

MECKLENBURG-UNION METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION
Charlotte-Mecklenburg Government Center Conference Room 267
May 21, 2008
Summary Minutes

Members Attending:

Anthony Foxx (Charlotte), James Bensman (Cornelius), Brian Jenest (Davidson), James Taylor (Matthews), Ted Biggers (Mint Hill), Bob Smith (Monroe), Jim Eschert (Pineville), Barbara Ann Price (Stallings), Kevin Pressley (Union County), Daune Gardner (Waxhaw), Nancy Anderson (Weddington), Stephen Rosenburgh (Char-Meck Planning Commission)

1. Call to Order

Vice-chairman Foxx called the May 21, 2008 MUMPO meeting to order at 7:02 PM.

2. Approval of Minutes

Summary:

Vice-chairman Foxx asked if everyone had an opportunity to review the March minutes and called for a motion.

Motion:

Mr. Smith made the motion to approve the March 2008 minutes as presented. Ms. Price seconded the motion. The March 2008 minutes were approved unanimously.

3. Citizen Comment Period

Summary:

No citizens present wished to address the MPO.

4. Draft 2009-2015 TIP Conformity Determination

Presenter:

Jonathan Parker, NCDOT

Summary:

Mr. Parker stated that this document is a statement that the 2009-2015 TIP conforms to air quality standards as noted in the resolution. He also discussed public involvement efforts, and requested the MPO to find the TIP in compliance with the Clean Air Act and SAFETEA-LU.

Motion:

Mayor Biggers made a motion to find the TIP in compliance with the Clean Air Act and SAFETEA-LU and to adopt the resolution as presented. Mr. Smith seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously.

5. Draft 2009-2015 Transportation Improvement Program

Presenter:

Andy Grzymiski, CDOT

Summary:

Mr. Grzymiski reviewed the components of the draft 2009-2015 TIP, including the STP-DA projects proposed for funding in FY 2014 and FY 2015 and the Marion Diehl earmark. The STP-DA project list was the same as that which was endorsed by the MPO at its March meeting. Concerning the earmark, Mr. Grzymiski stated that Queens University had obtained a technical correction to the earmark, thereby allowing the school to use it for its original intended purpose-parking lots and driveways at the Marion Diehl Park on Tyvola Road. He also reviewed the public involvement efforts undertaken by staff, and stated that the TCC's TIP recommendation to the MPO was as follows:

Program the \$20 million in STP-DA funds available in FY 14 & 15 to the projects approved at March MPO meeting

Program \$725,000 in TIP to fund transportation improvements at Marion Diehl Park

After the completion of Mr. Grzynski's presentation, Mr. Foxx asked Richard Hancock, Division 10 Deputy Engineer, to discuss the NC 218 funding proposal. NCDOT has proposed to fund the project in the TIP.

Mr. Hancock reviewed the problems associated with NC 218, noting the significant traffic volume increases and subsequent impacts on the road. He stated that the severity of the problem was such that maintenance funds allocated to Division 10 would not be an adequate to repair the problem without affecting the ability to implement other maintenance projects. NCDOT proposes to use funds associated with the U-2507A project in Charlotte, which involves a realignment of Mallard Creek Road. The specifics of the NC 218 project are: widen to a uniform 24 feet; improve the road surface; upgrade intersections at NC 200, 205 and US 601. Mr. Hancock stated that the Rocky River Rural Planning Organization (RRRPO) had agreed to delay TIP project R-3820 in Anson County in order to fund the NC 218 improvements. Mr. Foxx asked if the TCC has discussed this issue. Mr. Hancock stated that the TCC decided to defer action on this matter. Mayor Anderson asked why the TCC elected to defer. Mr. Cook stated that the TCC had not heard about the proposal to fund the project until the day of the meeting, therefore they did not believe they had enough time and information to make an informed decision. Mr. Cook mentioned that the NCDOT proposal at that time was to take the funds from TIP project U-4024, which involves improvements to US 601 in Monroe.

Mr. Pressley stated that the Union County Board of Commissioners was very concerned about the project, and noted the unanimous resolution supporting the funding of the project that had been handed out to the MPO members. Mr. Foxx restated the TCC's recommendation to defer action on this issue. Ms. Price stated that the Stallings council had directed her to vote against funding the NC 218 project.

Motion:

Mr. Smith made a motion to approve the 2009-2015 TIP as presented and as recommended by the TCC, without funding the NC 218 improvements. Mayor Biggers seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Following the motion and the vote, Mr. Foxx requested that more information on the U-2507A project be provided at the July meeting.

6. County-Level Population & Employment Projections

Presenter:

Anna Gallup, CDOT

Summary:

Ms. Gallup stated that the projections are used as an input into the regional travel demand model and in the long-range transportation plan update effort. She noted that she had been working with local staff and TCC members for 6-7 months on this effort. Mr. Foxx asked how the current projections compare to the previous projections. Ms. Gallup replied that they are trending slightly higher.

Motion:

Mr. Smith made a motion to endorse the county-level projections as presented. Mayor Biggers seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

7. 2007-2013 TIP Amendments

Presenter:

David McDonald, CATS

7a-New Rail Car Purchase

Summary:

Mr. McDonald discussed the ridership levels on the LYNX blue line, noting that it was far exceeding ridership projections, thereby necessitating the need for new rail cars. Mr. Foxx asked if this would be new money coming into the region. Mr. McDonald replied that it would be new money.

Motion:

Mayor Biggers made a motion to amend the TIP as requested. Mr. Smith seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

7b-New Bus & Transit Amenities Purchase

Summary:

Mr. McDonald stated that some NCDOT Congestion Mitigation & Air Quality (CMAQ) funds were set to lapse with the end of FY 08. The requested action will allocate the funds to the purchase of new buses, along with transit-related amenities such as bus shelters.

Motion:

Mr. Foxx made a motion to amend the TIP as requested. Mr. Smith seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

8. FY 09 Unified Planning Work Program

Presenter:

Robert Cook

Summary:

Mr. Cook noted that he had provided the MPO with two presentations on the UPWP's content at previous meetings, and that what was being presented at this meeting did not significantly differ from what was presented in March. He then requested that the MPO approve the FY 09 UPWP as presented.

Motion:

Mr. Smith made a motion to approve the FY 09 UPWP as presented. Ms. Price seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

9. MPO Self-Certification

Presenter:

Robert Cook

Summary:

Mr. Cook stated that this is a required annual action that states the MPO is adhering to all appropriate federal transportation planning laws, statues, regulations, etc. He observed that the quadrennial certification review was completed in November 2007 and MUMPO was fully certified at that time.

Motion:

Mayor Biggers made a motion to adopt the certification resolution as presented. Mr. Taylor seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

10. Draft 2035 Long-Range Transportation Plan Project List

Presenter:

Robert Cook

Summary:

Mr. Cook stated that the project list presented to the MPO was the total list of project that may be incorporated into the LRTP. All projects on the list had been included in the project ranking process. He stressed that the list was not the final list for the LRTP, and that the final list would not be approved until early 2009. He also noted that the final list will likely contain fewer projects than the current plan due to significant construction cost increases combined with no significant revenue increases on the horizon. Mr. Cook stated that the list will be used in MUMPO's Consultation discussions with the environmental resource agencies as the LRTP is developed.

Motion:

Mayor Biggers made a motion to endorse the draft project list as presented. Mr. Pressley seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

11. Comprehensive Transportation Plan

Presenter:

Jonathan Parker, NCDOT

Summary:

Mr. Parker conducted a presentation on the subject of comprehensive transportation plans (CTP). He reviewed the components of CTPs, noting that they have replaced Thoroughfare Plans as a result of a change in state statute. CTPs differ significantly from Thoroughfare Plans in that they are multi-modal and not limited to a single mode as are Thoroughfare Plans. Also discussed were the relationships between CTPs and LRTPs and TIPs. Mr. Parker stated that the final products of a CTP are: three maps (highway, bicycle, rail and public transportation) and a technical report. NCDOT's Transportation Planning Branch is proposing to prepare a CTP for MUMPO. More discussions with the TCC will be needed to develop a process with which both parties are comfortable.

Mr. Jenest asked if the Mooresville CTP had been prepared in-house. Mr. Parker stated that a consultant was hired to prepare that plan.

12. Monroe Connector/Bypass Update

Presenter:

Reid Simons, NCTA

Summary:

Ms. Simons updated the MPO on the project's status. She stated that the travel forecasts were complete, and also noted the meeting with the TCC on May 1 to review early functional designs, noting that final designs should be complete by the end of the summer and will be a part of the draft environmental impact statement (DEIS). Ms. Simons then discussed the project's cost estimate, and stated that based upon updated right-of-way (ROW) estimates, the cost estimate had increased by approximately \$200 million. She stated that the NCTA is looking at ways to reduce costs, and that the gap financing being requested of the General Assembly was now in the \$18-\$24 million range. Mr. Rosenburgh asked when the NCTA might start purchasing ROW. Ms. Simons answered that it could do so "at risk" next year. Mr. Smith asked if the ROW for the eastern part of the project had been purchased. Ms. Simons stated that that ROW had been purchased, but some adjustments may be needed.

The notification that the project's cost had increased so significantly generated a lengthy discussion concerning the state's inability to finance transportation projects. Mr. Foxx discussed the 21st Century Transportation Committee's work, and the McKinsey Report, noting that these may be ways to start to fix the state's problems. Bill Coxe, TCC vice-chair, stated that NCDOT in developing the 2009-2015 TIP, had assumed that the annual transfer of funds from the Highway Trust Fund to the general fund would end and that all funds would be available for programming in the TIP. However, some of the transferred funds will likely be used for NCTA project gap financing.

13. Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 8:20 PM.