

**MINUTES
GASTON URBAN AREA
METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION (GUAMPO)
TRANSPORTATION COORDINATING COMMITTEE (TCC)
REGULARLY SCHEDULED MEETING
NOVEMBER 14, 2007**

The regularly scheduled meeting of the Transportation Coordinating Committee (TCC) was held **Wednesday, November 14, 2007**, at the Market Street Buffet and Bakery, 2525 S. York Street, Gastonia, NC.

Members Present:

Ben Blackburn	City of Lowell, TCC Chair
Kevin Krouse	City of Bessemer City, Planning Dir., TCC Vice-Chair
Joe Gates	City of Lowell, Planning Director
Steve Baucom	Town of Cramerton, Planning Director
Steve Miller	Town of Dallas, Town Manager
David Kahler	Town of Dallas, Community Dev. Administrator
Bob Greback	Town of Stanley, Town Manager
Barry Webb	City of Belmont, City Manager
Adrian Miller	City of Belmont, Senior Planner
Chuck Webb	Town of Ranlo, Town Administrator
Jason Thompson	City of Gastonia, Senior Planner for Jack Kiser
Debby Key	City of Gastonia, Director of Fleet Services
Don Lowe	City of Gastonia, Traffic Engineer
David Williams	Gaston County, Planning & Development Director
Marc Bolick	Gaston EDC, Project Administrator
Loretta Barren	FHWA, NC Division, Community Planner
Jack Flaherty	NCDOT, Transportation Planner III

Staff Members present:

Hank Graham	Gaston MPO, Principal Transportation Planner
Randi Gates	Gaston MPO, Transportation Planner I
Bernie Yacobucci	Gaston MPO, Transportation Planner I
Cass Roberts	Gaston MPO, Administrative Assistant III

Members with absences in 2007:

Town of McAdenville	(Jan., Mar., May, July, Sept., Nov. - 6)
Town of Spencer Mountain	(Jan., Mar., May, July, Sept., Nov. - 6)
Town of Ranlo	(Jan., Mar., May, July - 4)
City of Mt. Holly	(Mar., Nov. - 2)
City of Bessemer City	(May - 1)
City of Belmont	(May - 1)
Town of Stanley	(Sept. - 1)

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

Mr. Blackburn asked if there were any new business items or any additions to include in the agenda? Ms. Gates stated that Steve Baucom would be presenting a Resolution for a grant application to the TCC. There were no other additions or amendments to the agenda. Mr. Blackburn entertained a motion to approve the agenda as amended.

Mr. Barry Webb made a motion to approve the agenda as amended with Mr. Bolick seconding the motion and the motion was approved unanimously.

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 September 12, 2007 as presented.

Mr. Krouse made a motion to approve the minutes of September 12, 2007 as presented with Mr. Thompson seconding the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

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

Mr. Blackburn asked that guests and others introduce themselves. Mr. Barry Webb introduced Adrian Miller, the new Senior Planner for Belmont. Mr. Bob Greback introduced himself as the new Town Manager of Stanley. Mr. Blackburn welcomed them to the meeting.

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

There were no public comments.

6. Bessemer City's Request to Use Gaston Urban Area MPO's Transportation Planning (PL) Funds, Presenter: Bernie Yacobucci, Transportation Planner I

Mr. Yacobucci stated that the City of Bessemer City has requested the use of MPO Planning (PL) Funds, mainly the use of some of the unobligated fund balance, to hire a Civil Engineering firm to complete a functional design for the further extension of the Southridge Parkway. He added that MPO staff was directed by the TAC members to provide a dollar amount for the project along with supporting documentation for quotes and bids to be included in their request for PL funds for projects.

Mr. Yacobucci stated that US Infrastructure of Carolina, Inc. of Charlotte, NC, submitted a proposal to provide engineering services for the functional design for the further

extension of the Southridge Parkway in the amount of \$20,115. The quote for this project and supporting documentation is included in the agenda package.

Mr. Blackburn entertained a motion to approve Bessemer City's Request to use Gaston Urban Area MPO's Transportation Planning (PL) Funds to hire a Civil Engineering firm to complete a functional design for the further extension of Southridge Parkway.

Mr. Barry Webb made a motion to recommend approval to the TAC of Bessemer City's request to use Gaston Urban Area MPO's Transportation Planning (PL) Funds to hire a Civil Engineering firm to complete a functional design for the further extension of Southridge Parkway. Mr. Krouse seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

7. SocioEconomic (SE) Data Update, Presenter: Bernie Yacobucci, Transportation Planner I

Mr. Yacobucci stated that it was time to revise population and employment projections again for the Gaston Urban Area. He added that staff took the data in 2000-2002 in the Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) and extrapolated this data to the year 2009. In the agenda package, there is an Extrapolated 2009 Projections Information Sheet with population, households, and employment data.

Mr. Blackburn entertained a motion to recommend to the TAC the SocioEconomic (SE) Data Update as presented.

Mr. Krouse made a motion to recommend to the TAC the SocioEconomic (SE) Data Update as presented. Mr. Barry Webb seconded the motion and the motion was approved unanimously by the TCC.

8. EPA Proposed Strengthening of the 8-hour Ozone Standard, Presenter: Bernie Yacobucci, Transportation Planner I

Mr. Yacobucci stated that Representative Jeff Barnhart (R) of Cabarrus County requested that the TCC discuss the Resolution in the agenda package advising and strongly urging the Environment Protection Agency (EPA) to retain the existing National Ambient Air Quality Standard (NAAQS) for ozone. The change to the ozone standards would be a detriment to the Gaston Urban Area Metropolitan Planning Organization and the Metrolina region. The Metrolina region including Gaston County, as it is adjacent to Mecklenburg County, is projected to potentially violate the current standard. In lowering the standard, it will be very difficult for the Metrolina region to pass conformity, the region would be placed into a conformity lapse, federal dollars would be stopped, and there would ultimately be more congestion and ground level ozone.

Mr. Yacobucci stated that the enclosed draft Resolution, *Resolution Strongly Urging EPA to Retain the Existing National Ambient Air Quality Standards for Ozone*, was

originally written by the American Manufacturers Association, so if the TCC wishes to alter it in anyway, he encouraged them to do so.

Mr. Graham asked Ms. Barren when would the final decision be made to change the ozone standards? Ms. Barren stated that EPA will be doing preliminary reviews by January 2008, and the final decision may be made sometime from March to June.

Mr. Graham stated that staff will edit the Resolution significantly to make it appropriate for the Gaston Urban Area MPO before we submit it. Mr. Barry Webb suggested that the Resolution should be very implicit and not be perceived as weak as it pertains to our position that the EPA should not lower the 8-hour ozone standard as it would be detrimental to the Gaston Urban Area and the Metrolina region.

Mr. Krouse made a motion that the TCC recommend to the TAC adoption of a Resolution opposing the EPA proposed strengthening of the 8-hour Ozone Standard for the Gaston Urban Area MPO with the changes that Mr. Graham and Mr. Barry Webb have suggested as outlined in the above paragraph. Mr. Barry Webb seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

9. Draft 2009-2015 State Transportation Improvement Program, Presenter: Hank Graham, AICP, Principal Transportation Planner

Mr. Graham stated that staff received the draft 2009-2015 STIP from NCDOT on October 31, 2007. One of the newly funded projects is the I-85/US 321 Interchange with actual construction occurring in 2015. Some of the other projects include a Feasibility Study slated for the US29/74 Catawba River Bridge that has been funded for 2008 and the South Fork Catawba River Bridge Replacement slated for 2012.

Mr. Graham stated that any and all comments and concerns will be transmitted to our NCDOT Board member next month.

10. Carolina Thread Trail Resolution in Support, Presenter: Randi Gates, Transportation Planner I

Ms. Gates stated that Gaston County has been selected as one of two pilot sites for the Carolina Thread Trail grants program. A Resolution in support of this project is needed from the Gaston Urban Area MPO and the City of Gastonia has a Resolution on their Council agenda. The Cities of Belmont and Mt. Holly have already adopted this Resolution.

Mr. Barry Webb stated that the Resolution should not reference the City of Gastonia as seen in the first paragraph and throughout the Resolution but rather the Gaston Urban Area MPO.

Mr. Greback asked that in the last paragraph of the Resolution, "Chair" should be removed so as to reflect that the Transportation Advisory Committee, as a body, will be endorsing this Resolution.

Mr. Krouse made a motion to recommend approval to the TAC of this Resolution with the changes outlined by Mr. Barry Webb and Mr. Greback. Mr. Baucom seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

11. NCDOT Div. of Bicycle and Pedestrian Transportation Planning Grant Applications - Resolutions in Support, Presenter: Randi Gates, Transportation Planner I

Ms. Gates stated that the TCC is being asked to review and recommend to the TAC two Resolutions in support of the following Pedestrian Planning Grant applications for the City of Belmont and the City of Bessemer City.

Mr. Barry Webb made a motion to recommend to the TAC the Pedestrian Transportation Planning Grant application for the City of Belmont and for the City of Bessemer City. Mr. Krouse seconded the motion. Mr. Webb added that he wished to amend his motion to include the correction as outlined in the previous Resolution that in the last paragraph of the Resolution, "Chair" should be removed so as to reflect that the Transportation Advisory Committee, as a body, will be endorsing this Resolution. Mr. Blackburn stated that those in favor of the amended motion should signify their approval by saying "aye." All members were in approval of the amended motion and the motion carried unanimously.

12. Safe Routes to School Updated Information and Support for the City of Belmont's Grant Application, Presenter: Randi Gates, Transportation Planner I

Ms. Gates stated that NCDOT's Safe Routes to School Program held an Informational Workshop in October which gave a new program overview. The City of Belmont wishes to submit an application for an Action Plan Service Award and is requesting that the MPO support a Resolution at this time.

Ms. Gates pointed out that there are highway division funds available for each division. Our Division (12) has \$200,000 allocated for 2008 for Safe Routes to School Spot Improvement Projects located within two miles of a middle or elementary school. Some examples of spot improvement projects include crosswalks and filling in gaps in the sidewalks. The request for funds is made directly to Mike Holder of Division 12. Project allocations range from \$10 to \$50 thousand dollars and request for project money is on a first come, first serve basis.

Mr. Adrian Miller was interested in an extra plan for the Belmont Middle School, Belmont Central Elementary, and Page Elementary.

Ms. Gates stated that she will revise the Resolution to include the corrections as outlined in the previous item in that in the last paragraph of the Resolution, "Chair" should be removed so as to reflect that the Transportation Advisory Committee, as a body, will be endorsing this Resolution.

There were no other questions or comments. Mr. Blackburn entertained a motion to approve the Resolution with the changes presented.

Mr. Baucom made the motion to approve the Resolution with the changes discussed with Mr. Krouse seconding the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

13. New Business

Mr. Baucom stated that the Town Manager of Cramerton is working on a NCDENR grant for a section of Greenway Trail from the South Fork River to US 29-74. The Town of Cramerton is asking for the TCC to support their Resolution

Mr. Blackburn entertained a motion to support the Town of Cramerton in their Resolution. Mr. Barry Webb made a motion with Mr. Krouse seconding the motion and the motion carried unanimously.

14. Other Business

- a) Blue Ribbon Transportation Committee – Mr. Yacobucci stated that Senator David Hoyle will be on this committee, which has been formed by Governor Easley to discuss and find solutions for the state's transportation issues. Mr. Graham hoped that this committee would address highway funding issues. He added that the Gaston MPO should continue to send Resolutions addressing the equity formula and have our TAC Chair be involved with meetings in Raleigh and with Senator Hoyle.
- b) 2008 MPO Meeting Calendar – Ms. Gates stated that the 2008 MPO meeting calendar is included in the agenda packet for discussion and no comments were made at this time on the calendar.
- c) Elections, January 2008 – Ms. Gates stated that the first TCC meeting in January (January 9, 2008) will be the time to elect the Chair and Vice Chair of the TCC. The Bylaws state that the Chair and Vice Chair shall not serve more than two consecutive one-year terms. Mr. Blackburn, Chair, and Mr. Krouse, Vice Chair, have been in office for one year.
- d) Gastonia Express 85-X Ridership Report – Ms. Gates stated that ridership still continues to increase.

15. Adjournment

There being no other business to discuss, Mr. Blackburn entertained a motion to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Baucom made a motion to adjourn the meeting with Mr. Krouse seconding the motion. The motion carried.

The meeting adjourned at 1:00 pm.