

MINUTES
METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION (MPO)
TRANSPORTATION COORDINATING COMMITTEE (TCC)
REGULARLY SCHEDULED MEETING
MAY 9, 2007

The regularly scheduled meeting of the Transportation Coordinating Committee (TCC) was held **Wednesday, May 9, 2007**, at the Market Street Buffet and Bakery, 2525 S. York Street, Gastonia, NC.

Members Present:

Ben Blackburn	City of Lowell, TCC CHAIR
Thomas Shrewsbury	City of Lowell, Public Works Director
Wilce Martin	Town of Stanley, Public Works Director
Gary Hicks	Town of Stanley, Interim City Manager
Steve Baucom	Town of Cramerton, Planner
David Kahler	Town of Dallas, Comm. Dev. Administrator
Danny Jackson	City of Mt. Holly, Assistant City Manager
Jack Kiser	City of Gastonia, Director of Planning
Bob Pulkkinen	City of Gastonia, Transit Field Supervisor
David Williams	Gaston County, Director of Planning
Shannon Ransom	NCDOT, Gaston MPO Coordinator
Jack Flaherty	NCDOT, Planner
Mike Holder	NCDOT, Division Engineer
Steve Hefner	NCDOT, Assistant Div. 12 Traffic Engineer

Staff Members 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

Guest:

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

Town of McAdenville	(Jan., Mar., May - 3)
Town of Spencer Mountain	(Jan., Mar., May - 3)
Town of Ranlo	(Jan., Mar., May - 3)
City of Mt. Holly	(Mar. - 1)
City of Bessemer City	(May - 1)
City of Belmont	(May - 1)

1. Set Agenda, Presenter: Ben Blackburn, TCC Chair

Mr. Blackburn asked if there was any new business or any additions to add to the agenda? There were none.

2. Determination of Quorum, Presenter: Ben Blackburn, TCC Chair

It was determined that there was a quorum present.

3. Approval of Minutes, Presenter: Ben Blackburn, TCC Chair

Mr. Blackburn entertained a motion to approve the minutes of March 14, 2007 as presented.

Mr. Martin made a motion to approve the minutes of March 14, 2007 as presented with Mr. Blackburn seconding the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

4. Introduction of Guests, Presenter: Ben Blackburn, TCC Chair

There were no new guests.

5. Public Comment Period, Presenter: Ben Blackburn, TCC Chair

There were no public comments.

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

Mr. Graham 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 that some of 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.

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.

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 or 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. Blackburn thanked Ms. Barren for her presentation.

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

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

Mr. Graham stated that Gastonia Transit has programmed the necessary replacement/expansion of two new ADA compliant lift vans for FY 2008. As required for use of Federal funds, an endorsement from the MPO is necessary. The addition of this project has been included in the 2007-2013 MTIP.

Mr. Blackburn entertained a motion to recommend approval to the TAC the Amendment to the 07-13 Metropolitan Transportation Improvement Program (MTIP) to include the purchase of two ADA compliant lift vans in FY 2008. Mr. Pulkinen made the motion to recommend approval to the TAC as presented with Mr. Jackson seconding the motion. The motion was approved unanimously.

8. 8-Hour Ozone Conformity Analysis and Determination Report, Presenter: Randi A. Philbeck, Transportation Planner I

Ms. Philbeck stated that recent changes in the 2007-2013 State TIP requires a new Ozone Conformity Analysis Report for the Charlotte ozone non-attainment region. This report constitutes the second amendment to the original Conformity Determination Report dated June 8, 2005. Copies of the Conformity Analysis and Determination Report were on display in local libraries and in city halls throughout the MPO area for thirty days. The thirty-day comment period ended on May 3, 2007 and no comments were received. She added that there was a public hearing on April 27, 2007 and no participants came to the meeting. Ms. Philbeck stated that this report must be adopted at this meeting.

There were no further comments or discussion.

Mr. Blackburn entertained a motion to recommend to the TAC the approval of the 8-Hour Ozone Conformity Analysis and Determination Report as presented. Mr. Martin made the motion to approve with Mr. Pulkinnen seconding the motion. The motion was approved unanimously.

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

Ms. Philbeck stated that periodically, as needs and conditions change, it becomes necessary to amend the LRTP. Enclosed is one amendment to the Gaston Urban Area Long Range Transportation Plan, and two resolutions, including one to adopt the Amended 2030 LRTP for the Gaston Urban Area MPO, and one finding conformity of the 2030 LRTP.

Ms. Philbeck stated that the GUAMPO project is TIP Project U-4915 in Bessemer City (SR 1307 - Edgewood Road) that was rescheduled to occur after 2010 by the NC Board of Transportation. The project is now scheduled to be completed by 2020 and the road will be widened to 3 lanes.

Ms. Philbeck asked that the amendment and the two resolutions be voted upon separately.

Mr. Blackburn entertained a motion to recommend to the TAC the adoption of the amendment to the Gaston Urban Area Long Range Transportation Plan as presented. Mr. Jackson made a motion to approve with Mr. Kahler seconding the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Blackburn entertain a motion to recommend to the TAC adoption of the Resolution for the Amended 2030 LRTP for the GUAMPO and the Resolution finding conformity of the 2030 LRTP as presented. Mr. Hicks

made a motion to approve with Mr. Jackson seconding the motion. The motion was approved unanimously.

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

Ms. Philbeck stated that at the March 27, 2007 meeting of the TAC, a Resolution was signed adopting the Gaston Urban Area Metropolitan Transportation Improvement Program and its supporting Funding Table for FY 07-13, along with the 07-13 State Transportation Improvement Program and its supporting Funding Table. The addition of Southridge Drive Parkway to the Thoroughfare Plan Map is the reason for this minor amendment to the TIP funding tables and MTIP.

Ms. Philbeck stated that a Resolution is necessary for finding conformity of the Gaston Urban Area Metropolitan Planning Organization FY 2007-2013 State Transportation Improvement Program.

Mr. Blackburn entertained a motion to recommend approval to the TAC of an amended Resolution adopting the Gaston Urban Area Metropolitan Transportation Improvement Program and its supporting funding table and the State Transportation Improvement Program and its supporting funding table for FY 2007-2013 in conformity with the North Carolina State Implementation Plan for Interim Emissions in areas where no SIP has been approved or found adequate. Mr. Jackson made a motion to approve as presented with Mr. Flaherty seconding the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Black entertained a motion to recommend approval to the TAC the Resolution finding conformity of the Gaston Urban Area Metropolitan Planning Organization FY 2007-2013 Transportation Improvement Program. Mr. Jackson made a motion to approve as presented with Mr. Flaherty seconding the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

11. Modification to Gaston MPO Boundary, Presenter: Hank Graham, AICP, Principal Transportation Planner

Mr. Graham stated that he would like to pull this item for discussion at a later date. There was no objection.

Mr. Blackburn entertained a motion to amend the agenda to pull this item for discussion for a later date. Mr. Kiser made a motion to approve with Mr. Hicks seconding the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

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

Mr. Yacobucci stated that Centralina Council of Governments is developing a regional commuting report for travel times between burgeoning residential areas near and outside of 485 and Uptown Charlotte. Some of their methodology would include recruiting volunteers who would record their commuting travel times for five to ten days. This would be valuable information for a variety of audiences, and would help raise the level of awareness and hopefully facilitate more efficient travel patterns for workers commuting to Uptown Charlotte. The cost of the study is \$25,000 with our share being \$2,500.

Mr. Blackburn entertained a motion to recommend approval to the TAC of a Regional Commuting Report, with the cost of the study being \$25,000 and the MPO share amounting to \$2,500. Mr. Hicks made the motion to approve with Mr. Pulkinen seconding the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

13. Purchase of Gaston County Freight Data, Presenter: Hank Graham, AICP, Principal Transportation Planner

Mr. Graham stated that the consultants hired for the Freight Study for the Gaston MPO Area have informed MPO staff that additional detailed data exists that would significantly benefit Gaston County. This data was not part of the current study's scope. The cost for this detailed data is approximately \$15,000. Benefits would include actual instead of estimated assumption totals of freight traffic within and through Gaston County. This data is collected and assembled nationally from a private source.

Mr. Graham stated that staff will verify with the Charlotte Department of Transportation who is responsible for putting together our regional travel demand model just to make sure that if we do pay for this data that it would be able to be incorporated into our regional travel demand model for conformity purposes. The Gaston freight data alone is \$11,258. If we would enter into an agreement with our regional partners for the data for this entire region it would cost \$15,000. He felt that it might be our best interest to get our regional partners to buy this full report.

Ms. Barren suggested that the Gaston MPO wait before purchasing this data since there will be a study forthcoming from NC State for truck data from the federal level. She added that there are studies for rail that can be accessed for free on the rail division website.

Mr. Kiser stated that purchasing this data doesn't require the action of the TCC or the TAC. If the data is needed and justified and the contract is approved by City Council, it can be bought outright.

No action was need at this time.

14. New Business

Mr. Blackburn presented a Certificate of Appreciation to Mr. Jackson in recognition of his outstanding service as Chair of the TCC of the Gaston Urban Area Metropolitan Planning Organization from January 12, 2005 to January 10, 2007.

15. Other Business

- a) Gastonia Express 85-X Ridership Report – Ms. Philbeck stated that ridership continues to increase every month.
- b) Gastonia Transit Expansion Study – Update – Mr. Yacobucci 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.
- c) Gaston County Freight Study – Update – Mr. Yacobucci stated that the first working group meeting was conducted on May 1, 2007. A Community Workshop will occur at the Westfield Mall, food court area, on May 17, 2007.
- d) Ozone Awareness/Education Program – Ms. Philbeck stated that she continues to ask cities, towns, 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. She asked the TCC members who are not participating in this program to please do so and also asked the TCC members if they know of any potential participants with flag locations in their municipalities, private or public, who would be willing to participate in this program. Ozone season began May 1, 2007.

16. Adjournment

There being no other business to discuss, Mr. Blackburn entertained a motion to adjourn the meeting.

Mr. Jackson made a motion to adjourn the meeting with Mr. Pulkinnen seconding the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 1:00 pm.