

MECKLENBURG - UNION TECHNICAL COORDINATING COMMITTEE

Summary Meeting Minutes

Charlotte-Mecklenburg Government Center

Innovation Station, 8th Floor

April 3, 2008

Voting Members: Wayne Herron-Chairman (Monroe), Bill Coxe-Vice-chair (Huntersville), Norm Steinman - alt. for Danny Pleasant (CDOT), Jim Keenan (E&PM), Ken Tippet (CDOT-Bike Coordinator), Jonathan Wells-alt. for Debra Campbell (CMPD), Alan Giles – alt. for Leslie Rhodes (LUESA), David McDonald (MTC), Jack Flaherty (NCDOT-PTD), Jonathan Parker – via phone (NCDOT-TPB), Andrew Grant (Cornelius), Scott Kaufhold (Indian Trail), Bill Sherrill (Matthews), Lee Bailey (Mint Hill), Kevin Icard (Pineville), Shannon Martel – alt. for Brian Matthews (Stallings), Greg Mahar (Waxhaw), Mary Jo Gollnitz (Weddington), Justin Krieg (Wesley Chapel)

Staff: Robert Cook (MUMPO), Barry Mosley (MUMPO), Tim Gibbs (CDOT), Eldewins Haynes (CDOT), Anna Gallup (CDOT), Crissy Huffstickler (CMPD), Jim Loyd (Monroe), Jennifer Harris-via phone (NCTA), Christy Shumate – via phone (NCTA-GEC), Loretta Barren – via phone (FHWA), Dana Stoogenke (Rocky River RPO), Jim Garges (Mecklenburg County Park & Recreation), Julie Clark (Mecklenburg County Park & Recreation)

Guests: Carl Gibilaro (PBS&J), Steve Blakley (Kimley-Horn), Pamela Davies (Queens University), Laurie Guy (Queens University), Bill Nichols (Queens University)

Mr. Herron opened the meeting at 10:00 AM and asked if there were any changes to the agenda.

1. Consideration of January Minutes

Presenter: Wayne Herron

Summary/Requested Action:

Jonathan Wells asked that the minutes be changed to reflect a corrected adjournment time. Bill Coxe made a motion to approve the minutes with that correction. David McDonald seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

2. Marion Diehl Park Earmark

Presenter: Pamela Davies & Bill Nichols of Queens University

Summary/Requested Action:

Mr. Herron asked that the discussion begin with an overview of the project, and asked Mr. Cook to provide that information. Mr. Cook reviewed the history of the project, starting with the earmark's inclusion in SAFETEA-LU when it was enacted in 2005. He noted that the language in SAFETEA-LU was vague and stated "Transportation improvements at the Marion Diehl Center, Charlotte, NC." He then discussed the development of the 2007-2013 TIP and the MPO's refusal to include the project in the TIP, and the current request to include the project in the 2009-2015 TIP. Mr. Cook noted that during the 2007-2013 TIP discussions, MUMPO was told that it would have to delay a project in order for the earmark to advance. However, at this point, NCDOT has told staff that the earmark can be funded without impacting another project. This is a result of a "financial cushion" built into the TIP due to the knowledge that not all funded projects will move forward on schedule. Pamela Davies, Queens University president, then described the project's concept, stating that it would link two parts of the Marion Diehl site and that components were designed to accommodate those with special needs.

Mr. Herron raised the issue of the “financial cushion” and that why not use the funds to implement unfunded transportation projects. He then asked Charlotte’s representatives for the City’s view. Norm Steinman stated that Charlotte had not developed an official position, and asked Mr. Cook to represent the MPO at an upcoming Charlotte City Council Transportation Committee meeting.

Bill Nichols of Queens University then provided details of the project by reviewing a site plan. Jim Garges of Mecklenburg County Park & Recreation stated that the connection within the park was crucial to its operations. Mr. Coxe asked about the project’s public benefit. Mr. Garges replied that anyone can use the park and therefore the public will benefit from any improvements to it. He also noted that the Diehl Center may be expanded. Mr. Herron observed that the project is not a typical transportation project. Mr. Steinman asked if the roadway linking the two parts of the site was a driveway, or if it looked more like a street. Mr. Nichols stated that it will have sidewalks on both sides. Andrew Grant asked if the roadway was being built to city standards. Mr. Nichols stated it would be. Ken Tippetts asked if the project will connect with Little Sugar Creek. Mr. Nichols replied that it would, and Julie Clark of Mecklenburg County Park & Recreation added that there are plans to bring the greenway system on to the site via the Little Hope Creek.

Loretta Barren stated that in order for the project to be funded in the TIP, it needs to be Title 23 eligible. Laurie Guy of Queens University stated she sent plans to an FHWA staff member in 2006 and the response received was that the project was acceptable. Justin Krieg asked if this project should be given more consideration than NC 218 or I-277 lighting. Kevin Icard agreed and stated that a line needs to be drawn at some point. Mr. Grant asked if it was better to let the funding go, or use it for something with a public benefit.

It was decided that this issue would be discussed in detail at the April 9 Transportation Staff meeting. All parties would be asked to participate: NCDOT; FHWA; Queens; Park & Recreation. Mr. Icard asked that Queens staff provide an electronic copy of the plan to everyone. Mr. Coxe added that he wants the TCC to develop a policy on earmarks.

3. Draft 2009-2015 Transportation Improvement Program

Presenter: Robert Cook

Summary/Requested Action:

Mr. Cook updated the TCC on the project’s status. He noted that the MPO had endorsed the STP-DA project list, and that it was available for public review. He stated that two public meetings were scheduled to hear the public’s comments: April 17 in Charlotte and April 23 in Monroe.

4. LRTP Update/County-Level Population & Employment Projections

Presenter: Anna Gallup & Robert Cook

Summary/Requested Action:

Ms. Gallup stated that she was still working on updating the county-level projections and that the TCC will be asked to recommend endorsement of the figures to the MPO at the May meeting. She noted that she was still expecting information from two agencies, and reminded the members that work still needed to be done on TAZ-level information.

Mr. Cook updated the committee on LRTP efforts related to: cost estimates; the Consultation process; public involvement and project ranking.

Regarding cost estimates, the Mr. Cook informed the TCC that staff is pursuing a contract with a consulting firm to prepare updated estimates for the over 350 projects now being ranked. He noted that information provided by the consultant indicates that project costs from the 2030 Plan have nearly doubled since the time those estimates were prepared in late 2004. The result will likely be far

fewer projects in the updated 2035 Plan because it will be difficult to justify significant revenue increases to offset the higher project costs.

Specific to the project ranking issue, Mr. Cook requested guidance on how to proceed with ranking projects linked to Cornelius' Village of Lake Norman project. At the time of the meeting, the Town had not yet granted any approvals, and financing details were not settled, yet the project's success is contingent upon a series of improvements: interchange at I-77 and Westmoreland Road; widening of I-77; Bailey Road Extension across I-77; US 21 widening; Westmoreland Road widening. Mr. Cook asked the TCC how staff should proceed with the project ranking process despite the lack of approvals.

Mr. Grant stated that an approval by the Town board will be a clear sign that the Town wants to see the project implemented, and stated that he would like to see the projects ranked as proposed by the developer. Mr. Coxe mentioned that all of the projects in question have merit, even without the Village of Lake Norman development, and suggested that the TCC proceed with ranking the projects. David McDonald recommended that the MPO should comment on the proposed interchange, and Mr. Coxe suggested that a request should come from Cornelius to amend the Thoroughfare Plan to include the interchange. Steve Blakley asked if the projects should be ranked individually or as a package, because it is the totality of the projects that will permit the development to occur. Mr. McDonald recommended ranking the projects individually. Mr. Grant stated he could support an individual ranking process. Mr. Herron stated that the TCC should support the Town and move forward with ranking the projects despite the lack of approvals.

5. CMAQ Project Selection Subcommittee

Presenter: Barry Mosley

Summary/Requested Action:

Mr. Mosley reminded the TCC that it had formed a subcommittee to develop project selection criteria for CMAQ projects. He stated that due to so many other tasks taking precedence, the committee's work had been stopped for some time, but that staff recognizes the importance of completing the task and therefore had requested Centralina COG to lead an effort to do so. The draft scope of work was distributed to the committee, and comments were requested.

6. Monroe Connector/Bypass Update

Presenter: Carl Gibilaro

Summary / FYI:

Mr. Gibilaro indicated that the NCTA held a meeting the previous week in Indian Trail and discussed impacts on the Old Hickory Industrial Park. Segment 2 has been slightly realigned to lessen the impact on the industrial park. Information from that meeting was distributed. Also discussed was the indirect and cumulative impacts (ICI) study, and that the NCTA is hoping to have the study's results in May. It was mentioned that biologists and roadway survey crews are in the field at present.

Work is now underway on functional designs for the road, including interchanges. Mr. Gibilaro requested that a meeting be arranged after May's TCC meeting to review the functional designs in detail, along with other issues such as centerline alignments, a schedule update and cost estimates.

Mr. Gibilaro discussed the frontage roads that are associated with Segment 2. Segment 2 uses a small portion of the existing US 74 ROW, and the frontage roads are required to satisfy the state statute that toll roads have a free, parallel route. The current design calls for the roads to be two-lane, one way roads.

7. Air Quality Issues Update

Presenter: Eldewins Haynes

Summary / FYI:

Due to the meeting running late, this item was rescheduled for the May meeting.

8. Other Business

Mr. Tippette invited everyone to participate in a bicycle webinar on April 15.

Mr. Steinman referenced an appearance by the Charlotte Chamber director at a recent Charlotte City Council meeting where he requested the formation of a 21-person committee to prioritize roadway projects and make funding recommendations. This committee will be limited to Mecklenburg County.

Mr. Coxe asked Mr. Grant about the Mayors Transportation Task Force. Mr. Grant committed to discussing the task force's work at the May meeting.

9. Adjourn: The meeting was adjourned at 12:15 PM.