

RFATS

Rock Hill-Fort Mill Area Transportation Study

POLICY COMMITTEE MEETING SUMMARY MINUTES

Friday, June 27, 2008 - 12:00 p.m. (NOON)
City Hall – Room 373

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT: Chairman Bob Runde; Jim Reno; Paul Lindemann; Carl Gullick; Sarah Nuckles; Wes Hayes; Kathy Pender and Danny Funderburk.

ADMINISTRATIVE / TECHNICAL / MANAGEMENT STAFF PRESENT: Phil Leazer (York County); Allison Love (York County); Stan Bland (SCDOT); Greg Shaw (SCDOT); Kevin Sheppard (SCDOT); David Burgess (SCDOT); Shane Belcher (FHWA); Michael Juras (SCDHEC); Jennifer Hasting (SCDOT); Brenda Perryman (SCDOT); Doug Frate (SCDOT); David Hooper (CRH) and Leigh Welch (CRH).

CITIZENS / VISITORS PRESENT:

Jim Van Blarcom (CAC Chairman); Barre Mitchell (CAC); Carol Higgins (CAC) and Daniel John (WRHI).

1. CALL TO ORDER:

A. Welcome – Chairman Runde called the meeting to order at 12:15 PM. Mayor Runde welcomed everyone in attendance and asked everyone to introduce themselves.

B. Citizen Comment Period – Chairman Runde invited citizens in attendance to address the Policy Committee. There were no comments.

2. REVIEW / APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

Chairman Runde asked if there were any changes, deletions or comments to the minutes of the May 30, 2008 meeting. Hearing none, Ms. Pender made a motion to approve the minutes. Mr. Gullick seconded the motion and the minutes were unanimously approved as presented.

3. UPDATE ON CURRENT PROJECTS:

A. York County Capital Projects – Mr. Leazer stated that staff has continued to aggressively assume management of the 1997 and 2003 Pennies for Progress Programs; issued 25 termination notices to the current management consultant; and is now working with all municipalities and the State to move projects forward. Mr. Leazer then stated he will begin a new position with York County on June 30, 2008, assisting with the management of the Pennies for Progress Programs.

B. SCDOT Report – Ms. Hasting updated the Committee on the following projects exempt from Guideshare; specifically, the US 21 Bridge Replacement Project and the I-77 / US 21 Interchange. With regards to the US 21 Bridge Replacement, Ms. Hasting stated that the Right-of-way obligation is scheduled for Fall 2008; the construction obligation is scheduled for Fall 2009. Additionally, Ms. Hasting mentioned that the environmental documents are currently under revision to include widening a portion of the project as well. Ms. Hasting then stated that an Enhancement Committee meeting is scheduled for the first week of July to discuss what types of enhancements can be incorporated in the bridge fund(s) amount. It was also noted that a public hearing will be scheduled during the summer. With respect to the I-77 / US 21 Interchange project, Ms. Hasting confirmed that construction plans have been completed and the cost estimates are now being updated.

C. 82X Bus Service – Mr. Hooper provided a ridership report on the CATS 82X Commuter Bus Service for the 2nd quarter of 2008. Mr. Hooper stated that ridership has declined approximately 5.6% from the previous year's quarterly total and that on a year-over-year basis ridership is down approximately 9.9%. Mr. Hooper then stated that it appears a few riders (approximately 9 to 12 a day) are opting to utilize the Lynx Blue Line as an alternative to the 82X. Mr. Hooper also noted that the trends for the second quarter remain consistent with previous years. Brief discussion was then held regarding ridership data, the incorporation of an additional morning trip, as well as the planning efforts to date regarding the expansion of the 82X service along Celanese Road.

D. TEP and CMAQ Projects – Mr. Hooper briefly reviewed the quarterly project status of all projects funded under the Transportation Enhancement (TEP) and Congestion Mitigation & Air Quality Improvement Programs (CMAQ). Specifically, Mr. Hooper stated that of the 10 TEP Projects, 8 were under construction and 2 proposed projects for FY 08-09 were pending submission to SCDOT. Mr. Hooper then stated that of the 20 CMAQ Projects, 6 were under construction; 5 were pending completion of an air quality benefit analysis and 8 were pending a notice to proceed from SCDOT.

Commissioner Nuckles then stated that the SCDOT Commission has recently approved a new variation on the CMAQ program ranking projects based on the results of the air quality benefit analysis. Specifically, Commissioner Nuckles stated that a project with a rating of 0.1 or higher will receive 100% CMAQ funding – such as intersection improvement and traffic signal synchronization projects currently receive. Commissioner Nuckles also stated that if a project that falls below 0.1, such as alternate fuel vehicles and trails projects typically do, will continue to require a 20% local match.

Mr. Gullick then asked about the status / project details of the Hwy 160 intersection project. Mr. Leazer stated that the air quality benefit analysis on that project is currently being conducted and is expected to be submitted to SCDOT in September 2008. Mr. Leazer then briefly summarized the project cost information at 1.3 million dollars – with approximately \$250,000.00 in local matching funds being provided by an area developer.

Mr. Sheppard briefly reviewed previous discussions with regards to the increase in CMAQ funds for FY 2008-09. Specifically, Mr. Sheppard stated the FHWA has authorized SCDOT to determine which projects can receive 100% CMAQ funding going forward. Mr. Sheppard also stated that SCDOT reviewed all submitted projects received thus far since allocating funds at the MPO level – to determine which projects best improve air quality. Mr. Sheppard then referred to project #12 on RFATS approved CMAQ list, SC160/US 21 intersection, and stated the approved amount was \$400,000 with \$80,000 as the 20% local match from the Town of Fort Mill. Mr. Sheppard then stated that under the newly approved, FWHA endorsed proposal, the \$80,000 local match is no longer needed. CMAQ will fund this project at 100%, if funds are available.

Mr. Sheppard went on to state that in the future, RFATS will not be the sole beneficiary of CMAQ funds due to the expected non-attainment designations in other areas of the state (Greenville and Columbia), and that the process for submitting, evaluating and ranking project would change. Ms. Pender then asked if a time frame has been established regarding any proposed changes to how funding is handled under the CMAQ program. Mr. Sheppard responded that it would be around 2010 before standards are changed, and that until then, RFATS will continue to receive the full amount of its nonattainment allocation.

Ms. Pender then asked if projects are ranked on a project basis or if the ranking is dependent on the degree of nonattainment, for example severe or moderate. In response, Mr. Sheppard stated that there is no discussion on this issue at this time. Mr. Juras then noted that it is expected in March 2010, that DHEC will receive a response from EPA a year after the Governor's submission of recommendations on which areas should be designated as nonattainment. Mr. Juras continued that once EPA makes an official nonattainment designation, that DHEC will have one year to work on transportation conformity issues.

Mr. Hooper then briefly noted that the new ranking criteria SCDOT has implemented for CMAQ funding represents a similar evaluation criteria approved by the Policy Committee in March 2008. Mr. Hooper then asked Mr. Sheppard a clarifying question regarding the total apportionment expected for the State when EPA's new standard of 0.75 is implemented; specifically, how would the anticipated increase in the total amount of funding available be reflected in the allocation to RFATS.

Mr. Sheppard responded that once new standards are in place, the amount of CMAQ funding will be affected. Specifically, under the new standards, all CMAQ funds will be designated as mandatory (unlike the current practice of SCDOT making a discretionary allocation to fund the motor vehicle assistance program) and therefore would be allocated only to nonattainment areas.

Mr. Hooper then referenced the current formula used to determine the amount of CMAQ funding allocated to nonattainment areas and asked that as the nonattainment population in the State increases, would not the total amount of CMAQ funds available to the State also increase – since the federal allocation is based on the total nonattainment population within a state? Mr. Belcher stated that RFATS is the only nonattainment area population used to determine how much money is allocated at this time; however, as other nonattainment areas are added, the population of the entire nonattainment areas goes into the formula for allocating CMAQ funding.

Mr. Runde asked for clarification on the percentage RFATS will receive once other areas are designated nonattainment. Mr. Sheppard stated the percentage per nonattainment area is a FWHA regulation.

Mr. Runde then asked if RFATS is required to take any action in regards to the change in funding amount for projects currently submitted for the 80/20 CMAQ funding but would qualify for 100% funding based on the new variation. Mr. Sheppard stated RFATS should submit a written request noting the understanding of the new variation and request 100% funding for the particular project. Mr. Runde asked if a motion should be made now to request 100% funding or wait until the next scheduled RFATS meeting in September. Mr. Hooper responded that it may be advisable to review and discuss the 100% CMAQ funding for FY 2008-09 projects prior to official submission to SCDOT at the September meeting.

Mr. Gullick asked if the current list of CMAQ projects could be amended given the new funding formula outlined by SCDOT. Mr. Runde indicated that the list could be amended. Mr. Gullick then asked if the Committee could replace projects on the current list that receive 80% CMAQ funding with projects that meet the new guidelines with regard to intersection improvements or signal upgrades and receive 100% funding. Mr. Hooper responded by briefly outlining the annual process of review undertaken by the CMAQ Sub-committee as well as the probable timeframe involved in amending the current list. Mr. Runde then stated that since the projects already selected for the FY 2008-09 funding cycle will have an impact on each locality that perhaps applying this new formula going forward represents a preferred approach.

4. PROPOSED POLICY COMMITTEE ACTION ITEMS:

A. TIP Amendment – Mr. Hooper reported that no public comments were received on the City of Tega Cay's Amber Woods Trail Project or the City of Rock Hill's Saluda Street Project (Phase II). Mr. Hooper further indicated that these projects have been endorsed by Commissioner Nuckles. A motion to approve both projects and amend the TIP was made by Mr. Gullick and seconded by Mr. Hayes – the motion passed unanimously.

B. CMAQ Project – Mr. Hooper presented for preliminary approval a request from the staff at the City of Tega Cay to reallocate \$450,336 in FY 2007-08 CMAQ funds from the Walking Trail Project in Stonecrest to the Gardendale Project and to authorize the preparation of an air quality benefit analysis. A motion was made by Mr. Gullick and seconded by Mr. Hayes – the motion was unanimously passed.

C. 2035 LRTP Update – Mr. Leazer reviewed the 2035 Draft Project List along with copies of an RFATS map highlighting the location of proposed projects. Additionally, Mr. Leazer briefly discussed area safety issues and locations with a high incidence of traffic accidents. Mr. Leazer then presented a Long Range Plan Overlay Map that showed the roads currently operating at a level of service E or F – which effectively highlighted the major congestion points in the RFATS Area.

Senator Hayes then asked if Hwy 5 near Bowater is included on the Draft Project List. Mr. Leazer stated Hwy 5 is a bike lane addition and is included on the list. Senator Hayes also asked when the 2003 Pennies for Progress Program was due to end. Mr. Leazer indicated

that the 2003 Pennies round is slated to terminate in the summer of 2010 and that the York County Council has directed staff to begin the process of putting together another ballot for York County citizens to consider in order to continue funding the Pennies for Progress Program.

Mr. Gullick then asked about the growing congestion on Hwy 49 and about the possibility of having it added to the draft project list. Mr. Leazer responded that he has received citizen input about increased congestion. Mr. Leazer also stated that due to increased development in the area that this section of Hwy 49 may need to be a seven lane facility. Mr. Gullick asked if a motion needed to be made to add Hwy 49/Hwy 274 to the Draft Project List.

Commissioner Nuckles then asked if this project would be listed under Unfunded Transportation Needs – Mr. Leazer responded that it would. Mr. Reno asked what the numbers of miles are of the particular project. Mr. Leazer stated he would furnish the information at a later date. Mr. Gullick made a motion to add the section of Hwy 49 from Five points to Three points to the Draft Project List; Senator Hayes seconded the motion and it was passed unanimously.

Commissioner Nuckles asked if projects were prioritized and also commented that intersection improvements, line item 1 under Financially Feasible Plan (2035), increased from 7.5 to 10.5 million. Mr. Leazer stated that the projects were not prioritized and that the increase was due to updated cost estimates for the cost-constrained projects and the addition of transportation needs / projects that recently emerged from Rock Hill's I-77 Traffic Study. Mr. Gullick then made a motion to endorse the 2035 Draft Project List; Commissioner Nuckles seconded the motion and it was unanimously passed.

D. Transportation Conformity Memorandum of Agreement – Mr. Juras requested approval of the Transportation Conformity Memorandum of Agreement, which is required by DHEC under the Clean Air Act. Mr. Juras briefly explained that the Memorandum of Agreement addresses the interagency consultation process for conformity determination and the roles and responsibilities of the local, state and federal partners. Commissioner Nuckles made a motion to approve the request. Ms. Pender seconded the motion and it was approved unanimously.

E. Rapid Transit Land Use Implementation Plan – Ms. Love briefly reviewed the Policy Committee's endorsement of the Rapid Transit Study – which identified the US 21 corridor and Bus Rapid Transit as the locally preferred alternative for the RFATS Area. Ms. Love then requested approval to allow staff to execute a contract in an amount not to exceed that available in state technical assistance funds after a finalized scope of work has been agreed to. Commissioner Nuckles referred to the Draft Project List, item 5 under Unfunded Transportation Needs, indicating 13.3 million dollars for preservation and asked for clarification if the Rapid Transit Land Use Implementation Plan was the same plan. Mr. Leazer stated this is separate from the Draft Project List. Commissioner Nuckles then moved to approve the request to allow the use of a consultant to assist with Land Use and Development Standards for the US 21 (BRT) corridor and authorize contract execution. Senator Hayes seconded the motion and it was passed unanimously.

5. OTHER BUSINESS:

A. Commissioner Nuckles briefly commented on the Non Federal Aid and Pavement Improvement Program, the \$0.16 state gas tax. Commissioner Nuckles stated for 2009, York County received a 76% increase in funding dollars from the prior year. Commissioner Nuckles also stated that the road miles being paved decreased due to roads needing more work in addition to resurfacing. Commissioner Nuckles also noted that the three projects for York County are SC 557, Stateline Road and Locust Hill Road. Mr. Bland stated the decreased road miles are due to some roads being reconstructed instead of resurfaced due to the condition of the roads today and also noted the rising cost of construction.

B. Next meeting is scheduled for September 26, 2008.

6. ADJOURN:

Meeting adjourned at 1:27pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Leigh W. Welch