

Citizens Advisory Committee

**HR Training Room, 2nd Floor, Hall County Government Center
Draft Minutes of December 5, 2024 Meeting**

Voting Members Present:

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

Voting Members Absent:

Jason Cox, City of Gainesville
Kim Jackson, Hall County
Jim Southard, Jackson County
Bob Norton, Hall County
Nick Haynes, Hall County

Others Present:

Steve Cote, RS&H
Joseph Boyd, GHMPO
Michael Haire, GHMPO

1. Welcome – Renee Gerrell, Chair

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

2. Approval of July 25, 2024 Meeting Minutes

MOTION: Mr. Smith made a motion to approve of the July 25, 2024 meeting minutes, with a second from Mr. Millwood, and the motion passed by unanimous vote.

3. Recommend Approval of the Draft 2025 Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) Fiscally Constrained Project List

Mr. Cote provided a presentation on the 2025 MTP development process, recapping the developments so far and discussing the results of the public engagement process, and gave an overview of how the draft MTP Fiscally Constrained Projected List is organized.

Mr. Haire gave an overview of all projects included in the Fiscally Constrained Project List, engaging with Committee members when clarification or additional information were needed. Mr. Haire then discussed next steps, including the public comment period, which will run from April 2, 2025 through May 2, 2025, and the final approval of the plan by the Policy Committee on May 6, 2025.

Mr. Millwood asked if the first phase of the US 129/Cleveland Highway widening (GH-020A) was going to straighten out the curve as the road approaches Nopone Road, to which MPO staff said that while they haven't seen the engineering for the project, it is likely that they would take the opportunity to straighten that curve out during the widening.

Ms. Rice asked about the possibility of limiting trucks on SR 369/Browns Bridge Road, to which staff replied that because this road is a State Route, local governments cannot limit freight access.

Mr. Millwood asked whether intersections will be affected or speed limits will be adjusted when the operational improvements on Browns Bridge Road are made (GH-100), to which staff responded that both of those will likely need to be a part of the project, but that will be left up to GDOT.

Mr. Smith asked if the bridge replacement at Flat Creek on SR 283 (GH-141) will have a planned detour while the bridge is being reconstructed, to which MPO staff said they would need to check with GDOT regarding the engineering for that project.

The committee discussed the widening of State Route 365 up to Lula (GH-150), including the corridor transitioning to limited access, and the possibility of it becoming an extended portion of I-985. Mr. Boyd stressed that once design for the project is complete, the remaining phases may receive funding and move out of the unfunded, long-range project band. The committee briefly discussed impact fees.

Mr. Hoffman asked about the Bike/Ped label on the project sheets – specifically regarding the widening of State Route 60/Thompson Bridge Road (GH-038), which has completed pre-engineering but does not have a specific bike/ped element described. GHMPO staff stated they would check on that project and try to get an update on the bike/ped design elements but often times those details are not known until the project is under design.

Ms. Rice asked about if impacts are projected for new developments, to which MPO staff discussed how jurisdictions use traffic impact studies to justify asking developers to make improvements to existing road infrastructure.

Mr. Rudio asked about extending Skelton Road to connect to McEver Road, to which Mr. Boyd responded that that will likely not happen, but Hall County is interested in extending Memorial Park Drive to State Route 53/McEver Road.

MOTION: Mr. Smith made a motion to recommend approval of the Draft 2025 MTP Fiscally Constrained Project List, which received a second from Mr. Millwood, and the motion passed by unanimous vote.

4. Recommend Approval of the 2025 Safety Performance Measures (PM 1)

Mr. Boyd briefly discussed the 2025 Safety Performance Measures, which are set by GDOT and then adopted by MPOs statewide. These performance measures set goals for the number of fatalities, number of serious injuries, fatality rate per 100 million vehicle miles traveled, serious injury rate per 100 million vehicle miles traveled, and the total number of non-motorized fatalities and serious injuries, all operating on a 5-year moving average (2021-2025). Once adopted by the Policy Committee, these performance measures will be inserted into the FY 24-27 Transportation Improvement Program and the FY 2026 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP).

MOTION: Mr. Smith made a motion to recommend approval of the draft 2025 Safety Performance Measures (PM 1), which received a second from Ms. Jones, and the motion passed by unanimous vote.

5. Recommend Approval of Draft Amendment #4 to the FY24-27 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)

Mr. Haire introduced Draft Amendment #4 to the FY 2024-2027 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), which contains all projects receiving funding between the fiscal years of 2024-2027. The updates being made to the Transportation Improvement Program with Amendment #4 are below:

- New Project: GH-023B / PI 0015280: Spout Springs Road Widening Phase II
 - Right-of-Way (ROW) funding added for FY 2027 in the amount of \$20,243,000.00.
- New Project Phase: GH-147 / PI 0016089: State Route 211 Widening – Phase II
 - Construction (CST) funding added for FY 2026 in the amount of \$284,140.29.
- New Project Phase: GH-148 / PI 0020370: NEVI – Charging Stations. Four EV charging stations to be added along I-985 corridor, location TBD.
 - Construction (CST) funding added for FY 2025 in the amount of \$30,000.00.
- New Project: GH-150 / PI 0020731: State Route 365 Widening from I-985 to Belton Bridge Road in Lula
 - Pre-Engineering (PE) funding added for FY 2026 in the amount of \$10,000,000.00.
- New Project: GH-151 / PI 0020735: Widening of State Route 53 from State Route 124 to New Cut Road
 - Pre-Engineering (PE) funding added for FY 2026 in the amount of \$1,500,000.00
- Updated procedures for Administrative Modifications and Amendments on Page 7.
- Updated System Performance Report added to Appendix H.

MOTION: Mr. Smith made a motion to recommend approval of Draft Amendment #4 to the FY 2024-2027 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), which received a second from Mr. O'Rourke, and the motion passed by unanimous vote.

6. Recommend Approval of the Draft Carbon Reduction Project List for FY 2024 - 2027

Mr. Boyd led a discussion on the Draft Carbon Reduction Project List for FY 2024-2027, which has been developed in collaboration with local planning partners. This draft list provides several projects for which local agencies would like to utilize funds from GHMPO's allocation of Carbon Reduction Program funding. The project list is listed below:

- Jackson County: EV Charging Stations in Braselton/Hoschton
- Oakwood: EV Charging in new Downtown/INK
- Hall County: EV Charging at Exit 16 Park & Ride
- Gainesville: Replace Lighting (location TBD) or EV charging at Poultry Park
- Hoschton: Replace lighting along SR 53 and/or Low/Zero Emission Trolley or Bus
- Braselton: EV Charging near Town Green
- Flowery Branch: EV Charging along Downtown Parking Spots

MOTION: Mr. Smith made a motion to recommend approval of Draft Carbon Reduction Project List for FY 2024-2027, which received a second from Ms. Jones, and the motion passed by unanimous vote.

7. First Review of Draft FY 2026 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP)

Mr. Haire discussed the first draft of the FY 2026 Unified Planning Work Program, which is the annual operating budget for the MPO, funding all planning activities and any additional studies GHMPO would like to do. This draft of the FY 2026 UPWP contains finalize funding amounts for FHWA's PL grant and FTA's Section 5303 grant. Additionally, a new Work Element (4.6 – Air Quality) has been created to describe the work that GHMPO does with Atlanta Regional Commission regarding air quality conformity. Lastly, Mr. Haire discussed the potential studies listed within the UPWP that GHMPO and local jurisdictions could choose to pursue in FY 2026 – namely, the Oakwood-Flowery Branch Connection Trail Study, which GHMPO could do utilizing the base PL grant, and the State Route 13 (Oakwood) Corridor Study, which would require applying for additional PL funds. The FY 2026 UPWP will be a voting item at the Citizens Advisory Committee meeting in January.

8. Other

GHMPO staff provided updates on various ongoing projects.

Mr. Haire discussed the State Route 13 / Atlanta Highway Corridor Study. The study team held the first public open house for the project on November 12, and are currently in the process of developing the list of potential improvements. GHMPO staff are hoping to hold a large public meeting for the State Route 13 Study, the Metropolitan Transportation Plan, the Safe Streets for All (SS4A) Safety Action Plan, and the Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan in February.

Mr. Boyd discussed the Hoschton Transportation Plan, which will begin in 2025 and will create a master transportation plan for the city of Hoschton and their transportation network.

Mr. Boyd discussed the Safe Streets for All (SS4A) Safety Action Plan, which is still on track to be adopted by May 13, 2025.

9. TCC Agency Reports

Mr. Boyd briefly discussed some of the notable project updates from the TCC Agency Report.

10. Public Comments

Several Committee members asked for the following comments to be placed in the minutes:

Ms. Gerrell mentioned that she's seen discussion of a road washout near Tumbling Creek, but that she wasn't sure of the exact location. MPO staff said they would reach out and try to investigate.

Ms. Gerrell also mentioned that moving southbound on US Route 129, a yield sign has been removed, causing an increase in accidents turning right off the corridor. MPO staff said they would investigate the issue.

Mr. Smith asked if Hall County was going to do an in-depth analysis of the TSPLOST referendum results in order to determine what could have been done differently. MPO staff said they would reach out to Hall County and the Chamber of Commerce to see if any data or information on the results had been released yet.

Mr. Rudio asked if, in the absence of TSPLOST funding, the City of Flowery Branch could look at installing a traffic light at Blackjack Road and Hog Mountain Road in order to make some improvements there while waiting on funding for a more expansive widening. Staff responded that they would reach out to Flowery Branch and Hall County to discuss.

Ms. Lipscomb asked about potholes along EE Butler/US 129 near the intersection of Ridge Road in Gainesville. Mr. Boyd responded that GDOT had taken a look but didn't see anything major, but he would provide her with their contact information so they could discuss it further.

Ms. Lipscomb also raised concerns about the Railroad regularly blocking the at-grade crossing on Athens Street in Gainesville and how disruptive that was to the surrounding community. Mr. Boyd responded that while local agencies cannot control the workings of the Railroad, in recent years a new signal was installed in Flowery Branch that was supposed to aid in this issue. He continued that he would reach out to Flowery Branch to obtain more information on that and also pass this concern along to the City of Gainesville.

11. Upcoming Meeting Date: January 30, 2025

Ms. Gerrell reminded the committee of their next meeting on January 30, 2025.

12. Adjourn

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

Renee Gerrell, Chair

Michael Haire, GHMPO

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