



CORE MPO Citizens Advisory Committee

Minutes

February 15, 2024, at 5:30 pm

February 15, 2024, CORE MPO Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) Meeting

Voting Members	Representing	Present
Anthony (Tony) Abbott	Chatham County	X
Dr. Daniel Brantley	Chatham County	X
Vacant	Chatham County	
Kevin Glover	Savannah	
Armand Turner	Savannah	X
Robert Pirie	Savannah	X
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
Kieron Coffield	CORE MPO/MPC	X
A'riel Johnson	Chatham Area Transit	X

I. Approval of Agenda

Mr. Tony Abbott motioned to approve the February 15th, 2024 CAC meeting agenda; seconded by Mr. Robert Pirie. The motion passed with none opposed.

II. Action Items

1. [Approval of the December 7, 2023 CAC Meeting minutes](#)

Mr. Robert Pirie motioned to approve the December 7th, 2023 CORE MPO CAC Meeting Minutes; seconded by Mr. Tony Abbott. The motion passed with none opposed.

2. 2045 MTP Amendment

Ms. Wykoda Wang stated that GDOT requested an amendment be made to the 2045 MTP to add the Right-of-Way phase for SR 404 SPUR/US 17 at the Savannah River Crossing into Cost Band Two in FY 2028. The cost is estimated at \$500,000. Their reasoning is the current maintenance project to tighten the cable on the Talmadge Bridge to increase vertical clearance is considered a short-term fix. The long-term fix would probably be replacement of the Talmadge Bridge itself. This project started as a feasibility study. Now GDOT is ready to move on to the next step for recommendations. FHWA requires that this Right-of-Way phase be included in the Metropolitan Transportation Plan before FHWA can review the feasibility study results, recommendations, or alternatives. We are doing this to satisfy the requirements.

We conducted a financial balance analysis. GDOT indicated they will have additional funds beyond the original 2045 MTP revenue projections, even beyond that we do have a balance in Cost Band Two that could accommodate the \$500,000 cost. CORE MPO Staff recommend that CAC endorse this amendment.

Mr. Tony Abbott asked to clarify if the bridge is being raised or replaced?

Ms. Wykoda Wang answered they are replacing the cables, that is PI# 0019219, and this will raise the bridge almost 5 feet, which is considered a short-term fix. A long-term fix might be bridge replacement or a tunnel. That is why they did the feasibility study. Georgia Ports Authority had to come up with the 10 million dollars to do the feasibility study. FHWA refused to review the feasibility study recommendations or alternatives until we have the Right-of-Way phase in our MTP.

Mr. Tony Abbott motioned to endorse the 2045 MTP Amendment; seconded by Mr. Robert Pirie. The motion passed with none opposed.

3. FY 2024 - FY 2027 TIP Amendments February 2024

Ms. Wykoda Wang stated this is the TIP amendment for the Truman Linear Park Trail Phase II-B Project. Once this project is completed, it will connect Truman Linear Park Trail Phase II-A which ends on DeRenne Ave and moves north connecting to 52nd Street, all the way to Daffin Park. We originally had about \$6.4 million programmed for this project in the FY 2021 – 2024 TIP for the construction phase. The City of Savannah provided an updated cost estimate of \$3.9 million. GDOT was only able to authorize the funds based on the cost estimate.

Since then, City did the bidding process and the lowest bid received was around \$7.8 million. The City of Savannah asked CORE MPO if we could come up with additional funds. We checked the balance and found out that we have about \$16,000 in federal funds from the Carbon Reduction Program and \$231,000 from the Y230 funds. This is all the federal funding the MPO has available, about \$250,000 in total. The City will have to come up with about \$4 million. They have already awarded the contract to the lowest bidder, so we hope to have construction start very soon. In about two years you will be able to bike or walk from Lake Mayer all the way to Daffin Park.

Mr. Robert Pirie asked if that is connecting to the bike trail that terminates at the police memorial bike trail?

Ms. Wykoda Wang stated yes, that is Phase I. The portion that Chatham County completed is called Phase II-A, from Lake Mayer to DeRenne. This is the phase that is from DeRenne to 52nd Street. We are adding the construction phase into FY 2024, so after TIP Amendment is approved by the CORE MPO Board, we will forward it to GDOT and hopefully they will authorize the funds soon. Staff request the CAC endorsement for the proposed amendment.

Mr. Armand Turner asked if GDOT took into account how off the estimate was, for future reference?

Ms. Wykoda Wang stated in ideal times we probably could figure it out. However last May, early June, she had to stay late on a Wednesday afternoon because some of the funds were lapsing that Friday. We don't want to have the funds lapsing, and at that time we could only use the latest cost estimate provided to us. Several months prior to that, we asked the City of Savannah to update the cost estimate, but they did not provide any updates and still estimated at \$3.9 million. That Wednesday, when she received news that some of the funds would lapse that Friday, we had to figure it out because we had \$6.4 million programmed but we were only able to authorize \$3.9 million, which means we have to re-allocate almost \$2 million dollars. We got Chatham County together as well, because they were applying for US 17 Corridor Study, SR 204 Corridor Study, and Green Island Trail Project, that were ready to accept that money. We had one day to process before the funds lapsed. Next time, she hopes the City of Savannah will do a better job so it will be easier.

Mr. Tony Abbott stated it sounds like their consultant made a serious error. He just finished a sewage treatment plant in Bryan County and we had an estimate made pre-COVID, it was \$1.8 million and went up to \$3.5 million by the time the plant was finished. That was without errors, so this consulting firm made a serious error.

Ms. Wykoda Wang stated that even Phase II-A from Lake Mayer to DeRenne Ave cost more than \$3.9 million. Chatham County said Phase II-B is more complicated and it will definitely be more than that, but unfortunately that was the number we had to go along with. Everyone has learned their lesson to budget more money. The City of Savannah will have to come up with an additional \$4 million. Some of the funding that they let go was \$1.75 million of 100% federally funded money, which means they didn't have to have a local match but they lost it. Thankfully they finally have it awarded. Let's help the City of Savannah get the funds to start construction.

Mr. Robert Pirie motioned to endorse the TIP Amendment; seconded by Mr. Tony Abbott. The motion passed with none opposed.

4. FY 2025 UPWP Adoption

Ms. Wykoda Wang stated she presented the Preliminary Draft of the 2025 UPWP back in December, so she will just focus on the updates since then.

The UPWP is the staff budget. It details how much money we get for planning, and how our planning funds will be used to pay salaries and to do planning work. We have 3 funding sources, all requiring a local match:

- PL grant from Federal Highway Administration
 - 20% local match from membership dues
- Y410 grant from Federal Highway Administration for bike and pedestrian planning (subset for PL and covers Complete Street or the Non-motorized Transportation Plan)
 - 0% local match currently due to federal waiver
- Section 5303 grant from Federal Transit Administration
 - 20% local match - GDOT pays 10%, and the other 10% comes from membership dues.

We received our updated funding numbers on February 1st. When we developed the preliminary draft and presented it in December, we assumed last year's numbers because the updated numbers were not available. For the PL Highway Planning, we received about an \$8,000 increase, and for the Y410 about \$300 less. The total amount for the MPO function is about \$802,000. We will use this money to accomplish next year's major tasks and all the activities related to the MTP update.

We will update the Participation Plan and the Title VI Plan. We will maintain and update the current TIP and do research on new E-TIP software for a searchable TIP on our website so that Call for Projects submittal and ranking and scoring can be done online. We will finish the certification review to make sure the CORE MPO is certified, ensuring that federal dollars will continue to flow to our area. We will continue to adopt the performance measures such as PM1, PM2, Safety Congestion and Freight, and Greenhouse Gas Emissions. We will also have several special studies.

For the On-going Studies we will continue to coordinate with the local project sponsors.

- City of Savannah and GDOT
 - I-16 Exit Ramp Removal IMR
- Chatham County – we have updated the consultants and schedules
 - SR 204 Access Study,
 - US 17/SR 25 Corridor Study
 - President Street Railroad Crossing Elimination Study
- CAT
 - AOPP Funded Study
 - ARP Funded Study

We have several Unfunded Studies. We will apply for funds, probably for 1-3 select projects of interest.

- CORE MPO
 - Regional Truck Parking Study
 - Resilience Improvement Plan (RIP)
 - Urban Flooding Model Study Phase II
 - **NEW** - Bike/Pedestrian Plan Implementation Tool
- Chatham County
 - Islands Expressway Between Truman Parkway and US 80
- Effingham County
 - **NEW** - US 80 Corridor Study Phase II – Limit and Cost Change
- CAT
 - Transit Oriented Development Study
 - Bus Stop Amenities Study

- Mobility Hub Study and Program
- Bus Rapid Transit Feasibility Study

We have also updated the CORE MPO Metropolitan Planning Area (MPA) Boundary because Bryan County does not want to be a part of our MPO. In the southern part of Bryan County, there are a lot of people in the unincorporated region who are classified as living in the Savannah Urbanized Area. We have to take those areas in due to federal law.

Dr. Daniel Brantley asked if Bryan County has time to change their mind?

Ms. Wykoda Wang stated Bryan County will have to learn the lesson themselves. After the 2010 census, we had to update the CORE MPO MPA and we needed to expand to southern Bryan County and southern Effingham County. Richmond Hill agreed to join in and Effingham County did not. Over the years, Effingham County learned they were missing funding opportunities. Chatham County can use the MPO controlled portion of the money, say for a \$2 million project with \$1 million in Chatham and \$1 million in Effingham, Chatham would only need to come up with \$200,000 as the MPO would come up with the \$800,000. Effingham would have to come up with \$1 million. Effingham could not come up with the \$1 million, so we would have to give up that project. This time Effingham County is eager to join, as they understand the value of the MPO planning process. Bryan County does not see the value and their letter is attached to this agenda. They will have to learn.

Mr. Robert Pirie asked to clarify if the southern part of Bryan County is part of the MPO, they are just not participating? Ms. Wykoda Wang answered the southern part has to join and she will go into more detail later in this meeting. We have to include the boundary in the UPWP, and that is why I mentioned it now.

For the financial information, we have allocated an additional \$8,000 to administration for the certification review. We also incorporated the comments we received from FHWA and GDOT. The UPWP revised draft is also attached to this agenda item, and all updates are highlighted in red. Staff request that the CAC endorse the revised draft of the UPWP.

Dr. Daniel Brantley motioned to endorse the FY 2025 UPWP; seconded by Mr. Tony Abbott. The motion passed with none opposed.

III. Status Reports

[5. 2050 MTP Update](#)

Ms. Wykoda Wang stated there are several things going on.

For the Travel Demand Model, the GDOT consultant has already presented at the TCC meeting, and it is very technical. We use the model to project our future needs; it is attached to the TCC agenda and you can see where the problems are in our network. They completed the 2020 Base Year Model run and the 2050 Do Nothing Model run, and they are still going to do the model run for Existing Projects + Committed Projects (which means they have construction already programmed in the current TIP). We have already provided that information to them and it is attached to this agenda. We have 4 projects that have capacity building, that is the next model run. The next one we will need to provide the projects that have Right-of-Way and Preliminary Engineering programmed, GDOT will run that and we will see what kind of projects come up. The model will show where the congested areas are, the levels of service, and what kind of improvements need to be made.

For contributing plans, Ms. Asia Hernton will talk about the Non-Motorized Transportation Plan. We have a preliminary draft for the Congestion Management Process, which is the next agenda item. Staff did an internal review. If you look over the document, please focus on Sections 9 (findings) and 10 (solutions). Both plans will feed into the 2050 MTP. Ms. Anna McQuarrie is doing the Resiliency Planning and has conducted several meetings using the VAST Tool. She has already started the chapter on Resiliency Planning for the 2050 MTP.

We will start on the financial plan development. Based on the previous boundary, GDOT was supposed to give us our revenue projections for the next 25 years. Unfortunately, GDOT received the letter from Bryan County before we did. GDOT reached out to us to ask if we knew our boundary would change, because our revenue projections are based on our boundary. On February 28th, after the CORE MPO Board adopts the new boundary, GDOT will provide us with the revenue projections. In the meantime, we are developing the prioritization methodology. We are going to start the prioritization of projects, so when revenues become available, we will match the funds with the projects that have the highest priority.

We also have the framework for the 2050 MTP document and will start to work on the different elements as the information becomes available. The supporting documents are available for what we submitted to GDOT for the Travel Demand Model, you can see the 1st, 2nd, and 3rd network, the resiliency chapters, etc.

6. CMP Update

Ms. Wykoda Wang stated she did already touch on this topic. The preliminary draft has not included internal staff comments yet, as Ms. Asia Hernton, Ms. Anna McQuarrie and herself have provided comments, and Ms. Genesis Harrod is in the process of incorporating the comments. If you have any comments, please send them to us so that we may incorporate them as well. This is a very big and comprehensive document, so some of the maps are still missing, as we are still working on them, like congestion or crash locations, etc.

Dr. Daniel Brantley asked when would you need the comments by?

Ms. Wykoda Wang stated we want to have the CMP done in April, so please try to get your comments in March if possible.

7. Non-Motorized Transportation Plan Update Status Report

Ms. Asia Hernton stated that staff is continuing work on the Non-Motorized Transportation Plan. This plan is a document that addresses the development of bike and pedestrian infrastructure in the CORE MPO planning area. The goal of the Non-Motorized Transportation Plan update is to identify new projects, assess the needs of the community, and set new goals for bike and pedestrian infrastructure.

Current Activities:

Mapping the Projects - First, we identified some of the projects we would like to add to the plan.

- The map (on the slide attached to the agenda) shows the projects that are being added to the Non-Motorized Transportation Plan. Some of the features are dots instead of lines because they do not yet have an alignment.
- Will provide an updated map as we have identified more projects to add.

Reviewing and Attempting to Update the Scoring Criteria and Methodology - Staff has been reviewing the original scoring methodology to make changes for a few reasons:

1. To add more equity measures to the scoring methodology;
2. To make protected bike and pedestrian paths a higher priority;
3. To account for shared use paths, in which both bike and pedestrian activity can occur on the pathway;
4. Account for increased development in the Savannah area; and
5. Simplify the scoring process.

Staff met with members of the Steering Committee twice in the beginning of January to discuss possible additions and updates that can be made to the scoring methodology. Staff also received great feedback on different equity measures and data sources that can be used to prioritize each project.

This is a draft of a simplified version of the scoring criteria. Instead of having two scoring categories for bike and pedestrian projects, as was in the original 2014 NTMP update, we merged it into one. We retained these measures from the 2014 plan and added new measures and are considering adding the Justice40 and Transportation Disadvantaged data that has come out from USDOT. For reference, the original 2014 scoring methodology is attached to this agenda. You can read the report to see the original methodology for pedestrian project prioritization criteria or the bicycle project prioritization criteria.

After an additional meeting on February 8, it became clear that the old criteria have some measures that are in need of updating, so it has been officially decided to do a major update of the scoring system, criteria, and methodology. We are looking into GIS to aid in the update process. Since we do have to update the old scoring criteria, everything in the previous plan has to be re-scored, which would be about 500 projects.

Barriers to updating the scoring criteria:

- Time: To adopt this plan in June, all major products of the plan must be completed by the end of May. Changing the scoring criteria at this stage may be a roadblock to the timely completion of this plan.
 - GIS can aid the process

- Complexity: Changing the scoring criteria would lead to re-scoring all 400 existing projects to ensure consistency.

Additionally, we want to ensure that the conversations related to equity, protected pathways and development opportunities are still within other places in the document. The highlighted methodology earlier in this report has since changed, it may not be present in the methodology so we will ensure those conversations are present in other places within the document.

8. MPO Boundary, MOU and Bylaws Updates

Ms. Wykoda Wang stated the letter from Bryan County to Chairman Ellis is attached to the agenda. Please take a look for Bryan County's reasoning on not joining the CORE MPO. We did an analysis and according to federal law, any area included in the Savannah Urbanized Area has to be a part of the CORE MPO. We proposed 3 scenarios to Bryan County. Scenario 1 has only the census defined Savannah Urbanized Area included which has to be included, and this has left several holes in the area. Scenario 2 has smoothed out the holes and boundary. Scenario 3 includes all of south Bryan County. Bryan County has chosen Scenario 1. Scenario 1 has a population of more than 13,000, so they have to be a part of the CORE MPO and will have a voting seat. We have updated the MOU. Richmond Hill has a population of 16,000 and the unincorporated area has a population of 13,000; these are not small numbers and we cannot neglect that. We will ask the CORE MPO Board to adopt this revised boundary in February, then we will send the draft MOU for comment from all the municipalities. Then we will probably adopt the MOU in April.

Dr. Daniel Brantley asked what reasons Bryan County gave for not joining the CORE MPO?

Ms. Wykoda Wang stated in the letter "Bryan County objects to the expansion of the CORE MPO Boundary and does not agree to be included within the MPO." They have a resolution included. "Based on the following findings, most of Bryan County is not urbanized or an urbanizing area... North Bryan is a mostly rural low density area... majority population growth is in south Bryan County...the use of impervious area to indicate urbanization is not provided for in federal law...the needs of the County's residents and property owners will be better served by maintaining the County's current status for transportation planning...etc." As a result, for the Hyundai plant, it relieves us from the burden of planning. GDOT and Bryan County will have to do the planning for the Hyundai plant. This is Bryan County's reasoning and we cannot force them to join. Since this was mostly north Bryan County, we focused on southern Bryan County and they still decided to go with the minimum requirement.

For the reapportionment, besides the boundary change we have the MOU changes. In the MOU we have corrected for Bryan County to only include Richmond Hill and the portion of 2020 census defined Savannah Urbanized Area that falls within the unincorporated part of Bryan County, and the area connecting those areas with Richmond Hill. Also Effingham County gave feedback about our language in the MOU not being accurate for 'the portion of Effingham County south of State Route 119' which is not an accurate boundary because SR 119 actually tilts north, that means our language includes more area. We have updated the language to 'the portion of Effingham County south of SR 119 - Indigo Road- Bethany Road' to be more accurate. Since North Bryan County will not be a part of the CORE MPO, we have removed all mentions of Pembroke. We have updated the map to include the Scenario 1 in Exhibit A.

In Exhibit B regarding membership dues, Effingham County agreed to pay 100% of county's dues, covering for Guyton, Springfield, and Rincon. Those cities will probably share one seat. Regarding Bryan County, currently, Richmond Hill pays for the portion included in the MPO Boundary, but that has changed from 300-400 people to 13,000. Now we have changed the language for Bryan County and Richmond Hill will split their county's share of the membership's dues. Chatham County had a poll for election of the CORE MPO Board. Chairman Ellis stated if we have elections for the Board, Chatham County will no longer pay 25% of its municipalities' share of dues. If there is no election, Chatham County will continue to pay the 25%. We did the polling because we are the only MPO that does not have elections. After tallying the results, Savannah, Tybee, and Pooler would like to have elections; Thunderbolt and Garden City do not want an election; we are still waiting on the other responses and the majority will win. If it is based on election, we will base dues on the population.

CAT is not fiscally as strong as the Georgia Ports Authority (GPA) or the Savannah Airport Commission, so we have decided that Chatham Area Transit Authority will pay less for their membership dues. We have updated the language to 'CAT will contribute a fixed amount based on the 60th percentile of the County's municipalities contributions. GPA and Savannah Airport Commission will still be based on the 70th percentile.' Exhibit B also includes the 2020 Census population. The table in Exhibit B has been updated. Based on the polling results, for the Bylaws we will add in the election and we will keep on working on this.

For CAC and ACAT, we will need to schedule a meeting to decide on the membership positions, meeting frequency, etc. All the members that have been actively participating will be carried forward. We need to set up a time so we can revise the Bylaws.

Mr. Robert Pirie wanted to clarify we are the only MPO that does not have elections?

Ms. Wykoda Wang stated yes. There are 16 MPOs in Georgia and all the other 15 have elections. We are the only one that don't have elections and the holdup is the County Chairperson Ellis.

Dr. Daniel Brantley asked why does Chairperson Ellis oppose elections?

Ms. Wykoda Wang stated under the current system he automatically becomes the Chairperson, so he wants to keep being the Chairperson. CAC, TCC and ACAT have elections. In Georgia, we are the only MPO that does not have elections. Nationwide the majority hold elections. It is hard to justify not having an election.

Ms. A'riel Johnson asked if we always did not have elections, or did that start recently?

Ms. Wykoda Wang stated she believes previously ACAT and CAC had elections, but TCC and CORE MPO Board did not have elections. During a certification review, FHWA and FTA indicated that we have to have elections. We subsequently implemented TCC elections. Previously the MPC Executive Director is automatically the TCC Chairperson and the Director of Transportation Department is the Vice Chairperson. We decided it makes more sense to have elections. Chatham County has been Chairperson, Richmond Hill has been Chairperson, and Garden City has been Vice Chairperson. She believes the reason they set up that way previously is because they struggled to have quorums, but we have not had issues with quorums since starting the TCC elections. Since the last reapportionment, we had already decided to have elections on the CORE MPO Board. The Chatham County Chair at that time said 'no.' This time, we are trying again to have elections. FHWA suggested since we are having elections this year, maybe the new Chatham County Chairperson would be open to elections on the CORE MPO Board. However, we are not certain a new Chairperson would be open to elections either, so we are doing the polling now.

Mr. Tony Abbott asked if the current Chatham County Chairperson still has another term to serve?

Mr. Robert Pirie answered it is Chester Ellis and he is in his second term.

Ms. Wykoda Wang stated he must run for reelection.

Mr. Tony Abbott stated if he runs and is reelected that would be for 4 more years?

Ms. Wykoda Wang stated now at least he is open to the polling to determine the elections. In the beginning he was opposed, but now he is open. We will see what happens.

IV. Agency Reports

All agency reports are attached to the agenda and listed under Notices. If CAC members have any questions on any projects, please let staff know.

V. Other Business

VI. Other Public Comments (limit to 3 minutes)

VII. Notices

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

Report attached to the agenda.

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

Report attached to the agenda.

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

Report attached to the agenda.

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

Report attached to the agenda.

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

Report attached to the agenda.

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

Report attached to the agenda.

[15. TIP Funding Tracking Report](#)

Report attached to the agenda.

[16. Next CORE MPO CAC Committee Meeting April 18, 2024 at 5:30pm](#)

Report attached to the agenda.

VIII. Adjournment

There being no further business, the February 15th, 2024 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.