

Frequently Asked Questions

Madison Athens-Clarke Oconee Regional Transportation Study (MACORTS)

Background

In Georgia, planning for transportation improvements is accomplished through either a rural area process or an urban area process. The Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT), in conjunction with the regional commissions, performs the transportation planning activities for the rural areas so that federal funds may be used for transportation improvements in those areas. For urban areas, it is the Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPO's) in cooperation with the Georgia Department of Transportation that perform the transportation planning activities required to utilize federal funds for transportation improvements.

What is an MPO?

- A Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) is an organization designated as the transportation planning group for a particular urbanized area.
- The name of the MPO based in and around Athens is the Madison Athens-Clarke Oconee Regional Transportation Study (MACORTS).
- The MPO area includes all of Athens-Clarke County, the northern half of Oconee County, the southernmost quarter of Madison County, and small portions of Jackson and Oglethorpe Counties.
- MPO has three major roles:
 - Cooperative organization that is a venue for counties to coordinate transportation efforts with Federal and State agencies at the table
 - Federal funding is channeled through MPO process
 - Provides mechanism for local input into how federal dollars should be spent

What is the make-up of MPO ?

The composition and boundary of the MPO is approved by the Governor, and it is updated every ten years with the release of the U.S. Census Bureau population data. Representatives from Jackson and Oglethorpe Counties have chosen not to participate in the planning process.

MACORTS is made up of 2 committees:

Policy Committee – decision making body of MACORTS

- currently 8 voting members: Mayor/Chairman of Board of Commissioners for Athens-Clarke, Oconee, and Madison Cos., citizen representative from each county, Commissioner of GDOT or designee, Senior Vice President for Finance and Administration for UGA

Technical Coordinating Committee – provides technical input to the Policy Committee; recommending body

- members include county engineers, UGA Auxiliary Services and Transit, planning directors, county administrators, transit planner, GDOT representatives, citizen representatives, school boards, transportation industry professionals, and other technical county staff