



CORE MPO Technical Coordinating Committee

Minutes
February 20, 2025, at 2:00pm

February 20, 2025, CORE MPO Technical Coordinating Committee

Voting Members	Representing	Present
Deanna Brooks	Chatham County Engineering	X
Michele Strickland	City of Savannah	X
Charles Ackridge	City of Bloomingdale	
Rhonda Ferrell	City of Garden City	
Leon Davenport	City of Pooler	
Omar Senati-Martinez	City of Port Wentworth	X
Matt Walker	Town of Thunderbolt	
Peter Gulbronson	City of Tybee Island	X
Paul Teague	Bryan County	X
Nathan Clark	City of Richmond Hill	X
Jonathan Hulme	Effingham County	X
Representative	Municipality within Effingham County (rotating seat)	
Mary Moskowitz	Chatham Area Transit	
Jamie McCurry	Georgia Ports Authority	X
Heath Maines	Savannah Airport Commission	X
Melanie Wilson	MPC Executive Director & CEO	X
Kaniz Sathi	GDOT – Planning	X
Katie Proctor	GDOT – District Five	X
Caila Brown	Bike Walk Savannah	X
Voting Alternate	Representing	
Others	Representing	
Pamela Everett	MPC	X
Asia Hernton	CORE MPO	X
Anna McQuarrie	CORE MPO/MPC	X
Kieron Coffield	CORE MPO	X
Wykoda Wang	CORE MPO	X
Sadie Esch-Laurent	CORE MPO/MPC	X
Hind Patel	MPC IT	X

Joseph Longo	FHWA	X
Damon Rice	Chatham County	X
Sarah Greenbush	MPC	X
L N Manchi	Consultant for Chatham County President St.	X
Teresa Scott	Consultant for Chatham County President St.	X
Tina Bockhold	Chatham County	X
Mary Flatt	GDOT	X

I. Approval of Agenda

Mr. Nathan Clark, Richmond Hill, motioned to approve the agenda, seconded by Ms. Caila Brown, Bike Walk Savannah. The motion passed with none opposed.

II. Action Items

[1. Approval of the December 12, 2024 CORE MPO TCC meeting minutes](#)

Mr. Jonathan Hulme, Effingham County, motioned to approve the December 12th, 2024, meeting minutes, seconded by Mr. Nathan Clark. The motion passed 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 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.

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 \(Intersection of SR 21AL & SR 307 to Transition from SR 21AL to SR17\)](#)

Mr. Heath Maines, Savannah Airport, motioned to endorse the National Highway System Change Request, seconded by Mr. Jonathan Hulme. 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
 - Mr. Robbie Byrd, Rincon, to represent Effingham County Municipalities rotating seat
- 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 list/waiting list
 - TCC will review and help CORE MPO Staff to develop the scoring criteria
 - TCC will review the application form
 - We will hold an application workshop
 - Request more than needed (considering inflation)
 - Plan out for 5-6 years, not just 1 year
 - Make sure projects are consistent with the 2050 MTP
 - Operational Improvements, bike/ped lanes, etc. are fine.
 - Specific and bigger projects, like highway projects, please make sure to check for consistency with the 2050 MTP.
 - 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. Previously FHWA wanted us to include the federal planning emphasis areas in the UPWP, for example Justice 40 and Equity, which are now forbidden words. The language in the final UPWP might be updated, but we have the budget's final numbers and those will not change. Staff would like to ask TCC to endorse the FY 2026 UPWP keeping in mind the language may need to be updated based on new directives, whenever those come out.

Chairperson Deana Brooks asked when the Call for Projects and the application workshop would happen.

Ms. Wykoda Wang answered we will start the Call for Projects in August 2025. CORE MPO staff will have an application workshop in August or September. We will give all agencies a month to respond because there are so many uncertainties right now. Currently CORE MPO manages the STBG (Y230) funds, Transportation

Alternatives (Y301) funds, and Carbon Reduction Program (CRP) funds, but since resiliency is questionable, we don't know if these funds will continue to be available. The new Deputy Secretary of USDOT is against transit and pedestrian safety, so there is possibility Transportation Alternatives funds could go away. When CORE MPO staff have more certainty, we will develop specific schedules.

Mr. Nathan Clark motioned to endorse the FY 2026 UPWP Adoption, seconded by Ms. Caila Brown. The motion passed with none opposed.

III. Other Business

IV. Status Reports

4. US 80 Corridor Study Phase II

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

The RFP was issued at the end of December and we received two proposals. The deadline for completing the written proposal scores is tomorrow, so she will have the scores compiled by COB tomorrow. Since there are only two proposals, we will interview both candidates. After the interviews, we will compile the written proposal scores and interview scores to determine the consultant rankings. We will develop a contract between MPC and the selected consultant, but we cannot sign the contract until we have more certainty on the funding due to administration changes. CORE MPO staff thought we would be able to kick off the study in early April, but due to the uncertainty with funding the study could be delayed. Right now, CORE MPO staff will focus on reviewing the proposals and scheduling the interviews, to have the rankings ready. CORE MPO is waiting for certainty that the funding will be available.

5. Urban Flood Model Study Phase II

Ms. Anna McQuarrie gave the presentation on the Urban Flood Model Study Phase II.

As Ms. Wykoda Wang noted, federal funding is uncertain and no contract will be signed until we have clarity with the Urban Flooding Model Study Phase II. We did extend the final submission date by a day and a half due to the inclement winter weather. The closing date was February 4th, however on February 11th we put a 30 day pause on this RFP to give CORE MPO time to navigate the changes from the federal government and assess the impacts. This study is related to climate change and social vulnerability, so we will give an update on March 11th on how we choose to proceed.

Chairperson Deana Brooks asked how many proposals were received.

Ms. Anna McQuarrie answered we received one proposal.

6. CORE MPO Bicycle and Pedestrian Facility Study

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

The Bicycle and Pedestrian Facility Study is a project that aims to document and create a mapped inventory of the bicycle lanes, sidewalks, and crosswalks throughout the CORE MPO planning area, which includes Chatham County and parts of Bryan and Effingham Counties. This study will also provide an analysis of the gaps and opportunities within the local non-motorized transportation infrastructure system. To see more details, the RFP document and addendum can be found on the CORE MPO's website, link included in agenda. The RFP was released on January 21st, and we received several questions and have addressed them in the addendum which is posted to the website.

We have received two proposals so far, and the deadline for submittal is tomorrow, February 21st. The proposed project timeline (Start – End) is April 24th, 2025, to March 31st, 2027. However, as Ms. Wykoda Wang and Ms. Anna McQuarrie stated earlier, we are waiting on further clarification from the federal government for any changes.

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 a bicycle and pedestrian plan. Included in this plan are bicycle and pedestrian projects, specifically local ones, community goals and objectives regarding bike lanes and sidewalks and crosswalks, and also community information regarding non-motorized transportation. This

project has been on-going but was put on hold to accommodate the development of other CORE MPO projects, including the 2050 MTP. We have restarted the NMTP, aiming to complete and adopt it in June 2025.

The next step in this process is to score and rank the projects. This is a big part, as there are around 500 projects and we have to score every single project. CORE MPO Staff and the NMTP Steering Committee will come together to find the most effective way to score such a high number of projects. We aim to complete that scoring by the end of March. The Steering Committee has been reactivated and will have future meetings regarding this project, which we aim to have at the beginning of March.

In relation to the Bicycle and Pedestrian Facility Study, the NMTP will be adopted before the completion of that 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

Mr. Jonathan Hulme asked if the entire CORE MPO area was included in the NMTP and was Effingham County included.

Ms. Asia Hernton stated the beginning of the project was done before the current bylaws and boundary. At first the boundaries did not include the southeastern portion of Effingham County, but the NMTP Steering Committee tried to include Effingham County projects because we knew the boundary would expand. Most of the projects are in Chatham County, but we want to make sure that Effingham and Bryan Counties have projects in the NMTP. If anyone has projects they feel are missing, please submit them to CORE MPO staff, and we will score and add them to the NMTP.

Ms. Wykoda Wang stated when we do our Call for Projects this fall, if anyone plans to apply for funding, please make sure the project is included in the NMTP.

Chairperson Deana Brooks asked how the 500 projects were identified - were they network gaps or were they submitted?

Ms. Asia Hernton answered it was a variety of different ways. CORE MPO staff worked with Ms. Caila Brown of Bike Walk Savannah and drew out possible long-range routes for non-motorized travel that can be an anchor for other routes to branch off of. Another area was from projects we have had in the past - past studies that identified possible projects for sidewalks, bike lanes, and other non-motorized infrastructure. Another source is from discussions with Municipalities and the NMTP Steering Committee. During our TEPIAC meeting, we spoke to our committee member with vision impairment who stated we need audible crosswalks so that vision impaired people are safe. The audible crosswalks were added to the NMTP project list.

Mr. Jonathan Hulme asked that Ms. Asia Hernton email him and Bryan County the information in regard to the NMTP so they can look at it.

Ms. Caila Brown stated we discussed potentially creating a 2-tier scoring system. Originally, we were focusing heavily on equity and some other elements that may not be scored as high with the new federal administrative emphasis areas. Now we would consider things like economic development or crash data having one score, then having a secondary score for demographic data or other things which could be pulled out if deemed unnecessary.

Ms. Melanie Wilson stated before scoring any projects, we need to come up with new criteria so that everything is scored fairly. Right now is a very different time and we need to be strategic with putting projects forward.

Chairperson Deana Brooks asked if the Steering Committee is open now.

Ms. Asia Hernton answered yes. CORE MPO staff sent out an email to schedule a Steering Committee meeting. She will send that email with the virtual meeting link to all TCC members. Going back to some of the considerations for the scoring method, she wants to make sure the language is not too politicized. For example, Zero Car Households, or existing public transit data could be something that we retain. We do recognize these are different times and we want to create a scoring system that will not impede the development of the projects.

Ms. Melanie Wilson stated for example with our existing public transit, there is now a USDOT deputy secretary that hates public transit, so we need to be very strategic about how we place weights in the scoring methodology in order to get these projects implemented. There could be another level of review besides the normal level. There is a memo that places more weight on areas with higher birth and marriage rates. She wants to stress how different this is and how we need to be creative to get our funding for projects.

8. PROTECT Grant Updates

Ms. Anna McQuarrie gave the presentation on the PROTECT grant.

CORE MPO was applying for the Promoting Resilient Operations for a Transformative, Efficient and Cost saving Transformation (PROTECT) Discretionary Grant to develop a Resilience Improvement Plan (RIP), which we renamed to the Coastal Region MPO Efficiency and Quality Improvement Plan or EQIP. We were watching the USDOT updates and this grant had not been pulled off the website, so we proceeded with the application until notified on February 12th that the Notice Of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) was removed from www.grants.gov as of February 11th for review by FHWA. We'd like to thank everyone that submitted a letter of support. We received 15, which is absolutely fantastic to see the support from our region and our MPO members and other organizations. We will hold on to those letters of support should this funding opportunity reopen or be revised and keep everyone updated. For now, this grant has been indefinitely paused.

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, and 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

10. Potential Impacts from Federal Funding Freeze

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

She would like to mention two articles, both attached to the agenda. The first article is from the Transportation 4 America Blog, which has evaluated the federal funding freeze impacts. Please take a look to see what/where will be impacted the most. The second article is from the Association of Metropolitan Planning Organizations (AMPO), which states that after FHWA reviews the TIP amendments, they are subject to an added layer of review. This added layer of review has effectively placed a hold on all projects requiring TIP amendments. That means a lot of projects will be delayed. This is all new information, so CORE MPO staff need time to explore and digest this news. We will attend webinars to gather more information.

CORE MPO staff have put together some tables to show which projects in our area might be impacted.

For the 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 – These 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
- Volterra Electrification of American Ports (VEAP)
 - Reduction of Truck Emissions at Port Facilities
- Port of Savannah Renewable Fuel Project
 - Reduction of Truck Emissions at Port Facilities
- 37th Street Safety Improvement and Supplemental Planning
 - Safe Streets and Roads for All Program

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.

- SR 404 SPUR @ Talmadge Memorial Bridge
- I-16 from I-95 to I-516
- SR 25 @ Savannah River in Port Wentworth Back River
- 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

Ms. Wykoda Wang asked Ms. Katie Proctor if she knows if GDOT has funding available.

Ms. Katie Proctor, GDOT District Five, answered she would have to check; she doesn't have any information on that yet.

Ms. Wykoda Wang stated that the last time CORE MPO spoke with GDOT, they advised us to move along as if nothing happened until told otherwise.

Transit Projects and CAT

A lot of the transit projects are on-going and programmed into our TIP, which includes CAT's fixed route, paratransit services, etc. 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.

CORE MPO Planning

CORE MPO is funded by the Highway Planning Funds and Transit Planning Funds. If they find problems with our UPWP, we might not be reimbursed. If GDOT does not receive the funds from FHWA and FTA, they cannot pay the CORE MPO. If MPO functions stop, that will impact all of us, as we would not be able to process MTP or TIP amendments, among other things. As far as our three RFP planning studies are concerned, there is still uncertainty with funding, so we don't know when the contracts will be signed and when we can kick off the studies. We don't know the specific impacts on specific projects, as there is a lot of uncertainty right now.

V. Information Reports (verbal)

11. GDOT Project Status Update Report

Report attached to the agenda. Ms. Katie Proctor gave the update.

12. Chatham County Project Status Update Report

Report attached to the agenda. Ms. Deana Brooks gave the update.

13. City of Savannah Project Status Update Report

Report attached to the agenda. Ms. Michele Strickland, City of Savannah, gave the update.

14. Savannah Hilton Head International Airport Project Status Update Report

Report attached to the agenda. Mr. Heath Maines gave the update.

15. Chatham Area Transit Project Status Update Report

Report attached to the agenda.

16. City of Port Wentworth Status Update Report

Report attached to the agenda. Mr. Omar Senati-Martinez, City of Port Wentworth, gave the update.

17. LATS-SCDOT Project Status Update Report

18. City of Bloomingdale Updates

19. City of Garden City Updates

20. City of Pooler Updates

21. Town of Thunderbolt Updates

22. City of Tybee Island Updates

Mr. Pete Gulbranson, City of Tybee Island, stated they are finishing up some local paving projects and local sewer jobs. They've got some paving on the sewer project next week.

23. Bryan County Updates

[24. City of Richmond Hill Updates](#)

[25. Effingham County Updates](#)

[26. Municipalities in Effingham County Updates](#)

[27. Georgia Ports Authority Updates](#)

VI. Other Public Comments (limit to 3 minutes)

VII. Notices

[28. 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. CORE MPO wants to inventory the federal land in our area. 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.

[29. Next CORE MPO TCC meeting April 17, 2025, at 2:00pm](#)

VIII. Adjournment

There being no further business, the February 20th, 2025, TCC 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.