

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

Members Attending:

Anthony Foxx (Charlotte), Dan Schallenkamp (Indian Trail), Lee Myers (Matthews), Dumont Clarke (Mecklenburg County), Carl Ellington (Mint Hill), Bob Smith (Monroe), Jim Eschert (Pineville), Lynda Paxton (Stallings), Daune Gardner (Waxhaw), Nancy Anderson (Weddington), Brad Horvath (Wesley Chapel), Marion Cowell (NC Board of Transportation), Stephen Rosenburgh (Char-Meck Planning Commission), Bill Lackey (NC Turnpike Authority)

1. Call to Order

Chairman Myers called the July 16, 2008 MUMPO meeting to order at 7:01 PM.

2. Approval of Minutes

Summary:

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

Motion:

Mr. Foxx made the motion to approve the May 2008 minutes as presented. Mr. Smith seconded the motion. The May 2008 minutes were approved unanimously.

3. Citizen Comment Period

Summary:

Barbara Ann Price of Stallings addressed the MPO on the following subjects:

1. Stallings Road: Ms. Price's concerns were with NCDOT's proposed design for the road, particularly a proposed 23 foot wide median and the loss of the at-grade railroad crossing;
2. McKee Road Extension: the comments focused on the Hendricks automotive site and a future extension of McKee Road across US 74 and its relation to a potential alignment of the Monroe Connector/Bypass known as alternative 2;
3. Monroe Connector/Bypass: Ms. Price's comments addressed opposition to alternative 2.

4. 2007-2013 TIP Amendment: Fixed Guideway Enhancements

Presenter:

David McDonald, CATS

Summary:

Mr. McDonald explained that once a fixed-guideway facility is operational for seven years, it becomes eligible for funds in the Fixed Guideway Enhancements category. The Independence Boulevard busway is now eligible for these funds.

Motion:

Mr. Foxx made a motion to amend the TIP to allocate the requested funds to the Fixed Guideway Enhancements program as recommended by the Technical Coordinating Committee (TCC). Mayor Paxton seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously.

5. 2009-2015 TIP Amendment: NC 218 Funding

Presenter:

Barry Moose, NCDOT

Summary:

Mr. Moose described the project, stating that it would improve NC 218 between I-485 and Polkton and was necessary due to the rapidly deteriorating conditions on the road related to recent significant traffic volume increases. Mr. Foxx stated that his vote was directed by the Charlotte City Council and that the direction he

received was for the TCC's conditions to be met, and asked if they had been met. *(Note: The TCC unanimously recommended on June 5, 2008 to recommend to the MPO that it approve the TIP amendment, provided that the following conditions were met: a) Charlotte assures the TCC that it is confident that the U-2507A verified cost estimate is sufficient to build the project as the city wishes to see it constructed; b) the Charlotte City Council accepts the design; and c) no other project is delayed as a result of the funding of NC 218 improvements.)* A discussion ensued regarding Charlotte's satisfaction with how the TCC's conditions are being addressed by NCDOT, particularly the first two listed. Mr. Foxx asked Danny Pleasant (interim CDOT head) if he was comfortable with acting on the request. Mr. Pleasant replied that he was and that CDOT will continue to monitor progress on the U-2507A project. Mr. Schallenkamp stated that Indian Trail's council asked him to express concern with shifting TIP funds to a maintenance project.

Motion:

Mr. Foxx made a motion to approve the TIP amendment as presented and as recommended by the TCC. Mr. Ellington seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

6. Prosperity Church Road Thoroughfare Plan Amendment

Presenter:

Steve Blakley, Kimley-Horn Associates

Summary:

Mr. Blakley explained that the request was to approve the start of a public involvement process to amend the Thoroughfare Plan, and provided an explanation as to why the amendment was necessary. Future year traffic volumes will require dual left turn lanes from northbound Prosperity Church Road to westbound Eastfield Road. The current 45 degree skew does not allow for the construction of the needed lanes, thus the need for the amendment. Mr. Blakley went on to explain that his firm will be handling the amendment process due to MUMPO and Huntersville staff time constraints.

Motion:

Mr. Clarke made a motion to approve the start of a public involvement effort to amend the Thoroughfare Plan. Mr. Eschert seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

7. LRTP Schedule & Air Quality Conformity

Presenter:

Norm Steinman, CDOT

Summary:

Mr. Steinman stated that MUMPO's deadline to approve an air quality conforming long-range transportation plan (LRTP) is May 2009; however, the MPO will not be able to meet this deadline due to the motor vehicle emissions budgets (MVEB) that have been approved in the State Implementation Plan (SIP) by the NC Division of Air Quality (DAQ). He noted that the SIP contains two components that make developing a conforming LRTP by May 2009 impossible: DAQ has approved budgets at a county level and the budgets are too low. Mr. Steinman reviewed the efforts MUMPO used to convince DAQ that it was more appropriate to set the budgets at a non-attainment region level and that they needed to be higher. He then discussed that MUMPO will be able to develop a conforming LRTP by early 2010, and stressed that the delay will not result in the penalties associated with a conformity lapse because SAFETEA-LU allows for a one-year grace period for region's not able to develop conforming plans in the required time frame. During the grace period, projects are allowed to proceed as normal; however, TIP amendments are not permitted. Mr. Clarke asked why it was believed a conforming plan could be developed in early 2010. Mr. Steinman responded that it was because 2009 emissions would not be a factor, and that from 2010 through 2015, it is assumed that the vehicle fleet will be more fuel-efficient and fuels will burn cleaner.

8. Monroe Connector/Bypass Update

Presenter:

Carl Gibilaro, PBS&J

Summary:

Mr. Gibilaro updated the MPO on the project's status. He stated that the General Assembly had approved \$24 million in gap financing for the project beginning in July 2009 for a period of 39 years and thanked everyone for their efforts to get this accomplished. He noted that the NCTA is still making progress on functional designs and that they will be released in late August/early September. Mr. Gibilaro also discussed the indirect and cumulative effects assessment now being prepared, noting that if the NCTA can demonstrate that improving existing US 74 does not make sense, the resource agencies will likely agree to drop it from further consideration. Mr. Smith asked what was meant by improving existing US 74. Mr. Gibilaro replied that it would mean a conversion of the roadway from I-485 to the project's limits east of Wingate to a controlled-access facility with frontage roads.

The presentation continued with a discussion of the draft EIS's status, noting that it should be available by late fall (2008) and will include the NCTA's preferred alignment. The release of the DEIS will be followed by public workshops in early 2009. Also mentioned was the project cost estimate which stands in the \$750-\$755 million range. Mr. Smith asked if the schedule was still holding. Mr. Gibilaro stated that it was, with the record of decision (ROD) on track for August 2009.

9. Northwest Huntersville Transportation Study

Presenter:

Robert Cook, MUMPO

Summary:

Mr. Cook reviewed the project's status, noting that the intent had been to bring this to the MPO for a decision at this point, but that delays have pushed back the date for a final decision to amend the Thoroughfare Plan. He stated that it would be more likely to request action in November.

10. Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 8:20 PM.