



**TECHNICAL COORDINATING COMMITTEE**  
**Minutes of February 18, 2008**  
**11:00 a.m., Greensboro, NC**  
**Blue Room**  
**(County Commissioner's Briefing Room)**  
**Old Guilford County Courthouse**

**ATTENDANCE**

Jim Westmoreland	<i>GDOT / TCC Chair</i>	Mike Kirkman	<i>Greensboro Planning</i>
Peter Ohlms	<i>GDOT / MPO</i>	Hanna Cockburn	<i>Piedmont Triad RPO</i>
Tyler Meyer	<i>GDOT / MPO</i>	Bill Bruce	<i>Guilford County</i>
Lydia McIntyre	<i>GDOT / MPO</i>	Mark Kirstner	<i>Guilford County</i>
Peggy Holland	<i>GDOT / MPO</i>	Roger Bardsley	<i>Guilford County</i>
Craig McKinney	<i>GDOT / MPO</i>	Kelly Larkins	<i>GDOT Planning</i>
Adam Fischer	<i>GDOT Engineering</i>	Mike Mills	<i>NCDOT</i>
Scott Rhine	<i>PART</i>	Wayne Davis	<i>NCDOT</i>
George Linney	<i>GTA</i>	John Button	<i>NCDOT</i>

**Jim Westmoreland called the meeting to order at 11:00 a.m. and thanked committee members for their time and service in the MPO.** He noted that the afternoon's TAC meeting would include the selection of a new Chair and a slightly different board. Attendees introduced themselves.

**Action Items**

**1. Approve Minutes of November 14, 2007**

Mike Mills moved for approval of the minutes. Roger Bardsley seconded the motion. The Committee voted unanimously to approve the minutes of the November 14, 2007 meeting.

**2. Amend 2007-2008 Work Program**

Tyler Meyer noted that the Unified Planning Work Program provides for grant funds for transportation planning by the MPO and NCDOT and transit planning by GTA. 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.

**Planning for the transportation future**

At the beginning of each year, the MPO estimates its planning work for the coming year, and towards the end of each year, the MPO amends its UPWP to reflect actual expenditures. Meyer advised that the MPO's share of the cost for the travel survey was \$196,000 and that the survey is essential to improve reliability of the regional travel demand model. The 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.

Roger Bardsley moved to amend the UPWP. Hanna Cockburn seconded the motion. The Committee voted unanimously to recommend that the TAC approve the amendment to the 2007-2008 Unified Planning Work Program.

### **3. 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.

Tyler Meyer moved to amend the MTIP. Mike Kirkman seconded the motion. The Committee voted unanimously to recommend that the TAC approve the administrative modification to the 2007-2013 Metropolitan Transportation Improvement Program.

### **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. Staff are compiling comments and survey results from attendees.

Meyer described some of the planning-level analysis involved to date in the LRTP update. He 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 inquired if the plan needed to be updated every 4 years. Meyer advised that this was indeed the case and that the plan also helps to document future transportation needs over the long term. Approval of the LRTP allows the TIP to move forward. Meyer noted that it is a fiscally constrained plan although it can be difficult to predict uncertain future funding amounts. The plan also helps to document future transportation needs over the long term and supports ongoing community dialogue about transportation priorities.

Roger Bardsley inquired about a potential City transportation bond. Westmoreland advised that the City Council had identified a list of focus items for 2008, which did include transportation and potential funding options. Staff are working to review needs related to roadways, intersections, sidewalks, greenways, transit, and street maintenance. Some items may become incorporated into the City's operational budget, and others may be incorporated into a bond package that could appear on the ballot in November 2008. Community meetings in March will inform Council's decision

regarding whether to include the bond package on the ballot. Westmoreland noted that continuing cost increases mean that projects that are expensive now will likely be even more expensive later.

Bill Bruce inquired if the maps from the LRTP open house would be available online. Peter Ohlms indicated that they would be online within a week. Meyer commended the Planning Division staff for its efforts. Westmoreland noted that the turnout at the meeting was very good.

## 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 was underway. The LRTP public meeting also featured a station with information about the draft MTIP. 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.

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. A resolution requesting the restoration of the previous construction schedule for this section of the project was prepared for the TAC's consideration.

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. Lydia McIntyre noted that an excerpt of the Draft MTIP would be available online shortly.

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. He noted that 75 percent of the \$4 billion NCDOT budget is outside the STIP; it is programmed internally and by the legislature.

Westmoreland also noted that the Intermodal Subcommittee of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Transportation Committee had met in early 2008. A preliminary report will likely focus on eliminating transfers from the Highway Trust Fund. Significant recommendations regarding funding could be acted upon after the new legislature is in place in about a year. Westmoreland noted that these issues affect the MPO because of issues such as the Eastern Urban Loop, which was delayed due to the availability of funds.

Adam Fischer inquired about the status of the Western Urban Loop from Bryan Boulevard to Lawndale Drive. Mike Mills advised that the design will be complete by May 2008, when the project will wait for funding. Mills advised that even if NCDOT could be made more efficient and transfers

out of the highway trust fund could be stopped, the state would not be able to meet all the needs without an additional source of funding. A large statewide bond issue is one potential funding source.

Westmoreland noted that state Senator Marc Basnight had been discussing the need to be more efficient and to provide more infrastructure for economic development in eastern North Carolina. Basnight had also claimed that toll roads will be needed in order to meet the needs of the future, but he did not discuss the possibility of a bond or other revenue sources.

Fischer inquired about whether the environmental permits would expire for the Western Urban Loop if the project could not proceed. Mills advised that the project must remain active; advanced acquisition of right-of-way could qualify to keep it active. He advised that Doug Galyon had been looking to accelerate the project through alternative funding options, so the design group had made it a priority. Although the funding did not materialize, the design group plans to finish the plans, and it will be ready for construction if the funding becomes available. Funding for right-of-way acquisition is available.

Mark Kirstner inquired about why the Western Urban Loop had not been built to Fleming Road during the initial phase of construction, rather than terminating at Bryan Boulevard. Craig McKinney advised that there is not an interchange at Fleming Road in the current design for the Loop. McKinney inquired if the new interchange with Old Oak Ridge Road was still on schedule. Mills advised that it would be completed in summer 2008 and noted that if it had been finished ahead of the Loop, as scheduled, congestion would likely not have been as severe.

### **3. 2008-2009 Work Program: Draft**

Tyler Meyer noted that the development of the UPWP for 2008-2009 had begun. He invited the Committee to identify priorities that had not been identified in the draft work program. Meyer advised that existing priorities include completing the 2035 LRTP, working on the regional travel demand model and travel surveys, implementing the BiPed Plan, conducting feasibility studies as needed, 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.

Meyer noted that SPR funds from the Statewide Planning Branch are not shown in the draft but will be included in the final version. PL funds and public transportation funds are also reflected. Meyer advised that \$611,000 of PL funds would be available for the fiscal year, much of which supports staff expenses. Development of the regional travel demand model will be a large task for the upcoming year. Meyer noted that staff would bring the final UPWP to the next meeting for approval.

Mike Kirkman inquired how the travel surveys would be done. Lydia McIntyre noted that the National Household Travel Survey (NHTS) would use telephone surveys. Meyer advised that license-plate surveys or intercept surveys were also an option. Kirkman noted that surveys at major workplaces would be another option. McIntyre advised that there will be nine stations in the Triad where surveyors stop travelers and ask them where they're coming from and where they're going. Jim Westmoreland inquired about how the surveys could approach the issue of travel modes. McIntyre advised that some households would receive a travel diary to complete. Westmoreland inquired how many people would be surveyed, and Scott Rhine advised that 5,000 people would be surveyed throughout the Triad as an add-on to the NHTS.

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. Rhine noted that Winston-Salem had completed a draft plan of the same type. Westmoreland inquired how soon the state would have its plans done, and Ohlms advised that NCDOT's Public Transportation Division was going to follow a similar schedule.

#### 4. 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). 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.

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 in 2006. The study 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. If the project does receive state funding, there may need to be some additional study. Summerfield's Town Council requested a final presentation for April.

Mike Mills advised that the section of the Western Urban Loop from I-40 to I-85 would likely be completed within two weeks. Signal installation is complete, with work remaining on signage, markers, and markings.

#### 5. 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. McIntyre noted that the emissions budget covered the counties of Catawba, Davidson, and Guilford. The Triad area entered into an Early Action Compact (EAC) in 2002, and the Compact has met its milestones in order to be designated as attainment for 8-hour ozone standards. McIntyre noted that the EPA was considering strengthening the ozone standards. Scott Rhine advised that forming another EAC would likely not be an option.

Jim Westmoreland noted that the City would likely make an offer on a property for GTA's new maintenance and operations facility in spring 2008. Local officials are requesting federal discretionary funds to meet the needs for this new transit facility.

Tyler Meyer advised that the National Surface Transportation Long Range Revenue Policy Study Commission issued a report that lays out future transportation funding challenges and strategy recommendations. Reorganizing the federal funding program into a performance-based system would require documented benefits from major projects before they receive funding. Meyer noted that the recommendations would most likely be taken piecemeal in the short term rather than being fully implemented immediately.

Rhine advised that the Heart of the Triad (HOT) project had received some feedback from Davidson County's planning director and citizens. Various stakeholders have adopted resolutions regarding the plan's growth recommendations, and further discussion has centered on the lack of funding. PART is looking to bring additional land-use planning activities to the table, but it is unclear

whether there will be continued participation from the Chambers of Commerce and others. Rhine advised that there may not be full commitment to the plan's current recommendations. Westmoreland noted that an update on HOT could be a potential item for a future meeting.

Westmoreland noted that the Piedmont Triad Seamless Mobility Study was underway. It looks at the various public transportation systems in the Triad and surrounding areas to identify opportunities to cooperate, coordinate, and possibly consolidate services. Rhine noted that the study was the largest coordination effort ever attempted in North Carolina, with 10 counties participating. Rhine advised that the Triangle had attempted to consolidate transit systems, which did not come to pass. Efforts there focused on consolidation rather than coordination, whereas the Triad's study acknowledges that each transit system is unique and attempts to identify overlap.

Ohlms advised that the TAC would consider altering the 2008 meeting schedule and that staff would provide updates via e-mail.

Hanna Cockburn noted that the State Bicycle Committee had reviewed a draft survey of attitudes towards "Sharing the Road." Funds from vanity plates and the Carolina MS Society were supporting the effort. She also noted that Bike-to-Work Week was coming up in May, and PTCOG will be coordinating efforts to publicize it.

Rhine advised that PART was planning new services on US 220 South and US 52 South, including park-and-ride lot development. Those services are to be operational by the end of June 2008 using new buses. Rhine advised that PART had secured a low interest rate to purchase the vehicles and that local governments might be able to do the same.

Rhine noted that the second Triad Commute Challenge would begin in early March and last through the summer. PART has begun a Travel Demand Management (TDM) program, with a TDM manager and a TDM planner on staff. He advised that last year's Triad Commute Challenge was successful.

## **Other Items**

### **1. NCDOT Update**

Mike Mills advised that milling and resurfacing would occur on Business I-85/Business I-40 from High Point Road to the Eastern Urban Loop in spring 2008. The same type of repair is scheduled for May on US 29 from Business I-85 to Cone Boulevard. These projects will require significant traffic changes. Mills referred committee members to the NCDOT Active Projects Report. Craig McKinney inquired about other changes to US 29, and Mills advised that the project would fix some drainage problems but was mostly limited to resurfacing.

### **2. TCC Member Reports**

Mark Kirstner advised that Guilford County Transportation and Mobility Services was promoting the concept of having its service bring people from outlying areas to the nearest fixed-route bus stop. Kirstner also advised that the Employment Transportation Mobility Program provides access to public transportation for the general public who do not have access to fixed-route public transportation. People with disabilities and the elderly can receive the service free of charge, and other assistance is possible for certain other types of trips.

Kirstner noted that his department was attempting to operate seamless programs that serve people rather than separate programs to match funding requirements. The agency is projecting over 200,000 trips for the current year, evidence of the need for transportation in the community. Jim

Westmoreland inquired where the growth areas were, and Kirstner noted that employment trips were rising while Medicaid-funded trips were falling slightly. Trips for senior-citizens were also growing slowly but steadily.

Scott Rhine advised that the annual statewide transit conference was coming up in June in Wilmington. He encouraged committee members to attend the conference to learn about the connections between transit and MPO planning.

### 3. Wrap-Up

The TCC was adjourned at 12:25 p.m.