

SUMMARY MINUTES

MACORTS Technical Coordinating Committee
WebEx Virtual Meeting Platform
Wednesday, October 27, 2021
10:00 a.m.

Members Present: Brad Griffin – ACC Planning Director
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
SueAnne Decker - GDOT District 1
Virginia Hamilton - UGA Transit System Alternate
Daniel Sizemore - ACC Transportation & Public Works
Ashley Finch – GDOT Intermodal Programs
Jeramy Durrence – GDOT District 1
Jody Woodall- Oconee County Public Works
Tim Griffeth – ACC Traffic Engineering
Sheridan Soileau – ACC Public Utilities

Others Present: Victor Pope – ACC Transit Department
Justin Lott - GDOT District 1
Tamara Christion - FHWA (Ex-Officio)
Lee Becker - Oconee Resident
Diane Border - Oconee Resident
Lance Haynie– Oconee Resident
Michael Azzolin – Oconee Resident
John Butler – Oconee Resident

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

Mr. Griffin called the meeting to order at 10:06 am.

II. PUBLIC COMMENT OPPORTUNITY

Mr. Griffin recognized those who wanted to speak during public comment.

- John Butler, a citizen of Oconee County, spoke about the Watkinsville Bypass project. He wanted all options and alignments to be examined, and he hoped that the least invasive option will be chosen.

III. APPROVAL OF AUGUST 25, 2021 MEETING MINUTES

Mr. Woodall made a motion to approve the minutes from the August 25, 2021 TCC meeting. Ms. Hale seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous.

IV. REVIEW OF FINAL AMENDMENT TO THE 2045 METROPOLITAN TRANSPORTATION PLAN & 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 explained that GDOT made a request for staff to include a Scoping phase for this project in the MTP & TIP so federal transportation funds can be used for it. 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 noted there is no alignment proposed at this time and the funding required would be \$500,000 (\$400,000 federal & \$100,000 state). She stated 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 explained the public comment for these amendments was held September 20 – October 4 with a virtual public meeting on September 27 and in-person meeting on September 30. A summary of the public comment along with the raw public comment as it was received by staff during that time was sent for review and consideration last week to committee members. She stated that there was very good attendance at both the virtual (12 people) and in-person meetings (48 people) along with a substantial amount of public comment received. She noted that this bypass generated much local interest and concern.

Mr. Sizemore made a motion to recommend approval of the amendment to the 2045 MTP and 21-24 TIP to add the scoping phase of the Watkinsville Truck Bypass. Ms. Hale seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous.

V. REVIEW OF AMENDMENT TO FY 2022 UNIFIED PLANNING WORK PROGRAM TO INCLUDE METROPOLITAN TRANSPORTATION PLAN UPDATE AS FUNDED & RECOMMENDATION TO POLICY COMMITTEE

Ms. McDuffie explained that the ‘leftover’ federal transportation planning (PL) funds that are not spent by MPO’s in Georgia are annually rolled into a fund that is redistributed as a competitive grant awarded by GDOT and vetted through the Georgia Association of MPO’s Planning Fund Group. This is how the last update of the MTP was funded.

The update of the MTP to 2050 was included as an unfunded work element in the FY 22 UPWP. She explained that MPO staff presented the unfunded work element to the GAMPO Planning Fund Committee at their September 27 meeting. They chose to award this project. Therefore, this amendment would move the MTP Update work element from the Unfunded section into the funded portion of the document. This action will allow MPO staff and GDOT to

execute the contract that will pay for the update of the MTP. Ms. McDuffie noted the following changes made to this project as part of the amendment:

- Staff refined the project description after coordination with GDOT and FHWA.
- Some paraphrasing has been done and expansion of the MTP freight section to be more robust.
- An additional project was added to the funding table as well.

She noted there is no public review beyond that associated with the TCC and PC meetings required for this amendment.

She explained that once the contract between ACC and GDOT is executed, work will begin on the RFP through the ACC Finance Department, GDOT, and FHWA. The RFP and slate of members for the review committee will be brought to TCC and Policy Committee early next year. Staff will then move toward hiring a consultant to complete the work.

Ms. Hale made a motion to recommend approval of the amendment to the FY 22 UPWP to show the MTP Update to 2050 as funded. Ms. Grayson seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous.

VI. REVIEW OF DRAFT FY 2023 UNIFIED PLANNING WORK PROGRAM & RECOMMENDATION TO POLICY COMMITTEE

Ms. McDuffie explained that the Draft FY 2023 UPWP outlines how the MPO will utilize the transportation planning funding. MACORTS is required to submit a Draft version of the UPWP to GDOT/FHWA/FTA by December. The final draft will be brought to TCC & PC after the first of the year for final approval. Committee members were sent a list of changes made to the 23 UPWP from the 22 version along with the Draft version. Staff had updated all of the funding levels. She noted work on the MTP update is the largest work endeavor in FY 23. She stated that the results from the 2020 Census may affect the MPO boundary and/or status in FY 23.

Ms. McDuffie stated staff updated the priorities to align with the federal priorities including the national goals as they are in the FAST Act and added the Administration's priorities of Equity, Economy, Climate Change, Resiliency, and Covid-19 Relief. She explained those priorities have been added throughout the document. She stated the FY 22 Accomplishments have been updated with present and anticipated accomplishments.

Ms. McDuffie discussed the federal and local funds used for transportation planning. She explained that both the normal PL Grant and the Special Study funds are reimbursement grants. Therefore, for the PL Grant, ACC spends the funds and at the end of the fiscal year, the other counties are 'billed' each August for their portion of the local match that is required based on the amount spent. She stated the special study includes each county that will be 'billed' for their portion of what is spent at the 50% & 100% completion points of the contract.

Two fiscal years of transit planning funding are shown in the UPWP because of the timing of the transit planning grant application.

Ms. Hale made a motion to recommend approval of the Draft FY 23 UPWP to be submitted to GDOT, FHWA, & FTA for review. Ms. Soileau seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous.

VII. OLD BUSINESS

There was none.

VIII. UPDATES / OTHER BUSINESS

Oconee Rivers Greenway Commission

Dr. Hinkle was unable to attend the meeting, but he provided comments to be conveyed to the committee. The proposed 2023 ACC TSPLOST projects are posted on the website with the Oconee Rivers Greenway Trails as #68 on the list. The Greenway Commission participated in the “A Ticket to Ride Event” and will be a part of the East Athens/Bike Pedestrian Day On October 30th.

Athens-Clarke County Transit Department

Mr. Pope stated that ACC Transit continues to work on submission of the 5307 grant application and NTD documentation. Their night and weekend service schedule started on October 4th and has helped some with an increase in ridership. Overall ridership is still about 31% below pre-Covid levels.

Oconee County Public Works Department

Mr. Woodall stated GDOT has reviewed all submitted documents and appears to be on schedule for the roundabouts on SR 53 at Snows Mill Road / Rocky Branch Road and Rays Church Road / Malcolm Bridge Road. The county has completed an update of the pavement index study. This will allow the county to update the Lidar images, improve road ratings and allow a more current baseline to project a 3- 5 year resurfacing program. They have completed some maintenance work on sidewalk and signals on Epps Bridge Parkway.

Athens-Clarke County Transportation & Public Works Department

Mr. Katreeb stated they continue to receive bids for The Tallassee Road Bridge Replacement over CSX with 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 Drive and Tallassee Road. Several sidewalk gap projects have been completed including those along Magnolia Street and Holman Avenue. The preliminary engineering phase continues for Cherokee Road and Riverbend Road multi-path projects along with several other locations, and there are several bike & pedestrian projects in the preliminary design phase. The Paving Program for this year will be completed soon and staff is drafting a list of TSPLOST projects for 2023.

Athens-Clarke County Public Utilities Department

Ms. Soileau stated they have submitted 6 proposals for American Rescue Plan (ARP) grants.

Georgia Department of Transportation District 1

Ms. Decker stated that they are working on public outreach activities concerning the proposed SR 316 corridor improvements. She stated GDOT will reach out to the local level officials to discuss overpasses and interchanges. She noted they have hired a new Planning & Programming Liaison, Jeramy Durrence.

Federal Highway Administration

Tamara Christian introduced herself to the group as the Interim Planner for MACORTS. She explained that Ann-Marie Day has been promoted to Planning Team Leader.

IX. ADJOURN

Mr. Griffin adjourned the meeting at 10:30 am. The next meeting is scheduled for January 26, 2022.