

MINUTES

**BURLINGTON-GRAHAM URBAN AREA
TECHNICAL COORDINATING COMMITTEE
TUESDAY, AUGUST 17, 2021
VIA MICROSOFT TEAMS
9 AM**

MEMBERS PRESENT

Nishith Trivedi, Orange County (Chair)
Mike Nunn, Burlington (Vice Chair)
Dan Danieleley, Airport Authority
Sean Tencer, Haw River
Nolan Kirkman, Burlington
Peter Murphy, ACTA
Brandon Parker, Gibsonville
Ben York, Alamance
Tonya Caddle, Alamance County
Cy Stober, Mebane
Mark Kirstner, PART
Preston Mitchell, Mebane
Pamela DeSoto, Elon
Bonnie Guo, GoTriangle

BGMPO STAFF PRESENT

Wannetta Mallette
Blake Cashmore

NCDOT STAFF

Jason Schronce, NCDOT-SPOT
Stephen Robinson, NCDOT Division 7
Andy Bailey, NCDOT-TPD
Natasha Earle-Young, NCDOT-TPD
Kusondra King, NCDOT-TPD

FHWA STAFF

Suzette Morales

PUBLIC

Eric Keravuori, Summit Design &
Engineering

Call to Order

Chair Nishith Trivedi called the August 17, 2021 TCC meeting to order at 9:02 a.m. and welcomed all members and guests. Ms. Wannetta Mallette conducted the membership roll call and established a quorum. Chair Trivedi asked if there were any changes to the agenda. Ms. Wannetta Mallette proposed two changes to the agenda: Mr. Andy Bailey presenting the CTP Update on behalf of Daryl Vreeland and a request to move Item #5 (TIP Amendments) to Item #2. Ms. Tonya Caddle made a motion to approve the agenda and Mr. Mike Nunn seconded the motion. Mr. Cy Stober made a motion to approve the May 18 and June 15 TCC meeting minutes, seconded by Ms. Caddle.

FY 2020 – 2025 TIP Amendments

Mr. Blake Cashmore presented the TIP amendments adopted by the Board of Transportation in July and August 2021. Two projects specific to the BGMPO, EB-5879 and U-6014, were amended. EB-5879 is a sidewalk project that extends along US 70 from Graham Hopedale Rd to Sellars Mill Rd. The proposed change was to push ROW acquisition back to 2022. U-6014 is a roadway project that extends along Graham Hopedale Rd from W Hanover Rd to Morningside Dr. The proposed changes included pushing ROW acquisition back to 2023 and adjusting the cost to \$19.1 million. Mr. Cashmore presented seven additional statewide transit and CMAQ projects that were modifications or additions to the TIP. No comments or questions were brought forward regarding the TIP amendments. Chair Trivedi asked for a motion to approve. Mr. Nunn made a motion to approve, seconded by Mr. Dan Danieley. The motion passed by unanimous vote.

SPOT 6.0 Schedule Delay

Mr. Jason Schronce gave an update on the delay of the SPOT 6.0 prioritization process. His presentation was previously given to the Board of Transportation. Mr. Schronce stated that NCDOT conducted a cost estimate review of a select number of STIP projects in the previous 12-18 months and discovered that preliminary cost estimates had been underestimated. Major contributing factors to the cost underestimation included: lack of surveys, traffic forecast, and designs; inaccurate project assumptions; and rising right of way and construction costs. These preliminary cost estimates were generated from a GIS-based Cost Estimation Tool (CET) that does not consider project specific details. The revised cost estimates, coupled with reduced revenues and cash issues, triggered a reprogramming of the STIP in Summer of 2020 to keep the STIP fiscally constrained. This experience prompted NCDOT to evaluate their cost estimation process and recommend improvements. This program evaluation revealed the following: The CET results are often low; ROW, Utilities and Construction estimates are not always updated regularly; and a lack of central data-repository led to multiple estimates for the same project. As a result of these findings, NCDOT established three goals to improve the cost estimation process: One, create consistent process for updating estimates; two, ensure estimates are updated on a regular basis and communicated to all parties; and three, create a single data-repository for all estimates. Mr. Schronce summarized some key activities currently underway that will help NCDOT meet these goals. Foremost among them is the phased integration of value engineering/value assessments into the cost estimation process which have already led to project cost savings. After this reprogramming exercise, NCDOT duplicated this process for all STIP highway cost estimates to get a more complete picture. Division planning and corridor planning engineers participated in this expanded cost estimate review process, focusing on projects that had seemingly low-cost estimates. Through this process, 450+ projects were identified, quantities updated, scope accuracies verified, and over 1000 estimates for ROW, Utilities and Construction

updated. With the cost estimates updated in the current STIP, NCDOT then could determine the available amount of funding for the SPOT 6.0 fund cycle. NCDOT discovered that all committed and non-committed projects across statewide, regional and division sectors were underfunded. Based on these findings, it did not make sense to move forward with the SPOT 6.0 prioritization process when there is inadequate funding for projects currently in the STIP. A recommendation made to the Board of Transportation to halt the SPOT 6.0 process was approved in August 2021. Mr. Schronce stated that since NCDOT is still required to update the STIP, the next STIP will only consist of all or some of the projects in the current STIP. Mr. Schronce stated that NCDOT has discussed how to factor inflation into cost estimates with the Board of Transportation. Revenue is currently reduced by approximately \$1 billion to account for inflation in the STIP. This comes out to about 1% compounded annually for the first five years and held constant for the remainder of the STIP. There are concerns that this 1% value is too low. NCDOT will continue to hold conversations with the Board regarding the inflation rate, which can impact future funding. Mr. Schronce also highlighted that the Strategic Transportation Investments (STI) Prioritization Workgroup will recommence meeting monthly to discuss the challenge of balancing the STIP. Workgroup participants include MPO and RPO representatives, local government advocacy groups, and NCDOT division engineers and technical staff. Mr. Schronce ended by summarizing the key findings of his presentation and reiterating that the pending STIP development will involve extensive coordination with the MPOs and RPOs. Ms. Mallette thanked Mr. Schronce for his presentation and invited TCC members to offer any questions or comments. Mr. Cy Stober asked if local jurisdictions would need to offer any local input points. Mr. Schronce said that would not be necessary since SPOT 6.0 is on hold and no new projects will be added. The input local jurisdictions will provide to NCDOT is regarding existing projects. Mr. Stober then asked what is next for local jurisdictions that need these projects that were submitted through the SPOT 6.0 process. Mr. Schronce said local jurisdictions should communicate their needs to the Division staff and perhaps consider other funding sources. Ms. Pam DeSoto asked about the selection process and purpose of express design. Mr. Schronce responded that the express design process replaced the feasibility study and is intended to provide streamlined engineering designs that can provide cost inputs for the STIP. Chair Trivedi then asked Mr. Schronce to clarify if the updates to the existing STIP would include the removal of projects, particularly developmental projects, as a measure to maintain its fiscally constrained status. Mr. Schronce could not confirm then but said that would be determined through the STI Prioritization Workgroup discussions. Mr. Schronce personally was doubtful that the non-committed projects could be retained but reiterated that would be determined by the workgroup. Mr. Stober asked if the Board of Transportation had discussed the infrastructure bill currently under debate in the United States Senate and whether those funds would help fill the SPOT 6.0 funding gap. Mr. Schronce stated NCDOT would receive additional funds if the bill was passed, but it would likely only help offset some of the costs as opposed to resolving the funding gap entirely. Ms. Mallette thanked Mr. Schronce for the update and committed to keeping the TCC and TAC updated on any new developments.

NC Moves 2050 Resiliency Element

Ms. Natasha Earle-Young stated that since 2015, FHWA has begun to focus more on resiliency planning. In 2018, as part of State Executive Order 80, NCDOT was tasked to begin development of an Annual Resiliency Strategy Report. The North Carolina General Assembly authorized funding for resiliency programming moving forward. One of the programs developed through these funds is the Flood Inundation Mapping and Alert Network (FIMAN-T). FIMAN-T is a state-wide system that allows local emergency response agencies to monitor and respond to active flood threats in real-time. As part of the NC Moves 2050 Plan, NCDOT identified a couple resiliency action steps: First, Identify and prioritize multimodal transportation improvements that enhance system performance and reliability; and secondly, support community-based resiliency approaches that inform NCDOT practices. Subsidiary goals and objectives for these action steps were developed as well that prioritized enhanced coordination with MPOs. A multidisciplinary management team serves as the vessel for implementing the resiliency program and has recently supported some pilot studies and best practices research. Ms. Earle-Young stated that 17 strategies were developed that will be enacted over the next 12 months as part of the resiliency program. One of these strategies is a vulnerability assessment of US 70 that will evaluate threats and recommend mitigation measures. Another strategy will be the requirement to incorporate resiliency considerations in MTP updates. Ms. Earle-Young shared a dashboard developed by NCDOT that displays the flood risk for primary roads across North Carolina. She also shared a flood simulator that can visualize flood scenarios caused by storm surges on the coast. These two databases are not available to the public. NCDOT has another data source, called Geotech Asset Management Database, that is available to the public. It highlights areas prone to landslide and rockfalls. The data in these dashboards can be incorporated into the MTP and CTP project selection and prioritization process. Ms. Earle-Young outlined the flood inundation guidelines that impacts their datasets as well as ongoing resilience projects across the state. NCDOT is also developing a registry of resiliency projects and encourages cross-collaboration with local partners to ensure efforts are not duplicated. Ms. Earle-Young mentioned NCDOT is developing a flood inundation study of rail corridors across North Carolina. The resiliency data is found on the NCDOT Making Transportation Resilient webpage. Ms. Earle-Young concluded her presentation by outlining next steps, which include finalizing resiliency policy, conducting benefit-cost analyses of resilience projects, and continuing internal and external collaborative opportunities for resiliency planning. Mr. Cy Stober thanked Ms. Earle-Young for her presentation and asked if the data from USGS is updated to reflect the current and changing flood risk. Ms. Earle-Young stated NCDOT has a rain-on-grid model that can pull in this other data and help predict future flood risk.

NCDOT Draft CTP Update

Mr. Andy Bailey provided an update on the CTP in place of Mr. Daryl Vreeland. Mr. Bailey stated that NCDOT has circulated the draft CTP to local governments in the BGMPO and incorporated their input into the CTP maps and recommendation lists. The City of Burlington will submit their final comments by the end of the month. Mr. Bailey stated the tentative CTP schedule will be pushed back, with the tentative adoption to occur in January 2022. Chair Trivedi asked if there was additional time for other jurisdictions to submit comments or additional projects. Mr. Bailey stated there was time, but the submitted projects had to have an identified need outlined. Ms. Mallette asked if there would be additional opportunity to add or revise projects during the public comment period in October. Mr. Bailey confirmed that project revision, including the deletion of projects, is still an option during the public comment period.

Agency Reports and Updates

FHWA: Ms. Suzette Morales stated there was a proposal to change the definition for urban areas in the most recent census. They received substantial input on this issue. The United States Census Office plans to finish reviewing these comments in January 2022. After the official definition is adopted, FHWA will make their determinations for the MPO and rural planning areas. MPOs will be informed of the FHWA criteria determinations by Fall 2022. The proposed definition change under consideration could lead to some urban minor collector roads being classified as rural minor collector roads. Ms. Morales also gave an update on the RAISE program, which replaced the previous TIGER grant program. FHWA is currently reviewing applications. All grant applicants will be notified of the results of the applications, and the results will be posted on the FHWA website. Mr. Stober asked if next year would follow the regular application cycle, which was confirmed by Ms. Morales. Mr. Stober also asked about the federal infrastructure funding and if any of that would be routed to MPOs or just to the state for distribution. Ms. Morales could not confirm how those funds would be distributed.

NCDOT-TPD: Mr. Andy Bailey stated that after each census, NCDOT reviews the functional classification for urban and rural roads with each MPO. These reviews will take place next year.

NCDOT-Division 7: Mr. Robinson gave a status update on a few transportation projects underway in BGMPO.

BGMPO: Ms. Mallette gave an update on the Highway Safety Program. BGMPO and NCDOT jointly completed a scope of work in the end of July. NCDOT forwarded the scope of work to VHB, an on-call consultant selected to develop the Highway Safety Plan. The Project Team met with the consultant team to answer their questions and is currently waiting for any follow-up questions. The Project Team will then finalize a formal scope

of work and contract, finish the procurement process in September and hold a project kick-off meeting in October. The Project Team and VHB will prepare a presentation to the TCC and TAC in October. Ms. Mallette also thanked everyone currently participating with the CommunityViz workshops. BGMPO is partnering with Alamance County to update the parcel layer, which will be completed at the end of the month. BGMPO staff will also participate in the CommunityViz workshops to help develop growth scenarios for the model. Chair Trivedi shared his excitement for the Highway Safety Plan and confirmed if VHB was the consultant. Ms. Mallette stated VHB was selected due their expertise in traffic safety planning and experience working with BGMPO.

Adjournment

There being no further business, Chair Trivedi adjourned the meeting at 10:20 a.m. The next meeting was scheduled on **October 19, 2021**.