

## SUMMARY MINUTES

MACORTS Policy Committee  
WebEx Virtual Meeting Platform  
Wednesday, September 8, 2021  
10:00 a.m.

**Members Present:** John Daniell, Oconee County Chairman  
Kelly Girtz, Athens-Clarke County Mayor  
Dave Henson, Oconee County Citizen  
Sara Beresford, Athens Clarke County Citizen  
Radney Simpson, GDOT Planning Office  
Brett Jackson, UGA Transit  
Brad Griffin, MACORTS – Alternate for early meeting

**Others Present:** Cherie Varnum, MACORTS  
Pat Hale, Athens Transit Department  
Tom Caiafa, GDOT Planning Office  
Kimberly Grayson, GDOT Planning Office  
Sue Anne Decker, GDOT District 1  
Virginia Hamilton, UGA  
Todd Bervan, UGA Transit  
Ann-Marie Day, FHWA  
Charles Hunt, Oconee County Citizen  
Andy Hill, Oconee County Citizen

### **I. CALL TO ORDER / ROLL CALL**

Mr. Girtz called the meeting to order at 10:12 am

### **II. APPROVAL OF AUGUST 11, 2021 MEETING MINUTES**

Ms. Beresford made a motion to approve the minutes from August 11, 2021 Policy Committee meeting. Mr. Griffin seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous.

### **III. REVIEW OF PUBLIC COMMENT RECEIVED AT TCC MEETINGS / PLANNING COMMISSION MEETINGS**

Mrs. Varnum reviewed the public comment offered at the TCC meeting on August 25 as follows:

- 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.

#### **IV. REVIEW AND DETERMINATION OF FINAL DRAFT TITLE VI PLAN**

Mrs. Varnum 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 procedures as they relate to Title VI. She noted the content is repackaged information this committee saw when the Participation Plan and the Limited English Proficiency Plan were updated earlier this year. She explained the document is required to be signed and accepted by the MPO. She stated TCC recommended approval of the document for submission to GDOT.

Ms. Beresford made a motion to approve Title VI Plan for submission to GDOT Intermodal Programs Office. Ms. Jackson seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous.

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

Mrs. Varnum explained GDOT has requested to include a Scoping phase for this project in the MTP & TIP so that federal transportation funds can be used for it. She noted there is no alignment or any detail beyond that included in the title on the agenda. Activities during the scoping phase include defining the required project deliverables, the working budget, and the schedule for designing and developing the project. The amount of funding required would be \$500,000 (\$400,000 federal & \$100,000 state). She explained the amendment to the MTP could be accomplished using some of the 'leftover' funds in the Plan so 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.

Mrs. Varnum stated staff would run both amendments together through the public process. She noted when the project moves out of the scoping phase, another amendment would be required through MACORTS. She explained the public comment period would be from September 20 – October 4, 2021 with a virtual and in person meeting. She stated TCC recommended approval to take the amendment to the public for review and comment.

Ms. Beresford asked for clarification about what is involved in the scoping phase. Ms. Decker explained that the scoping phase helps GDOT develop a schedule and Practical Alternatives Report (PAR) and understand any difficulties associated with the project before much more is invested in the PE phase. She was not sure why this project is being moved forward at this time.

Mr. Daniell stated that Oconee County has been interested in a bypass to US 441 for a while, however; most of the time the proposed alignments were outside of the MACORTS area. There's an issue with how the US 441 Widening will affect the town of Bishop. With increasing truck traffic coming up SR 15, it's important to look at ways to get traffic between SR 15 and US 441. This will have a big impact on Watkinsville.

Mr. Girtz made reference to his personal experience with the problematic truck traffic coming through Watkinsville to Madison and Milledgeville that he experienced during his tenure at his last job. He stated he had spoken to Mayor Broderick about his hope for the City of Watkinsville to have walkable and safe downtown corridor.

Mr. Simpson made a motion to approve the amendment to add the scoping phase of the Watkinsville Truck Bypass to the 2045 MTP & 21-24 TIP to be taken to the public for review and comment. Mr. Daniell seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous.

## **VI. OLD BUSINESS**

There was none.

## **VII. NEW BUSINESS**

Mr. Girtz spoke about the Atlanta Regional Commission's proposal for a bus route from Dekalb County and Athens-Clarke Counties for state funding. He stated support for the route and hoped to see the route funded by the state in the next couple of years.

## **VIII. ADJOURN**

Mr. Girtz adjourned the meeting at 10:25 am and stated the next meeting is scheduled for October 13, 2021.