



**TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE**  
**Minutes of November 14, 2007**  
**2:00 p.m., Greensboro, NC**  
**4<sup>th</sup> Floor Conference Room**  
**Old Guilford County Courthouse**

**TAC MEMBERS PRESENT**

|                         |   |                |   |
|-------------------------|---|----------------|---|
| Sandy Carmany           | <i>TAC Chair</i>                              | Keith Holliday | <i>Mayor, City of Greensboro</i>              |
| Doug Galyon             | <i>NCDOT</i>                                  | Mike Winstead  | <i>Guilford County Board of Commissioners</i> |
| Kirk Perkins            | <i>Guilford County Board of Commissioners</i> |                | <i>Commissioners</i>                          |
| T. Dianne Bellamy-Small | <i>Greensboro City Council</i>                |                |   |

**ATTENDANCE**

|                  |                   |               |                   |
|------------------|-------------------|---------------|-------------------|
| Jim Westmoreland | <i>TCC Chair</i>  | Mike Mills    | <i>NCDOT</i>      |
| Tyler Meyer      | <i>GDOT / MPO</i> | Michael Abuya | <i>NCDOT</i>      |
| Craig McKinney   | <i>GDOT / MPO</i> | Peggy Holland | <i>GDOT / MPO</i> |
| Peter Ohlms      | <i>GDOT / MPO</i> |               |                   |

Sandy Carmany called the meeting to order at 2:10 p.m.

**Action Items**

1. Approve Minutes of September 26, 2007

Keith Holliday moved for approval of the minutes. Kirk Perkins seconded the motion. The Committee voted unanimously to approve the minutes of the September 26, 2007 meeting.

2. Recognition of Outgoing TAC Members

Jim Westmoreland recognized the efforts of TAC Chair Sandy Carmany and Mayor Keith Holliday and their distinguished leadership through years of service on the TAC. Carmany noted that she appreciated the opportunity to serve. Doug Galyon advised that he was unaware of anyone else in Greensboro with a better understanding of transportation and air quality than Carmany. Holliday noted that it had often been difficult to get elected officials connected with transportation issues.

**Planning for the transportation future**

Other TAC members congratulated Carmany and Holliday on their efforts and noted that opportunities would likely arise in the future for them to continue to serve.

### 3. Reports, Concerns, and Discussion from MPO Area Towns

None

### 4. Citizen Comments

None

## **Business / Potential Action Items**

### 1. Preliminary 2008 Meeting Schedule

Peter Ohlms advised that the preliminary meeting schedule for 2008 included TCC and TAC meetings the fourth Wednesday of each month except in November and December. Kirk Perkins moved to approve the preliminary schedule. Keith Holliday seconded the motion. The Committee voted unanimously to approve the preliminary 2008 meeting schedule. Keith Holliday noted that Robbie Perkins would likely volunteer to serve on the TAC and that the proposed schedule would probably be fine for Perkins.

### 2. LRTP Update

Tyler Meyer advised that the 2035 Long Range Transportation Plan would build off of the work done for the 2030 effort completed in 2004. The timeline for expected future projects is based on an analysis of basic funding trends, and an analysis of air quality conformity will be necessary. The plan involves updated discussions of transportation issues, trends, and policies. Meyer advised that work to date included updating the regional travel model, updating the Congestion Management Process, developing Comprehensive Transportation Plan maps, and financial analysis.

For public involvement, staff propose to hold meetings in spring 2008, with TAC approval expected in summer 2008. Outcomes from the LRTP include demonstration of conformity with air-quality and fiscal constraint requirements. The plan will highlight funding challenges that the area will face in light of future needs, supporting continued community dialogue and the development of the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP).

### 3. 2009-2015 MTIP Development

Tyler Meyer advised that the Metropolitan TIP for 2009-2015 was under development. The draft State TIP has been released and mainly deals with changes to highway project schedules over a seven-year period. Meyer noted that a summary of major projects and a Project Update Newsletter were included with meeting materials, and Doug Galyon noted that the newsletter was an excellent tool, particularly for use with individuals and small groups.

The MPO's process will begin in early 2008 with a public meeting, coordinated with the public meeting for the LRTP. NCDOT plans to adopt the STIP around June 2008. Because the MPO cannot adopt the MTIP without a conformity determination, official TAC adoption will not occur before August 2008.

Meyer advised of the status of major transportation projects, including those identified as MPO Priority Needs. In the draft STIP, construction of the eastern section of the Urban Loop was delayed two years to 2013. The remainder of the Loop's western portion remains unfunded as a post-

year project. Doug Galyon advised that virtually every city with an urban loop project has experienced a similar two-year setback and that officials were discussing the funding problems with state government. State Board of Transportation members will be looking at the status of all loop projects to evaluate funding needs. Keith Holliday noted that the western portion of the Loop from Bryan Boulevard to Battleground Avenue would provide substantial relief to traffic on Battleground Avenue, and that he would support any type of creative means to construct it. Galyon and Mike Mills advised that the segment will cost around \$100 million, partially due to the need to construct a mile-long bridge. Sandy Carmany noted that the one urban loop that was not delayed in the most recent STIP was Fayetteville's. Galyon discussed the history of the state's urban loops and funding problems. Holliday inquired if any right-of-way had been acquired for the remainder of the Greensboro Urban Loop. Mike Mills advised that a significant portion of right-of-way between Bryan Boulevard and Battleground Avenue had been purchased through advance acquisitions.

Meyer advised that construction of the High Point Road widening project has slipped one year to 2012, along with the construction of the High Point Road interchange at the Urban Loop.

Other priority needs included US 220 widening (R-2309) and Market Street widening (R-2611). US 220 remained on schedule, but Market Street slipped one year for both right-of-way and construction, largely due to increased right-of-way cost estimates. As a result of these cost increases, the MPO committed some STP-DA funding to fill some of the gap, and a one-year delay is not bad for NCDOT to cover a cost increase of this size. Galyon noted that the US 220 project would provide a four-lane divided road all the way from the planned US 220 / NC 68 Connector to Horse Pen Creek Road, which would provide significant congestion relief.

The main priority need for transit was a new operations, maintenance, and administrative facility, which remains unfunded. Meyer advised that the federal bus discretionary funds for the current fiscal year were completely allocated to a new federal program, the Urban Partnerships Initiative, that went mostly to larger cities. Staff continue to work towards implementation of the new transit facility.

Priority needs that remain on schedule include Bridford Parkway, Hornaday Road, the Greensboro Signal System replacement, and the current phase of the Battleground Rail-Trail. Holliday inquired how long the signal system replacement would take to complete. Meyer advised that it would take around two years due to the need to install new cable, new signal boxes, and new control centers.

Holliday encouraged staff to provide a transportation briefing to City Council at its January retreat and also to the County Commissioners. Galyon advised that the eastern portion of the Urban Loop would improve traffic conditions on US 29 and Business I-40 through Greensboro by re-routing through traffic around the City.

#### **4. Coordinated Human Services Transportation Plan**

Peter Ohlms described planned efforts to develop a Coordinated Human Services Transportation Plan. Conducting this planning effort in the Greensboro area would ensure that transportation-disadvantaged populations, such as low-income people and people with disabilities, can access the services they need. It would also ensure that the community provides transportation for human services efficiently across the boundaries of the multiple agencies involved. The planning process will explore what services already exist in the community, look at what is still needed, set out a strategy for addressing the gaps, and outline relative priority areas.

Ohlms advised that the MPO would seek to move forward to manage this planning process. Any other stakeholder could do so instead of the MPO if all parties agree. Managing the process would

include outreach to stakeholders, conducting planning workshops, and creating a draft plan. The first planning workshop could occur in January 2008.

Ohlms advised that, depending upon the outcome of the planning process, the MPO might also serve as the administrator or “direct recipient” of a competitive selection process to direct some small amounts of federal funding to providers. This would only apply for funds under the Job Access and Reverse Commute Program and the New Freedom Program. Ohlms noted that just under \$389,000 is available through these two programs combined for the Greensboro area for FY 2006 and 2007, with additional allocations expected through FY 2009. Although the Coordinated Plan does allow the area to access this funding, the community benefits to conducting this planning process exceed the benefits from being able to spend these limited funds.

Sandy Carmany inquired how the Coordinated Plan would mesh with the regional Seamless Mobility initiative. Ohlms advised that the TCC had discussed including a regional Coordinated Plan in its scope for Seamless Mobility, but that PART had decided not to do so.

## 5. Safe Routes to School Funding Opportunities

Peter Ohlms described the Safe Routes to School (SRTS) program in light of recent grant announcements by NCDOT. Total SRTS federal-aid funding in North Carolina is approximately \$15 million through 2008-2009. Grants are 100% federally funded; no local match is required. The program encourages communities to address education, encouragement, engineering, and enforcement to support safe and routine walking and bicycling to school, as well as evaluation of the effectiveness of SRTS programs.

Ohlms advised that currently available grant funding includes Action Plans, which are intended to identify the infrastructure and non-infrastructure needs and proposed actions at schools serving grades K-8, and Non-Infrastructure Grants, which are intended for relatively small non-engineering activities such as encouragement and enforcement. In addition, each NCDOT Highway Division has some funding to use for improvements on state-maintained roads. Mike Mills advised that the Division’s traffic section would review projects and construct them as merited.

Sandy Carmany inquired if the school systems had been notified of the SRTS program. Mills noted that NCDOT had held workshops, including one in Greensboro, and Ohlms noted that at least one official from Guilford County Public Schools was in attendance. Carmany noted that it would be important to notify individual principals.

T. Dianne Bellamy-Small inquired if there was any data regarding the percentage of students already walking to school and which schools have existing bicycle parking facilities. Peggy Holland noted that Claxton Elementary installed bicycle racks, which are often filled with bicycles. Holland advised that the level of awareness of bicycle and pedestrian safety varied widely from school to school, depending mainly on the administration.

Ohlms noted that NCDOT was expecting to begin accepting applications for Infrastructure Grants in summer 2008. These grants would be for significant engineering improvements, and cities and counties are eligible to apply for these funds to make roadway improvements. Schools with action plans will receive extra points towards receiving infrastructure grants beginning in 2009.

Ohlms advised that projects must have a resolution of support from the MPO in order to receive grants. In addition, the MPO would need to include federally funded SRTS projects in the Metropolitan Transportation Improvement Program.

Keith Holliday moved to adopt the resolution. Bellamy-Small seconded the motion. The Committee voted unanimously to approve a resolution of support and administration for Safe Routes to Schools.

Bellamy-Small and Holliday discussed the need for pedestrian accommodations on Lovett Street near Peck Elementary School. Tyler Meyer noted that the project could be considered for inclusion on the next transportation bond. He also noted that some schools had already made efforts to promote walking and bicycling in coordination with GDOT as a result of a pilot SRTS program and that the Bicycle, Pedestrian, and Greenway Master Plan provided some of the prioritization needed to move forward.

## 6. Transportation Project Updates

Craig McKinney advised that NCDOT began a feasibility study for widening I-40 from Sandy Ridge Road west into Forsyth County. The study is anticipated to take around a year and will consider what it would require to add one or two lanes in each direction.

McKinney advised of the status of R-2612, a project to construct interchanges on US 421 at Woody Mill Road and at Neelley Road. An upcoming meeting of the merger team will determine which alternative is the least environmentally damaging. A Finding of No Significant Impact is expected in the first quarter of 2008.

McKinney advised that the second public involvement session for the NC 150 Relocation feasibility study was well-attended. The study is being conducted at the request of the Town of Summerfield to determine feasibility of a more direct route for NC 150. The technical team will review comments received and make recommendations regarding which alternative to pursue for the final feasibility document.

Tyler Meyer advised that former TAC member Bob Landreth had requested the Greensboro City Council to consider what could be done to improve Burlington Road in eastern Greensboro for pedestrians. Sidewalks can be added to the corridor with the installation of curb and gutter, which would likely require a future municipal transportation bond or a federally funded sidewalk project. It does not appear to be a strong candidate for a federally funded road project. In the near term, GDOT will install additional street lights in the area to improve nighttime pedestrian safety. The preliminary cost estimate for the one-mile section is approximately \$3 million. T. Dianne Bellamy-Small advised that Aunt Mary Street, which is in the same area, is also very dark.

Keith Holliday inquired if a small paved shoulder could be added to provide at least some space to walk, as an interim measure. McKinney advised that the traffic volumes and speeds would not make this a safe improvement. Meyer noted that staff had not considered adding a shoulder treatment because it would be only a marginal improvement, but that if it were to be installed it would probably cost around \$200,000. Kirk Perkins noted that such a facility might give pedestrians a false sense of security, especially at night, on such a heavily traveled street with a large percentage of truck traffic. Committee members discussed the need to address Greensboro's considerable needs for pedestrian facilities.

## 7. NC MPO Conference

Tyler Meyer noted that the MPO was honored to host the 2007 NC MPO Conference. Meyer acknowledged the efforts of Craig McKinney and Peter Ohlms to help organize the conference, oversee logistics, and arrange the technical program. Mobile tours were well-received despite rainy weather. Around 300 people attended, which exceeds previous attendance records. Meyer noted that

the conference also helped to involve the state's RPOs. Doug Galyon noted that the presentations from NCDOT staff were excellent.

## 8. MPO Strategic Topics

Tyler Meyer thanked Sandy Carmany and Keith Holliday for their efforts on the TAC.

### **Other Items**

#### 1. Board Member Report

Doug Galyon noted that the portion of the Urban Loop from I-40 to Bryan Boulevard would open soon. Closure of ramps at Inman Road led to congestion that was corrected by adjusting the traffic signal timing. The remainder of the Loop to I-85 is anticipated to open between Thanksgiving and the first of the year.

Galyon described the NCDOT Transformation Initiative, which is intended to improve its internal workings and speed up project delivery by fixing uncoordinated "silos." In concert, the Governor has formed the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Transportation Committee. Notable members from the Triad include former secretary Sam Hunt, Winston-Salem Mayor Allen Joines, Gregory Plemmons of the Old Dominion Global trucking firm, NCA&T Engineering Dean Dr. Joseph Monroe, Rockingham County Representative Nelson Cole, and Forsyth County Representative Bill McGee. Discussion is ongoing regarding how the state can meet anticipated funding shortfalls, because current funding systems do not address the substantial growth in urban areas. A multibillion-dollar bond issue is a possible outcome.

T. Diane Bellamy-Small inquired about the status of toll roads. Galyon advised that there is no question that toll roads will be a part of the Committee's recommendations. Potential toll roads are likely to include I-95, but it is not clear where other toll roads will be suggested. More local funding participation, including bond issues, is also anticipated to be one of the recommendations.

Keith Holliday inquired about traffic volumes on major roads in the central business district. In light of high volumes on both Elm and Eugene Streets and low volumes on Greene Street, the three one-way blocks on Greene appear to prevent people from using it to its full potential. Holliday recommended expediting the conversion of those three blocks to two-way traffic to help distribute traffic more evenly. Tyler Meyer advised that GDOT engineers had done some initial thinking about this issue and that they would continue investigating the issue.

Galyon noted that, now that the project is complete, public response is positive to the new median on Friendly Avenue.

#### 2. Regional Transportation News

Sandy Carmany noted that the PART Board had approved imposition of a five percent vehicle rental tax in Stokes County, which means that PART Express service will begin stopping in King and other locations. The PART Board authorized the addition of another bus in the mornings and afternoon in order to provide this service, since the existing bus to Mount Airy is full and cannot accommodate additional passengers coming to and from King. In order to accomplish this, a 59-passenger coach will be used on the Boone route rather than the standard 39-passenger vehicle, which will be used as the additional bus to Mount Airy. In addition, bus service to Davidson and Randolph Counties is expected to begin June 30, 2008.

Doug Galyon noted that one potential future outcome is that a commercial carrier could take over one or more of the PART routes once a market has been established. Carmany advised that fares and a state grant was funding the Boone route at this time. Carmany noted that Guilford County already collected a tax on vehicle rentals in lieu of property tax on the vehicles, so it was easy to add the five percent for PART, but that the situation would be more difficult in Stokes County.

3. Other Items - None

4. Wrap-Up

The TAC was adjourned at 3:50 p.m.