

MINUTES
GASTON URBAN AREA METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION (MPO)
TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE REGULAR MEETING
MARCH 27, 2007

The regularly scheduled meeting of the Gaston Urban Area MPO Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC) was held Tuesday, March 27, 2007, 6:30 pm until 8:00 pm in the Community Room of the Gastonia Police Department located at 200 East Long Avenue, Gastonia, NC.

Members Present:

Jim Long	City of Bessemer City, TAC Chair
Wayne Massagee	City of Bessemer City, Councilman
Ronald Murphy	Town of Cramerton, Mayor
Rick Coleman	Town of Dallas, Mayor
James Watson	City of Gastonia, Councilman
John Howren, Jr.	City of Gastonia, Councilman
Irl Dixon	City of Belmont, Councilman
Joe Carpenter	Gaston County, Commissioner
Phyllis Harris	City of Mt. Holly, Councilperson
Ira Dixon	City of Belmont, Councilperson
Judith Johnson	Town of Stanley, Mayor
Robert Collier	NC Board of Transportation Member
Bob Spencer	NCDOT Turnpike Board, Ex-Officio Member

Others Present:

Hank Graham	Gaston MPO, Principal Transportation Planner
Randi Philbeck	Gaston MPO, Transportation Planner I
Cass Roberts	Gaston MPO, Administrative Assistant III
Shannon Ransom	NCDOT, Gaston MPO Coordinator

Guests:

Sgt. Jimmy Overlin Town of Stanley Police Department

Members with absences in 2007:

Town of Spencer Mountain	(Jan., Mar. - 2)
City of Lowell	(Jan., Mar. - 2)
Town of Dallas	(Jan. - 1)
Town of McAdenville	(Jan., Mar. - 2)
Gaston County	(Jan. - 1)
Town of Ranlo	(Mar. - 1)

1. Set Agenda, Presenter: Jim Long, TAC Chair

Mr. Long asked if there were any new items to add to the agenda. Mr. Graham asked that there be discussion later in the meeting regarding moving the May TAC meeting to the 5th week of May instead of the regularly scheduled date of May 22, 2007. Mr. Long said that it would be discussed under other business.

2. Determination of a Quorum

It was determined that there was a quorum present.

3. Approval of Minutes, Presenter: Jim Long, TAC Chair

Mr. Long asked if there were any changes, additions, or deletions to the minutes of the regularly scheduled meeting of January 23, 2007. There were none.

Upon a motion made by Mr. Carpenter and seconded by Mr. Watson, the minutes of January 23, 2007 as presented were approved unanimously.

4. Introduction of Guests, Presenter: Jim Long, TAC Chair

Mr. Long introduced Wayne Massagee, Councilman from Bessemer City. Mayor Johnson introduced Sgt. Jimmy Overland of the town of Stanley.

5. Public Comment Period, Presenter: Jim Long, TAC Chair

There were no public comments made.

6. Gaston Urban Area MPO 2007- 2008 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP), Presenter: Hank Graham, AICP, Principal Transportation Planner

Mr. Graham stated that purpose of the proposed 2008 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) for Fiscal Year 2007-2008 is to outline the tasks to be undertaken by MPO staff in the coming year and the amount of funding it will take to complete those tasks.

Mr. Graham stated that our annual allocation is \$250,022 and traditionally we have been spending around \$180,000 of the annual allocation. Our unobligated fund balance is around \$650,000. The annual work program for this year is \$350,000. Transit funding totals \$34,800. In addition to the annual allocation, \$14,500 from the unobligated fund balance will be used as well bringing the total PL (planning) and 5303 grant funds to \$299,322.

Mr. Long entertained a motion to approve the Gaston Urban Area MPO 2007 - 2008 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) as presented. Mr. Carpenter made a motion to approve with Mr. Howren seconding the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

6. Thoroughfare Plan Map Amendments, Presenter: Hank Graham, AICP, Principal Transportation Planner

Garden Parkway Name Change

Mr. Graham stated that in November, 2006, the North Carolina Turnpike Authority voted to change the name of the Gaston East-West Connector to the Garden Parkway and asked that in the spirit of conformity, that the TAC approve the amendment to the Gaston Urban Area Thoroughfare Plan Map for this name change.

Mr. Graham added that the original Gaston East-West Connector was split into two sections. One section was north of Dallas and that section today, with approving this amendment, will be known as the 321 Bypass. The other section is the Garden Parkway which will connect from I-85 to I-485.

Mr. Long hoped that public perception of the naming of these segments would improve and that the Garden Parkway's original intent to relieve traffic in the future would be better understood by the public.

Southridge Parkway Extension – Functional Design

Mr. Graham stated that this map amendment to the Gaston Urban Area Thoroughfare Plan involves the addition and inclusion of Southridge Drive. NCDOT has completed a functional design for Southridge Drive in Bessemer City for the Southridge Industrial Park and the Dole Plant. Mr. Graham added that there have been discussions to extend the Southridge Parkway into Bessemer City proper, but there is no funding at this time, but that it could be added to the Thoroughfare Plan as an unfunded project.

Mr. Long entertained a motion to approve the Garden Parkway name change and the Southridge Parkway Extension functional design. Mr. Carpenter made a motion to approve with Mr. Dixon seconding the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Murphy wondered if the center line has been decided for the Garden Parkway. He felt that the public is confused. Mr. Carpenter agreed and hoped as well that the determination of the centerline would help the public. Mr. Spencer stated that the first leg of Garden Parkway is from 485 to 279. The goal is 7 years from now that this leg would be a toll road. Judge Collier stated that the 2007 Preliminary Scoping for this project will be discussed next week at the Board of Transportation meeting and added that the funding will not come out of the equity fund. As an additional point of information, he added that Garvee Funds will be used to resurface some areas of I-85.

8. Methodology for Funding – Use of Transportation Planning Funds (104f Grant Monies), Presenter: Bernie Yacobucci, Transportation Planner I

Mr. Yacobucci stated that MPO staff is currently developing a methodology for the use of Planning (PL) 104f Funds. Mr. Long added that he wanted MPO staff to be fully involved with facilitating the shared use of funds for local governments. Mr. Graham stated that MPO staff would receive copies of proposed uses from local governments and then determine whether the state's requirements have been satisfied for the use of these funds for transportation planning.

Mr. Carpenter asked that perhaps we need a special citizens group to look at projects and that it would be advantageous to take a more comprehensive coordinated look on the part of all local governments and the county to reprioritize projects.

Mr. Yacobucci stated that in the agenda package there is a draft Planning Funds Sub-Allocation Guideline for members to review and for each city or town within the planning area that is a recipient of PL funds certain minimal criteria must be met as described in the agenda package.

9. Adopted 07-13 State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP), Presenter: Randi A. Philbeck, Transportation Planner I

Ms. Philbeck stated that the 2007-2013 State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) was adopted by the NCDOT Board of Transportation on March 1, 2007. There is one change between the Draft STIP and the adopted 07-13 STIP in Gaston County which involves Project I-5007, I-85, Milepost 24 to Milepost 27, for pavement rehabilitation and this, based on priority needs, has been added with construction in FY 07.

After some discussion, Mr. Long entertained a motion to adopt the 07-13 State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) as presented. Mr. Carpenter made the motion to approve with Mr. Watson seconding the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

10. Draft Franklin Blvd. Corridor Plan Concept, Presenter: Hank Graham, AICP, Principal Transportation Planner

Mr. Graham stated that included in the agenda is a handout of draft conceptual designs for the proposed Franklin Boulevard Corridor Study. The consultant that was hired for this study split the corridor into different sections and segments. These consist of areas in Dixie Village, Greasy Corner, Downtown, the mall area, and the Eastern Gateway. Staff made many comments to the consultant for implementation.

11. New Business

12. Other Business

- a) **Gastonia Express 85-X Ridership Report** - Ms. Philbeck stated that ridership is still on the increase for all months. Mr. Graham added that our Express Route is the 2nd highest used express route out of the CATS eight express routes. He added that our annual contract with CATS has been reduced by an additional \$15,000.
- b) **Gastonia Transit Expansion Study – Update** – Mr. Yacobucci stated that the study is progressing nicely with successful stakeholder meetings and good response from surveys and a public workshop at the 1st United Methodist Church. Mr. Graham stated that the survey is also located on our webpage as a hot link. Mr. Howren said he took the survey and it took less than 5 minutes to do and he added that it was well done.
- c) **Gaston County Freight Study Kick-off** – Mr. Yacobucci stated that the kickoff meeting for the freight study was on March 21, 2007 and it involved private freight carriers (trucking and rail), airports, planning, public works, community and economic development organizations. The final report will be out June 28, 2007. Mr. Graham added that this study will provide information for a digital GIS data map showing truck, freight, rail, traffic data and how this data will impact economic growth. This study will also go into the Long Range Transportation Plan which is a new federal government requirement as well.
- d) **Gaston MPO Site Plan Review Reminder** – Ms. Philbeck stated that the MPO should be involved in any site plan review with local governments.
- e) **County-wide/MPO-wide Greenway Plan** – Ms. Philbeck stated that the plan entailed that all greenway plans in the county be reviewed in order to see where possible connections could be made countywide. She said that the meeting held on the evening of March 22, 2007 was not well attended and Ms. Philbeck hoped that future meetings would be held during the day.
- f) **Possibility that the date of the TAC meeting may change** - Mr. Graham stated that the meeting may be moved to May 29 because when projects shift, the model for the 2007-2013 TIP must be redone. Ms. Ransom stated that for now we are on track but if the meeting has to be moved to May 29, she will let staff know in plenty of time to pass that information on to the TAC.
- g) **Judge Collier's Comments** – Judge Collier stated that the 321 and I-85 intersection is still our highest priority in Gaston County. There are two plans for this project – one being extravagant and costly which will involve more ROW and a flyover. In other areas, Highway 150 and I-77 have been designed as a strategic highway corridor. For Highway 16 in Catawba County, there will be at least a 4 lane highway from I-40 and Charlotte.

13. Adjournment

There being no other business, Mr. Long entertained a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:00 pm.

Mr. Murphy made a motion to adjourn the meeting with Mr. Watson seconding the motion. The motion carried unanimously.