

**QUORUM WAS NOT PRESENT**

**MINUTES**

**GASTON URBAN AREA METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION (MPO)  
TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE REGULAR MEETING**

MAY 22, 2007

The regularly scheduled meeting of the Gaston Urban Area MPO Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC) was held Tuesday, May 22, 2007, 6:30 pm until 7:30 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
Ronald Murphy	Town of Cramerton, Mayor
Rick Coleman	Town of Dallas, Mayor
Dave Kirlin	City of Gastonia, Councilman
Judith Johnson	Town of Stanley, Mayor
Robert Collier	NC Board of Transportation Member

**Others Present:**

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

**Guests:**

Loretta Barren	FHWA, Community Planner
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**Members with absences in 2007:**

Town of Spencer Mountain	(Jan., Mar., May - 3)
City of Lowell	(Jan., Mar., May - 3)
Town of Dallas	(Jan. - 1)
Town of McAdenville	(Jan., Mar., May - 3)
City of Mount Holly	(May - 1)
Gaston County	(Jan., May - 2)
Town of Ranlo	(Mar., May - 2)
City of Belmont	(May - 1)

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

No action could be taken due to lack of quorum votes.

### 2. Determination of a Quorum

Mr. Long stated that there was not a quorum present and another meeting will be called because we have items that must be voted upon before July 1, 2007. Mr. Long called the meeting to order for items on the agenda that did not require a vote.

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

No action could be taken due to lack of quorum votes.

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

Mr. Long welcomed Loretta Barren, Community Planner, Federal Highways Administration who was here to give a presentation on SAFETEA-LU.

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

There were no public comments made.

### 6. SAFETEA-LU: Final Statewide and Metropolitan Planning Rule, Presenter: Loretta Barren, Community Planner, Federal Highways Administration

Mr. Long stated that Loretta Barren will present a brief overview of the SAFETEA-LU regulations and their impacts on the MPO planning process.

Ms. Barren began her presentation by stating SAFETEA-LU is the new Federal Transportation Planning Regulation that stands for ***Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act - A Legacy for Users***. The key items of interest and change are Planning Factors, Public Participation, Interested Parties, Consultation, Environmental Mitigation, Congestion, Financial Planning, Amendments and Modifications to the Plan and to the TIP, and Implementation.

Planning Factors – Safety and security are of paramount importance in SAFETEA-LU. Also, Land Use to promote consistency of plans with state and local planned growth, as well as coordination between the MPO and NCDOT to streamline transportation and land use planning.

Mr. Long asked about what steps should be taken for the MPO and NCDOT to coordinate and streamline transportation and land use planning and are they mandated? Ms. Barren stated that FHWA does not mandate Land Use Law but wants

consistency between the plans. Mr. Long stated that presently there is no requirement to show the cumulative effect of how three or four different approved developments will impact transportation. What happens is that we put more and more pressure on our busiest streets without the funds to correct or prohibit unsafe traffic conditions. Mr. Holder added that traffic impact analysis does occur nonetheless. Ms. Barren stated that most of the MPOs she works with in North Carolina have a site plan review component. Mr. Holder stated that development is not done in a vacuum; these factors are known.

Participation Plans – More focus on how MPOs are gathering public comments and how they meet requirements through timely and adequate public notices, reasonable access to meetings, locations and times convenient to the public, and ways to provide information electronically such as on the web or cds.

Interested Parties – Notices to users of pedestrian walkways and bicycle transportation facilities as well as representatives of the disabled, freight shippers, union and non-union public transportation employees and other interested parties.

Consultation – Review of local and state plans and how to consult with resource agencies. MPO and State LRTPs shall be developed in consultation with State, tribal, and local agencies responsible for Land Use Management, Natural Resources, Conservation and Historic Preservation.

Environmental Mitigation - During LRTP development, it is required that the environmental impact on these plans be discussed with State, Federal, tribal, land management, wildlife and regulatory agencies.

Congestion – There is a national initiative to address congestion.

Mr. Graham said that he was considering changing our MPO boundaries and inviting discussion on this. Ms. Barren stated that transportation management areas are defined by the census bureau and if the next update causes your boundary to be 200,000 and over, then your area would be federally mandated as a transportation management area with all the requirements that would go along with it.

Financial – The STIP/TIP has changed from a 2-year document to a 4-year document. These plans must include an inflation rate that reflects the year of expenditure dollars.

Implementation – Air Quality conformity will be updated every 4 years with the Plan/TIP. The LRTP will be updated every 4 to 5 years.

Amendments and Modification - On July 1, 2007, we will be in a “plan freeze” which means no changes can be made to the LRTP nor to the TIP that has been adopted. Administrative modifications such as minor funding or description changes will be allowed after July 1, 2007, but major new project amendments will not be allowed.

Mr. Long thanked Ms. Barren for her presentation.

No action was needed as the presentation was provided for information.

**7. Amendment to the 07-13 State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) to include the purchase of two ADA compliant lift vans in FY 2008, Presenter: Hank Graham, AICP, Principal Transportation Planner**

No action could be taken due to lack of quorum votes.

**8. Eight- Hour Ozone Conformity Analysis and Determination Report**

No action could be taken due to lack of quorum votes.

**9. Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) Updates, Presenter: Randi A. Philbeck, Transportation Planner I**

No action could be taken due to lack of quorum votes.

**10. 2007-2013 Gaston Urban Area Metropolitan Transportation Improvement Program, Presenter: Randi A. Philbeck, Transportation Planner I**

No action could be taken due to lack of quorum votes.

**11. Regional Commuting Report, Presenter: Bernie Yacobucci, Transportation Planner I**

No action could be taken due to lack of quorum votes.

**12. New Business**

**13. Other Business**

- a) Gastonia Express 85-X Ridership Report – Ms. Philbeck stated that ridership continues to increase and we will see more ridership with the rising gas costs.
- b) Gastonia Transit Expansion Study – Update – Mr. Yacobucci said that 400 transit expansion surveys were received. He pointed out the key points from the transit surveys – 1) CATS Express Bus does not connect well with Gastonia Transit buses; 2) Current Gastonia Transit schedules can be confusing; 3) Riders are pleased with the quality of Gastonia Transit services; 4) A growing number of important destinations are outside the existing service area.

He stated that the next community workshop will be on June 7, 2007 from 4:00 pm until 7:00 pm at the 1<sup>st</sup> United Methodist Church and the next working group will be on June 14, 2007 from 2:30 pm until 3:30 pm.

Mr. Kirlin asked what will be done with this good information? Mr. Yacobucci said that hopefully we will be able to improve the transit system. Mr. Graham stated that the consultant will prepare a final report and that the technical working group from all local municipalities will also provide feedback. Our final goal is for the consultants of all the transportation studies underway to bring their reports, data, and recommendations to City Council and to the TAC later this summer in a transportation workshop setting. This will allow discussion and decision-making on long-term transportation issues. Mr. Kirlin asked that a presentation should be made to the Gaston County Commissioners as well. Gastonia should not shoulder the total financial burden of the transit system and what we should be considering is a county-wide transportation system. Mr. Kirlin added that we need stakeholder participation in the county - with the rising gas prices, the sooner we can get people on the buses, the better it will be. How easy will this goal will be - he wasn't sure.

Mr. Long stated a few years ago there was a Transportation Advisory Board and he wondered if it was still in existence. Mr. Graham stated that Margaret Darby Taylor of Gaston County Access coordinates the meetings and the board is comprised of Social Service Agency providers.

- c) Gaston County Freight Study – Update – Mr. Yacobucci stated that the first working group meeting was conducted on May 1, 2007. A Community Workshop occurred at the Westfield Mall on May 17, 2007. He said that the study is checking on profiles of the different modes of travel in corridors such as on I-85, Franklin Boulevard. Interviews will be conducted with elected officials to seek their input. The next meeting for the Freight Study will be on June 13, 2007 from 10:00 am until 12:00 pm.
- d) Ozone Awareness/Education Program – Ms. Philbeck stated that most of the neighboring municipalities are participating in this program. She stated that she continues to ask schools and businesses to participate in the Ozone Awareness/Education program by flying corresponding flags (Orange or Red) at their sites when the Air Quality Index for Ozone reaches 101 or greater. Of the 50 flags, 9 are left. Ozone season began May 1, 2007. Ms. Stroupe stated that Stanley could use an extra flag for Desatech or for Buckeye. Now, 8 flags are left.

Mr. Long asked Judge Collier for any updates. Judge Collier stated that there is some “band-aid” work being done at the 321 and I-85 interchange though there should be something permanent there to improve the terrible conditions. There will be some resurfacing of I-85 here in Gaston County. He added that the Board of Transportation is going through a strategic organizational assessment and it is

being conducted and overseen by McKinsey and Company which is a private management consulting firm.

Mr. Murphy stated that the city of Charlotte has initiated a petition to the state regarding the funding source of the transportation money that Charlotte is being short changed and he asked the Judge what is the Transportation Board's view on this issue. Judge Collier stated that the answer depends from member to member since some members of the board benefit from the way the funding source of the transportation money is currently structured and some members do not benefit as well. There is not an official position on this. Eastern North Carolina has the control on funding at this time. Mr. Kirlin stated that a shift in power in the state legislature might solve this. Mr. Holder added that the Federal government is worse off than the State government and transportation is not high on their list of priorities. The next set of candidates for government will talk about education and other topics, not transportation.

Mr. Long stated that we will have to have a TAC meeting in the next three weeks to vote on all the Resolutions and Amendments that we could not vote on tonight due to a lack of a quorum. After a brief discussion, the meeting was scheduled for Thursday, June 7, 2007 at 6:30 pm – dinner at 5:45 pm, with the location to be determined. All members will be notified.

There being no other business to discussed, the meeting ended at 7:30 pm.