

MINUTES

EXECUTIVE BOARD
of the
Nashville Area Metropolitan Planning Organization
February 15, 2012

Attendees: Mayor Rogers Anderson, Mr. Paul Ballard (for Vice-Mayor Diane Neighbors), Mayor Ernest Burgess, Mayor Philip Craighead, Mayor Karl Dean, Mr. Tim Ellis (for Mayor Gary Manning), Ms. Deborah Fleming (for Gov. Bill Haslam), Mayor Jo Ann Graves, Executive Anthony Holt, Mayor Randall Hutto, Mr. Victor Lay (for Mayor Michael Dinwiddie), Mr. Addam McCormick (for Mayor Michael Arnold), Mayor Ken Moore, Mr. Mark O'Neal (for Mayor Tony Dover), Mr. Tim Roach, Commissioner John Schroer, Mayor Paul Webb, Mayor Kenneth Wilber

Approve Minutes from Last Meeting

Mayor Rogers Anderson, Chair, opened the meeting at 9:00 a.m. Mr. Victor Lay moved to approve the January 18, 2012 meeting minutes with Executive Anthony Holt seconding. The motion passed unanimously.

MPO Chair's Report

Chairman Anderson welcomed members to the meeting. He had no further report.

Recommendations from the Broadway-West End Alternatives Analysis

Jim McAteer, Director of Planning and Grants for the Nashville MTA, presented an overview of the recommendations from the BWE AA. According to him, the study is now being called the East-West Connector. He said that they followed the federal regulations regarding alternative analyses. The MTA board recommended the Bus Rapid Transit alternative. He said that presently, there is a RFP out for the PE. The dedicated lane and the frequency of service is what drive the ridership for the BRT.

Jim McAteer, Director of Planning and Grants for the Nashville MTA, presented an overview of the recommendations from the Broadway / West End AA. He said that the corridor is now called the East-West Connector which is about 8 miles long.

He said that the FTA study process includes the following phases: 1) Alternatives Analysis which is done; 2) Preliminary engineering and Environmental Review which is about to begin; 3) Final Design and 4) Implementation. He said the evaluation factors were 1) cost, 2) first-year ridership, 3) economic development along the corridor, 4) flexibility, 5) frequency, 6) comfort, 7) environmentally friendly, 8) permanence, and 9) required infrastructure.

The goals and objectives are to create connections and choices where we already have character, to support and enhance the corridor's economic engine, develop a transit service that attracts new riders to public transit, and develop a project that can be implemented in the short term. Jobs and residential density per acre is an important indicator for ridership. The magic number for density is 40. There is also a complete streets element with cost estimates of \$38M for BRT and the streetcar. In terms of cost, the estimated capital cost is \$136M vs. \$275M for the streetcar. The total preliminary transit infrastructure and streetscape improvements cost is \$174M for BRT vs. \$313M for the streetcar. Funding will come from federal, state and regional, and project specific sources. These estimates do not include purchasing large plots of land for right-of-way.

The annual operating and maintenance costs between White Bridge Road and East Nashville are estimated to be \$4.1M for BRT and \$5.1M for the streetcar. The ridership for the BRT is estimated to be 4,500/daily during the first year with 7,560/daily after 20 years. These forecasts will continually be refined through the planning process.

He said that the frequency would be 10 minutes in the AM and PM rush hours with 15 minutes the remainder of the day. Saturdays and Sundays will be 20 minutes. The BRT can be up and running after 3 years. It will be longer for the streetcar.

This study is the first step toward mass transit along the East-West Connector. The other steps will be 1) select the preferred transit mode and route, 2) determine how to pay for the system, 3) continued public engagement, and 4) initiate detailed engineering/environmental analysis.

Commissioner John Schroer asked how they predicted the ridership. Mr. McAteer said that it was an estimate using the MPO model which predicts travel patterns. Mr. Michael Skipper, MPO director, asked if students trips were included in the ridership figures. Mr. McAteer said sub-models were developed to help provide estimate of trips made by students, tourists, etc., but that those numbers would be added later. Mayor Anderson asked how the businesses along the corridor are accepting this. Mr. McAteer said that there is excitement but also some are concerned about losing street parking. He said that MTA will be working with all to make it the BRT a success.

More information about the study, including presentation material, is available at:

<http://www.broadwaywestendstudy.com/>

2035 Regional Transportation Plan Amendments

Mr. Skipper said that in the 2035 RTP established a bold new vision for mass transit for Middle Tennessee. He said a critical part of this vision includes increased circulation in downtown Nashville to make the regional routes more efficient. He said the East-West Corridor alternative will help implement the Plan's call for increased circulation in the urban core and requested that the Board endorse staff's recommendation to amend the 2035 RTP to include the locally preferred alternative determined by the study. Amendments to the RTP will require no less than a 30-day public review and comment period prior to adoption.

Mayor Jo Ann Graves moved to endorse the proposed amendment for public review and comment. Mr. Tim Roach seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

More information about the 2035 Plan is available on the MPO’s website at:
www.nashvillempo.org/plans_programs/rtp/

The schedule for adoption is:

- 2/1 – TCC endorsement
- **2/15 – XB endorsement**
- 2/17-3/19 – Public review and comment period
- 3/7 - First public hearing (TCC)
- 3/21 - Second public hearing / adoption (XB)

Proposed Amendments to the FYs 2011-2015 TIP

Mr. Félix Castrodad, MPO staff, gave a brief overview of the amendments to the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) for Amendment Cycle FY12-B. The amendments require a 21-day public review and comment period prior to adoption.

More information about the TIP, including proposed amendments, is available at:
http://www.nashvillempo.org/plans_programs/tip/

TIP #	RTP #	Project Name	Sponsor	Action
2008-67-035	1067-161	Concord Road Signals	Brentwood	Program construction
2012-66-182	1085-501	Fairview Multimodal Connector - Phase 1	Fairview	Add project to TIP
2012-56-183	1085-501	Downtown Gallatin Streetscape - Phase 3	Gallatin	Add project to TIP
2008-54-033	1054-275	Various Intersection Improvements	Gallatin	Update description and funding
2012-15-184	1215-001	East-West Connector	MTA	Add project to TIP
2012-16-185	1085-501	Music City Moves	Metro	Add project to TIP
2012-76-186	1085-501	Mini Greenway Connector to MCS station	Mt. Juliet	Add project to TIP
2012-66-187	1085-501	Small Town Connections Project	Nolensville	Add project to TIP
2012-26-188	1085-501	Spring Station Drive Multi-Use Trail	Spring Hill	Add project to TIP
2008-56-082	1056-299	Lower Station Camp Creek Rd Greenway	Sumner Co.	Add funds
2011-72-107	1072-214	I-40 Widening	TDOT	Add funds
2006-417	1062-113	I-65 Widening	TDOT	Add phase; funds
AM-018	1052-223	SR – 109 Widening	TDOT	Add funds; update FY
2012-66-189	1086-602	Thompson’s Station Greenway – Phase 1	Thompson’s Station	Add project to TIP
232	Consistent	Gateway Trail	Murfreesboro	Add project to TIP

Executive Holt moved to endorse the proposed amendments for public review and comment. Mayor Ken Moore seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

The schedule for adoption is:

- 2/1 – TCC endorsement
- **2/15 – XB endorsement**
- 2/17-3/19 – Public review and comment period
- 3/7 - First public hearing (TCC)
- 3/21 - Second public hearing / adoption (XB)

Tennessee Department of Transportation Report

Mayor Graves asked Commissioner Schroer the status on the highway funds. Are more rescissions on the horizon? Commissioner Schroer said that both the House (6 years) and Senate (2 years) bills propose to consolidate funding programs. He said that funding runs out on March 31st unless those bills or other legislation is passed to extend the authorization.

Commissioner Schroer said that TDOT's budget is at the Legislature for approval. It is down \$100M from last year. He said that this is the largest reduction of all the State departments.

Ms. Deborah Fleming said that the new director for the Long Range Planning Division is Ms. Tanisha Hall. She replaces Ms. Jeanne Stevens. She also said that the TIGER IV grants are out and to contact Mr. Michael Skipper with any questions.

Public Comment

There was no public comment.

MPO Director's Report

a) Update on Federal Transportation Legislation

Mr. Skipper said that the Senate bill is a bipartisan agreement that maintains current spending levels with a \$13B shortfall covered from funding sources beyond the federal gas tax. The proposed House bill eliminates transit from the highway trust fund and moves it to the general fund. Another provision reduces the surface transportation program which sub-allocates funds to large urban areas and gives the states discretion over how it is spent will go from 62% to 50% of the money. CMAQ is retained but money can be used on any project deemed to reduce congestion. The transportation Enhancement program is eliminated.

Mayor Graves asked if a letter noting the Board's opposition to deleting transit from dedicated funding should be sent to Washington. Mayor Graves said that if transit is taken out of dedicated funding, it would have to fight for funding each year with all of the other federal programs and it is good to let them know how this Board feels. Mr. Paul Ballard said that sending a letter is an excellent idea and that preserving dedicated funding is critically important.

Mayor Graves moved to send a letter from the Board encouraging the continuation of dedicated transit funding. Mr. Ballard seconded.

Commissioner Schroer said that some see the move as a way to continue to fund transit while freeing up funding in the highway trust fund for roadway projects. Mayor Graves asked if that is realistic. Commissioner Schroer said that this is just another way to look at the issue. He said that all cities have different goals and directions and mass transit may not work for everyone. He said that the House is more concerned about highway infrastructure than transit.

Mr. Skipper said that the issue is two-fold. One issue is the level of funding provided to transit. The other issue is whether or not that funding will continue to be provided by the highway trust fund which currently houses the mass transit account. The House bill does propose the same level of funding in the short-term, but dictates that those revenues be drawn from the general fund to pay the bills. The concern is that in the long-run transit will not be funded at the same levels due to the demand for general fund revenues. There is also the concern about the lack of certainty each year that comes with the highly political annual budgeting process associated with the general fund -- something which is difficult for operators like MTA to plan for. He also said that a decrease in transit funding would impact communities all across the nation – both urban and rural. Transit is more than light rail or city buses; it also includes vanpools and important rural paratransit services that provide life-saving transport for the elderly and disabled.

Mayor Karl Dean said that over the last 2 years the collective discussion on dedicated funding for the region has been on-going and that this group has clearly identified the importance of mass transit to the region. A letter from the Board would be stronger than individual letters.

Mayor Burgess said he believed that transit should stay in the dedicated highway trust fund. Mayor Ken Moore said that the predictability of funds is important for planning.

The motion to send a letter from the Board was unanimously passed.

b) Welcome Jennifer Hill

Mr. Skipper introduced Ms. Jennifer Hill as the new MPO planner. She has a dual master's degree in Planning and Urban Design

With no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 10:08 a.m.

Date: _____

The Honorable Rogers Anderson
Chairman, MPO Executive Board

Michael Skipper, AICP, Executive Director
Secretary, MPO Executive Board