

MECKLENBURG-UNION METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION
Charlotte-Mecklenburg Government Center Conference Room 267
January 16, 2008
Summary Minutes

Members Attending:

Anthony Foxx (Charlotte), Eddie McNeely (Cornelius), Brian Sisson (Huntersville), Lee Godwin (Indian Trail), Lee Myers (Matthews), Dumont Clarke (Mecklenburg County), Ted Biggers (Mint Hill), Bob Smith (Monroe), Jim Eschert (Pineville), Lynda Paxton (Stallings), Kevin Pressley (Union County), Joyce Blythe (Waxhaw), Nancy Anderson (Weddington), Brad Horvath (Wesley Chapel), Mark Loflin (Char-Meck Planning Commission)

1. Call to Order

Brian Sisson called the January 16, 2008 MUMPO meeting to order at 7:05 PM.

2. Election of Officers

Election of Chairman:

Mr. Sisson requested nominations for MPO chairman. Mr. McNeely nominated Mr. Sisson and Mayor Biggers nominated Mayor Myers. A total of 23 votes were cast for Mayor Myers and a total of 12 votes were cast for Mr. Sisson. Mayor Myers was elected chairman of the MPO for 2008.

Election of Vice-Chairman:

Chairman Myers requested nominations for MPO vice-chairman. Mayor Biggers nominated Mr. Foxx, Mayor Paxton nominated Mr. Smith, and Mayor Anderson nominated Mr. Pressley. A total of 22 votes were cast for Mr. Foxx, six votes for Mr. Smith and five votes for Mr. Pressley. Mr. Foxx was elected vice-chairman for 2008.

3. Approval of Minutes

Summary:

Chairman Myers asked if everyone had an opportunity to review the November minutes and called for a motion.

Motion:

Mr. Smith made the motion to approve the November 2007 minutes as presented. Mayor Paxton seconded the motion. The November 2007 minutes were approved unanimously.

4. Citizen Comment Period

Summary:

No one expressed a desire to address the MPO.

5. TIP Amendment: I-277 Lighting

Presenter:

Barry Moose, NCDOT Division 10 Engineer

Summary:

Mr. Moose discussed the unsuccessful efforts to repair the lighting on the Brookshire Freeway. He stated that the problem is beyond the scope of conventional maintenance, that the entire system had to be replaced and that the TIP needed to be amended in order to fund the needed repairs. Mr. Sisson asked about the source of funds. Mr. Moose replied that the source is the Interstate Maintenance fund, and there are sufficient funds available such that an existing funded project will not have to be delayed in order to fund this project. Mayor Myers asked when the funds can be available. Mr. Moose stated that they should be available in April and construction could be complete by early summer.

Motion:

Mr. Sisson made a motion to amend the TIP to fund replacement lighting on the Brookshire Freeway from US 74 to I-77. Mr. Smith seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously.

6. Goldmine Road Thoroughfare Plan Amendment

Presenter:

Jim Loyd, Director of Public Works, City of Monroe

Summary:

Mr. Loyd described the project, stating that the realignment was made necessary by the expansion of the runway at Monroe Regional Airport. He described the public involvement efforts that involved meeting in small groups, or one-on-one, with affected property owners.

Motion:

Mr. Smith made a motion to approve amending the Thoroughfare Plan to include a realigned Goldmine Road. Mayor Biggers seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

7. Carolina Thread Trail

Presenter:

Saxby Chaplin, Trust for Public Land

Summary:

Mr. Chaplin provided the MPO with an overview of the project, noting that it is a series of greenways and covers 15 counties in the greater Charlotte region. He noted that it is important to obtain MUMPO's endorsement because the trails won't be purely recreational facilities, but will serve a transportation function, too. Mr. Smith asked about the type of transportation. Mr. Chaplin replied that it would be limited to bicycle and pedestrian travel. Mr. Chaplin went on to discuss the project's fundraising efforts, noting that \$17 million of its \$40 million goal has been raised. Mayor Myers asked about the MPO's role. Mr. Chaplin stated that more than an endorsement was needed, and that inclusion in the LRTP was important. Mayor Myers asked if Union County was included in the planning efforts, and Mr. Chaplin replied that his organization had met with all 15 counties. Mr. Smith stated that he did not believe that Union County had been involved, and Mr. Pressley stated that he had seen a presentation about the project, but nothing more than that. Mr. Chaplin committed to reaching out more to Union County representatives.

Motion:

Mr. Godwin made a motion to endorse the Carolina Thread Trail. Mr. Foxx seconded the motion. The motion passed with one dissenting vote cast by Mr. Sisson.

8. Monroe Connector/Bypass Update

Presenter:

Reid Simons, NCTA

Summary:

Ms. Simons provided the MPO with the NCTA's monthly status report on the Monroe Connector/Bypass project. She stated that while the official comment period is closed, the NCTA is still taking comments on the Alternatives Development and Analysis report. The NCTA plans to eliminate existing US 74 from further consideration as an alternative, but in response to the concerns of some of the regulatory agencies, it will be carried forward for a short time in order to develop more justification for it being eliminated as a corridor. Also, routes 18A and 22A will be carried forward. Detailed analyses will be prepared for all corridors being carried forward.

Ms. Simons noted the comments received from C.A.R.E.-Citizens Against Route Eighteen, and added that the Union County school system, CPCC, Stallings, Monroe and Matthews have all gone on record as opposing route 18A. She discussed a meeting requested by Mayor Paxton and Mayor Myers to discuss MUMPO's role in the NEPA process, a meeting attended by NCTA and FHWA officials. Also discussed was the history of route 18, and that it was an alignment studied when the Connector was an NCDOT project. Finally, Ms. Simons stated that the cost estimate for the entire project was \$583 million.

Mayor Paxton stated that 1693 petitions opposing 18A had been sent to the NCTA. She also stated that, until recently, she was unaware of a request made by Stallings to analyze what is now identified as route 18, and stated the request from seven years ago was not an endorsement of that alignment.

Mr. Smith asked about the Rocky River Road interchange. Carl Gibilaro of PBS&J stated that some of the environmental agencies are concerned about it because of potential land use-related impacts. Mr. Smith stated that this interchange is very important to Monroe.

Mayor Myers stated that MUMPO has final authority over the funding of the project, in part, because of the federal funds allocated to it in the TIP. Ms. Simons observed that the use of federal money is one of the reasons why the NEPA process is being followed. Mayor Myers also expressed a concern that MUMPO was ceding its Thoroughfare Plan alignment determination authority because of the NEPA process. Robert Cook, the MUMPO secretary, noted that the MPO's memorandum of understanding speaks to the MPO being responsible for determining preliminary alignments, and that the standard practice has been for other agencies (e.g. NCDOT) to determine final alignments through a detailed environmental study.

9. Draft 2009-2015 Transportation Improvement Program

Presenter:

Andy Grzymski, CDOT

Summary:

Mr. Grzymski stated that the primary issue for the MPO is to allocate the \$20 million in STP-DA funds. He noted that Mr. Cook had requested candidate projects from the member jurisdictions, and that staff would soon analyze the projects through the TCC process. Mr. Cook noted that a TIP public meeting had preceded the MPO meeting and another had been held the previous evening in Monroe.

10. Draft FY 2009 Unified Planning Work Program

Presenter:

Robert Cook

Summary:

Mr. Cook presented a brief Power Point presentation that provided an overview of the UPWP, stating that it sets forth the tasks staff believes need to be undertaken during a fiscal year. He noted that the total amount of funding available was still unknown due to late Congressional action affecting MUMPO's Section 5303 (transit planning) funding. At this point, staff is assuming the FY 08 amount as it works on the UPWP. The Planning (PL) funding amount was unaffected and stands at \$922,968. Mr. Cook stated that the most significant task for the MPO would be the LRTP update. He also discussed the PL fund sub-allocations. At the time of the meeting, two sub-allocation requests had been made: the Town of Davidson-\$40,000, and a joint project of the towns of Waxhaw, Weddington, Wesley Chapel and Marvin-\$80,000. Mr. Cook stated that an update on the UPWP will be provided to the MPO at its March meeting, with final action in May.

11. Long-Range Transportation Plan Update

Mr. Cook provided an update on work associated with the LRTP update. He described why the MPO needs to work on this, stating that local approvals, including action on the air quality conformity determination, must be made by February/March 2009. He also discussed work that had been started, or was about to start: updating county-level population and employment projections; project ranking meetings; public participation meetings (Feb 21 in Charlotte and Feb 28 in Monroe); the Consultation process with agencies connected with land use, natural resource, environmental protection, etc.

12. Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 8:45 PM.