

MECKLENBURG-UNION METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION
Charlotte-Mecklenburg Government Center Conference Room 267
November 19, 2008
Summary Minutes

Members Attending:

Anthony Foxx (Charlotte), Eddie McNeely (Cornelius), Brian Jenest (Davidson), Brian Sisson (Huntersville), Dan Schallenkamp (Indian Trail), Lee Myers (Matthews), Carl Ellington (Mint Hill), Bob Smith (Monroe), Jim Eschert (Pineville), Lynda Paxton (Stallings), Daune Gardner (Waxhaw), Nancy Anderson (Weddington), Brad Horvath (Wesley Chapel), Mariona Cowell (NC Board of Transportation), Stephen Rosenburgh (Char-Meck Planning Commission), William McGuirt (Union County Planning Board)

A portion of the November 2008 meeting was held jointly with the Metropolitan Transit Commission (MTC). The MTC meeting was shifted to the third Wednesday due to Thanksgiving. The joint portion of the meeting began at approximately 6:30 PM and focused on updating MPO members on transit-related activities; however, representatives of the consulting firm HNTB made a presentation on MUMPO's efforts to update project cost estimates for the long-range transportation plan.

1. Call to Order

Chairman Myers called the November 19, 2008 MUMPO meeting to order at 7:40 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 a 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:

Four people addressed the MPO:

1. Barbara Anne Price stated that she was addressing the MPO as a private citizen and was not speaking for the Stallings Town Council. She stated her opposition to alternate 2 of the Monroe Connector/Bypass and stated her support for alternate 18A. Ms. Price also stated she believed that unused equity formula funds that may be available due to the approval of project gap financing by the General Assembly should be used for Union County projects.
2. Shawna Steele thanked the North Carolina Turnpike Authority (NCTA) for its work and stated that she supports alternate 18A and opposes alternate 2 because of its impact on businesses. She also stated that Union County should have a bigger voice in the decision-making because the project is largely in Union County.
3. Len Tower stated his support of alternate 18A and supports using the unused equity formula funds for Union County projects.
4. Rick Smith read a statement on behalf of CARE-Citizens Against Route Eighteen. He noted that CARE had obtained over 2000 signatures on a petition against alternate 18A. The primary concern was air and noise pollution in general, as well as specific impacts on Stallings Elementary School.

4. CMAQ Project Selection Process

Presenter:

Robert Cook

Summary:

Mr. Cook reminded the MPO members that this issue had been brought before them in September with an in-depth discussion of the process conducted by Bjorn Hansen of Centralina COG, and at this time staff was

requesting approval. He stated that the project's goal was to create a process to evaluate projects requesting CMAQ funding and that if approved, it will be put to use almost immediately. Mr. Cook also stated that at its September meeting, the TCC unanimously recommended that the MPO approve the project selection process.

Motion:

Mr. Smith made a motion to approve the project selection criteria as presented. Mr. Sisson seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

5. Safe Routes to School & Bike/Ped Grant Endorsements

Presenter:

Robert Cook

Summary:

Mr. Cook stated that the rules associated with the Safe Routes to School (SRTS) program and the Bicycle & Pedestrian Planning Grant program requires MPO endorsement of each project. The proposed projects were then briefly reviewed:

- a. Charlotte SRTS
- b. Cornelius SRTS
- c. Davidson SRTS & Pedestrian
- d. Indian Trail Bicycle
- e. Matthews SRTS
- f. Mint Hill SRTS & Pedestrian
- g. Stallings SRTS
- h. Waxhaw SRTS & Pedestrian

Following the review of the projects, Mr. Cook stated that at its November meeting, the TCC unanimously recommended that the MPO endorse all projects.

Motion:

Mr. Sisson made a motion to endorse all projects as presented. Mr. McNeely seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

6. Prosperity Church Road Extension Thoroughfare Plan Amendment

Presenter:

Stuart Basham

Summary:

Mr. Basham provided an overview of the proposed amendment. He noted that the current skewed design of the intersection, as well as what is currently proposed for the future extension of Prosperity Church Road, would not permit the installation of dual-left turn lanes once the road is extended north of its current terminus at Eastfield Road. Projected traffic volumes indicate a need for the dual left-turn lanes. The purpose of the amendment is to allow for the redesign of the intersection and adjust the proposed alignment north of Eastfield Road to accommodate a standard 90 degree intersection. Mr. Basham discussed the public meeting that was held in September to educate the public about the proposal and that the Town of Huntersville has approved the change. Mr. Basham concluded his presentation with a request for the MPO to amend the Thoroughfare Plan to show the proposed revision. He noted that at its November meeting, the TCC unanimously recommended to the MPO that it approve the amendment.

Chairman Myers asked if one public meeting was sufficient. Mr. Basham responded that, due to the minor nature of the change, one meeting was justified. Chairman Myers then asked if there had been any opposition to the proposed change. Mr. Basham replied that there had been none.

Motion:

Mr. Sisson made a motion to amend the Thoroughfare Plan as presented. Mr. Cowell seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

7. **Air Quality Conformity Determination Report**

Presenter:

Robert Cook

Summary:

Mr. Cook stated that MUMPO may have to prepare and approve an air quality determination report in early 2009 despite the fact that it will not be able to adopt an updated conforming long-range transportation plan (LRTP) until 2010. The reason this action may be needed is that MUMPO's regional partners (Cabarrus-Rowan and Gaston MPOs) may be able to adopt updated, air quality-conforming LRTPs by the original deadline-May 2009. Since MUMPO occupies the same non-attainment area as the other two MPOs, a conformity determination by MUMPO is required. Mr. Cook noted that MUMPO's action will essentially be on its current LRTP projected to the new horizon year of 2035. Mr. Cook emphasized that the action being requested may not be needed since there is no guarantee that the two MPOs will be able to demonstrate conformity. Therefore the requested action is to allow for the release of a conformity report, if needed.

Motion:

Mr. Foxx made a motion to release a conformity determination report, if necessary. Mr. Smith seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

8. **Fast Lanes Project Update**

Presenter:

Chuck Fuhs, PB Americas

Summary:

Mr. Fuhs provided a review of the on-going Fast Lanes study, providing information on its background and status, as well as the results of Phase 1 and the status of Phase 2. He discussed the existing HOV lane on I-77 and noted that it carries 1000 persons in 300 vehicles in the peak direction (southbound) during the AM peak hour. By contrast the average general purpose lane carries 1700 persons in 1600 vehicles during the same period. Mr. Fuhs then stated that Phase 1 was designed to identify the most promising corridors and Phase 2 is undertaking detailed evaluations of the most promising roadways. 340 miles of study corridors were analyzed Phase 1 and 167 miles (49%) advanced to Phase 2. The corridors that advanced to Phase 2 are:

- I-85 North and South
- I-77 North and South
- US-74 East
- I-485 South, West & Northeast
- NC-16 West

Phase 2 is designed to address the following issues: type of lane treatment; type of operation strategy; HOV and HOT policy; truck potential; revenue potential; access; connectivity; phasing.

Mr. Fuhs then discussed the project's schedule and stated that a draft report on Phase 2 should be available in March 2009. He also reminded the MPO members about the project's website: www.fastlanes.org.

Chairman Myers asked if high occupancy toll (HOT) lanes would be in new lanes. Mr. Fuhs responded that existing HOV lanes could be converted. Mayor Anderson asked why the rest of North Carolina is not studying this. Mr. Cowell replied that I-40 in the Triangle had been studied to determine if HOV lanes were feasible, but the findings were that such a technique would not work on that facility.

9. **Monroe Connector/Bypass**

Presenter:

Carl Gibilaro, PBS&J

Summary:

Mr. Gibilaro updated the MPO on the project's status. He stated that the NCTA had attended meetings in Stallings and Indian Trail to explain scenarios associated with alternatives 2 and 18A. Also mentioned were

efforts to complete the draft environmental impact statement (DEIS) by the end of the year. A recommended alternative will be included in the DEIS.

Mr. Smith asked about project shortfalls. Mr. Gibilaro replied that the analysis is not far enough along to know what is happening regarding costs versus revenue. Mr. Foxx raised the issue of the recent Citistates Report and asked about land use strategies in the corridor. Mr. Gibilaro responded by discussing the indirect and cumulative effects (ICE) assessment that is being prepared. The ICE assessment evaluates the potential land use changes and environmental effects of the project and was prepared with the cooperation of local governments. Mr. Smith noted that Union County does not have the water or sewer capacity to allocate to projects that would generate significant changes.

Mayor Paxton asked about efforts to provide better access to the Forest Park neighborhood. Mr. Gibilaro stated that there had been no activity on this since work is focused on completing the DEIS, but that the design can be adjusted after the DEIS is complete. Mayor Paxton then asked about how the DEIS is publicized. Mr. Gibilaro stated that ads will be placed in local publications, press releases will be prepared, the website will be updated, the towns will be notified, etc. Mayor Paxton then commented on Stallings' position on the alternatives. She noted that the Council voted on October 13, 2008 to change its position and endorse alternative 18A.

10. Northwest Huntersville Transportation Study

Presenter:

Bill Coxe, Huntersville

Summary:

Due to the late hour, and the fact that no action was required, Mr. Coxe stated that he hoped to return at the January meeting with a recommendation for action. Mr. Sisson reiterated this, noting that two rezoning are affected by the decision.

11. Other Business

- A. A discussion of funding-related matters began that reflected a discussion that took place during the joint meeting portion of the evening when a CATS lobbyist discussed what President-elect Obama's administration might do relative to transportation.
- B. Mr. Foxx noted that the 2010 Census will likely result in changes to the MPO's boundary and that MUMPO should examine other areas of our size to see how their MPOs are structured.
- C. Mr. Foxx stated that the Charlotte City Council requested that he raise the issue of a traffic signal at US 521 and Ballantyne Crossing. Chairman Myers stated that the issue was outside MUMPO's jurisdiction. Richard Hancock of NCDOT-Division 10 stated that warrants for a signal had not been met.

12. Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 9:10 PM.