

Policy Committee

Commission Meeting Room, 2nd Floor, Hall County Government Center Minutes of February 21, 2023 Meeting

Voting Members Present:

Mayor Lamar Scroggs, City of Oakwood, Chair
Mayor Sam Couvillon, City of Gainesville
Mayor Ed Asbridge, City of Flowery Branch
Commissioner Kathy Cooper, Hall County
Commissioner Jeff Stowe, Hall County
Commissioner Jim Hix, Jackson County
Megan Weiss, GDOT

Voting Members Absent:

Chairman Richard Higgins, Hall County

Others Present:

Bryan Lackey, City of Gainesville
Angela Sheppard, City of Gainesville
Chris Rotalsky, City of Gainesville
Corey Jones, City of Gainesville
Tonya Parish, City of Flowery Branch
BR White, City of Oakwood
Srikanth Yamala, Hall County
Bill Nash, Hall County
Jorge Gomez, Hall County

Frank Miller, Hall County
Gina Roy, Jackson County
Dan Branch, City of Buford
Jared Lombard, FHWA
Shelly Ramey, GDOT
Justin Lott, GDOT
Randi Doveton, GHMPO
Joseph Boyd, GHMPO
Michael Haire, GHMPO

1. Welcome – Mayor Lamar Scroggs, Chair

Mayor Scroggs opened the meeting at 10:00 AM.

2. Approval of November 15, 2022 Meeting Minutes

MOTION: Mayor Asbridge made a motion to approve of the November 15, 2022 meeting minutes, which received a second from Commissioner Stowe, and the motion passed by unanimous vote.

3. Update from the Technical Coordinating Committee (TCC)

Mr. Boyd provided the committee with a brief recap of the recent Technical

Coordinating Committee meeting, which took place on February 15, 2023. The TCC unanimously recommend approval of all agenda items. Additionally, Mr. Boyd provided updates on the Highlands to Islands Subcommittee, which is expected to meet again in March. The first half of the Tumbling Creek / UNG Connector Trail is complete, and the second half will hopefully be open later this spring, if weather permits. The next planned trail segment will be the Gainesville Airport Connector, which is currently under design.

Mr. Boyd also provided an update on the McEver Road Subcommittee, which is currently exploring options for improving McEver Road south of Mundy Mill Road. Hall County is moving forward with a roundabout at Lights Ferry and McEver, and Flowery Branch is moving forward with a roundabout at Gaines Ferry and McEver. Oakwood is working with the Georgia Department of Transportation to install a new signal at HF Reed Industrial Parkway and McEver Road that will have a flashing yellow turn arrow that can be programmed to be a green protected left turn arrow during peak travel times.

4. Update from the Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC)

Mr. Boyd provided a brief recap of the recent Citizens Advisory Committee meeting, which took place on February 16, 2023. The CAC was unable to recommend approval of agenda items as a quorum had not been reached.

5. Approval of Draft Amendment #5 to the FY 2021-2024 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)

Mr. Haire introduced Draft Amendment #5 to the FY 2021-2024 Transportation Improvement Program. This Amendment was requested by Hall Area Transit and the Georgia Department of Transportation. A new project factsheet has been added to Appendix A, which enables Hall Area Transit to utilize FY 2023's available Carbon Reduction (Y606) funding, which will be flexed to the Federal Transit Administration (FTA). Mr. Haire reiterated that more Carbon Reduction Program funding will be available when FY 2024 begins in July, and local jurisdictions should consider potential uses.

Additionally, this Amendment adds two new tables pertaining to Hall Area Transit to Appendix B of the Transportation Improvement Plan. The first table is an updated Fleet Inventory table, which lists Hall Area Transit's current vehicle inventory, and the second is a table displaying FY 2021-2024 Capital Purchases for Hall Area Transit, which will allow them to allocate previously authorized funding for specific purchases.

Mr. Haire received a question from Mayor Asbridge asking about the WeGo platform. Mr. Haire responded that WeGo is an on-demand microtransit service which picks up and delivers users to destinations without the use of fixed routes. Mayor Couvillon further explained some of the specifics regarding benefits and cost sharing of the system.

MOTION: Commissioner Stowe made a motion to approve of Draft Amendment #5 to the FY 2021-2024 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), which received a second from Mayor Couvillon, and the motion passed by unanimous vote.

6. Approval of Draft Amendment #2 to the FY 2023 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP)

Mr. Haire introduced Amendment #2 to the FY 2023 Unified Planning Work Program, which was requested by the Georgia Department of Transportation and adds language specifying GHMPO's intent to apply for additional PL (Planning) funds at the March PL Funds Review Committee meeting to conduct the Metropolitan Transportation Plan: 2025 Update concurrently with a Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan Update. Specific language expressing this intent has been added to pages 21, 23, 26, and 30 of the FY 2023 Unified Planning Work Program.

MOTION: Commissioner Cooper made a motion to approve of Draft Amendment #2 to the FY 2023 Unified Planning Work Program, which received a second from Commissioner Stowe, and the motion passed by unanimous vote.

7. Approval of Draft FY 2024 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP)

Mr. Haire introduced the Draft FY 2024 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP). This document serves as the MPO's annual operating budget and provides funding for various planning activities and studies. This is the second and final review of this document. Mr. Haire explained that this draft has finalized funding amounts for both the PL and 5303 grants, and also includes the recently added Flowery Branch Downtown Plan to the "Upcoming Unfunded Products" section. Additionally, local match is no longer required for Carbon Reduction (Y410) funds utilized in sub-element 6.1 "Complete Streets."

MOTION: Mayor Couvillon made a motion to approve of the FY 2024 Unified Planning Work Program, which received a second from Commissioner Stowe, and the motion passed by unanimous vote.

8. Approval of Draft Performance Measures

Mr. Haire introduced new draft Performance Measures, which are targets set by the Georgia Department of Transportation and adopted by GHMPO. Mr. Haire explained that PM 1 (Safety) performance measures set targets for roadway safety in calendar year 2023, PM 2 (Bridge and Pavement) performance measures set 2- and 4-year targets for the condition of bridges and paved surfaces connected to the National Highway System, and PM 3 (National Highway System, Freight, and CMAQ) performance measures set 2- and 4-year targets for reliable NHS miles, congestion, and emissions.

Mr. Haire received a question from Commissioner Stowe about how these targets would be assessed within the GHMPO planning boundary, to which Mr. Boyd responded that this data would be collected by state authorities and would inform them on how roadways within the MPO planning

area were performing in reaching these targets. Mr. Haire clarified that if these targets are not met, that would indicate to GDOT where more funding would need to be allocated for safety upgrades.

MOTION: Commissioner Stowe made a motion to approve of the Draft Performance Measures, which received a second from Mayor Couvillon, and the motion passed by unanimous vote.

9. Approval of Draft Application for Concurrent Regional Transportation Plan / Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan

Mr. Boyd provided an overview of the Draft PL Funds Application for the concurrent Metropolitan Transportation Plan / Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan. Mr. Boyd explained that GHMPO can apply for funds at the PL Funds Review Committee in March or September, so GHMPO would like to apply in March in order to get the process started later this spring. Mr. Boyd further discussed the transition to an application that will fund both the Metropolitan Transportation Plan and Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan, explaining that it is expected to save time and money by consolidating public participation and project websites.

MOTION: Mayor Couvillon made a motion to approve of the Draft Application for a Concurrent Metropolitan Transportation Plan Update / Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan Update, with a second from Mayor Asbridge, and the motion passed by unanimous vote.

10. Discussion on Transportation Management Areas (TMAs)

Mr. Lombard discussed the results of the 2020 Census, which concluded that the Gainesville urbanized area has surpassed a population of 200,000 and is designated to become a Transportation Management Area (TMA). The United States Department of Transportation (USDOT) will publish a Federal Register notice designating new TMAs in Spring/Summer of 2023, which will establish a timeline and process for becoming a TMA.

Mr. Lombard further explained that this will come with enhanced responsibilities, including the expansion of the UPWP to include information on transportation and transit planning related activities from non-federal sources, the selection of federally funded projects for implementation, and new required documents addressing housing and the congestion management process. The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) will continue coordinating with the Federal Transit Administration (FTA), GDOT, and MPO staff to coordinate on upcoming deadlines and prepare for this change.

Mr. Yamala commented to the committee on the importance of the transition to a TMA. Mr. Yamala encouraged the Policy Committee to carefully consider the funding available to the MPO prior to signing an intergovernmental-agreement defining the new MPO planning boundary.

Lastly, Mr. Boyd received a question from Commissioner Cooper, who asked if MPO staff would need to hire a third party consultant to assist in the transition to a TMA, to which Mr. Boyd responded that while the MPO plans to hire a consultant to conduct the Metropolitan Transportation Plan Update, MPO staff expect to be able to manage the transition to a TMA without further outside assistance. Mr. Boyd also stated that he expected to have updates regarding this

transition at every Policy Committee meeting moving forward until the TMA transition process is completed in late 2024.

11. Jurisdiction and Agency Reports

Representatives shared the status of projects being completed by their jurisdictions: Mr. Jones for the City of Gainesville, Mr. White for the City of Oakwood, Mayor Asbridge for the City of Flowery Branch, Mr. Branch for the City of Buford, Mr. Miller for Hall County, Ms. Roy for Jackson County, and Mr. Lott and Ms. Weiss for the Georgia Department of Transportation.

12. Other

There were no other items of business.

13. Public Comment

There were no public comments.

14. Upcoming Meeting Date: May 9, 2023

Mayor Scroggs reminded the Committee of their next meeting date on May 9, 2023.

15. Adjourn

MOTION: Commissioner Cooper made a motion to adjourn the meeting, with a second from Commissioner Stowe, and the motion passed by unanimous vote.

Edward R. Asbridge
Mayor Ed Asbridge, Flowery Branch
Policy Committee

Michael Hane
Michael Hane, G4MPO