



GREENSBORO URBAN AREA METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION

TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE

March 22, 2006

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
Doug Galyon	NCDOT
Mike Winstead	Guilford County Board of Commissioners
Kirk Perkins	Guilford County Board of Commissioners

ATTENDANCE

Tyler Meyer	GDOT / MPO	Cary Gentry	Forsyth County Env. Affairs Dept.
Jeff Sovich	GDOT / MPO	Pat Reagan	Forsyth County Env. Affairs Dept.
Craig McKinney	GDOT / MPO	Lydia McIntyre	GDOT / MPO
Scott Rhine	PART		
Wayne Davis	NCDOT, Triad Unit		
Taft Wireback	News & Record		

Sandy Carmany called the meeting to order at 1:50 p.m.

Action Items

1. Approve Minutes of February 22, 2006

Kirk Perkins moved for approval of the minutes. Doug Galyon seconded the motion. The Committee voted unanimously to approve the minutes of the February 22, 2006 meeting.

2. Amend 06-12 MTIP

Tyler Meyer advised that there are two sets of MTIP amendments. Amendment 1 includes revisions to GTA and PART projects. GTA earmark projects (TA-4935, TA-4936, TA-XXX1, and TA-XXX2) were updated to reflect the funding shown in the SAFETEA-LU Bill and a letter from FTA showing the funding for fiscal year 2006. In addition, TA-4935 project status was changed to “funded”.

PART project revisions included reflecting earmark funding and advancement of schedule for TA -4910 (expansion buses). Two projects were also added, TP-XXX1 (regional commuter corridor study) and TP-XXX2 (unfunded Heart of the Triad land use study). TP-XXX1 is for capital planning for preliminary engineering and consultant modeling services. TP-XXX2 is a project for the continuation of the Heart of the Triad study for implementation. The funds for the project are going to be requested from the legislative body.

Kirk Perkins moved to recommend that the TAC approve this amendment as presented. Doug Galyon seconded the motion. The Committee voted unanimously to approve the amendment as presented.

Tyler Meyer advised that the second amendment the reallocation of STP-DA funds. This amendment stems from the need for increased resources to support GTAs burgeoning ridership growth and increasing costs as well as schedule delays on two STP-DA projects. The amendment adds FY 06 STP-DA funds to existing GTA preventive maintenance project TG-4757B. A total of \$625,000 was added (\$500,000 STP-DA and \$125,000 local match). These funds were removed from the Battleground Rail-Trail project (E-4709). E-4709 will be funded with FY 07 STP-DA obligation authority taken from the Wendover Avenue Sidewalk project (U-4747) and carryover balance from the previously programmed E-4709 FY 2006 allocation. U-4747 will henceforth be funded in its entirety by the City of Greensboro, and is expected to be ready for construction in FY 2008. Tyler Meyer noted the Board of Transportation is expected to approve this amendment in June and GTA will be able to submit their grants thereafter.

Doug Galyon moved to recommend that the TAC approve this amendment as presented. Kirk Perkins seconded the motion. The Committee voted unanimously to approve the amendment as presented.

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

None

4. Citizen Comments

None

Business / Potential Action Items

1. US 70 Project Environmental Study

Tyler Meyer advised of the need to move forward on the development of an environmental document for US 70 between Greensboro and Burlington (TIP projects U-2581 and R-2910). Traffic will increase in the future as the already substantial growth along the corridor continues. Significant future congestion is expected. The corridor is also a strategic one from an incident management standpoint view (relative to I-40) as well as from an economic and community development point of view. The project development

process will inevitably take a long time, so it is important to start on the environmental study as soon as possible to minimize the delay in ultimately delivering this project.

Meyer then reported on meetings between MPO staff and the NCDOT Project Development and Burlington MPO staffs to discuss initiating the environmental document. It appears that NCDOT Project Development (PDEA) staff could be available to prepare the document, but a funding commitment and direction to proceed is needed. Staff recommends that a letter be sent from TAC Chair Sandy Carmany to NCDOT on behalf of the MPO to request the department to begin work on the environmental study and to contact the MPO if negotiation regarding document funding is needed.

Keith Holliday asked for a cost estimate for preparation of the environmental document. Meyer responded one million dollars appears to be the best estimate in light of average costs on similar projects based on information from NCDOT PDEA. Mayor Holliday also asked how long would the document take to be completed and would it be beneficial to have a consultant complete it? Meyer added that the timeframe for completion of a document of this type could be expected in the 5 to 7 year range. Doug Galyon noted that consultant services would add expense and not necessarily lead to substantial time savings. Meyer further explained that as a result of the time it takes to complete a document, it will be important to initiate the document early such that it can be complete and a project ready to move forward as future funding becomes available. Such documents has a shelf life of 3 years between major project development steps (environmental document, design, right-of-way, construction) – if a three year window is exceeded between the completion of one major step and the start of another, then the information in the document has to be reevaluated.

Doug Galyon noted that he was aware of a good deal of support in the community for moving forward on this project. For example, he noted a recent communication from the President of Elon University noting the need for the project. Mayor Holliday and Commissioner Perkins noted the substantial growth taking place between Greensboro and Burlington and concurred that moving forward with the project by starting the environmental document as early as possible is a priority.

Kirk Perkins moved for a letter to be sent to the NCDOT regarding the negotiation for funding to initiate the environmental study for US 70. Keith Holliday seconded the motion. The Committee voted unanimously to send the letter to request initiation of the environmental study for US 70. .

2. Air Quality Update-Forsyth County Environmental Affairs

Pat Reagan from the Forsyth County Environmental Affairs Department gave an overview of the Department's responsibilities and a summary of issues pertaining to the PM 2.5 standard and requirements for new source review. Keith Holliday inquired if Guilford County has a similar entity. The response was no and Forsyth County made the decision to fund such an organization. Lydia McIntyre and Scott Rhine noted the department had assisted the Triad MPOs in the conformity analysis for PM 2.5. Pat Reagan stated that a regional air quality agency had been discussed years ago and it is something that could be revisited.

The department was started in 1968 after a need for a local air quality agency was identified. The department does several different tasks, including issuing permits to stationary sources such as power plants. As technology has progressed, the department has also been able to do air dispersion modeling which gives them ability to analyze the air quality impacts from a new plant. The department is also responsible for the monitors as well as analyzing the data from the monitors in Forsyth County. Pat Reagan explained the simplified method used to alert the public of air quality and pollen forecast for each day. There is also an Air Awareness outreach program which serves to educate the public on air

quality issues and identifies actions they can take to help alleviate these issues. The program is being funded through PART and the Triad MPOs. Pat Reagan noted Guilford County was maintenance for 1 hour ozone and is an Early Action Compact (EAC) for 8 hour ozone. The EAC program allows participants to be proactive and implement measures early to meet EPA standards. Guilford County is non-attainment for Particulate Matter 2.5. PM 2.5 is smaller than a piece of hair and is therefore very dangerous to our health. An analogy to inhaling soot was given as an example of how harmful PM 2.5 can be to our health. Guilford County was designated non-attainment, although county monitors did not exceed the standard for PM 2.5. A possible rationale for the county being designated may be a result of one of the county's monitors being moved before complete data could be recorded. Presently, Guilford County monitors are still below the standard, however Davidson County monitors are exceeding and therefore the non-attainment designation will remain in place. Along with the designation come certain sanctions including the new source review. The review looks at a new industry coming into the area and how emissions from it will impact air quality. This may result in industries locating to areas with attainment status rather than areas with non-attainment status. The department can also assist with CMAQ applications in terms of projecting the air quality benefits from a proposed project. Staff is also familiar with the area and may be able to suggest improvements that may help with air quality overall, such as improving signal timing.

The local program serves to provide MPOs a local contact, assist State air quality staff, and provide clarification on air quality issues. The department has greatly assisted with the EAC and strives to make complex data easy to understand by the public using graphical representation. Enhancements to the department's tasks include analysis of mobile sources, assisting all MPOs in the Triad, and the regional awareness program. Pat Reagan emphasized that the department was available to assist with any air quality analysis or issues.

3. BiPed Plan Draft Recommendations

Tyler Meyer advised that a second round of public meetings on the MPO Bicycle, Pedestrian, and Greenways Plan were planned for April 1st, 4th, 5th, and 6th. The goal is increase public awareness and to share draft recommendations and future facility maps for public review and feedback. Detailed maps of recommended future on-street bicycling, sidewalk, and greenway will be on display. Keith Holliday noted the opportunity to publicize the early implementation efforts associated with the plan. With all the interest expressed in such facilities, he observed, it would behoove the organization to be sure to get the word out, probably through ribbon cuttings, formal announcements and so forth in coordination with the completion of the BikePed Plan and with key implementation steps.

4. System planning Update

Lydia McIntyre advised of the status and recommendations for the Feasibility Study for Youngs Mill Road and Florida Street extensions. The extensions of Youngs Mill Road and Florida Street have been identified on the thoroughfare plan. These extensions would provide north / south and east /west access and mobility and facilitate the economic development of the area. The feasibility study is an initial step in the project development process to determine if the project is viable and to refine routing and alignment assumptions in light of a more detailed review.

The study was prompted by a request from the TAC in light of the community economic development strategy and the findings of the 2025 Comprehensive Plan that eastern Greensboro and Guilford County is a key target area for economic development. Recommendations from the study will be incorporated into the area land development plan. The study was initiated in November 2005 and is being conducted

with the support of Wilbur Smith Associates. The study includes recommended alternatives, purpose and need statement, environmental screening, and costs estimates.

Youngs Mill Road extension would extend from McConnell Road on new location to existing Ward Road. A portion will be on new location and cross the rail line and tie into Penry Road at US 70. The alignment shown on the thoroughfare plan is the preferred alignment. The long term improvement for the Penry Road / US 70 area includes grade separating the rail line from the extension and tying into Penry Road with an at-grade intersection. It is also anticipated that the leg of Burlington Road tying into US 70 would be removed. The grade separation is expensive; therefore an interim improvement would include using existing at-grade Ward Road crossing to access US 70. The Florida Street extension would extend from Lee Street to Mount Hope Church Road.

Stakeholder meetings were held with agency stakeholders including planning, traffic engineering, and NCDOT Division 7 staffs. In addition, several meetings were held with officials from NCA&TSU to review the proposed Florida Street extension as it would relate to NCA&TSU property. NCA&TSU officials expressed concern about the proposed alignment crossing the farm and the impacts it would have on farming operations. It was noted that the farm is currently receiving many grants and is in the process of making facility improvements. On the other hand, NCA&TSU officials also expressed some interest in developing the roadway into the Milenium Campus development. The alignment that was agreed upon to have the least impact was an alignment extending from Lee Street to McConnell Road along the western edge of the farm. The extension would then follow existing McConnell Road and Clapp Farms Road to Mount Hope Church Road. Further consultation with NCA&TSU officials will be needed prior to the commencement of project development activities of the Florida Street extension to McConnell Road and/or the development of the Millenium Campus property.

The 2030 traffic volumes on Youngs Mill Road ranged from 15,000 to 24,000 vpd and from 14,000 to 36,000 vpd on Florida Street. These traffic volumes reflect assumptions made in the traffic forecast that some of the development for mixed use corporate park, residential, and commercial uses foreseen in the the 2025 Comprehensive Plan would occur. A four-lane divided cross section is recommended for both facilities. The cross sections would also include accommodations for bikes and sidewalks. The interim cost estimate for a two lane extension of Youngs Mill Road using the existing Ward Road crossing is \$25.0 million and \$30.0 million for the long-term improvement. The Florida Street extension is estimated at \$11.0 million. The substantial costs difference in the two projects is a result of Youngs Mill having more roadway on new location and the construction of a substantial bridge for a stream and flood plain crossing.

Tyler Meyer pointed out that the Florida Street extension / McConnell Road improvements would most likely call for a higher priority in the short to mid-term. This is due to its lower cost, its comparable ease of construction, greater traffic demand on the corridor and to the fact that the Mixed Use Corporate Park study process indicates a concentration of interest by economic development prospects along the Urban Loop and I-40 as opposed to throughout the entire large area initially identified in the Comprehensive Plan process.

MPO Strategic Reports

Tyler Meyer reminded the TAC about the upcoming Walkable Communities Workshops. These meetings are intended to involve interested people in learning about walkability and issues/opportunities in various areas and to enhance the community dialog on walkability. Post cards were distributed which

included an explanation of the purpose of the workshops and meeting information for the 5 meetings. One of the five meetings will be focus on bike facilities.

Craig McKinney advised that he is working with NCDOT and area stakeholders on resolving an ordinance compliance issue that arose as a result of a proposed improvement NCDOT is planning for the Mackay Road Bridge. Craig McKinney also informed the TAC of the upcoming merger meeting for the Eastern Urban Loop (U-2525C) for concurrence points *2a bridging decisions and final alternatives to carry forward* and *4a avoidance and minimization*. Also, a public information workshop is tentatively planned for the US 158 widening (R-2577) on April 25th; formal notification is pending. This will be the first public workshop for the project, and will address the project in general terms only.

Other Items

1. Board Member Report

Doug Galyon thanked Jim Westmoreland and others for compiling the notebook for U-2525B. The notebook contains letters and request to restore full funding to the portion of the outer loop from US 70 to US 29.

2. Regional Transportation News

Sandy Carmany advised of the Heart of the Triad Charrette during the week of April 3rd at the Girl Scout Facility and encouraged everyone to attend.

3. Wrap-Up

Next TAC meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, April 26th at 2:00 pm. The TAC members agreed to move the meeting time from 1:45pm to 2:00pm. The additional time would allow members time to get from preceding meetings to the TAC meeting. The TAC adjourned at 3:18 pm.