

Cornelius
Davidson
Huntersville
Kannapolis
Concord



Lincoln County
Mecklenburg County
Cabarrus County

January 23, 2019
10:30 AM - 12:00 PM
Kannapolis City Hall
401 Laureate Way
Executive Conference Room 2201
Kannapolis, NC

Regular Meeting Minutes

Attendees:

Susie Morris	Cabarrus County
Kevin Ashley	City of Concord
Aaron Tucker	Town of Cornelius
Jason Burdette	Town of Davidson
Julio Paredes	Gaston-Cleveland-Lincoln MPO (GCLMPO)
Jack Simoneau	Town of Huntersville
Bill Coxe	Town of Huntersville
Zac Gordon	City of Kannapolis
Charles Knox	Lake Norman Chamber/Knox Group
Donald Griffith	NCDOT Corridor Development
Stuart Basham	NCDOT Division 10
Blair Israel	Centralina Council of Governments (CCOG)

Via teleconference:

Phil Conrad	Cabarrus-Rowan MPO (CRMPO)
Mike Reese	NCDOT Congestion Management
Wilson Stroud	NCDOT Project Management
David Robinson	HDR
Jordan Bond	HDR
Steve Pound	HDR
Adam Karagosian	WSP
Teresa Ellerby	WSP
Kevin Moore	WSP

Welcome and Introductions:

Mr. Gordon opened the meeting at 10:30 am. All present introduced themselves. Technical difficulties with the phone connection delayed participation with the teleconference callers.

Administrative Matters

a. Meeting Minutes from the October 24, 2018 COP meeting:

Motion was made by Mr. Simoneau to approve the minutes, was seconded by Mr. Burdette and carried unanimously.



Updating the NC 73 Corridor Plan

Mr. Coxe provided some historical context for the NC 73 Corridor study and the Council of Planning. Coordination began in 1998 with a committee of three Chambers of Commerce - Lincoln County, North Mecklenburg, and Cabarrus County - whose goal was to widen Highway 73 from Lincolnton to Kannapolis. They decided that until the facility could be widened, the existing asset should be preserved. NCDOT and the local governments agreed to commit funds for a corridor study - the first of its kind in North Carolina - proceeded under the supervision of Centralina Council of Governments. Bill Duston was the project manager. National experts of the Transportation Research Board provided advice on access management. The Study took a couple of years, with extensive involvement of the public and local governments in the corridor. The final document linked the preservation of the transportation asset with the economic development goals of the communities along it. It prescribed mechanisms - with no force of law behind them - to separate and limit access points, addressed median openings, traffic signals, and so forth, all along the corridor. The participating communities signed Memorandums of Understanding. Dennis Rash served as the political consultant and helped convince the communities to sign the MoUs. In doing so, the communities pledged to manage the corridor jointly.

Since that time of the Plan's inception, the parochial goals of the individual communities in many cases have superseded the goal of cooperating to manage the NC 73 Corridor as a whole. The Council of Planning was formed to share information and help guide that corridor management. While the Council has performed well sharing information over the years, it has not met expectations in managing the asset and convincing local elected officials to preserve the integrity of the Corridor.

Mr. Coxe observed that NCDOT is probably the only group that has within its power and its mission to supersede local jurisdictional boundaries. As the public is now on the verge of investing over \$400 million to widen this corridor, the region will have a brand new multi-lane facility stretching from Hwy 16 to Hwy 29. But this new facility will once again be subject to the individual economic development interests of each of the communities in the corridor.

Mr. Coxe posed the challenge to the communities represented by the Council of how they will manage the asset that they will have just created... again? What will be the forum and the means for doing so? When a municipal board member receives a request from a friend in the development community for a new median opening, or other alteration to promote economic development, and that local board member passes that request to a state board member, who passes it to the NCDOT Division; in this manner, changes to the facility are made. Without a determined check on this system by the will of the community, the asset is gradually and inevitably compromised. That has been the pattern witnessed over the years by Mr. Coxe.

Mr. Knox recalled how the three chambers originally emphasized that NCDOT should be at the table with the local decision makers to coordinate and balance the impacts of land uses and transportation.

Mr. Simoneau pointed out how the super street has changed the dynamic. Now we have to re-think how that kind of facility will work with adjacent land use. He recounted that initially, the

COP had greater funding and held annual meetings with elected officials. But with the downturn in the economy, members scaled back their funding, and the coordination effort suffered. In recent years, the COP has returned to paying annual dues and having more regular meetings.

Mr. Israel suggested that increased coordination could take place through a more active partnership with the region's Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs). Mr. Paredes agreed, suggesting that GCLMPO would include COP updates in their TCC and TAC board agendas, and update the COP on their actions. The MPO can also post pertinent data on their GIS website. Mr. Paredes said he would discuss ideas with Randi Gates, the GCLMPO Administrator and Principal Transportation Planner. Mr. Coxe reminded that MPOs adopt an annual planning program (CRTPO is scheduled to adopt theirs next month). And while MPO representatives of CRMPO and GCLMPO do attend the COP meeting regularly, there are currently no participants from CRTPO. Mr. Coxe also suggested that a funding source for the ongoing activity of the COP could come from the Unified Planning Work Program adopted by all three of those MPOs. The transportation profession is moving more toward adopted federally legislated performance measures that relate to the physical status and the safety of transportation assets. Therefore, it could be said that the COP is intended to manage the performance of the NC 73 asset.

Mr. Gordon made the point that this region is not ready for a regional authority that can enforce transportation facility management decisions, so how else can it maintain the functionality of a multi-jurisdictional road corridor like NC 73?

Mr. Coxe explained that in the environmental documents of road projects, mitigation measures required to address adverse impacts are identified. The commitments to the mitigation measures by the various agencies involved are recorded in the document's "green sheet", and these can be enforced.

Since the adoption of the 2004 NC 73 Corridor Plan, land use goals have changed significantly throughout the corridor. And the facility currently under construction is very different than what was planned for. But the new design may end up with the same eventual shortcomings, as requests come in for additional driveways and median openings, etc.

Mr. Simoneau recalled that the 2004 Plan was user-friendly and useful. Requests were compared with the Plan for consistency. The COP was meeting maybe six times a year, along with the annual dinner meeting with elected officials. But as road designs changed, and the downturn of the economy, and meeting less frequently, we must alter our strategy to find ways to accomplish the task.

Mr. Gordon said the COP began to discuss updating the Corridor Plan five years ago. At the time there was no funding to do it. So we began to focus on intersections with the help of Mr. Reece and others at NCDOT Congestion Management. Mr. Coxe added that the COP was also looking at projects that could be implemented short of starting a new corridor plan.

Update of the R-2632AB and R-5706 Projects

Mr. Karagosian presented a brief update of the R-2632AB project, which runs from NC 115 to Davidson-Concord Road, and R-5706, from Davidson-Concord Road to US 29. Our public meetings for both projects are to be conducted on January 28th and 29th.

R-2632 includes widening from two to four lanes, with a superstreet design at the Davidson-Concord Road intersection. A quadrant intersection here may be warranted later as development progresses. To the west, we will present bicycle and pedestrian facilities across the Norfolk-Southern Rail to Parr Drive, which will tie into the previously constructed AA project. We are still reviewing connecting bike/ped facilities to NC 115. WSP's rail division favors sidewalk facilities to the multi-use paths. Mr. Burdette conveyed how local officials and staff need to see proposed plans before they are unveiled to the general public. WSP agreed to send plans of critical intersections prior to those meetings. Mr. Coxe and Mr. Reece commented on the June Washam intersection.

R-5706 also involves widening from two to four lanes, with intersection design concepts, including a quadrant at Poplar Tent Road, and bow-tie intersections at International and at Central toward the eastern end of the project. At Kannapolis Parkway, we are proposing a grade separation with a quadrant in the southwest quad. We are planning to meet with a few of the larger businesses in the corridor this week to discuss impacts, specifically Amazon, FedEx and Cisco. WSP has been designing bicycle lanes and sidewalks for this segment, but the jurisdictions in Cabarrus have expressed preference for multi-use paths. WSP is waiting for an informal request from them for those facilities. Until then, WSP is moving forward with its current design. Right-of-way acquisition for both projects is scheduled for March 2020, with construction completed in 2023.

Update of the R-5721 and U-5765 Projects

Mr. Stroud provided a high-level overview of these projects. They lie west of I-77, stretching from NC-16 in Denver to North Cross Drive in Huntersville. Public meetings were held in October in Huntersville and Denver. We are currently addressing the comments made on those preliminary designs. We are proposing a four-lane divided facility from NC 16 to West Catawba Avenue, and a six-lane facility from there to Northcross Drive. We are proposing a super-street concept and several innovative intersections to accommodate anticipated traffic movements. We are proposing bicycle and pedestrian accommodations throughout the project in various forms based on local plans and consultation with local jurisdictions. We anticipate the design document to be completed in April 2019. We are still working on the Traffic Noise Analysis component. We are coordinating with the Department of Cultural Resources concerning the Stilwell-Hubbard farm complex mitigation measures, and some archaeological studies. We are in the process of getting cost estimates for right-of-way acquisition and utility relocations and construction. We presented three alternatives for the section between McGuire Nuclear Station and Beatties Ford Road: 1.) widen the existing roads, 2a.) relocate NC 73 to the south, which matches well with the NW Huntersville Transportation Plan, and 2b.) create a similar but shallower bypass. We are working with the inter-agency merger team to reach concurrence on which option. We plan to announce and post those decisions publicly.

when they are made. In the new draft STIP, the schedule of R-O-W purchase for R-5721 moved from FY 2020 to FY 2021, and construction from FY '22 to '23. And for U-5765, R-O-W purchase remained the same, and construction moved from FY '22 to '23.

Mr. Robinson added that coordination with Duke Energy will be needed as the proposed design shifts the alignment of NC 73 slightly southward west of the Catawba River where it will impact their boat ramp and parking facility. The preliminary plan for reconstructing that area is now under internal NCDOT review.

Mr. Stroud serves as the contact for inquiries about this project.

Ms. Morris inquired about interest in revising the NC 73 corridor land use plan, expressing concern about the additional financial commitment that would entail. Mr. Gordon answered that there has been some thought given to it, but no conclusions made. Any action would need to be discussed at a future meeting. There is an apparent need for some form of planning, perhaps an update to the 2004 plan. Ms. Morris advised that a much firmer picture of the access points and widening alignment would be needed before future planning could be beneficial. Mr. Basham confirmed that access points will be partial-controlled and set by NCDOT and stated that additional design is needed before R-O-W alignment can be finalized. Mr. Gordon expressed concern about planning for growth in the interim. Mr. Basham estimated that a more refined alignment will be determined by late this year.

What's New along the NC 73 Corridor

Huntersville

Mr. Simoneau mentioned that a golf driving range is planned next to Bradford Park. While the range across from Birkdale is closing to be replaced by a mixed-use development that includes a hotel, apartments and retail.

Concord

Mr. Ashley reported that the Moss Creek development plan has been approved by Council. The end closest to NC 73 is approved for 155,000 sf of commercial development to be preceded by the construction of 367 single family and townhome units on the southern end.

Kannapolis

Mr. Gordon said the proposed Planned Unit Development (PUD) that was approved in 2007 (located in the SW quadrant of the NC 73/Kannapolis Parkway intersection) will feature retail up front, some multi- and single-family units in the rear. There is also an approved development in the SE quadrant of this intersection that will include some light-assembly industrial uses, and a new drive-through commercial business.

Next Meeting:

The next meeting of the COP is requested to be held in the Spring, at a location to be determined. Mr. Gordon adjourned the meeting at 12:30 p.m.

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