

SUMMARY MINUTES

MACORTS Technical Coordinating Committee
WebEx Virtual Meeting Platform
Wednesday, August 25, 2021
10:00 a.m.

Members Present: Cherie Varnum - ACC Planning Department
Sherry McDuffie - ACC Planning Department
Stephen Bailey - ACC Transportation & Public Works
Pat Hale - ACC Transit Department
Rani Katreeb - ACC Transportation & Public Works
Kimberly Grayson - GDOT Planning
Sue Anne Decker - GDOT District 1
Todd Berven - UGA Transit System
Ross Hinkle - Oconee Rivers Greenway Commission
Daniel Sizemore - ACC Transportation & Public Works
Ashley Finch – GDOT Intermodal Programs

Others Present: Virginia Hamilton - UGA Auxiliary Services
Victor Pope – ACC Transit Department
Justin Lott - GDOT District 1
Ann-Marie Day - FHWA (Ex-Officio)
Lee Becker - Oconee Resident
Sharon Thelen - Oconee Resident
Chris Jones – Oconee Resident
Brian Broderick - Mayor, City of Watkinsville
Sharyn Dickerson – City Manager, City of Watkinsville

I. CALL TO ORDER & ROLL CALL OF MEMBERS AND GUESTS

Mrs. Varnum called the meeting to order at 10:04 am. Ms. McDuffie reviewed the attendance of members.

II. PUBLIC COMMENT OPPORTUNITY

Mrs. Varnum recognized those who wanted to speak during public comment.

- Sharon Thelen, a citizen of Oconee County, spoke representing the Dials Mill Plantation Property Owners Association. The subdivision is located just south of the SR 316/Dials Mill Road interchange area. She outlined the potential impacts of both interchange projects on 316 at Dials Mill Road Extension and Dials Mill Road on the surrounding area and her subdivision specifically. She spoke about the need for more information regarding the interchange project and the process and options that have been considered to date. SueAnne Decker, GDOT District Office,

provided a link to information on GDOT's website and the email address to the project manager.

- Brian Brodrick, Mayor of Watkinsville, spoke in support of moving the Watkinsville Truck Bypass forward into the Scoping Phase. The project is a key priority for the Watkinsville City Council to mitigate truck traffic downtown.

III. APPROVAL OF JULY 28, 2021 MEETING MINUTES

Ms. Decker made a motion to approve minutes from July 28, 2021 meeting minutes. Ms. Hale seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous.

IV. REVIEW OF FINAL DRAFT TITLE VI PLAN & RECOMMENDATION TO POLICY COMMITTEE

Ms. McDuffie stated the Title VI Plan is submitted to GDOT every 3 years. She explained the format is a template provided by GDOT Intermodal to all their sub-recipients so they can report their processes related to Title VI. She noted the content is repackaged information that was seen previously when staff updated the Participation Plan and LEP Plan earlier this year. She stated it is a requirement for staff to bring this document to TCC so it can be signed and accepted by the MPO.

Mr. Bervan made a motion to recommend approval to submit the final Title VI Plan to GDOT. Ms. Hale seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous.

V. REVIEW OF AMENDMENT TO THE 2045 METROPOLITAN TRANSPORTATION PLAN (MTP) & FY 2021 – 2024 TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM (TIP) TO ADD SCOPING PHASE FOR THE WATKINSVILLE TRUCK BYPASS FROM US 441/SR 24 TO SR 15 & RECOMMENDATION TO POLICY COMMITTEE

Ms. McDuffie stated GDOT made a request for staff to add a scoping phase for this project in the MTP & TIP so that federal transportation funds can be used. She noted GDOT did not provide any alignment or detail beyond the title description on the agenda. She explained the scoping phase includes the activities to define the required project deliverables, the working budget, and the schedule for designing and developing the project. She stated the amount of funding required would be \$500,000 (\$400,000 federal & \$100,000 state). The amendment to the MTP could be accomplished using some of the 'leftover' funds in the Plan so that no projects would have to be moved out to make room for it. The TIP would be amended to include the Scoping in FY 22.

She stated staff would run both amendments together through the public process. She noted if the project were to move out of the scoping phase, another amendment would be required through MACORTS to bring the other phases into the MTP and subsequently into the TIP. She explained the public comment period would be from September 20 – October 4, 2021 with a virtual and in-person meeting.

Ms. Decker made a motion to recommend approval to take the amendment to the MTP and TIP for the scoping of the Watkinsville Truck Bypass to the public for review and comment. Mr. Sizemore seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous.

VI. OLD BUSINESS

There was none.

VII. UPDATES / OTHER BUSINESS

Athens-Clarke County Transportation & Public Works

Mr. Katreb stated the contractors for the Pavement Program should begin paving this week. The Tallassee Road Bridge Replacement over CSX is in the final design review phase with utility coordination and has a proposed Notice to Proceed timeframe in January/February 2022. Traffic will be maintained for the duration of the project. The new bridge will be built first and then traffic will be moved to it entering the intersection improvement of Westchester Driver and Tallassee Road. There are several bike & pedestrian projects in the preliminary design phase, and staff is drafting a list of TSPLOST projects for 2023.

Athens-Clarke County Transit Department

Mr. Pope stated the ACC Transit is continuing their fall service schedule and has begun to see some increase in ridership even though overall there is still about 35% decrease.

University of Georgia Transit System

Mr. Berven stated the UGA transit system has seen about 30% decrease of overall ridership. There is a lot more pedestrian traffic since more students are walking to classes.

Oconee Rivers Greenway Commission

Mr. Hinkle stated they are submitting a TSPLOST 2023 project proposal to upgrade and continue some of the trail segments in Athens. There has been some testing for the Oak/Oconee Street underpass to get across from Dudley Park. There was a very colorful art exhibit dedication last week for the rainbow forest along Martin Luther King Road and Ruth Street Trail, near the North Oconee Greenway trail.

Federal Highway Administration

Ms. Day shared priority areas for MACORTS to consider during development of the next MTP and FY23 UPWP including: equity, economy, climate change/resiliency and Covid-19 relief. She stated the MPO should continue to focus on freight and land uses on the freight corridors in the region. She complimented staff on including an expansion of the freight section of the upcoming MTP update. She also noted the FHWA administration continues to focus on Bike/Pedestrian activities as a priority.

GDOT - District 1

Ms. Decker stated they have hired a new Planning & Programming Liaison, Jeremy Durance, who will gradually transition to his new role. She noted there is a website for 'Transform 316' that is available to the public and has information about the interchanges for the project (<https://transformingsr316-gdot.hub.arcgis.com>) as well as the email address for that initiative (sr316project@dot.ga.gov).

GDOT – Intermodal Programs

Ms. Finch stated that GDOT – Intermodal will be hosting the annual Sub-recipient Workshop on September 8th and 9th.

VIII. ADJOURN

Mrs. Varnum adjourned the meeting at 10:32 and stated that the next TCC meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, September 22.