



GREENSBORO URBAN AREA METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION

TECHNICAL COORDINATING COMMITTEE

October 11, 2006

11:00 a.m., Greensboro, NC

Blue Room (County Commissioners' Briefing Room)

Old Guilford County Courthouse

ATTENDANCE

Peter Ohlms	GDOT / MPO	Stephanie Edwards	Greensboro Parks & Recreation
Tyler Meyer	GDOT / MPO	Mike Kirkman	Greensboro Planning
Lydia McIntyre	GDOT / MPO	Heidi Galanti	Greensboro Planning
Peggy Holland	GDOT / MPO	Donald Arant	Greensboro Engineering & Inspections
Craig McKinney	GDOT / MPO	Roger Bardsley	Guilford County
Chris Spencer	GDOT Engineering	Bill Bruce	Guilford County
Wayne Davis	NCDOT	Hanna Cockburn	PTCOG
John Hunsinger	NCDOT		

Tyler Meyer called the meeting to order at 11:00 a.m. and noted that Jim Westmoreland and Libby James were attending an out-of-town conference on public transportation. Meyer introduced Stephanie Edwards from the Greensboro Parks and Recreation Department and Donald Arant, the new City Engineer from the Greensboro Engineering and Inspections Department.

Action Items

1. Approve Minutes of August 23, 2006

Roger Bardsley moved for approval of the minutes. Donald Arant seconded the motion. The Committee voted unanimously to approve the minutes of the August 23, 2006 meeting.

2. Amend Thoroughfare Plan

Craig McKinney advised of two items that prompted this Thoroughfare Plan Amendment, Greensboro's Connections 2025 Comprehensive Plan and a recent feasibility study conducted for Young's Mill Road and the Florida Street Extension. The amendment recommends (1) removal of the Franklin Boulevard Extension from McConnell Road south to the current planned Florida Street Extension; (2) removal of the Florida Street Extension from McConnell Road to Clapp Farms Road and realignment of the Florida Street Extension from Lee Street to McConnell Road; (3) reclassification of McConnell Road from the Florida Street Extension to I-40 from a Minor Thoroughfare to a Major Thoroughfare; (4) classification of Clapp Farms Road as a Major Thoroughfare from McConnell Road to the existing portion classified as such, which begins just west of the future Urban Loop; and (5) addition of Holt's Chapel Road Extension from proposed Youngs Mill Road to US 70. McKinney pointed out how the amendment fits in with the Collector Street Plan to address questions from the last meeting.

McKinney noted that during the public review period for this amendment, GDOT received one comment from a resident and Clapp family member who was concerned about how the classification of Clapp Farms Road as a Major Thoroughfare would impact her family's farm. GDOT's response was that if the area does not develop in the future as envisioned in the Comprehensive Plan, the classification of Clapp Farms Road might warrant revisiting. McKinney requested that the TCC recommend adoption of the amendment as presented.

Meyer noted that Clapp Farms Road provides the only crossing of the future Urban Loop between US 70 and Business I-85/I-40, which is one reason for the classification. Meyer advised that the recommendations are coming from a solid technical basis and represent an improvement of the previous thoroughfare plan alignments. Meyer also noted that the TAC's approval would finalize this amendment, as the Thoroughfare Plan is no longer forwarded to NCDOT for approval.

Hanna Cockburn moved to recommend amendment of the Thoroughfare Plan as presented. Roger Bardsley seconded the motion. The Committee voted unanimously to recommend that the TAC adopt this amendment.

3. BiPed Plan Adoption

Meyer noted that the adoption of this plan will represent the culmination of multiple years of work and congratulated committee members and staff for their roles. He summarized the scope of the plan, which proposes a comprehensive multimodal system of connected greenway, bicycle, and pedestrian facilities, including on- and off-street recommendations and crossing improvements, and lays out both long-term recommendations and short-term strategies. The plan is based both on technical analysis of needs and a review of practical constraints on implementation. Meyer recognized the partners involved in creating the plan, including Action Greensboro, the Greensboro Parks and Recreation Department, and the Moses Cone-Wesley Long Community Health Foundation.

Meyer presented a summary of the public involvement efforts, which included an open house held at the Depot that attracted 58 people and the creation of a summary document for the plan. Public comments received during the September 2006 public review period totaled 78, representing 13 submissions from individuals or groups. One type of comments received focused on additional bicycle and pedestrian facilities, such as bike lanes on Friendly Avenue and sidewalks on Patterson Street. While the former requires further study, the latter was added to the plan as a recommendation. Meyer also described other comments, including requests that bicycles be allowed to ride on Bryan Boulevard, lower speed limits, sidewalk design, maintenance, supporting policies such as signage and enforcement, and text

suggestions/corrections, and noted that verbatim comments have been included in an appendix to the plan. Some comments did result in changes to the plan.

Meyer described the next steps towards implementation after plan adoption, which include working with various implementing agencies and jurisdictions. He anticipated briefing the Greensboro City Council on the plan in November and presenting it for their endorsement or adoption afterwards. Meyer proposed sharing the plan with Guilford County and with other municipalities in the MPO, presenting the plan as a comprehensive set of recommendations that could be helpful in their planning efforts. Meyer expressed a willingness to provide more information or presentations to these jurisdictions if requested.

Meyer noted the plan's relationship to the Long Range Transportation Plan, along with the plan's wide-ranging public outreach, coordination with other agencies, and a flexible program of planning-level recommendations. He also advised of some addenda to the adoption action, to include some remaining map corrections.

Heidi Galanti discussed the need to present the plan to the Greensboro Planning Board and Zoning Commission in the implementation phase, so that when projects or rezoning cases come before them, they can take actions that are supportive of the plan.

Roger Bardsley moved to recommend adoption of the BiPed Plan as presented. Chris Spencer seconded the motion. The Committee voted unanimously to recommend that the TAC adopt the Greensboro Urban Area Bicycle, Pedestrian, & Greenway Master Plan.

4. Approve 2007 Meeting Schedule

Peter Ohlms advised that the 2007 meeting schedule has been developed based on the current practice of holding meetings on the fourth Wednesday of each month. The schedule has been adjusted for known staff conflicts and holidays.

Business / Potential Action Items

1. Draft 2007 – 2013 MTIP Update

Lydia McIntyre advised that the state Board of Transportation had released the draft document for the 2007-2013 Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP), which follows closely behind the release of the current 2006-2012 STIP. The STIP is the state's official investment schedule for state and federal transportation projects. The Metropolitan TIP or MTIP is specific to each urban area, and each MPO in the state has an MTIP. The MTIP projects are based on priorities identified by the MPO and are refined through consultation with NCDOT. The MTIP must be approved by both the TAC and NCDOT, and the projects shown in the MTIP should be shown in the STIP.

McIntyre provided an overview of major projects and associated schedule changes, beginning with the western Urban Loop from Business I-85 to Bryan Boulevard, which is currently under construction and has remained on schedule, with completion scheduled for the summer of 2007. The Urban Loop from Bryan Boulevard to Lawndale Drive and on to US 29 is still currently unfunded. McIntyre noted that the NCDOT Board Member for this area had made efforts to get the eastern portion of the Urban Loop from US 29 to US 70 back in the STIP, which did occur. Previously, right-of-way and construction were scheduled for 2010-2011 and unfunded, respectively; the new draft STIP moves those dates to 2009-

2010 for right-of-way and 2011-Post Years for construction (PY). PY means that an item will be completed or occur after 2013, the final year for this STIP.

The High Point Road project was delayed in this STIP. The portion in the High Point MPO is Section A, from US 311 to Hilltop Road, and the portion in the Greensboro Urban Area MPO is Section B, from Hilltop Road to Stanford Road. Section B is ahead of Section A but did get delayed by two years for both construction and right-of-way.

McIntyre reminded the committee of an earlier session about environmental document development for the US 70 project. The project remains unfunded, but efforts are underway to secure funding to develop an environmental document.

The US 220 project from Horse Pen Creek Road to Winfree Road was delayed by one year. McIntyre noted that one project on US 220, north of Winfree Road to Rockingham County, is still ahead of schedule.

Staff will present a more detailed draft MTIP at the November 15 MPO meetings, and a public review period will begin after that. Efforts are underway to determine the necessary steps for air-quality conformity determinations. One or more public meetings will be held in January, along with NCDOT public hearings in October or November. NCDOT approval of the draft STIP is anticipated for June 2007, but that date may change.

Peggy Holland inquired about projects not shown in the project summary attachment. McIntyre responded that the summary included only major projects in the urban area, not every project, and that the entire TIP is available at the web site of NCDOT or from MPO staff. Tyler Meyer advised that the presentation lays out the major projects and their schedules and encouraged committee members to review the summary and the Project Update Newsletter. Craig McKinney noted that High Point Road was the most delayed project in the urban area, and that some of the projects that appear to have slipped by a full year may have only slipped by a few months, pushing them from the end of one year to the beginning of the next.

2. Public Participation Plan Revision

Peter Ohlms advised that the Public Participation Plan is intended to guide staff in procedures to be followed and also to give the public an idea of what to expect. The last revision of the Public Involvement Plan was adopted in January 2001, and federal regulations require the existence of the plan and a regular review of its effectiveness. At the MPO's most recent Triennial Review and Certification, reviewers suggested that the MPO look closely at this plan and contemplate revisions to reflect strategies already in use but not documented in the plan. The federal requirements regarding public involvement were strengthened recently, giving another reason for revising this plan. A public review period of at least 45 days is required, which staff plan to allow for by combining review of this plan with review of the MTIP. As such, a January adoption date is expected.

Ohlms noted that the revised plan features a system of tiers, reflecting the idea that different levels of public involvement are required for different types of projects and studies. This approach avoids the need to specify a separate process for each type of plan or study that the MPO performs. The revised plan also includes measures to increase involvement of low-income, minority, and non-English-speaking groups, and it reflects experiences from doing public involvement above the level required by the existing plan.

An administrative tier is included in the plan for projects that do not require formal public involvement procedures. Tier 1, the most basic tier of formal public involvement, would apply to projects with limited geographic impacts. Minimum requirements in this tier include public notice, document review, and acceptance of comments. Tier 2 builds on Tier 1, including all minimum requirements from Tier 1 and adding additional steps for public notice and document review, a mass electronic mailing, additional consultation with interested parties, and a public meeting. Tier 2 projects would generally have broader impacts across the urban area than Tier 1 projects. Tier 3 projects are the broad, long-range types of items that may impact the whole urban area or have significant community impacts. This tier includes all requirements from Tiers 1 and 2 plus expanded public notice and document review items, postal mailings and surveys, and at least two public meetings.

Ohlms noted that the tiers indicate minimum requirements, and that the plan also includes a Toolkit that suggests additional strategies for expanding the public participation process.

Meyer noted that the plan's tiered approach is innovative and avoids the need to create a lengthy plan document.

3. MPO Logo Revision

Ohlms noted that, while the existing MPO logo is representative of the urban area, it is difficult to discern at a small size and is not inspiring. MPO staff developed a proposed new logo that includes elements of the city, the countryside, and transportation, with the letters "MPO" in large type, making the logo easy to see at a small size.

The goals of revising the logo were to create something simple, clear and identifiable that suggests what the MPO does and is legible at a small size. Both color and black-and-white versions were produced. Ohlms described some comments from staff on the logo revision, recognized Kevin Elwood for his work on the new logo, and welcomed comments from committee members.

Hanna Cockburn affirmed the need to have the words "metropolitan planning organization" spelled out in the logo. John Hunsinger noted that a reference to the smaller communities in the MPO should be included in the logo somehow, citing frequent calls that NCDOT receives from citizens in those communities who do not understand what the MPO does. Ohlms responded that putting everything in the logo made it too crowded, and that the inclusion of the countryside in the logo was an attempt to refer to the small towns. Peggy Holland noted that staff also considered the idea of changing the organization's name to make the smaller towns feel more included, but the region lacks an identifying characteristic, such as a river or historical aspect, that is not associated with the City of Greensboro. Heidi Galanti noted that the existing logo, a map of the area, does represent all of the jurisdictions. Hanna Cockburn suggested using the logo in conjunction with a sidebar listing the names of participating municipalities and the County. Discussion continued around these issues. Meyer acknowledged the significance of these items and advised that many of them likely cannot be resolved by a logo revision alone.

4. Project Updates

Craig McKinney presented an update on R-4707, noting that a recent stakeholders meeting included representatives of industry around the Reedy Fork/US 29 interchange location. Some participants expressed concern about how the interchange would affect future land use in the area. At the first merger team meeting in Raleigh, major permitting agencies were presented with concurrence points 1, the purpose and need for the project, and 2, the alternatives being studied. The team signed off on the

concurrence points with minor changes. The alternatives presented included a half-clover interchange, a single-point interchange, and a no-build alternative. At the agencies' request, a conventional diamond-type interchange was added to the list of alternatives. A public workshop in November and a public officials meeting will be held.

McKinney discussed R-2612, advising that the study process is moving forward, with meetings scheduled for late October. Staff will present further information after reviewing that project.

Meyer brought to the committee's attention a summary of active NCDOT projects created by John Hunsinger. Hunsinger advised that he would prepare this list, which includes projects under construction, nearing construction, recently completed, or proposed, for each MPO meeting, with changes from the last month's edition shown in bold. The list is not meant to be comprehensive but is intended to show what can be expected in the next six to eight months.

5. MPO Strategic Reports

Meyer advised that staff continue to work closely with PART, other jurisdictions, and NCDOT on the traffic demand model and getting it validated. During the process, changes have been necessary that have caused delays, but it is hoped that the model will be completed by the year's end. Meyer also noted that the Memorandum of Agreement is being revised for the model.

MPO staff will be attending the annual conference of the North Carolina Association of MPOs in Concord in late October. The conference will feature some technical sessions including MPO staff members and TCC committee members.

Meyer advised that a proposal has been identified to purchase traffic-counting equipment using PL grant funds, in conjunction with the GDOT Traffic Engineering Division. The equipment will provide more effective classification counts, the ability to perform bicycle and pedestrian counts, and permanent count stations to allow for flexibility such as time-of-day analysis. Chris Spencer noted that the counters will be a significant improvement over current equipment. Craig McKinney noted that GDOT intends to use the equipment in part to perform counts outside the City of Greensboro on behalf of the MPO as needed.

Meyer brought to the committee's attention a recently compiled list of the MPO area's top 10 congested locations that was compiled at the request of FHWA in conjunction with a nationwide initiative. McIntyre noted that the NCDOT also submitted a list to FHWA, and that the MPO list was developed using traffic counts and by working closely with GDOT's congestion management staff. She reviewed each of the locations and noted upcoming projects that might alleviate the bottlenecks. Providing this information to the FHWA may help in getting funding support for these projects, although it is unclear exactly how FHWA will use the information. John Hunsinger inquired whether Guilford College Road at West Market Street was close to making the list, and Chris Spencer responded that it was in the top 25 congested intersections list, but did not show up in the arterials list. Meyer and Spencer discussed the degree to which the Western Urban Loop could alleviate a bottleneck on Westridge Road. Heidi Galanti noted that we cannot build our way out of congestion.

Other Items

1. TCC Member Reports

Hanna Cockburn noted that Terry Canales, former NCDOT Safe Routes To School Coordinator, has moved to a different position, leaving the SRTS position vacant. This may affect the continued funding of SRTS workshops and projects, but the outcome is unclear.

Heidi Galanti introduced Mike Kirkman, a new Comprehensive Planner in the City's Planning Department, to the committee. Kirkman may substitute for Galanti if she is unable to attend meetings.

Bill Bruce reported that the Oak Ridge Town Council adopted the Collector Street Plan on October 5. The planning efforts and education efforts paid off there. Bruce also reported that Guilford County has recently begun a small area planning effort for the area from Rockingham County to the northern lakes. Guilford County has also recently adopted a Comprehensive Plan, which contains concise goals, objectives, and policies, and is available on the Guilford County Web site.

The TCC was adjourned at 12:05 p.m.