2030
LONG RANGE TRANSPORTATION PLAN

Mecklenburg-Union
Metropolitan Planning Organization

Prepared By
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April 20, 2005

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600 East Fourth Street
Charlotte, North Carolina 28202
2030 Long-Range Transportation Plan
Conforming with the 1-Hour and 8-Hour Ozone Standard

This Plan’s introduction explains that the Mecklenburg-Union MPO’s 2025 Long-Range Transportation Plan lapsed on April 15, 2005 and a new Plan – conforming to the “1-Hour Ozone Standard” – needed to be adopted by that date. This document fulfilled that requirement.

In addition, new Federal standards now apply, requiring that long range transportation plans must meet conformity requirements for a new “8-Hour Ozone Standard”. Therefore, by June 15, 2005, this Plan’s highway and transit projects must be shown to be conforming with the emissions tests associated with the new 8-Hour Ozone Standard. A separate document, called the Conformity Analysis and Determination Report, shows that this Plan also conforms to the 8-hour standard.

This Plan was prepared in conjunction with the plans for the adjacent metropolitan planning organizations (MPOs) because the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) designated an eight-county, bi-state area as not complying with the 8-hour standard. More information about the bi-state non-attainment area is included in the Conformity Analysis and Determination Report.
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1.0 INTRODUCTION

This is the Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) for the Mecklenburg-Union Metropolitan Planning Organization (MUMPO). MUMPO is the federally designated regional transportation planning entity for all of Mecklenburg County and the western and central, urbanized portions of Union County.

MUMPO Jurisdictions

The following local governments are members of the Mecklenburg-Union MPO: Mecklenburg County; City of Charlotte; Towns of Cornelius, Davidson, Huntersville, Matthews, Mint Hill and Pineville; Union County; City of Monroe; Towns of Indian Trail, Stallings, Waxhaw, Weddington, Wesley Chapel and Wingate.

Other communities in western and central Union County (including Fairview, Hemby Bridge, Lake Park, Marvin, Mineral Springs and Unionville) are in MUMPO’s planning area, but are not voting members of MUMPO. The boundaries of the local jurisdictions that are voting members of MUMPO are shown in Figure 1-1.

The Greater Charlotte region, also referred to as the Metrolina region, encompasses an area much larger than that included within MUMPO’s planning area. The larger, urbanizing region stretches across the North Carolina-South Carolina border, encompassing about a dozen counties in an area extending at least 35 miles away from downtown Charlotte. There are three other Metropolitan Planning Organizations, in addition to MUMPO, in the Greater Charlotte region. The boundaries of MUMPO and the adjacent MPOs are shown in Figure 1-2.

The 2030 Long-Range Transportation Plan

This document – MUMPO’s 2030 Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) – defines the policies, programs and projects to be implemented during the next twenty years in order to provide mobility choices to residents and visitors in MUMPO’s planning area.

The Long-Range Transportation Plan contains recommendations for the following types of surface transportation: streets and roads, transit routes and guideways, and bicycle and pedestrian facilities. The LRTP also contains descriptions and assessments of conditions or factors affecting the surface transportation of persons and/or the movement of freight within MUMPO’s planning area.
1. INTRODUCTION

Coordination with Federal Transportation Planning Requirements

The LRTP is intended to comply with the Statewide and Metropolitan Transportation Planning regulations issued by the United States Department of Transportation (Federal Highway Administration and Federal Transit Administration) governing the development of transportation plans and programs for urbanized areas.

This LRTP was prepared in accordance with Federal law (23 CFR Part 450), which requires the development and update of transportation plans every three years in air quality maintenance or non-attainment areas. Those types of air quality designations are based on comparisons of actual pollutant emissions, not just from motor vehicles but all emissions sources, against the National Ambient Air Quality Standards. Mecklenburg County was classified as a maintenance area for Ozone and Carbon Monoxide in July 1995. In April, 2004, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) classified Mecklenburg, Union and other Counties in the Greater Charlotte region as being in non-attainment of the new 8-Hour Ozone Standard.

MUMPO’s previous LRTP was updated three years ago and the Conformity Determination was issued on April 15, 2002. That Plan and Conformity Determination will lapse on April 15, 2005. This 2030 Long-Range Transportation Plan – based on population, employment and travel projections for the years 2010, 2020 and 2030 – will replace the 2025 Long-Range Transportation Plan and will satisfy the requirements of the Clean Air Act.

This plan fulfills both the 1-Hour and 8-Hour conformity requirements. The roadway and transit projects included in this LRTP were analyzed and were required to demonstrate conformity with the 8-Hour Ozone Standard and conformity with the 1-Hour Ozone Standard.

In other words, this version of the LRTP for MUMPO is the same as the 2030 Long-Range Transportation Plan that passed the conformity requirements for the 1-Hour Ozone Standard. No changes to the version of the 2030 Plan originally prepared for public review at the end of March, 2005, needed to be made for the LRTP to pass the conformity requirements for the new 8-Hour Ozone Standard.
1.1 Related Plans and Programs

There are several plans and planning processes that served as precursors to this 2030 Long
Range Transportation Plan. Some of the most significant ones are described below.

- **The 2025 Integrated Transit/Land-Use Plan**

This strategic plan – completed in October 1998 after an extensive public involvement process – became the basis for a county-wide referendum on enacting a local sales tax dedicated to support a greatly expanded transit system in Mecklenburg County. A 58 percent majority of the county voters supported the proposed half-cent sales tax increase. The plan calls for investment in five rapid transit corridors and significant expansion of complementary and supporting bus transit services. The most innovative concept in this plan is the requirement for ongoing, close coordination of land use decisions with the investments in the transit system. Major Investment Studies (MIS) have been completed for the five rapid transit corridors. Those studies considered all reasonable alignments and technologies within each corridor. Light rail transit was selected for the South Corridor when that Corridor’s MIS was completed in 2000.

- **The 2025 Transit System Plan**

This 2025 Transit System Plan was adopted by the Metropolitan Transit Commission (MTC) in November, 2002, and by MUMPO in January, 2003. The plan consists of rapid transit improvements in five corridors (South, Southeast, Northeast, North and West), a series of improvements in uptown Charlotte, streetcar service from I-85 and Beatties Ford Road to the Eastland Mall, and bus service and facility improvements throughout the region. When completed, the Plan will serve four times as many transit riders as the present system, and will include 28 miles of bus rapid transit (BRT) guideways, 21 miles of light rail transit (LRT), 11 miles of streetcar, 30 miles of commuter rail, and an extended network of bus service.

- **Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP)**

The UPWP is adopted annually by MUMPO and identifies the major transportation planning activities to be undertaken for the coming year. An important element of the UPWP is the continuing update and maintenance of land use, demographic and travel data needed to apply the computer model, which projects travel demands based on the population and employment projections and the transportation facilities and services.

- **Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)**

This program of capital projects describes the region’s and the state’s anticipated investments in transportation over a seven-year period. The State TIP is updated every two years by the North Carolina Board of Transportation and must then be endorsed by the Mecklenburg-Union MPO.
1.2 Transportation Policy Boards

- **Mecklenburg-Union Metropolitan Planning Organization (MUMPO)**

Under Federal law, any urbanized area (as defined by the Census Bureau) exceeding a population of 50,000 people, must establish an MPO whose purpose is to coordinate transportation planning and programming among the member governments. MUMPO includes Mecklenburg County and most of Union County.

Representatives to the MPO include members of the governing boards of Mecklenburg and Union counties, the cities of Charlotte and Monroe, and the towns of Davidson, Cornelius, Huntersville, Indian Trail, Matthews, Mint Hill, Pineville, Stallings, Waxhaw, Weddington, Wesley Chapel and Wingate. The local representative to the NC Board of Transportation is also a voting member of MUMPO. Non-voting representatives from the Union County Planning Board, the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Planning Commission and the U.S. Department of Transportation also participate in MUMPO meetings. The voting structure is based on population, with Charlotte assigned 16 votes; Mecklenburg and Union counties, two each; Huntersville, Matthews, Mint Hill and Monroe, two each; and each of the other voting members, one each – for a total of 38 votes.

The MPO is charged with the responsibility of adopting the Long-Range Transportation Plan, and the Thoroughfare Plan required in North Carolina; the Transportation Improvement Program for road, transit, bicycle, and pedestrian investments; and the Unified Planning Work Program.

After appropriate planning, engineering, and public input, the MPO will adopt specific alignments for proposed thoroughfares and transit guideways. Local governments will then use these alignments to require land development proposals to conform to the long-range plan by reserving or donating the land upon which the thoroughfares and transit guideways will be constructed. Finally, the MPO must certify that these plans will allow the local area to maintain its air quality goals.

- **Mecklenburg-Union Technical Coordinating Committee (TCC)**

The TCC is the staff arm to the MPO and holds regular monthly meetings. It is composed of representatives of the various municipal and county departments involved in the transportation planning process. Various state and federal staff are also members.

The TCC’s primary responsibility is to carry out the planning tasks described in the Unified Planning Work Program. These include the updates to the Long Range Transportation Plan, analyses of operational issues in the thoroughfare system, recommendations for various transportation investment programs, and the public involvement process for the MPO. Virtually all technical recommendations to the MPO originate at the TCC level.
Charlotte Regional Alliance for Transportation (CRAFT)

Four metropolitan planning organizations – the Cabarrus-Rowan Urban Area, the Gaston Urban Area, the Mecklenburg-Union Urban Area and the Rock Hill-Fort Mill (South Carolina) Area Transportation Study – participate in a continuing, cooperative and comprehensive transportation planning process through an entity known as the Charlotte Regional Alliance for Transportation. CRAFT’s role is to enhance communication between jurisdictions, promote awareness of regional concerns, and provide a forum in the Charlotte metropolitan bi-state region for addressing significant issues of common interest.

North Carolina Board of Transportation (BOT)

The Board of Transportation is charged with setting policies for state-maintained and operated transportation systems regardless of mode. The Governor of the State of North Carolina appoints the Board, which has 19 members and the non-voting Secretary of Transportation. The Board adopts the State’s Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), the seven-year investment program determining how state and federal transportation funds will be spent statewide.

Metropolitan Transit Commission (MTC)

The Metropolitan Transit Commission was established in 1999 to help implement the half-cent sales tax for transit purposes. Mecklenburg County and the county’s seven incorporated local jurisdictions formed the MTC to act as the policy body to review and approve transit system operations and improvements throughout the county. Two members (the mayor and manager of the governmental unit) represent each jurisdiction, but only one vote is assigned to each of the eight participating governments.

In 2004, the Citizens Transit Advisory Group (CATG) evaluated the original MTC Governance Agreement. The report addressed possible expansion of rapid transit service to surrounding counties and, consequently, the addition of new voting members. The MTC received CTAG’s report and directed the county and town managers’ to explore four issues: (a) designation of the NCDOT representative as a voting member; (b) the timing and criteria for adding jurisdictions from outside Mecklenburg County as voting members; (c) revision of provisions in the existing Interlocal Agreement that may serve as impediments to continued successful governance of the system; and (d) the future role and composition of the CTAG.

The following pages contain these related Figures (Maps)

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- Figure 1-2: Charlotte Region Metropolitan and Rural Planning Organizations .......................... Page 1-9