

TPO Technical Committee Minutes
April 8, 2014
9:00 a.m.
Small Assembly Room
City/County Building
Knoxville, Tennessee

The Knoxville Regional Transportation Planning Organization (TPO) Technical Committee met on April 8, 2014, at 9 a.m. in the Small Assembly Room of the City/County Building in Knoxville. Chair Cindy Pionke presided and called the meeting to order. It was determined that there was a quorum. Committee members were asked to introduce themselves.

*Kathryn Baldwin	City of Oak Ridge
*Brian Boone	City of Maryville
*Don Brown	ETDD, <i>for Terry Bobrowski</i>
*Rich DesGroseilliers	LAMTPO
*Mark Donaldson	Metropolitan Planning Commission
*Karen Estes	CAC
*Jim Hagerman	City of Knoxville
*John Lamb	Blount County
*Ted Newsom	Knoxville Commuter Pool
*Jeff Ownby	Sevier County
*Mike Patterson	ETHRA, <i>for Gary Holiway</i>
*Pat Phillips	City of Loudon, Loudon County
*Cindy Pionke	Knox County, <i>for Dwight Van de Vate</i>
*Jack Qualls	Tennessee Department of Transportation (TDOT)
*Melissa Roberson	Knoxville Area Transit (KAT)
*Blake Sartin	Metro Knoxville Airport Authority
*Darryl Smith	Town of Farragut
*Andrew Sonner	City of Alcoa
**Scott Allen	FHWA
TPO Staff	
Partner Agency Staff	
Members of the Public	
*voting members	
** non-voting member	

1. Approval of March 11, 2014 Minutes

Item Summary: Approval of March 11, 2014 TPO Technical Committee Minutes.

A Motion was made by Pat Philips and seconded by Jack Qualls to approve the March 11, 2014 Minutes. The Motion carried unanimously.

2. Recommend Approval of Amendments to the 2014-2017 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)

Item Summary: The following Amendments to the TIP were requested by our state and local governments. Staff recommends approval.

Discussion: Bryan Berry noted staff was requesting approval of 7 proposed Amendments, all pertaining to FTA Section 5310 funds. He stated Attachments 2A and 2B are Amendments involving Section 5310 funds that had been awarded by TDOT, who has requested they be added to our 2014-2017 TIP. These both involve the purchase of lowered floor minivans for Evergreen Presbyterian Ministries and Agape Outreach Homes.

Mr. Berry, referencing the Attachment # 2C packet handed out this morning, noted these remaining 5 proposed Amendments reflect funds previously awarded by the TPO back in 2013 to Knox Count CAC Transit, ETHRA and the Cerebral Palsy Center and at the time were added to the 2011-2014 TIP. He noted that for administrative purposes these projects need to be added to our current 2014-2017 TIP. Mr. Berry then noted the first Amendment in the 2C packet was a project placeholder for the Section 5310 funds and takes 1.1 million dollars and distributes it to the remaining 4 projects. These are: The purchase of lowered floor minivans for the Cerebral Palsy Center; Funds for the Demand Response and Mobility Manager Project at ETHRA involving program operations and purchasing; The purchase of vehicles for Knox County CAC Transit and lastly Funding for continuation and expansion of the Knox County CAC – Volunteer Assisted Transportation Program. It was clarified that when these last 4 projects were awarded last year, there was a regional Call-for-Projects within our urban area issued in multiple regional papers, letters were sent to entities on a TDOT mailing list which contained contact information for all of the agencies to whom they have previously awarded funds to for the purchase of vehicles and was posted on the website. It was further clarified that this grant historically awards funds to assist agencies with providing services not already available.

A Motion was made by Ted Newson and seconded by Mark Donaldson to Recommend Approval of Amendments to the 2014-2017 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)

3. Motion to Approve Dissolution of the Bicycle Advisory Committee (BAC)

Item Summary: The purpose of the BAC was to advise the TPO Technical Committee and Executive Board on bicycle issues. Since 2001, our staff expertise on bicycle issues has increased to the point that they are able to fulfill this need. BAC members will continue to be involved with the TPO Bicycle Program, and will be able to use their time and energy working with the newly formed advocacy organization, Bike Walk Knoxville. This is following a move in Chattanooga that disbanded the MPO Bicycle/Pedestrian Committee and formed an advocacy organization, Bike Walk Chattanooga. Staff recommends approval.

Discussion: Kelley Segars noted it has been a struggle to make the BAC self-sustaining and with identifying their role for the last few years. She stated their role was advisory and not advocacy in nature. Ms. Segars noted there is now a forum for individuals to be bicycle advocates with the recent formation of Bike Walk Knoxville. She also noted that the current bicycle program would remain as is and that there will continue to be bicycle ambassadors, offering additional opportunities for individuals who want to remain active in promulgating the bicycle community. She noted that discussions with the current and founding BAC Chairs resulted in the decision to explore following in Chattanooga's footsteps who disbanded their BAC for the same reasons. Ms. Segars also noted staff is considering forming a Complete Street committee to assist with evaluating multimodal projects and funding. It was clarified that there has been representation from Blount County on the BAC, and although they have tried to gain representation from other counties they have been unsuccessful. She further noted that she works with the other counties surrounding Knox County through the bicycle program. Concern was expressed that Bike Walk Knoxville was not regional, however Ms. Segars noted its intent is to be a regional body and that they are just starting out. There was discussion on how or what would be a good mechanism to ensure there is regional involvement. Ms. Segars stated she would actively pursue interest in a Complete Streets committee with the Committee members.

A Motion was made by Pat Phillips and seconded by Mark Donaldson to Approve the Dissolution of the Bicycle Advisory Committee. The Motion carried with John Lamb voting no.

4. Presentation on PM 2.5 Air Quality Monitoring

Item Summary: A brief presentation will be made on issues related to data collection, monitoring and analysis On PM2.5 in the Knoxville region.

Discussion: Amber Talgo explained that PM2.5 is particulate matter 2.5 microns or smaller. She stated Knox County has 4 monitoring sites with 5 monitors, analyzed by a State of Tennessee laboratory. Ms. Talgo described how the filters are analyzed in some detail touching on the strict guidelines surrounding that process.

Ms. Talgo stated back in 2011 she began to notice the lab conditions (temperature and humidity) required by EPA for testing were not within specifications and per EPA guidance, flagged those filters analyzed under those conditions with a “qualifier code” with the assumption their data was still acceptable. She became more alarmed at the amount of flagged filters she was receiving and discussed this with the EPA who instructed her to continue as she had been for the time being. In early 2013 a Technical Systems audit was conducted of all of the state labs and all were found to have the same temperature and humidity issues, and subsequently all data from the flagged filters needed to be thrown out. Knox County could lose approximately 50 % of all of their monitoring for PM2.5. The state, seeking a solution, is working with a contractor to identify how important temperature and humidity actually are in the analysis processes in addition to reviewing the equipment calibration as EPA wants the flagged data to be nullified. TDEC is also working towards a solution to gain acceptance of this data by the EPA. It was noted that if attainment cannot be proven, an area is identified as being in non-attainment. It was also clarified that this is an equipment/facility problem, not a protocol problem. Ms. Talgo was unable to say if our areas were in attainment. Lynn Liddington noted they are out on bid to identify a new lab to contract with for future testing. She noted this could affect 3 years’ worth of data and further noted EPA requires 3 consecutive years of data to identify an area as being in attainment and subsequently we could be in non-attainment for several years. She does not have a timeline for resolution and is meeting with the EPA at the end of May. On a positive note, Ms. Liddington noted our numbers have been coming down the last few years. Consensus noted a concern as non-attainment has a drastic effect on economic development. Jeff Welch clarified that if we are deemed as in non-attainment it would also require us to do more extensive modeling for our transportation projects.

5. Congestion Management Air Quality Program Update

Item Summary: TPO staff presented our area’s proposed CMAQ projects at a statewide meeting March 28th. A summary of that meeting and other CMAQ program updates will be provided by staff.

Discussion: Mike Conger gave an overview on the CMAQ project review committee meeting he recently attended in Nashville. He noted that a total of approximately 35.3 million dollars (roughly the total annual amount of CMAQ dollars allocated to Tennessee under MAP-21) was applied for by 5 MPO’s/TPO’s as well as one project submitted by TDOT, and briefly noted the number and type(s) of projects submitted by each applicant. Each project was presented to a review committee comprised of representatives from TDOT, TDEC and the Department of Health, whose job will be to score the projects against the established selection criteria. The preliminary schedule is for the projects to be scored by April 7th and those results will be presented to the TDOT commissioner on April 15th with project selections being announced thereafter. Mr. Conger noted the Strategic Air Quality Initiative projects were not discussed at the meeting; these were the Park and Ride Lots, New or Expanded Transit Service and Clean Transit Busses and noted he was not aware of any projects submitted from our area under those initiatives other than one from Gatlinburg for a replacement trolley using alternative fuel. Mr. Conger then reviewed the remaining Strategic Air Quality Initiatives: the Cleaner Diesel Technology Rebate Program (we are still awaiting clarification on this program from TDOT on how this program will work), Tennessee Commute Options, Transportation Systems Management and Operations Pilot Project (TSMO) and Clean Road Construction Pilot Project. They will not be doing individual Call-for-Projects for these initiatives. Members need to contact TPO staff with any interest.

Mr. Conger spoke in more detail regarding the Cleaner Diesel Technology Rebate Program and the 8.3 million dollars set aside for the program. He noted that out of the 8.3 million dollars statewide, TDOT has already programmed this money into groupings in the eligible MPO areas allocated based on population. He noted in our TIP they have programmed a grouping of around 2.1 million dollars of federal funds with a local match of \$500,000.00 dollars for a total amount of approximately 2.6 million dollars for this program. Mr. Conger noted large diesel fleets in our region will need to be identified that could benefit from this funding program. He further noted TDOT has said it will pay the 20 percent local match for projects with non-return on investment which do not provide an economic incentive to the fleet owners. Mr. Conger offered that we could consider looking at installing diesel retrofits on our ageing school bus fleet, noting that although newer busses already have emissions limiting filters there are a large number of old ones, roughly 84%, that do not.

He suggested this money could be used to reduce emissions and both improve regional air quality as well as in and around the busses themselves providing health benefits to school children. He briefly described some different types of diesel control devices that could be considered. The complete presentation can be found at the following link: http://www.knoxtrans.org/meetings/agendas/tech/apr14/cmaq_update_pres.pdf

6. Transit Update from East Tennessee Human Resource Agency (ETHRA)

Item Summary: ETHRA staff will provide an overview of transit services provided by them in the Knoxville urban area. Periodic updates on transit service operations in the TPO area will be provided to the Technical Committee.

Discussion: Mike Patterson noted this was their first year as an urban provider in the Knoxville region. He noted it was also their first year as a full reporter to the National Training Database which is the vehicle FTA uses to receive all of the report data annually for transit systems nationwide. He noted in a 6 month period they provided 40, 749 trips in just the Knoxville urban area (he noted these figures/services do not include the City of Oak Ridge or the Lakeway areas as they provide services under different systems there). Currently they are providing services under FTA Section 5310 funds to assist individuals in Blount County in getting to a sheltered workshop as that entity lost their funding to provide transportation. Further, they have received some IT grants and one is a project that will allow them the opportunity to install cameras in all of their vehicles in the urban and rural areas and will involve a 5 camera system that they hope will assist them with obtaining information on the on-goings in the vehicles. Additionally he noted they have just upgraded the security system at their Loudon maintenance facility which serves all of their vehicles and they hope to better protect their equipment. On behalf of ETHRA, Mr. Patterson thanked the City of Knoxville and KAT for allowing ETHRA to remain a provider in the urban areas, noting without their financial support this would not have been possible. He then briefly reviewed their funding situation and felt that they were well placed to receive sufficient funding to operate in the future. Mr. Patterson noted they had received their direct recipient pre-award authority from the City of Knoxville, which means that they can operate within the urban area. Further, once their application is funded, they can begin to draw federal dollars. He noted their application has been approved by FTA and is now being reviewed by the Department of Labor, who has indicated they have no issue with it, basically the final approval. Karen Estes of CAC noted they were already a recipient and they have also received a letter from the Department of Labor that they were approved for funds.

7. Presentation on MAP-21 Draft Performance Measures Rulemaking

Item Summary: MAP-21 established a performance goal for safety, which is to achieve a significant reduction in traffic fatalities and serious injuries on all public roads. The FHWA is required to establish measures through a rulemaking to assess performance in 12 areas. Of the 12 areas, 4 are addressed in this first rulemaking which are: serious injuries per Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT), fatalities per VMT, number of serious injuries, and number of fatalities. The deadline for comments on this rulemaking ends June 9, 2014.

Discussion: Tarren Barrett gave a brief background on MAP-21, noting the key features of the legislation was to establish a performance and outcome based program, whereas states would invest in the resources of projects that would collectively make progress towards the achievement of the National Goals it has established, which she then reviewed. Of the National Goals the first rulemaking that has come down is on safety. She noted it will be based on the number of fatalities and serious injuries and will look at the number and the rate of both over all public roads within the MPA boundary. She noted it will look at the processes both the states and MPO's need to look at to produce a measurable target for FHWA. Ms. Barrett then reviewed the short and long term parameters and timelines involved in the production of what will be 4 targets we (TPO) will produce either along with the state or as a TPO. She also noted that if significant progress is not demonstrated there will be a penalty; a dedicated amount of HSIP funds that will be limited solely to safety projects and the generation of an annualized implementation report. Jeff Welch, noting TDOT has requested a preliminary assessment of our intent, stated presently he is inclined to accept TDOT's standards and measures and encouraged the Committee members to share their thoughts with staff. It was clarified that the potential costs to the TPO have not yet been determined.

TDOT did note that they have sent comments to all MPOs about their concerns with the rulemaking and performance measures. The complete presentation can be found at the following link:
http://www.knoxtrans.org/meetings/agendas/tech/apr14/fwaha_pm_pres.pdf

8. Transportation Planning Work Program

Presenter: TPO Staff

Item Summary: Staff is requesting that they be advised of any additional planning studies that should be included in FY 2015. The FY 2014-2015 TPO Transportation Planning Work Program (TPWP) can be found at the following link: http://www.knoxtrans.org/plans/upwp/14_15upwp.pdf

Discussion: Jeff Welch noted staff is finalizing the FY 2015 Transportation Planning Work Program, looking at funding and reviewing the list of studies and projects. He noted that as MAP-21 performance measures will continue to come out over the next several months we may need to revisit the Work Program. A Draft Work Program will be sent to TDOT in the next few weeks. Mr. Welch then noted there will be a Public Comment Period. He briefly touched on handouts of TDOT's Proposed FY 2015-2017 Transportation Improvement Program, a TDOT news release, and lastly a listing of Project Highlights for each region. As money is tight at the federal level no new projects were initiated this year and they are proceeding with projects already underway and funded. Mr. Welch reviewed the Project Highlights for Region 1, subject to approval of the state's Work Program and funding. Andy Sonner noted the SR-115/US-1219 project (Relocated Alcoa Highway) contains a typographical error as it is 0.37 miles in length, not 3.7.

9. Other Business

- Executive Board Meeting Wednesday, April 23, at 9 a.m. in the Small Assembly Room of the City County Building.
- Technical Committee Meeting Tuesday, May 13, at 9 a.m. in the Small Assembly Room of the City County Building.
- Kelley Segars noted May is Bike Month and there are many activities scheduled such as rides, classes and other events. She touched on some of the planned activities. She noted they are trying to make the Bike Festival more of a Bike Summit and are planning a panel discussion on how to make our communities more bike/ped friendly. Bike to Work Day is May 16th. Details of all events can be found on the website at <http://www.knoxtrans.org/bikemonth/>
- Melissa Roberson announced that Mayor Rogero has appointed Dawn Distler as the new Director of Transit. She will join us on June 1st.
- Jack Qualls noted TDOT Commissioner John Schroer will be attending the April 23rd Executive Board meeting and will be presenting on the financial status of transportation in Tennessee.

10. Public comment

Members of the public may address the Technical Committee with a five-minute time limitation for each person. There was no comment from the public.

11. Adjournment

A Motion was made by Darryl Smith and seconded by Jeff Ownby to adjourn. The Motion carried unanimously and the meeting was adjourned.