

Cornelius
Davidson
Huntersville
Kannapolis
Concord



Lincoln County
Mecklenburg County
Cabarrus County

Meeting Minutes September 18, 2008 Kannapolis Train Station

Attendees: Commissioner Sarah McAulay (Huntersville), Commissioner Ron Julian (Huntersville), Zac Gordon (Huntersville), Jack Simoneau (Huntersville), Bill Coxe (Huntersville), Colleen Nelson (Cabarrus), Boyd Stanley (Concord), Kevin Ashley (Concord), Karen Floyd (Cornelius), Jason Abernethy (Cornelius), Kris Krider (Davidson), Lauren Blackburn (Davidson), Parvis Moosavi (Davidson), Andrew Bryant (Lincoln), Scott Cole (NCDOT Div. 10), Linda Dosse (NCDOT-TPB), Bjorn Hansen (Centralina), Blair Israel (Centralina).

Welcome and Introductions: Kris Krider opened the meeting at 1:10 p.m. with a quorum.

ADMINISTRATIVE ITEMS

After clarification on the item concerning quadrant left intersections, the minutes from the June 26, 2008 meeting were approved.

The first order of business was the election of a new chairman and vice-chairman for the COP. Kris Krider explained the roles and challenges of the NC 73 COP. Siting the recent success with the Bradford Park intersection, he encouraged the group to expand its advocacy role. Commissioner Sarah McAulay nominated Jack Simoneau for chair and Zac Gordon nominated Andrew Bryant for vice-chair. Both nominations passed.

OLD ISSUES

Corridor Plan Final Product: Kris Krider distributed the Corridor Plan final GIS product, created by Davidson GIS technician and planner Erica Palmisano. Bjorn Hansen began the discussion of how the COP would make this information to the public. Ideas voiced included:

- Make JPG file images available for download from the NC 73 COP website
- Allow web users to “build” interactive map images online, layer-by-layer, through an ArcIMS system that references the GIS files
- Develop a similar web-based interactive system from layered PDF files

In any case, it was agreed that a clear disclaimer should be placed on the images stating the date and purpose of these planning documents. Lauren Blackburn advised that the land use data included in the files should be substituted with more updated data from each municipality. Kris voiced the broader concern about who would maintain the data and how often. Jack Simoneau reminded that the Corridor Plan itself is due for an update. Kris stated the need for an updating policy and suggested the COP focus on a 5-year Corridor Plan update. Andrew Bryant said that such an update requires an update of policy statements as well. Commissioner Sarah McAulay advised that the first step for lobbying for the funds needed would be to have the current map on display to show justification for the funding.

At that suggestion, Kris concluded that the COP should perform an in-house update of the existing GIS files first. He then suggested that a print out of both the existing map, and the one displaying updates, both be displayed together at the annual retreat. Bjorn Hansen asked what attributes should be updated? Zac Gordon suggested that, while having one person perform all the updates for each jurisdiction would lend consistency, it might be impractical. Jack inquired whether Centralina could perform the file changes. Bjorn confirmed that Centralina could -- under their current NC 73 COP contract -- take all the shapefiles, once they have individually been updated by the jurisdictions, and bring them together into the single map. Bjorn recommended an annual update by each jurisdiction, and that the map showing all the updates be approved by each jurisdiction as well.

Kris summarized that each jurisdiction will review the maps received at this meeting and assign their own staff to update the files with new layers, and then send those layers to Centralina. Bjorn agreed to send out a request for this updated data with instructions.

Bradford Park entrance: Kris Krider recapped how the COP requested Mecklenburg Parks and Recreation to hold off opening the park until the intersection safety issues could be addressed. These safety issues are anticipated at an intuitive level, but are not documented. Scott Cole explained the information needed in order to document the need for safety improvements:

1. Establish the traffic pattern
2. Describe trips generated in terms of time of day and direction of travel

Various options for entrances were discussed. Zac Gordon has available information on a similar site. Kris described the situation further, saying that Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools has closed on a site across the street but has no funding yet to begin school construction. Davidson East subdivision is also directly across from the park. Their plan indicates the need for a signal at the intersection of Rama Church and Davidson-Concord Road. Such a signal would conflict with the NC 73 plan. A park bond to be voted on this November could be used to improve access conditions or to build three new soccer fields. A temporary (3 year) traffic light would likely be the most economic solution, and could be ready by the spring, but there is concern about a “temporary” traffic light becoming permanent. A Memo of



Understanding would need to be issued stating the light would be temporary. Scott Cole expressed that NCDOT may not permit a signal if the need is not definitely warranted, due to the liability of installing such signals. The solution may involve a right-in/right-out entrance instead. Bill Coxe mentioned that the Park System said they would pay for a traffic light, but surmised that traffic lights planned for NC 73 might be replaced more often by super street designs. Jonathon Guy, Kimley-Horn and Associates traffic engineer, would have more information on that topic. Zac Gordon volunteered to follow up with Jonathon.

Corridor Access tracking system: Bill Coxe posed the question of what does the NC 73 COP want to track or manage in regards to driveways along NC 73? Kris Krider suggested three objectives:

1. Determine existing driveway access conditions
2. Develop an access policy for the entire corridor
3. Eliminate or diminish the need for increased access to NC 73 by encouraging the development of more parallel roads and increasing connections to them.

Bjorn suggested that Centralina could get started digitizing existing driveways into GIS format by using aerial maps. Each driveway would be classified by attributes such as: surface, directional access, land use served, etc. Each jurisdiction would then review their portion of the “driveway map” generated by Centralina, and provide Centralina additional updated driveway data where necessary. The revised map would be sent to NCDOT Divisions 10 & 12 for their information. The Divisions, in turn, would then be responsible for sharing a copy of each future driveway permit with the COP.

It was recalled from a previous COP meeting, that Jackie McSwain said Division 12 has a driveway tracking system. The COP has not yet heard back from her about sharing such information. Scott Cole agreed to check with the Division 10 District Engineer about their spreadsheet of driveway records. He said Division 10 driveway locations are usually located by an approximate distance to the nearest intersection, so they may not be accurate enough for GIS coding.

Once an NC 73 driveway data layer is completed, it could be overlaid on the NC 73 Corridor Plan to create an access management tool. The combined data/map could be used as a guide in the rezoning process, or to place special conditions on new or new-use driveways. The project could serve as a pilot program for the State on other Strategic Highway Corridors.

Centralina will submit a proposal to the COP for the work. The proposal will specify a methodology and suggest a list of driveway attributes to be recorded.



NEW ISSUES

Annual Meeting: Bjorn Hansen recapped the standard format for the past three annual meetings. But he suggested a different format for this year's meeting, in the form of a bus tour for elected officials and other community leaders of the NC 73 corridor. The tour would include a predetermined number of select stops along the way, where experts of various types would explain specific corridor issues.

After the tour, the second part of the meeting would include dinner, ideally with presentations by spokespersons of the 21st Century committee and the Committee of 21. Both of these groups are scheduled to issue reports and recommendations on transportation finance in December-January, and their information would be very useful to affected communities along the NC 73 corridor.

Commissioner Sarah McAulay liked the bus tour idea, but felt that many of the officials are already familiar with the NC 73 Corridor. Ron Julian countered that just as many of them are not. Jack Simoneau pointed out some logistical difficulties, such as having to double back on the tour in order to begin and end at the same location. Bjorn suggested the span of the tour be limited to the portion of the corridor between NC 16 and Kannapolis. It was thought that many officials would prefer to meet at certain select focal points instead of taking the entire tour. The conclusion by the COP was to scrap the bus tour plan.

Kris Krider suggested the Michael Waltrip Facility for the Annual Meeting location. Other suggested locations include the Duke Nuclear Plant, and Joe Gibbs Racing. Centralina will request dates of availability of officials of each member jurisdiction in order to schedule the meeting, ideally within a January timeframe.

Lake Norman Regional Transportation Commission (LNRTC): Bill Coxe reported that the Huntersville Town Commission decided not to take part in the LNRTC at this time. Bill stated that while the Commission expressed interest in cooperation with other communities on mutual transportation issues, priorities among the member communities differ, and the Commission was concerned about creating another level of bureaucracy, and contributing funds to a group into over which it had no direct control.

Commissioner Ron Julian said that he had voted against membership in the LNRTC primarily because of its funding mechanism. Commissioner Sarah MacAulay reiterated that the Commission was against relinquishing authority to the LNRTC, and explained that the media poorly represented the events of the meeting. Kris Krider stated that the other municipalities involved felt that the LNRTC reflected local needs, and explained that there are transportation needs driving public debate that are currently outside of local control, and that the educational element was very helpful.



Kris posed the question of how the LNRTC should interact with the NC 73 COP. Commissioner MacAuley said that that connection was not made in the meeting. Kris asked whether the COP should take on some of the tasks of the LNRTC or something completely different. Bill reminded that there is a significant number of transportation planning committees in the area. Commissioner MacAulay advised that the NC 73 COP not become intertwined with the goals of the LNRTC.

At this point, Scott Cole of NCDOT Division 10, acknowledging that this was his first attendance at an NC 73 COP meeting, asked why the group was limited in its scope of concern to NC 73? Bill fielded the question. He summarized the history of the COP starting, describing its impetus as business community driven through the cooperative efforts of three chambers of commerce. Their initial objective was to widen NC 73, but they discovered that some of their goals could be met through coordinating land use and transportation planning. NC 73 is also classified a strategic highway corridor.

NC 73 Widening in Huntersville: Bill Coxe reported that the Town of Huntersville had endorsed the widening. NCDOT is the contractor. The environmental documentation work is expected to be completed in four months. It remains for Huntersville to decide upon a model of delivery. A modified design-build model, where more time is spent on design, would help to lower construction cost contingencies. But this savings might be offset by inflation over the extra time spent in design.

Quadrant Left Intersection Design: Bill Coxe continued with news of a seminar in Raleigh by the Regional Transportation Alliance (RTA) to area chambers about Quadrant Left Intersections. Greensboro has had such an intersection for thirty years. Documentation from this example has generated impressive numbers of traffic delay hours reduced, fuel saved, and air pollutants reduced. Zac Gordon stated that a feasibility study for a Quadrant Left Intersection is being performed for the NC 73 – Davidson Concord Road intersection.

ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION ALONG THE CORRIDOR:

Zac Gordon reminded everyone of the Northwest Study workshop, scheduled for October 16.

Jack Simoneau cited a new operational traffic light at South Lake.

Andrew Bryant described the Moving Ahead project at Old Hwy. 16 and NC 73 as finishing up. There will be three miles of coordinated traffic signals.

Bjorn Hansen reported that Mooresville is exploring the potential for CMAQ funds for a new Park and Ride lot.



Karen Floyd suggested that NCDOT and the Town of Cornelius meet with Charlotte-Mecklenburg School officials in order to work out a street connectivity plan. She requested that Scott Cole be there. Jason Abernathy would coordinate the meeting.

NEXT MEETING:

The next regular meeting was set for November 18 at 2 p.m. in Huntersville.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:15 p.m.

Stay current. Visit the NC 73 COP website at <http://www.nc73.net/>

