

MECKLENBURG-UNION METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION
Charlotte-Mecklenburg Government Center Conference Room 267
January 21, 2009
Summary Minutes

Members Attending:

Anthony Foxx (Charlotte), Jim Bensman-alternate (Cornelius), Brian Jenest (Davidson), Brian Sisson (Huntersville), John Quinn (Indian Trail), Lee Myers (Matthews), Ted Biggers (Mint Hill), John Ashcraft-alternate (Monroe), Jim Eschert (Pineville), Lynda Paxton (Stallings), Tracy Kuehler (Union County), Daune Gardner (Waxhaw), Nancy Anderson (Weddington), Brad Horvath (Wesley Chapel), Stephen Rosenburgh (Char-Meck Planning Commission), William McGuirt (Union County Planning Board)

1. Call to Order

Mayor Lee Myers called the January 21, 2009 MUMPO meeting to order at 7:00 PM.

2. Election of Officers

Election of Chairman:

Mayor Myers requested nominations for MPO chairman. Ted Biggers nominated Mayor Myers; Brian Jenest seconded the nomination. No other names were put into nomination. Mayor Myers was elected as chairman of the MPO for 2009 by acclamation.

Election of Vice-Chairman:

Chairman Myers requested nominations for MPO vice-chairman. Mr. Jenest nominated Anthony Foxx; Jim Eschert seconded the nomination. No other names were put into nomination. Mr. Foxx was elected vice-chairman of the MPO for 2009 by acclamation.

3. Approval of Minutes

Summary:

Chairman Myers asked if everyone had an opportunity to review the November 2008 minutes and called for a motion.

Motion:

Brian Sisson made a motion to approve the November 2008 minutes as presented. Mayor Biggers seconded the motion. The November 2008 minutes were approved unanimously.

4. Monroe Connector/Bypass

Presenter:

Steve DeWitt, NC Turnpike Authority

Summary:

Chairman Myers suggested that this item be moved up on the agenda due to Mr. DeWitt's need to return to Raleigh that evening.

Mr. DeWitt explained that the North Carolina Turnpike Authority (NCTA) was delayed in releasing the project's draft environmental impact statement (DEIS), and that it would be approximately two months until the DEIS was released. He also noted that there would be an extensive public involvement effort once the document is released.

5. Citizen Comment Period

Summary:

Four people addressed the MPO:

1. Richard Deming addressed the MPO on item 10a on the agenda (TIP amendment for CMAQ project C-4953). He discussed congestion on NC 16 in Union County and stated that he would like to see the proposed CATS service implemented.

2. Saxby Chaplin representing the Carolina Thread Trail asked the MPO to consider a diverse approach to project funding and to consider alternate transportation modes when it came time to fund projects as a part of the proposed economic stimulus.
3. Barbara Anne Price discussed alternate 2 of the Monroe Connector/Bypass and stated that the Hendricks Automotive Group will not need to build the McKee Road bridge if it is selected. She also stated that Mayor Paxton is a supporter of alternate 2 and lives near alternate 18 and discussed conflict of interest issues.

6. Safe Routes to School Grant Endorsements

Presenter:

Robert Cook

Summary:

Mr. Cook stated that the rules associated with the Safe Routes to School (SRTS) program require MPO endorsement of all projects. The proposed projects were then briefly reviewed:

- a. Huntersville
- b. Mecklenburg County
- c. Mint Hill

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

Motion:

Mayor Biggers made a motion to endorse all projects as presented. Brian Sisson seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

7. I-485 Designation

Presenter:

Robert Cook

Summary:

Mr. Cook stated that the area of I-485 in question is from I-85 west of Charlotte to I-77 north of Charlotte. He then discussed the federal regulations that require MPO endorsement of additions to the Interstate system, and stated that at its January meeting, the TCC unanimously recommended that the MPO endorse the designation of I-485.

Motion:

Mr. Foxx made a motion to endorse designating the portion of I-485 from I-85 west of Charlotte to I-77 north of Charlotte as a part of the Interstate system. Mayor Biggers seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

8. Draft Public Involvement Plan Revision

Presenter:

Robert Cook

Summary:

Mr. Cook stated that the request is for the MPO to release the PIP for public review, noting that a 45-day public comment period is required. He then discussed the proposed changes and stated that most relate to adding SAFETEA-LU-specific language and editing the text for clarity. Mr. Cook also stated that there were some significant changes to the Thoroughfare Plan section: the number of categories is being reduced from five to three with Levels 4A and Level 4B combined into a single category and Levels 1 and Level 2 being combined as single category; Level 4B related to notification after the changes had occurred—post notification will be eliminated; Level 2 is essentially obsolete—it deals with significant changes to the Thoroughfare Plan, but does not require individual property owners to be notified. He noted that MUMPO had not used this approach in at least four years and that the scope of Level 2-type changes warrants individual property notification. Mr. Cook asked for

the MPO members to comment on the proposed changes and stated that at its January meeting, the TCC unanimously recommended that the MPO release the draft PIP for public review.

Motion:

Mr. Sisson made a motion to release the draft PIP for public review. Mayor Biggers seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously

9. Draft 2011-2017 Candidate Projects List

Presenter:

Robert Cook

Summary:

Mr. Cook stated that the Candidate Projects List (CPL) is prepared in advance of the development of the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) and represents the MPO's priorities for funding in the TIP, but noted that in consideration of NCDOT's current financial problems, the primary focus of the CPL effort was to review the list to be sure it represented the MPO's wishes. It was noted that the CPL had undergone extensive review by the TCC. He then reviewed proposed changes, additions and deletions. This was followed by questions about specific projects and why the document is created. The presentation concluded with a request to release the draft CPL for public review, noting that at its January meeting, the TCC unanimously recommended that the MPO release the draft CPL for public review

Motion:

Mr. Sisson made a motion to release the draft 2011-2017 CPL for public review. Mr. Foxx seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

10. Draft FY 2010 Unified Planning Work Program

Presenter:

Robert Cook

Summary:

Mr. Cook stated that the Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) is prepared annually and identifies the major transportation planning activities to be undertaken during the fiscal year. He then stated that MUMPO's FY 2010 Planning (PL) fund allocation is \$725,075, a 10.2% decrease from FY 09, and that the reason for the decrease is a federal rescission that occurred in May 2008. PL funds originate with the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and are the MPO's most significant funding source. Mr. Cook stated that MUMPO's PL funds are supplemented by STP-DA funds allocated in the TIP (U-9999C) in the amount of \$480,000 and that staff is attempting to determine if these funds might be subject to a rescission. The other major funding source is Section 5303 funds which originate with the Federal Transit Administration (FTA); however, as of the MPO's meeting, staff had not been informed of the FY 2010 Section 5303 allocation. Mr. Cook also stated that four communities had requested the use of PL funds to take on locally-based transportation planning activities: Cornelius; Davidson, Huntersville; Mint Hill. The presentation concluded with a request to release the draft UPWP for public review, noting that at its January meeting, the TCC unanimously recommended that the MPO release the draft UPWP for public review

Motion:

Mr. Sisson made a motion to release the draft FY 2010 UPWP for public review. Mr. Bensman seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

11. Congestion Mitigation & Air Quality (CMAQ) Issues

a. TIP Amendment: C-4953

Presenter:

David McDonald, CATS

Summary:

Mr. McDonald stated that the original proposal for this project was express bus service between Waxhaw and Charlotte, but due to funding constraints, lack of vehicles, etc., it was not possible to start such service at this time; however, approximately fine vanpools will be purchased to provide service to Waxhaw. Mr. McDonald also noted that the TIP amendment will result in funds being used to support a transportation demand management (TDM) program for the promotion of clean air initiatives. Mr. Sisson asked Mr. McDonald for information about the vanpool program.

Motion:

Mayor Biggers made a motion to approve the TIP amendment as presented. Mayor Gardner seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

b. & c. Project Fast Tracking: C-4956B & C-4955

Presenter:

Andrew Grant, Cornelius (C-4956B) & Andrew Grzymiski, CDOT (C-4955)

Summary:

Item (b) was originally on the agenda as a TIP amendment, but the agenda noted that it could be presented for Fast Tracking if it was determined to be eligible for that process. Prior to the MPO meeting it was determined that it was in fact eligible. Since both projects were existing CMAQ projects, and both were requesting Fast Tracking status, the MPO acted on them with a single motion. C-4956B is an intersection improvement project at NC 115 and Washam Potts Road in Cornelius; C-4955 is the center city parking and wayfinding system in Charlotte.

Motion:

Mayor Biggers made a motion to approve both projects for Fast Track status. Mr. Sisson seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

d. Project Fast Tracking Endorsements

Presenter:

Wayne Herron, TCC Chairman & Bjorn Hansen, Centralina COG

Summary:

Mr. Herron began the discussion by providing an overview of the process used to select the projects being submitted to the MPO. He also thanked the TCC subcommittee for its work, and thanked Mr. Hansen for his leadership of the subcommittee. Mr. Hansen then provided additional information about the process, and discussed how the subcommittee used the projects selection process the MPO adopted in November 2008.

MPO members then posed questions to Mr. Hansen concerning the GRADE: Grants to Reduce Aging Diesel Engines project. There were three primary concerns mentioned: use of public money for equipment owned and operated by the private sector; an inability for the project to have a meaningful impact due to the amount of funding being requested (\$300,000); the retrofitted equipment can be relocated outside the non-attainment area. A project representative was not available to respond to the members' concerns.

Motion:

Mayor Anderson made a motion to fast track the Clean Air Works and US 521 and Ballantyne Commons Parkway intersection improvements but to not fast track the GRADE project and instead to substitute the Mecklenburg-Union Clean School Bus Initiative. Mayor Biggers seconded the motion. The motion passed with 30 Yes votes and four No votes. Huntersville and Union County cast the No votes.

12. Economic Stimulus Projects

Presenter:

Robert Cook

Summary:

Mr. Cook provided an overview of the economic stimulus, stating that it was designed to jump start the economy through job creation, that indications from NCDOT were that the funds would be subject to the equity formula and that requirements were changing since nothing had been approved by Congress. He then reviewed a list of projects prepared by NCDOT, and reminded the members that MUMPO had been asked to prepared a project list and that NCDOT had set January 27 as the deadline for submitting the list. He added that he had asked MUMPO's member agencies to provide their list to him by January 26. MPO members asked if the projects would be provided to NCDOT in rank order. Mr. Cook replied that they would not due to lack of time to bring a project list back to the MPO for it to act on it. The MPO then directed staff to rank the road projects and to send a ranked project list to NCDOT by the January 27 deadline.

Motion:

Mr. Sisson made a motion to permit staff to rank road projects for submittal to NCDOT. Mr. Foxx seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

13. EPA Action Regarding the State Implementation Plan (SIP)

Presenter:

Norm Steinman, CDOT

Summary:

Mr. Steinman described the SIP as the state's plan to achieve federal air quality standards and discussed the 8-hour ozone standard that affects MUMPO's planning area. He discussed a letter from the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to the NC Department of the Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) proposing that the regional ozone non-attainment area be reclassified from "moderate" to "serious" by DENR. In the absence of a reclassification, the EPA stated it would disapprove the SIP. The reason for the EPA's request was due to its belief that the area could not achieve the ozone standard by the established date of the end of 2009. Mr. Steinman then discussed a counter proposal by DENR to withdraw the SIP and prepare a new one that shows the region attaining the 8-hour standard by 2011, assuming two, one-year extensions for exceeding the standard less than four times in 2009 and again in 2010. The EPA accepted DENR's proposal in early January.

14. Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 9:40 PM.