DARTS Citizens’ Transportation Committee Minutes

Wednesday, September 20, 2023, at 9:00 A.M.

Hybrid – 240 Pine Ave, Suite 380, Albany, GA 31701

**CALL TO ORDER**

Citizens’ Chair L. McClain called the meeting to order at 9:04 AM.

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| **PRESENT**  Charles “Bruce” Capps  Glenn “Tyler” Harris  Larry McClain  Brent Davis | City of Albany *(Virtual)*  Dougherty County  City of Albany *(Chair) (Virtual)*  Lee County |
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| **ABSENT**  Peter Ngwafu  David Gregors  Billy Merritt  Sonya Johnson | Lee County  City of Albany  City of Albany Planning Commission  City of Albany *(Vice-Chair)* |
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| **OTHERS PRESENT**  Tanner Anderson  Jason Tolbert  Marina Rosen | Planner II, City of Albany  Transit Planner, City of Albany  Transportation Planner I, City of Albany |

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| **APPROVAL OF MINUTES** | (June 21, 2023) |  |

L. McClain asked members to take a minute to review the minutes if they hadn’t done so.

B. Capps made the motion to approve the minutes. Seconded by T. Harris and approved unanimously.

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| **TOPIC I** | Election of Vice-Chair | Tanner Anderson |

T. Anderson notified members that L. McClain would lead this meeting in the absence of S. Johnson, who was set to take over as Chair. T. Anderson stated a Vice-Chair would still need to be elected at this meeting. T. Harris made motion to elect Brent Davis Vice-Chair. Seconded by B. Capps and approved unanimously.

**TOPIC II** Transportation Update Tanner Anderson

**FY24-27 TIP**

T. Anderson stated the FY24-27 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) is a prioritization list of transportation projects over a 4-year period and current projects happening in the MPO. The last update was done in June 2021. The FY24-27 will not be able to go in effect until the STIP is adopted, which is expected toward the end of September or early October 2023. The MPO is aiming to adopt the document at its meetings tomorrow. Committees should have received a draft of the document. The document went out for public review from June through July. Staff has satisfied all GDOT/FHWA comments and those are addressed at the end of the document.

**2045 Amendment #3**

T. Anderson reminded the board that the 2045 Amendment is a formality used when developing a five-year plan as the long-range plan can become out of budget and must be brought back into budget. T. Anderson informed the committee that only one comment was received regarding the Oglethorpe Bridge Project, which, as of right now, is scheduled in the TIP for FY27. A project list was made available for everyone back in June. T. Anderson stated that there are new requirements under the Biden Infrastructure Bill so there will be new topics to discuss regarding the long-range plan.

T. Harris brought up the importance of attendance by board members at all meetings as they are the first conduit between the public and what the committee is doing. B. Capps and L. McClain concurred. T. Anderson stated that we will be looking at our 2025 goals and by-laws to incorporate new regulations regarding member attendance.

**FY25 UPWP**

T. Anderson gave a brief overview of the dates for FY25 that runs from July 1, 2024, and ends June 30, 2025. This document covers the MPO’s budget and day-to-day activities of the MPO including Studies and technical support. Examples of activities mentioned were: Studies (Bicycle & Pedestrian Plan, Freight Profile); Planning Documents (2050 MTP, FY 24-27 TIP); Maintaining Comprehensive Data (Demographic and Employment Information, Traffic Counts and Congestion); Carrying out recommendations of the MTP; and Maintaining relationships with City/County Planning organizations to integrate land use planning with transportation planning. A Call for activity went out and one was received but we can’t start on it until the end of the FY25. T. Anderson stated that the MPO will be wrapping up its 2050 MTP update during FY25. If a study is wanting to be conducted by the committees, we would apply to the Georgia Association of Metropolitan Planning Organizations (GAMPO) in March 2025. T. Anderson says that there has been talks of possibly doing a Major Corridor study (Dawson Road, Old Dawson Road, US 19, etc.).

B. Capps asked for information regarding the number of people who depend on bicycling for transportation. He also requested information about the paratransit system. T. Anderson posed this question to J. Tolbert, with Albany Transit, who agreed to share this information with B. Capps. B. Capps also had statements regarding speed limit rules on certain roads in Albany. T. Anderson answered that GDOT sets limits on our state roads.

**2050 MTP**

T. Anderson stated that Metro Analytics LLC has been selected as consultant. The Socioeconomic Data review is finished for 2020 and the 2050 review/update is underway. Interesting trends have noted a decrease in population while employment is increasing. A Citizens’ Transportation Committee meeting has been scheduled for October 11, 2023, where we will outline our priorities before we start the Public Outreach meetings. This will be the kick-off meeting with our new consultants, so it was suggested that the CTC come with an idea of what they want to look for in this long-range plan.

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| **TOPIC III** | Transit Update | Jason Tolbert |

**Albany Transportation Center Update:**

J. Tolbert provided an update on the bus driver shortage. The Transit staff will be participating in the city-wide job fair on September 27, 2023. J. Tolbert stated that one new driver started this week with more interviews to be held on Monday. The Transit Center is also offering a $1,000 signing bonus. The Transit Staff will also be holding two Public Community Meeting sessions on Wednesday, September 27, 2023.

J. Tolbert stated that Transit has opened up applications for the Paratransit Advisory Board and is very excited about this increase in community engagement with this population.

J. Tolbert states that he will comply with C. Capps’ request for paratransit data and further offered to sit down with C. Capps so that he can see the “big picture” where transit is concerned.

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| **TOPIC IV** | Airport Update |  |

**Corporate Hanger & General Aviation Terminal:**

T. Anderson informed the committee that the position of Airport Superintendent has not yet been filled as interviews are still ongoing.

J. Tolbert stated that the GA Terminal will be completed by January 2024, and he believes the Corporate Hangars are complete. T. Anderson responded in the affirmative as to the completion of the hangars.

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| **TOPIC V** | Discussion |  |

T. Anderson provided two updates; one being his making sure all board members receive the GDOT Status Updates and the latter being an introduction of new staff, Marina Rosen, and the continued contributions of Denise Clark.

B. Capps asked about the Summer Transportation Institute. T. Anderson explained this partnership between Albany State University and DARTS which brings in young people who then travel throughout Georgia, learning about different modes of transportation.

B. Capps also brought up the incorporation of electric buses to the Transit Fleet. J. Tolbert replied that we will have some electric vehicles coming pretty soon.

T. Harris inquired about the availability of the Community Room at the Transit Center, and the criteria to be met for its usage. Additionally. T. Harris stated that the recent events regarding Greyhound and the Airport were corporate situations and not created by the City.

**ADJOURNMENT**

T. Harris called the motion to adjourn. Seconded by B. Davis. Meeting adjourned at 9:48 AM.

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| Submitted by: | Tanner Anderson |