



TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE
Minutes of March 25, 2009
2:00 p.m., Greensboro, NC
Plaza Level Conference Room
Melvin Municipal Office Building

TAC MEMBERS PRESENT

Robbie Perkins	<i>TAC Chair</i>	Mike Winstead	<i>Guilford County Commissioner</i>
Kirk Perkins	<i>Guilford County Commissioner</i>	Doug Galyon	NCDOT BOT

ATTENDANCE

Tyler Meyer	<i>GDOT / TCC Chair</i>	Mark Kirstner	<i>PART</i>
Adam Fischer	<i>GDOT Acting Director</i>	Sandy Carmany	<i>Town of Pleasant Garden</i>
Craig McKinney	<i>GDOT / MPO</i>	Aaron Harris	<i>Southeast Community Association</i>
Peggy Holland	<i>GDOT / MPO</i>	Richard Mearns	<i>Southeast Community Association</i>
Lydia McIntyre	<i>GDOT / MPO</i>	Harold Garrett	<i>Southeast Community Association</i>
Kelly Larkins	<i>GDOT / MPO</i>	Barbara Garrett	<i>Southeast Community Association</i>
Mike Mills	<i>NCDOT</i>	Mike Brandt	<i>Town of Summerfield</i>
Libby James	<i>GTA</i>		
Scott Rhine	<i>PART</i>		

Robbie Perkins called the meeting to order at 2:07 p.m.

Action Items

1. Approve Minutes of January 28, 2008

Kirk Perkins moved for approval of the minutes. Mike Winstead seconded the motion. The Committee voted unanimously to approve the minutes of the January 28, 2009 meeting.

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

Sandy Carmany inquired about road counting devices in Pleasant Garden. It was clarified that the black tubing across the roads were for traffic counts being conducted by NCDOT.

3. Citizen Comments

Richard Mearns introduced the Southeast Community Association. The purpose of the group is to allow citizens living in the southeast part of Guilford County an avenue to voice their views in a public forum.

Planning for the transportation future

This organization has a board of directors, an advisory committee, and an email list containing around one-thousand residents. The group has already been active in the development of projects including the Food Lion, shops at Forest Oaks, and other developments.

Mearns noted that his group is a trails committee focused on getting non-vehicular transportation and recreation opportunities in the area. This is through installing sidewalk, bike lanes, and greenways. The group surveyed residents and more than 100 are interested in these types of facilities but are dissatisfied with the current conditions. These facilities would not only be used for recreation but to also reduce air quality.

Mearns noted that the group is interested helping to implement the Bicycle, Pedestrian, and Greenway Master Plan. He noted that the current plan proposes 898 miles of bicycle lanes with the southeast receiving about 30% of the total.

The current number of bicycle lanes or paved shoulders is zero in southeast Guilford. There are 97 miles of greenways in the county with the southeast having zero. This is also true for sidewalks.

To implement the 20 year plan, the current rate would be 5% a year.

Mearns also noted that it was the committee's interest to start on this plan and include the southeast Guilford.

For the next two to three years the committee is looking for 28 miles of bikes lanes or paved shoulders, five miles of greenways, and six miles of sidewalks in the area. The 28 miles would only be 10% of the portion described in the plan for the southeast; greenways would be 4%.

The priorities of the committee are close to the priorities in the plan already. Noted priorities for the area which correspond closely with the plan. Priority 1 is Alamance Church for bike lanes and priority 2 is Southeast School Road. Differ from plan and request bike lanes on Liberty Road because heavily traveled.

If these projects are completed it would grant access to five schools, five shopping areas, and four accesses to downtown.

Mearns also noted the request for 5 miles of greenways near Hagan Stone Park.

Priority 1 for sidewalk goes through Pleasant Garden allowing access to a number of businesses and 2 schools. Other priorities would grant access to middle and high schools and shopping centers at Forest Oak and Woody Mill Road.

Robbie Perkins thanked Mearns for the presentation, organization, clarity, and direction of the proposal. Perkins also noted that this area is in the water and sewage coverage area and will experience growth in the next economic upturn, which will justify the future work done in this area. Perkins further acknowledged that the group did a good job linking the activity centers with the neighborhoods. It will take working with the county and finding funding sources to achieve these goes.

Mike Winstead asked about how funding would occur.

Adam Fischer noted that are many gaps within the City of Greensboro already. With these and projects in the southeast area, using STPDA funds or enhancement funds could be an option.

Perkins noted that the area is in the county and possible partner with the county to provide a local match.

Winstead noting difficulty in getting the county to approve funding for these activities. Emphasized a need to have funding plan in place for implementation.

Fischer noted the city has a policy and ordinances in place requiring development to build sidewalks inside the city and may be the county could also consider.

Meyer noted that the MPO over the next month can make a detailed review of the request a find a response to some of the funding options available. The information then can be taken back to the boards.

Mearns asked if the projects the group was asking for could be possible in a three to four year time period.

Perkins acknowledged taking this first step is important and asked Meyer to coordinate with the southeast group on any future projects.

Mearns offered the groups help in moving the implementation of the recommendations forward.

Kirk Perkins recommended forwarded the information to Alex, Open space and Greenway Coordinator because looking for projects. Noted bond money still available for greenways and open space.

Galyon noted since the county is not responsible for the roadways, this would be an excellent way for the county to participate by helping build pedestrian and bicycle accommodations.

Mike Brandt, Town of Summerfield Manager, noted that the town has been working with the county and Greensboro's Parks and Recreation to provide a better access point for the greenway trail at Strawberry Road. This falls into a zone that causes the responsibility to be spread between the county, town, and city.

If certain funding sources became available, there are plans to buy adjoining land on US-220 and create a parking lot at the beginning of the trail. With the current state of the economy both the Greensboro and Guilford County had to back off on funding the project. Despite this, Summerfield is leasing the land is starting on creating the parking lot itself.

Brandt noted about learning that there had been multiple projects set for sidewalks and greenways that the MPO would be involved with. The parking lot project is ready for bid. The cost of the property is around \$150,000 and construction would be a little more. There would be approximately 25 parking spaces and will close the Strawberry Road access.

Perkins noted his personal use of the trail and acknowledged the need for providing a better parking solution and the closing the Strawberry Road access because of safety issues.

Brandt noted that with the possible future widening of US-220 there could be another adjacent piece of property available. Working with NCDOT to acquire the parcel. Noted another parcel to the south owned by city or county and purchased for remediation purposes during watershed bonds. If made available, could count for towards impervious surface and allow for more parking spaces.

Perkins noted that this area is fast growing.

Kirk Perkins noted that funding could come through county bonds.

Perkins noted that the trail paving was paid for using private donations from the Piedmont Land Conservancy. He further noted that the government should get behind this project. Perkins further suggested that similar to the southeast projects that more research go into funding with a report back at the next MPO meeting.

4. Annual MPO Self-Certification

Tyler Meyer noted that this certification comes up every year and is a requirement in connection with the planning Work Program. Before the MPO passes the Work Program it will consider this Certification resolution. This is just a statement indicating that all the planning documents are up-to-date and all procedures required by federal legislation is being followed. As indicated in the handout, the MPO is doing all of those things. A resolution will make this binding.

Doug Galyon moved for approval. Kirk Perkins seconded the motion. The Committee voted unanimously to approve the resolution supporting the annual MPO self-certification.

5. Approve 2009-2010 Work Program

Meyer noted that the Work Program also comes up every year. It accounts for the anticipated usages of planning grants expected over the upcoming fiscal year. There are FHWA planning grants which are called "PL" funds and funds from FTA. These are transit planning funds which is also called "5303." GTA also chooses to apply some of its formula funding to preventive maintenance and capital expenses. Also, NCDOT

uses some statewide planning research funds and are accounted for in the planning work program. The PL funds and the SPR funds are from FHWA; while the 5303 and 5307 are from FTA.

Upcoming planning tasks include model development, data collection, Airport Area Study, Sandy Ridge Feasibility, and other MPO tasks.

Kirk Perkins moved for approval. Mike Winstead seconded the motion. The Committee voted unanimously to approve the 2009-2010 Work Program.

6. Approve National Highway System Change

Lydia McIntyre noted there were two functional class changes last year. This current one is a result of the realignment of Bryan Boulevard and the relocation of the entrance into the airport. The request is to delete the old entrance into the airport and add the new entrance as an intermodal connector.

With any functionally classified roads, the designation comes with funding options for improvements.

Robbie Perkins asked if traffic is still flowing on the blue segment of roadway.

McIntyre noted that it is still open but the classification changed from intermodal collector to urban collector. Having freight movement classifies a roadway for the intermodal collector designation.

Meyer further noted that intermodal collectors connect National Highway System roads.

Kirk Perkins moved for approval. Doug Galyon seconded the motion. The Committee voted unanimously to approve the National Highway System Change.

7. Endorse Scenic Byway Designation

Hanna Cockburn noted that this proposed Scenic Byway designation was presented a year and a half ago to NCDOT. This pertains to a scenic byway that exists in Rockingham County and begins in Guilford County.

The scenic byway program is statewide and funded under federal funds coming to each state for scenic byways. There are around 50 of these in North Carolina which total around 1,800 miles. Several of these are already in this region.

Back in 2007 there was a study done to see if there were additional roads that could have the byway destination in the rural counties. The idea was this could provide tourism and dollars into the counties.

The criteria used for scenic byways are that they must be a public road, at least a mile in length, and no outdoor advertising. Another aspect in the designation proposal to NCDOT is telling a unique story ensuring and giving drivers a one-of-a-kind experience. In 2007, volunteers from each county identified candidate routes to submit to NCDOT. There were 17 routes all together that were reviewed and out of those only eight met the qualifications for NCDOT review.

In December of 2008, eight routes had been selected for further study for designation. The route discussed at this meeting is in Rockingham and Guilford counties and is tied to the Revolutionary and High Rock Road. In Rockingham County we are proposing three extensions because of the underlying theme of colonialism and how it ties to the Race to the Dan and the retreat of the Battle of Guilford Courthouse. It connects NC 150 and begins in Ossipee and includes interesting features such as the ford on the Haw River at High Rock and a nationally registered historic property. The route goes through actively farmed agricultural lands, passive rural lands, as well as some historic homes.

In the past several months the RPO has been seeking resolutions from local government members, chambers of commerce, and tourism authority boards. At this meeting the organization is seeking support for the Transportation Advisory Committee. Press releases have already been sent out to news outlets in the region along with maps and photographs. These will be submitted at the end of March to NCDOT and hopefully

the consideration of the Board of Transportation. The final decision may take up to a year judging from past experiences.

Mike Winstead moved for approval. Kirk Perkins seconded the motion. The Committee voted unanimously to endorse the Scenic Byway Designation.

8. Modify 2009-2015 Metropolitan Transportation Improvement Program -- Stimulus Projects

Meyer noted there were several MTIP amendments.

CMAQ Fast Tracking

The first amendment is the GTA expanded evening service. The new service will expand the current seven routes into the full fourteen. At the January MPO meeting, an amendment was approved to allocate funding for the first 3 years of service using CMAQ funds for expansion of evening service.

Since this amendment NCDOT has made a call for projects to be 100% funding in 2009 or fast track. The 100% federal funding is allowed through a provision in federal law Energy Independence and Security Act of 2007. NCDOT has approved the GTA expanded evening service for 100% CMAQ funding in fiscal year 2009. The next step is approval from the TAC to amend the MTIP accordingly. Overall this will save GTA some money that they can use towards other things.

Robbie Perkins asked what this meant for future years.

Meyer noted that 2010 and 2011 the funding will go back to a 80% split causing GTA to pick up the remaining 20%. Service expansion to begin July 1st.

Fischer noted that this was one of the GTA board's top priorities.

Libby James noted that some buses are experiencing standing loads on some of their evening routes.

Kirk Perkins moved for approval, Mike Winstead seconded. Committee voted unanimously to approve the amendment to MTIP for CMAQ fast tracking.

Stimulus Amendment

Meyer explained the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 also known as the stimulus package. A component of the act pertains to transportation. The main goals of the transportation infrastructure program are to stimulate the economy with a side goal of restore liquidity in transportation infrastructure investment. This will put money in the hands of agency that currently have project backlogs.

For this program the readiness of a project is an underlining requirement. The way the program is setup, half of the funding for highways needs be authorized within 120 days. The projects must be authorized with these time frames. The money that came to North Carolina in the federal highway projects totaled a little over \$735,000,000. The way NCDOT is managing this is through breaking it up into two phases corresponding to the time frames mentioned previously. The first phase of the projects is being handled as NCDOT directive investments. This includes resurfacing and enhancements which will include bicycle and pedestrian projects. Under the second phase is funding directly allocated through the MPOs. The amount for the Greensboro area is \$7,400,000. There is also FTA funds that directly allocated to transit in which Greensboro will receive \$5,400,000.

Robbie Perkins asked for the criteria to be stated qualifying these projects for stimulus funding.

Meyer noted the key criterion is project readiness. For highways the authorization of the project has a deadline of October 1st.

Robbie Perkins asked if to get the money the MPO needs projects that they can fully act on by October 1st.

Meyer noted that this is true and that transit projects have a different timeframe but is all under the October 1st deadline.

Robbie Perkins noted hearing about the possibility of more stimulus money being given to the state if an effective job is done with the current stimulus funding.

Meyer noted that this is a possibility due to some states possibly not allocating the funding fast enough causing them to could lose it.

There are three potential TIP amendments and project request that have been made.

Phase I- NCDOT Projects

NCDOT area projects include the resurfacing of I-85 from Groomtown Road to US-29/ US-70 interchange with a total being a \$4,000,000 project. There is also project to resurface I-40 from Rock Creek Dairy Road to University Drive in Alamance County which will have a cost of \$10,000,000.

Tyler noted that the next projects are statewide but still needed to be included in the MTIP. The two projects that will fall under the statewide element include one for bicycle and pedestrian with a total of \$2,000,000. The element is for roadside environmental projects and tree plantings for \$5,500,000.

NCDOT identified a proposal to fund section 1-A of the Downtown Greenway along with some previous request that were made. However this project is not ready to go in the required timeframe. The request to NCDOT is to substitute the money for the Downtown Greenway could be used for the Bicentennial Greenway.

The Bicentennial Greenway will be a county project within the city connecting Market Street to Ballinger Road. It would connect two schools and a recreation center through both natural wetlands and forested areas.

Meyer noted that this would be a great project for the area and the cost of \$600,000 is within the funding estimate earlier set aside for the Downtown Greenway. Would be added under existing project EL-5101.

Robbie Perkins asked if using the current funding for the trail would allow alternative funding sources for the greenway.

Meyer noted that was correct due to not having the greenway project ready at this time.

Kirk Perkins moved for approval, Mike Winstead seconded. Committee voted unanimously to approve the NCDOT projects for stimulus funding.

Phase II- FHWA Projects

Meyer noted that the next part is the FHWA Program Allocation. Projects that are recommended are phase two projects and funds for them could be authorized by October 1st. The first is a current bond project and would put a median and sidewalk down South Elm-Eugene Street between JJ Drive and Vandalia Road with a cost of \$2,300,000. The next project is widening portions of Lake Jeanette Road with intersection improvements and the installation of sidewalks. The estimated cost is \$600,000,000, but expect bids to come in lower. The final part is resurfacing of roads. Eligible facilities must be federally classified roads and total \$1,500,000. All of these will replace bond funds. The amendment would allocate \$1.6 million to Elm-Eugene, \$4.3 million to Lake Jeanette, and \$1.5 million to resurfacing. This can assist the city with its liquidity with freeing up bond funds for projects needing fund matching for fiscal year 2010 including STPDA matches.

Fischer noted additional bond funds are available for project overruns. However, based on current bids, expect lower bids.

Robbie Perkins noted that the purpose of using stimulus funds was to expand the scope of projects originally expected only to receive bond funding.

Kirk Perkins moved for approval, Mike Winstead seconded. Committee voted unanimously to approve the FHWA Projects for stimulus funding and Trail Head parking lot in Summerfield for \$300,000

Phase II-FTA Projects

The final one is related to the FTA Stimulus Program with \$5,400,000 available for the area. The current allocation for the money is towards the GTA Operations, Maintenance, and Administration facility. This has been identified as the top transit need. Completing this is critical to current and future operations with GTA. The conditions GTA is under now is increasing operating cost and limiting future expansion with their growing fleet. Meyer noted that under the current schedule that site preparations should begin in July with building construction in September. The total cost is currently \$20,000,000 and this amendment would fully fund it. If the cost does not go up, there could be some residual STPDA funds that could be reallocated to other projects.

Libby James noted that the process for the new GTA facility is well underway. There was a grant received to complete the design phase and land acquisition. This will meet GTA's both current and future needs.

Meyer noted that there were additional project requests for stimulus funding. The first one is from PART and requests one bus and the establishment of a park-and-ride lot on US-421 near Forest Oaks. The project cost of the bus is around \$400,000 and the lot is around \$600,000. The second project is the Lake Brandt trail head project in Summerfield. The estimated cost is \$150,000. With both of these projects the recommended action is conduct some research and bring back information at the next MPO meeting.

Robbie Perkins inquired what chance these additional request would be filled with funding?

Meyer noted that chance remains high based future availability of STPDA and CMAQ funds despite some restrictions on some funding.

Perkins noted understand the priorities as laid out, but does not want to slight PART. Important to MPO structure in terms of transit.

Meyer noted may be able to fund PART through STPDA funds.

Sandy Carmany noted that the town has been in conversation with PART to support the park and ride lot.

Perkins stated that the partnership model with the towns and PART should be considered further to leverage funding. Express desire to fund both projects. Inquire about including 2nd phase of the Summerfield project.

Meyer noted the motion would include Phase I and Phase II of the Trailhead parking lot at Strawberry Road for total of \$300,000 under EL-5101. Recommended STPDA funding for PART. PART would need to provide local match.

Kirk Perkins moved for approval, Mike Winstead seconded. Committee voted unanimously to approve the FTA Projects for stimulus funding and to direct up to 1,050,000 of STPDA funds for PART bus and Park and Ride lot.

Business Items / Potential Action Items

I. USDOT Certification Review Update

Meyer noted that the MPO had its USDOT certification process recently. It is on a four year cycle and FHWA and FTA staff meets with the MPO staff over two days. The review is to find out what the MPO does and how it does it. This took place on the 16th and 17th of March. On the night of the 16th there was a

public meeting in the city council chambers with around 15 citizens attending. The findings from the review will result in a report and the MPO was issued no corrective action. Thanked Craig McKinney for pulling information together for the Review.

Fischer recognized the MPO staff for keeping everything current with the DOT.

2. Transportation Project Updates

Craig McKinney reported on R-2577 where the study area covered more than half of Stokesdale. NCDOT had a merger meeting for the project in February.

The result of meeting was the permitting agency agreed to three corridors; the northern, the middle, the southern, and two crossovers with the middle and southern corridor. NCDOT has suspended the study due to economic conditions at this time. There is also no funding to keep the study going.

The second item is the Naco Road extension. Information gathered during a North Carolina Rail Road Forum included the news that over \$2,000,000 for the environmental impact study has been received for the extension and nearby interchanges. These are items that came out of the Eastern Guilford Track Separation study in 2004. There are two grade separations. One is at Franklin Boulevard and the other at the Naco Road extension before it reaches US-70. This is a project that will be completed and then put aside until funding is available.

3. MPO Strategic Topics

McIntyre gave update on new 8-hr standard. The old standard is .08 while the new one is .075. Division of Air Quality reported to the Triad about its findings that were being sent to the EPA. These findings indicated that Guilford County should be designated as non-attainment. The EPA will give a response on December 12th. The current reading for Guilford County is .082 which was included in the report by DAQ and made up the second highest reading in the state. The area is on track for PM 2.5 maintenance. The area will need to conform to the new 8-hour standard. The MPO will no longer be required show conformity for 1-hour after April 2009.

Other Items

I. Board Member Report

Doug Galyon noted the change in future funding due to a shift towards more fuel-efficient vehicles. The stimulus will be helpful in regards to pushing shorter term projects up to the front that can be completed in 180 days. The state needs to allocate the funds to keep the contractors in business. A major project that needs attention is the Yadkin River Bridge. For replacement the estimated price is \$350,000,000. There are some discretionary funds that could be used for the design and preliminary work.

The MPO will take on more importance than ever before. It will have more direct contact with leadership at NCDOT. The RPO will also have a more major role.

Galyon noted being cautionary optimistic about North Carolina will utilize the stimulus package to our best advantage.

The new board should be in place by June.

2. Regional Transportation News

Scott Rhine thanked the MPO for its help with the project on US-421.

Mark Kirstner gave an update on the 2009 Triad Commute Challenge.

Robbie Perkins recognized Doug Galyon and Sandy Carmany for their work at PART.

Tyler noted that the next meeting is April 21st.

Scott Rhine noted the MPO may want to consider a resolution of support for the Yadkin River Bridge receiving stimulus funding. Doug Galyon moved for approval, Kirk Perkins seconded. Committee voted unanimously to approve the resolution of support for the Yadkin River Bridge.

Mike Brandt thanked the MPO staff for their funding help.

3. Wrap-Up

Robbie Perkins adjourned the meeting at 3:42pm