

MECKLENBURG-UNION METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION
Charlotte-Mecklenburg Government Center Conference Room 267
September 17, 2008
Summary Minutes

Members Attending:

Anthony Foxx (Charlotte), Brian Jenest (Davidson), 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), Marion Cowell (NC Board of Transportation), Stephen Rosenburgh (Char-Meck Planning Commission), William McGuirt (Union County Planning Board)

1. Call to Order

Chairman Myers called the September 17, 2008 MUMPO meeting to order at 7:00 PM.

2. Approval of Minutes

Summary:

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

Motion:

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

3. Citizen Comment Period

Summary:

Martin Zimmerman of the Charlotte Area Bike Alliance (CABA) addressed the MPO on the subject of the recently adopted Charlotte bicycle plan. He thanked Mr. Foxx for his efforts to get the plan adopted.

4. CMAQ Project Selection Process

Presenter:

Bjorn Hansen, Centralina COG

Summary:

Mr. Hansen stated that the objective of this effort was to develop a process to evaluate proposed projects requesting CMAQ funding. The total value of proposed projects often significantly exceeds available funds, so an objective evaluation of proposals is necessary. Projects will be evaluated in eight categories with 100 points being the total possible score. The categories and the maximum number of points are as follows:

1. NOx and Particulate Matter Reduction 25
2. Project Cost Effectiveness 20
3. Transportation Impact 15
4. Policy and Information Sharing 5
5. Applicant Financial Commitment 5
6. Project Readiness 10
7. Project Maintenance and Management 10
8. Concurrency with Existing Plans 10

Mr. Hansen stated that the TCC had unanimously recommended that the process be adopted by the MPO. Staff will request approval at the November meeting. The MPO members had no questions for Mr. Hansen.

5. Northwest Huntersville Transportation Study

Presenter:

Carl Gibilaro, PBS&J

Summary:

Mr. Gibilaro updated the MPO on the progress of this project, stating that a third public meeting was scheduled for October 16 at Huntersville Town Hall. He stated that preliminary alternatives presented at the April 2008 public meeting required significant laneage to provide acceptable levels of service. He also noted that at the time of the April meeting, travel demand model data were not available, so assumptions concerning growth rates were used to project future traffic volumes. A Power Point presentation showed the project study area and the alternatives being considered. Also shown was a sample VISSIM movie that will be used at the October public meeting. VISSIM provides a visual of what future traffic volumes will look like through the use of computer simulation. Mr. Gibilaro noted the public's concerns about noise and visual impacts and compatibility with local land use.

Chairman Myers asked if this project was connected to a pending rezoning, and if so, what action comes first, the rezoning or the Thoroughfare Plan amendment. Bill Coxe replied that it was actually part of two pending rezonings, and that Town staff has recommended that the Thoroughfare Plan amendments occur first.

6. Committee of 21

Presenter:

Norm Steinman, CDOT

Summary:

Mr. Steinman provided an update on the work of the Committee of 21. The presentation began with background information on the committee's origins and purpose. The committee was organized at the request of the Charlotte Chamber and consists of municipal and county representatives from Mecklenburg County. Its purpose is threefold:

- Prioritize top local and state road needs in Mecklenburg County
- Identify and build consensus around a long-term funding option(s) to build local and state roads in Mecklenburg County
- Advocate for anticipated local and/or state approval of proposed funding option(s)

A portion of the presentation focused on a projected capital and maintenance funding gap over the next 25 years. This gap is projected to be at least \$12.2 billion for Mecklenburg County. (*Information was still being gathered that will likely increase the \$12.2 billion figure.*) Mr. Steinman completed his presentation with a discussion of some of the revenue options being considered by the committee, and noted that they are scheduled to make recommendations in November. Following a series of questions from the MPO members, Chairman Myers recognized Ken Randall who is a member of the committee. Mr. Randall complimented Mr. Steinman for his assistance to the committee, and further noted the challenges faced by the community.

7. Monroe Connector/Bypass Update

a. Project Update

Presenter:

Reid Simons, NCTA

Summary:

Ms. Simons updated the MPO on the project's status. The following issues were discussed:

Functional Designs-meetings were held recently concerning the functional designs, including one that took place prior to the start of the MPO meeting. She stated that alternatives 2 and 18A were the subject of most of the discussions at the meetings and briefly described some of the details associated with each. Mayor Paxton stated that many were concerned with the impacts of the alternatives and thanked the NCTA for the work that went into the functional designs to minimize impacts. Chairman Myers commended the NCTA for their work on 2. Mr. Schallenkamp expressed concern with alternative 2 and the raised elevation and its impact on the ability to widen the road in the future. Mayor Paxton asked when more information about the wall (Alt. 2) along US 74 would be available. Ms. Simons stated that it was not yet determined when more details on the aesthetics of the wall would be available.

Gap Funding-will be appropriated in July 2009.

Project Schedule-the draft environmental impact statement (DEIS) should be released by the end of the year with public meetings to follow in early 2009. The final environmental impact statement (FEIS) should be available by October 2009. Work is underway on an investment grade traffic and revenue study. Mr. Schallenkamp asked when the NCTA will release its preferred alternative. Ms. Simons replied that NCTA would include its preferred alternative in the DEIS, which is due by the end of 2008. NCTA would send the DEIS to the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) for their review, the environmental agencies for their review, and then NCTA would hold public hearings in March 2009 to get the public's comment on the recommended preferred alternative and DEIS. Once all the reviews and comments are gathered, the final alternative will be announced - likely 2nd quarter 2009.

b. Role of MPO in Selection of Preferred Alternative

Presenter:

Chairman Myers

Summary:

Chairman Myers stated that the MPO approves federal transportation dollars and that through MUMPO's Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) the member jurisdictions have given the MPO the authority to make Thoroughfare Plan-related decisions. He further stated that the NCTA staff does not attend the MPO meetings simply to provide updates on the Monroe Connector/Bypass' status, and stated that it was important to discuss these issues since MUMPO is a regional planning body covering two counties. Mr. Smith stated that it would be counter-productive for the MPO to interject itself into the process to recommend a preferred alternative before the NCTA makes its recommendation. Chairman Myers stated that if the MPO does not support the NCTA's recommendation, funding could be an issue.

c. Toll Road Gap Funding Discussion

Presenter:

Marion Cowell

Summary:

Mr. Cowell stated that the gap funding approved by the General Assembly frees up the equity formula money that had been allocated in the TIP to the Monroe Connector/Bypass, and that these funds should be available to reprogram in Division 10. He further stated that he wanted to allocate the funds to a big project, such as the completion of I-485. Construction on this project could start in 2011 if the funds were reprogrammed, instead of the currently planned 2015. Mr. Cowell stated that no action was required on this any time soon. Mr. Foxx stated he was excited about the possibility of completing I-485 sooner and asked if there should be concern considering the upcoming election and the likelihood of a new transportation secretary and Board of Transportation. Mr. Cowell stated that a good case can be made for the project regardless of administration. Mayor Anderson, Mayor Gardner, Mr. Schallenkamp and Mr. Smith all stated that they felt the funds should be spent on Union County projects. Mayor Gardner stated that tolling should be considered for I-485.

Chairman Myers then recognized Natalie English of the Charlotte Chamber. Ms. English had requested to address the MPO on this topic. She stated that the chamber had been involved in transportation issues for many years, had formed the Regional Roads Committee and had fought for the gap money for the Monroe project. She emphasized the importance of I-485 and that it was time to complete the project.

8. Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 8:55 PM.