

MECKLENBURG - UNION TECHNICAL COORDINATING COMMITTEE
Summary Meeting Minutes
Charlotte-Mecklenburg Government Center
Room CH-14
March 1, 2012

Voting Members: *TCC Chair* – Bill Coxe (Huntersville), Norm Steinman – alt for Danny Pleasant (CDOT), George Berger (Charlotte Engineering & Property Management), Ken Tippet (CDOT Bicycle Coordinator), Jonathan Wells – alt for Debra Campbell (C-M Planning), Lisa Stiwinter (Monroe), Jason Rayfield (LUESA-Air Quality), David McDonald (CATS), Barry Moose (NCDOT-Div. 10), Jack Flaherty (NCDOT-Public Transportation), Jamal Alavi – alt for Anil Panicker (NCDOT-TPB), Andrew Grant (Cornelius), Lauren Blackburn (Davidson), Adam McLamb – alt for Scott Kaufhold (Indian Trail), Ralph Messera (Matthews), Kevin Icard (Pineville), Shannon Martel (Stallings), Greg Mahar (Waxhaw), Jordan Cook (Weddington), Amy Helms (Union County)

Staff: Robert Cook (MUMPO), Stuart Basham (MUMPO), Nick Polimeni (MUMPO), Tim Gibbs (CDOT), Eldewins Haynes (CDOT), Andy Grzynski (CDOT), Tracy Newsome (CDOT), Anna Gallup (CDOT), Jay Higginbotham (Mecklenburg County-Park & Recreation), John DeKemper (Cornelius), Troy Fitzsimmons (Cornelius), Keith Sorensen (Indian Trail), Jim Loyd (Monroe), Loretta Barren (FHWA), Reid Simons (NCTA), John Underwood (NCDOT), Kumar Trivedi (NCDOT) – phone

Guests: Steve Blakley (Kimley-Horn), Todd Steiss (PB), Bill Thunberg (LNTC)

Bill Coxe opened the meeting at 10:00 AM.

Prior to hearing the first item on the Agenda, Mr. Coxe suggested that a new standing item for all future agendas, to approve the TCC agenda, be added. He then made the following suggested changes to the March TCC agenda:

- Take Item 3c. as an action item, per the February 29 staff meeting discussion;
- Add Item 3d. as requested by CATS; and
- Take Item 6 before Item 5 to improve the flow of the discussion for those two related items.

Mr. Coxe asked the TCC if there is consensus for the proposed changes, to which the TCC responded affirmatively.

1. Consideration of February Meeting Minutes

Mr. Coxe noted a minor clarification to one of the items from the February minutes, and then asked if any other changes to the minutes were necessary. Hearing none, he asked for a motion to approve the minutes as modified. Mr. Moose made a motion to approve the February TCC minutes. Mr. McDonald seconded the motion. Upon being put to a vote, the motion passed unanimously.

2. Functional Classification & National Highway System Changes

Presenter: Robert Cook

Summary/Requested Action:

Mr. Cook stated that there has been a request to remove project R-2559A, which is associated with the original concept of the Monroe Bypass project, from the Functional Classification System and the National Highway System, and to add project R-3329 (Monroe Connector project) to the National Highway System as "New Construction-Principal Arterial." He also indicated that TIP project R-2559B (Monroe Connector/Bypass project) is a part of the National Highway System. Mr. Coxe asked if the current US 74 roadway is on the National Highway System, resulting in two parallel roadways on the system? Mr. Cook indicated it is, but that it is not part of this action and can be modified at a later date.

Motion:

Mr. McDonald made a motion to recommend that the MPO remove TIP project R-2559A from the Functional Classification System and the National Highway System, and add TIP project R-3329 to the National Highway System map as presented. Mr. Alavi seconded the motion. Upon being put to a vote, the motion passed unanimously.

3. TIP Amendments

a. Miscellaneous TIP Amendments

Presenter: Robert Cook

Summary/Requested Action:

Mr. Cook stated that two TIP amendments were originally requested, as follows:

- Remove project B-5241, to replace a bridge over the Southern Railroad, due to the fact that the project will be built with State Legislative Bridge Funds; and
- Revise the project description for project R-4902, to widen I-485, to extend the eastern terminus to Rea Road.

He indicated that the second TIP amendment, for project R-4902, does not need to be considered at this time because it is subject to conformity, which has not yet been completed. Mr. Coxe asked if the first TIP amendment (B-5241) is equity based, and if so, would deleting it from the TIP free up money for this equity region? Mr. Moose responded that in theory, the money would come back to this region.

Motion:

Mr. McDonald made a motion to recommend that the MPO amend the 2012-2018 TIP to remove project B-5241, as presented. Mr. Wells seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

b. Barton Creek Greenway (C-5537)

Presenter: Jay Higginbotham, Mecklenburg County Park & Recreation

Summary/FYI:

Mr. Higginbotham introduced the item by stating that Barton Creek Greenway currently has CMAQ funding programmed for FY 2015 in the TIP, but that Mecklenburg County would like to request that funding be programmed for FY 2013 in order to accomplish the project sooner. He stated that expediting the project would allow for it to serve as a bypass for pedestrians during a bridge construction project on N. Tryon Street that will require the closure of both Mallard Creek and Toby Creek greenways. Mecklenburg County and NCDOT have been working together to determine the best solution for pedestrian movement during the construction period, and it was determined that Barton Creek would

provide the necessary connectivity. Mr. Coxe asked how the project would be funded in FY 2013. Mr. Moose suggested that statewide CMAQ funds could be used in FY 2013, and then be reimbursed with the local CMAQ funds currently programmed for the project in FY 2015. Mr. Steinman asked if Mecklenburg County would be able to provide the required 20% match in FY 2013, to which Mr. Higginbotham replied that it is still being worked out. Mr. Coxe asked if there were any other possible solutions, and Mr. Moose and Ms. Barren agreed to look into other funding scenarios. Mr. Coxe stated that action would not be appropriate since it is unclear where the funding will come from, but he asked if the TCC would provide its general support for the project assuming a reasonable funding arrangement could be found. There was consensus among the TCC to support the project.

c. Caldwell Station Creek Greenway (EB-5010)

Presenter: John DeKemper, Town of Cornelius

Summary/Requested Action:

Mr. DeKemper stated that the Town of Cornelius started working on this project in 2004. He indicated that a feasibility study for the project was programmed in the TIP for FY 2007 and that now NCDOT would like to program the project in the current TIP for construction. Mr. Moose noted that the project would impact the equity funding that the region receives. He stated that the TIP is currently over programmed, but that he is unsure if programming this project would impact other projects currently funded in the TIP. Mr. Moose noted that he supports this project. Mr. Grant, with the Town of Cornelius, stated that the town is prepared to provide matching funds. Mr. McDonald stated that the project was placed on MUMPO's candidate projects list. There was consensus by the TCC that it is a good project to fund.

Motion:

Mr. McDonald made a motion to recommend that the MPO add \$2.15 million to the 2012-2018 TIP for the Caldwell Station Creek Greenway project in Cornelius, as presented. Mr. Berger seconded the motion. Upon being put to a vote, the motion passed unanimously.

d. Transit TIP Amendments

Presenter: David McDonald, CATS

Summary/Requested Action:

Mr. McDonald informed the TCC that CATS would like to request two amendments to the 2012-2018 TIP to add funding for two transit projects. He stated that the first amendment is related to a TIGER grant previously received by CATS to construct lengthened platforms at select stops along the LYNX Blue Line. The second amendment is for updates, including safety equipment, to the on-street vehicles that will be used for the future Charlotte Streetcar project. Mr. McDonald indicated that the City of Charlotte will provide the local match for both projects and that the amendments will add new money to the TIP, and will not affect any existing TIP project funding.

Motion:

Mr. Flaherty made a motion to recommend that the MPO amend the 2012-2018 TIP to add the following transit projects: 1) TE-4702 – for the design and construction of platform extensions at LYNX Blue Line Stations, and 2) TE-5103 – for upgrades to the proposed Charlotte Streetcar Fixed Guide-way project. Mr. Grant seconded the motion. Upon being put to a vote, the motion passed unanimously.

4. Unified Planning Work Program

a. FY 2012 UPWP Amendment-Congestion Management Process (CMP)

Presenter: Robert Cook

Summary/Requested Action:

Mr. Cook informed the TCC that \$150,000 is programmed in the FY 2012 UPWP to be used for the completion of MUMPO's CMP. Due to the fact that a lot of work is still necessary to complete the CMP, he suggests that \$140,000 be moved to the FY 2013 UPWP, leaving \$10,000 in the FY 2012 UPWP for any work that is accomplished between now and the end of the current fiscal year. He stated that the reason for shifting the funds is to reduce the risk of the funds being delayed, which would impact the schedule for completing the CMP. Mr. Steinman asked when the CMP is anticipated to be completed, to which Mr. Cook responded that FHWA would like it finished by December 31, 2012.

Motion:

Mr. Steinman made a motion to recommend that the MPO amend the FY 2012 UPWP to transfer a portion of programmed Congestion Management Process funds (\$140,000) from FY 2012 to FY 2013 – \$10,000 will remain in FY 2012. Mr. McDonald seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

b. FY 2012 UPWP Amendment-Red Line Trail Study

Presenter: Bill Coxe, Town of Huntersville (for Gwen Cook, Mecklenburg County Park & Recreation)

Summary/Requested Action:

Mr. Coxe stated that the Red Line Trail project is currently programmed in the FY 2012 UPWP, but that work to plan the trail is not yet complete. He indicated that several solutions had been previously discussed, and that it was determined that the best option is to shift the existing funds to the FY 2013 UPWP in order to provide more time for completion of the work. NCDOT stated that it would be okay to proceed with that action.

Motion:

Mr. McDonald made a motion to recommend that the MPO amend the FY 2012 UPWP to transfer programmed funds (\$28,000) for the Red Line Trail Study from FY 2012 to FY 2013. Ms. Blackburn seconded the motion. Upon being put to a vote, the motion passed unanimously.

c. Draft FY 2013 UPWP

Presenter: Robert Cook

Summary/FYI:

Mr. Cook stated that work is being done to complete the FY 2013 UPWP. He indicated that the FY 2012 UPWP numbers will be used as the basis for developing the FY 2013 UPWP, because that is currently the best information available. He also noted that a request for the use of 5303 funds was received which exceeds the 5303 funding limit, and that more discussion will be necessary to resolve that issue. In addition, it was stated that MUMPO should be able to meet its needs based on current funding levels.

5. I-77 North Project (I-5405) Environmental Study Comments

Presenter: Bill Coxe, Town of Huntersville

Summary/Requested Action:

Mr. Coxe thanked Mr. Gibbs, of CDOT, for compiling comments related to a Categorical Exclusion (CE) released by NCDOT to solicit comments regarding environmental impacts for the widening of I-77, from I-85 to Catawba Avenue. He stated that the comments compiled by Mr. Gibbs have been provided to the TCC for review, but also to various outside entities, including officials at NCDOT – in particular, Mr. Jim Trogdon. Mr. Coxe asked if the TCC had any concerns about the comments. Mr. Steinman made the following suggestions: 1) The comments should be reorganized to list purpose and need first; 2) That the “general” comments and “other” comments be combined and ordered in a logical manner; and, 3) that several position statements included in the comments should be restated. He also indicated that CDOT supports managed lanes on I-77, but that all the alternatives need to be evaluated starting with project I-5405 which is programmed in the current TIP. Mr. Coxe suggested adding a comment about ramp metering, or other management techniques, to preserve the long term capacity of the investment being made. He asked if the TCC would be comfortable endorsing the comments in their basic form, with some minor editing, including reorganization and minor language changes.

Motion:

Mr. Wells made a motion to endorse the comments as presented with the recommended changes to the organization of the comments, as discussed. Mr. McDonald seconded the motion. Upon being put to a vote, the motion passed unanimously.

6. I-77 & I-485 TIP and LRTP Amendments & Conformity Determination

Presenter: Jamal Alavi, NCDOT-Transportation Planning Branch

Summary/Requested Action:

Mr. Coxe introduced the topic by stating that the action requested is to endorse and release for public comment the following three items: 2012-2018 TIP Amendments, 2035 LRTP Amendments and a conformity determination for both documents. He also stated that there are four options for the I-77 project being proposed, which are as follows:

- 1) Convert the existing HOV lanes to HOT operations and extend them north to exit 28 (HOT 2+);
- 2) Convert the existing HOV lanes to HOT operations and extend them north to exit 28 (HOT 3+);
- 3) Convert the existing HOV lanes to HOT operations and expand them to provide 2 HOT lanes in each direction between I-85 and exit 28 (HOT 2+);
- 4) Convert the existing HOV lanes to HOT operations and expand them to provide 2 HOT lanes in each direction between I-85 and exit 28 (HOT 3+).

He noted that this topic was discussed at the February 29 staff meeting at length, and that one of the main concerns is that there are no documents prepared at this time for the four options described. Mr. Alavi, with NCDOT, stated that all the scenarios have been modeled and that they all pass conformity. He stated that a Traffic & Revenue report will be provided to MUMPO after it is finalized. He reminded the TCC that two projects are being considered – I-77 and I-485 – and that MUMPO is being asked to release the conformity report for public review when it is ready.

Mr. Steinman suggested that based on the modeling that has been completed virtually any alternative will pass conformity, so air quality impacts should not be considered one of the risks for accomplishing the proposed I-77 project. Mr. Moose stated that NCDOT would like to build more than what is proposed for the scope of project I-5405. He indicated that the importance of getting the CE is to show progress on the project and reduce some of the risk for potential concessionaires, which MUMPO’s action would provide. He noted that it will also help keep the aggressive schedule on track. Mr. Coxe noted that

MUMPO is ready to be involved so long as communication is open and the best interest of the public is being considered. Mr. Alavi then mentioned that the scope of the I-485 project is as follows:

- 1) Widen to 6 general purpose lanes from I-77 to Rea Road (which will include the flyover of Johnston Road and all auxiliary lanes currently in place);
- 2) Widen to 8 lanes from Rea Road to US 74 (6 general purposed lanes + 2 Express Toll Lanes and all auxiliary lanes currently in place)

He noted that both phases of the I-485 project are scheduled for Horizon Year 2025. Mr. Steinman stated that CDOT supports the notion of widening I-485 as far east as possible, which the 2025 Horizon Year allows. Mr. Coxe stated that a tentative action could be to ask the MPO to allow the TCC to release the documents at such time that the TCC is comfortable with the documents. Mr. Moose suggested that the MPO needs to take action in March in order to maintain the current schedule. Discussion followed about possible options for resolving the timing issue, which also would include MUMPO being comfortable with the documents that are proposed to be released – documents that are currently not completed.

In conclusion, it was proposed that NCDOT make itself available at a transportation staff meeting prior to the March MPO meeting to present the documents that will be released for public review, and if the TCC is comfortable with the documents at that time then it will recommend that the MPO release the documents at its March 21 meeting. If the TCC is not comfortable with the documents at the transportation staff meeting, then it will recommend that the MPO allow the TCC to release the documents at which time they are comfortable.

Motion:

Ms. Blackburn made a motion to conditionally recommend that the MPO release documents for public review regarding the proposed I-77 and I-485 managed lanes projects which will trigger amendments to the 2012-2018 TIP, the 2035 LRTP and a Conformity Determination for both documents, contingent upon a review and assessment of the documents at a March transportation staff meeting (prior to the March MPO meeting) which results in the working group of the TCC in attendance at that staff meeting finding those documents to be acceptable for release to, and review by, the public. In addition, if the documents are not found to be acceptable for release prior to the March MPO meeting, the TCC will recommend that the MPO give the TCC the authority to release the documents at such time that the documents are found to be acceptable for release and public review – preferably no later than the April 5 TCC meeting. Mr. Grant seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

7. Complete Streets Planning & Design Guidelines

Presenter: Jack Flaherty, NCDOT-Public Transportation Division

Summary/Requested Action:

Mr. Flaherty provided Complete Streets comments to the TCC, and highlighted major points. He stated that the group shared comments via email, and they focus on chapters five through nine, which specifically including comments related to grammar errors and pedestrian street lighting, among others. Mr. Coxe suggested that because the comments were just received by the TCC, it would not be appropriate to ask the TCC to endorse them. He recommended that the comments be submitted to NCDOT on behalf of the technical team of the TCC that prepared the comments. Mr. Steinman stated that it would be helpful to add a general comment of support for NCDOT's efforts in preparing the Complete Streets Guidelines.

Motion:

Mr. Steinman made a motion to recommend that the TCC take a position of support to the implementation of the Complete Streets Planning & Design Guidelines by NCDOT, and that the comments presented be sent to Mr. Jay Bennett on behalf of the TCC technical team that prepared them. Mr. Berger seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

8. Prosperity Church Road Realignment at Eastfield Road

Presenter: Bill Coxe, Town of Huntersville

Summary/Requested Action:

Mr. Coxe stated that the alignment for Prosperity Church Road previously presented to the TCC was not adopted by the MPO because the Town of Huntersville Board voted against it. He noted that the developer has since proposed a new alignment that is contained almost entirely within the developer's property, which the Town of Huntersville Board approved.

Motion:

Mr. McDonald made a motion to recommend that the MPO approve the proposed amendment to the Thoroughfare Plan to change the alignment of Prosperity Church Road as proposed. Mr. Messera seconded the motion. Upon being put to a vote, the motion passed unanimously.

9. NC 73 Widening

Presenter: Bill Coxe, Town of Huntersville

Summary/FYI:

Mr. Coxe stated that the NC 73 widening, from NC 115 to US 21, will have a major change to its operation beginning March 7 due to the opening of a quadrant roadway intersection that will become operational. He noted that there is a video on the Huntersville website, as well as the MUMPO website, that details how the intersection will work. He also suggested that the TCC watch the video and pass on the information to alleviate as much confusion as possible about the operation of the new intersection.

10. Upcoming Issues

Mr. Moose, the NCDOT Division 10 Engineer, on behalf of Reid Simons of the North Carolina Turnpike Authority, announced that the Record of Decision (ROD) for the Garden Parkway project had been signed.

11. Adjourn: The meeting was adjourned at 12:00 PM.