

**CHARLOTTE REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION PLANNING ORGANIZATION**  
**Charlotte-Mecklenburg Government Center, Room 267**  
**September 20, 2023 Meeting**  
**Summary Minutes**

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**Members Attending:**

Ed Driggs (Charlotte), Denis Bilodeau (Cornelius), Dan Boone (Huntersville), Jamie Lein (Marvin), Renee Garner (Matthews), Leigh Altman (Mecklenburg County), John Higdon (Metropolitan Transit Commission), Fredrick Becker (Mineral Springs), Lisa Qualls ( Mooresville), Tony Lathrop (NCBOT – Division 10), George Harris (Troutman), Brian Helms (Union County), Ron Pappas (Waxhaw), Craig Horn (Weddington)

**Non-Voting Members Attending:**

Loretta Barren (FHWA), Jim Walker (NC Turnpike Authority)

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**1. Call to Order**

Chair Ron Pappas called the September 2023 CRTPO Board meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

**2. Adoption of the Agenda**

Summary:

Chair Pappas asked if any changes to the agenda were necessary. No changes were identified.

Motion:

Mayor Higdon made a motion to approve the agenda. Leigh Altman seconded the motion. Upon being put to a vote, the agenda was adopted by acclamation.

**3. Public Comment Period**

There were no comments.

**4. Ethics Awareness & Conflict of Interest Reminder**

Mr. Burke read the ethics awareness and conflict of interest reminder. No conflicts of interest were identified.

**5. Consent Agenda**

Summary:

Chair Pappas requested action on the following consent agenda items:

- a) August 16, 2023 CRTPO Board Meeting Minutes
- b) 2024-2033 TIP Amendments
- c) FY 2024 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) Amendment
- d) Union County Transportation FTA Section 5307 TIP Amendment

Motion:

Mayor Becker made a motion to approve the consent agenda. Ms. Altman seconded the motion. Upon being put to a vote, the consent agenda was unanimously approved.

**6. CRTPO Discretionary Grants Program Policy Guide Revisions**

Presenter:

Jennifer Stafford

Summary:

Ms. Stafford provided information to the Board via a Power Point presentation, the contents of which are incorporated into the minutes.

She began the presentation by stating that the requested action was to approve the revisions to the discretionary project policy. The CRTPO Discretionary Grants Program Policy Guide was adopted by the CRTPO Board in February 2019 and last revised in August 2020. He explained that these policy revisions were developed over seven POC meetings throughout 2023 and were a collaborative effort with Mecklenburg County Health and Air Quality staff. If the policy revisions are approved by the Board in September, they will be utilized within the scoring process for the 2023 fall call applications.

Policy revisions may be summarized into the following nine categories:

1. Revising the maximum funding amount allowed for one project
2. Adding a contingency on the construction phase
3. Requiring inflation to be added to estimates
4. Limiting shortfall awards on individual projects
5. Project readiness based on funding request
6. Increasing the highway safety score from 10 to 15 points
7. Adding crash reduction and equity scoring criteria to highway projects
8. Adding air quality scoring methodology for ranking project applications for CMAQ and CRP funds
9. Administrative revisions that do not change the content of the Policy

She concluded the presentation by stating that the TCC unanimously recommended that the CRTPO Board approve the Discretionary Grants Program Policy Guide Revisions during their September 7 meeting. Fall Call opened on August 14 and applications are due by October 31.

Motion:

Lisa Qualls made a motion to approve the Discretionary Grants Program Policy Guide Revisions. Denis Bilodeau seconded the motion. Upon being put to a vote, the consent agenda was unanimously approved.

**7. 2024 CRTPO Orientation**

Presenter:

Judy Dellert

Summary:

Ms. Dellert began the presentation by stating that the CRTPO will hold its biennial orientation for new and existing Board members in early January 2024. The orientation provides an opportunity for new and returning Board members to learn more about the roles and responsibilities of the CRTPO. A memorandum with potential orientation topics was distributed via email earlier this week, and staff is requesting that CRTPO Board members complete the handout before the end of the meeting with their preferences. Ms. Dellert concluded the presentation by stating that CRTPO Board members will receive an email later this week requesting their availability to attend the orientation during the week of January 8, 2024.

**8. Planning Area Boundary Adoption**

Presenter:

Robert Cook

Summary:

Mr. Cook provided information to the Board via a Power Point presentation, the contents of which are incorporated into the minutes.

He began the presentation by explaining that the federal transportation planning regulations require MPOs to review their planning area boundaries after each census to determine if the boundaries meet minimum statutory requirements for new and updated urban areas (23 CFR 450.312(i)). Urban areas with populations greater than 50,000 must be located in an MPO.

Mr. Cook stated that the 2020 Census Charlotte urban area contracted by 109 square miles as compared to the 2010 Census urban area. This was due to significant changes in how the Census Bureau defines urban areas. With the exception of two minor deviations, the Charlotte urban area is located entirely in the current CRTPO planning area boundary. The deviations are where small portions of the Charlotte urban area extend into Gaston and York counties and are located in the planning areas of the MPOs serving those counties.

He explained that CRTPO staff reviewed the current planning area boundary and finds that the boundary should remain unchanged for the following reasons:

- Statutory minimums are met by the current planning area including the entirety of the Charlotte urban area. (Except as noted above.)
- The City of Statesville and the Town of Marshville have both elected to remain active members of the CRTPO despite no longer being located in the Charlotte urban area.

Mr. Cook stated that the CRTPO will need to adopt a resolution confirming the current planning area boundary. In October, staff anticipates requesting the TCC to make a recommendation to the Board on this topic, followed by Board action on October 18. Unless there are serious reservations about the boundary, staff anticipates placing the requested action on the consent agenda.

Mayor Higdon asked why the urban area defined in the 2020 census are not automatically used as an MPO's planning area boundary. Mr. Cook responded to explain that the Census Bureau defines urban areas every ten years for a variety of purposes, and not limited to defining MPO planning areas. FHWA guidance stipulates that the starting point for an MPO to define its planning area is the census-defined urban area. Mr. Cook explained that geographic and political features, the regional transportation network, and adjacent MPO boundaries are collectively factored into defining the planning area boundary every ten years.

Chair Pappas inquired about a deadline for the CRTPO to approve its planning area boundary. Loretta Barren responded to explain that the MPO/RPO planning area boundaries within the Metrolina regional model area need to be approved by their policy boards in time for the next MTP updates. She stated that the Rock Hill-Fort Mill Area Transportation Study (RFATS) 2055 MTP is due in 2025.

## **9. Transfer of Planning Responsibilities Memoranda of Agreement**

### Presenter:

Robert Cook

### Summary:

Mr. Cook provided information to the Board via a Power Point presentation, the contents of which are incorporated into the minutes.

He provided an update on the planning responsibilities Memoranda of Agreement. The 2020 census resulted in instances where Census-designated urban areas associated with the region's four metropolitan planning organizations (MPO) overlap the adjacent agency's planning area boundaries. The result is that as per 23 CFR 450.312(h), the four MPOs must enter into memoranda of agreements to transfer metropolitan planning responsibilities for those portions of the urban areas located in another MPO's existing planning areas. The fundamental intent of the agreements is to state that the affected MPOs mutually agree to the transfer of transportation planning activities and efforts for portions of their Census-designated urban areas that lie within adjacent agency's planning areas. The agreements also confirm existing funding-related matters, air quality, and data collection.

In October, staff anticipates requesting the TCC to make a recommendation to the Board on this topic, followed by Board action on October 18. Unless there are serious reservations about the boundary, staff anticipates placing the requested action on the consent agenda.

## 10. CRTPO Strategic Plan Implementation Update

Presenter:

Brian Elgort

Summary:

Mr. Elgort provided information to the Board via a Power Point presentation, the contents of which are incorporated into the minutes.

He began the presentation by explain that the CRTPO's Strategic Plan allows staff to link day-to-day planning activities to mission, long-term vision, goals, and actionable strategies of the organization. The Strategic Plan was adopted by the CRTPO Board in November 2021. The presentation reviewed progress on Goal 1 and Goal 6 of the Strategic Plan. Goal 1 is focused on the CRTPO leading regional mobility issues and Goal 6 endeavors to expand regional transportation funding. Implementation will continue for Goals 1 and 6 into the next year. The implementation of Goal 5, Continuously improve internal operations to fulfill CRTPO's Mission and Vision will begin in the fall of 2023.

## 11. CONNECT Beyond Update

Presenter:

Jason Wager, Centralina Regional Council

Summary:

Mr. Wager provided information to the Board via a Power Point presentation, the contents of which are incorporated into the minutes.

He began his presentation by stating that CONNECT Beyond is a regional transit vision and plan that identifies mobility solutions and opportunities for residents and visitors across two states and 12 counties. Following the endorsement of CONNECT Beyond by the CRTPO Board in 2021, staff has led implementation activities which include the development of a regional transportation demand management plan, launching seamless CONNECTIONS, administering the Advancing the Plan committee, and grant updates.

The Regional Transportation Demand Management (TDM) Program established a bi-monthly steering committee through FY 2024. The Centralina TDM Assessment report is anticipated in the fall/winter of 2023 and the TDM implementation guidebook is anticipated in spring of 2024. The Seamless CONNECTIONS program coordinates training sessions for regional transit operators to discuss opportunities for using Remix, a transit planning tool. Advancing the Plan committee met on July 28 to review peer region research, identify transit functions for regional collaboration, and discuss committee outputs and progress on year-end goals. The committee is scheduled to meet again on September 22.

Ed Driggs inquired about the timeframe for the Advancing the Plan subcommittee to complete its work and asked about the process to develop a recommendation on a governance model for the region's transit agencies. Mr. Wager responded to explain that the initial schedule was six meetings of the Advancing the Plan subcommittee scheduled throughout 2023; however, he anticipates several additional meetings may be necessary as the implementation process is complex and involves multiple agencies. Mr. Wager added that the Advancing the Plan subcommittee meeting scheduled for next Friday is focused on the review of legislative models to leverage additional regional transportation funding.

Ms. Altman stated that she is a member of the Advancing the Plan subcommittee and the tradeoffs associated between a regional transportation governance model involve local control vs.. centralized control without losing local autonomy over priorities.

## **12. FTA Section 5307 Transit Agency Annual Reports**

### Presenter:

Jerrel Leonard; Chad Howell (CATS); Bradley Johnson (Iredell County Area Transportation System); Masie Jones & Richard Buchanan (Mecklenburg Transportation System); Theresa Torres (Union County Transportation)

### Summary:

Mr. Leonard began the presentation by stating that the CRTPO Board adopted an MPO in July 2021 that outlines the process and methodology for the annual apportionment and distribution of FTA Section 5307 funds. The MOU requires recipients of Section 5307 funds to report annually to the CRTPO on the status of funds awarded to the respective agencies. Mr. Leonard stated that Section 5307 funds are utilized by the four transit agencies within the CRTPO planning area to undertake planning, engineering, and design of transit projects; capital investments; and operating assistance for agencies with a rolling stock of less than 100 vehicles. Next, the staff representatives conducted presentations that summarized the Section 5307 allocations and associated activities for their organizations. Mr. Leonard concluded the presentation by explaining that Rock Hill-Fort Mill Area Transportation Study (RFATS) chose to provide written correspondence of their Section 5307 activities in lieu of conducting a presentation.

## **13. FY 2023 CRTPO Public Engagement Summary**

### Presenter:

Judy Dellert

### Summary:

Ms. Dellert provided information to the Board via a Power Point presentation, the contents of which are incorporated into the minutes.

She began the presentation by providing a summary of the public engagement activities undertaken by CRTPO throughout FY 2023. Over 72,000 residents were engaged through social media, remote and in-person community participation, and survey responses during FY 2023. Ms. Dellert highlighted member jurisdiction benefits that CRTPO provides which include the discretionary program workshop, informational presentation to member jurisdictions, and quarterly meetings with member jurisdiction's public information officers. She then provided an overview of the public engagement accomplishments in FY 2023 which include the activities associated with the update to the CRTPO's Public Involvement Plan, the adoption of the 2024-2033 TIP, and identification of projects for NCDOT Prioritization 7.0. Ms. Dellert concluded her presentation by providing an overview of engagement activities for FY 2024, which include the CRTPO orientation, kickoff to the 2055 MTP, and the NCDOT Prioritization 7.0 local input points allocation process.

## **14. Upcoming Agenda Items**

### Presenter:

Neil Burke

### Summary:

The October 18 CRTPO Board agenda is anticipated to include the following agenda items:

#### *Action items:*

- Planning Area Boundary Adoption
- Transfer of Planning Responsibilities Memoranda of Agreement
- 2024-2033 TIP amendments

#### *Information items:*

- City of Charlotte Functional Classification Requests
- COORDINATE Our Future/CommunityViz
- Update on CRTPO Board request of I-77 Mobility Partners

Mr. Cook introduced two new CRTPO staff members. Will Snyder joined the CRTPO on September 11 as an Associate Planner. Mr. Snyder previously worked for a private-sector planning and engineering consulting firm. Paul Benton began work with CRTPO on September 18 as the new Transportation Planning Engineer. Mr. Benton is a licensed Professional Engineer and previously worked for Charlotte DOT.

Mr. Cook announced that Jennifer Stafford has received a promotion to Project Manager within the CRTPO. Jennifer has administered the discretionary projects program since 2020, and has made numerous enhancements leading to clarity and enhanced transparency for the CRTPO member jurisdictions.

## **15. Board Member Comments**

Presenter:

Ron Pappas

Tony Lathrop offered an update of the NC Board of Transportation Activities. He serves as the finance chair of the BOT, and an NCDOT spend plan was reviewed during the September meeting. NCDOT has a \$2 billion cash balance between the Highway Fund and Highway Trust Fund accounts; however, the majority of these funds are committed to projects scheduled throughout the next several years of the 2024-2033 STIP. An update was provided to the BOT regarding the status of the federal August redistribution process where NCDOT has received an additional \$200 million in federal spending authority by authorizing MPO and state allocated funds to projects. The BOT has dedicated the I-40 & I-77 interchange in Statesville to Judge Robert Collier. Judge Collier was the Chair of the BOT for many years.

Mayor Higdon asked how the bill passed by the General Assembly regarding appointments to the BOT would affect representation on the CRTPO Board. Mr. Lathrop explained that the Governor has vetoed the bill and it has not been overturned as of today. He remains uncertain of the final status but hopes to remain on the BOT and the CRTPO Board.

Chair Pappas provided an update regarding the process for I-77 Mobility Partners and NCDOT to provide responses to the CRTPO Board member questions regarding the operations of the managed lanes between Uptown Charlotte and Mooresville. The I-77 Mobility Partners and NCDOT are anticipated to have responses to the questions prepared and distributed to the CRTPO Board in advance of the October 18 meeting. Following Board review of the responses, I-77 Mobility Partners and NCDOT staff are available to provide additional information during an upcoming meeting if deemed necessary.

## **16. Adjourn**

The meeting was adjourned at 7:26 p.m.