



MATS POLICY COMMITTEE MEETING – SPECIAL CALL

MATS POLICY COMMITTEE MEETING: September 28, 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/87830477043?pwd=V0lxNG5qUTlnVGpDcXlyUU5MUXQyQT09>

Attendance

Name	Present	Absent	On-Line	Representative
Chairman Seth Clark Commissioner (Dist. 5) Macon-Bibb County		X		
Vice Chairman Louis “Frank” Tompkins 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			Greg Boike
Jean Easom Chair, Macon-Bibb County Planning & Zoning Commission		X		
Gary Bechtel Chair Macon Water Authority	X			



Macon Area Transportation Study

Name	Present	Absent	On-Line	Representative
Vivian Canizares Asst. Office Head Metro & Rural Planning Branch Georgia Dept. of Transportation, Office of Planning	X			Ted Hicks
Rachel Umana Chair Macon Area Transportation Commission Citizen's Advisory Committee	X			
Stephen Adams Macon-Bibb County Industrial Authority	X			Gary Wilson
Non-Voting Members				
Name	Present	Absent	On-Line	Representative
Jeff Ruggieri Executive Director, Macon-Bibb County Planning & Zoning Commission				
Sabrina David GA Division Administrator, FHWA				
Wanzina Jackson Macon-Bibb County Urban Development Authority				
Dr. Keith Moffett County Manager Macon-Bibb County		X		
Charles Brooks Macon-Bibb County Engineer	X			
Laura Mathis Executive Director, Middle GA Regional Commission				
Guests				
Name	Representing	Present	On-Line	





AGENDA

1. **Call to Order (Time Index +9:40)** – Vice Chairman Tompkins called the meeting to order at 9:36 a.m. Roll was called to establish attendance and quorum. Attendance was recorded as described on the preceding pages
2. **Adoption of Agenda (Action Item: Time Index +12:35)** – Mike Greenwald advised that the agenda had one modification; since the meeting in question is a Special Call meeting, there is no Public Comment period Vice Chairman Tompkins acknowledged the modification, and asked for a motion to approve the agenda.
Motion to approve the modified agenda: 1st Commissioner Howell (Macon-Bibb County Dist. 7); 2nd Chairman Bechtel (Macon Water Authority);
Approved by unanimous consent.
3. **Public Comment Period** – This Item was removed from the agenda by unanimous consent (see Item #2, above).
4. New Business
 - a. **Authorization to Apply for Annual 5303 Grant (Time Index: +14:40 Action Item)** – Margaret Peth summarized the application process for the MATS FY 2025 Sec. 5303 grant.
Ms. Peth explained that this is a formula grant, as opposed to a discretionary/competitive grant (the difference being that if/when the paperwork is filed before the deadline, the funding is guaranteed). Because MATS is an MPO under the 200,000 population threshold, the grant funding is submitted through GDOT Office of Intermodal. The funding is matched at both the State and the Federal level. The grant is managed on a reimbursement basis; MATS staff performs the work, and then submits quarterly reimbursements for the work performed under the grant.
Ms. Peth explained the FY 2025 budget is \$121,782.50 (80% Federal; 10% State match; 10% Local match). In past, the authorization to apply was brought before the Macon-Bibb County Planning & Zoning Commission (as the specific entity contracted to perform the work). However, changes applied by GDOT Intermodal to the application template now require the MATS Policy Committee to endorse it. Also, the application had previously been due during the October/November time period. However, this year GDOT Intermodal moved the deadline up to September 30.
Ms. Peth requested the authorizations for:
 - Authorize the Executive Director, Mr. Jeff Ruggieri, to sign all necessary documents related to the 5303 grant application materials;
 - Direct staff to submit the 5303 grant for the forthcoming FY 2025 to GDOT Office of Intermodal
 - Return to MATS Committees during the October/November meeting cycle with a briefing on the MATS draft FY 2025 UPWP.

Motion to authorize the MATS Executive Director, Mr. Jeff Ruggieri, to sign all required application materials for the 5303 application for FY 2025: 1st Chairman Bechtel (Macon Water Authority); 2nd Commissioner Howell (Macon-Bibb County Dist. 7);



Macon Area Transportation Study

Voting In Favor: Chairman Tompkins, Bechtel, Howell, Hicks, Boike, Wilson, Wood (on-line)

Voting Against: None

Voting Abstention: Umana

Prior to the vote, Mike Greenwald explained that Ms. Umana would have to vote to Abstain for all votes during this meeting. The reason was that while the MATS CAC chair does have a voting seat on the MATS Policy Committee (per the MATS Bylaws), the MATS CAC Special Call meeting on September 26, 2023 did not have quorum, and as such could not authorize Chair Umana to vote on behalf of the CAC on any of the items on this agenda.

- b. **Adoption of Final Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP) Document – FY 2024 – 2027 (Time Index: +19:02 Action Item)** – Mike Greenwald summarized both the FY 2024 – 2027 TIP document and the explained the related Amendment to the MATS 2050 Air Quality Conformity Determination Report (2050 AQCD). The presentation began with an overview of the “nutshell” model of the MPO Planning process. Mike Greenwald reminded the committee that the 2050 MTP was adopted in May 2022. The TIP is a listing of the activities that will take place on a subset of those projects within any given 4 year period. Earlier in 2023, MATS staff was advised by GDOT to start working on the FY 2024 -2027 TIP. While there is currently a 2021 - 2024 TIP on the books, GDOT wanted to ensure that “the baton got passed smoothly,” and that there were no lapses. Mike Greenwald then summarized the fiscal analysis by category:

- Discretionary Highway Projects – Specific projects GDOT is putting money towards, such as bridge and pedestrian projects. Examples would include projects on Eisenhower Pkwy, and Bass Rd. Approximately \$38 million
- Lump Sum Projects – Projects that are of a similar type or characteristic, but take place at various locations throughout the county. Examples would include maintenance and/or railroad safety projects. Approximately \$27.3 million
- Transit Capital & Operations – This item changed since the last time it was presented back at the August 2, 2023 regular meeting of the MATS Policy Committee. GDOT Office of Financial Management had forecasts for the Operations budget through 2027, but would only provide preliminary numbers for Capital budgets for FY 2024. MATS staff anticipates that going forward that there will be amendments going forward to get those Capital funds (**note: *mis-stated as Operations funds in the meeting audio recording*) into the TIP document. Approximately \$37.8 million
- Airport Capital Improvements – This is for work anticipated at Middle Georgia Regional Airport and Herbert Smart Field. Approximately \$124.9 million

Grand total for the MATS FY 2024 – 2027 TIP is approximately 228 \$million

The main thrust of the MATS FY 2024 – 2027 includes:





Macon Area Transportation Study

- Continuation of the I-16/I-75 Interchange projects (in particular, Phase 5). The other 4 phases (including both phases 1a and 1b) are covered under other annual year budgets and are already underway;
- 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, and is currently ongoing;
 - Forest Hill Rd. Phase 2 (Wimbish Rd. to Vineville Ave.) – This project is not included at this time, although MATS staff are working diligently with GDOT staff to get it incorporated into the FY 2024 – 2027 TIP as a future amendment. Adoption of the FY 2024 – 2027 TIP is a necessary precondition to getting this project moved forward.

Mike Greenwald then provided an overview on the individual projects in the MATS FY 2024 – 2027 TIP. After the individual project summary, he explained that the Draft FY 2024 – 2027 TIP went out for comment from both the Interagency Coordinating Committee (IAC) and the general public. On a related note, MATS staff is also updating the 2050 Air Quality Conformity Determination Report (2050 AQCD). Since the 2050 AQCD must reference the most current TIP, the adoption of a new TIP necessarily requires an amendment to the 2050 AQCD to reflect the update. In addition, there is a Design Value for Ozone for the MATS area; the MATS area value for ozone has dropped from .064 parts per million to .058 parts per million. MATS already beats the standard set by the 2015 NAAQS at .070 parts per million, so this new value is further improvement.

The IAC review period for both the FY 2024 – 2027 TIP and the 2050 AQCD amendments ran from July 19, 2023 through August 21, 2023, and simultaneously to the general public from August 4, 2023 through September 5, 2023.

MATS staff received no comments from the general public during the August/September time period. IAC made the following editorial comments:

- Add Title VI disclaimer language at the beginning of the document
- Add Project #0019088 to Roads & Bridges Projects
- Minor typographical edits to Projects #0017121 (Bass Rd. Phase 1) and #0017221 (SR 247 @ Echeconnee Creek & Overflows) to ensure dollars are in correct Fiscal Years
- Revamp funding totals for 5307 and 5339 programs, to correspond with GDOT Office of Financial Management projections
- Add funding summary for projects in relation to Performance Measures
- Coordinate with GDOT for MATS MPO Self Certification, to be included in the final TIP

All IAC comments were addressed, with the exact responses listed in the necessary appendices.

The action recommended to the MATS Policy Committee is:

- Adopt revised MATS 2024 – 2027 TIP and Amended 2050 ACQD, as presented
- Direct MATS staff as follows:
 - Post FY 2024 – 2027 TIP, with Self Certification, to MATS MPO website





Macon Area Transportation Study

- Inform GDOT Office of Planning of document adoption and posting
- Continue to inform MATS MPO Committees of needs and opportunities to amend FY 2024 – 2027 TIP, as needed

Q1 (Greg Boike, Middle GA Regional Commission) – Mr. Boike asked about the large dollar value on the airport capital improvement slide. Is that primarily due to the runway extension at Middle GA Regional Airport?

A1 (Mike Greenwald, MATS staff) – Yes, that’s correct.

Q2 (Commissioner Howell, Macon-Bibb County District 7) – Is it possible to get a breakdown of the airport projects budget?

A2 (Mike Greenwald, MATS staff) – Yes. Airport projects are their own chapter in the TIP document.

Q3 (Commissioner Howell, Macon-Bibb County District 7) – Commissioner Howell followed up with an appreciation for the opportunity to serve on the MATS Policy Committee, although he did not intend to simply act as a “rubber stamp” for GDOT’s list of projects. With that in mind, Forest Hill Rd. has been languishing at GDOT for an extended period of time. Meanwhile, Forest Hill Rd. is one of the busiest secondary roads in Bibb County. Forest Hill Rd. should have been upgraded years ago, and now Bibb County is in a quandry: Forest Hill Rd. is unsafe, and can’t wait on the State prioritization any longer. If the State isn’t going to prioritize this project in a timely manner, the County needs to take appropriate measures. Does the County need to take the initiative, or is this close to some sort of resolution with GDOT?

A3 (Mike Greenwald, MATS staff) – There is a history with this project. As it relates to the MATS Policy Committee, the project was in the TIP for FY 2018 – 2021, and GDOT had MATS MPO remove the project for fiscal constraint reasons. The current status of the project is that Federal funds cannot be put towards the project because the environmental assessments have expired. It is not a difficult task to get the environmental assessments updated and reinstated. The issue is getting people at GDOT who are not currently in the room to reauthorize and reinstate the project. MATS staff has been working with GDOT Office of Planning staff over the course of the summer to achieve that outcome, and Chairman Clark has been taking the lead on directing MATS staff on what strategies to pursue in getting Forest Hill Rd. reinstated. There are open questions as to whether or not Bibb County can or should pay for the project out their own funds. Because Forest Hill Phase 1 was funded with Federal dollars, Forest Hill Phase 2 would still need to come through MATS to be amended into the TIP; any project that connects to a project that has received Federal funding needs to be incorporated into the TIP. At that point, GDOT is going to be involved either way.

Getting Forest Hill Rd. amended into the TIP is going to involve getting some of the local elected officials talking with the GDOT senior staff, and explaining that this is not a project that can wait.

Commissioner Howell responded that he would further discuss strategic options with MATS staff after the meeting.

A3a (Chairman Bechtel, Macon Water Authority) – Chairman Bechtel added that the original plan for Forest Hill was a major expansion going all the way across Forsyth Rd., over to the Macon Mall. That plan was originally proposed in 1994, all the way through 2010/2012. In the intervening period, Moreland Altobelli (the engineering firm on the project at the time) received substantial neighborhood objections to the scope of the project. As a result of these objections, Chairman Bechtel (who at the time was on the Macon-Bibb County Board of Commissioners) and Mayor Reichert reached out to Meg Pirkle, (Chief Engineer at GDOT) to express



Macon Area Transportation Study

concerns. As a result of those discussions, in 2015 Moreland Altobelli reduced the scope of the project. Although the current scope of the project is much improved, there remains substantial neighborhood opposition. Outside of engineers and certain Macon-Bibb County commissioners, there is not a great appetite for the project. Even so, Chairman Bechtel agreed with Commissioner Howell that there are safety concerns. Commissioner Howell responded that Forest Hill is no longer a quiet suburban road, and that perhaps Forest Hill Rd. could be taken in sections. He also stated that at this point, Macon-Bibb County probably just needed to proceed on its own. Chairman Bechtel stated that Forest Hill Rd. remained under GDOT jurisdiction, and they would likely be reluctant to give that up. Mike Greenwald concluded with the point that if the State was going to be involved on Forest Hill Rd. Phase 2, adoption of a current TIP is a necessary precondition.

Motion as follows:

- **Adopt revised MATS 2024 – 2027 TIP and Amended 2050 ACQD, as presented**
- **Direct MATS staff as follows:**
 - **Post FY 2024 – 2027 TIP, with Self Certification, to MATS MPO website**
 - **Inform GDOT Office of Planning of document adoption and posting**
 - **Continue to inform MATS MPO Committees of needs and opportunities to amend FY 2024 – 2027 TIP, as needed**

1st Commissioner Howell (Macon-Bibb County Dist. 7); 2nd Chairman Bechtel (Macon Water Authority);

Voting In Favor: Chairman Tompkins, Bechtel, Howell, Hicks, Boike, Wilson, Wood (on-line)

Voting Against: None

Voting Abstention: Umana

- c. **Amendment to the MATS 2050 Air Quality Conformity Determination Report (2050 ACQD) (Time Index: +45:24 Action Item)** – The discussion and vote for this item is discussed above, under Item 4b.
- d. **Anticipated Amendments to the FY 2024 – 2027 TIP (Time Index: +45:53)** – Mike Greenwald explained that now the FY 2024 – 2027 TIP has been adopted, there are anticipated amendments forthcoming. Some of these are anticipated for the upcoming November 1, 2023 Policy Committee meeting. Briefly, those projects include:
- **Parking area expansion for the Macon-Bibb County Transit Authority (approximately \$4.2 million)** – This project has been going back and forth with Macon-Bibb County Transit Authority, MATS, GDOT Office of Intermodal and FTA regarding some historic preservation issues related to demolished structures. While those issues have been resolved, the budget wasn't completed in time for inclusion of this project into the initial adoption of the FY 2024 – 2027 TIP. The amendment is needed so that Macon-Bibb County Transit Authority can proceed with the project.
 - **GDOT Project M006228 – I-75 from Arkwright Rd. to I-475/I-75 split in Monroe County (approximately \$90.5 million)** – This is a maintenance project involving resurfacing I-75 along the identified corridor. This project will have no impact on local funds (i.e., it will be covered entirely by State and Federal funds). GDOT is still



Macon Area Transportation Study

trying to nail down some of the phases and fiscal years, so this project may not come forward in the October/November meeting cycle. If not, staff anticipates it will come forward in the January/February 2024 meeting cycle.

This project is a pre-condition of pursuing any other projects related to the I-16/I-75 expansion along this corridor. The roadbed needs to be sufficient before any other type of capacity work can be started.

- GDOT Project 0017121 – Bass Rd. from Providence to New Forsyth (amount TBD) – Mike Greenwald has been on the project management calls with the GDOT project manager and Macon-Bibb County Engineering. The GDOT project manager has described a budget that is much larger than in either the 2050 MTP or the 2024 – 2027 TIP. The budgets and phasing for this project in both those documents will need to be updated. As a result of the budget increase, the local match requirement for the project will also increase. Mike Greenwald has been keeping Chairman Clark apprised of the increased local match cost; at this moment, the additional local match required of Macon-Bibb County is anticipated to be around \$7.5 million. That money doesn't need to happen immediately, but it is something that Macon-Bibb County will need to consider in the development of future budgets.

Q1 (Chairman Bechtel, Macon Water Authority) – How much has Macon-Bibb already obligated to this project?

A1 (Mike Greenwald, MATS Staff) – Approximately \$5.4 million.

Q2 (Chairman Bechtel, Macon Water Authority) – *Inaudible*

A2 (Mike Greenwald, MATS Staff) – While not prepared to get into specific numbers, the anticipated new budget for the Bass Rd. project is around \$62.5 million. That would make the Local Match requirement around \$12.4 million (+/-). That changes the additional \$7.5 million described above. If the current obligation in the SPLOST is \$8 million, and the new required match is \$12.4 million, the additional Local Match required is reduced from \$7.5 million to 4.5 million (+/-).

Mike Greenwald explained that the examples for match were very much “back of the envelope” calculations for the purposes of discussion at this meeting. Exact values would require further review of exact dollar figures for the full project budget, and the actual values of obligated SPLOST dollars. At this time, the GDOT project manager is finalizing their concept plan for the project so that they can proceed with the Public Information Open House.

Chairman Bechtel observed that the stretch of Bass Rd. from Providence to New Forsyth was the most expensive dirt in Bibb County.

5. **Adjourn (Time Index: +58:36)**– Mike Greenwald reviewed the upcoming regular MATS Meeting cycle (MATS CAC on October 11 at 6:00 p.m.; MATS TCC on October 18, 2023 at 10:00 a.m.; MATS Policy Committee on November 1, 2023 at 9:30 a.m.). Preliminary agendas will be distributed shortly. MATS staff will attempt to have the CY 2024 meeting calendar available for review at the November 1, 2023 Policy Committee meeting

Q1 (Commissioner Howell (Macon-Bibb County Dist. 7) - Are the CAC meetings open to the public?

A1 (Mike Greenwald, MATS Staff) – All MATS meetings are open to the public, and opportunity for public comment is available.





Macon Area Transportation Study

Q2 (Commissioner Howell (Macon-Bibb County Dist. 7) - Is it a large crowd?

A2 (Mike Greenwald, MATS Staff) – Generally not. Trying to get people engaged with the CAC is part of Margaret Peth’s portfolio

A2a (Margaret Peth, MATS Staff) – There is a CAC board of 21 members. Typical attendance is under 10, although staff is working with Chairwoman Umana to identify candidates to take the place of members whose positions have become open due to absenteeism. It is a work in progress.

Q3 (Commissioner Howell (Macon-Bibb County Dist. 7) – Is CAC something the Policy Committee members need to attend?

A3 (Margaret Peth, MATS Staff) – The meeting content is essentially the same between the CAC and Policy Committee meetings.

Motion to Adjourn meeting: 1st Commissioner Howell (Macon-Bibb County Dist. 7); 2nd Chairman Bechtel (Macon Water Authority);

Approved by unanimous consent.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:27 a.m.

Seth Clark
MATS Policy Committee Chairman