



Transportation Equity and Public Involvement Advisory Committee

Minutes
September 4th, 2024 at 3:00pm

September 4, 2024 CORE MPO Transportation Equity and Public Involvement Advisory Committee

Voting Members	Representing	Present
Tia Baker	Chatham Area Transit	
Asia Hernton	CORE MPO	X
Terry Tolbert	Economic Opportunity Authority	X
Brenda Pollen	Housing Authority of Savannah	
Shannon Ginn	Living Independence for Everyone (LIFE), Inc.	X
Tyrone Palmer	National Federation of the Blind, Local Chapter	
Representative	Savannah – Chatham Council on Disability Issues	
Paula Valdez	Savannah Center for the Blind and Low Vision	
Patti Lyons	Senior Citizens Inc.	
Ben Lewis	Chatham County	X
Tony Abbott	Interested Citizen	
Robert Pirie	Interested Citizen	
A'riel Johnson	Interested Citizen	X
Armand Turner	Interested Citizen	X
Daniel Brantley	Interested Citizen	
Kevin Glover	Interested Citizen	
Non-Voting	Representing	
Representative	Savannah Council of the Blind	
Representative	Coastal Center for Development Services	
Representative	GDOT District Five	
Representative	Georgia Infirmary Day Center	
Bill Kelso	Goodwill Industries of the Coastal Empire	
Representative	NAACP - Savannah Branch	
Representative	Savannah - Chatham County Fair Housing Council	

Representative	Deaf Community	
Alden Strandburg	Effingham County	X
Representative	Bryan County	
Representative	Harambee House	
Others	Representing	Present
Kieron Coffield	CORE MPO	X
Anna McQuarrie	CORE MPO	X
Wykoda Wang	CORE MPO	X
Kaniz Sathi	GDOT	X
Joe Longo	FHWA	X

Roll Call

- I. **Approval of Agenda**
- II. **Action Items**
- III. **Status Reports**

[1. Participation Plan Draft](#)

Ms. Asia Hernton, CORE MPO, stated this meeting has been called to review several drafts that we are updating. So, we are updating our Participation Plan, our Title VI Plan, and our Language Assistance Plan. Part of this process involves getting the TEPIAC to review these drafts and see if we are moving in the right direction in terms of what the content of the plan so far. So, I'll start with the Participation Plan draft. I'm going to scroll to the parts that are most important for the TEPIAC to review. These are all attached to the agenda. You can also review these on your own time after this meeting. I will focus biggest portions that I updated rather than every single update.

In terms of what the Participation Plan is, it's our public involvement plan. It documents the types of public outreach methods that we use for the CORE MPO public outreach. It also documents some of the events that we have had, such as attendance for CORE MPO meetings. In the case of this plan update, we also documented a lot of the public outreach we did for the 2050 MTP.

Ms. Hernton stated that CORE MPO staff have included new numbers based on the 2020 census and then also updated with the new CORE MPO boundary as well. We swapped out the old CORE MPO boundary map with the new map here.

We also made updates to add language about TEPIAC. Beforehand the CAC was the organization or the committee that reviewed the Participation Plan update, but the CAC was consolidated into the TEPIAC. We added some language showing that the Transportation Equity and Public Involvement Advisory Committee will be overseeing the update of the Participation Plan and that it is a consolidated version of the ACAT

and the CAC. So, we moved the CAC information out and the ACAT information out, added the Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee (BPAC) and the TEPIAC committees in.

We also updated the goals and objectives. This is one portion that we do need input from this Committee on. The goals are basically the same, here are the list of the goals.

- **Goal 1:** Raise interested citizens'/parties' level of understanding of the MPO transportation planning process and identify how interested citizens/parties can become involved.
- **Goal 2:** Ensure that the interested citizens/parties have been provided with adequate, appropriate and meaningful opportunities to participate in the decision-making process.
- **Goal 3:** Identify and involve traditionally underserved communities (those communities with high concentrations of minority, low-income, Limited English Proficiency, disabled or elderly populations) in the MPO transportation planning process.
- **Goal 4:** Utilize the TEPIAC to its fullest extent to reach interested parties in the community including citizens within the planning area, the CORE MPO Board and local, state and federal transportation and public officials.

So those are the four goals that we're carrying over to this participation plan. Should we update these? Are there any changes we would like to see or should we even add additional goals?

Mr. Terry Tolbert, Economic Opportunity Authority, asked can you be a little bit more definitive about what those goals are? With these 4 goals, are there more specific items attached to those goals?

Ms. Asia Hernton stated yes, those four goals also have objectives attached. I will show the goals and their objectives. I just want to see if the TEPIAC wanted to maybe add an additional goal.

Mr. Terry Tolbert asked if we have to make a comment today, or could we review it and then send it back to you?

Ms. Asia Hernton stated yes, you can send comments back to me. Well is anyone interested in seeing the full objectives? Ms. Hernton stated that committee members should review the goals and objectives, which start at page 19 of the document. This is something that I think is important for the TEPIAC to review and give their input on. If you have any input and you have time to read it between now and the end of the public comment period, please send it to me. You can also open up this attachment on the agenda and read through it and you can send me comments that way too.

Vice Chairperson Shannon Ginn asked if that is the first item on this agenda for today?

Ms. Asia Hernton confirmed yes, the Participation Plan is the first item on this agenda, and the goals and objectives start on page 19 and end on page 22.

Ms. Asia Hernton stated moving on to another update that I would like to get input on is on page 24. It's the Section 4 for Measures of Effectiveness This is a method to monitor attendance to the CORE MPO board and the Advisory Committee meetings. The way CORE MPO staff measures the average attendance is across a 2-year period. We did go through that 2-year attendance and added the TEPIAC and the BPAC. We weren't able to do a full analysis of TEPIAC and BPAC because they just started and there's nothing to average yet. We still did record their attendance and we added it to this table right here, which shows numbers of meetings, total attendance, and average attendance. In the future for TEPIAC and BPAC, this full table will be filled out. But since they just started, we don't really have much data on them yet.

In terms of input on this; one section that we did add was Qualitative Information. So for our Measures of Effectiveness, they've generally been quantitative where we are just measuring attendance. We wanted to add some qualitative factors too, in terms of trying to understand how these events go, and what type of input we're receiving. We also wanted to add information on the 2050 Metropolitan Transportation Plan update. We thought that qualitative information was important because the attendance record while important to have, only tells you one thing. It is also good to have qualitative information of what types of feedback are we noticing from the public, what is the experience like with these different public outreach methods that we've used.

For this section, I just added a few overarching bullet points or takeaways from the public participation and public involvement in the 2050 MTP. I added information on introducing the project and the CORE MPO. I thought it was important to add this section because during the process of telling people about the Metropolitan Transportation Plan and why it's important, we ran into this struggle where a lot of people didn't know what the CORE MPO was in the first place. We wanted to make note of that. This is to know that moving forward, when we do enter the community with plans, we're likely going to enter into a community that doesn't know what CORE MPO or even what an MPO is. Moving forward we want to have that in mind, we're going to have to introduce a lot more information than we initially thought. There's that piece where we have to introduce the plan, but there's this piece where we have to introduce ourselves too, I wanted to take note of that.

I also wanted to note in terms of qualitative input, the scope of public input. Another thing we noticed was for the 2050 MTP, the Metropolitan Transportation Plan is a very large plan. It's a long range plan. It's very high level, it's on a regional scale. When going out in the community and asking for input, we were receiving a lot of very local and neighborhood specific input. It wasn't this large regional input; it was what was affecting someone basically from the standpoint of their front yard. I thought it was important to take note of that because the types of questions that we were asking people were from that regional perspective. But what we were hearing back was more neighborhood and very local concerns. It is important to note that because, moving

forward, we should probably expect more of those specific comments, even when we are introducing these really big plans.

Mr. Terry Tolbert stated CORE MPO staff get comments from people and you aggregate all of that information, does it change the plan that you created? Because even though the person who is responding, is responding to the area in which they are familiar with, and even though this regional approach, what does that do for them as it relates to feedback to use. Does it make any difference from what they say? Or does it change anything that you created?

Ms. Asia Hernton stated yes, it definitely makes a difference in terms of how we communicate to the public. When we started noticing that we were getting a lot of specific input, it kind of made us more on our toes in terms of understanding what knowledge we should have going into different neighborhoods. For example, if we were to go into a neighborhood where we knew a specific transportation project was happening, we would try to have knowledge of that transportation project because we knew that was something that was going to come up. We also try to be more on our toes about passing comments to the right people. For example, if someone within City of Savannah had a specific comment then we think of who to pass this comment to, so the employees with City of Savannah can address the comment, because this is a very local or neighborhood specific problem. It definitely made us think differently in terms of how we do public outreach. So there's this planned piece of taking in the comments, as we still have to document them for the 2050 MTP. But then CORE MPO staff also have to do this other task of getting their concerns to the right people, because local leaders might be able to address those problems better than CORE MPO could at that stage.

Chairperson Armand Turner stated looking at this, one of the things that comes to mind for me and I think it's an important question to ask or get some type of feedback from individuals, is their understanding or their access to the CORE MPO website. So much of this information, from the meeting times, what's going to be discussed and the agenda are all accessible to the website. I don't know how much of the public actually is aware of the website, or use the website, or if they find the website easy to use. That could give us a good idea of where a lot of the community members are, as far as being involved in being able to give their feedback properly.

Ms. Asia Hernton stated that is a good comment. That was something that we were kind of tossing around and trying to play around specifically for our 2050 MTP page. We were trying to figure out what is a layout that is usable and easy to understand for people. But generally, a lot of the public does not just stumble upon the CORE MPO website. We're trying to think of how to get it out there more because that's where everything is. Whatever people need to know, they could find it there. But a lot of people, they don't know CORE MPO and they especially don't know our website. So that's something that we're still kind of brainstorming on. Are there any other questions? I can move on from this section because there are a few more qualitative takeaways from this section, but this is something else that it would be great to have TEPIAC's input on. In terms of maybe there's something I'm missing here, or maybe

some additional context or information needs to be added to the section. If there are no other comments, I can move on to the next portion that I need the TEPIAC's input on. I'm going to be skipping quite a lot here to page 61, but again this is attached to the agenda so you can review this in your own time and send comments too.

Mr. Shannon Ginn, LIFE, asked when is the deadline for this?

Ms. Asia Hernton answered the deadline for this is the end of the public comment period, which I believe is October 17th. Ms. Hernton then stated on page 61 it shows the public input that we did for the 2050 MTP. It shows the different methods that we used to do public input, and also some examples. Another important part in this section is our toolbox of the different techniques we can draw upon to do public outreach in the future. It would be great if TEPIAC could go through these. Even right now, just off the top of off the top of your head, if you have a public participation technique that would be helpful for the CORE MPO in the future. We can add that to this toolbox. The toolbox is composed of different public participation techniques that we have done or have not done. We're open to different ideas in order to get the best public input that we possibly could and to have the best process that we possibly can. If you have any different ideas we could add to this toolbox, you can share with me now or you can review this and share it later during the public comment period.

That was the last part of the specific input we need on the Participation Plan from TEPIAC, but if anyone else is interested with any other section within this document, I can scroll to that now or I could move on to the Title VI Plan. Or if you have any comments in general you can share them now. Hearing none, I will move on to the Title VI plan.

[2. Title VI Plan Draft](#)

Ms. Asia Hernton stated the Title VI Plan is also on the same timeline as the Participation Plan. So again, if you could get your feedback in by October 17th, that would be great. Then we can make sure that your feedback is incorporated into the plan. Moving on to the Title VI Plan, this is our non-discrimination plan. It's essentially our plan that shows how our CORE MPO process is inclusive. This also includes a complaint procedure and process in case someone is discriminated against.

In terms of how we've updated this plan, this plan is majorly different and that's because GDOT has provided a new format for the Title VI Plan. The original Title VI plan was about twice as long, so this one is a lot shorter and more streamlined, that's the first major update.

In terms of the actual content being updated, and the type of input I need from TEPIAC, is on page 11. I will also show some of the other things we've updated. We have Title VI Notices to the Public and that notifies the public of their rights. We have that in English, Spanish, Chinese and Vietnamese. We have it in those four languages, because those language groups have a high number of people that are not proficient in English. Since we have a high number of people that are not

proficient in English in those language groups, we have to provide translated materials for them. I'll get more into how that works, when we get to the language portion.

Mr. Shannon Ginn asked does mean being discriminated through the CORE MPO or just basic transportation?

Ms. Asia Hernton answered it would be the CORE MPO. So if someone felt like they face discrimination or had a discriminatory situation with the CORE MPO, then they can submit a complaint. In terms of investigating a complaint, we still haven't decided the number of business days a complainant has to submit a letter. I'll just read the sentence, "the claimant has X number of business days from the date of the letter to send requested information to the investigator assigned to the case." According to the advice we got from GDOT, the number of business days can be anywhere between 30 days to 60 days but GDOT said 60 days is really pushing it. We didn't know what a fair number of days is to give someone to request information. On the low end, we could do 30 days or we could have it match these 45 days, but we weren't sure what was a fair amount of time to give someone.

Mr. Shannon Ginn stated my opinion is maybe close to 45 days. In case people don't understand everything, or their rights, and what they need to do to file the complaint. It is an extra time as well, if they need to get specific things in order, any kind of documents they need to get together. That's what I'm just saying but of course, it's up to CORE MPO staff. That way they'll understand exactly what's going on, and they have enough time to get the complaint in. 30 days would probably still be enough time, but just in case, for example if somebody's sick or has undetermined circumstances or something.

Ms. Asia Hernton stated they will give 45 days to give people a little leeway. Then we'll move on to page 25. This is the section that Ms. Anna McQuarrie updated, it gives more information about language. The CORE MPO has to provide translated materials for certain populations. If there are a high number of people within certain language populations or language groups that don't speak English very well, they fit into something called a Safe Harbor Threshold. Essentially, for any languages where there are over 1000 people within the language group that speak English less than very well, then they are Safe Harbor language. We have to provide translated documents for them and translated complaint forms for them. So the populations that reach those numbers are Spanish and Vietnamese. Also Chinese is getting very, very close to that threshold, so we are preparing for that and we are already providing translated materials for people that speak Chinese but maybe don't speak English as well.

The CORE MPO staff are also preparing for the Korean speaking population to possibly meet that Safe Harbor threshold just because of the Hyundai Plant. We have a lot of new residents that are from Korea. The CORE MPO is preparing for that population to meet Safe Harbor as well. We've updated the different data associated with that, which is based on the American Community Survey. Moving on in terms of

how we try to provide translated materials and how we try to serve these populations, the information I need from TEPIAC is maybe what strategies should we be using in order to serve these populations better? What we have is that we provide translations. We also reach out to local colleges, universities and translation organizations who can assist us when we encounter someone that maybe doesn't speak English very well. Also, in terms of providing translated materials or encountering people that don't speak English very well, we have strategies such as using translation services and Google Translate in order to assist someone that doesn't speak English. Are there any other strategies that we should be doing or pursuing to better serve people that maybe don't speak English very well but want to learn more or need help from CORE MPO.

Mr. Shannon Ginn stated I just had a quick question. I know with people with disabilities can somewhat or some can speak good English, but I just wonder about people that are kind of deaf or hard of hearing or visually impaired. I guess CORE MPO staff are able to help with that part, depending on if people with disability need help with doing the complaint form.

Ms. Asia Hernton stated I believe we do have a section that addresses the complaint form for people need some type of assistance with filling out the complaint form or getting more information. I'll have to scroll through and find that section. So I'll get back to you on that to give you the specifics.

Chairperson Armand Turner asked how does the CORE MPO translate the all material. Is there a specific person or group or organization or program that you all use?

Ms. Asia Hernton answered we have a variety of methods and we documented it in the plan. For translating things in Chinese, we have Ms. Wykoda Wang, because she speaks and can write in Mandarin. So we're very lucky to have her. In terms of translating anything in Vietnamese, we used the Center for Pan Asian Community Services and they provide translations. Then for Spanish, we have contacts at Savannah State University and in the past, we've also had a person at the federal government level. I believe it was FHWA that provided Spanish translations for us as well. But moving forward we have a contact at Savannah State University who can assist in translating documents as needed.

Mr. Joseph Longo stated that person may have been Ms. Vivian Canizares, but I can't speak for the past.

Ms. Asia Hernton stated yes, it is Ms. Vivian Canizares with GDOT. Then moving forward to the descriptions about how our Language Assistance Plan is updated and monitored. CORE MPO does have a Language Assistance Plan, in terms of the updates that will be occurring, we will be updating the number of less than English proficient people that we encounter annually. We will also address or document how the needs of someone that speaks English less than very well has been addressed. Then also we will use data to determine the current number of people that are less than English proficient within the CORE MPO area. Those are some of the updates

that are included in our Language Assistance Plan. But among this, is there anything else we should add to the section or do you believe this covers everything? OK, hearing none, we can move on to the types of training CORE MPO staff will have.

CORE MPO staff will be trained on Title VI procedures and LEP responsibilities, and LEP refers to people that are less than proficient in English. Also within this plan we described the types of language assistance and services offered to the public. Another cool idea that we got from this plan and template were the "I Speak" language cards to see people's language preferences. I thought that was really cool because it's not something that we've used before, but it's something that we can use in the future. Then in general, we will use Google Translate and attend any training opportunities to ensure that we are serving these populations as needed. This is an example of the "I Speak" card. Moving forward, we can have this available at public outreach events to see what language someone prefers to communicate in.

Moving on, we also documented the surveys. So for the 2050 MTP, we did have the surveys translated and we did get quite a few responses in different languages. We got 21 responses on that survey in Chinese, several responses in Spanish, but we didn't receive any responses for anyone that speaks Vietnamese. This is another section that I do have a question on. So within the CORE MPO process we do record the ethnicity or race of the board members for the CORE MPO and all of the different committees as well. We have it all documented here, what racial group each committee or board member is a part of. In the previous update of the Title VI plan, we did a survey so it could be self-reported. Do you believe that we should do that survey again so people can self-report their racial or ethnic identity, or should we go with this table which CORE MPO staff filled in?

Chairperson Armand Turner stated I feel self-reporting might be better.

Ms. Asia Hernton stated we could put together a survey asking people what their race is. I think the time frame is also really short, so if we were to put that survey together, it would be great if everyone could just take it because we don't have a lot of time because the plan does have to be adopted on October 23rd. So please do the survey as soon as I send it out. Please take it so we can make sure it gets in on time.

Mr. Terry Tolbert asked what if you have information for people, that's correct about them. You shouldn't have to do it to all those people. If they got copies of this and their name, it's on it. They could, you know, just e-mail back because I see mine. And you know, it's good. You don't have to send it to me.

Ms. Asia Hernton stated that could be a good idea. We will send this out to the Board and committee members to have them double-check..

Mr. Shannon Ginn asked is that something you need just for the CORE MPO members or is that for the other agencies as well?

Ms. Asia Hernton clarified that it's for all of the board and committee members, including this one.

Chairperson Armand Tuner stated I like that idea, though. Asia just literally say if there's anything that you wanted change, please let us know before the October 23rd date and then just go off what you all already have.

Ms. Asia Hernton stated Great, I will send that out. Then moving forward to the last page, the last section that I would need input on is the section where we have efforts to encourage minority participation. this is essentially how we plan to get more people from minority communities to participate within the CORE MPO. What we wrote in this section is that "CORE MPO will continue to have a presence in the community, including minority communities to increase understanding in and participation with the CORE MPO. Additionally, CORE MPO created a Transportation Equity and Public Involvement Advisory committee with the intention to facilitate inclusivity and equity within the transportation planning process." Should we be pursuing any other methods or is there anything else that we should add in this section? Or do you believe this covers it? Hearing no input, you can review this all of this yourself and then if you have some comments later down the line, you can just send them to me. That was the last section of the Title VI plan that I needed specific input from TEPIAC. So, if you have any types of questions or comments later, feel free to send them to me, and then we'll make sure they get addressed.

[3. Language Assistance Plan Draft](#)

Ms. Asia Hernton stated we are moving on to the last plan, which is the Language Assistance Plan. When we update the Title VI Plan, we also have to update our Language Assistance Plan as well as a part of that. I am showing specifically what's been updated. Ms. Anna McQuarrie has updated this one. She's updated the boundary and a lot of the maps in terms of the where Hispanic communities are within the CORE MPO. For example she updated this map here showing population broken down by I believe these are census blocks, right?

Ms. Anna McQuarrie clarified these are census tracks.

Ms. Asia Hernton stated these are census tracks showing Race and Hispanic origin by census tract. Also included are maps showing different language groups broken down by census tract. Additionally, the language tables were updated. It shows the different language groups in which people speak English less than very well, and Ms. Anna McQuarrie broke it down across counties and also the CORE MPO area.

Ms. Anna McQuarrie stated you can see the Bryan County and the Effingham County Census tracks are the ones that cross into our CORE MPO border to try to give us the most accurate count. There are those little asterisks in it and then the counties are listed just below the table, if you're curious.

Mr. Terry Tolbert asked if this is from the American Community Survey?

Ms. Anna McQuarrie answered correct, so this is from GDOT and their training.

Mr. Terry Tolbert asked when was this last updated? I know that they put out additional information from time to time, so this was from 2018 to 2022?

Ms. Anna McQuarrie stated yes, this is what GDOT recommended to use the 2018 to 2022, so the five year ACS update. Then the corresponding map is that blue and yellow map below. The table below this, is the previous table used in the last update. So if you wanted to see any changes, I believe they used the MSA population which is all of Bryan County and all of Effingham County. But we have that in there just if you're curious, that was in the last plan.

Mr. Terry Tolbert stated No, I have access to that. I can find that I use the American Community Survey.

Ms. Anna McQuarrie stated the maps show you which table is used too. You can see which ACS table I used for the map in that little data source description. So again if you use it a lot, it just makes it easier for you to look up exactly where that data is coming from.

Ms. Asia Hernton stated the type of input that we might need from TEPIAC is help with trying to understand what methods we should be using to better serve people that don't speak English very well. If you've had any firsthand experience, it would be great if maybe you could draw on your experience and tell us what's been successful in your case in terms of how you go about being inclusive to people that don't speak English very well. Or maybe within your organization, you may have randomly encountered someone that speaks a language you don't speak and so you have to use some type of method in order to communicate with them. If you have any experience with that or some methods that you think would be helpful to the CORE MPO, you could definitely share them with us and then we can add that to our Language Assistance Plan and our Title VI Plan. Again, this one is attached to the agenda, if you would like to review it on your own time, it's here and you can provide comments as needed. This was the last plan on the agenda, are there any questions or comments in general? If there are any questions or comments after this meeting, definitely feel free to e-mail me or message me. I will make sure your comments or questions get addressed.

Chairperson Armand Turner stated thank you Ms. Asia Hernton, looking forward to any follow-up, I appreciate it..

iv. Agency Reports (verbal)

v. Other Business

vi. Public Participation Opportunities

vii. Notices

viii. Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

There being no further business, the September 4th, 2024, TEPIAC 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.