



# GREENSBORO URBAN AREA METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION

## TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE

June 22, 2005

1:45 p.m. Greensboro, NC

Blue Room

(County Commissioner's Briefing Room)

Old Guilford County Courthouse

### TAC MEMBERS PRESENT

Sandy Carmany	TAC Chair
Keith Holliday	Mayor, City of Greensboro
Jim Westmoreland	TCC Chair
Robbie Perkins	Greensboro City Council
Paul Gibson	GC Board of Commissioners

### ATTENDANCE

Tyler Meyer	GDOT / MPO	Scott Rhine	PART
Jeff Sovich	GDOT / MPO	Bill Bruce	Town of Summerfield
Craig McKinney	GDOT / MPO	Michael Brandt	Town of Summerfield
Lydia McIntyre	GDOT / MPO	Robert Gordon	Town of Summerfield
Mike Mills	NCDOT, Division 7	Richard Atkins	Triad Trans Partnerships
Derrick Lewis	NCDOT	Brian Peeler	Rummel, Klepper, & Kahl
Nicole Hackler	NCDOT	Amy Dominello	<i>Greensboro News &amp; Record</i>

Sandy Carmany called the meeting to order at 1:50 p.m. Due to the absence of a quorum at the start of the meeting, the agenda was altered to begin with Business Items, followed by Action Items once a quorum was attained.

### BUSINESS ITEMS / POTENTIAL ACTION ITEMS

#### 1. Recommend Updates to MPO Public Involvement Policy

Jeff Sovich advised that earlier this year the Greensboro MPO went through its Federal Triennial Certification review and was certified by FHWA and FTA for its transportation planning process. In the Certification Review Report there were three specific recommendations related to the MPO's Public Involvement Policy. Those recommendations give rise to the need for updating the Public Involvement

Policy. The PIP was last updated in January 2001. The MPO staff is currently developing a detailed update proposal that will accomplish a number of objectives: it will formalize the innovative and proactive public involvement practices the MPO already uses, which are not reflected in the current PIP; it will expand the range of public involvement strategies the MPO uses by tailoring the level of public involvement to the nature of the MPO function or activity; it will establish consistent public involvement procedures for key MPO functions not addressed in the current PIP, such as TAC & TCC meetings, UPWP adoption & amendment, CMS adoption and amendment; it will establish a system for measuring the effectiveness of the PIP, including the results of any future changes to the PIP; it will improve the overall cost-effectiveness for the MPO's public involvement efforts by reducing or eliminating less successful techniques; it will increase the MPO's efforts to engage minority and low income populations; and it will describe how the MPO's public involvement efforts meet and/or exceed the standards of applicable federal regulations and state statutes. The ultimate goal of this revision is to improve access to and transparency of the MPO's transportation planning process, giving the public a greater opportunity to make meaningful input at meaningful points in planning for the area's transportation system. MPO staff will present a draft PIP possibly during the August meeting, following a 45 day public review.

## **2. Proposed Thoroughfare Plan Amendments**

Tyler Meyer advised of two proposed thoroughfare plan amendments. These amendments are being presented for informational purposes only, so no action is requested today. Following today's presentations, there will be a public review and comment period on the two amendments. The first proposed amendment reconfigures the intersection of McConnell Road and Millstream Road, consistent with the project plans already underway by NCDOT. The second proposed amendment relates to the proposed widening of US 158 from Forsyth County into Rockingham County. The amendment replaces the existing new location portion of the US 158 Corridor with a different new location alignment. This revised alignment avoids impacting Stokesdale's historic mainstreet as well as constraining natural features and existing and planned development that are located in the path of the former alignment. This project is currently in post-years in the TIP, but early stages of the environmental process are under way. The Town of Stokesdale will hold a public meeting regarding this amended alignment, with MPO staff on hand. Comments received will be used in determining any final revisions to the alignment.

## **3. I-73 Connector Feasibility Study**

Derrick Lewis of NCDOT advised of the updates on the development of the I-73 Connector (NC 68 / US 220 Connector). There are currently four proposed study corridors for the I-73 Connector. The corridor for Alternative 1 begins at the I-40 interchange with the western urban loop, traveling north to Bryan Boulevard, then follows Bryan Boulevard west to NC 68, then north on the NC 68 connector. Alternative 2 begins at the I-40 / NC 68 interchange, traveling north on existing NC 68, then north on the NC 68 connector. Alternative 3 follows the western urban loop from the I-40 interchange to US 220, then follows US 220 north to the Haw River. Alternative 4 follows the same path as Alternative 1 except that it follows a proposed extension of Bryan Boulevard from the Old Oak Ridge Road interchange northwest to the NC 68 connector. All the alternatives are approximately 14 to 15 miles in length.

The study will take a maximum of approximately two years to complete, although it could be completed sooner. NCDOT recognizes the importance of expediting this review in order to enable other local planning efforts to proceed. While some of these alternatives appear to be obviously impractical, NCDOT is studying all four corridors for several reasons. First, without an objective and quantitative

analysis of all the alternatives, the decision to select one corridor over the others will not be adequately justified from FHWA's perspective. Second, having this additional level of detail regarding the infeasible corridors will help avoid potential delays in getting the necessary approvals later in the process. Evaluation of the impractical alternatives will continue only until enough information has been gathered to clearly eliminate them from further consideration. The majority of time and effort will be spent on in-depth study of the more favorable alternatives. Further information will be presented at future meetings.

Jim Westmoreland advised that during a recent meeting at the offices of PART a conceptual alignment for a future Thoroughfare Plan amendment was presented. The concept is referred to as the "West Side Thoroughfare Connector" and represents an extension of an alignment that has been on the High Point Thoroughfare Plan for several years. This new extension would create a north-south connection from US 311, through the "Heart of the Triad" area, to the proposed I-73 / I-74 connector. This concept would involve making some adjustments to the airport area connectors currently on the Thoroughfare Plan, but further study will be needed to determine whether the changes would be advantageous. The idea for this connector arose out of continued interest in promoting the "Heart of the Triad" area as a viable opportunity for a major center for future employment and residential development, centrally located with the region. This effort will require considerable in-depth study involving policy support and eventually funding support from the MPOs and PART, in order to begin to develop functional designs and protect the corridors. In an upcoming meeting, MPO staff will provide the TAC with a list of recommendations about all of the project planning opportunities and resources that are available, so that you can make some decisions about what fund and to move forward with.

#### **4. MPO Strategic Reports**

Jeff Sovich advised that to celebrate the month of May as National Bike Month, GTA has compiled data about the usage of bike racks on its buses. The figures indicate how many times a rack has been folded down for use, not necessarily the total number of bikes occupying a rack. During the month of May, GTA's bike-on-bus racks were activated a total of 1,837 times. The routes with heaviest usage are North Elm Street, Summit Avenue, Battleground Avenue, High Point Road and South Elm Eugene Street / Randleman Road, each with over 100 uses during the month.

Craig McKinney advised that NCDOT will be holding a public information workshop regarding the future widening of Gallimore Dairy Road from NC 68 to I-40. The meeting will be held at Western Guilford High School from 4 to 7 p.m.

On June 15, the Greensboro Planning Board reviewed the proposed Collector Street Plan and made a recommendation for the City Council to approve it at its next meeting. The Pleasant Garden Long Range Planning Board will be reviewing the plan on July 11, and hopefully recommending approval by the Town Council for August 9. The Guilford County Planning Board will review the plan on July 13, with a recommendation to County Commissioners for their August 18 meeting. Finally, the Stokesdale Planning Board will review the plan on August 4, and make a recommendation for the Town Council's August 18 meeting. There are three communities remaining to review the Collector Street Plan: Oak Ridge, Summerfield, and Sedalia. We hope to schedule these presentations in the near future.

Tyler Meyer advised that MPO staff are reviewing upcoming project planning opportunities in an effort to bring some prioritization to them. One such opportunity that has recently been requested by the Town of Summerfield is a feasibility study of the NC 150 connector, which would facilitate development plan

implementation by providing a basis for limiting development in the corridor. We will present our recommendations on this and other potential planning priorities and solicit your feedback at the next meeting.

## **ACTION ITEMS**

### **1. Approve Minutes of April 27<sup>th</sup>, 2005**

Keith Holiday moved for approval of the minutes as presented. Robbie Perkins seconded the motion. The Committee voted unanimously to approve the minutes of the April 27<sup>th</sup>, 2005 meeting as presented.

### **2. Adopt 2006-2012 Metropolitan Transportation Improvement Program**

Lydia McIntyre advised that there was previous discussion on particular projects and their status of the 2006-2012 MTIP. The TIP development process was delayed significantly due to the ongoing Congressional impasse on the surface transportation reauthorization bill. Currently, the legislature is debating funding levels between \$295 billion and \$284 billion, while a seventh extension of TEA-21 is in effect. A public review and comment period was held on the Draft MTIP between May 2<sup>nd</sup> and May 31<sup>st</sup> in which several written comments on highways and public transportation were received. The highway comments primarily involved concerns about the delay of Project U-2525 B & C, the Northern/Eastern Urban Loop, from US 70 to Lawndale Drive and requested that original schedule for this project be restored. There was also one comment requesting that Wiley Davis Road from Vandalia Road to Groometown Road be improved from two lanes to five lanes, creating a major east-west thoroughfare connection from Guilford College Road to Elm-Eugene Street. Finally, there was a comment requesting the widening of the railroad underpasses at Tate Street and Aycock Street. The public transportation comments involved concerns with the comfort and pedestrian accessibility of GTA's bus stops. There was also one comment that expressed concerns about the lack of future bicycle facilities listed in the TIP.

Because of the Greensboro MPO's designation as an air quality non-attainment area under the PM 2.5 standard, an air quality conformity initial review was conducted, to ensure that the projects listed in the TIP are a subset of the 2030 LRTP. A full air quality conformity analysis will not be required, but an air quality conformity determination report will need to be prepared and approved, before the MTIP can take effect. The recommended action is for the TAC to approve the 2006 – 2012 MTIP as presented, contingent upon approval of an air quality conformity determination report.

Robbie Perkins moved to approve the adoption of the 2006 – 2012 MTIP as presented. Keith Holliday seconded the motion. The Committee voted unanimously to approve the 2006 – 2012 MTIP as presented.

Robbie Perkins asked if there had been any progress in discussions with Chandler Concrete regarding the Battleground Rail Trail. Tyler Meyer advised that although MPO staff have assisted Chandler in investigating several potential sites to which to relocate, no decision to purchase has yet been reached. In the interim, MPO staff have begun documentation on the potential for creating a trailhead facility on the Chandler site. Robbie Perkins recommended that the segment of the Battleground Rail Trail from Chandler Concrete to downtown Greensboro should be specifically considered for inclusion in an upcoming bond referendum, given that it is the key link needed for the proposed downtown greenway system.

## **OTHER ITEMS**

### **1. Board Member Report**

Mike Mills advised that construction of the Western Urban Loop is progressing well and is still on schedule for completion in July 2007.

Robbie Perkins noted that the TAC is not satisfied about the funding delay of the Northern/Eastern Urban Loop and strongly urges NCDOT to get this back on track. Mike Mills advised that he and Doug Galyon have developed a strategy that could help get the funding accelerated for this portion of the loop, by continuing to advance the environmental and planning phases, so that right-of-way and construction can take advantage of delays to similar projects in other parts of the state.

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

Michael Brandt of Summerfield noted that the five incorporated towns do not have a voice in the MPO and requested that the TAC consider altering its structure to perhaps include an additional seat that could rotate among the five towns, but would represent the interests of all five concurrently. If this scenario raises a concern about the TAC becoming too large, or the City of Greensboro becoming overruled by the combined weight of the County and town representatives, then the TAC membership could scale back to just one County Commissioner, and one town representative.

Sandy Carmany responded that the TAC revised its structure several years ago by adding a second County Commissioner with the intent of strengthening the representation of the towns in the MPO's actions.

Michael Brandt replied that the current arrangement has put the towns in the position of addressing their concerns to the Guilford County planners, whose concerns are focused primarily on the unincorporated areas of the County, rather than on the needs of the towns. This situation results in a growing portion of the County's population that has no direct representation within the MPO.

Mayor Holliday explained that within the City of Greensboro, residents pay taxes to allow GDOT to pave and maintain roads that are not State maintained. All the roads outside the City, along with the State maintained roads within the City are handled by NCDOT. While residents of Greensboro have taken on an extra tax burden to maintain their local roadways, residents of the incorporated towns have not taken a similar step. Yet the majority of the work of the MPO addresses funding for the planning, construction, and maintenance of those State maintained roads, with only minor attention on local roads within the City of Greensboro. The MPO has a strong interest in, and priority on taking good care of the thoroughfares throughout the planning area, including within the boundaries of the towns. Meanwhile, the available funding for thoroughfare level roads is balanced against work on lower level facilities that Highway Division 7 handles.

Michael Brandt responded that because the City participates in Powell Bill funds, it receives a slightly larger amount of funding for roadways than the towns, which do not. However, it is the State that maintains the major roads, so in that respect, the City and the towns are even. So, from the perspective of the MPO as a whole, what's good for the City is good for the MPO. But what's good for the City is not necessarily good for the towns. We realize that it's unreasonable for each town to have its own

representative on the TAC, but from our perspective, the opportunity of having one rotating seat, with the potential to be overruled by the City is still better than having no voice at all. We are asking for the ability to have a dissenting viewpoint expressed in the records of these transportation decisions.

Mayor Holliday replied that the TAC agenda has been altered to explicitly include a segment during which the towns can present their needs, concerns, and opinions each month. The key is communication and the MPO has always encouraged a free flow of communication between the towns and the MPO. If the County Commissioners are not representing the towns' interests it is up to the towns to make their interests known to them.

Robbie Perkins stated that with the rate of growth of Summerfield and some of the other towns, and the lack of investment in infrastructure with respect to both utilities and roadways, there will be significant infrastructure shortfalls within ten years. So the towns either need to take major steps to curb that growth very soon, or the needs will quickly expand far beyond any entity's ability to fund.

Mayor Holliday suggested that possibly the agenda sequence could be altered to providing the opportunity for the towns to directly express their concerns during the Action Items phase, rather than after the Business Items have already been heard. This would at least help to resolve some of the communication difficulties.

Tyler Meyer added that when the MPO's Memorandum of Understanding was last revised, the issue of town representation was discussed at length. During those discussions, the current arrangement of communication between the MPO and the towns was developed, which included fully informing and involving the towns in staff-level work, as well as time during the MPO meetings for coordination. Another important part of this arrangement involves the towns talking with the County representatives to inform them of their needs, preferences, and expectations. So, perhaps the solution to the problem lies in all parties increasing our efforts at effective communication.

### **3. Citizen Comments**

None.

### **4. Regional Transportation News**

Scott Rhine of PART advised that the alternatives analysis for the Triad Commuter Transit Major Investment Study will be completed during the Fall of 2005, at which time there will be presentations to the MPOs regarding the selection of the locally preferred alternative.

Jim Westmoreland advised that Phase II of the renovation of the Depot continues to progress and is on schedule to be complete by the end of September to welcome the return of Amtrak to the facility. We are also working tentatively with NCDOT to plan a dedication ceremony in the middle of October. More information will be provided at a later date.

GDOT has been working with Mike Mills and other staff in the NCDOT Division 7 office to develop an access management safety and operations study for US 29, which involves some improvement and ramp closures. Mike and Doug Galyon have been able to locate some funds for us to be able to begin implementation of this plan later this summer.

Finally, during its meeting last night, the Greensboro City Council approved a contract for just over \$750,000 in new sidewalk construction, which further demonstrates the Council's ongoing support for implementing the Walkability Policy.

## **5. Wrap-Up**

The next TAC meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, July 27th at 1:45 p.m. The TAC adjourned at 3:16 p.m.