

CHARLOTTE REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION PLANNING ORGANIZATION
Charlotte-Mecklenburg Government Center, Room 267 & Remote Participation
May 18, 2022 Meeting
Summary Minutes

Members Attending (In-person)

Larken Egleston (Charlotte), Denis Bilodeau (Cornelius), Rob Kidwell (Huntersville), David Cohn (Indian Trail), Ron Pappas (Waxhaw), Renee Garner (Matthews), Joe Pollino (Marvin), John Higdon (Metropolitan Transit Commission), Frederick Becker (Mineral Springs), Dale Dalton (Mint Hill), James Kerr (Monroe), Tony Lathrop (NC BOT-Division 10), Stephen Rosenburgh (NC BOT – Division 12)

Members Attending (via remote participation):

Melissa Neader (Iredell County), Ernestine Staton (Marshville), Lisa Qualls (Mooresville), Jack Edwards (Pineville), Lori Bailey (Wesley Chapel)

Non-Voting Members Attending (In-Person):

Chuck Travis (NC Turnpike Authority)

1. Call to Order

Chair Ron Pappas called the May 2022 CRTPO Board meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. He explained that this meeting would be conducted as a hybrid meeting with Board members attending both in-person and remotely using virtual meeting software.

Chair Pappas reminded Board members attending remotely that usage of the chat box function within the online meeting software is part of the Board public record.

Mr. Burke conducted the roll call and determined that a quorum of the Board had been met based upon the bylaw provisions for a hybrid meeting.

2. Adoption of the Agenda

Summary:

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

Motion:

Chair Pappas made a motion to the Board to adopt the agenda by acclamation unless at least one opposing vote is cast. No opposing vote was cast. Upon being put to a vote, the motion to adopt the agenda as presented was approved by acclamation.

3. Public Comment Period

There were no public comments.

4. Ethics Awareness & Conflict of Interest Reminder

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

5. Consent Agenda

Summary:

Chair Pappas requested action on the following four consent agenda items:

- a) March 23, 2022 CRTPO Board Meeting minutes
- b) 2020-2029 TIP Amendments
- c) FY 2022 UPWP Amendment – Mecklenburg County Transportation System
- d) FY 2022 UPWP Amendment – Transportation Improvement Program

Motion:

Chair Pappas made a motion to the Board to approve the consent agenda item by acclamation unless at least one opposing vote is cast. No opposing vote was cast. Upon being put to a vote, the motion to adopt the consent agenda was approved by acclamation.

6. Jurisdiction Education Session Series: Cornelius and Waxhaw Planning Initiatives

Presenter:

Judy Dellert-O'Keef, Aaron Tucker (Cornelius), and Theo Ghitea (Waxhaw)

Summary:

Ms. Dellert-O'Keef began the presentation by stating that this the initial occurrence in series of education sessions throughout 2022 that will be led by TCC members. The purpose of the jurisdiction education sessions is to keep the Board informed regarding project and activities throughout the planning area. Ms. Dellert-O'Keef concluded by introducing Mr. Aaron Tucker with the Town of Cornelius and Theo Ghitea with the Town of Waxhaw.

Mr. Tucker began his presentation by providing an overview of the population and geography of the Town of Cornelius. Next, he provided an overview of current multimodal transportation planning activities such as the Town's Emerald Necklace greenway network and Cornelius's bicycle plan that was adopted in 2017. Mr. Tucker then provided an update on a series of corridor studies conducted along the NC 115 corridor within Cornelius that received funding assistance from the CRTPO's local planning fund program. He concluded his presentation by highlighting a series of upcoming transportation projects that will be let for construction throughout the next several years.

Mr. Ghitea began his presentation by providing an overview of the geography and transportation network within the Town of Waxhaw. He explained that the Town updated its Land Use Plan in 2021 to encourage the development of regional employment and commercial centers. Diversifying land uses will allow employment opportunities for residents and lessen the need to commute outside of the community. Mr. Ghitea highlighted the Transportation Master Plan, Pedestrian Plan Update, and an ongoing Origin-Destination Study as recent planning activities that have been funded through a contribution with the CRTPO. He concluded his presentation by highlighting a series of active transportation planning projects and initiatives throughout Waxhaw.

7. Charlotte Urbanized Area Coordinated Public Transit-Human Services Transportation Plan Update

Presenter:

Jerrel Leonard and Lyuba Zuyeva, VHB

Summary:

Mr. Leonard and Ms. Zuyeva provided information to the Board via a Power Point presentation, the contents of which are incorporated into the minutes. The presentation's purpose was to update the Board on the status of the development process for the Coordinated Public Transit-Human Services Plan.

Ms. Zuyeva explained that these plans provide guidance for short-term capital projects, operating assistance and operating strategies for fixed-route and paratransit services for low-income households, senior citizens and individuals living with disabilities. The presentation reviewed the process used to update the plan, including public outreach and some of the strategies that have emerged thus far. Ms. Zuyeva concluded her presentation by stating that the board will be asked to endorse the plan at its June meeting.

Chair Pappas inquired the criteria used to expand transit service beyond I-485. Ms. Zuyeva explained that population and employment data are typically used by transit agencies as a primary measure to understand new areas for service demand, however not all agencies are equipped from a financial and operations standpoint to transition from demand response to fixed route service.

8. Iredell County Comprehensive Transportation Plan Amendments

Presenter:

Richard Hoffman, Iredell County

Summary:

Mr. Hoffman provided information to the Board via a Power Point presentation, the contents of which are incorporated into the minutes. The presentation's purpose was to review the proposed CTP amendments recommended from the Iredell County Transportation Master Plan.

Mr. Hoffman began his presentation by stating that the Iredell County Transportation Master Plan serves as an update to the county's 2008 Comprehensive Transportation Plan Study Report. This plan was adopted by the Iredell Board of Commissioners on November 16, 2021. Iredell County staff has worked with CRTPO to identify a series of map amendments to ensure that recommendations from the study are included within the CRTPO's CTP. Mr. Hoffman explained that the proposed CTP amendments were presented during the May 5 TCC meeting and no concerns were raised. He concluded his presentation by stating that the board will be asked to approve the CTP amendments at its June meeting.

9. NCDOT Initial 2024-2033 DRAFT State Transportation Improvement Program

Presenter:

J. Travis Johnson

Summary:

Mr. Johnson provided information to the Board via a Power Point presentation, the contents of which are incorporated into the minutes. The presentation's purpose was to review NCDOT's Initial Draft 2024-2033 State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP).

Mr. Johnson began his presentation by stating that NCDOT developed its initial DRAFT 2024-2033 STIP based upon recommendations from the Prioritization Work Group. NCDOT distributed the DRAFT STIP to MPOs and RPOs throughout the state with the direction that each Planning Organization's staff conduct presentations to their TCC's and Boards. Mr. Johnson added that NCDOT did not consult with MPO staff regarding project programming and schedules prior to the release date. He added that the North Carolina Association of MPOs submitted a letter to NCDOT expressing concern with a lack of collaboration with the MPOs and requesting that the NCDOT Division Engineers conduct presentations to TCC and Boards.

He then compared the funding allocations within the CRTPO between the 2020-2029 and the 2024-2033 Draft STIPs. At a statewide level, 408 projects in the 2020-2029 STIP are now unfunded in the 2024-2033 STIP at an estimated amount of \$22.6 billion. Within the CRTPO, 45 projects from 2020-2029 are now unfunded in the 2024-2033 STIP at an estimated amount of \$3.6 billion. Mr. Johnson reviewed the current STI funding availability within the CRTPO's five funding buckets. NCDOT is overprogrammed by \$3.3 billion in the Statewide Mobility tier; \$1.2 billion in Funding Regions E and F (Regional Impact); and \$302 million in Divisions 10 and 12 (Division Needs). The projected numbers reflect the anticipate additional revenue from the federal IIJA legislation.

Mr. Johnson reviewed the federal requirements that require coordination between NCDOT and MPOs in the development of their respective STIP and TIP. In addition to the adoption of a 2024-2033 TIP, the CRTPO is also required to approve 2050 MTP amendments, make an air quality conformity determination and conduct public involvement.

He stated that the Prioritization Work Group developed a criterion to identify delivery projects that can be automatically included in the 2024-2033 STIP based upon their current project development schedule in the 2020-2029 STIP and historical NCDOT prioritization score. In addition, he explained that MPOs will have a local flexibility option to exchange an unfunded 2024-2033 STIP project with a delivery project if the two projects are within a 10% estimated cost of each other. The project exchange would need approval by the respective MPO and NCDOT Division. Mr. Johnson outlined the deadlines set by the CRTPO to approve project exchanges by

stating that staff would need local letters of support from elected boards by July 25 in order to pursue endorsement of the swap by the CRTPO Board in August. The NCDOT Divisions must be in agreement of the respective project exchange, and CRTPO's deadline to submit the documentation to NCDOT is September 30.

Mr. Johnson concluded his presentation by reviewing the schedules for NCDOT's 2024-2033 STIP development process and NCDOT Prioritization 7.0 (P7.0).

Chair Pappas facilitated the discussion between Board members and NCDOT staff.

Mayor Edwards expressed concern in developing a 10-year STIP with the final year being 2033 given NCDOT's issues with developing accurate cost estimates and effectively accounting for inflation. He was uncertain if the state legislature would be willing to allocate additional funds to transportation in North Carolina. Mayor Edwards added that an additional option for NCDOT may be to unfund all projects and begin the process from scratch, with heightened levels of inflation. Tony Lathrop responded to explain that the NC Board of Transportation (NC BOT) has set a higher inflation rate of 3% annually, and the NC BOT can revisit and adjust the inflation rate on an as-needed basis. Brett Canipe added that the projects in the DRAFT STIP have significant prior investment from NCDOT in terms of design and right-of-way acquisition, and the department's goal is to create reliability for the engineering and construction industry by identifying the projects that can advance within the next five years.

Mayor Higdon inquired about the corrections that NCDOT is making to its project cost estimate process. Mark Stafford stated that NCDOT used an automated project cost estimation tool in previous rounds of Prioritization that failed to accurately account for the cost of right-of-way acquisition. Over the past two years, NCDOT has improved the process by conducting express designs on legacy projects that were previously estimated using the tool and plans to use this process moving forward during P7.0.

Renee Garner asked about NCDOT's ability to acquire right-of-way for projects given the rising cost of real estate and the status of NC Map Act. Mr. Stafford responded that the increasing cost of real estate may impact the amount of projects that the NCDOT can deliver in future STIPs.

Stephen Rosenburgh stated that NCDOT has an \$8 billion shortfall and spends \$2 billion per year on construction, therefore additional revenues must be identified. He expressed support of general fund transfers from the state legislature, tolling, public-private partnerships, and federal earmarks. Mr. Rosenburgh encouraged the Board members to become engaged in the alternative revenue generation discussion, and not solely rely on staff from throughout the region to lead the initiative. He stated that NCDOT and elected officials need to speak as one voice to ensure a positive outcome in terms of additional revenue identification for transportation infrastructure projects.

Mayor Pollino stated that the Town of Marvin is considering a bond to cover a funding shortfall on an NCDOT managed roundabout project to ensure it is completed in today's dollars. Mr. Lathrop stated that he believes local and statewide bond issuance to complete projects in today's dollars is a sound concept.

Vice-Chair Qualls inquired about NCDOT's willingness to partner with local municipalities in agreements where the jurisdiction funds the cost of a project on the front-end and seeks reimbursement following completion (also known as the Town of Cary model). She added that the Town of Mooresville approached NCDOT about this funding partnership two years ago, and the department stated that this was not possible given its financial issues. Mr. Canipe responded that Division 10 has partnered with jurisdictions in the past and will reimburse the agency based upon the project schedule in the STIP year with inflation added. Mr. Stafford added that NCDOT's financial situation has improved, and they would be willing to entertain funding reimbursement partnerships with jurisdictions again.

Mayor Cohn stated that the Town of Indian Trail committed \$10 million in local bond revenue 10-12 years ago as a contribution to NCDOT to ensure that the Old Monroe Road widening project (U-4714) advances, and the

Town has yet to see construction initiated on the project. Mr. Rosenburgh committed to investigate the issue on behalf of NCDOT.

Mayor Higdon stated that the State Legislature has a \$7 billion revenue surplus and he would support fund transfers to NCDOT to resolve funding shortfalls before considering local and regional tax increases.

Mr. Lathrop requested to clarify the financial projections that were included within the STIP presentation this evening. Within the presentation, the total anticipated investment in the 2024-2033 STIP is \$37.5 billion across the state, when it should be reduced to approximately \$26 billion to account for the actual available revenue. \$14 billion will be available for the committed delivery projects within the first five years of the STIP. He added that there is only \$1.2 billion worth of unfunded projects in the CRTPO for the 2024-2033 STIP. If the projects funded for preliminary engineering only are included within the delivery project category the amount within the CRTPO increases from \$1.9 billion to \$2.3 billion.

10. Strategic Plan Implementation Process

Presenter:

Robert Cook

Summary:

Mr. Cook thanked the Board members that were able to attend the meeting in-person after over two years of remote meetings.

He began his presentation by stating that the CRTPO adopted its first Strategic Plan in November of 2021, and staff has been focused on initiating the implementation of the plan throughout 2022. Mr. Cook reviewed the six goals associated with the Strategic Plan and stated that staff has been focusing its implementation efforts to-date on Goal 6: Expand regional transportation funding in the region. He then reviewed the seven Goal 6 strategies that have been prioritized into Immediate, short-term, and mid-term timeframes.

11. Upcoming Agenda Items

Presenter:

Neil Burke

Summary:

The June 15 CRTPO Board agenda will include the following action items:

- Endorsement of the Coordinated Public Transit-Human Services Transportation Plan
- Approval of the CTP Amendments from the Iredell County Transportation Master Plan

Information reports will be conducted on the following issues:

- Discretionary Program Funding Recommendations: Spring 2022 Shortfall Project Call
- Jurisdiction Education Session Series: Town of Huntersville

Mr. Burke provided the following announcements:

- The kickoff meeting for the Beyond 77 Implementation Task Force will be held on Monday, May 23 at the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Government Center
- The following are CRTPO deadlines for jurisdictions that propose to swap projects into the delivery phase of the NCDOT 2024-2033 STIP Development Process:
 - July 25: Deadline for jurisdictions to submit letters of support from their elected boards
 - August 17 Board meeting: Endorsement of all project swap proposals
 - September 30: Deadline for CRTPO to submit all swap proposals to NCDOT

12. Board Member Comments

Presenter:

Ron Pappas

Mr. Pappas announced that the June 15 Board meeting will be in-person only with no virtual option.

Ms. Garner requested an update regarding the unsolicited proposal that NCDOT for a public-private partnership to construct express lanes along I-77 between Uptown and the South Carolina State Line. Mr. Canipe responded to explain that they have contacted the proposer with the request for additional information and have not yet received a formal response as of today. He committed to keep the Board informed of any additional information if it is received from the proposer. Mr. Lathrop encouraged the Board to discuss the proposal internally as it would be a mechanism to deliver the project within a shorter period of time.

13. Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 8:09 p.m.