

MEETING MINUTES
Gaston-Cleveland-Lincoln
Metropolitan Planning Organization (GCLMPO) Board
July 25, 2019

The scheduled Board meeting of the Gaston-Cleveland-Lincoln Metropolitan Planning Organization was held on Thursday, July 25, 2019 from 6:30 pm – 7:44 pm at the Gastonia Police Department located at 200 Long Avenue, Gastonia, NC.

Members Present

Bud Cesena	Lincoln County, Commissioner
Rick Coleman	Town of Dallas, Mayor
Robin Conner	Town of Ranlo, Commissioner
Martin Eaddy	City of Lincoln, Council Member
Ken Ervin	City of Lowell, Council Member
David Humphries	City of Gastonia, Council Member
Demetrios Koutsoupas	Town of Cramerton, Mayor Pro Tem
Charles McCorkle	City of Mt. Holly, Council Member
Keith Miller	City of Kings Mtn., Council Member
Scott Neisler	City of Kings Mtn., Mayor, MPO Chair
Todd Pierceall	City of Gastonia, Council Member
John Pope	NCDOT Division 12, Board Member
Jill Puett	City of Cherryville, Mayor Pro Tem
Danny Sparrow	Town of Stanley, Mayor Pro Tem
Martha Stowe	City of Belmont, Council Member
Richard Turner	City of Belmont, Council Member, MPO Vice-Chair
Ronnie Worley	Gaston County, Commissioner

Staff Present

Randi Gates	GCLMPO, Principal Transportation Planner
Jane Love	GCLMPO, Senior Transportation Planner
Julio Paredes	GCLMPO, Planner
Kristen Wheeler	GCLMPO, Administrative Assistant II

Guests Present

Loretta Barren	FHWA, Planner
Dominique Boyd	NCDOT-TPD, GCLMPO Coordinator
Joel Deese	Citizen
Blake Guffey	NCDOT, District Engineer
Dean Ledbetter	NCDOT – Program Dev. Branch, Corridor Dev. Engineer
Quentin McPhatter	City of Gastonia, Assistant City Manager
Anil Panicker	NCDOT Div. 12, Division Planner
Mark Stafford	NCDOT Div. 12, Division Engineer
James Walker	Citizen

Absences (x = Absent) / Not In Good Standing

Member	Jul	Sept	Oct	Dec	Jan	Mar	May	July
City of Belmont	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----
City of Bessemer City	-----	X	-----	X	-----	-----	-----	X
Town of Boiling Springs	X	-----	-----	X	X	-----	X	X
City of Cherryville	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----
Town of Cramerton	-----	-----	-----	-----	X	-----	X	-----
Town of Dallas	X	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	X	-----
City of Gastonia (1/2)	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----
City of Gastonia (2/2)	-----	-----	X	-----	X	-----	-----	-----
City of Kings Mountain	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----
City of Lincolnton	-----	-----	X	-----	X	-----	X	-----
City of Lowell	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----
City of Mount Holly	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----
Town of Ranlo	-----	X	-----	X	-----	-----	-----	-----
City of Shelby	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	X	X	X
Town of Stanley	X	-----	-----	X	X	-----	-----	-----
Cleveland County	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----
Gaston County	-----	-----	-----	X	-----	-----	X	-----
Lincoln County	-----	-----	-----	-----	X	X	-----	-----
NCDOT – Board of Transportation	-----	-----	-----	X	-----	X	-----	-----

1. Set Agenda

Presenter: Scott Neisler, MPO Board Chair

Mr. Neisler stated that it was time to set the agenda.

Mr. Pierceall motioned to set the agenda. Mr. Turner seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

2. Determination of Quorum and Good Standing

Presenter: Scott Neisler, MPO Board Chair

Mrs. Gates determined that a quorum had been met.

3. Ethics Awareness & Conflict of Interest Reminder

Presenter: Scott Neisler, MPO Board Chair

Mr. Neisler read the ethics awareness and conflict of interest reminder.

4. Approval of Minutes

Presenter: Scott Neisler, MPO Board Chair

Mr. Neisler asked for a motion to approve the May 23, 2019 meeting minutes as presented.

Mr. Pierceall motioned to approve the May 23, 2019 minutes as presented. Mr. Humphries seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

5. Introduction of Members & Guests

Presenter: Scott Neisler, MPO Board Chair

Mr. Neisler asked that all members and guests introduce themselves.

6. Public Comment

Presenter: Scott Neisler, MPO Board Chair

Mr. Walker noted that the reason he began coming to the MPO Board meetings is because he noticed, in

2013 when STI first came out, that there was no plan to widen I-85 and it concerned him so he attended his first TCC meeting. Upon meeting Mr. Bjorn Hansen, they discussed the possibility of putting the I-85 widening project through prioritization and Mr. Walker was told that it was not possible at that time. Eventually the Board decided to submit the I-85 widening project and a few years later it was included in the funded projects. Although the project continued to be controversial the Board continued its support. Mr. Walker stated that he appreciated the continued support for projects such as the I-85 widening.

7. FY 19-20 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) Amendment

Presenter: Randi Gates, Principal Transportation Planner

Mrs. Gates noted that the FY 19-20 UPWP was approved on March 28, 2019. Since that approval, GCLMPO has received additional planning funds that need to be included in the UPWP. Mrs. Gates sent the new matches out to local jurisdictions prior to the TCC meeting so that they would have an opportunity to review the changes before the meeting and before adopting their local budgets. All of the additional funds have been programmed into Regional and Statewide Planning to fund projects such as the Regional Transit Study that will begin soon. In addition, MPO staff would like to dedicate some funding to the Intelligent Transportation System (ITS) Plan update which will be led by Centralina COG (CCOG).

Additionally, Mrs. Gates was notified May 20, 2019 that GCLMPO was awarded funding for the Catawba Crossings Feasibility Study following submitting an SPR grant request. This grant will require a local share from the participating jurisdictions of Gaston County, City of Gastonia, City of Belmont and the Town of Cramerton. These funds will need to be incorporated in the UPWP as well and have been programmed in the Special Studies task code. MPO Staff has worked over the last six (6) months with CRTPO, NCDOT Divisions 10 and 12 as well NCDOT-TPD on a draft RFP. The RFP was advertised Monday July 22, 2019 and proposals are due at the end of August. City of Gastonia, as the lead planning agency for the MPO, will be the organization contracting with the consultant for the work.

Mr. Humphries asked what the ITS study was hoping to accomplish. Mrs. Gates explained that there are only so many lanes that can be added to any road so it is important to focus on other ways to improve the existing infrastructure and how it moves traffic, freight and people. Signal coordination, GPS, ramp metering and many other tools are viable options for making the system more efficient and would be studied in the ITS Plan update.

Mr. Humphries motioned to approve the FY 19-20 UPWP Amendment as presented. Mr. Pierceall seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

8. Letter of Support – Repealing the FAST Act Rescission

Presenter: Randi Gates, Principal Transportation Planner

Mrs. Gates stated that Section 1438 of the FAST Act contains a \$7.569 billion rescission that will take effect in FY 2020. The actual rescission will take place on July 1, 2020. GCLMPO will be directly impacted as unobligated CMAQ funding is subject to the rescission if the funding cannot be locked in before the deadline. Mrs. Gates has been working with NCDOT and the communities to figure out ways to lock the funding in and, as a result of that, has made some funding substitutions in order to get as many projects locked in as possible.

MPOs and RPOs in the state and across the nation are sending a Letter of Support to repeal the FAST Act rescission. The letter itself is a template letter sent out by the National Association of MPOs and Mrs. Gates will need to make small changes to the language to reflect changes in the budget status. In addition to GCLMPO Mrs. Gates stated that the North Carolina Association of MPOs (NCAMPO) and Charlotte Regional Alliance for Transportation (CRAFT) are planning to sign the letter as well. Though the repeal of the rescission would need to be approved by Congress, it is important to show support for the repeal.

Mr. Worley motioned to approve the Letter of Support for Repealing the FAST Act Rescission as presented. Mr. Pierceall seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

9. Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) Grant Applications

Presenter: Randi Gates, Principal Transportation Planner

Mrs. Gates noted that, in an effort to save as much of the CMAQ funding as possible from the rescission MPO

staff has been working with individual communities, NCDOT Division 12 and the STIP unit to redirect and reorganize funding for certain projects. In order to get those projects locked in MPO staff has increased design budgets as well as swapped funds from CMAQ to TAP funds. Due to the funding swaps the MPO has managed to lock in \$3.3 million out of the \$4.7 million original potential loss with more possible before it is finished. Projects that have not been authorized by September 30, 2019 are going to lose funding so the GCLMPO has swapped some CMAQ funding for TAP funding that can be used later, once these projects are locked in. In order to substitute CMAQ funding for TAP funding the MPO must submit official CMAQ applications. There are seven (7) sidewalk projects being affected. Five (5) projects are in Gastonia, two (2) are in Mount Holly and they will use CMAQ funds for engineering to potentially free up TAP money later down the road. All new project estimates are still subject to change as the GCLMPO continues to work with NCDOT to revise and review costs.

Mr. Turner motioned to approve a Resolution Endorsing FY 19 Candidate CMAQ Project Proposals for Preliminary Engineering Funding as presented. Mr. Pierceall seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

10. 2018-2027 Metropolitan Transportation Improvement Program (MTIP) Amendments

Presenter: Randi Gates, Principal Transportation Planner

Mrs. Gates stated that the GCLMPO's MTIP needs to be amended to reflect modifications that have been made or will be made to the 2018-2027 State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP). Because of the funding swaps and project acceleration mentioned in the previous agenda item there are necessary STIP modifications. When the STIP is amended the MTIP must be modified to match.

The projects affected are in Gastonia and Mount Holly and they will use CMAQ funds for engineering to potentially free up TAP money later down the road. Additional projects that need to be amended include a project in Lincoln County that needs to be delayed to allow more time for design as well as a project in Cleveland County which also needs more time for planning and design along with several others.

There will be one (1) CMAQ project added to the STIP which was approved in the recent past; the Cramerton-McAdenville Greenway Connector will take the place of a sidewalk project on Cramer Mountain Road. Other projects will be added from the Draft STIP to the current STIP in order to get those under way. Additionally, there will be some deletions as requested by local communities or the MPO. Most of the deleted projects will be completed under other projects.

Typically STIP additions or deletions require a 30-day public comment period but, since the MPO has a deadline of September 30th and due to the way the meeting schedule currently falls, the MPO is requesting an approval of waiving the 30-day public comment period and approving the modifications as they are. All the projects have already been through some sort of public comment period at other times.

Mr. Cesena asked why Triangle has been put off for so long and when the project will start back up. Mrs. Gates answered that, to her knowledge, the delay was caused by several utility issues. Mr. Cesena then asked what needs to be done to make it work. Mr. Anil Panicker noted that the issue with power and telephone companies has been statewide and that they have their own schedules that don't always match up with NCDOT schedules. Mr. Cesena then stated that Lincoln County was originally told that the issue was with their utilities but, after some back and forth, it was discovered that it was not Lincoln County. Mr. Panicker said he was unfamiliar with the specifics but Mr. Ledbetter noted that Jackie McSwain met with Mr. Permenter recently to explain the issues and next steps and that Mr. Permenter seemed satisfied at the end of the meeting but Mr. Ledbetter declined to comment on the specifics as he didn't have notes from the meeting in front of him and did not want to speculate.

Mr. Turner asked how the funds that were allocated from construction to ROW for the Belmont Rail Trail will be replaced. Mrs. Gates noted that there were several possibilities including utilizing TAP funding which would require competing with other projects in similar circumstances, submitting the project through P6.0 scoring or possibly using CMAQ funding in the future.

Mr. Worley motioned to approve waiving the 30-day public comment period as presented. Mr. Turner seconded and the motioned passed with one dissenting vote from Mr. Cesena.

Mr. Coleman motioned to approve the 2018-2027 MTIP Amendments as presented. Mr. Pierceall seconded and the motion passed with one dissenting vote from Mr. Cesena.

11. NCDOT Bicycle and Pedestrian Planning Grant Initiative – GCLMPO Support

Presenter: Jane Love, Senior Transportation Planner

Mrs. Love noted that the NC Department of Transportation is accepting applications from communities for the fall 2019 Bicycle and Pedestrian Planning Grant Initiative with an application deadline of August 2, 2019. This program provides funding for municipalities across the state to develop comprehensive bicycle and pedestrian plans and has a matching formula based on the size of the community. At this time GCLMPO has three (3) communities applying for grants. Currently Bessemer City is applying to update their pedestrian plan, Gastonia is applying for a bicycle planning grant and Stanley plans to apply for a project acceleration grant. MPO staff is requesting resolutions of support to include in the applications.

Mr. Pierceall motioned to approve the Resolutions of Support for the NCDOT Bicycle and Pedestrian Planning Grant Initiative for Bessemer City, Gastonia and Stanley. Mr. Sparrow seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

12. GCLMPO Title VI Program Plan

Presenter: Randi Gates, Principal Transportation Planner

Mrs. Gates stated that pursuant to the Title VI Nondiscrimination Agreement between GCLMPO and NCDOT, GCLMPO has agreed to correct all deficiencies identified by NCDOT as outlined in the report's Corrective Action Plan (CAP) from two (2) years ago. Multiple items have been addressed at various meetings in the past and the final deficiency to be addressed is the adoption of a Title VI Program Plan. Following receiving the Title VI MPO template from NCDOT, completing the template and receiving back comments from NCDOT, MPO staff have completed the Title VI Program Plan.

Included in the plan are the MPOs plans for the Limited English Proficiency population and how the MPO will conduct outreach to any populations tripping the pre-determined threshold. The only current threshold being met is by the Spanish speaking population. In order to meet the requirements set forth in the Title VI plan the MPO translates all critical documents, public comment period documents and flyers. Dissemination of Title VI Information as well as Discrimination Complaint Procedures are also included in the plan. Finally, the Title VI Program Plan addresses training which takes place yearly. Mrs. Gates' covering of the plan at the MPO Board meeting will count as training and, as such, Board members are asked to sign the Title VI Acknowledgment Forms following the completion of the discussion.

Mr. Pierceall motioned to approve the GCLMPO Title VI Program Plan. Mr. Worley seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

13. Other Business

a. Draft GCLMPO Comprehensive Transportation Plan (CTP) Amendment Policy –

Mrs. Gates stated that, as directed by the MPO Board, a policy for CTP Amendments has been drafted. The policy outlines the process for requesting and approving amendments to the CTP. The recommendation of the TCC upon being presented the policy at the July 10th meeting was to table the policy until some of the language could be tweaked. The CTP Amendment Policy should be ready for the next Board meeting.

b. NCDOT Update – Division 12 Staff and TPD MPO Coordinator

Mr. Anil Panicker had the following updates:

- i. Lincoln County
 1. W-5601Q (NC 16 Bus. At N. Pilot Knob Rd & Hagers Ferry Rd) – ROW acquisition is complete. Utility relocation is under way. Let has been moved to February 11, 2020.
 2. Resurfacings – Under way and just awarded \$2.28 million future projects.
- ii. Gaston County
 1. I-5000 (I-85 & US 321 Interchange) – Project is roughly 55% complete. The contractor is currently waiting on tie in for Ramp D to I-85 NB then will proceed to finishing grading Bulb and then to Marietta Street.

2. U-3633 (Widening of NC 273) – Project is about 40% behind schedule. Still having utility issues. Completion date is 7/2/2020.
 3. C-4934 (NC 279 Widening from Garrison Blvd to Burtonwood Dr) – Project is 34% behind schedule due to TMP/signal plan error and re-design. Utilities are now in conflict with drainage. Traffic has been shifted to Phase 2.
- iii. Cleveland County
1. R-2707C (Shelby Bypass NC 226 to NC 150) – ROW has been acquired. Waiting on Duke Energy and AT&T to relocate as well as utility delays. Working on construction to pave, add noise walls and signs.
 2. Resurfacings – Projects are 15% complete, behind by 85%.
- c. **Transit Systems Ridership** – For information only.

14. Adjournment

There being no further business Mr. Neisler opened the floor for a motion to adjourn.

Mr. Pierceall motioned to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Turner seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

DRAFT