



GREENSBORO URBAN AREA METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION

TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE

January 25, 2006

1:45 p.m. Greensboro, NC

Blue Room

(County Commissioner's Briefing Room)

Old Guilford County Courthouse

TAC MEMBERS PRESENT

Sandy Carmany	TAC Chair
Jim Westmoreland	TCC Chair
Keith Holliday	Greensboro City Council
T. Dianne Bellamy-Small	Greensboro City Council
Kirk Perkins	Guilford County Board of Commissioners

ATTENDANCE

Tyler Meyer	GDOT / MPO	Wayne Davis	NCDOT Transportation Planning Branch
Jeff Sovich	GDOT / MPO	Tom Brown	Town of Oak Ridge
Craig McKinney	GDOT / MPO	Dena Barnes	Town of Summerfield
Scott Rhine	PART	Jonathan Jones	<i>Greensboro News & Record</i>

Sandy Carmany called the meeting to order at 1:48 p.m.

Action Items

1. Approve Minutes of November 16, 2005

Kirk Perkins moved for approval of the minutes, as presented. Keith Holliday seconded the motion. The Committee voted unanimously to approve the minutes of the November 16, 2005 meeting, as presented.

2. Amend 05-06 UPWP

Tyler Meyer advised that the UPWP is an accounting document adopted each year, that details the transportation planning work that will be conducted over the course of the year. The UPWP identifies the basic major transportation planning activities, as well as special studies and projects that the MPO plans to conduct over the year. The UPWP documents the receipt of Federal Transit Administration and Federal Highway Administration planning grants, and how the funds received are used for planning purposes. This funding is used to fund staff positions, intern support, consultant services, and various ancillary costs.

During the September and November 2005 MPO meetings, UPWP amendments were made programming additional PL funds. This amendment programs an additional \$100,000 in previously unobligated PL funds which have recently come available, along with the accompanying 20% local match. Adding these funds into the budget now ensures that anticipated work is not delayed due to funding shortfalls. It is generally advantageous to make these amendments as the funds become available to allow planning projects to proceed, rather than waiting to do them all at once. This amendment will bring the amount of programmed PL funds into the planning work program to a total of \$701,081. The requested action is to approve this amendment as presented, which is anticipated to be the last amendment to this UPWP.

Kirk Perkins moved for approval of the UPWP amendment, as presented. Keith Holliday seconded the motion. The Committee voted unanimously to approve the UPWP amendment as presented.

3. Approve Draft PM 2.5 Conformity Determination Report

Jeff Sovich advised that the PM 2.5 air quality standard refers to airborne particulate matter that is 2.5 microns or larger in diameter, which ordinary people would refer to as dust. In April of 2005, Guilford and Davidson Counties were designated as non-attainment areas for the PM 2.5 standard. All of the air quality monitoring stations in Guilford County were below the standard limits, however due to close proximity to Davidson County, Guilford County was also designated as a non-attainment county. The deadline for completing the analysis and documentation of the actual air quality status on the ground is April 5, 2006. PART has taken the lead in coordinating the analysis process and has prepared the draft conformity determination report, which was presented to the TAC in November for endorsement, prior to release for a 30-day public review and comment period, from December 15, 2005 through January 13, 2006. No comments were received from the general public, although several comments were received from federal and state reviewing agencies. The draft document was revised as appropriate to address those comments, and is presented to the TAC today, for adoption. Following adoption the report will be submitted to the federal agencies for final review and approval. The results of the analysis show that Guilford County was well under the limits for PM 2.5 and as a result, will probably receive a maintenance designation. This designation means that although the standard had been previously exceeded in Guilford County, they are currently being met. This maintenance designation will be in place for twenty years. The requested action is to approve the PM 2.5 Conformity Determination Report and submit it for final review.

Kirk Perkins moved for approval of the PM 2.5 Conformity Determination Report as presented. Keith Holliday seconded the motion. The Committee voted unanimously to approve the PM 2.5 Conformity Determination Report as presented.

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

Tom Brown advised that development in the Town of Oak Ridge is advancing rapidly. The Town has a new school, a new shopping center, and is currently in the process of building a new Town Hall.

Dena Barnes advised that the Town of Summerfield continues to work on its community park.

5. Citizen Comments

None.

Business / Potential Action Items

1. 2006 MPO Meeting Schedule and TAC Membership

Sandy Carmany welcomed new TAC member T. Dianne Bellamy-Small, of the Greensboro City Council and announced that Mike Barber, also of the Greensboro City Council had been appointed as an alternate TAC member. Other TAC members, MPO staff, and others in attendance introduced themselves to Ms. Bellamy-Small.

Tyler Meyer advised that the 2006 MPO meeting schedule was provided to inform the TAC of the dates currently scheduled for TAC meetings, and to provide the TAC, especially new members, with the opportunity to discuss the meeting schedule. No discussion issues were raised by the TAC, regarding the 2006 MPO meeting schedule.

2. TIP Update / Eastern Urban Loop Status

Tyler Meyer advised that the Transportation Improvement Program is a document prepared every two years, that accounts for all federal funds to be spent by the MPO for projects other than planning. The locally adopted Metropolitan Transportation Improvement Program is incorporated into the state adopted State Transportation Improvement Program. The current TIP document covers the 2006-2012 period and became effective on October 1, 2005. NCDOT is transitioning to an odd year schedule, meaning that the next document will cover the 2007-2013 period. The 07-13 TIP is now under development, although draft materials are not expected from NCDOT until April or May. Once information on the 07-13 TIP development process is received from NCDOT, we will have a much better idea as to which projects will be affected in terms of their scheduling.

In previous TIP cycles, funding for the Eastern Urban Loop (U-2525) was programmed for construction to begin by 2012. However, in the 06-12 TIP, this portion of the Urban Loop has been shifted to "Post Years," signifying that no funding is formally assigned to the project. The only portion of the Urban Loop that is still shown as funded in the TIP is right-of-way acquisition for the section from US 70 to US 29. Based on previous directives and actions it would seem that it would be well advised to take action urging NCDOT to restore funding to this section of the Eastern Urban Loop. A resolution expressing the importance of restoring funding to this project has been prepared for the TAC's consideration. The requested action is to adopt the resolution as presented.

Keith Holliday moved for approval of the resolution as presented. Kirk Perkins seconded the motion. The Committee voted unanimously to approve the resolution as presented.

3. 2006-2007 Unified Planning Work Program

Tyler Meyer advised that MPO staff are currently developing the FY 06-07 UPWP and that a completed package of materials and recommendations will be ready in February for the TAC's review and approval. A more detailed presentation, including additional background information will be given at that time. The UPWP package will include a list of the priority planning areas that have been identified at the Technical Coordinating Committee level. The deadline for submitting the UPWP to the state is March 1, 2006.

4. MPO Strategic Reports

Tyler Meyer advised that PART and the regional Chambers of Commerce will host a public meeting regarding the "Heart of the Triad" economic development planning project.. The purpose of this meeting is to inform citizens about what the project could potentially mean for the Piedmont Triad Region and to receive public input on preferred development forms for the H.O.T.T. area. The meeting will be held on Thursday, February 2, from 6 to 8pm in Triad Park.

Work on the BiPed Plan project continues to progress steadily. Staff will provide more detailed information on the current status and upcoming activities at the next meeting. A second round of public workshops will be held in early April. Leading in to these workshops, GDOT has arranged for a series of "Walkable Community Workshops" to be conducted during late March. These workshops will be an opportunity for people from the community to talk with and learn from visiting experts from the National Center for Bicycling and Walking. Participants will tour areas of the City that can benefit from improved pedestrian accommodations in the future.

MPO staff recently received a draft of the final Environmental Impact Statement for the High Point Road widening and relocation project. The deadline for MPO staff to review and submit comments is February 5. The EIS will be finalized by April 1, with a Record of Decision to be issued by May 31, barring any unforeseen delays.

Staff also recently learned that the environmental permitting process is currently under way for the Eastern Urban Loop. A field inspection of the alignment that was conducted in January found no significant environmental obstacles for constructing the project. This progress is important because it will allow the project to continue to move forward if construction funding is eventually restored.

Craig McKinney advised that MPO staff recently received the final feasibility study for the Pegg Road/Thatcher Road connection and grade separation project. The findings recommended that the project be constructed as a four lane median-divided facility with a minor re-alignment south of I-40. The current cost estimate for the project is \$25.6 million.

Other Items

1. Board Member Report

None.

2. Regional Transportation News

Scott Rhine advised that related to the previous discussion on the “Heart of the Triad” project, the High Point MPO has recently expressed interest in studying the feasibility of extending Piedmont Parkway to NC 66, and continuing into Forsyth County via Ogden School Road. There has also been some discussion about a north-south connector through this area and High Point has received some discretionary funds to study the feasibility of such a connection that would extend to the airport.

The Burlington-Graham MPO is following through with a feasibility study of establishing public transit service within its metropolitan area. BGMPO staff have been directed by their TAC to move forward with presentations to their constituent towns. BGMPO is the last urbanized area in North Carolina that does not have a mass transit system. They are seeking funding participation from each of the different towns including Elon, Gibsonville, Graham, Mebane, and Whitsett.

Sandy Carmany advised PART’s financial committee is examining the agency’s long range financial needs. In addition to looking at potential funding sources, this committee has also requested to convene a joint meeting of the operators of the various transit systems in the Piedmont Triad to discuss and consider the long-term feasibility of merging the systems together. Intuitively, there seems to be some degree of financial advantage to such a merger, but this potential will need to be investigated in greater depth in order to reach a clear understanding.

3. Wrap-Up

Next TAC meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, February 22, at 1:45 p.m. The TAC adjourned at 3:22 pm.