

Citizens Advisory Committee

**HR Training Room, 2nd Floor, Hall County Government Center
Minutes of July 27, 2023 Meeting**

Voting Members Present:

Renee Gerrell, Hall County – *Chair*
Patrick O’Rourke, Hall County – *Vice-Chair*
Pat Jones, City of Oakwood
Tony Millwood, City of Oakwood
Rick Marzano, City of Flowery Branch
Chip McCallum, City of Flowery Branch
Berlinda Lipscomb, City of Gainesville
Beverly Nordholz, City of Gainesville
Sammy Smith, City of Gainesville
Brent Hoffman, Hall County
Kim Jackson, Hall County
Adrienne Rice, Hall County
Billy Edwards, Town of Braselton
Jim Southard, Jackson County

Voting Members Absent:

Toni Buffington, Hall County
Nick Haynes, Hall County
Joe Kennedy, Hall County

Others Present:

Phillippa Lewis Moss, Hall Area Transit
Joseph Boyd, GHMPO


Jeff Gill, Gainesville Times

1. Welcome – Renee Gerrell, Chair

Ms. Gerrell opened the meeting at 4:00 PM.

2. Election of CAC Chair and Vice-Chair for FY 2024

MOTION: Mr. Smith made a motion to nominate Ms. Gerrell for Chair and Mr. O’Rourke for Vice-Chair for FY 2024, with a second from Ms. Lipscomb, and the motion passed by unanimous vote with Ms. Gerrell and Mr. O’Rourke agreeing to serve another year as Chair and Vice-Chair of the CAC.



3. Approval of April 27, 2023 Meeting Minutes

MOTION: Ms. Jones made a motion to approve of the April 27, 2023 meeting minutes, with a second from Mr. Millwood, and the motion passed by unanimous vote.

4. Update on GHMPO's Designation as a Transportation Management Area (TMA)

Mr. Boyd provided a brief update on GHMPO's earlier plans to transition to a Transportation Management Area (TMA). In the previous round of GHMPO committee meetings, MPO staff discussed GHMPO's designation as a TMA due to the urbanized area population crossing the 200,000 threshold as a result of the 2020 Census. As a TMA, GHMPO would be able to access increased funding and exercise more local control over the selection of transportation projects.

The 2020 Census revealed that the Gainesville Urbanized Area had expanded into Forsyth County, with a portion of Forsyth moving over from the Atlanta Urbanized Area. The Atlanta Regional Commission (ARC) noticed potential errors in the Census Bureau's methodology and requested an investigation.

Mr. Boyd explained that the Census Bureau has confirmed that there was indeed an error in methodology and the Gainesville Urbanized Area would not be extending into Forsyth County. Additionally, the Census confirmed that there would not be any additional growth in the urbanized area in eastern Hall or western Jackson Counties than what was already shown. Therefore, the Gainesville Urbanized Area will have a total 2020 population of 164,365 and GHMPO will no longer be transitioning into a TMA. Mr. Boyd let the Committee know that the Census would be sending updated urbanized area maps in the near future and that GHMPO staff will share this information with the Committee at their next meeting.

5. Recommend Approval of Hall Area Transit's Zero Emission Vehicle Transition Plan

Ms. Moss, the Director of Hall Area Transit (HAT), introduced the Zero Emission Vehicle Transition Plan and provided an overview of the purpose, recommendations, and key findings made in the report. The Federal Transit Administration requires six key elements be included in a transition plan:

- Long-Term Fleet Management
- Address Current and Future Resources
- Consider Policy and Legislation
- Evaluate Existing and Future Facilities
- Explore Partnerships with Alternative Fuel Providers
- Examine the Impact on Existing Workforce

Ms. Moss briefly explained the key findings the consultant discussed for all six elements and explained that once the plan is adopted, HAT plans to begin acquiring low/zero emission vehicles. Ms. Moss also gave a brief background on HAT, the WeGo microtransit service that currently serves all of Hall County, and the Gainesville Trolley routes.

Ms. Moss received various questions on the study relating to expected battery life, to which she responded that she would reach out the consultant team for confirmation. Ms. Rice asked if HAT would be transitioning to electric vehicles all at once or if they would be phased in, to which Ms. Moss responded that HAT would be purchasing one or two hybrid and/or zero emission vehicles with recently flexed funds from GHMPO and would test out the vehicles and their infrastructure impacts on HAT before doing a full transition over a period of time as vehicles need to be replaced. Mr. McCallum asked if the study discussed any background on the creation of electric vehicle batteries and its negative impacts on countries that manufacture them, to which Ms. Moss responded no, this particular study did not discuss the background of electric vehicle battery creation, but she requested Mr. McCallum send her any literature on the subject he had so HAT would be aware of all impacts that transitioning would have. Mr. Edwards asked if any conversations had been had about Braselton doing a similar Zero Emission Vehicle Transition Plan in the future, to which Mr. Boyd responded that Braselton was aware of the study and that GHMPO staff had passed along to Braselton and Jackson County that they could partner to do a similar study in the future if and when they are interested. Lastly, Mr. Hoffman suggested that HAT look into creating an electric vehicle charging plaza that both HAT and the public could use to charge electric vehicles in Gainesville.

MOTION: Mr. Smith made a motion to recommend approval of Hall Area Transit's Zero Emission Vehicle Transition Plan, with a second from Mr. Marzano. All members voted to approve the motion with the exception of Mr. McCallum, who voted against. The motion passed by majority vote.

6. Recommend Approval of the Draft FY 2024-2027 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)

Mr. Boyd discussed the final draft of the FY 2024-2027 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), which includes feedback from local, state, and federal partners. Mr. Boyd walked through the updated project list within the TIP and let the Committee know that the TIP will frequently be updated throughout the next four fiscal years as projects are added and new funding is assigned.

MOTION: Mr. Smith made a motion to recommend approval of the Draft FY 2024-2027 Transportation Improvement Program, with a second from Ms. Jones, and the motion passed by unanimous vote.

7. Recommend Approval of Draft Amendment #2 to the FY 2024 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP)

Mr. Boyd introduced Draft Amendment #2 to the FY 2024 Unified Planning Work Program, which is the annual budget document for GHMPO. Mr. Boyd explained that the City of Flowery Branch recently approached GHMPO about the possibility of commissioning a Flowery Branch Downtown Parking and Mobility Study in order to respond to the growth that downtown Flowery Branch is experiencing. This amendment would update Sub-Element 4.5 – "MTP/Bike and Ped Plan Update/Special Transportation Studies" to include the intent to develop this plan. This document would analyze optimal locations to install parking infrastructure, provide an implementation plan, and analyze alternatives for a road diet or conversation of one or two-way streets in order to better

direct the growing downtown traffic. This is not expected to require any additional funds beyond what is already programmed for Sub-Element 4.5. Flowery Branch will be providing a 20% cash match.

MOTION: Ms. Jones made a motion to recommend approval of Draft Amendment #2 to the FY 2024 Unified Planning Work Program, with a second from Mr. Edwards, and the motion passed by unanimous vote.

8. Other

Mr. Boyd provided brief updates from the TCC Trails Subcommittee. Staff attended the grand opening of the Tumbling Creek Trail on Thursday, July 13th, which connects the Chicopee Trail with the campus of the University of North Georgia in Oakwood. The next trail under development is the Gainesville Airport Connector Trail, which is currently under design with expected construction beginning by late 2023/early 2024.

Mr. Boyd next provided a status update on the Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP): 2025 Update and the Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan Update. GHMPO staff, alongside the Selection Committee, has selected the planning and engineering firm RS&H for this project. The contract was approved by the Hall County Board of Commissioners on Thursday, July 13th, and GHMPO staff has officially kicked off both studies with the consultant team. The MTP and Bike/Pedestrian Plan update are scheduled for adoption by May 2025.

Mr. Boyd updated the committee that Hall County was still working with all jurisdictions in order to bring a Transportation Special Purpose Local Options Sales Tax (TSPLOST) to the November 2023 ballot. This one cent sales tax could generate over \$300 million dollars for transportation projects across the County. Currently all jurisdictions have agreed to the call for a TSPLOST except for one, and negotiations are ongoing.

Mr. Boyd let Mr. Smith know that he had reached out to the GDOT District 1 office in Gainesville regarding his concern with congestion and safety at the intersection of State Route 60/Candler Road at Lee Land Road. GDOT responded that they were looking into the intersection and would follow up in the near future.

Mr. Smith asked for GHMPO staff to work with GDOT, the City of Gainesville, and Hall County to look into solutions at the following two locations:

- State Route 13/Atlanta Highway at Memorial Park Road – Explore congestion solutions including, but not limited to, adding a right-turn lane from Atlanta Highway (southbound) onto Memorial Park Road
- Browns Bridge Road/State Route 369 at Pearl Nix Parkway – Explore adding capacity to the left-turn lane from Pearl Nix Parkway (northbound) onto Browns Bridge Road (westbound)

9. Jurisdiction and Agency Reports

Mr. Boyd provided a brief recap of the local jurisdiction project updates that were provided at the Technical Coordinating Committee (TCC) meeting on July 19, 2023.

10. Public Comments

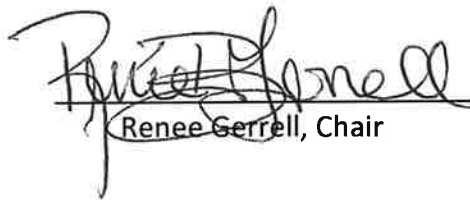
There were no public comments.

11. Upcoming Meeting Date: October 26, 2023

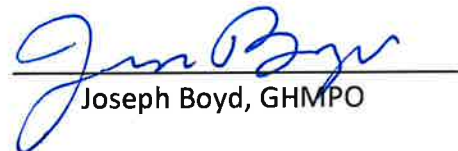
Ms. Gerrell reminded the Committee that their next meeting would be on October 26, 2023.

12. Adjourn

There being no other items of business, the meeting adjourned.



Renee Gerrell, Chair



Joseph Boyd, GHMPO