



MATS POLICY COMMITTEE MEETING

MATS POLICY COMMITTEE MEETING: August 2, 2023

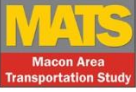
Time: 9:30 a.m.

Locations:

- Physical: 200 Cherry St., Suite 300
- On-Line: See Link on MATS Homepage (www.maconmpo.com)  
Direct Meeting Link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88305772571?pwd=eFUrZUIlWEI5aisreTlrWG1YYWZnQT09>

Attendance

Name	Present	Absent	On-Line	Representative
<b>Chairman</b> <b>Seth Clark</b> Commissioner (Dist. 5) Macon-Bibb County	X			
<b>Vice Chairman</b> <b>Louis "Frank" Tompkins</b> Macon-Bibb County Transit Authority	X			
Lester Miller Mayor Macon-Bibb County		X		
Valerie Wynn Commissioner (Dist. 1) Macon-Bibb County		X		
Bill Howell Commissioner (Dist. 7) Macon-Bibb County	X			
Chris Weidner Jones County Board of Commissioners	X			John Wood (Jones County Dist. 2)
Greg Tapley Commissioner, Monroe County		X		
John Harley Chairman, Middle GA Regional Commission; Mayor, City of Centerville	X			
Jean Easom Chair, Macon-Bibb County Planning & Zoning Commission	X			
Gary Bechtel Chair Macon Water Authority	X			



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Name	Present	Absent	On-Line	Representative
Vivian Canizares Asst. Office Head Metro & Rural Planning Branch Georgia Dept. of Transportation, Office of Planning	X			Jacqueline Williams
Rachel Umana Chair Macon Area Transportation Commission Citizen's Advisory Committee	X			
Stephen Adams Macon-Bibb County Industrial Authority		X		
Non-Voting Members				
Name	Present	Absent	On-Line	Representative
Jeff Ruggieri Executive Director, Macon-Bibb County Planning & Zoning Commission		X		
Sabrina David GA Division Administrator, FHWA	X			Olivia Lewis (on-line, at 9:57 a.m.)
Wanzina Jackson Macon-Bibb County Urban Development Authority		X		
Dr. Keith Moffett County Manager Macon-Bibb County		X		
Charles Brooks Macon-Bibb County Engineer		X		
Laura Mathis Executive Director, Middle GA Regional Commission	X			Greg Boike
Guests				
Name	Representing	Present	On-Line	
<b>Harland Smith</b>	<b>GDOT Dist. 3</b>			<b>X</b>
<b>Adam Smith</b>	<b>GDOT Dist. 3</b>			<b>X</b>
<b>Greg Brown</b>	<b>MATS MPO staff</b>	<b>X</b>		
<b>Margaret Peth</b>	<b>MATS MPO staff</b>	<b>X</b>		
<b>Miryam Yaramadi</b>	<b>Macon-Bibb County Planning &amp; Zoning</b>	<b>X</b>		





## AGENDA

- 1. Call to Order (Time Index +1:31)** – Chairman Clark called the meeting to order at 9:33 a.m. Mike Greenwald called the roll at the direction of The Chair (Time Index +2:08). Attendance was recorded as listed above.
- 2. Adoption of Agenda (Action Item: Time Index +1:51)** – Chairman Clark asked for a motion to approve the agenda as submitted.  
**Motion to approve the agenda as submitted: 1<sup>st</sup> Chairman Bechtel (Macon Water Authority); 2<sup>nd</sup> Chairwoman Jeanne Easom (Macon-Bibb County Planning & Zoning Commission).**  
**Approved by unanimous consent.**
- 3. Public Comment Period (5 Minutes: Time Index +7:23)** Rachel Umana (Chairwoman, MATS CAC) reported out from the MATS Citizens’ Advisory Committee (MATS CAC) meeting of July 12, 2023. Chairwoman Umana stated that there are 3 new members appointed to the MATS CAC since the last Policy Committee meeting; Ms. Caitlin Mee (Environmental Representative); Ms. Dianna Cooper (Macon Housing Authority Representative); and Ms. Deborah Garcia (Disabled Transit User Representative). MATS CAC was also able to “switch” the two CAC members who need to be re-appointed due to shifts in Macon-Bibb County Commission District boundaries. Chairwoman Umana also informed the Policy Committee that Ms. Margaret Peth of the MATS/Macon-Bibb County Planning & Zoning staff will be managing the MATS CAC meetings going forward. In addition to these membership and staffing issues, MATS CAC received briefings on the draft FY 2024 – 2027 TIP, the annual Title VI reporting for the FY 2023 year. The MATS CAC also watched a video brought forward by one of the CAC members on Complete Streets policies. Chairwoman Umana also wanted to reiterate the intent of the MATS CAC that as the various TIP and GDOT projects go forward in the MATS area, the Macon-Bibb County Complete Streets policy be enforced as part of those projects. Finally, the MATS CAC received an update on the status of the MATS 2050 Freight Plan RFP, and a review/update of GDOT active projects status for the MATS area.  
  
There were no other speakers signed up, either in person or on-line, to provide comments.
- 4. Approval of MATS Policy Committee Minutes (May 3, 2023: Action Item: Time Index +9:33)** – Chairman Clark advised the Policy Committee that the minutes for the 5/3/2023 meeting had been previously distributed to the group for review, and asked for a motion to approve.  
**Motion to approve Minutes of the May 3, 2023 Policy Committee meeting as submitted: 1<sup>st</sup> Chairman Bechtel (Macon Water Authority); 2<sup>nd</sup> Chairwoman Jeanne Easom (Macon-Bibb County Planning & Zoning Commission).**  
**Approved by unanimous consent.**
- 5. Introduction of New Committee Members and Staff (Time Index +10:04)** – Mike Greenwald introduced Margaret Peth as the newest member of the Planning Division staff for the Macon-Bibb County Planning & Zoning Commission. In her new role, Ms. Peth is taking over responsibility for the MATS CAC. Ms. Peth described that she was previously assigned to the Zoning Division staff. She also said that she was



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originally from Macon, although relocated for a brief time to North Carolina, and has now returned to the Macon-Bibb area.

### 6. New Business

#### a. **Update on Draft Transportation Improvement Program (FY 2024-2027: Time Index +11:38)** –

Mike Greenwald summarized the status of the MATS FY 2024 – 2027 Transportation Improvement Program (FY 2024 – 2027 TIP). He began by explaining that the TIP is a subset of the larger 2050 Metropolitan Transportation Plan (2050 MTP; adopted in May 2022), which is the “master list” of all Federally supported transportation projects taking place in the MATS MPO area. The TIP is a subset of specific projects and steps that are being worked on in any given 4 year period.

Because the MATS TIP and 2050 MTP adoption schedules are slightly offset from each other, the TIP under consideration covers the FY 2024 – 2027 period. The current TIP covers FY 2021 – 2024, and remains in effect until the successor document is adopted. The reason for the overlap is to make sure there is no gap in any of the ongoing projects.

Mike Greenwald summarized the fiscal analysis for the project: total budget of \$259,785,838. The four general areas are:

- Discretionary Projects – Projects that GDOT can choose to fund in our area. They are individual projects with individual project numbers
- Lump Sum Projects – Projects that are funded as a category, rather than a specific line item. Examples include railroad safety, wetlands mitigation, and purchasing of rights of way in anticipation of forthcoming projects
- Transit Capital & Operations – This affects the capital and operations of the Macon-Bibb County Transit Authority, as well as rural transit activities run through the Middle GA Regional Commission.
- Airport Capital Improvements Program – This covers projects anticipated at Middle GA Regional Airport and Herbert Smart/Macon Downtown airport.

The basic policy thrust of the MATS FY 2024 – 2027 includes maintaining the Federal funding eligibility for:

- The I-16/I-75 Interchange projects (in particular, Phase 5);
- The ongoing bridge repair/replacement projects underway in Bibb and Jones Counties;
- Projects of Local Interest
  - Bass Rd. Phase 1 (New Forsyth Rd. to Providence Blvd.) – This project is specifically identified for funding in the FY 2024 – 2027 TIP;
  - Forest Hill Rd. Phase 2 (Wimbish Rd. to Vineville Ave.) – This project has not been addressed yet, although MATS staff are working on trying to get it incorporated into the FY 2024 – 2027 TIP as a future amendment.



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Mike Greenwald then summarized the various individual road and bridge projects of interest to MATS members, which were included in the FY 2024 – 2027. With regard to next steps, he explained that the FY 2024 – 2027 TIP, and associated amendments to the MATS 2050 Air Quality Conformity Determination Report (2050 AQCD) reflecting the updated FY 2024 – 2027 TIP, required concurrence from the Interagency Coordinating Committee (IAC). This is an extra administrative step required of MATS for any modifications to Federal transportation planning documents. IAC has received the drafts of the FY 2024 – 2027 TIP and the 2050 AQCD for their review. In addition to IAC review, the MATS FY 2024 -2027 TIP and amended 2050 AQCD need to circulate for public comment for a minimum of 30 days. Based on consultation/conversations with the various IAC staff, the public comment period and the IAC review period may proceed concurrently. IAC staff had the documents for review starting on July 19, 2023. If either the FY 2024 – 2027 TIP receive “significant comment” from either the IAC review or the public comment process, then a second round of public comments will be required after the necessary adjustments are made to the document. As a rule, MATS staff coordinates with the IAC partners in the writing of the draft documents so that “significant comments” are not likely to arise. MATS staff anticipates releasing the draft documents for the required public review before Friday, August 4, 2023, and absolutely no later than Monday, August 7, 2023. Once the public comment period closes, MATS staff anticipates that a Special Call meeting will be required for late September 2023 get the FY 2024 – 2027 TIP and 2050 AQCD amendments approved.

**Q1 (Chairman Seth Clark)** – Are the projects that cross Echeconnee Creek and Ocmulgee River part of the public comment period as well?

**A1 (Mike Greenwald)** – Yes. All the projects being attempted in the FY 2024 – 2027 period have to be listed in the TIP. Adding a new project could be construed as a “significant comment.”

**Chairman Clark** - <inaudible>

**Mike Greenwald** – If the Chair would like staff to make a special effort to point specific organizations whose interest staff should solicit, staff would be happy to accommodate the request.

**Chairman Clark directed staff** to solicit input on the FY 2024 – 2027 TIP and 2050 AQCD Amendments from the Altamaha River Keepers to make sure they were aware of the TIP generally, and specifically with regard to GDOT projects crossing rivers in Jones County and along the Echeconnee Creek border with Houston County.

**Q2 (Commissioner Howell)** – Commissioner Howell thanked the staff for the e-mail regarding the glossary of transportation acronyms related to MATS activities and partner agencies. He was also pleased to see the roundabout project on GA 247/Pio Nono Ave. near the 7 Bridges area. He asked for a map to help track the progress of the project.

**Q3 (Chairman Bechtel, Macon Water Authority)** – Macon Water Authority has already done a release on moving some of the sewer and water lines related to the Bass Rd./Riverside roundabout expansion project. Chairman Bechtel anticipates the Bass Rd./Riverside roundabout will wind up being like the roundabout on Halley Rd./Eisenhower Pkwy or the one on Lamar Rd./Thomaston Rd.

b. **Update on Annual Title VI Reporting (FY 2023-2024: Time Index +28:07)** – Margaret Peth summarized the Title VI reporting requirement for the MATS MPO. Title VI of the 1964 Civil Rights Act requires that as a recipient of Federal funding, MATS must demonstrate that they are not discriminating against anyone on the basis of rates. MATS staff is currently in the process of collecting information on transit routes, demographics and ongoing





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transportation projects, analyzing them using GIS. In addition, staff is assembling and reviewing archival documents.

### 7. Old/Unfinished Business

- a. **Approval for Release of RFP for MATS 2050 Freight Plan Study (Time Index +29:11)** – Mike Greenwald clarified that there was a mis-statement on the released agenda. This is not actually an Action Item. It is a briefing to inform the MATS Policy Committee that the staff is preparing to publicly release the RFP.

Mike Greenwald explained that this project is the result of requests from GDOT and FHWA since the 2017/2018 funding cycle, and that the project is being funded by a special supplemental grant from GDOT which was awarded to MATS MPO earlier this year. The effect of the grant award is that the RFP will have no additional effect on the line item budgets for other Work Tasks in the FY 2024 UPWP. The work is to be performed by a consultant.

The total amount of the project is \$250,000 (\$200,000 from the aforementioned PL Supplemental grant award from GDOT; \$50,000 Local Match, provided by Macon-Bibb County from their American Rescue Plan funding that are allowed to be used for Federal grant match purposes).

The Scope of Work was summarized as follows: Development of a Stakeholder Group; Conducting a Freight Needs Assessment and Analysis; Conducting a Land Use Assessment (to identify how much land there is available to meet the identified freight needs); Economic Development Market Analysis; Environmental and Community Impact Analysis (specifically as it relates to Federal EJ40 goals); Developing Project Recommendations (not just existing projects within the 2050 MTP, but also identifying additional projects that could either be supported by Federal grants, as well as those that would be strictly local responsibilities); and a consolidated final report. With regard to timeline, MATS staff is in the middle of finalizing and posting the RFP, which will remain open for 30 days. A public notice ad has been readied to run in the newspaper. The RFP will be posted on the Georgia Procurement Registry website, where it will run for 30 days, as well as the MATS MPO website. Specific individual firms will also be invited to bid. The intent is to have the RFP run for 30 days, with a preferred vendor identified by mid September. Under that timeline, the goal is to have the identified consultant start work in October 2023, with work to continue through June 30, 2025 (and including regular update and reporting requirements).

Staff laid out that the next steps would be to post the RFP on the Georgia Procurement Registry, the MATS website, and inviting specific applicants to submit bids.

**Q1 (Chairman Bechtel, Macon Water Authority)** – There are a lot of MPOs throughout the State, which have to do similar work. Will there be one consultant that picks up on all of these projects, with the intention of presenting a consolidated plan to the Georgia DOT? Or will each MPO have its own consultant for their individual areas?

Chairman Bechtel referenced a conversation he and Mayor Miller had with the GDOT Commissioner. Chairman Bechtel recounted that, during the course of that conversation, the GDOT Commissioner told Chairman Bechtel that preliminary indications from a GDOT statewide freight study anticipated a doubling of freight volume through the I-16/I-75 Interchange in the next 25 years.

**A1 (Mike Greenwald)** – MATS staff have not been apprised of any simultaneous Statewide efforts looking at freight planning. The emphasis for this project is to get a report that can be used to update the next MTP





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update. That said, a coordinated/consolidated Statewide plan that could guide the individual MPOs would be quite useful.

On a related note, it is possible that one or a few of the consultants might indeed be coordinating approaches on various projects for consistency across the various studies. However, that's a contingency that hasn't been observed yet.

8. **Review of GDOT Project Status Report (Time Index +37:50)** – Harland Smith (GDOT District 3 Office) reviewed the GDOT active projects list (version: July 2023). This project list is included in the MATS meeting archives for the 8/2/2023 meeting.

**Q1 (Chairman Bechtel, Macon Water Authority)** – Chairman Bechtel asked for a clarification on Project #5 (SR 87 @ CR 742/Bass Rd.); is this project a bridge replacement or a roundabout?

**A1 (Harland Smith, GDOT Dist. 3 Office)** – Mr. Smith explained this is a roundabout project.

**Q2 (Chairman Bechtel, Macon Water Authority)** – Chairman Bechtel stated he did not hear the comments made about Project #6 (GDOT PI #0017121: Bass Rd. Phase 1)?

**A2 (Harland Smith, GDOT Dist. 3 Office)** – Mr. Smith explained that this project is currently set for outside the current STIP. Until the STIP changes, the comment listed on the sheet for that project (GDOT PI #0017121) would stay the same.

**A2a(Mike Greenwald, MATS MPO staff)** – Mike Greenwald stated he has been coordinating with Macon-Bibb County Engineering and the GDOT consultant specifically assigned to this project. Macon-Bibb County Engineering and the GDOT consultant are getting close to having a finalized project concept plan, which would then be released for a public information open house (PIOH). Once the PIOH was concluded, the project would be let for bid for engineering and construction.

When Mr. Smith says the project is “Outside the STIP,” Mr. Smith is focusing on the current Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) which covers FY 2021 through FY 2024. Mr. Smith can only speak to those projects that are within the timeframe of the current STIP.

**Q3 (Chairman Bechtel, Macon Water Authority)** – When can we expect the project to be brought before the board (i.e., the Policy Committee)?

**A3 (Mike Greenwald, MATS MPO staff)** – MATS staff anticipates it would be brought forward sometime in the next few months, although staff would have to coordinate with the Macon-Bibb County Engineer, Mr. Charles Brooks, to give a specific timeline. MATS staff anticipating a major increase in budget for GDOT PI #0017121, so there will need to be coordination between MATS staff and GDOT to update the project sheets and fiscal balancing (for the MTP and TIP documents).

Chairman Bechtel observed that one of the most important aspects of GDOT PI #0017121 is the widening of the bridge on Bass Rd. over Interstate 75, which need to come first before the other aspects of the project. There were “a lot of interested parties” in the bridge widening portion of the project, given that this project involved the most expensive real estate in Macon-Bibb County.

Mike Greenwald responded that he anticipates that the PIOH will happen soon, although he was unable to give a precise date at this time.



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9. **MATS Website Update (Time Index +45:04)** – Margaret Peth announced that staff is in the process of updating the MATS website. The current website is “a little dated,” so the goal of the website update is to increase accessibility, make content clearer, and increase the user friendliness. In addition, the intent with the re-design is to make the website easier for staff to administrate (staff who built the current website have moved on from MATS/Macon-Bibb Planning & Zoning, and the current website administration software is out of date). Ms. Peth laid out several questions that MATS staff would like Policy Committee members to consider as part of collecting public input on what should be included in an updated site (*questions are included on the slide deck examples as part of the archive for this meeting*). An on-line survey with a QR code has been launched to solicit and compile feedback.
10. **Next meeting dates (Time Index +47:20)** – Mike Greenwald summarized the meeting dates for the final round of regularly scheduled MATS meetings for CY 2023; Citizen’s Advisory Committee on October 11, 2023 at 6:00 p.m.; Technical Coordinating Committee on October 18, 2023 at 10:00 a.m.; Policy Committee on November 1, 2023 at 9:30 a.m. In addition to the regularly scheduled MATS meetings, GDOT is very anxious to have MATS adopt the updated FY 2024 – 2027 TIP. Also, if a preferred consultant is identified for the 2050 MATS Freight Plan, MATS would like to get them started as soon as possible. With that in mind, MATS staff anticipates Special Call meetings in September 2023 to accomplish both those specific tasks. These issues will be the only items on the Special Call agenda. Dr. Greenwald asked the Policy Committee members to keep the need for this meeting in mind during the month of September and to be available. Georgia Open Meetings Law requirements would still apply, so only those voting members who are physically present in the room could count towards quorum and have their votes counted. Normal quorum requirements would still apply.
- Q1 (Greg Brown, MATS staff)** – Will Special Call meetings be required for the MATS CAC and MATS TCC, in addition to the MATS Policy Committee?
- A1 (Mike Greenwald, MATS staff)** – For the adoption of the FY 2024 – 2027 TIP, yes. For the recommendation of a preferred consultant for the MATS 2050 Freight Study, that would need to be researched.
11. **Adjourn (Time Index: +50:46)**– Chairman Clark called for a motion to adjourn the meeting at 10:22 a.m. **Motion to Adjourn meeting: 1<sup>st</sup> Chairman Bechtel (Macon Water Authority); 2<sup>nd</sup> Chairwoman Jeanne Easom (Macon-Bibb County Planning & Zoning Commission).**  
**Approved by unanimous consent.**

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Seth Clark  
MATS Policy Committee Chairman

