



TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Minutes of February 26, 2020 2:00 p.m., Greensboro, NC Greensboro City Council Chamber Melvin Municipal Office Building

Attendance

Marikay Abuzuaiter	<i>TAC Chair</i>	Gray Johnston	<i>GDOT/GTA</i>
Tammi Thurm	<i>TAC Member, City of Greensboro</i>	Mike Mills	<i>NCDOT Division 7</i>
Alan Branson	<i>TAC Member, Guilford County</i>	Palmer McIntyre	<i>Piedmont Land Conservancy</i>
Carla Strickland	<i>TAC Member, Pleasant Garden</i>	Mark Kirstner	<i>PART</i>
Mike Fox	<i>TAC Member, NCDOT</i>	Joe Geigle	<i>FHWA</i>
Tyler Meyer	<i>GDOT/MPO</i>	Michael Abuya	<i>NCDOT TPD</i>
Craig McKinney	<i>GDOT/MPO</i>	Nicole Lindahl	<i>BIG</i>
Chris Spencer	<i>GDOT/MPO</i>	Ophelia Jones	<i>Town of Sedalia</i>
Lydia McIntyre	<i>GDOT/MPO</i>	Ken Delaney	<i>Verizon</i>
Tram Truong	<i>GDOT/MPO</i>	Taft Wireback	<i>News & Record</i>
Yuan Zhou	<i>GDOT/MPO</i>	John Hammer	<i>Rhino Times</i>
Chandler Hagen	<i>GDOT/MPO</i>		

Marikay Abuzuaiter called the meeting to order at approximately 2:02 PM.

Introductory Items

1. Conflict of Interest Policy Statement

Marikay Abuzuaiter read the Conflict of Interest Policy Statement required by the State Ethics Act which states that it is the responsibility of each committee member to avoid conflicts of interest and if there are any to identify them now. *No conflicts were noted by members.*

2. Reports, Concerns, and Discussion from MPO Area Towns:

There were none.

3. Public Comments:

There were none.

Action Items

1. January 22, 2019 Meeting Minutes

Mike Fox moved to approve the minutes of January 22, 2020. Tammi Thurm seconded the motion. The TAC voted unanimously to approve.

2. MPO Self Certification for FY 2020-2021

Tyler Meyer described the MPO Self Certification as a mandatory annual administrative action required prior to adoption of the Unified Planning Work Program. Self-certification documents MPO compliance with USDOT planning process requirements including the Statewide and Metropolitan Planning Regulations, the Clean Air Act, the Civil Rights Act, and the Americans with Disabilities Act. The checklist attached to the resolution notes compliance with these laws and regulations and associated process requirements. MPO self-certification is not to be confused with the USDOT (FHWA and FTA) certification every four years of MPOs with over 200,000 urbanized area populations.

Tammi Thurm moved to approve MPO Self Certification for FY 2020-2021. Alan Branson seconded the motion. The TCC voted unanimously to approve.

3. FY 2020-2021 Unified Planning Work Program

Tyler Meyer stated the Unified Planning Work Program establishes the annual budget and work plan for MPO staff and MPO activities. NCDOT and FHWA use the UPWP for accounting and oversight purposes, and the City of Greensboro uses it as the basis for budgeting transportation planning grant funds. For FY 2021, approximately \$632,000 in FHWA planning grants and \$195,000 in FTA planning grants are available. These funds are passed through NCDOT and are subject to NCDOT administrative oversight. The FTA grant allocation will increase starting in FY 2021 by \$45,000 thanks to a recent revision to formula NCDOT uses to apportion these funds between MPOs. Meyer noted that he and a team of NCAMPO representatives had negotiated the formula details with NCDOT, and commended NCDOT on their outcome of that process.

The key work items for next year include Prioritization 6.0 and the MTIP; 2045 MTP and CTP update (long range transportation plan); Mobility Greensboro 2040 implementation; Vision Zero Action Plan implementation; pedestrian and bicycle planning, outreach, and projects; model update, freight model development, household travel survey, data collection and performance management. The UPWP adoption needed at the February 26 meeting to meet a March 15 deadline.

Alan Branson moved to approve FY 2020-2021 Unified Planning Work Program. Tammi Thurm seconded the motion. The TAC voted unanimously to approve.

4. MTIP Amendment: FY 2020-2029 Transit Listings

Tyler Meyer noted the primary purpose of this amendment is to update FTA formula funded transit project funding amounts based on final full year appropriation amounts being higher than estimated. The amendment also adjusts PART routine capital and operating assistance projects to draw down available prior year funding for use in FY 2020; adds a project for a new FTA discretionary grant awarded to GTA – Transit Safety Innovations – to support efforts to combat human trafficking; and updates Section 5310 Elderly & Disabled project funding per recent discussions with GTA and TAMs. As standard practice, staff extrapolated FY 2020 FTA formula funding levels out through 2029, the final year of the current MTIP.

Tammi Thurm asked how much the actual FTA formula funding levels had increased from what had been estimated? Meyer said he did not recall the exact amount but would provide that information later. In the meantime he noted the approximate increase of \$100,000 to the Section 5339 funded Galyon Depot renovation project listing as one indicator of the magnitude of the change. [Editor's Note: the total increase was **\$531,000**].

Marikay Abuzuaiter asked if anything had changed with the three year CMAQ operational grant GTA is using to support new service in the Randleman – Elm Eugene corridor? Meyer sated it had not and clarified that the amendment before TAC only lists projects for which changes are proposed at this time.

Carla Strickland asked for more information on PART's human trafficking campaign. Meyer said that GTA will use the grant to create and distribute an app that patrons and operators can use to report human trafficking, as well as training and other means for operators to use to report suspected incidents of human trafficking.

Tammi Thurm moved to approve MTIP Amendment: FY 2020-2029 Transit Listings. Mike Fox seconded the motion. The TAC voted unanimously to approve.

5. MTIP Amendment: M-0539 Environmental Mitigation and Minimization

Tyler Meyer noted that this amendment adds a statewide project providing for environmental mitigation and minimization activities required for obtaining necessary environmental permits. The amendment is essentially is an administrative step that makes the MTIP consistent with the STIP. Division 7 may use some of these funds to conduct mitigation and minimization activities, like paying for environmental improvements onsite or offsite in the same watershed area, to offset environmental impacts and obtain project permits.

Alan Branson moved to approve MTIP Amendment: M-0539 Environmental Mitigation and Minimization. Mike Fox seconded the motion. The TCC voted unanimously to approve.

6. Congestion Management Process

Lydia McIntyre stated the 2020 Congestion Management Process (CMP) is the sixth version of the document. Federal law requires MPOs with urbanized area populations greater than 200,000 to develop and approve Congestion Management Processes to support Metropolitan Transportation Plans (MTP). The MTP draws from the CMP analysis and incorporates its findings and recommendations to a large degree.

The CMP evaluates the multi-modal transportation system, identifies and applies system and corridor level congestion and performance measures, and identifies strategies for maintaining and improving transportation mobility in the MPO area.

When outlining the process, McIntyre emphasized the importance of data gathering. She said that typically data from the past 5-7 years is used in the document, but more current years were used in this most recent version.

The CMP covers projects within the MPO area, so McIntyre mentioned that this is a good source for keeping up to date with what projects are happening in the area.

She provided examples of recommendations that are included in the document. She pointed out that a new recommendation is the inclusion of Vision Zero Greensboro. She said a major recommendation is further development and collection of data for evaluating the performance of the transportation system, especially ensuring the correct sources are used.

Mike Fox asked for TAC members to be sent the whole CMP document plus a separate copy of the map that complements Table 5.1 *Highest Bottleneck Locations* on page 7 of the Executive Summary, so that they

can visualize the referenced locations. Also in reference to the table, he asked if there is a document that shows potential projects at the bottleneck locations that may be implemented in order to improve these areas. McIntyre said the TIP includes some projects at these locations, such as a project at I-40 East at Elm-Eugene Street Exit 125 and a project at I-40 West at Sandy Ridge Road Exit 208. Also, an additional location at I-40 West at Mt. Hope Church Road Exit 132 is the focus of a new project submittal for P6.0. Fox said it would be helpful for him and Mike Mills to have funded or proposed those at these locations to be included in the table. McIntyre agreed and said a column will be added for that purpose.

Mike Fox then asked how the twenty locations in the table are identified? Yuan Zhou said the rankings listed in the table may not be a true reflection of the need for the project as some of the rankings are based on an overlay map or a map that may show duplicates. Chris Spencer added that the projects are based on several different metrics, such as hours of delay and travel time, to underscore that the rankings are accurate despite the fact they look low.

Tammi Thurm asked if there could be a way to analyze and show how public transportation could aid congestion in some of the identified bottleneck locations? McIntyre said the CMP endeavors to identify such locations, and a continuing focus for future CMP development will be more systematically evaluating the impact of alternative modes on travel.

Tammi Thurm moved to approve the Congestion Management Process. Mike Fox seconded the motion. The TAC voted unanimously to approve.

Business Items

1. Piedmont Land Conservancy Presentation on the Piedmont Greenway

Palmer McIntyre said she was presenting on behalf of the Piedmont Land Conservancy, a nonprofit regional land trust that works with nine counties in this part of the state to protect different kinds of conservation lands including family farms, streams, rivers, natural areas, parks, open spaces, and trails. Her topic was the proposed Piedmont Greenway. Work on the Piedmont Greenway started in the early 2000s. A master plan was published in 2003. Kernersville recently did a feasibility study for their section. Forsyth County is breaking ground on the first official section and putting out bids for construction soon.

A feasibility study for the Guilford County was completed in 2019 by Alta Planning + Design. The proposed greenway follows a 19 mile route to connect Greensboro and Winston Salem and will connect to the Greensboro Watershed Trails, the A&Y Greenway, Summerfield, Oak Ridge, Triad Park, Downtown Kernersville, and Winston-Salem greenways including Salem Lake Trail.

McIntyre described what makes a successful trail and stated that these were all addressed in the feasibility study and will be incorporated into project plans. These features include access to nature, trailheads and wayfinding, secure and safe road crossings, low environmental impact, and availability to multi-users. She also covered the guiding principles for the Piedmont Greenway, which includes community connections, economic development, health and wellness, and environmental preservation.

Guilford County Phase 1 will be 3.9 miles long along mostly public land. Phase 1A will span from U.S. 220 to Bunch Road, and Phase 1B will span from Bunch Road to I-73. There will be trailhead parking on Bunch Road and two underpasses. Trail spurs will connect to Summerfield and Oak Ridge. Sections of the trail will be built initially as a natural surface path using volunteers before eventually being constructed to paved greenway standards.

Phase 2 will be 3.2 miles long. It will start around I-73 and finish near Alcorn Road and NC 68. There is a wide underpass at I-73 that provides good connection to Phase 1. The conservancy is working on finalizing open space acquisition from Bandera Farms.

Phase 3 will be 5.4 miles long starting around NC 68 and ending in Triad Park. It will mainly run through privately owned land and homeowners associations making acquisition difficult. The Town of Oak Ridge is in the process of acquiring easements. There will be four road crossings: NC 68, Bunker Hill Road, Beeson Road, and Cross Creek Road.

The feasibility study was funded by the Clean Water Management trust fund grant plus matching from Guilford County. The overall cost estimate from Alta Planning + Design is \$22.3 M. The cost is so high because of major grading work that must be done. The greenway will ultimately be a 10 to 12 foot paved greenway.

An executive summary was created thanks to work from Alta Planning + Design and the Greensboro Department of Transportation's MPO staff. The executive summary gives a general overview of the trail and shows trail benefits and connectivity. It will be distributed to the public. Presentations will be made to MPO's, Parks and Recreation, and Trail committees and boards. There will be an open house with Summerfield and Oak Ridge. A steering committee will continue their work in helping move the project forward and make key land acquisitions.

Tammi Thurm noticed a discrepancy between the total construction cost of Phase 1 reported in the presentation versus the cost reported in the executive summary. McIntyre advised that the executive summary likely reflects the correct amount.

2. Division Engineer Updates

Mike Mills presented the following project updates:

- U-2581BA (Mt. Hope Church Road to Birch Creek Road) project to begin construction this summer and to be complete in 2021.
- R-4707 (interchange modification at US 29 and SR 4771 – Reedy Fork Parkway) bids by June with construction starting soon after.
- Section of the Urban Loop from Elm to Lawndale to open late this year.
- Extension of Konica Drive to Judge Adams Road in the Rock Creek Dairy area is under construction with completion later this year.

Carla Strickland asked if there are planned improvements to the Neelley Road bridge over Highway 421. Mike Mills said there are plans to correct the bridge approaches, and these improvements are likely to be completed by Summer 2020.

3. Project Updates

Lydia McIntyre gave an update on Prioritization 6.0. The process started in the middle of 2019 when the MPO solicited candidate projects from member jurisdictions and MPO staff began studying area needs to identify additional candidate projects. These projects are grouped by mode, with a separate list for roadways, bicycle & pedestrian projects, transit, rail, and aviation projects. Current plans are for the project lists to go out for public review from March 9 until April 9. The public review period is a good time for TAC members to provide any comments, ideas, or thoughts that they may have. TAC approval is scheduled for April 15. The projects are due for must be submittal to NCDOT by May 1.

McIntyre reviewed the steps of the prioritization process. The first step was the identification of candidate projects. This step began in mid-2019, but due to NCDOT's delayed approval of the STIP, the MPO has had a much longer time than initially expected to assess candidate projects. The City of Greensboro, Town of Oak Ridge, Town of Summerfield, Town of Pleasant Garden, NCDOT, and Piedmont Triad International Airport have all identified and submitted candidate projects. For the first time since P3.0 transit projects are included as well. Under STI only transit facilities or expansion vehicles are eligible. The proposed projects would provide expansion vehicles for Mobility Greensboro 2040 plan

implementation. Oak Ridge submitted two roadway projects. Summerfield submitted two or three roadway projects. Pleasant Garden resubmitted a roadway project. NCDOT submitted rail projects, and the Piedmont Triad International Airport submitted aviation projects.

Up to 23 projects may be submitted for each mode. McIntyre said it can be difficult to narrow the list down to only 23 Roadway and Bicycle and Pedestrian projects. That is why one of the reasons staff focuses on analyzing the candidate lists to determine which are likely to be most competitive before bringing recommended submittals to public review followed by TCC endorsement and TAC approval.

McIntyre noted a few of the projects under consideration at this time. These include a smart corridor pilot project on Gate City Boulevard. That project will be submitted under a different project improvement type this time around, which may lead to a better quantitative score. Another was a project on Pleasant Garden Road that didn't score well in the past but that MPO staff and NCDOT are reviewing more closely. A notable new candidate project is the intersection and approaches at Wendover Avenue and Church Street. The complete streets / safety enhancement project on Summit Avenue from Sullivan Street to Fourth Street is also a notable need, as is a newly proposed project to enhance the City's signal system with improved detection and data analysis capabilities as well as to replace aging cabinets and signal strain pole wires on which signals hang above many intersections.

Mike Fox asked about the order in which the projects are listed, noting it could be helpful to see the projects ordered from most expensive to least expensive or by relative priority. Tyler Meyer said that the current listing is a pretty good indicator of competitiveness and that staff will take a systematic approach to narrowing down projects to the 23 and listing them in order of their relative competitiveness. Staff will also further consider how to make the listings as easy to understand as possible.

Fox added that he likes the new striping and other improvements on Elm Street, but he requests GDOT to re-evaluate traffic signal timing. The newly constrained lanes have caused more cars to line up, creating periodic traffic flow issues. Chris Spencer said that changes were made in an attempt to decrease congestion but that staff can re-evaluate the signal timing to see if any changes would help.

Fox noted Meyer is as knowledgeable about the NCDOT prioritization process as anyone, and asked him his assessment of how the prioritization values smart cities and smart corridor types of project. Are such projects fairly assessed, and are they able to score competitively? Meyer said that was a tricky question. The process has certainly improved in the last couple of rounds for signal system and signal optimization projects given more appropriate analytical methods being brought to bear. The same is true for intersection and interchange projects. Ultimately though, smart cities projects don't seem to fit cleanly under any existing project types, and it would be helpful for the Department to study the issue of how to accommodate these projects in more detail.

Tammi Thurm asked about the status of requested bicycle and pedestrian improvements on NCDOT's New Garden and Bryan Boulevard interchange project, and she said she wishes to stay updated on the details. She emphasized that the existing sidewalks in the area are very heavily used and the connection across the bridge is critically needed. Tyler Meyer stated that NCDOT is not reconstructing the existing bridge and had previously said the existing bridge was only wide enough for a sidewalk on one side. The Department has been reviewing the ability of the structure to accommodate sidewalks for some time and have not yet communicated their findings. The requested sidewalk would include pedestrian signals at the intersections on either side of the bridge. Mike Mills stated that NCDOT is currently reevaluating the project scope and area traffic volumes. He noted that Urban Loop recently opened to Lawndale Drive may have reduced traffic on New Garden Road and that he was considering the possibility of dropping the new ramp to Bryan westbound and associated bridge improvements including the sidewalk. Meyer noted this issue will need further review and discussion prior to any such decision given this is an MPO submitted, STI-selected project.

Tyler Meyer then reminded TAC that NCDOT had placed most locally administered federally funded project authorizations on hold for a time starting around October 2019 as a part of their effort to get control of the Department's cash flow issues. Towards the end of this period the Department solicited MPO project priorities, and conducted a review of what would be allowed to move forward at this time and what would have to be delayed for cash flow management purposes. Meyer stated that he had now received NCDOT's findings, and that key MPO priority projects would now be able to move forward. This includes the high priority Josephine Boyd-Walker Avenue intersection and corridor improvements and the Ballinger Road Bridge Replacement project. The Department also approved the City's request to open bids for Phase 4 of the A&Y Greenway and the Downtown Greenway in October 2020. The Latham Park Greenway project will be brought to City Council on March 17. Meyer re-emphasized that P6.0 submittals are scheduled for TAC approval on April 15 and due to NCDOT on May 1.

4. Strategic Reports

Tyler Meyer reminded TAC members to file the necessary documents for the North Carolina State Ethics Commission by April 15. He said if they need any help, MPO staff can provide assistance if needed. He mentioned that if you file online, the Real Estate Disclosure Form has been incorporated in the Statements of Economic Interest questions making filing more convenient.

Lydia McIntyre described the second Vision Zero Greensboro summit that was held on February 13 at the Barber Park Event Center. 42 attendees from a variety of organizations were present. The purpose of the summit was to bring stakeholders up to date on what steps have been taken since the Vision Zero Greensboro action plan was adopted in May 2019.

Highlights of the information McIntyre presented included that there were 33 traffic-related fatalities in 2019, an increase from 31 in 2018. Of the 33 fatalities, 7 were motorcycle-related, 0 were bicycle-related, 10 were pedestrian-related, and 16 were related to DUIs. The methodology for the High Injury Network (HIN) as reviewed, as were its use HIN is P6.0 project analysis, the CMP, and the MTP. Recent improvements in sharing crash data between the Greensboro Police Department and GDOT were lauded.

Several guest speakers also presented. Joe Stewart, Vice President for Governmental Affairs at Insurance Agents of North Carolina, shared information on prospects for hands-free mobile phone legislation. Dré Fleury, Chief Legal Officer at Crumley Roberts, shared their new initiative concerning road safety. Ron Glenn, Police Information Officer for the Greensboro Police Department (GPD), spoke about safety events held by the department. Lastly, Dr. Ali Karimodini, NCA&TSU, gave an overview of his research on the potential for autonomous vehicles to improve traffic safety.

Attendees then broke out into four groups—Communication, Data, Infrastructure, and Operation and Policy—to discuss in needed future steps for Vision Zero. These groups mirrored the task force groups that will be formed to carry out the work plan for next year.

McIntyre closed the event noting that pending implementation efforts and that the work plan will be updated every two years. A campaign called "What's your safe?" is planned to begin in late March with a display at the Four Seasons Mall. The display includes an exhibition of 33 pairs of jeans – one for each 2019 fatality – and information to help people better understand the critical importance of travelling carefully and mindfully to reducing the likelihood of suffering a crash and associated injuries or fatalities. The "What's your safe?" campaign will ask the public what they consider to be their "safe," or best safe practice. McIntyre extended an invitation to the TAC for the kickoff at the mall.

Tammi Thurm spoke about a request from some of her constituents as a result of discussing Vision Zero at a meeting for seniors that she attended. They asked for her to communicate that they would like

legislation to be passed that requires car headlights be turned on during the day if the cars are moving because that would make cars easier for everyone- not just seniors or those with vision limitations- to see.

Other Items

1. TAC Member Updates

Mike Fox noted Secretary Trogdon has retired and that Eric Boyette will replace him as the new Transportation Secretary for NCDOT. Fox would like to schedule time at one of the future meetings for Eric Boyette to meet the MPO.

2. Regional Updates

Mark Kirstner from PART thanked the TAC for their support of PART's funding needs and in particular the additional the Section 5307 funding provided for under the recent Transit Resource Allocation Plan update.

3. Wrap-Up

Alan Branson moved to adjourn the meeting. Mike Fox seconded the motion. The TAC unanimously voted to adjourn the meeting.

The meeting was adjourned by Marikay Abuzuaiter at approximately 3:16 PM.