



GREENSBORO URBAN AREA METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION

TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE

July 27, 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
Jim Westmoreland	TCC Chair
Doug Galyon	Chair, NC Board of Transportation
Robbie Perkins	Greensboro City Council
Don Vaughan	Greensboro City Council
Kirk Perkins	Guilford County Board of Commissioners

ATTENDANCE

Tyler Meyer	GDOT / MPO	Stephanie Caudill	NCDOT-PDEA
Jeff Sovich	GDOT / MPO	Mickie Elmore	Piedmont Triad Airport Authority
Craig McKinney	GDOT / MPO	Edgar Phillips	Town of Pleasant Garden
Lydia McIntyre	GDOT / MPO	Robert Gordon	Town of Summerfield
Peggy Holland	GDOT / MPO	Bill Bruce	Town of Summerfield
Mike Cowan	NCDOT Div. 7	Randle Jones	Stokesdale Town Council
Eric Midkiff	NCDOT-PDEA		

Sandy Carmany called the meeting to order at 1:51 p.m., however in the absence of a quorum, the meeting began with Action Item 6 to provide additional time for TAC members to arrive.

Action Items

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

Don Vaughan advised that several North Carolina Highway Patrol personnel have requested that consideration be given for naming a new bridge in honor of a fellow trooper who was killed in the line of duty in Greensboro, in 1999. Mike Cowan explained that there is a standard process for facility

naming requests, which involves approval by the Board of Transportation. He will provide information on the procedure to Don Vaughan.

Randle Jones of the Stokesdale Town Council expressed concerns regarding the recent proposal to amend the Thoroughfare Plan to reflect realignment of the planned US 158 bypass through Stokesdale. The Town Council has met with a group of property owners who would be affected by the proposed realignment, and has established a committee to study and provide recommendations on the issue. The committee has identified significant impediments to the proposed realignment. First, the new corridor runs through the septic field of a textile manufacturing facility owned by Culp, Incorporated. Culp recently invested \$10.5 million in expanding this plant, which provides over 180 jobs and an annual payroll of \$4.6 million. Because there is no feasible means of extending water and sewer service to this site, loss of the septic field would force the company to close this facility, creating an economic impact on the entire county.

Second, the new alignment also runs close to the Pine Needle liquefied natural gas storage facility. With 4 billion cubic feet of capacity, this facility, is the largest of its kind on the east coast. But this facility has been designed and constructed so that it is not visible from the road. The site was chosen specifically for its seclusion, but if the US 158 bypass is re-routed to be near the tanks, they would be visible from the road, making them much more vulnerable to terrorist attacks.

Third, the re-routed bypass would also pass through an area of Stokesdale contaminated with ethyl di-bromide in the highest concentration anywhere in the state. Ethyl di-bromide is a carcinogen, which makes it a significant public health hazard. The presence of this soil and groundwater contamination prompted Stokesdale to construct a completely new municipal water system.

Fourth, there are a few remaining un-contaminated wells used by local businesses and family farms in this area. But many of these wells are producing barely enough water to be viable. Construction of this re-routed bypass could disturb the productivity of this aquifer, forcing closure of many of the farms and business that rely on this water source.

Finally, the re-aligned bypass could effectively cut off Eversfield Road, which is the primary route for emergency vehicles from Summerfield to Stokesdale.

The Stokesdale Town Council is not advocating any particular route, but we are willing to work with the MPO in identifying a viable route for the US 158 bypass that will create minimal impacts on the community. In fact there is a considerable number of Stokesdale residents who question the need for widening US 158, in light of the planned I-73 connector and improvements to US 220.

Sandy Carmany agreed to forward Mr. Jones' information and concerns to NCDOT, so that it can be taken into consideration.

At this point in the meeting, a quorum had been attained, so the discussion of agenda items resumed its normal sequence.

1. Approve Minutes of June 22, 2005

Don Vaughan moved for approval of the minutes. Robbie Perkins seconded the motion. The Committee voted unanimously to approve the minutes of the June 22, 2005 meeting.

2. Proposed Thoroughfare Plan Amendment

Craig McKinney advised that this proposed amendment to the Thoroughfare Plan has been initiated as a result of project documentation from NCDOT regarding replacement of the bridge on McConnell Road over Little Alamance Creek, just south of the Millstream Road intersection. The project will construct the new bridge on a new alignment, just east of the existing bridge. Re-alignment of the bridge will necessitate re-configuring the McConnell Road / Millstream Road intersection. The final plans for the project show a re-configuration that differs from the original, which the current Thoroughfare Plan alignment was based on. The changes in the intersection configuration will provide a more geometrically acceptable alignment. The proposed Thoroughfare Plan amendment removes the original intersection re-configuration and replaces it with one that matches NCDOT's actual construction plans. The requested action is to approve the Thoroughfare Plan amendment as presented.

Don Vaughan moved to approve the amendment as presented. Robbie Perkins seconded the motion. The Committee voted unanimously to approve the amendment as presented.

3. Resolution of Support for 06-12 MTIP Amendment

Jeff Sovich advised that in May, 2003, the Thoroughfare Plan was amended to include a system of freeway level connector routes in the vicinity of the Piedmont Triad International Airport. Recently PART asked the NC Turnpike Authority to investigate opportunities to establish the I-73 / I-74 connector corridor as a toll road. The Turnpike Authority agreed to conduct preliminary evaluation of the corridor, and has requested that NCDOT take the necessary steps to establish this study as a project in the MTIP. NCDOT in turn, has requested the MPO to indicate its support for the study and future MTIP amendments needed to advance the project to completion. The project will include environmental, planning and feasibility study of both the Guilford and Forsyth County portions of the corridor. Official MTIP amendment action is anticipated in October or soon following. The Winston-Salem-Forsyth MPO indicated its support for the study at its last meeting. The requested action is to approve the resolution of support for this study, as presented.

Don Vaughan moved to approve the resolution of support as presented. Robbie Perkins seconded the motion. The Committee voted unanimously to approve the resolution of support as presented.

4. Conformity Determination Report for 06-12 MTIP

Lydia McIntyre advised that the TAC approved the MTIP on June 22nd, contingent on the approval of the Conformity Determination Report. The report was completed and made available for a 30 day public review and comment period, which concluded on July 25th. However, because the federal agencies are still reviewing the report, approval has been deferred to the next meeting, August 24th.

5. Update to Boundaries, Structure, and Governance Report

Lydia McIntyre advised that North Carolina General Statutes requires that at least every ten years, following the release of applicable data from the decennial census, each MPO must conduct a review of its boundaries, structure, and governance. Greensboro originally approved its Boundaries, Structure, and Governance Report in January, 2003. MPOs are also required to prepare updates to the review within one year of new air quality non-attainment designations. As a result of Guilford County's designation as a non-attainment area under the 8-hour ozone standard, the Greensboro MPO has prepared the required update to its Boundaries, Structure, and Governance Report. Although the

designation became effective on April 15, 2004, the conformity requirements remain deferred until April, 2007, while the Triad Early Action Compact process is implemented, with the ultimate aim of attaining the 8-hour ozone standard. The requested action is to approve the updated Boundaries, Structure, and Governance Report as presented.

Robbie Perkins moved to approve the updated report as presented. Don Vaughan seconded the motion. The Committee voted unanimously to approve the updated report as presented.

6. Reports, Concerns, and Discussion from MPO Area Towns (continued)

Bill Bruce reiterated the Town of Summerfield's request from the June 22 meeting, urging the TAC consider funding and conducting a feasibility study for realignment of the NC 150 corridor through Summerfield. Population growth rate in Summerfield over the past five to ten years has been remarkable. Accordingly, the Town is working on refining a vision plan for its historic downtown district, that will transform it into a pedestrian-friendly mixed-use area. The transportation system presents a major challenge to achieving this vision, because of the significant amount of through traffic using Summerfield Road and Pleasant Ridge Road, traveling between Greensboro and points north, as well as through the portion of the east-west NC 150 corridor where it coincides with US 220. Adding to the congestion through central Summerfield, NCDOT recently unveiled plans for the US 220 widening project, which indicated that the Hamburg Mill Road intersection would no longer allow left turns to US 220 north. A feasibility study could help determine whether a realignment of NC 150 would relieve any of this pressure.

Jim Westmoreland advised that this proposed feasibility study has been added to the draft priority needs list, which the TCC will be reviewing in the near future, for potential TAC action at the August meeting.

Doug Galyon advised that the Summerfield Town Council should consider developing plans now to eventually establish the Town's own transportation department, with funding mechanisms that will allow it to handle construction and maintenance of transportation facilities within its boundaries, and to do so with greater flexibility and self-determination.

Edgar Phillips advised that Pleasant Garden's Long Range Planning Board has recommended that the Town Council approve the Town's Collector Street Plan. The Town Council will take action on this item in August.

Pleasant Garden has also hired a full-time paid Town Administrator. The Town is making slow but steady progress toward becoming a viable full-service municipality in the next ten to fifteen years.

7. Citizen Comments

None.

Business / Potential Action Items

1. 07-13 MTIP Development Process

Tyler Meyer advised that even though the 2006 to 2012 TIP will not take effect until October 1st, it is already time to begin developing the 2007 to 2013 TIP, which is scheduled for adoption next summer. The result is that the TIP development cycle will shift from approval in even years to approval in odd

years. The first step in the process is development of the priority needs list. A TCC work session will be held in early August to refine recommendations for action by the TAC at the September meeting. The priority needs list would then be submitted to NCDOT for their review and consideration in October, followed by NCDOT's release of the draft TIP in December. Further consultation between MPO staff and NCDOT will continue throughout the preparation of the final TIP, due to be released in Summer, 2006, and become effective October 1st.

NCDOT recently provided feedback on the CMAQ project proposal approved by the TAC in January, which included funding for GTA's University and College Service (UCS). NCDOT indicated that although it intends to fully fund the projects that the MPO requested, there will be less money available per year, than was previously anticipated. Consequently, funding for the UCS project would need to be stretched over a six-year period between 2006-2011, instead of a 3 year period. However, because the requirements of the transit CMAQ program stipulate that operating expenses are eligible for support only during the first three years of a new service, the expanded funding period will not work. In order to find the UCS project within the needed timeline, staff have are working with NCDOT to develop a proposal that would shift federal funds from another project. One potential solution would be to delay the Woody Mill Road interchange portion of project R-2612 by one to two years, since it is not a time-sensitive project. Staff have prepared a resolution of endorsement to conduct negotiations with NCDOT to secure the necessary funding for the UCS, up to and including shifts in right-of-way acquisition and environmental mitigation phases of the Woody Mill Road / US 421 interchange if needed.

Robbie Perkins moved to approve the resolution as presented. Don Vaughan seconded the motion. The Committee voted unanimously to approve the resolution as presented.

2. Upcoming Planning Study Needs

Tyler Meyer advised that part of the process of developing the priority needs list will include an inventory of various planning studies needed. Taking steps now to initiate feasibility studies and environmental assessments can provide significant momentum to justify funding for construction projects currently programmed as unfunded. Staff will provide more information at upcoming meetings.

MPO staff are conducting preliminary investigations of two ideas that have surfaced recently, in order to gain a better understanding of their significance relative to other long-standing study needs. The first consists of basic evaluation of the potential traffic impacts and environmental data on the "West Side Thoroughfare" conceptual corridor in order to determine if a Thoroughfare Plan amendment for a project like this would work and what the potential trade-offs would be relative to proposed corridors already included in the Thoroughfare Plan. The second involves the "Heart of the Triad Study" that PART has conducted in coordination with the planning directors throughout the region. Now PART proposes a market analysis to determine the types of land uses that are feasible and likely for this area, leading to a conceptual land use plan for the area and a more detailed review of the transportation in the vicinity.

3. Update on Project R-2309, US 220 Widening

Eric Midkiff introduced himself as the Central Region Project Head for NCDOT's Project Development and Environmental Analysis Division, and introduced Stephanie Caudill as the new project manager for project R-2309. Stephanie Caudill advised that a public hearing on the project was held last night, Tuesday, July 26th, which was attended by approximately 120 people. PDEA will try to accommodate reasonable requests for changes to the project, including driveway access, median breaks, turning lanes,

etc. All the comments received will be reviewed and used to revise the plan for the project. The project involves widening a 5.4 mile stretch of US 220 from Horsepen Creek Road to Winfree Road. Each of the various alternatives for the cross-section of the project were described in turn.

Regarding the timeline for the project, the Environmental Assessment was completed in December, 2004. A meeting will be held in December, 2005 to present the Least Environmentally Damaging Practicable Alternative, which is part of the Merger environmental permitting process. The final environmental document is scheduled to be completed in July, 2006. Right-of-way acquisition will begin in 2007, followed by construction beginning in 2009.

4. Update on Bryan Boulevard Relocation and Airport Expansion

Mickie Elmore advised that the expansion of the Piedmont Triad International Airport consists of six individual projects:

- the north concourse extension, adding six to eight new gates to serve as the new location for Delta operations, will cost \$6.3 million, with completion in 2006;
- the extension of the terminal building on each, which will including security screening checkpoint areas, will be finished in late 2005;
- installation of a new baggage belt system, which will cost around \$3 million;
- construction of the new 40,000 square foot hangar for ComAir, which may subsequently be doubled, will have 120 person crew complement;
- the construction of the third runway and FedEx Mid-Atlantic Hub with a total cost of \$516 million, funded jointly by FedEx, the Federal Aviation Administration, NCDOT, and the Piedmont Triad Airport Authority. Construction is scheduled to begin summer 2006, to be operational by 2009. When fully operational, this facility will have approximately 1,500 employees, with a maximum of 63 flights per day; and
- relocation of Bryan Boulevard, which is currently under construction and is scheduled to be complete prior to opening of the FedEx facility.

PTIA has established a Citizens Advisory Committee, an Airport Users Committee, and a Government Advisory Committee, to study the flight pattern alternatives to determine the best way to minimize noise impacts to residential neighborhoods.

Robbie Perkins suggested that PTIA should contact the City of Greensboro, the City of High Point, and Guilford County regarding the possibility of updating their development ordinances to reflect anticipated changes in the noise impact estimates. Addressing this issue now will ensure that the airport will remain adequately buffered from future development pressures. Mickie Elmore responded that he will present this suggestion to the Piedmont Triad Airport Authority Board.

5. MPO Strategic Reports

Tyler Meyer advised that the House and Senate have spent the last few months working on the surface transportation re-authorization bill and have passed another extension of it, with the expectation that current negotiations will resolve points of contention shortly.

The Bridford Parkway extension and I-40 grade separation project has received a full approval of the final environmental document, which is a Finding of No Significant Impact. This approval signifies that the project will be able to proceed to right-of-way acquisition, design, and construction.

The environmental document is complete for the West Market Street widening project out to Colfax, but the final environmental approval has not yet been granted.

A conformity analysis is under way related to the PM 2.5 non-attainment designation. The analysis is due to be complete in April, 2006. Current indications are that we will be able to demonstrate conformity as a result of the analysis.

MPO staff have been developing the scope for a Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan over the past several months. A consultant has been selected to assist with development of the plan and contract arrangements will be finalized soon. Formal kick-off events will be held in the next six to eight weeks.

Other Items

1. Board Member Report

Doug Galyon advised that NCDOT has asked the legislature to allow the state to issue GARVEE bonds. GARVEE bonds are issued by the state in anticipation of receiving money from the federal government. This will give the state access to over \$900 million to help ease some of the current budget shortfalls. Currently 19 other states use this mechanism.

2. Regional Transportation News

None.

3. Wrap-Up

None.

Next TAC meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, August 24th at 1:45 pm. The TAC adjourned at 3:20 pm.