



GREENSBORO URBAN AREA METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION

TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE

October 11, 2006

2:00 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
Doug Galyon	NCDOT	Mike Winstead	Guilford County Board of Commissioners

ATTENDANCE

Tyler Meyer	GDOT / MPO	Donald Arant	Greensboro Engineering & Inspections
Craig McKinney	GDOT / MPO	Bob Klepfer	Action Greensboro
Peter Ohlms	GDOT / MPO	Taft Wireback	News & Record
Peggy Holland	GDOT / MPO	John McLendon	Bicycling In Greensboro, Inc.
Lydia McIntyre	GDOT / MPO	Jeff Sovich	Bicycling In Greensboro, Inc.
Wayne Davis	NCDOT	Jody Dietrich	Bicycling In Greensboro, Inc.
John Hunsinger	NCDOT		

Sandy Carmany called the meeting to order at 2:05 p.m. and noted that Jim Westmoreland was attending an out-of-town conference.

Action Items

1. Approve Minutes of August 23, 2006

Keith Holliday moved for approval of the minutes. Doug Galyon seconded the motion. The Committee voted unanimously to approve the minutes of the August 23, 2006 meeting.

2. Amend Thoroughfare Plan

Craig McKinney advised of two items that prompted this Thoroughfare Plan Amendment, Greensboro's Connections 2025 Comprehensive Plan and a recent feasibility study conducted for Young's Mill Road and the Florida Street Extension. The amendment recommends (1) removal of the Franklin Boulevard Extension from McConnell Road south to the current planned Florida Street Extension; (2) removal of the Florida Street Extension from McConnell Road to Clapp Farms Road and realignment of the Florida Street Extension from Lee Street to McConnell Road; (3) reclassification of McConnell Road from the Florida Street Extension to I-40 from a Minor Thoroughfare to a Major Thoroughfare; (4) classification of Clapp Farms Road as a Major Thoroughfare from McConnell Road to the existing portion classified as such, which begins just west of the future Urban Loop; and (5) addition of Holt's Chapel Road Extension from proposed Youngs Mill Road to US 70. A map was exhibited to show how the amendment fits in with the Collector Street Plan in response to questions from the last meeting.

McKinney noted that during the public review period for this amendment, GDOT received one comment from a resident and Clapp family member who was concerned about how the classification of Clapp Farms Road as a Major Thoroughfare would impact her family's farm. GDOT's response was that if the area does not develop in the future as envisioned in the Comprehensive Plan, the classification of Clapp Farms Road might warrant revisiting. McKinney advised that the TCC had recommended adoption of the amendment as presented.

Keith Holliday moved to amend the Thoroughfare Plan as presented. Doug Galyon seconded the motion. The Committee voted unanimously to adopt this Thoroughfare Plan amendment.

3. BiPed Plan Adoption

Meyer noted that the adoption of this plan will represent the culmination of multiple years of work. He summarized the scope of the plan, which proposes a comprehensive multimodal system of connected greenway, bicycle, and pedestrian facilities, including on- and off-street recommendations and crossing improvements, and lays out both long-term recommendations and short-term strategies. The plan is based both on technical analysis of needs and a review of practical constraints on implementation. Meyer recognized the partners involved in creating the plan, including Action Greensboro, the Greensboro Parks and Recreation Department, and the Moses Cone-Wesley Long Community Health Foundation.

Meyer presented a summary of the public involvement efforts, which included an open house held at the Depot that attracted 58 people and the creation of a summary document for the plan. During the September 2006 public review period, the Web site for the plan logged nearly 600 visits. Public comments received during that public review period totaled 78, representing 13 submissions from individuals or groups. One type of comments received focused on additional bicycle and pedestrian facilities, such as bike lanes on Friendly Avenue and sidewalks on Patterson Street. While the former requires further study, the latter was added to the plan as a recommendation. Meyer also described other comments, including requests that bicycles be allowed to ride on Bryan Boulevard, lower speed limits, sidewalk design, maintenance, supporting policies such as signage and enforcement, and text suggestions/corrections, and noted that verbatim comments have been included in an appendix to the plan. Some comments did result in changes to the plan.

Meyer described the next steps towards implementation after plan adoption, which include working with various implementing agencies and jurisdictions. He anticipated briefing the Greensboro City Council on the plan in November and presenting it for their endorsement or adoption afterwards. Meyer

proposed sharing the plan with Guilford County and with other municipalities in the MPO, presenting the plan as a comprehensive set of recommendations that could be helpful in their planning efforts. Meyer expressed a willingness to provide more information or presentations to these jurisdictions if requested.

Meyer noted the plan's relationship to the Long Range Transportation Plan, along with the plan's wide-ranging public outreach, coordination with other agencies, and a flexible program of planning-level recommendations. He also advised that the TCC had recommended some addenda to the adoption action, to include some remaining map corrections.

Meyer noted the presence of members of the community at the meeting, and Sandy Carmany invited John McLendon to speak. McLendon spoke on behalf of Bicycling In Greensboro, Inc. (BIG) and submitted a letter from BIG president Kurt Cavanaugh. McLendon thanked the Committee and staff for their work on the plan and for providing opportunities for public comment. McLendon expressed enthusiasm about the prioritization for improvements, especially regarding implementation work already completed on Spring Garden Street and Florida Street. He thanked the Chair for attending the organization's BIG Salute To Bike Lanes event on September 23, which attracted almost 100 participants for a celebratory ride on the new bike lanes. McLendon recognized BIG board members Jeff Sovich and Jody Dietrich, who were in attendance. BIG has over 100 members, many of whom have contributed to the list of comments submitted by BIG.

Keith Holliday inquired about a scientific methodology for collecting data on bicycle and pedestrian volumes, both before and after the implementation of new facilities, in order to help justify their creation and future expansion. He advised McLendon that BIG might be able to provide such data. Meyer noted that staff are conducting observational studies on an ongoing basis, including looking at motorist speed and pedestrian/bicycle behavior. McLendon noted that BIG will be organizing future events to coincide with National Bike Month, in May, Bike to Work Day, and another bike lane ride, perhaps on Florida Street. McLendon expressed that BIG would be willing to help with the data collection process. Holliday inquired whether bike lanes provide bicyclists with a false sense of security or actually do make them safer. Carmany noted that a citizen had contacted her and was upset about the loss of right-turn lanes on Spring Garden Street at Chapman Street. McLendon noted that the bicycle lanes can also slow traffic, which was needed on Spring Garden Street.

Regarding the adoption process, Jeff Sovich inquired what would happen after the TAC adoption of the plan. Meyer responded that the City Council would be briefed and requested to adopt or endorse the plan, and that other MPO jurisdictions would receive it as an informational item. Holliday advised briefing the Guilford County Commissioners for education purposes, and Meyer expressed willingness to do so. Mike Winstead noted that the Commissioners had heard little about the plan and agreed that a briefing would help educate and build support. Meyer noted that, although the county is not an implementing agency for transportation, it does construct greenway trails, and county officials have opportunities to make decisions regarding transportation in coordination with NCDOT.

Carmany invited Bob Klepfer to speak. Klepfer, the executive director of Action Greensboro, noted that it was exciting to see governmental agencies making decisions to move the community towards its goals and commended the Committee for its farsightedness, thoughtfulness, and inclusiveness in this planning process. He noted that sedentary lifestyles are a major factor in 25 percent of all deaths from chronic disease, that the country has an obesity problem, and that making outdoor recreational areas attractive and accessible will enable more people to take advantage of them, leading to a healthier community. Klepfer encouraged adoption of the plan.

Carmany invited Jody Dietrich to speak. Dietrich noted that she was happy to see the plan, having been involved in a crash while bicycling a few months earlier, and that her comments were represented in the document submitted by BIG. She also expressed hope that parts of Bryan Boulevard would someday be reopened to cyclists and noted interest in the health aspects of the plan as well.

Keith Holliday moved to adopt the BiPed Plan as presented. Doug Galyon seconded the motion. The Committee voted unanimously to adopt the Greensboro Urban Area Bicycle, Pedestrian, & Greenway Master Plan.

Keith Holliday requested that further overtures be made to Norfolk Southern, seeking abandonment of the old Atlantic and Yadkin rail line north of Pembroke Road / Green Valley Road in order to continue constructing portions of the Battleground Rail-Trail.

4. Approve 2007 Meeting Schedule

Peter Ohlms advised that the 2007 meeting schedule has been developed based on the current practice of holding meetings on the fourth Wednesday of each month. The schedule has been adjusted for known staff conflicts and holidays. Doug Galyon noted a conflict with one meeting date, and it was adjusted.

Keith Holliday moved to approve this change and adopt the 2007 meeting schedule. Sandy Carmany seconded the motion. The Committee voted unanimously to approve the 2007 meeting schedule.

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

None

6. Citizen Comments

None

Business / Potential Action Items

1. Draft 2007 – 2013 MTIP Update

Lydia McIntyre advised that the state Board of Transportation had released the draft document for the 2007-2013 Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP), which follows closely behind the release of the current 2006-2012 STIP. The STIP is the state's official investment schedule for state and federal transportation projects. The Metropolitan TIP or MTIP is specific to each urban area, and each MPO in the state has an MTIP. The MTIP projects are based on priorities identified by the MPO and are refined through consultation with NCDOT. The MTIP must be approved by both the TAC and NCDOT, and the projects shown in the MTIP should be shown in the STIP.

McIntyre provided an overview of major projects and associated schedule changes, beginning with the western Urban Loop from Business I-85 to Bryan Boulevard, which is currently under construction and has remained on schedule, with completion scheduled for the summer of 2007. The Urban Loop from Bryan Boulevard to Lawndale Drive and on to US 29 is still currently unfunded. McIntyre noted that the NCDOT Board Member for this area had made efforts to get the eastern portion of the Urban Loop from US 29 to US 70 back in the STIP, which did occur. Previously, right-of-way and construction were scheduled for 2010-2011 and unfunded, respectively; the new draft STIP moves those dates to 2009-

2010 for right-of-way and 2011-Post Years for construction (PY). PY means that an item will be completed or occur after 2013, the final year for this STIP.

The High Point Road project was delayed in this STIP. The portion in the High Point MPO is Section A, from US 311 to Hilltop Road, and the portion in the Greensboro Urban Area MPO is Section B, from Hilltop Road to Stanford Road. Section B is ahead of Section A but did get delayed by two years for both construction and right-of-way.

McIntyre reminded the committee of an earlier session about environmental document development for the US 70 project. The project remains unfunded, but efforts are underway to secure funding to develop an environmental document.

The US 220 project from Horse Pen Creek Road to Winfree Road was delayed by one year. McIntyre noted that one project on US 220, north of Winfree Road to Rockingham County, is still ahead of schedule.

Staff will present a more detailed draft MTIP at the November 15 MPO meetings, and a public review period will begin after that. Efforts are underway to determine the necessary steps for air-quality conformity determinations. One or more public meetings will be held in January, along with NCDOT public hearings in October or November. NCDOT approval of the STIP is anticipated for June 2007.

Craig McKinney noted some of the projects that appear to have slipped by a full year may have only slipped by a few months, pushing them from the end of one year to the beginning of the next.

Keith Holliday inquired about the phasing of the western Urban Loop construction and opening to traffic, and noted that the completion of portions of this by August 2007 would facilitate traffic movement during a major golf tournament. Galyon responded that he would review this item.

Galyon advised that an arrangement to advance the western Urban Loop with GARVEE Bond funds with the interest not subject to the equity formula appears to require legislative action, from what he is told by the Secretary of Transportation. He noted that the legislation would likely affect urban loops statewide, and that Nelson Cole was willing to champion it. Holliday noted that this item was a top priority.

Meyer advised that a draft MTIP document would be presented at the next MPO meeting.

2. Public Participation Plan Revision

Peter Ohlms advised that the Public Participation Plan is intended to guide staff in procedures to be followed and also to give the public an idea of what to expect. The last revision of the Public Involvement Plan was adopted in January 2001, and federal regulations require the existence of the plan and a regular review of its effectiveness. At the MPO's most recent Triennial Review and Certification, reviewers suggested that the MPO look closely at this plan and contemplate revisions to reflect strategies already in use but not documented in the plan. The federal requirements regarding public involvement were strengthened recently, giving another reason for revising this plan. A public review period of at least 45 days is required, which staff plan to allow for by combining review of this plan with review of the MTIP. As such, a January adoption date is expected.

Ohlms noted that the revised plan's length has been kept to a minimum. The plan features a system of tiers, reflecting the idea that different levels of public involvement are required for different types of

projects and studies. This approach avoids the need to specify a separate process for each type of plan or study that the MPO performs. The revised plan also includes measures to increase involvement of low-income, minority, and non-English-speaking groups, and it reflects experiences from doing public involvement above the level required by the existing plan.

An administrative tier is included in the plan for projects that do not require formal public involvement procedures. Tier 1, the most basic tier of formal public involvement, would apply to projects with limited geographic impacts. Minimum requirements in this tier include public notice, document review, and acceptance of comments. Tier 2 builds on Tier 1, including all minimum requirements from Tier 1 and adding additional steps for public notice and document review, a mass electronic mailing, additional consultation with interested parties, and a public meeting. Tier 2 projects would generally have broader impacts across the urban area than Tier 1 projects. Tier 3 projects are the broad, long-range types of items that may impact the whole urban area or have significant community impacts. This tier includes all requirements from Tiers 1 and 2 plus expanded public notice and document review items, postal mailings and surveys, and at least two public meetings.

Ohlms noted that the tiers indicate minimum requirements, and that the plan also includes a Toolkit that suggests additional strategies for expanding the public participation process.

3. MPO Logo Revision

Ohlms noted that, while the existing MPO logo is representative of the urban area, it is difficult to discern at a small size and is not inspiring. MPO staff developed a proposed new logo that includes elements of the city, the countryside, and transportation, with the letters “MPO” in large type, making the logo easy to see at a small size.

The goals of revising the logo were to create something simple, clear and identifiable that suggests what the MPO does and is legible at a small size. Both color and black-and-white versions were produced. Ohlms described some comments from staff on the logo revision, recognized Kevin Elwood for his work on the new logo, and welcomed comments from committee members.

Keith Holliday inquired why the word “transportation” had not been included in the redesigned logo, noting that the main aspect of the MPO’s duties is not necessarily reflected in the words “metropolitan planning organization.” Meyer thanked Holliday for the suggestion. Sandy Carmany noted that the revised logo was a definite improvement over the old one. Holliday indicated that the Trails Division logo provides a good example of a clear logo.

4. Project Updates

Craig McKinney presented an update on R-4707, noting that a recent stakeholders meeting included representatives of industry around the Reedy Fork/US 29 interchange location. Some participants expressed concern about how the interchange would affect future land use in the area. At the first merger team meeting in Raleigh, major permitting agencies were presented with concurrence points 1, the purpose and need for the project, and 2, the alternatives being studied. The team signed off on the concurrence points with minor changes. The alternatives presented included a half-clover interchange, a single-point interchange, and a no-build alternative. At the agencies’ request, a conventional diamond-type interchange was added to the list of alternatives. A public workshop in November and a public officials meeting will be held.

McKinney discussed R-2612, advising that the study process is moving forward, with meetings scheduled for late October. Staff will present further information after reviewing that project. Carmany noted that the TIP shows these projects having slipped by a year or more.

Holliday noted that the NCDOT Active Projects Report was impressive and easily understandable and encouraged its distribution to the general public. Meyer advised that staff would post the report to the MPO Web site, and John Hunsinger noted that Doug Galyon was responsible for having the report created.

5. MPO Strategic Reports

Tyler Meyer advised that the TCC welcomed a new member, Greensboro City Engineer Donald Arant, at its meeting earlier.

Meyer advised that staff continue to work closely with PART, other jurisdictions, and NCDOT on the traffic demand model and getting it validated. During the process, changes have been necessary that have caused delays, but it is hoped that the model will be completed by the year's end. Meyer also noted that the Memorandum of Agreement is being revised for the model.

Meyer advised that a proposal has been identified to purchase traffic-counting equipment using PL grant funds, in conjunction with the GDOT Traffic Engineering Division. The equipment will provide more effective classification counts, the ability to perform bicycle and pedestrian counts, and permanent count stations to allow for flexibility such as time-of-day analysis. GDOT intends to use the equipment to perform counts outside the City of Greensboro on behalf of the MPO as needed.

Meyer advised of a possible cancellation of the December 20 meeting and that the status of this would be confirmed by the November meeting.

Meyer brought to the committee's attention a recently compiled list of the MPO area's top 10 congested locations that was compiled at the request of FHWA in conjunction with a nationwide initiative. Lydia McIntyre noted that the NCDOT also submitted a list to FHWA, and that the MPO list was developed using traffic counts and by working closely with GDOT's congestion management staff. She reviewed each of the locations and noted upcoming projects that might alleviate the bottlenecks. Providing this information to the FHWA may help in getting funding support for these projects, although it is unclear exactly how FHWA will use the information. Keith Holliday noted that five of the top ten bottlenecks would be improved by the section of the Urban Loop from Bryan Boulevard to Lawndale Drive, and that the southwestern portion of the Urban Loop would reduce traffic on another congested location. Meyer noted that traffic has improved somewhat in certain locations but remains congested.

Other Items

1. Board Member Report

Doug Galyon advised that revenues continue to drop at the state level, but that the Board is confident that projects currently in place will be funded. Sandy Carmany inquired about what was causing the drop in revenue, and Galyon responded that slower car sales and less gasoline consumption had reduced funds, and that the most recent national transportation legislation had not yet increased the amount of North Carolina's return on its contributions to federal transportation funds, leaving it at around 86 cents per dollar. Keith Holliday asked for a simple explanation of this situation. Craig McKinney noted that a course on federal funding presented such an explanation, which involved operating expenses for the

Federal Highway Administration, and that money was taken from all 50 states before being redistributed. Tyler Meyer added that funds also went towards Hurricane Katrina relief and to address the overall tight fiscal situation in Washington.

2. Regional Transportation News

Sandy Carmany advised that ridership continues to grow on the PART Express Route to Mount Airy and Pilot Mountain, which now uses two buses that are both filling up. The heavy ridership was not anticipated or budgeted for, but is a nice problem to have. Corporate participation and support from area universities have likely fueled the ridership growth. Carmany also noted that the PART service to Boone is experiencing ridership growth as well.

Carmany advised that area MPOs are preparing to enter into the Seamless Mobility study, which includes human services transportation. The Piedmont Triad RPO had expressed interest in being included in this study for coordinating its human services transportation.

3. Other Items

Keith Holliday inquired whether NCDOT could potentially provide any type of funding support to local jurisdictions for paratransit. Tyler Meyer responded that staff would investigate the question and report back.

4. Wrap-Up

The TAC was adjourned at 3:20 p.m.