



# GREENSBORO URBAN AREA METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION

## TECHNICAL COORDINATING COMMITTEE

September 28, 2005

11:00 a.m. Greensboro, NC

Conference Room 401 (County Commissioners' Briefing Room)

Old Guilford County Courthouse

### ATTENDANCE

Jim Westmoreland	GDOT / MPO	Greg Niles	Guilford Co. Planning & Development
Tyler Meyer	GDOT / MPO	Mike Cowan	NCDOT Div. 7
Jeff Sovich	GDOT / MPO	Hanna Cockburn	PTRPO/PTCOG
Craig McKinney	GDOT / MPO	Heidi Galanti	Greensboro Planning Department
Lydia McIntyre	GDOT / MPO	Mark Kirstner	Guilford County Community & Economic Development
Peggy Holland	GDOT / MPO	Jonathan Jones	<i>Greensboro News &amp; Record</i>
Adam Fischer	GDOT	Amy Dominello	<i>Greensboro News &amp; Record</i>
Scott Rhine	PART		

Jim Westmoreland called the meeting to order at 11:05 a.m.

### Action Items

#### 1. Approve Minutes of August 24, 2005

Mike Cowan moved for approval of the minutes as presented. Adam Fischer seconded the motion. The Committee voted unanimously to approve the minutes of the August 24, 2005 meeting as presented.

#### 2. Amend 05-06 UPWP

Jeff Sovich advised that with the recent passage of SAFETEA-LU, Greensboro's PL fund allocations were increased. Accordingly, an amendment to the FY 05-06 UPWP is proposed to add in these funds, as well as some remaining unobligated funds from the FY 04-05 UPWP. The proposed amendment will

increase the current total of \$518,000 programmed for FY 05-06 to \$704,000. This additional funding will enable the program of planning projects for the year to continue to move ahead. The requested action was to recommend that the TAC to approve this amendment to the 05-06 UPWP.

Scott Rhine moved to recommend that the TAC approve this amendment as presented. Greg Niles seconded the motion. The Committee voted unanimously to recommend that the TAC approve the amendment as presented.

### **3. Amend 04-10 MTIP**

Jeff Sovich advised that GTA's recent efforts to prepare its list of priority projects for the 07-13 Transportation Improvement Program gave GTA the opportunity to do a full-scale review of its capital and preventive maintenance needs for upcoming years. As a result of this review, two FY 05 projects can be shifted. It was determined that project TA-4764, 8 Replacement Small Buses and project TA-4765, 3 Expansion Small Buses can be delayed by one year. The amendment helps to better meet GTA's capital needs. The requested action is to recommend that the TAC approve the amendment to the 04-10 MTIP as presented.

Hanna Cockburn moved to recommend that the TAC approve the amendment as presented. Greg Niles seconded the motion. The Committee voted unanimously to recommend that the TAC approve amendment as presented.

### **4. Amend 06-12 MTIP**

Jeff Sovich advised that GTA's review of capital and preventive maintenance needs for development of the 07-13 Transportation Improvement Program also identified projects in the 06-12 MTIP which were in need of amendment. This proposed amendment involves changes to 35 GTA projects and 2 PART projects. The MPO staff worked closely with GTA to do a thorough review of GTA's capital and preventative maintenance needs over the coming years. The proposed amendment adds several projects, deletes several others, and changes the descriptions, funding sources, and/or schedules several existing projects. These modifications ensure that the programmed projects better meet GTA's needs and available resources.

The amendments to PART projects involve correcting one project mistakenly attributed to GTA, and bringing the schedule of a second project into consistency with a corresponding amendment to the 04-10 MTIP approved during the August 24 meeting. The requested action is to recommend that the TAC approve the proposed amendment to the 06-12 MTIP as presented.

Scott Rhine moved to recommend that the TAC approve the amendment as presented. Tyler Meyer seconded the motion. The Committee voted unanimously to recommend that the TAC approve the amendment as presented.

### **5. Approve Priority Needs List for 07-13 MTIP**

Tyler Meyer advised that in response to the TAC's request during the August meeting, MPO staff have modified the proposed MPO Priority Needs List for the 07-13 MTIP. The modification adds the Pegg Road / Thatcher Road Connector as a priority for initiating an environmental study in order to better expedite that project. In other respects, the roadway system priorities remain essentially unchanged.

The bicycle and pedestrian priorities consist of Phase II of the Battleground Rail-Trail, which has received High Priority Project funding through SAFETEA-LU. This earmark provides partial funding for future extension of this facility south from Markland Drive along the Norfolk-Southern rail corridor.

Regional study needs have been narrowed down to establishing funding for the environmental documentation for the first tier of the Airport Area Transportation Study recommendations. The preliminary study of the I-73 / I-74 Connector, which has been initiated by the North Carolina Turnpike Authority, may help to advance the Airport Area environmental process. The Turnpike Authority are trying to keep that study on track and seek approval for additional analysis that may be needed.

The transit priorities consist of establishing funding for replacing and expanding GTA's bus fleet for FY 06 through FY 11, as well as a system-wide technology upgrade which would include an automated vehicle locator system, to improve the efficiency of routing and scheduling, provide real-time service information, and integrate with the planned Signal System Replacement and Expansion project. The requested action is to recommend that the TAC approve the Priority Needs List as presented. The next step in the process is transmittal to NCDOT for their review and for further discussion about these future needs.

Tyler Meyer moved to recommend that the TAC approve the Priority Needs List as presented. Hanna Cockburn seconded the motion. The Committee voted unanimously to recommend that the TAC approve the Priority Needs List as presented.

## **6. STP-DA Funds for Project U-4711 and 07-11 MTIP**

Tyler Meyer advised that the Greensboro Signal and ITS System Replacement and Expansion project received a federal earmark of \$10 million with the passage of SAFETEA-LU. This funding combined with the necessary local match of \$2.5 million, and previously programmed CMAQ funds of \$8.8 million left a funding gap of \$2.5 million on this \$23.8 million project. MPO staff have worked with NCDOT staff about how to close this gap and have developed a proposal to apply \$2.0 million in Surface Transportation Program – Direct Apportionment funds to the project, plus the accompanying \$500,000 local match. The proposed resolution states the MPO's intent to exercise its STP-DA obligation authority for this project in FY 07. Subject to completion of negotiations and approval by NCDOT, this project can move forward. The STP-DA funds would be drawn from the High Point Road widening project which has been delayed by other project-development related factors. The proposed resolution also communicates the MPO's intent to direct STP-DA obligating authority throughout the 07-13 TIP timeframe. The requested action is to recommend that the TAC approve the resolution as presented.

Adam Fischer moved to recommend that the TAC approve the resolution as presented. Scott Rhine seconded the motion. The Committee voted unanimously to recommend that the TAC approve the resolution as presented.

## **Business / Potential Action Items**

### **1. 07-13 MTIP Development Update**

Tyler Meyer advised that development of the TIP follows a linear process. Upon the submission of the priority needs list, NCDOT will begin working on the draft TIP. There will be some opportunities for further discussion, comments, and refinement during that time. NCDOT expects to issue the draft TIP

in the early spring, followed by a formal MPO-NCDOT negotiation meeting which is customary in the TIP development process. NCDOT will then hold its public meetings for the draft TIP throughout the state. The MPO will also conduct some public involvement activities meetings in the April to May timeframe. The final 07-13 TIP document will then be prepared for TAC approval around June, or possibly later that summer. An air quality conformity determination report for PM 2.5 will be required, which is currently being prepared by PART. The conformity analysis is being developed to meet the April 2006 deadline established in conjunction with the enactment of the PM 2.5 air quality standard. If no major project changes occur in the new TIP, this analysis will suffice. Similarly, if no significant project changes occur, the current Ozone conformity analysis will also remain in effect. It is possible that new analyses will be required to cover both PM 2.5 and Ozone if significant project schedule changes occur in this TIP cycle. The BOT is expected to approve the state TIP sometime after July of 2006. This TIP development cycle is a one year process instead of a two year process because the state is shifting adoption from the even to odd years, making the sequence compressed but still manageable.

## **2. Bicycle and Pedestrian Transportation Plan Kick-off**

Jeff Sovich advised that the Bicycle and Pedestrian Transportation Plan is going to be a truly comprehensive effort looking at both cycling and walking simultaneously. The BiPed Plan will span the entire MPO area and will coordinate with our three neighboring MPO's, as well as the areas served by the Piedmont Triad RPO. MPO staff will also be coordinating very closely with the Greensboro Parks and Recreation Department, which is embarking on its own Trails and Greenways Master Plan. Essentially, the end result will be a single integrated plan, with two main components that function seamlessly together. The Trails and Greenways Master Plan component will address the recreational and health aspects of cycling and walking, while the Bicycle and Pedestrian Transportation component will address the transportation and safety aspects of cycling and walking. A series of four public meetings have been scheduled throughout the area for October 12, 13, 19, and 20. The meetings are from 5:30-7:30 pm and we hope to see a lot of participation among the general public as well as among bicycling and pedestrian enthusiasts in the area. Staff will provide more details as the project progresses.

## **3. NCDOT Policy on Matching Funds**

Tyler Meyer advised in the past, local areas have been generally expected to provide the local matching funds for most projects, while NCDOT has provided the state match amount. However, the Board of Transportation reviewed a policy at its September meeting that would generally discontinue routine provision of matching funds by the State for projects selected by local areas, and funded through either a federal earmark, through the CMAQ program, or through STP-DA funds, if the project is not already in the TIP. This policy would give the Board the discretion to choose whether or not to provide matching funds for such projects. The Board's decision to provide matching funds for any particular project would be non-negotiable, although there would remain some instances where a state match would be appropriate. This policy is expected to be adopted by the BOT at the October meeting. MPO staff are investigating the option of requesting NCDOT to consider introducing greater flexibility in this policy and to generally engage the MPOs and RPOs in more direct consultation in prior to presenting such policies to the Board.

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

Jim Westmoreland advised that three different events will be occurring related to the initiation of Amtrak service at the Depot. The first train will arrive at the Depot at 12:15 am on Saturday, October 1st, which may receive some media coverage, but there won't be any organized activities. Then on Friday, October 21st, there will be a dedication ceremony and celebration for public officials. Finally, on Saturday, October 22nd, there will be a community open house and public celebration from 10:30 am until 4:30 pm. NCDOT and the BOT have shown great leadership in getting this project completed and have been very generous in preparation for the celebration.

The re-establishment of passenger rail service at the Depot should help to provide the stimulus needed to bring the Depot's western wing lease space to full occupancy very soon. There is also a concept to develop a permanent visitors' center in the Depot's main concourse. Another possibility involves expanding the passenger waiting area for GTA and PART, which are both experiencing significant increases in ridership. There is also a lot of wall space in the concourse that can be utilized, either as advertising space, or as display space for information on Greensboro's history, culture, events, and points of interest. It may also be possible to make space available for lease to kiosk-based vendors. To provide a perspective on the effect that the Amtrak opening will have, currently, between 5,000 and 7,000 people come through the Depot each day, and 80% of GTA riders transfer there. The arrival of Amtrak will add several thousand people per day to this already busy hub.

#### **Other Items**

##### **1. TCC Member Report**

Lydia McIntyre advised that a draft feasibility study was recently released for the Pegg Road / Thatcher Road Connector from Gallimore Dairy Road to Market Street. The study recommends a four lane divided cross-section, with the section of Thatcher Road between Gallimore Dairy Road and Thorndike Road shifted slightly west to a new alignment. The estimated cost for the widening and construction is \$24.1 million, including a grade separation over I-40. The next step in the process is to seek funding for an conducting an environmental study, which has been added to the Priority Needs List. If funding authorization is received, the project can then move into the planning phase of the environmental process.

Craig McKinney advised that NCDOT announced this week that final public review of plans for widening Groometown Road from Vandalia Road to Grandover Parkway, will be held during the second week of October. Initial review by MPO staff indicates that the plans look good. The proposed contract letting date for the project is July 31st, 2006.

Development of plans for the Hornaday Road Extension project is moving along rapidly, with completion of the bridge design expected in October. Although a change order has been issued on the roadway design, which relocated the access drive for the rock quarry, the roadway design should also be completed in October. The Hornaday Road bridge is anticipated to be complete before this section of the Urban Loop opens for traffic. MPO staff will be meeting with NCDOT Highway Division 7 personnel next Friday review details of the project design and schedule, as well as options to use City funding on a reimbursement basis to avoid TIP-related delays to the project, which now place the let date for the project at January, 2008.

Mark Kirstner advised that he attended the Refueling America conference at NC State University, sponsored by the North Carolina Solar Center. There is currently a plan to attempt to bring bio-diesel fuel to Guilford County. Greensboro is the largest user of bio-diesel fuel in the County, but that there is no storage facility for the fuel. In addition, despite the fact that North Carolina is currently among the leading states for bio-diesel usage, there is no bio-diesel production facility in the State. Last week, the Piedmont Triad Council of Governments hosted a meeting with several of the major petroleum distributors in the state regarding the possibility of bringing a bio-diesel storage facility to Guilford County. Such a move could have significant effects on local air quality and agricultural development.

A consultant has been hired to move the Heart of the Triad project forward. The project has an accelerated timeline, with the completed plan anticipated within the next six months. The area Chambers of Commerce have teamed up to provide funding matches to the State. A kickoff celebration for the project has been tentatively scheduled for November 1<sup>st</sup>, to be held at the Airport Marriott Hotel.

Next TCC meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, October 26<sup>th</sup> at 11:00 am. The TCC adjourned at 12:15 pm.