



TECHNICAL COORDINATING COMMITTEE
Minutes of March 28, 2007
11:00 a.m., Greensboro, NC
Blue Room
(County Commissioner's Briefing Room)
Old Guilford County Courthouse

ATTENDANCE

| | | | |
|----------------|-------------------|----------------|-------------------------------|
| Peter Ohlms | <i>GDOT / MPO</i> | Heidi Galanti | <i>Greensboro Planning</i> |
| Tyler Meyer | <i>GDOT / MPO</i> | Donald Arant | <i>Greensboro Engineering</i> |
| Lydia McIntyre | <i>GDOT / MPO</i> | Bill Bruce | <i>Guilford County</i> |
| Peggy Holland | <i>GDOT / MPO</i> | Mark Kirstner | <i>Guilford County</i> |
| Craig McKinney | <i>GDOT / MPO</i> | Roger Bardsley | <i>Guilford County</i> |
| Mike Mills | <i>NCDOT</i> | Scott Rhine | <i>PART</i> |
| Pam Hawley | <i>NCDOT</i> | Hanna Cockburn | <i>PTCOG</i> |
| Brian Thomas | <i>NCDOT</i> | | |

Tyler Meyer called the meeting to order at 11:05 a.m. and noted that Jim Westmoreland was in another meeting.

Action Items

1. Approve Minutes of February 21, 2007

Roger Bardsley moved for approval of the minutes. Mike Mills seconded the motion. The Committee voted unanimously to approve the minutes of the February 21, 2007 meeting.

2. Amend 2006-2007 Unified Planning Work Program

Tyler Meyer noted that the amendment was a relatively straightforward action that was necessary to ensure that unspent funds in the current fiscal year's Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) could be spent in future years. The amendment shifts such funds into unobligated balance. It also shifts funds between task codes, which are organized by basic work types, to improve tracking of line-item expenditures as requested by NCDOT. Meyer advised that future UPWPs would have their work types tracked in this way.

Planning for the transportation future

Hanna Cockburn moved to recommend that the TAC approve the UPWP amendment. Roger Bardsley seconded the motion. The Committee voted unanimously to recommend amending the 2006-2007 Unified Planning Work Program as presented.

Business / Potential Action Items

1. Final Draft 2007-2013 MTIP Update

Lydia McIntyre presented an update on the Final Draft Metropolitan Transportation Improvement Program (MTIP), which was put out for a final public review period on March 1. An addendum sent out March 21 reflects significant additional changes to highway and transit projects.

Significant highway changes include the project descriptions for I-4715 (Milling and Resurfacing of I-40/I-85 Business) and I-4907 (Milling and Resurfacing of I-40/I-85). The extents were modified for each project. Mike Mills advised that the new extents for I-4907 might still be shown incorrectly and noted that he would check. McIntyre advised that any changes would not affect the completed Conformity Report. Meyer stated that the TIP project description would be checked against the actual project limits and corrected if necessary.

Significant transit changes reflect a shift in funding to cover operational needs and core capital needs. Two additional capital projects for bus purchases were added to reflect 2005 and 2006 funds that had not been made available. Due to the release of funding apportionments for the Section 5307 formula funding program, the costs were modified for other existing projects.

McIntyre noted that the MTIP process was drawing to a close, with the final steps of compiling public comments, revising the MTIP, and TAC approval to occur in April.

Tyler Meyer noted that federal planning regulations state that until a conforming long-range transportation plan is in place, which will not occur for another year, TIP amendments will not be permitted. Administrative modifications will be allowed, but this may still pose problems if existing projects change. Staff are seeking additional guidance on this issue. Meyer stated that he did not believe the requirement was warranted or supported by legislative language. He also advised that development of the 2009-2015 MTIP would need to begin in a matter of months.

McIntyre noted that the March 8 MTIP public meeting attracted a substantial group of residents and interested parties with various concerns.

2. BiPed Implementation Update

Peggy Holland presented highlights of the implementation efforts related to the adopted Bicycle, Pedestrian, and Greenway Master Plan, including bike lanes, edgelines, bike routes, a bike map, shared-use paths, bike parking, and sidewalks.

Holland noted that bicycle lanes had been installed on Florida Street and Spring Garden Street. The next bicycle lanes are expected to be added to Westridge Road in summer 2007 and Willoughby Boulevard in fall 2007. Edgelines have been installed along portions of Florida Street and Spring Garden Street where bicycle lanes were not possible. Resurfacing of Hobbs Road in summer 2007 provides an opportunity to add edgelines from Jefferson Road to Starmount Farms. Cornwallis Drive is scheduled to receive edgelines or bicycle lanes from one block short of Holden Road to one block short of Elm Street.

Holland noted that the City's old bicycle route signs have been removed in preparation for installation of a new bicycle route system. The new routes, numbered 3, 6, 9, 12, and 16, connect

outlying areas of the City through the downtown area and are planned to extend outside the City in the future. The accompanying bicycle map is still under development; staff hopes for a May 2007 distribution of 25,000 copies. Holland presented an image of the map and described its key features.

Holland advised that the City's Parks & Recreation Department had been working to create more trails. Staff are planning to visit the site of the potential Gracewood Greenway. Other trails under development include the Price Park Trail, Bicentennial Greenway, and a piece of the Downtown Greenway on Greensboro College property, which is a finalist for a \$60,000 grant. The Battleground Rail-Trail, which includes an underpass at Cone Boulevard, is in progress, with construction and ribbon-cuttings expected in late 2007 or early 2008. Tyler Meyer commented that the project had been a significant learning opportunity.

Holland stated that staff had been analyzing existing bicycle parking and looking at new bicycle parking options. The City is asking for developers to install bicycle racks as part of multifamily and student housing developments. The revised Land Development Ordinance may include requirements for bicycle racks, with incentives for developers who construct bicycle lockers, showers, and changing rooms.

Holland advised that the City let a new sidewalk contract in February 2007 with approximately 21,000 feet of new sidewalk along West Market, Friendly, Elam, Holden, Pisgah Church, Randleman, Huffine Mill, Stanley, and other streets, with the biggest being West Market at around 3,000 feet. Currently, sidewalk construction is progressing on Friendly Avenue just west of the Friendly widening project. Donald Arant noted that a property issue might cause a small short-term gap in the sidewalk. Meyer and Holland agreed that the Friendly Avenue sidewalk project had moved quickly and thanked Arant for his work moving the project forward.

Heidi Galanti inquired about sidewalks on Wendover Avenue, and Holland advised that sidewalk along Wendover between Edwardia Drive and Bridford Parkway is under a different contract. Many of the February contract projects fill small gaps in the sidewalk network. Holland noted that the project listing is available on the GDOT Planning Division Web site.

Mike Mills inquired if bicycle routes are shown on the Web site and whether any routes traverse the County outside the City. Holland responded that the routes are shown but that they do not extend outside the City at this time because of the need to improve roads outside the City first. Meyer noted that the bicycle mapping project had been more complicated than expected. Routes are shown on roads that are currently suitable for bicycling and avoid roads that need improvements. The map also shows roads that are not signed as routes but are suitable for bicycling. Mills noted that the District Engineer could require wider shoulders on future bicycle routes in the County in conjunction with new development, and staff advised that they should do so, considering the fact that the BiPed Plan was adopted with this as one of its purposes. Meyer advised that signed bicycle routes were different from bicycle lanes, wide shoulders, and other facilities.

3. Discussion of Coordinated Transit - Human Services Plan

Peter Ohlms presented a summary of requirements and options for meeting the federal requirement of a locally developed, coordinated public transit - human services transportation plan. Ohlms advised that SAFETEA-LU requires areas to have a coordinated plan in order to receive funding under the Job Access Reverse Commute (JARC), New Freedom, and Elderly Individuals and Individuals with Disabilities (Section 5310) programs. JARC and New Freedom funds are administered locally, while states administer Section 5310 funds.

The coordinated plan is intended to identify local needs in the area of public transportation for people with low incomes, minorities, elderly people, and people with disabilities. It should identify strategies to meet those needs and prioritize them for implementation. The process should be coordinated with multiple agencies, including public, private, and non-profit providers of transportation for human services, and should include the members of the public who would be affected.

Some potential ways to develop a coordinated plan include facilitated community planning sessions, a series of focus groups, surveys of unmet needs, technical analysis, or the use of a self-assessment tool designed to help agencies coordinate public transportation and human services providers in their area. Options for stakeholder involvement include various outreach strategies in order to give participants an active role in the plan's development, adoption, and implementation. Ohlms presented a list of some of the agencies and groups that might be involved in the development of the plan and noted that the list was neither mandatory nor exclusive.

Ohlms advised that the coordinated plan must be updated as often as the Long Range Transportation Plan and must be consistent with state and metropolitan Transportation Improvement Programs. The plan must be in place in order for agencies to receive grants under JARC, New Freedom, and Section 5310, and there are numerous options for developing the plan. The Federal Transit Administration (FTA) has scheduled a training session on this topic. Ohlms asked for discussion from TCC members on how the MPO might consider proceeding with this item.

Mark Kirstner stated that the area needs a coordinated plan and inquired how PART's Seamless Mobility Study might address the issue. In response to a question from Hanna Cockburn, Pam Hawley advised that the New Freedom program is intended to fund additional or expanded services for people with disabilities. Kirstner inquired how a locally coordinated effort would work, and Ohlms responded that a local effort in this case would need to be performed at the MPO area and include the appropriate stakeholders there, whereas a regional effort would include multiple MPOs and RPOs. Kirstner noted that the plan could highlight duplicated services and gaps in service. Peggy Holland stated that the inclusion of nonprofit organizations was important because many of them may be eligible to receive federal funds.

Hawley advised that an additional step would be necessary after completion of the plan: a competitive selection process must be used to select projects for funding. The competitive process could be run by the MPO, the designated recipient, or another entity. Tyler Meyer, Scott Rhine, and Hawley clarified that the funds Guilford County Transportation has received came through the state, not the MPO, but that FTA-apportioned JARC and New Freedom funds should come through the MPO. Hawley noted that the county would have access to these funds for urban areas and the state's competitive process for receiving funds for non-urbanized areas. The JARC funds that the County has been receiving were federal funds from a special appropriation to this area, were distributed through the state's competitive selection process, and expire on June 30. Other funds the County receives are wholly from the state.

Rhine advised that the scope of work was being prepared for PART's regional Seamless Mobility Study, which is intended to examine the coordination of regional public transportation to some degree. Rhine expressed concern about whether the scope of work will include all the requirements for a coordinated plan; at this time, it does not. Timing may also be an issue; the study has not yet begun and will not be completed for at least one year. The purpose of the study is not identical to the purpose of the coordinated plan. Conversely, Rhine noted that decreasing the number of plans and studies by meeting two needs with one study would be desirable, but that it depend on when funds were needed. A portion of the study might be able to address the coordinated plan

requirements, but funding and consensus would need to be found from area MPOs. Cockburn noted that local areas could conduct a local process and feed their studies into the Seamless Mobility Study. Rhine advised that these issues should be brought to the table when defining the study's scope of work.

Hawley noted that the number of agencies that should be involved in the coordinated plan is large, which may be overly cumbersome if the plan is conducted at a regional level. Meyer noted that an interim planning process might be possible in order to receive funds immediately, with the potential for PART's study to look at the issues in more detail on a regional level.

Rhine noted that there is a great deal of confusion on the requirements for the coordinated plan. Hawley advised that FTA has not yet released final guidance on the matter and only recently began offering training sessions. Meyer noted that the MPO's federal partners often take a long time developing guidance and then expect plans to be ready very quickly. Meyer advised that staff will monitor the issue, wait for training, and return to the TCC and TAC to examine the issue again.

Rhine advised that PART could consider adding this item to the Mobility Study, but it would require additional funding and additional time, especially if multiple local processes need to be developed. The process might work better if localities could feed information into a regional plan. Cockburn noted that local areas could meet the requirements on their own timelines as necessary. Hawley advised that the coordinated plan was intended to be home-grown, with people coming together to work on it, rather than consultant-driven. She noted that the coordinated plan is an eligible expense under various funding programs, including the use of up to 10 percent of the funds from the three affected funding programs.

Kirstner said that the local area's plan might not need to be nearly as complex as the options suggest, and that the long list of potential stakeholders might be significantly shorter than presented. A single public meeting with agency invitees might suffice. Hawley noted that North Carolina is already far ahead of other states in terms of coordinating human service agencies and transportation providers. Rhine agreed that the level of outreach could vary, but that something should be done in the short term to ensure that funding can be received.

4. Project Updates

Craig McKinney advised that NCDOT had developed a Public Hearing Map for the U-2412 project (High Point Road widening). NCDOT is coordinating with Guilford Technical Community College to find a date to hold a public meeting at GTCC-Jamestown. The meeting announcement will be posted on the MPO Web site when available.

Mike Mills clarified that the purposes of the meeting would be (1) to look at impacts to the cemetery and church properties along the project, (2) to give the public a chance to examine design changes and options at the Adams Farm shopping center and Mackay Road, and (3) to give the public a chance to submit comments. McKinney and Mark Kirstner discussed the lengthy project development process, and McKinney advised that the greatest challenges were definitely in the past.

5. MPO Strategic Reports

Tyler Meyer advised that the 2007 North Carolina MPO Conference will be held at the Marriott in downtown Greensboro October 24-26. MPO staff will work with others to develop session content and work on logistics. Craig McKinney noted that he was looking at possible activities outside technical sessions. Meyer noted that Rural Planning Organizations would also be involved in the conference.

Scott Rhine advised that the North Carolina Public Transportation Association conference was coming up in Wilmington the first week of June.

Other Items

1. NCDOT Update

Mike Mills noted that the NCDOT Active Projects Report was included in the agenda packet. Several interstate maintenance projects have been let, so construction will begin soon. Mills discussed potential strategies for managing traffic flow on I-40 through the "Valley" during construction. He advised that a project on I-40 between US 15-501 and NC 55 in Durham County would begin April 9, with mostly night work and some weekends. Other upcoming night-work projects in nearby counties include a project from NC 49 to NC 54 and another from NC 54 to Buckhorn, and completion dates vary from fall 2007 to summer 2008. Mills discussed potential alternate routes and noted that he would forward information about these major projects.

2. TCC Member Reports

Hanna Cockburn noted that two people from the Greensboro area had participated in the League of American Bicyclists training for certified instructors, meaning that a road-bicycling training course can now be offered locally. Cockburn also advised that Bike-to-Work Week is May 14-18 and that the MPO would be provided with a resolution of support recognizing it.

Bill Bruce advised that the Town of Oak Ridge recently adopted a text amendment to their ordinances to require bicycle racks at commercial establishments. The Town is also developing design standards for those bike racks. Bruce noted that many of the smaller towns in the County are also enthusiastic about trying to provide pedestrian connectivity, but a recurring challenge is that NCDOT will not maintain sidewalks in its right-of-way. Sidewalks outside the right-of-way on private property can become problematic, and the towns do not have the capacity to maintain sidewalks inside the right-of-way themselves.

Mike Mills advised that NCDOT does not maintain any sidewalks, whether they are inside or outside the right-of-way. Orange County received some sort of legislative approval to maintain sidewalks outside its municipalities or allow the Town of Chapel Hill to maintain it. Mills noted that NCDOT has allowed homeowners' associations to maintain sidewalks within rights-of-way in subdivisions, but NCDOT will not allow individual persons to assume maintenance responsibilities. Bruce and Tyler Meyer discussed liability issues with easements.

Peggy Holland inquired if the state pedestrian and bicycle safety working group was looking into this issue, and Meyer responded that the group had done some initial investigating. Cockburn noted that regional legislators would likely support a legislative recommendation for how to address this problem. Discussion of this item continued, focusing on funding and implementation challenges.

Donald Arant advised that replacement of the 16th Street bridge was on schedule or slightly ahead of schedule, with completion estimated in December 2007. Printed material showing a May 2007 completion date was incorrect.

3. Wrap-Up

The TCC was adjourned at 12:30 p.m.