

MECKLENBURG-UNION METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION
Charlotte-Mecklenburg Government Center Conference Room 267
July 15, 2009
Summary Minutes

Members Attending:

Anthony Foxx (Charlotte), Jim Bensman (Cornelius), Brian Jenest (Davidson), Brian Sisson (Huntersville), Lee Myers (Matthews), Harold Cogdell, Jr. - alt. for Dumont Clarke (Mecklenburg County), Ted Biggers (Mint Hill), Bob Smith (Monroe), Jim Eschert (Pineville), Lynda Paxton (Stallings), Tracy Kuehler (Union County), Daune Gardner (Waxhaw), Nancy Anderson (Weddington), Brad Horvath (Wesley Chapel), Bill Braswell (Wingate), Greg Phipps (Charlotte-Mecklenburg Planning Commission), Mark DiBiasio (Union County Planning Board)

1. Call to Order

Chairman Myers called the July 2009 MUMPO meeting to order at 7:00 PM.

2. Approval of Minutes

Summary:

Chairman Myers asked if the MPO members had had a chance to review the minutes of the April 29 special meeting and the May regular meeting.

Motion:

Brian Sisson made a motion to approve the April 29 special meeting minutes and the May regular meeting minutes as presented. Bob Smith seconded the motion. Both meeting minutes were approved unanimously.

3. Citizen Comment Period

Summary:

June Blotnick, representing the Carolinas Clean Air Coalition, addressed the MPO. Ms. Blotnick expressed gratitude to the MPO for its approval of a CMAQ project for her organization's Clean School Bus Initiative. She also stated that her organization is opposed to the Monroe Connector/Bypass.

Charlotte City Council Member Nancy Carter also addressed the MPO. She spoke in favor of maintaining funding for the Independence Boulevard project, emphasizing its importance to the city.

4. Economic Stimulus-Project List Endorsement

Presenter:

Robert Cook

Summary:

Mr. Cook stated that the reason for this matter coming before the MPO was that bids for economic stimulus projects were coming in under estimates, resulting in additional funds being available for other projects. He noted that the TCC had unanimously recommended endorsement of the project list, and referred to the explanatory memorandum that had been included in the members' agenda packets that presented the process used to develop the list. There was discussion of recently learned information that the Board of Transportation (BOT) had not amended the state TIP for all projects included on MUMPO's list of economic stimulus projects adopted in March. It was initially believed that some worthwhile projects might not be able to advance because MUMPO is in a conformity grace period and TIP amendments are not permitted until an air quality conformity determination is made on the LRTP now being prepared. Mr. Cook reported that the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) has determined that the BOT can amend the state TIP for projects deemed to be exempt from air quality regulations. One project that can now advance is the Independence Point Parkway rehab project in Matthews.

Motion:

Jim Bensman made a motion to endorse the list with the Independence Point Parkway project added. The motion included a request that the TCC:

- a. examine MUMPO's March list of TIP amendments to determine if additional projects from that list are eligible to be added to the state's TIP; and
- b. review the endorsed list to determine if any prioritization changes are appropriate if it is found that different projects can be added.

Mr. Sisson seconded the motion. The motion passed with 34 votes cast in favor of the motion and two votes cast in opposition. Tracy Kuehler, representing Union County, cast the two votes in opposition.

5. I-485 Funding Plan

Presenter:

Robert Cook

Jim Trogdon, Chief Operating Officer, NCDOT

Summary:

Mr. Cook provided the MPO with background on this issue. He reminded the MPO of Governor Perdue's February announcement that construction on the final segment of I-485 would begin before the end of the year, but that at the MPO's May meeting, NCDOT Secretary Conti informed the MPO that no new funds were available to advance I-485. At that time, Secretary Conti told the MPO that the only way to meet the Governor's schedule would be to divert funds from an existing project, and he identified three projects: I-85 widening in Cabarrus County (TIP ID #I-3803B); Independence Boulevard widening (TIP ID #U-209B); Monroe Connector/Bypass (TIP ID #R-2559 and R-3329).

The presentation then turned to what the TCC did to respond to the MPO's direction to discuss the issue to determine if there was a desire to shift priorities. Mr. Cook stated that the TCC decided to use its LRTP project ranking methodology to compare projects, but that it elected not to consider the I-85 project because it is located outside MUMPO's jurisdiction. Therefore the projects analyzed were the unbuilt portion of I-485, Independence Boulevard widening and the Monroe Connector/Bypass. Mr. Cook reported that the results of the analysis were as follows:

Project	Total Points
Independence Boulevard	27
Monroe Connector/Bypass	23
I-485	16

The presentation concluded with a review and explanation of some of the scores, and by noting that at its July meeting, the TCC voted unanimously to forward the ranking information to the MPO. Questions about the ranking process followed.

Mr. Trogdon then addressed the MPO. He reviewed NCDOT's current fiscal situation, noting that the agency has \$12 billion worth of commitments, but just \$6 billion in revenue. He then presented the MPO with a method by which the Governor's schedule could be achieved. The proposal involved shifting the GARVEE bonds presently associated with the Independence Boulevard widening to I-485. By doing so, construction could begin by 2012 on I-485. The Independence Boulevard project would then be funded with equity formula dollars, but construction would be delayed to at least 2015.

Following his presentation, Mr. Trogdon responded to a series of questions from the MPO members. Chairman Myers asked if GARVEE bonds were repaid with equity formula funds. Mr. Trogdon replied that they were. Chairman Myers then stated that Loop funds could be diverted from other Loop projects in the state. Harold Cogdell asked what would happen to Independence Boulevard if the MPO rejected the proposal. Mr. Trogdon answered that right-of-way acquisition would begin in the fall, and construction would begin in FY 2011.

Anthony Foxx inquired about the impact on I-485 if the proposal is rejected. Mr. Trogdon stated that it could be

delayed beyond the current FY 2015 construction start date. Mr. Foxx stated that the MPO had anticipated that there would be additional funds based upon the expectation that was established by the Governor's February announcement. In response to a question from Mr. Sisson concerning how existing Loop funds are being allocated, Mr. Trogdon committed to providing the MPO with that information. Mr. Sisson followed up by asking why the Governor made the promise to start construction on I-485 without providing a way to pay for it. Bud Berro, the Governor's Charlotte representative, stated that the Governor knew the project was important and wanted to find a way to make it work.

Following the Q & A, the MPO members discussed the issue further. Mr. Foxx suggested the possibility of other options. He further stated that more information showing the real impact of the proposal needed to be provided. Chairman Myers expressed concern about public involvement requirements, noting that excluding the public from the decision-making process would be a mistake. Mr. Sisson stated he didn't like option presented by Mr. Trogdon and added that the Governor should put other Loop projects on the table and that he was not interested in reprioritizing MUMPO's options. Mr. Bensman stated he shared Mr. Sisson's views. The discussion closed with a commitment to studying the proposal further and discussing the matter at an upcoming meeting.

6. Statewide CMAQ Project Endorsement

Presenter:

Anne Tazewell, NC State University

Summary:

Ms. Tazewell addressed the MPO via telephone, using a Power Point presentation that had been provided. She reviewed the details of the Clean Fuel Advanced Technology project. She stated that it provides education and outreach about clean transportation technologies and practices to reduce transportation emissions and also awards funds to implement emission reduction projects such as the purchase of alternative fuel vehicles, refueling infrastructure, diesel retrofits and idle reduction technologies. Ms. Tazewell noted that the town of Cornelius has been the recipient of funds to purchase an alternative fuel vehicle.

Motion:

Mr. Bensman made a motion to endorse the CMAQ project. Mayor Paxton seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously.

7. Long-Range Transportation Plan

a. Ranked Project List

Presenter:

Robert Cook

Summary:

Mr. Cook reviewed the ranked project list. He explained that over 300 roadway projects were ranked by TCC members for possible inclusion in the 2035 LRTP. He further explained that the projects were ranked using a methodology approved by the MPO in 2007, but that projects identified as fully funded in the current TIP were not ranked and therefore were not included on the list being presented to the MPO. Mr. Cook stated that those projects will be included on the financially-constrained project lists that will be developed from the ranked project list. Projects will be assigned to either the 2015, 2025 or 2035 horizon years based upon available funding. He noted that staff and the TCC will continue to review the draft project list, and that draft financially-constrained lists will be presented to the TCC and MPO in August.

Following the presentation, Mr. Cook responded to questions. The questions concerned matters such as why projects scored the way they did, why some projects scored much lower this time as compared to scores from the ranking effort associated with the 2030 LRTP, why the list resulted in segments of the same roadway being ranked in an order that did not reflect the logical progression in which improvements would be implemented, etc.

b. Upcoming Project Milestones

Presenter:

Andy Grzymiski, CDOT

Summary:

Mr. Grzymiski discussed upcoming project milestones. The next major step would be the August presentation of draft financially-constrained road project lists, followed by the presentation of transportation and air quality analysis in September.

c. Revenue Sources

Presenter:

Andy Grzymiski, CDOT

Summary:

Mr. Grzymiski reviewed potential revenue sources. Many of the potential sources were discussed as a part of the statewide 21st Century Transportation Committee as well as Mecklenburg County's Committee of 21.

d. Modal & Financing Scenarios

Presenter:

Andy Grzymiski, CDOT

Summary:

Mr. Grzymiski presented the four financing recommendations that the TCC unanimously recommended to the MPO for consideration:

1. No additional revenue
2. Highway Emphasis, with an additional ½ cent sales tax in Mecklenburg County
3. Transit Emphasis, with an additional ½ cent sales tax in Mecklenburg County
4. Highway & Transit Emphasis, with an additional one cent sales tax in Mecklenburg County

After considerable discussion about the TCC recommendation, the MPO determined to that the financing scenarios listed in the motion below would be used.

Motion:

Mr. Sisson made a motion to use the following financing scenarios: no new revenue; ¼ cent of new revenue for roads; ¼ cent of new revenue for transit; ¼ cent of new revenue to be divided equally between roads and transit projects. Mr. Jenest seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

e. MPO Meeting Schedule

Presenter:

Lee Myers

Summary:

Chairman Myers stated that in order for MUMPO to maintain a schedule that will result in the LRTP being approved in early 2010 along with a conformity determination, additional meetings in August and October must be scheduled. Mr. Cook indicated that the meeting room was available on the third Wednesdays of August and October.

Motion:

Mr. Foxx made a motion to approve the scheduling of special meetings in August and October. Mr. Cogdell seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously.

8. Monroe Connector/Bypass

Presenter:

Reid Simons

Summary:

Ms. Simons provided a brief update on the project's status, focusing on the successful outreach effort in June to obtain the public's input on the project's draft environmental impact statement. She also noted that the NC Turnpike Authority was successful in selling bonds for the Triangle Expressway project in the Raleigh area.

9. Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 9:55 PM.