms. Wykoda Wang.

Ms. Wykoda Wang stated that if the funds have been authorized, we might be on the safer side. If the funds haven't been authorized, there might be delays.

We listed the UPWP projects as we are processing the reimbursements so the CORE MPO can continue to be funded. Based on our conversation with GDOT, they will probably process once we turn in the reimbursement request. Regarding the UPWP and the three studies, we will be hesitant to sign the contracts right now. We will proceed with the review process but wait until we have more certainty before signing the contracts.

The attached table shows the information that CORE MPO staff have compiled for potential impacts, and hopefully the impacts will not be as big as expected.

Mr. Tim Callanan stated he doesn't think that Effingham Parkway has any federal funding, so he thinks it should be safe.

Ms. Wykoda Wang confirmed if it's Georgia state funding it is safe.

Chairperson Chester Ellis stated with GDOT telling us to proceed as if nothing happened, he believes GDOT will be the ones to take the brunt of these changes. They will be the ones who advise and intervene for us.

Ms. Wykoda Wang stated that GDOT may have information that we do not. We will proceed as normal.

VI. Information Reports (verbal)

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

Report attached to the agenda.

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

Report attached to the agenda. Mr. Nathaniel Panther stated Chatham County has opened the bids yesterday for a temporary traffic signal at the intersection of Little Neck Rd, John Carter Rd, and DOT Barn Rd. Those bids were favorable. Chatham County will review the bids this week and expect to send them for consideration at the next CORE MPO Board meeting.

Chairperson Chester Ellis asked that Mr. Nathaniel Panther make sure Commissioner Tanya Milton receives updates, as that is her jurisdiction and she will receive the questions from the public about dates and timelines.

Mr. Nathaniel Panther stated Chatham County will send updates through the manager's office.

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

Report attached to the agenda. Mr. Joe Shearouse gave the update.

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

Report attached to the agenda.

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

Report attached to the agenda. Ms. Mary Moskowitz gave the update.

[16. City of Port Wentworth Status Update Report](#)

Report attached to the agenda.

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

Report attached to the agenda.

VII. Other Public Comments (limit to 3 minutes)

VIII. Notices

[18. GA FLAP Call for Projects Alert FY 27-29](#)

Ms. Wykoda Wang stated this is GA FLAP funding that might be available for federal land access. The local governments in our CORE MPO region are eligible for this funding for improvements to access federal land. For example, Fort Pulaski National Park is federal land. Access to Fort Pulaski would be eligible for this funding,

including highway, transit, or bike/pedestrian improvements. Those things are all eligible. This grant is not competitive, so let's try to take advantage of this opportunity.

19. [Next CORE MPO Board Meeting April 23, 2025, at 10:00am](#)

IX. Adjournment

There being no further business, the February 26th, 2025, CORE MPO Board 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.