



Technical Coordinating Committee Meeting Minutes of August 8, 2022

2:00 PM, Greensboro, NC
Zoom Online Virtual Meeting

Attendance

Tyler Meyer	<i>TCC Chair</i>	Scott Whitaker	<i>Summerfield</i>
Gray Johnston	<i>MPO Staff</i>	Sean Taylor	<i>Oak Ridge</i>
Yuan Zhou	<i>MPO Staff</i>	Stephen Robinson	<i>NCDOT Div. 7</i>
Tram Truong	<i>MPO Staff</i>	Suzette Morales	<i>FHWA</i>
Craig McKinney	<i>MPO Staff</i>	Alex Rotenberry	<i>NCDOT IMD</i>
Chris Spencer	<i>GDOT/Engineering</i>	Kelly Larkins	<i>GSO Planning</i>
Deniece Conway	<i>GDOT/Engineering</i>	Michael Abuya	<i>NCDOT TPD</i>
Dawn Vallieres	<i>PTRC</i>	Suzanne Akkoush	<i>PTLAA</i>
Mark Kirstner	<i>PART</i>	Tamara Njegovan	<i>NCDOT Div. 7</i>
Jason Geary	<i>GSO E&I</i>		

Tyler Meyer called the meeting to order at approximately 2:00 PM.

Introductory Items

1. Orientation to Zoom Software

Craig McKinney welcomed everyone to the March virtual meeting and reviewed how to use the Zoom software.

2. Opening Remarks and Roll Call

Craig McKinney took roll call for the public record. TCC members and others identified themselves.

Action Items:

1. February 7, 2022 Meeting Minutes

Tyler Meyer asked if any changes were needed to the minutes. No changes were identified.

Stephen Robinson moved to approve the minutes. Sean Taylor seconded. The TCC voted unanimously to approve.



2. MTIP Amendment & Modification: Statewide Projects:

Tyler Meyer presented an item that adjusts details for six statewide projects for transit, ITS operations, and air quality programs. This is an administrative step to keep the MTIP in line with the state TIP. The modification adds \$5.8 million in FY 23 for air quality projects. The projects are funded through the CMAQ program and raise awareness among the general public as well as fleet managers to reduce emissions and improve air quality. The modification also adds \$14.9 million in FY 23 and FY 24 for intelligent transportation systems. ITS operations include traffic management centers and variable messaging signs on freeways. Lastly, the modification adds \$1.8 million in FY 22 and FY 23 for transit technical assistance and training. The training is commissioned by the Integrated Mobility Division of NCDOT and is provided to transit operators across the state. The recommended action is to modify the MTIP.

Chirs Spencer moved to approve recommendation to TAC. Michael Abuya seconded. The TCC voted unanimously to approve.

3. MTIP Amendment: PART Transit Projects

Tyler Meyer presented an item to modify the MTIP to increase PART funding to reflect available amounts for PART's GUAMPO supported operating assistance and routine capital grants in FY 23 based on FY 22 funding levels. PART programs funds a year behind, so FY 23 funding is based on FY 22 apportionments. This change impacts two PART projects. The first is a \$147,000 increase in federal funds to support PART operations in the MPO area, as well as a corresponding local match. The second is a routine capital line item used to buy new equipment, bus shelters, and other passenger amenities. The modification also reduces GUAMPO federal funding for routine capital funding by 23k. The recommendation is to modify the MTIP.

Mark Kristner moved to approve recommendation to TAC. Stephen Robinson seconded. The TCC voted unanimously to approve.

4. MTIP Modification: Roadway and Rail Projects

Tyler Meyer detailed a proposed modification and amendment to the MTIP for two MPO area projects. The first project is to rehabilitate pavement on I-40 from Holden Road to east of Gate City Boulevard. The amendment is to shift construction from FY 22 to FY 23 and increase construction funding by \$1.2 million.

The second project concerns the grade separation of an at-grade crossing on Hilltop Road at the NCRR. The amendment shifts right of way needs from FY 23 to FY 24 and shifts construction from FY 25 to FY 26. Total funding for the project is reduced by \$1.6 million to \$13.3 million.

Alex Rotenberry asked if the grade separation will bridge the rail line. Tyler Meyer confirmed the road will bridge over the rail line. Rotenberry further asked if the project will affect Amtrak travel. Meyer answered the project will improve Amtrak travel once complete. During construction of the bridge DOT will keep the track open by building a parallel track.

Sean Taylor moved to approve recommendation to TAC. Chris Spencer seconded. The TCC voted unanimously to approve.

5. MTIP Amendment & Modification: Stand-alone Pedestrian & Bicycle Projects:

Tyler Meyer presented an MTIP amendment that adjusts schedules for nine pedestrian and bicycle projects primarily to move the next phase of work from FY 2022 to FY 2023. This item does not affect funding amounts. Projects shifting construction schedule from FY 22 to FY 23 include the Lake Daniel and Latham Park Greenway reconstruction project, the Vance Arlington Greenway project, the Farmington Drive sidewalks project, and the West Meadowview sidewalks project.

The amendment shifts the right of way for sidewalks on Wendover Avenue from FY 22 to FY 23, and construction from FY 23 to FY 24. The project was significantly delayed due to a utility pole in the middle of the bridge over Elm Street. A resolution has since been found with NCDOT and design work is continuing. Similarly, the right-of-way for sidewalks on Cone Boulevard, East Gate City Boulevard, and Old Battleground Drive shifts from FY 22 to FY 23, and construction shifts from FY 23 to FY 24. For the pedestrian signal project, the right-of-way shifts from FY 22 to FY 23. Construction will remain in FY 23.

Mark Kristner moved to approve recommendation to TAC. Kelly Larkins seconded. The TCC voted unanimously to approve.

6. MTIP Modification: Grouped Pedestrian & Bicycle Projects:

Tyler Meyer detailed an MTIP amendment and modification for projects EL-5101 and U-5532. These are grouped projects providing for subprojects to be implemented over a multiyear period. EL-5101 dates back to 2008 and the current phase, the Murrow Boulevard Bridge Repair project connected to the Downtown Greenway Phase 2 will be the last in the series. During Downtown Greenway construction staff discovered the Church Street Bridge deck needed repair before the project can be closed out. The amendment adds that repair to the TIP for FY 23 and adds \$1.5 million to the project to allow it to proceed.

The sidewalk projects under U-5532 encountered delays during right of way acquisition due to additional appraisal requirements from NCDOT. The amendment shifts construction from FY 22 to FY 23 to accommodate these delays. The amendment also increases funding by \$5 million in FY 23 to reflect current funding agreements. Craig McKinney noted the reason for the delays with right-of-way phase is that new requirements are now needed to acquire right of ways and staff now has to perform more detailed work. Tyler Meyer concurred and further noted that some projects had already completed the right of way before DOT required additional appraisals be completed.

Sean Taylor moved to approve recommendation to TAC. Chris Spencer seconded. The TCC voted unanimously to approve.

7. Fleming - Lewiston Connector & Interchange: MTP/ Thoroughfare & Collector/CTP Action:

Tyler Meyer presented an item to consider a developer request, public input, and staff findings and recommendation on removal or modification of a Fleming-Lewiston Connector & Interchange project from area transportation plans. Meyer began with some background information on the item. The project was conceived in 1996 to increase connectivity and provide loop access after the final alignment of the Urban Loop was determined. The project passed a feasibility study in 2004, but this study is now out of date. The MPO submitted the project in NCDOT Prioritization 2.0 through Prioritization 5.0, and the project scored poorly each time. The MPO did not resubmit the project in Prioritization 6.0. The MPO has since been reassessing the need for and potential viability of the project.

Over the last few weeks MPO staff conducted a high level analysis of the pros and cons of removing the project. This analysis was supplemented by a Feasibility Study prepared by Davenport Traffic Consultants, a 30-day Public Review Period, and by consultation with NCDOT Division 7, Town of Summerfield, Guilford County Planning, and TCC member agencies.

The 30-day Public Review Period, held from July 7 to August 5, yielded 21 responses, 20 of which supported retaining the connector and interchange. Reasons for supporting retention included concerns about current and future traffic flow, improving access to the Urban Loop, facilitating development in the area, and enhancing access between Summerfield and Greensboro. In addition, Bicycling In Greensboro stated the connector could provide a needed link for cyclists.

The Summerfield analysis indicated the connector roadway appears needed, but the interchange is not. Guilford County Planning concurred with Summerfield's assessment. NCDOT Division 7 reported the current Federal Highway Administration minimum interchange spacing rules do not allow for the construction of the interchange. Armed with this knowledge, MPO staff assumed the interchange is not viable and refocused the analysis on either retaining or removing the connector roadway from area transportation plans.

Staff analysis began by looking at projected growth of employment, population, and households in the vicinity of the project. A low degree of employment growth is anticipated, but substantial increases in population and households are expected. The next step of the analysis compared the total vehicle miles and hours travelled in the vicinity of the project if the connector is or is not built. The study found building the connector would slightly increase both vehicles miles and vehicle hours. This result suggests the project may not be as beneficial as hoped, because the point of building a connector is to facilitate faster and more direct travel patterns.

The Davenport study produced similar results: a slight increase in vehicle miles traveled and vehicle hours traveled if the connector is built. The Davenport study further suggested the connector would not create a significant reduction in total congestion. Rather, the connector would merely shift the location of congestion from the Lewiston and Fleming Road intersection to Fleming Road at

Isaacson Boulevard. All-in-all, these assessments indicate the project would not fulfill its intended purpose.

MPO staff also considered the cost-effectiveness and funding outlook of the project. Due to a lack of information staff did not prepare a comprehensive cost effectiveness analysis, but staff did consider future competitiveness of the project for funding based on estimates of cost and area congestion. These estimates suggest building the connector alone is not likely to be competitive. On the other hand, operational and intersection improvements on existing roadways are more cost effective in the mid to long-term and are more likely to be funded. Selecting cost-effective projects is essential to maximizing the limited transportation improvements budget.

Meyer noted final factors the TCC should keep in mind are the project would provide a new route for bicycle and pedestrian access which would be a benefit. Also, the project is in the vicinity of the transcontinental pipeline, a jurisdictional stream, and a designated wetland, all of which would complicate construction and increase costs.

The staff recommendation is to remove the Fleming-Lewinston connector interchange at I-40 from the area transportation plans, and to reclassify the Lewiston Road and Fleming Road north of Bryan Boulevard from major thoroughfare to minor thoroughfare.

Scott Whittaker thanked Tyler Meyer for all his and the staff's work on the project, but indicated his intention to vote against Meyer's recommendation on behalf of Summerfield's elected officials.

Chris Spencer asked if this project is a priority of the MPO's long range bicycle pedestrian plan or transit. Tyler Meyer indicated a line on the map was added to the plans, but this project is not a priority. Spencer thanked Meyer for the thorough presentation and analysis.

Scott Whittaker indicated he would be more likely to support removing the connector and interchange if there are other projects in the works that improve connectivity between Greensboro and Summerfield. Tyler Meyer noted there is a project to improve the intersection of Pleasant Ridge Road and Fleming Road, and a proposed project to upgrade Fleming Road with a series of intersection improvements, bicycle lanes, and sidewalks. Chris Spencer stated these improvements were considered in the Davenport analysis and are not likely to significantly improve congestion.

Kelly Larkins echoed the concerns of Scott Whittaker and noted the importance of other congestion improving projects in lieu of the interchange.

Chris Spencer noted that shutting down the possibility of a future extension to the roadway now may make it more difficult for the area to develop in the future. Tyler Meyer asked if there was a work around in the development review process in terms of connecting the road to the parcels which need access. Spencer stated there was. Spencer further noted there may be need to construct a stub roadway to allow for local access to area once developed. Meyer recommended Spencer articulate these needs at the upcoming TAC meeting on August 10.

Mark Kirstner asked what the motivation for amending the MTP right now is. Tyler Meyer stated there is a developer request to develop the land the interchange and connector would extend across.

Sean Taylor stated his view that the connector and interchange should not be removed from the MTP. There is a lot of growth in the area, and more connections will be needed to accommodate that growth. Tyler Meyer replied the data from the Davenport study and the staff analysis do not support Taylor's conjecture. Taylor stated that the data from these studies may be wrong. Sean Taylor moved to retain the connector and interchange.

Scott Whittaker offered a substitute motion. Scott Whittaker moved to remove the Fleming Lewiston interchange, retain the connector, and not reclassify Lewiston Road and Fleming Road north of Bryan Boulevard from major thoroughfare to minor thoroughfare. Sean Taylor agreed to the substitute motion and accepted Whittaker's second to the substitute motion.

Stephen Robinson from division seven noted that NCDOT does not support the interchange because current Federal Highway Administration minimum interchange spacing rules do not allow for the construction of the interchange. DOT does not currently object to the connector, but the department has not yet made a full investigation as to its potential merits, competitiveness or constructability.

Chris Spencer asked Tyler Meyer to review reclassifying Lewiston Road and Fleming Road north of Bryan Boulevard from major thoroughfare to minor thoroughfare. Meyer explained without an interchange the connectivity will be significantly decreased and the road will server more of a minor thoroughfare function, and so the recommendation is to make Lewiston Road a minor thoroughfare. Spencer agreed with this recommendation. Without the interchange, Lewiston will not carry enough traffic to require classification as a major thoroughfare. Scott Whittaker stated his primary goal is to retain the connector, and is amenable to reclassifying Lewiston Road if it is a more palatable motion. Tyler Meyer thanked Whittaker but reiterated that staff analysis indicates retaining the connector alone will not sufficiently improve congestion.

Scott Whittaker moved to recommend to remove the Fleming Lewiston interchange, retain the connector, and to reclassify Lewiston Road and Fleming Road north of Bryan Boulevard from major thoroughfare to minor thoroughfare. Chris Spencer seconded. The TCC voted to approve the motion with one abstention from Suzanne Akkoush of PTL.

Business Items / Potential Action Item(s):

1. Draft FY 2024-2033 State Transportation Improvement Program Update:

Tyler Meyer provided an update on the new August draft STIP that replaces the previous draft released in April. The new draft was prepared because the state budget transferred substantial sales tax revenues to the Highway Trust Fund to supplement NCDOT's construction program. The 10-year impact of the additional funds is estimated at \$4-6 billion. The increased funding outlook enabled a revision of the draft STIP. This update provides a high-level view of MTIP impacts and schedule updates.

The April version listed 20 funded projects and 21 unfunded projects. The unfunded projects consisted of about \$885 million, and the funded projects were a little under \$200 million. In the new revised STIP the number of funded projects increased to 23, which reduced the unfunded project number to 19. There was a substantial infusion of cash allocated to funded projects between the two drafts, an increase from \$198 million to \$476 million. The previously unfunded Sandy Ridge Road interchange project was re-added to the STIP with a 2027 construction schedule. The grade separation at Hilltop Street was shifted from FY 28 to FY 26. The grade separation project at South English Street was accelerated from FY 31 to FY 26.

The biggest change between the April and August draft STIPs was the reinstatement of the US 29 upgrade to Interstate Standards. This project is currently estimated at \$220 billion. Other effected projects include the Battleground Avenue Widening accelerated from FY 30 to FY 26, the NC 65/68 project shifted from FY 24 to FY 26, and the Benjamin Parkway widening project shifted from FY 24 to FY 25.

The US 158 project from Belevs Creek Road in Forsyth County over to Anthony Road shifted from unfunded to funded for PE only. This provides NCDOT the ability to begin a design process since the environmental study process is complete.

The DOT will hold public drop-in sessions on the draft STIP. The specific dates are to be determined but are anticipated in September or October. This is an opportunity for the members of the public as well as MPO representatives to discuss with NCDOT the different projects in the STIP. Project swaps are due by Friday March 17 2023. Swapping is possible for projects that are within 10% cost of each other. The Final 2024-2033 STIP is anticipated to be presented to the Board of Transportation for approval in May 2023.

2. Division Engineer Updates

Stephen Robinson delivered the division engineer report. There is a project underway at the Gateway Research Park. The department is currently partnering with NC A&T University to build an autonomous vehicle test track on East Lee Street. The department paved and marked the track.

Robinson also reiterated the potential for swaps in the Draft STIP. The swap deadline is March 23.

Lastly, Robinson asked for project sponsors to provide milestone dates for their projects. This will help ensure the NCDOT schedule management software uses realistic rather than arbitrary timeframe expectations for each project.

3. Project Updates

Jason Geary is out of town this month, so his update on City of Greensboro and locally administered projects will be delivered in the September TCC meeting.

Craig McKinney provided an update on recent depot renovations. Much of the work is now complete. An elevator was replaced, exterior windows were refurbished, and platforms were fixed. Final inspections are still needed. The roof and interior windows of the depot still need restoration. The price tag will be in the million dollar range. Staff is attempting to secure funds.

4. Strategic Reports

Tyler Meyer provided an update on upcoming work items and topics of current interest. Meyer noted staff is preparing an application for the Safe Streets For All program. SS4A new program authorized by the Infrastructure and Investment and Jobs Act. Five billion dollars a year are authorized for the program. Eligible grantees include MPOs, local governments, COGs and other non-state DOT organizations. The program provides two types of grants: (1) Comprehensive Safety Action Plans; and (2) implementation grants. Staff proposes to apply to develop a Vision Zero Action Plan for the MPO area. The application is due September 15. USDOT applicant selection criteria is based on the number of fatal and serious injuries, how innovative the project is, and how well the project addresses equity concerns. Staff intention is to request letters of support from member governments and advocacy groups. Meyer opened the floor questions and discussion.

Chris Spencer expressed support for this action and offered to help in any way possible. Tyler Meyer stated a letter of support would be very helpful.

Other Items

1. Member Updates

Alex Rotenberry provided an update from the integrated mobility division. The IMD hosted a quarterly webinar recently to discuss the division's work on bicycle, pedestrian, and transit programs. This includes a new equity assessment tool. Spencer invited the TCC to listen to the recording.

Tamara Njegovan stated Mike Stanley, the STIP manager for the central region, retired on August 1. Jason Schronce has filled now Stanley's role. Tyler Meyer praised Mike Stanley, saying he had been a tremendously effective and helpful colleague for many years. Meyer also stated he is looking forward to working with Jason Schronce.

Mark Kirstner stated the PART household travel survey project for the region is now in full swing in the pre-test phase. The full survey will be done fall 2022. The survey is now expanded to include additional territory in the RPO area. The freight model is complete, but more training for modeling staff is needed. Hopefully by early 2023 the model will be available for the MPOs to use. Lastly, data for the scenario planning and growth allocation project will be developed early 2023.

Gray Johnson stated GTA and PART are implementing a computer aided dispatch automatic vehicle locator system. This project will provided expansive and useful information about ridership and on-time performance at the stop level. This data will substantially support roadway, sidewalk, and bus stop planning efforts.

2. Wrap-Up & Adjournment

Tyler Meyer mentioned the TCC meets September 19, 2022 at 2:00 PM and thanked everyone for attending.

Tyler Meyer adjourned the meeting at 3:30 PM.