

TPO Technical Committee
9 a.m., July 18, 2006
Knox County School Board Conference Room
Andrew Johnson Building, 912 S. Gay Street
Knoxville, TN

The Knoxville Regional Transportation Planning Organization (TPO) Technical Committee met on July 18 at 9 a.m. in the Knox County School Board Conference Room in Knoxville. Scott Poland, Chair, presided and called the meeting to order. A quorum was determined. The Committee was introduced.

*Terry Bobrowski	East Tennessee Development District
*Drew Barrie Daruka	Tennessee Dept. of Transportation - Office of Public Transportation
*Rich DesGroseilliers	Lakeway Area Metropolitan Transportation Planning Organization
*Mark Donaldson	Knoxville/Knox County Metropolitan Planning Commission
*Karen Estes	Knox County Community Action Committee for Barbara Monty
*Chris Hamby	City of Alcoa
*Curtis Henry	Sevier County
*Brent Johnson	City of Knoxville Engineering for Steve King
*John Lamb	Blount County
*Angie Midgett	Tennessee Department of Transportation
*Ted Newsom	Knoxville Commuter Pool
*Cindy Pionke	Knox County Engineering for Bruce Wuethrich
*Scott Poland	City of Maryville
*Blake Sartin	Metro Knoxville Airport Authority for Bryan White
*Darryl Smith	Town of Farragut
*Melissa Trevathan	Knoxville Area Transit
*Bruce Wuethrich	Knox County Engineering
Jeff Welch	Transportation Planning Organization Director
Doug Burton	Transportation Planning Organization Staff
Bill Cole	City of Knoxville Engineering
Mike Conger	Transportation Planning Organization Staff
John Fairstein	Citizens Against the Beltway Orange Location
Kelsey Finch	Tennessee Department of Transportation
Mark Geldmeier	City of Knoxville Engineering
Katie Habgood	Transportation Planning Organization Staff
Bob Hayzlett	Tennessee Department of Transportation
Don Jacobs	Knoxville News Sentinel
James Norris	Transportation Planning Organization Staff
Jonathan Overly	East Tennessee Clean Fuels Coalition
Gary Palmer	Town of Farragut
Kelley Segars	Transportation Planning Organization Staff
Bob Shaw	Citizens Against the Beltway Orange Location
Shannon Tolliver	Transportation Planning Organization Staff
Charlotte West	Transportation Planning Organization Staff
Ellen Zavisca	Transportation Planning Organization Staff

*voting members

1. Approval of May 9, 2006, Minutes

Presenter: Scott Poland, Chair

Item Summary: Approval of May 9, 2006, TPO Technical Committee minutes

Background: Attachment #1.

A motion was made by Cindy Pionke and seconded by Terry Bobrowski to approve the May 9 minutes. The motion carried unanimously.

2. Recommend Approval of Resolution Adopting an Amendment to the 2005-2030 Knoxville Regional Long Range Transportation Plan and Conformity Analysis – Add Additional Lane Capacity and Interchange Improvements to I-275 and I-640

Presenter: TPO Staff

Item Summary: This amendment consists of adding two projects to the 2005-2030 Knoxville Regional Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) as part of the Smartfix 40 project. The projects are: (1) Modification of interchanges and conversion of existing auxiliary lanes and shoulders to one additional through lane in each direction on I-275 between I-40 and I-640 and (2) Widen I-640 from west of Clinton Highway to east of Bruhin Road to three through lanes in each direction. **Attachment #2a - Resolution.**

Background: These projects resulted from a traffic impact analysis on the likely routes that will be used as a detour by through traffic once I-40 in downtown Knoxville is closed as part of the Smartfix 40 project in early 2008. These projects are being constructed in advance of the closure to alleviate potential areas of congestion that may result from the higher traffic volumes.

Attachment #2b - Summary, Conformity Report and Map.

Mike Conger of the TPO staff stated that these two projects are in the LRTP as part of a group of projects that are being implemented to help reduce congestion when I-40, as part of the SmartFix effort, is shut down for construction. Later it was determined that these two projects should be listed individually and separated from the group. These were nonexempt for air quality, and a conformity analysis had to be prepared separately.

I-640 will be widened from west of Clinton Highway to east of Bruhin Road to three lanes in each direction. This will reduce bottlenecks when I-40 is closed. The conformity analysis report had to be revised. This project will be let September 1 and has to be completed before I-40 is closed in 2008. Jeff Welch complimented Mike for his work in completing this report.

A motion was made by Cindy Pionke and seconded by Chris Hamby to recommend approval for the amendment to the LRTP and Air Quality Conformity to the Executive Board. The motion carried unanimously.

3. Recommend Approval of Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) Projects to be Funded and to Amend the FY 2006-2008 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)

Presenter: TPO Staff

Item Summary: Knoxville TPO FY 2006 CMAQ applications.

Background: The FY 2006 CMAQ call for projects was released on March 16, 2005, and applications were due to the TPO by April 25, 2005. The TPO received 24 CMAQ applications totaling \$5.3 million. The current CMAQ balance is \$2.5 million. The TPO staff ranked the projects according to the evaluation criteria, and two funding scenarios were presented at the June Technical Committee Workshop. Based on discussion, Scenario #2 was favored and is attached. **Attachment #3a – Funding Scenario #2 and Applicants. Attachment #3b – Information on CMAQ Funding Applicant IdleAire.**

Shannon Tolliver of the TPO staff stated that the CMAQ applications were due April 25 and the TPO received 24 applications totaling \$5.3 million. At the June Technical Committee meeting the staff presented two funding scenarios and from that meeting and it was determined that funding scenario #2 was the preferred choice. Projects that are recommended for funding include two Knox County projects that were previously funded, two transit projects, several traffic signal timing projects, Farragut park-n-ride lot, continuation of East Tennessee Clean Fuels Coalition and the Smart Trips program, intersection improvements, and diesel vehicle retrofits. Staff did not

recommend the IdleAire project, the NuRide online ridesharing program, Northshore Drive signal timing, Hydrogen Fueling station, Gay street signal timing or the Maryville Pk/Sims Rd intersection improvement. The recommended list of projects totals \$2,517,366 dollars leaving the balance of the CMAQ funds at \$24,690.

A motion was made by John Lamb and seconded by Chris Hamby to recommend approval of the TIP amendment to the Executive Board. The motion carried unanimously.

4. Recommend Approval to Amend the FY 2006-2008 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)

Presenter: TPO Staff

a. Item Summary: Add Second Creek Greenway in Knoxville.

Background: The Tennessee Department of Transportation (TDOT) and the City of Knoxville are requesting that a total of \$407,827 federal/ \$101,956 local be added for the construction phase. **Attachment #4a.**

b. Item Summary: Add Boyd Station, Harvey and McFee Roads underpass.

Background: Knox County has requested that a total of \$293,990 federal/\$73,447 local be added for the construction phase. **Attachment #4b.**

c. Item Summary: Transfer funds from Will Skelton Greenway to Ten Mile Creek Greenway.

Background: The City of Knoxville is requesting that \$62,515.81 federal/\$15,629 local funds be transferred from Will Skelton Greenway to the Ten Mile Creek Greenway for the construction phase. The Will Skelton Greenway was previously in the 2004-2006 TIP and will need to be added into the current TIP then the funds can be transferred. **Attachment #4c.**

d. Item Summary: Amend I-40 Papermill/Weisgarber Interchange (Landscaping, including pedestrian and bicycle facilities).

Background: The Tennessee Department of Transportation has requested that \$320,000 federal/\$80,000 state funds be added to this project for the construction phase. **Attachment #4d.**

e. Item Summary: Amend I-40/75, I-640 Smart Fix interchange improvements.

Background: The Tennessee Department of Transportation has requested that \$11,542,133 federal/\$1,282,459 state be added to the construction phase as well as edit the project description. **Attachment #4e.**

f. Item Summary: Amend I-40, I-275 to Broadway connector at Cherry Street.

Background: The Tennessee Department of Transportation has requested that \$27,057,335 state funds be added for the construction phase. **Attachment #4f.**

g. Item Summary: Add Henley Street Bridge over the Tennessee River and SR-158.

Background: The Tennessee Department of Transportation has requested that \$4,000,000 federal/\$1,000,000 state funds be added for the right-of-way phase. **Attachment #4g.** Has been upgraded and 3 lanes will be added.

h. Item Summary: Amend Knoxville Parkway; I-40/75 west in Loudon County to I-75 north in Anderson County.

Background: The Tennessee Department of Transportation has requested that \$2,320,000 federal/\$580,000 state funds be added for the Environmental Study phase. **Attachment #4h.**

Shannon briefly discussed all of the TIP amendments. Darryl Smith was unsure about Item 4b and asked if the Boyd Station, McFee Rd, Harvey underpass should be shown under preliminary engineering phase instead of the construction phase as stated in the TIP project profile sheet. Jeff Welch stated that it would not be inappropriate to say it is for preliminary engineering. The funds will cover the transportation planning report and the preliminary engineering. Cindy Pionke agreed and stated that the funds will be spent on preliminary engineering. Shannon stated that she would change the TIP sheet to reflect funding for preliminary engineering.

Scott Poland asked Shannon about 4g concerning the Henley Street Bridge. He understood most of the money would be federal money and not money that would come out of the TIP. Shannon stated that this is a TEA-21 designated project. He asked about the right-of-way project. Jeff responded that since this is a high priority project, the state received money under TEA-21, and they are starting to move ahead with the bridge replacement. The proposal is to add two lanes to the bridge and need right-of-way for the approaches. There will be public meetings on it once TDOT is in the right-of-way and design phase.

Bob Shaw of 6705 Cate Road stated that he was a member of the Knoxville Parkway Design Resource Team. He asked about Item 4h concerning the EIS for the Knoxville Parkway. He wants the \$2.9 million for the Environmental Impact Study (EIS) phase to be spent evenly, dividing it up among the four alternatives and the No Build option, which would also have environmental consequences. He prepared and distributed a statement of how he would like the amendment to the TIP resolution to the Board to read. It would state “the TPO specify that the TIP funds for the Knoxville Parkway environmental study be proportioned evenly between the three proposed alignment alternatives and the No Build option as described in the project for the EIS.”

John Fairstein of 11205 Sam Lee Road stated that he agrees with Bob.

Jeff Welch stated that the EIS will include all alternatives including the No Build. Jeff stated that TDOT is proceeding with a final EIS for the Knoxville Parkway. They have spent the last two years going through a modified CSS process to identify an alignment within the orange corridor. As part of the preparation of the EIS, as required under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), they must look at all reasonable alternatives, including the No Build.

Mark Donaldson stated that the money should not be distributed evenly as one alternative might be dismissed fairly early. Mark added that all the alternatives should be given due diligence in the review. Bob Shaw stated that TDOT did issue a reevaluation report in January. The Resource Team’s study did identify a number of geology problems along the orange route, but the TDOT reevaluation report only stated that it is highly likely that the blue route has comparable karst areas. He would like to see a somewhat more even approach to the EIS that these dollars will be spent on.

Jeff recommended that the committee approve amendments a-g first then the committee could discuss the Parkway.

A motion was made by Terry Bobrowski and seconded by John Lamb to recommend approval of amendments “a-g” to the Executive Board. The motion carried unanimously.

Scott Poland stated each member needs to see the new wording on amendment “h” before they vote. Jeff stated that copies will be made and we could return to this item after discussing Item 5.

A motion was made by Blake Sartin and seconded by Mark Donaldson to recommend approval to the Executive Board of amendment “h” that TDOT has requested that \$2.3 million federal/\$580,000 state funds be added for the environmental study phase for I-40/75 west in Loudon County to I-75 north in Anderson County. The motion carried unanimously.

A motion was made by Chris Hamby and seconded by Terry Bobrowski to recommend approval to the Executive Board a resolution that recommends that, as required under NEPA, the TPO expects that TDOT, while preparing the EIS for the proposed SR-475 (Knoxville Regional Parkway), conduct a fair and reasonable analysis for all four alternatives, including No Build, in the environmental study phase of the Knoxville Regional Parkway. The motion carried with TDOT abstaining.

5. Recommend Approval to Designate Proposed SR-475 (Knoxville Regional Parkway) as Part of the National Highway System

Presenter: TPO Staff

Item Summary: TDOT has requested that proposed SR-475, Knoxville Regional Parkway, from I-75 to I-40/75, be added to the National Highway System (NHS). This link is in the TPO’s Long Range Transportation Plan.

Attachment #5a – Resolution.

Background: On April 5, 2006, the Knoxville Parkway Design Resource Team developed a recommendation on the alignment and design of the Knoxville Regional Parkway and forwarded it to TDOT. **Attachment #5b – Map. Attachment #5c – Correspondence.**

Jeff Welch stated that he received a letter from TDOT requesting that SR-475 be added to the NHS. The NHS is a series of high priority interstates and major arterials that connect the entire country to major cities, port facilities and the national defense highway system. Every interstate system is part of the NHS and the highway system can be amended as a request of the state department of transportation through the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA). TDOT proposes to add SR-475 to the NHS. It is part of a package of NHS amendments that TDOT is preparing to send to FHWA. Angie Midgett of TDOT stated that as part of the NHS, the project becomes eligible for a greater percentage of federal funds.

Bob Shaw asked where the urgency is in this proposal because the alignment has not been set and the final EIS has not been completed. The information in the packet provided by TDOT clearly describes the orange route and yet the final EIS is still underway. The Technical Committee has endorsed a beltway but not the orange route specifically. This NHS request predates TDOT's selection of a finalized alternative. He encouraged the Technical Committee to wait to recommend approval to add the Knoxville Regional Parkway to the NHS until after the EIS is completed in case there is a change in the plan.

John Lamb stated that this makes NHS funding available if it is designated NHS and feels it is appropriate at this time. Angie Midgett stated that if a different alignment is chosen, it could be amended because it is called a corridor. A specific alignment is not designated at this time. This just opens up another form of funding. TDOT is asking for other routes in Tennessee to be designated at this time, and TDOT would like for the Regional Parkway to be included. Jeff Welch stated it could be worded without defining the specific route and make it more generic as a corridor connecting I-75 to I-40 with a range of 25-40 miles. Angie stated that the letter is just a draft letter, and the wording could be changed.

John Fairstein of 11205 Sam Lee Road stated that he wants the resolution to be more generic. He asked on May 29 if it could be designated a scenic highway. He stated this could be a separate resolution or could be included in the NHS resolution. It should be reaffirmed that we want this to be designated a scenic highway. He stated it should say Knoxville Parkway and not Knoxville Beltway. John stated he does not have a problem with Knoxville Beltway being changed to Knoxville Parkway, but the scenic designation should probably be a separate action. Jeff stated that when Commissioner Nicely attended the Executive Board meeting he stated that TDOT was going to pursue the scenic highway designation. Angie stated that another resolution should be prepared with the language stating that the TPO supports the scenic designation not that it will be designated.

Jeff stated that the resolution (Attachment 5a) is generic enough to move forward. Scott Poland asked if someone wanted to add another resolution motion to make SR-475 a scenic highway. The Technical Committee suggested a resolution be drafted expressing the TPO's support to seek scenic designation for the Knoxville Regional Parkway. This resolution will go before the Executive Board with approval for recommendation.

A motion was made by John Lamb and seconded by Chris Hamby to recommend to the Executive Board approval of a resolution recommending that the SR-475 Parkway be added to the NHS and changing the language to make it more generic as an exact route has not been established. The motion carried unanimously.

A motion was made by John Lamb and seconded by Terry Bobrowski to recommend to the Executive Board approval of a resolution to designate SR-475 a scenic highway and/or parkway. The motion carried with TDOT abstaining.

6. Recommend Approval of the 2007 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP)

Presenter: TPO Staff

Item Summary: Every year the TPO must prepare and submit to our state and federal partners a UPWP. The UPWP identifies the transportation and air quality-related planning activities anticipated to be undertaken during fiscal year 2007 (October 1, 2006-September 30, 2007). Changes to the May version include the description of model improvements and other consulting services the TPO may enter into this coming year. Section V outlines these studies and costs. The TPO will use approximately \$93,000 from its fund balance to help pay for the

consultant work. Tables 1 and 2 present the budget tables for this upcoming year. **Attachment #6a – Work Program.**

Background: The UPWP must be prepared in cooperation with our state and federal partners. TDOT, FHWA and FTA have provided comments to the draft work program. TPO staff has made the changes to the work program to address their concerns. Drafts of the work program were reviewed at public meetings in May and July.

Attachment # 6b - Comments.

Jeff Welch provided a summary of the work program and the proposed funding expenditures and revenues.

A motion was made by John Lamb and seconded by Angie Midgett to recommend approval of the Unified Planning Work Program to the Executive Board. The motion carried unanimously.

7. Update on the Knoxville Regional Freight Advisory Committee

Presenter: TPO Staff

Item Summary: As part of the Knoxville Regional Freight Movement Plan, the TPO, in coordination with the Lakeway Area Metropolitan TPO, will host the first meeting of the Knoxville Regional Freight Advisory Committee (FAC) on July 25, 2006, at 11:30 a.m. at the National Transportation Research Center (NTRC), 2360 Cherahala Blvd., Knoxville. The FAC will consist of representatives from both the public and private sector who are involved in the planning and movement of freight.

Jeff Welch stated that the TPO is working on a Knoxville Regional Freight Movement Plan to learn the needs of those in the public and private sector who work in the movement of freight. We are working with the Lakeway Area Metropolitan TPO. The meeting is July 25 at the NTRC in Knoxville.

8. Other Business

Executive Board Meeting, July 26 at 9 a.m. in the Small Assembly Room of the City/County Building.

Technical Committee Meeting, August 8 at 9 a.m. in the Small Assembly Room of the City/County Building.

Jeff Welch stated that the Executive Board meeting is July 26, and the August Technical Committee meeting may be cancelled. The entire TPO packet for both the Board and Technical Committee can now be found on the knoxtrans.org website.

John Fairstein stated that he has drafted a statement for the scenic parkway designation. He asked Angie Midgett of TDOT if Commissioner Nicely has any other alternative bypasses planned in this region. He has not heard from Commissioner Nicely. He also asked if the TPO has any information about the rumored retrofitting of I-81 through Virginia and an intermodal terminus to be built in Knoxville, along with a new proposed road called I-3 that would terminate in Knoxville. Jeff Welch stated that he has not heard of any recent conversation of a major intermodal terminal facility proposed for Knoxville and that the staff is closely monitoring the discussion on I-81 improvements. Jeff stated that the Federal Highway Administration will be preparing a feasibility study concerning I-3 from Savannah to Knoxville. The TPO staff is monitoring the project and will provide comment at the appropriate time.

9. Public Comment

There was no other public comment.

10. Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.