



TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE
Minutes of February 18, 2008
2:00 p.m., Greensboro, NC
Blue Room
(County Commissioner's Briefing Room)
Old Guilford County Courthouse

TAC MEMBERS PRESENT

Robbie Perkins	<i>TAC Chair</i>	Doug Galyon	<i>NCDOT</i>
Sandra Anderson Groat	<i>Greensboro City Council</i>	Kirk Perkins	<i>Chair, Guilford County Board of Commissioners</i>
T. Dianne Bellamy-Small	<i>Greensboro City Council</i>		

ATTENDANCE

Tyler Meyer	<i>GDOT / MPO</i>	Scott Rhine	<i>PART</i>
Craig McKinney	<i>GDOT / MPO</i>	Libby James	<i>Greensboro Transit Authority</i>
Peter Ohlms	<i>GDOT / MPO</i>	Matt Talbott	<i>GDOT Planning</i>
Peggy Holland	<i>GDOT / MPO</i>	Nick Harrell	<i>GDOT Planning</i>
Lydia McIntyre	<i>GDOT / MPO</i>	Mark Kirstner	<i>Guilford County Transportation</i>
Jim Westmoreland	<i>TCC Chair</i>	Sandy Carmany	<i>Town of Pleasant Garden</i>
John Hunsinger	<i>NCDOT</i>	Wayne Davis	<i>NCDOT</i>

TCC Chair Jim Westmoreland called the meeting to order at 2:05 p.m. and noted that the TAC would need to appoint a Chair before approving Action Items. In the absence of a quorum, Westmoreland deferred this action and began with Business and Potential Action Items.

Business / Potential Action Items

I. 2035 Long Range Transportation Plan: Process Update

Tyler Meyer advised that the 2035 Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) update was underway. The plan must be updated every four years, and an update involves technical analysis of future needs and resources as well as public participation. Meyer reported that 77 people attended a public meeting on February 12 to consider draft plans, learn about the process, and give their input.

Planning for the transportation future

Meyer noted that the air quality analysis for the LRTP is underway, and that staff will continue developing the Draft LRTP document over the next few months. The project is expected to be ready for approval in August with an effective date of October 1, 2008.

Jim Westmoreland restated that the LRTP must be updated every 4 years and noted that it is related to the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). Meyer noted that approval of the LRTP allows the TIP to move forward. The plan also helps to document future transportation needs over the long term and supports ongoing community dialogue about transportation priorities. Westmoreland noted that the public meeting was well-received.

2. Draft 2009-2015 Metropolitan Transportation Improvement Program: Process, Priorities, and Eastern Urban Loop Status

Tyler Meyer advised that the 2009-2015 Metropolitan TIP (MTIP) development process is underway. After the MPO developed priority needs and prioritized some decisions in fall 2007, NCDOT released its draft State TIP (STIP), from which the MPO developed a draft MTIP. The LRTP public meeting also featured a station with information about the draft MTIP.

After NCDOT released its draft State TIP, it became apparent that the Eastern Urban Loop construction timeline had been delayed. The section from US 29 to US 70, a top priority project for the MPO, was scheduled for right-of-way acquisition in 2009 with construction in 2011. The draft STIP, however, schedules construction in 2013. Staff has prepared a resolution for consideration requesting the restoration of the previous construction schedule for this section of the project.

Robbie Perkins noted that a meeting at PART had included a resolution to endorse both the aforementioned section of the Urban Loop and a section of the Winston-Salem Urban Loop. Perkins inquired whether the resolution before the Committee should also include the Winston-Salem Urban Loop. Doug Galyon advised that a joint resolution about both priorities should come from PART, with the resolution from the Greensboro Urban Area MPO covering only the Greensboro Urban Area. Galyon noted that the portion of the Western Urban Loop from Bryan Boulevard to Lawndale Drive would be designed by May or June. Jim Westmoreland noted that it could be valuable to identify this project as a priority given its design status. Galyon advised adding this project to the resolution by noting its anticipated status.

Meyer noted that other roadway priorities include West Market Street, Bridford Parkway, Hornaday Road, and the signal system upgrade, which all remain on schedule. The High Point Road project was delayed somewhat. Longer-term needs that remain unfunded include an interchange at US 29 and Eckerson Road and the US 70 project. Other priority areas include bicycle and pedestrian projects such as the Battleground Rail-Trail. For public transportation, the top unfunded capital need is a new administrative, maintenance, and operations facility for GTA. Local officials are seeking federal funding for this project.

Meyer noted that NCDOT would be holding a STIP public meeting for Division 7 in Chapel Hill on February 20. The MPO generally sends a representative to this type of meeting. Air-quality analysis will be reflected in the next draft MTIP in the spring, with adoption expected over the summer. The program would become effective October 1, 2008.

Westmoreland advised that he was participating with NCDOT's Transformation group, along with leaders of other municipal transportation departments. NCDOT has dedicated some of its staff to addressing how to revise operating procedures relating to revision of the STIP. Westmoreland noted that the MPO and NCDOT had partnered to keep the West Market Street project on track.

Perkins inquired about the status of Chandler Concrete's potential relocation in light of Phase II of the Battleground Rail-Trail. Westmoreland advised that the City had participated in discussions before and that the next step would be to contact the company again and ask if the City can somehow facilitate its move. Westmoreland noted that the project also affects the proposed Downtown Greenway project and potential redevelopment projects. Perkins inquired about potential for condemnation and eminent domain on the corridor, and Meyer advised that as long as a user remains for the rail service, the railroad will continue using it. When the user leaves, the railroad will be willing to abandon the corridor. Perkins advised staff to pursue additional discussions with Chandler Concrete for its relocation. TAC members continued discussing potential available industrial sites for relocation.

Citing the presence of a quorum, Westmoreland returned to Action Items on the agenda.

Action Items

1. Select TAC Chair

Doug Galyon nominated Robbie Perkins for TAC Chair. Kirk Perkins seconded the motion. The Committee voted unanimously to appoint Robbie Perkins as Chair of the Transportation Advisory Committee.

2. Approve Minutes of November 14, 2007

Kirk Perkins moved for approval of the minutes. T. Dianne Bellamy-Small seconded the motion. The Committee voted unanimously to approve the minutes of the November 14, 2007 meeting.

3. Amend 2007-2008 Work Program

Tyler Meyer noted that the 2007-2008 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) covers the current state fiscal year until June 30. The proposed amendment affects the PL funding area to show actual costs for a household travel survey, a partnership with other Triad MPOs and PART. This amendment also shifts funding between line items in the Work Program to more closely reflect actual and expected expenditures. Meyer advised that the amendment does not change the overall funding level in the UPWP.

T. Dianne Bellamy-Small inquired how the City's hiring freeze had affected GDOT's capacity to staff the MPO. Jim Westmoreland advised that all related positions were currently filled, so the freeze had not affected MPO operations.

Kirk Perkins moved to amend the UPWP. T. Dianne Bellamy-Small seconded the motion. The Committee voted unanimously to approve the amendment to the 2007-2008 Unified Planning Work Program.

4. Amend 2007-2013 Metropolitan Transportation Improvement Program: Public Transportation

Peter Ohlms advised that the 2007-2013 MTIP required an amendment to revise funding amounts for two transit projects. These adjustments are due to the announcement of actual FY 2008 funding amounts for the federal Urbanized Area Formula Program and the State Maintenance Assistance Program. Both projects apply to GTA. Ohlms noted that the changes qualified as an Administrative Modification, which requires no public involvement other than the TAC meeting.

Kirk Perkins moved to amend the MTIP. T. Dianne Bellamy-Small seconded the motion. The Committee voted unanimously to approve the administrative modification to the 2007-2013 Metropolitan Transportation Improvement Program.

5. Eastern Urban Loop Resolution

Robbie Perkins noted that keeping the Eastern Urban Loop on schedule was a top priority. Westmoreland advised that staff would modify the resolution to include additional language regarding the funding status of the Western Urban Loop from Bryan Boulevard to Lawndale Drive, as discussed earlier. Perkins agreed to include this change in light of a potential statewide transportation bond.

T. Dianne Bellamy-Small moved to approve the resolution as modified. Kirk Perkins seconded the motion. The Committee voted unanimously to approve the resolution regarding the Eastern Urban Loop, with modifications to incorporate a portion of the Western Urban Loop.

Doug Galyon advised that the Western Urban Loop from Bryan Boulevard to Lawndale Drive has had funds available for early acquisition of right-of-way. The funds have not been used to date and were proposed for reallocation to other projects, but Galyon worked to keep the funds on the project. Galyon advised that the state already owns a relatively high percentage of the needed right-of-way but that significant costs would remain. TAC members discussed the challenges involved with constructing this highway segment.

6. Reports, Concerns, and Discussion from MPO Area Towns

Sandy Carmany, Interim Town Administrator/Clerk of Pleasant Garden, noted that she had been assigned to cover TAC meetings. Carmany inquired about the status of the interchanges on US 421 in the Pleasant Garden area. Robbie Perkins recommended that staff create a report for the public for that project. Tyler Meyer noted that an update later in the meeting would address this project.

7. Citizen Comments - None

Business / Potential Action Items

3. 2008-2009 Work Program: Draft

Tyler Meyer noted that the development of the UPWP for 2008-2009 had begun. The UPWP identifies funding resources that will be available over the next fiscal year for transportation planning and also highlights key planning efforts. It covers three main types of funds: PL funds, which support the GDOT planning staff, FTA transit planning funds for GTA, and state planning funds.

Meyer advised that existing priorities include completing the 2035 LRTP, working on the regional travel demand model and travel surveys, conducting feasibility studies as needed to respond to transportation needs, supporting related planning efforts, and planning for public transportation.

Meyer noted that staff will also complete a Coordinated Human Services Transportation Plan with GTA and Guilford County, which could allow the area to access some additional federal funding. Mark Kirstner, Director of Guilford County Mobility Services, noted that he and other staff had attended a workshop to discuss the use of around \$600,000 in federal funds for coordinated human service transportation. A one-day workshop and a concise plan will be scheduled over the next few months as a partnership between the MPO and Guilford County, with participation expected from GTA and other stakeholders. A competitive project selection process is proposed, with the TAC the likely selection committee.

4. 2008 Meeting Schedule

Noting the absence of Greensboro Mayor Yvonne Johnson, Robbie Perkins suggested that TAC members notify staff of schedule conflicts within a week and that staff attempt to reschedule dates with conflicts. T. Dianne Bellamy-Small noted that she had a conflict with the April 23 date, and Sandra Anderson Groat noted that she had a conflict with the March 26 date. Perkins noted that he would have some conflicts as well.

5. Project Updates

Craig McKinney advised that NCDOT's Project Development branch conducted a field meeting with permitting agencies in January to review wetland issues with the R-2612 project (interchanges on US 421). These agencies must approve projects during the development process. At Woody Mill Road, the agencies identified no major issues affecting the design of the interchange. At Neelley Road, the southeast quadrant of the interchange has some potential wetland issues. The agencies and NCDOT's designers reached an agreement to attempt to alter the interchange design to avoid bisecting the wetland area with new ramps. These decisions should not affect the schedule of construction in 2010 at Woody Mill Road and in 2015 or later at Neelley Road.

Lydia McIntyre advised that the NC 150 relocation feasibility study in Summerfield investigated the creation of a more direct connection for NC-150 at US 220. The Town of Summerfield requested the MPO to do the study, which looked at four alternatives. Alternative 3 was eliminated after public comment and review, because it did not serve the project's stated purpose. Alternative 2 was chosen as a preferred alignment after participation with stakeholders. Robbie Perkins inquired about the schedule, and McIntyre advised that it was simply a feasibility study at this point, so any construction would be in the long term or would occur with new development. McKinney noted that Summerfield's Town Council had requested a final presentation for April. T. Dianne Bellamy-Small inquired what data led to Alternative 3 being eliminated, and McIntyre advised that traffic modeling showed that it carried a low volume of traffic.

McKinney advised that the section of the Western Urban Loop currently under construction would open shortly. Doug Galyon advised that it might open in three days. Perkins inquired about the section from Lawndale Drive to US 29. Galyon advised that it is not as far along in the design process, but that it is important to get the design done in case funds become available from other projects not being constructible. Bellamy-Small inquired about the effect of the new Urban Loop on businesses on existing I-40, which will soon be Business I-40, in the Randleman Road area. Galyon advised that when the next section opens, there will likely be a significant drop in traffic volume on Business I-40. McKinney noted that it could be in the range of 30,000 to 40,000 vehicles per day removed. Perkins requested staff to present traffic projections for this area. Bellamy-Small requested staff to attend a meeting of the Randleman Road Association to discuss potential business ramifications. Committee members continued discussing this issue.

6. MPO Strategic Reports

Lydia McIntyre summarized air quality issues. The area has been in nonattainment status for PM 2.5, and the state has released a draft document containing emissions budgets. The Triad area entered into an Early Action Compact in 2002 or 2003, and the Compact has met its milestones in order to be designated as attainment for 8-hour ozone standards.

T. Dianne Bellamy-Small inquired about the traffic and air-quality impacts of the FedEx hub opening in 2009. Tyler Meyer advised that some initial analysis had been performed and that spin-off

or related traffic will likely be a bigger issue, and more complicated to predict, than the hub's direct effects. Meyer and McIntyre noted that the EPA is considering strengthening its standards for ozone, but for the time being, the area will become an attainment area for ozone and remain non-attainment for PM 2.5, with attainment status expected by 2009.

Peter Ohlms noted that TAC members' notebooks contained a Briefing Book that explains MPO transportation planning issues including air quality.

Other Items

1. Board Member Report

Doug Galyon noted that a staff member could make the presentation for the MPO at NCDOT's public hearing in Chapel Hill on November 20. A separate one-on-one meeting is also an option. Robbie Perkins advised staff to attend the public meeting.

Galyon advised that he had received many complaints about traffic from Northern High School at NC 150 and Spencer-Dixon Road. As a condition of rezoning, the school system was required to install a turn lane and traffic signal there, but has not done so. Kirk Perkins indicated that he would address this with the school system.

Galyon advised that the 21st Century Transportation Commission was meeting in Wilmington and making significant progress. Galyon noted that changes might be proposed in January 2009 during the long session of the state legislature. It is not yet clear how the Commission will propose to fill the large funding gap statewide, although bonds have been suggested.

Galyon advised that the Ellerbe Bypass is now open on US 220 South, which can save travelers about 15 minutes. He noted that NCDOT has worked to clean up the area near US 421 and Martin Luther King Jr. Drive. T. Dianne Bellamy-Small noted that US 29 is in need of cleaning through Greensboro as well.

2. Regional Transportation News

Scott Rhine advised that Robbie Perkins was already on the PART Board before becoming TAC Chair. Because the TAC Chair is automatically appointed to the PART Board, the City Council will need to appoint an additional representative to that Board before its next meeting in April. Rhine advised that Randolph County Commissioner Darrell Frye was the new chair of the PART Board.

Scott Rhine advised that PART was planning new services on US 220 South and US 52 South and would continue operating intercity bus service to Boone. Rhine noted that the second Triad Commute Challenge would begin in early March and last through the summer.

T. Dianne Bellamy-Small inquired about PART operating weekend service. Rhine advised that implementing weekend service would require a trial period. Because High Point's Hi-Tran system recently began to operate on the weekends, the opportunity was there to initiate the service.

3. Other Items – None

Kirk Perkins thanked Doug Galyon for his efforts in keeping the Urban Loop on schedule as much as possible. Galyon advised that he would be meeting with Governor Easley in late March to discuss funding issues.

T. Dianne Bellamy-Small noted that after two years and three months, the manager of the Wal-Mart on Elmsley Drive has agreed to place a bus shelter on the property. This will benefit customers as well as Wal-Mart employees.

4. Wrap-Up

The TAC was adjourned at 3:05 p.m.