

**AUTHORIZING RESOLUTION**

Resolution authorizing the execution of contracts between the Department of Transportation, United States of America, the Georgia Department of Transportation, and the Unified Government of Athens-Clarke County for the FY 2027 (July 1, 2026 - June 30, 2027) Planning (PL) Contract, if awarded.

WHEREAS, the Federal Government requires that Urbanized Areas such as Athens have a formal planning process as it relates to the planning of transportation projects; and

WHEREAS, the Federal Government will not authorize the expenditure of funds for said transportation projects unless they come out of this formal transportation planning process; and

WHEREAS, the formal transportation planning process is organized around what is commonly known as the Madison Athens-Clarke Oconee Regional Transportation Study (MACORTS);

WHEREAS, the staff of the Unified Government of Athens-Clarke County Planning Department provides support for MACORTS planning efforts;

WHEREAS, the Federal Government will provide up to an estimated amount of \$290,000 of the funding for the transportation planning (PL) contract expenses incurred by the Unified Government of Athens-Clarke County subject to a 20% local match of the funded amount (estimated to be a maximum of \$58,000), if awarded;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Mayor and Commission of the Unified Government of Athens-Clarke County:

That the Mayor and appropriate staff are authorized to apply for a grant, accept such grant if awarded, and execute an associated contracts with the Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) for the FY 2027 Transportation Planning (PL) Contract Funds, if awarded.

Adopted the \_\_\_\_\_ day of  
\_\_\_\_\_, 20\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Clerk of Commission

Approved the \_\_\_\_\_ day of  
\_\_\_\_\_, 20\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Mayor

**THE UNIFIED GOVERNMENT OF ATHENS-CLARKE COUNTY  
COMMISSION AGENDA ITEM**

**SUBJECT:** Annual Metropolitan Transportation Planning Grant for FY 2027 (July 1, 2026 - June 30, 2027)

**DATE:** November 18, 2025

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**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:**

This is an annual renewal of transportation grant funding to support the participation of Athens-Clarke County in the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) known as MACORTS (Madison Athens-Clarke Oconee Regional Transportation Study).

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**BUDGET INFORMATION:**

REVENUES:	\$232,000	Estimated Maximum Federal Share (80%) for FY 2027
	\$ 58,000	Estimated Maximum Local Share (20%) for FY 2027
	<b>\$290,000</b>	<b>Estimated Maximum Revenue for FY 2027</b>

**EXPENSES:**

ANNUAL: \$290,000  
CAPITAL:  
OTHER:

**FUNDING SOURCE:**

ACCGov General Fund – FY 2027 Planning Department Budget	\$37,700
Oconee County Government	\$10,150
Madison County Government	\$10,150

**COMMISSION ACTION REQUESTED ON:** January 6, 2026

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**PURPOSE:**

To request that the Mayor and Commission:

- a. Adopt a resolution (**Attachment #1**) authorizing the application for and acceptance of the Federal Planning (PL) contract amount associated with the annual Metropolitan Transportation Planning Grant for FY 2027 (July 1, 2026 - June 30, 2027); and,
- b. Authorize the Mayor and appropriate staff to execute the resulting contract between the Unified Government of Athens-Clarke County (ACCGov) and the Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT).

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**HISTORY:**

1. In 1969, the local Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) was created, which only included the City of Athens and Clarke County. Over time, the US Census Bureau has served as a basis to identify “urbanized areas” that are required to be included within a MPO’s boundary. These boundaries can cross county lines, and county governing authorities can elect whether to participate in the MPO or not.
2. For over 50 years, the City of Athens and Clarke County, and now the Unified Government of Athens-Clarke County (ACCGov), has annually entered into an agreement with the Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) to receive federal funding to perform transportation planning within the MPO.
3. In 1991, following the results of the 1990 Census, the Mayor and Commission approved a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) that:
  - a. Established the new boundary for the MPO adding a portion of Oconee County;
  - b. Added Oconee County as a participating member of the MPO (to then be known as the Athens-Clarke Oconee Regional Transportation Study), or “ACORTS”; and
  - c. Included language that ACCGov would pay the local match 10% of the MPO. The federal government paid 80% of the cost and the State of Georgia provided the remaining 10% of the cost.
4. In 2003, following the results of the 2000 Census, the Mayor and Commission approved a MOU that:
  - a. Established the new boundary for the MPO adding a portion of Madison County;
  - b. Added Madison County as a participating member of the MPO (now known as the Madison Athens-Clarke Oconee Regional Transportation Study, or “MACORTS”); and
  - c. Included language that ACCGov would continue to pay for the local match (10%).
5. In 2009, the MPO was informed that the State match of 10% would no longer be available beginning in the FY 2011 cycle, and the local match would become 20%.
6. In 2010, as the MPO’s decision-making body designated by the State, the MACORTS Policy Committee, approved a FY 2011 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP), which included a local match split with ACCGov paying 13%, and Oconee and Madison counties paying 3.5% each. MACORTS’ three active member counties agreed that ACCGov would continue to provide the 10% local match as it did prior to FY 2011. The remaining 10% required local match, to replace the 10% match previously provided by the State, was split between all three member counties.
7. On May 4, 2010, the Mayor and Commission approved the Metropolitan Transportation Planning (PL) Grant for FY 2011, which included reference to the Policy Committee-approved split of the local match.

8. On June 13, 2013, following the results of the 2010 Census, ACCGov entered into an MOU that:
  - a. Established the new boundary for the MPO that included small portions of Jackson and Oglethorpe Counties; and
  - b. Formalized the desired position of Jackson and Oglethorpe Counties as non-participating members of MACORTS.
  - c. The inclusion of these small areas in Jackson and Oglethorpe Counties does not affect MACORTS' membership, funding level, or the local match requirements already established between Athens-Clarke County, Oconee County, and Madison County.
9. In 2015, GDOT informed the MPOs in Georgia that beginning in FY 2017, the annual PL contract would no longer include the unspent funds from the previous year. Instead, all of the unspent funds from all of the MPOs in Georgia would be collected and awarded on an annual competitive basis to 'unfunded' projects proposed in the Unified Planning Work Programs statewide.
10. In FY 2017, MACORTS was awarded funding to update the Metropolitan Transportation Plan to 2045 from the discretionary balance of unspent MPO funds. The 2045 Metropolitan Transportation Plan was adopted on October 9, 2019.
11. In FY 2022, MACORTS was awarded funding to update the Metropolitan Transportation Plan to 2050 from the discretionary balance of unspent MPO funds by the October 9, 2024 deadline.
12. In FY 2025, MACORTS used the above referenced awarded funds to complete and adopt the 2050 Metropolitan Transportation Plan in September, 2024.

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## FACTS & ISSUES:

1. ACCGov receives federal funds for the Planning Department to perform transportation planning activities for the MACORTS area, as outlined in the MACORTS Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP). This includes funding to offset the salary cost of the transportation planners (80%) and a portion of the Department Director position (15%). The UPWP serves as the 'application' which renews the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) status of MACORTS. Receipt of the authorizing resolution (**Attachment #1**) by GDOT effectively renews the PL Grant for the upcoming fiscal year. The ACCGov Planning Department provides primary staff support for these metropolitan transportation planning efforts.
2. Since FY 2011, GDOT has not provided a state match for the federal transportation planning funds. This grant requires a 20% local match.

3. The estimated FY 2027 local match funding amounts shown in this agenda report are based on an agreement (History #6) whereby each of the three active member counties of MACORTS will provide a portion of the required local match. ACCGov will provide 65% of the required local match (13% of total grant amount) and Oconee and Madison Counties will each provide 17.5% of the required local match (3.5% each of total grant amount). This applies to both the PL contract and any unfunded project contracts, if awarded.
4. It is estimated that the FY 2027 federal award amount for the PL Grant will be approximately \$290,000.
5. It is anticipated that ACCGov will provide an amount not to exceed \$37,700 in local funding (13% of the total grant amount) to partially fund MACORTS' transportation planning costs during FY 2027. An additional \$20,300 in local match is to be provided by the other MACORTS member counties (Oconee and Madison).
6. The Transportation Planning (PL) Grant local match amount is approved each year as part of the ACCGov budgeting process. ACCGov's estimated FY 2027 PL Grant local match amount (\$37,700) will be included in the Planning Department's proposed FY 2027 budget as an ongoing grant program. Therefore, a future budget amendment to the FY 2027 budget is not anticipated.
7. In the last five years, MACORTS' total budget expenditures have varied from approximately \$162,000 to \$186,000. Since the grant is administered through a reimbursement program, only funds expended over the life of the grant must be matched.
8. This recommendation is consistent with the Mayor and Commission FY26-28 Strategic Plan: Goals and Strategies:
  - Safely Move Around Athens Goal, Strategy A: *Expand multi-modal Transit access to reduce auto dependency and provide greater mobility for Athens residents.*
  - Safely Move Around Athens Goal, Strategy B: *Enhance safety for all modes of transportation.*
  - Built and Natural Infrastructure Goal, Strategy A: *Adequately plan infrastructure to support our community in the future.*
  - Built and Natural Infrastructure Goal, Strategy B: *Follow through on the commitment to 100% Clean and Renewable Energy resolution.*

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#### **OPTIONS:**

1. The Mayor and Commission:
  - a. Adopt a resolution (**Attachment #1**) authorizing the application for and acceptance of the Federal Planning (PL) contract amount associated with the annual Metropolitan Transportation Planning Grant for FY 2027 (July 1, 2026 - June 30, 2027); and,

- b. Authorize the Mayor and appropriate staff to execute the resulting contract between the Unified Government of Athens-Clarke County (ACCGov) and the Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT).
2. The Mayor and Commission decline to authorize actions necessary to apply for and accept the subject grant.
3. Mayor and Commission Defined Option.

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**DEPARTMENT RECOMMENDED ACTION:** Option #1 a & b

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**DEPARTMENT:**

Prepared by: Robert Walker



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Bruce Lonnee, Director

November 18, 2025

Date:

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**ADMINISTRATIVE COMMENTS:**

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**ADMINISTRATIVE RECOMMENDATION:** Option #1 a & b



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Bob Cowell, Manager

December 10, 2025

Date:

**ATTACHMENTS:**

Attachment 1 - Authorizing Resolution for FY27 Metropolitan Transportation Planning Grant and Contract