



**TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE**  
**Minutes of April 7, 2008**  
**11:00 a.m., Greensboro, NC**  
**Board Room**  
**Greensboro Cultural Center**

**TAC MEMBERS PRESENT**

Robbie Perkins	<i>TAC Chair</i>	Kirk Perkins	<i>Guilford County Board of Commissioners</i>
Doug Galyon	<i>NCDOT</i>	T. Dianne Bellamy-Small	<i>Greensboro City Council</i>

**ATTENDANCE**

Adam Fischer	<i>TCC Chair</i>	Michael Abuya	<i>NCDOT</i>
Tyler Meyer	<i>GDOT / MPO</i>	Mike Mills	<i>NCDOT</i>
Craig McKinney	<i>GDOT / MPO</i>	Dabney Sanders	<i>Action Greensboro</i>
Peter Ohlms	<i>GDOT / MPO</i>	John McLendon	<i>Downtown Greenway Steering Committee</i>
Lydia McIntyre	<i>GDOT / MPO</i>	Sandy Carmany	<i>Town of Pleasant Garden</i>
Chris Spencer	<i>GDOT Engineering</i>	Taft Wireback	<i>News &amp; Record</i>
Scott Rhine	<i>PART</i>		

**Robbie Perkins called the meeting to order at 2:10 p.m. and directed staff to begin with business items due to the lack of a quorum.**

**Business/Potential Action Items**

**I. Proposed Downtown Greenway**

John McLendon, co-chair of Action Greensboro’s Downtown Greenway Steering Committee, provided an overview of the proposed Downtown Greenway project along with Dabney Sanders, special projects consultant with Action Greensboro.

Sanders advised that the Downtown Greenway is the official commemorative project of the Greensboro Bicentennial Commission. The 4.8-mile path loops around Greensboro’s central business district and will be designed for bicycling, walking, and other forms of active transportation. It will also form a central hub for the future greenway and trail network. Possible benefits include enhanced quality of life and encouraging development in downtown Greensboro. Sanders noted that although many cities were building greenways, a connected loop greenway would distinguish Greensboro as unique in the state and nationwide.

**Planning for the transportation future**

Sanders described the wide range of community partners involved in the project, including the City of Greensboro, Guilford County, nonprofit organizations, and educational institutions. Neighborhood connections and nearby neighborhoods include Glenwood, Warnersville, Asheboro Square, Arlington Street, Ole Asheboro, Southside, Cumberland Court, the East Market Street area, Aycock, Fisher Park, Latham Park, Lake Daniel, Westerwood, Cedar Street/Bellemeade, and College Hill. The greenway is envisioned to have eventual connections to Country Park and the watershed trails, Barber Park, and Hester Park, and the future Keeley Park.

Community involvement has included numerous meetings with civic organizations and neighborhoods, seeking to identify items that should be addressed and taken into consideration. Neighborhood history and themes can be incorporated into public art, which will be incorporated into functional and other elements of the project.

Total project cost is estimated at \$26 million, with \$17 million in transportation-related improvements for the construction of an urban trail. This includes multiple crossings of various roads. The balance of the cost includes short- and long-term trail-related parks and trailheads, along with a fund for initial operating costs. The City's Parks and Recreation Department will eventually oversee annual maintenance for the project. Funding for equipment and personnel expenses will be required in the first phase, and maintenance funding of about \$85,000 annually is anticipated to be necessary in the future. The police department has also been involved in the discussion of cost estimates for ensuring safety and security of trail users. Sanders noted that the bicycle squad in the central business district was willing to add the first phase of the greenway to its existing patrols.

The trail is envisioned as a public-private partnership. Funding for Phase 1 includes a grant from Fit Communities and funding from the Bicentennial Commission, local foundations, and the Moses Cone/Wesley Long Community Health Foundation. NCDOT has approved the use of public funds for relocation of a ramp and installation of a traffic signal at Lee Street, and Guilford County placed the project in its 2008 parks and recreation bond for potential funding. Greenways, Inc. will develop a phase-by-phase funding strategy that explores multiple options for the project.

Official community support to date includes the Bicentennial Commission, Greensboro City Council, the Greensboro Parks and Recreation Commission, and the Guilford County Commissioners. Sanders advised that official MPO support was desired. The project may also be supported in a potential City transportation bond in 2008.

Additional issues will need to be addressed related to engineering, safety, neighborhood concerns, and funding. McLendon noted that the project would benefit the City and the downtown area and advised that the greenway would work nicely with other plans that the City has for the area around Lee Street.

T. Dianne Bellamy-Small inquired about funding from private sources. McLendon advised that local foundations were involved, but that funding amounts could not yet be announced. Bellamy-Small clarified that she was wondering about corporate sponsorships, not community foundations. Sanders advised that while naming opportunities would be appropriate, the group wanted to establish significant public support before initiating a corporate fundraising program. Robbie Perkins noted that there would likely be challenges to the project based on its cost and anticipated funding. Perkins also noted that the project would not all happen in one year, which may not be well understood by the public. He suggested that the project could be just as successful as the downtown baseball stadium.

Noting the presence of a quorum, Perkins advised that it would be appropriate to take action regarding support for the project. Kirk Perkins moved to adopt a resolution supporting the Downtown Greenway. Bellamy-Small seconded the motion. The Committee voted unanimously to officially support the Downtown Greenway Project.

Robbie Perkins directed staff to return to the action items due to the presence of a quorum.

## **Action Items**

### **1. Approve Minutes of February 18, 2008**

Kirk Perkins moved for approval of the minutes. T. Dianne Bellamy-Small seconded the motion. The Committee voted unanimously to approve the minutes of the February 18, 2008 meeting.

### **2. Annual MPO Self-Certification**

Tyler Meyer advised that self-certification accompanies the adoption of the Unified Planning Work Program. It is a step for the TAC to certify compliance with federal laws and associated regulations. Staff and the TCC recommended that the MPO approve self-certification.

T. Dianne Bellamy-Small requested clarification at a future date regarding how the MPO complies with the Civil Rights Act of 1964. Meyer advised that he would follow-up with her.

Bellamy-Small moved for approval of self-certification. Kirk Perkins seconded the motion. The Committee voted unanimously to certify its transportation planning process for the coming fiscal year.

### **3. Approve 2008-2009 Work Program**

Tyler Meyer advised that the main purpose of the Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) is to account for USDOT Planning grants to the MPO for the coming fiscal year and how they will be used. Documentation identifies the sources of funds and their expected uses. This includes planning funds from FHWA called PL funds, federal transit planning funds under Section 5303 and Section 5307, and State Planning and Research funds for NCDOT's use.

Meyer described priority projects for the upcoming year, including the 2035 Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) update and Congestion Management Program. He noted that the regional model will have its external station survey updated this year. Feasibility studies, corridor studies, and regional and local initiatives are other items that may be part of the year's projects. Meyer advised that it would be typical to need an amendment to the UPWP towards the end of the fiscal year to adjust funding line items as needed, but that the recommended action at this time was to approve the UPWP.

Kirk Perkins moved for approval of the UPWP. T. Dianne Bellamy-Small seconded the motion. The Committee voted unanimously to approve the 2008-2009 Unified Planning Work Program.

Bellamy-Small inquired exactly what is done with the planning funds. Meyer advised that GTA would typically use planning funds to evaluate its service requests. For the MPO, some of the planning activities include data collection, such as for the regional model. Other activities include technical studies, writing documents for planning purposes, such as the LRTP, and a range of administrative functions. Some staff costs are supported as well. Bellamy-Small inquired if the Greensboro Transportation Needs survey was done with planning funds. Adam Fischer advised that it was not, as it was a city effort and not an MPO effort.

### **4. Assign Designated Recipient and Amend 2007-2013 Metropolitan Transportation Improvement Program for the Job Access & Reverse Commute and New Freedom Programs**

Peter Ohlms advised that two actions were required to accompany the draft Coordinated Human Services Transportation Plan. The first was approval of a resolution identifying the designated recipient for federal transit funds under the Job Access & Reverse Commute (JARC) and New Freedom Programs. Ohlms advised that JARC provides funding to assist people with lower incomes to access employment, and New Freedom provides funding for services that exceed the Americans with Disabilities Act. Both programs are allocated to the area based on formulas, and a "banker" must administer the funds.

Ohlms advised that because the City of Greensboro already administered other federal transit funds, it would make sense for the City to administer JARC and New Freedom as well. The MPO would oversee a competitive selection process for these funds. Ohlms advised that the TCC recommended approval of a

resolution identifying the City of Greensboro as the designated recipient and noting that the MPO would conduct the competitive process.

Kirk Perkins moved for approval of the resolution. T. Dianne Bellamy-Small seconded the motion. The Committee voted unanimously to identify the City of Greensboro as the designated recipient for JARC and New Freedom funds.

Ohlms advised that the next step was to insert these funds into the Metropolitan Transportation Improvement Program (MTIP), which did not currently show them. Funding amounts from federal fiscal years 2006, 2007, and 2008 will be added to the MTIP without specific projects identified. Projects resulting from the competitive selection process will be eligible for funds under these MTIP items.

Kirk Perkins moved for approval of the MTIP amendment. T. Dianne Bellamy-Small seconded the motion. The Committee voted unanimously to amend the 2007-2013 Metropolitan Transportation Improvement Program to include JARC and New Freedom funding.

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

Sandy Carmany advised that she had been appointed as permanent clerk for the Town of Pleasant Garden. She noted that projects of importance to the town were R-2612, on the agenda for the meeting, and adjustment to the speed limit on Alliance Church Road.

## 6. Citizen Comments – None

### **Business / Potential Action Items**

## 2. Long Range Transportation Plan and Congestion Management Process

Lydia McIntyre advised that staff were updating the Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) and Congestion Management Process (CMP). The CMP, known as the Congestion Management System in 2004, is a required document for urbanized areas and serves as input for the LRTP. It is not required to be updated on the same schedule as the LRTP, but it is convenient to do so. It serves to examine the future roadway network, estimate future traffic and congestion, and explores options for managing congestion. Staff worked with a consultant to develop the data and recommendations in the CMP.

The CMP evaluates traffic in 2002 and 2015 only, representing existing conditions and near-term future conditions. Additional data through 2035 is used for the LRTP. The CMP and regional travel model predict that vehicle hours of travel will increase in the future, despite completion of new roadway projects. Doug Galyon noted that he typically saw the measure *vehicle miles traveled* used, rather than *vehicle hours traveled*. McIntyre advised that they are both helpful ways to look at travel demand and network performance. Vehicle miles traveled (VMT, the number of vehicles times the number of miles they travel) will similarly rise, and over-capacity facilities will represent a larger portion of the total VMT in 2015 than in 2002.

McIntyre advised that the volume-to-capacity ratio helps to identify potentially congested roads by comparing volumes to the capacity of roadways and intersections. In 2002, roadways over capacity in the afternoon peak hours included I-40 (before widening), NC 68, US 220 north, and US 70 east of Greensboro. In 2015, this measure shows that congestion becomes more evenly distributed across unincorporated areas.

T. Dianne Bellamy-Small inquired whether the southern portion of the Urban Loop was included in the analysis. McIntyre advised that it was included in 2015 along with the eastern portion, which is expected to be completed by then. McIntyre advised that sometimes the model assigned traffic volumes to certain roadways incorrectly; staff use engineering judgment to adjust these errors as necessary. Tyler Meyer advised that the model works well for overall traffic flow and identifying congestion “hot spots” and that established procedures are used when adjustments to the model’s output are required. Chris Spencer advised that the City also maintains its own congestion management program with corridor travel time studies.

Bellamy-Small inquired whether a shift in travel patterns was yet evident due to the opening of the new section of the Urban Loop. She also noted that speed enforcement is needed there. McIntyre advised that NCDOT was conducting traffic counts to estimate the amount of traffic diverted. Results were expected in June or July. Bellamy-Small noted that the Randleman Road Association would appreciate hearing from NCDOT regarding this analysis.

McIntyre advised that this year's CMP update included the following corridor-specific studies: US 70 east of Greensboro, High Point Road, New Garden Road, US 220, West Market Street, West Wendover Avenue, and East Wendover Avenue. Bellamy-Small inquired whether the section of Business I-85/40 from the interchange of Business I-85/40 to northbound US 29 could be reconstructed. Mike Mills advised that a bridge underpass may have been preventing the addition of lanes in that area but that he would investigate.

### **3. Draft 2009-2015 MTIP and Air Quality Conformity**

Lydia McIntyre advised that as the Draft 2009-2015 Metropolitan Transportation Improvement Program (MTIP) is being updated, the analysis of air-quality conformity is also occurring. Ongoing air-quality analysis will lead to a draft MTIP and conformity document available at the May MPO meeting, with public review expected in June. Scott Rhine advised that the emissions analysis is complete. Adoption of the MTIP and conformity analysis is expected in August 2008.

McIntyre provided background on air-quality conformity. Standards are based on requirements from the Clean Air Act. Designations are tied to air-quality monitoring and include ozone (nitrous oxides and volatile organic compounds) and fine particulates. Conformity applies to the Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) and the MTIP, and analysis is tied to the horizon years of the regional travel model. Conformity means that new projects will not cause the area to exceed its pollutant budgets or cause the area to worsen in its violation of standards. Triad MPOs work together on a regional conformity report rather than creating separate reports for each MPO. Regulators such as FHWA and EPA are included in the process, and next steps include a review of the analysis of conformity and approval with the MTIP and LRTP.

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

Peter Ohlms summarized the draft Coordinated Human Services Transportation Plan. It relates to the funding sources addressed under the Action Items and focuses on the area's vision for transportation for older adults, people with disabilities, and individuals with low incomes who need to get to work.

Ohlms advised that a one-day planning workshop allowed stakeholders to discuss their vision for a fully coordinated transportation system for the area. The plan contains a summary of this vision, where the area is today, and how to address the gaps in service to prioritize improvements. Elements of the vision included better marketing about services, better infrastructure such as sidewalks, on-time performance, and other information.

Ohlms advised that administration for funding programs related to this plan would be split between the City and the State as discussed under Action Items. Projects for funding under these programs must be derived from the Coordinated Plan. The tight timeline for developing the plan is due to the potential for FY 2006 funds to lapse if not accessed by September.

T. Dianne Bellamy-Small requested a copy of the slides and inquired whether there was discussion of consolidating human services transportation systems or whether that would occur with PART's Seamless Mobility Study. She noted that GTA's SCAT service is very expensive to operate. Ohlms advised that improved coordination of services, which could include consolidation, was one of the focus areas in the plan. He noted that the County's system is a consolidation of smaller human services agencies, each of which was operating its own transportation services. The Coordinated Plan was focused on the MPO area, and the Seamless Mobility Study has a broader scope of the Triad as a whole. Ohlms advised conducting the coordinated planning effort on a regional basis in the future.

Adam Fischer inquired whether the County could apply for funding under the federal programs related to this plan. Ohlms advised that they could, along with any other public or nonprofit organization. Bellamy-Small and Fischer discussed the need for cross-town bus routes to avoid the need to transfer downtown. Ohlms advised that GTA's five-year transit services plan was underway and might consider whether to restructure GTA's routes.

Bellamy-Small inquired about federal changes for transit funding, and Doug Galyon advised contacting Congressman Coble and noting that public transit should receive full funding under the federal transportation reauthorization legislation.

Robbie Perkins noted that the difficulties of moving between the Greensboro MPO area and the High Point MPO area was affecting the students of GTCC, at both its Jamestown and East Wendover campuses. Increasing gas prices make it difficult for students to move between the campuses. Bellamy-Small noted that the planned GTCC campus near the airport is not near any existing GTA routes.

Ohlms advised that plan adoption and project selection was anticipated for May.

## **5. Bike-to-Work Week**

Peter Ohlms advised that May would be National Bike Month. May 12 through 16 would be Bike-to-Work Week, and May 16 would be Bike-to-Work Day. GDOT will sponsor a "refueling station" in downtown Greensboro on the 16<sup>th</sup>, and other organizations will be sponsoring similar events around the Triad. Ohlms noted that a resolution of support was included with the meeting materials.

Kirk Perkins moved to approve the resolution. T. Dianne Bellamy-Small seconded the motion. The Committee voted unanimously to recognize Bike Month and Bike-to-Work Week for 2008.

Bellamy-Small suggested creating a list of where bike racks are in the downtown area as a promotion strategy. Meyer advised that staff had catalogued them but could investigate publishing the list. Perkins suggested getting the resolution to the County Commissioners as well.

## **6. Transportation Project Updates**

Craig McKinney referred Committee members to an information sheet for R-2612, a project to add interchanges along US 421, prepared on TAC request. He advised that staff could create similar information sheets for other area projects that have completed the planning process but are not yet constructed. Robbie Perkins inquired about the construction schedule for this project. McKinney advised that the first interchange at Woody Mill Road was scheduled to begin construction in 2010. The second, at Neelley Road, would be sometime after 2013. McKinney noted that design changes had been made to minimize wetland impacts.

## **7. MPO Strategic Topics**

Tyler Meyer noted that multiple noise-related complaints have been made relating to the newly opened western portion of the Urban Loop / I-40. Doug Galyon advised that he would discuss the issue in his report.

Meyer advised that nationwide air-quality standards for ground-level ozone would be tightened and would affect the MPO in 2011. This change was anticipated, but intervention from President Bush limited the extent of the change, making it potentially easier for areas such as Greensboro to meet the new standards. It is likely that the area will be in nonattainment, but there is a possibility that final conformity designations beginning in 2010 could be met without nonattainment status. Sandy Carmany noted that discussions were underway regarding the continuation of Early Action Compacts for air quality, despite earlier indications that such arrangements would no longer be permitted.

Meyer noted that staff had reviewed a draft feasibility study for routing of the I-73 Connector from the NC 68 / US 220 Connector to the Urban Loop. Two alternatives were retained for further study. The preferred alternative follows the 68/220 Connector and connects to Bryan Boulevard at the Old Oak Ridge Road

interchange. The other alternative, which has more environmental impacts, would come down the 68/220 Connector but would branch off to Bryan Boulevard before reaching the alignment of existing NC 68.

Meyer described an upcoming implementation effort related to the MPO's Bicycle, Pedestrian, and Greenway Master Plan. Although an able-bodied person can navigate improperly constructed wheelchair ramps, it can be difficult for a person with disabilities. Because standard or typical designs cannot always be applied across-the-board, new wheelchair ramps are often built incorrectly. The City and NCDOT are required to install or upgrade ramps when resurfacing streets. An upcoming accessible design training course would apply to City, County, and NCDOT engineers, designers, inspectors, and maintenance officials. The MPO will sponsor this training for 70 participants on April 22 and 23 using federal planning funds. The course instructor is with the national Association of Bicycle and Pedestrian Professionals.

T. Dianne Bellamy-Small inquired about stolen manhole covers in City streets. Adam Fischer advised that those would be under the City's Water Resources or Field Operations Departments.

## **Other Items**

### **I. Board Member Report**

Doug Galyon reported that a meeting was held in Raleigh to discuss noise issues on Greensboro's newly opened Western Urban Loop. Participants included the Secretary of NCDOT, the Deputy Secretary, the FHWA administrator, NCDOT noise-abatement staff, and GDOT staff. The outcome of the meeting was that all data will be reviewed to verify accuracy. Maps shown at public hearings will be reviewed to ensure that they were consistent with the construction. NCDOT expects to hold a public meeting within six weeks to continue discussions with area residents. Mike Mills advised that NCDOT could potentially partner with the City, but that a news report indicating the City would have to cover the follow-up costs was in error.

Robbie Perkins noted that residents are contacting state legislators, so it would be advisable to keep the legislators informed. T. Dianne Bellamy-Small noted that someone had stated that NCDOT had misrepresented the impact of the facility. Mills advised that people have claimed they did not know the new road would be an Interstate highway, so NCDOT has reviewed the public hearing maps, which do show an 8-lane facility. Craig McKinney advised that Painter Boulevard was an unofficial name that had been used in the community for years and from which people may have gotten the wrong impression about the project. He pointed out, however, that the environmental document for the project notes that this section of the Western Urban Loop would be designated I-40, and that the City and NCDOT have consistently communicated that the project would be a freeway facility. Mills noted that the remainder of the Loop is still unfunded, so it may be built through northwest Greensboro as much as two decades after its public hearing.

Galyon advised that he had met with the Governor's office regarding advancing the construction of the Eastern Urban Loop. Although he was doubtful that a change would be forthcoming, he advised that the project would likely hold its place without further delays. The Governor's office was tremendously impressed by the fact that the project was high on Rockingham County's list of priority projects. Galyon noted that the Western Loop from Bryan Boulevard to Lawndale will have its planning work complete in May or June, but funding still needs to be secured. Galyon advised keeping this project in the forefront to have it added to the next state funding program. He stated that completing all the planned Loops in the state will take \$3.9 billion in current-year dollars. The 21<sup>st</sup> Century Transportation Commission would likely consider how to address these needs in the long session of the general assembly.

### **2. Regional Transportation News**

Scott Rhine advised that PART had completed the regional emissions analysis for air quality and was on schedule for the remainder of the work. PART is also working to implement new express bus services on US 220 south to Asheboro and US 52 in the Winston-Salem area by June 30, 2008. Rhine requested input regarding where the bus should stop in Greensboro, considering that it could not stop everywhere.

Rhine advised that the Seamless Mobility Study was progressing well. It incorporates 12 public transportation systems and will likely result in some higher levels of coordination between them. He advised that there were a multitude of options; local jurisdictions will have to choose what to do.

T. Dianne Bellamy-Small inquired whether PART could be eligible to apply for funding intended for transportation for low-income workers. Peter Ohlms advised that it would be, since it is authorized to operate transit services within the MPO area. Bellamy-Small inquired about how areas near existing bus routes could be served, possibly on a weekly or monthly basis but not every day. Ohlms advised that there are some possibilities that transit agencies could investigate, including shared-ride feeder vans that connect outlying destinations to fixed routes.

### **3. Other Items – None**

### **4. Wrap-Up**

Robbie Perkins advised that NC Go! had presented an excellent summary of transportation needs in North Carolina recently. Perkins suggested that the City of Greensboro needs to actively pursue as large a bond referendum as possible in order to produce the local match that will be required for federal transportation projects in the future. Perkins recommended that Committee members speak with City Council regarding the need to support this type of bond. Now may be the time to poll the community on its interest in maintaining the area's transportation system.

Perkins noted that previous Greensboro transportation bonds had applied a significant portion of their funding to State-system streets, which has helped to keep Greensboro's transportation network adequate. With this strong track record, Perkins advised that he would support as large a bond as possible in order to leverage NCDOT's limited resources and meet the community's pressing needs. Doug Galyon agreed that the bond funds could help leverage state funds. Perkins also noted that roadway costs had continued escalating sharply in recent years.

T. Dianne Bellamy-Small and Adam Fischer advised that the City had conducted public meetings in March to attempt to identify residents' level of support for potential bond projects. Fischer noted that it would be necessary to use feedback from the meetings to narrow the focus and recommend a package of projects to Council for approval. Perkins suggested targeting education efforts to the City Council and stated that transportation bond funding would be the single most important item for the future of the community.

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