

## Attachment # 1b

**TPO Technical Committee  
February 18, 2009  
3 p.m.  
Main Assembly Room  
City/County Building  
Knoxville, Tennessee**

The Knoxville Regional Transportation Planning Organization (TPO) Technical Committee met on February 18 at 3 p.m. in the Main Assembly Room of the City/County Building in Knoxville. John Lamb, Chair, presided and called the meeting to order.

*Kathryn Baldwin	Anderson County
*Brian Boone	City of Maryville
*Mark Donaldson	Knoxville/Knox County MPC
*Chris Hamby	City of Alcoa
*Steve King	City of Knoxville Engineering
*John Lamb	Blount County
*Angie Midgett	Tennessee Department of Transportation
*Barbara Monty	Knox County Community Action Committee
*Russ Newman	Loudon County
*Ted Newsom	Knoxville Commuter Pool
*Cindy Pionke	Knox County Engineering
*Melissa Roberson	Knoxville Area Transit
*Darryl Smith	Town of Farragut
Jeff Welch	Transportation Planning Organization Director
Amy Brooks	Transportation Planning Organization Staff
Mike Conger	Transportation Planning Organization Staff
John Fairstein	Citizens Against the Beltway Orange Location
Dan Hall	Vaughn & Melton Inc.
Katie Habgood	Transportation Planning Organization Staff
Chris Jenkins	Town of Farragut
Finbarr Saunders	Knox County Commission
Andrew Sonner	City of Alcoa
Jim Ullrich	Citizen
Carl Van Hoozier, Jr.	Vulcan
Ellen Zavisca	Transportation Planning Organization Staff

\*voting members

### **Determination of Quorum**

**Determination of Quorum - John Lamb, Chair**

## **1. Status of Surface Transportation Program (STP) Fund Balance**

**Presenter:** TPO Staff

**a. Item Summary:** The Knoxville TPO is carrying a fund balance of \$27,409,141. This represents almost four years of STP allocation. In the attached letter and a conference call with TDOT on Feb. 13, 2009, TDOT is asking for a plan of action on how we will spend down this balance. There is no immediate threat of losing any of these federal funds.

### **b. Background: Attachment #1- STP Balance Letter from TDOT**

Jeff discussed Attachment #1 which was a letter received from the Tennessee Department of Transportation (TDOT) regarding our STP fund balance. Currently, the TPO has a fund balance of \$27,409,141. This fund balance is an accumulation from FY 2006 through FY 2009. The main reason for this large of a fund balance is that it takes so long for projects to go from programmed to obligation, i.e., letting the contract. TDOT has requested a plan of action to spend down this fund balance. A concerted effort must be made to move projects forward into the implementation phase. Angie Midgett, TDOT, indicated that the Knoxville TPO has done a fairly good job of spending down its STP balance. They are again requesting a plan of action to keep projects moving through the implement period. Kathryn Baldwin asked whether any projects on the proposed stimulation list could use further STP funds. Jeff indicated that some of the projects on the stimulation list would be eligible for STP funds, which could then spend down the balance.

TPO's staff will work with the Technical Committee over the next two months to develop a plan of action. This will be presented at the April 14 Technical Committee meeting and forwarded on to the April 22 Executive Board meeting.

## **2. Economic Stimulus Update**

**Presenter:** TPO Staff

**a. Item Summary:** Staff will discuss the latest information on the economic stimulus package passed by the U. S. Congress. The President signed the bill on February 17, 2009. A summary of the bill and other information will be discussed. Also to be discussed will be how the TPO will allocate STP stimulus funds that we will receive (approximately \$12,700,000).

**Attachment 2a.** – Draft Summary of Stimulus bill

**Attachment 2b.** – Draft Summary of Reporting Requirements for Stimulus bill

**Attachment 2c.** – STP Eligibility Summary

**Attachment 2d.** – Checklist for Stimulus Eligibility

**Attachment 2e.** – Draft list of TPO Economic Stimulus projects

Jeff Welch referred to a number of attachments that are included as part of the agenda item. They first reviewed the draft Summary of the Stimulus Bill and noted that the final guidance will not be available until early/mid March. It appears as if the Knoxville area may receive approximately \$12.7 million of STP funds and approximately \$5 to \$6 million of Federal Transit Administration (FTA) formula funds. These numbers should be used as a guide (a starting-off point) for selection of projects for stimulus funding. Further, the final language from the stimulus bill indicates that the MPOs will have a longer period of time to obligate its suballocated funds, perhaps maybe a year or longer.

Bruce Wuethrich asked whether “obligations” and “spent” mean the same thing. The response was that obligation means that FHWA has agreed to spend the dollars. It does not mean it has been spent already. John Lamb wanted a further explanation of what a contract means. Typically “under contract” means a contract between TDOT/local government and a contractor.

**b. Background:** TDOT has 120 days to obligate 50% of their Economic Stimulus funds. The TPO has one year to obligate our STP Economic Stimulus funds. The TPO will have a webpage set up as a resource for economic stimulus information by the end of the week.

Attachment #2b discusses the reporting requirements for which the Stimulus Bill, which is briefly explained. Angie Midgett indicated that TDOT developed a standard of which all MPOs will work to meet the requirements of the Economic Stimulus Bill.

Attachment #2c was a definition of projects that are eligible for stimulus funding on the highway side, and basically meet the same guidelines as STP as defined under SAFETEA-LU.

Attachment #2d was the compliance certification for the analysis to determine whether a project is ready to go and be able to let for contract as quickly as possible. Mike Conger explained the hot spot analysis process which TDOT goes through for areas of concern of such as the Knoxville area. The issues related to the PM2.5 hot spot analysis, are traffic at the base year and 20-year projection and for intersections, an intersection level of service.

Two more projects on the proposed highway stimulus list, Campbell Station and Lovell Road, have already gone through the hot spot analysis. If there are any issues or questions related to the project, contact Mike Conger. Mike will work with you and will get any assistance from Mark McAdoo, from TDOT, who will request information from local governments and will determine whether hot spot analysis is needed or not. Further, there will be an interagency consultation process, which could take up to two weeks to complete. Any questions in the project check list need to be completed. Jeff responded that since there is no short fuse in obligating the MPO/STP funds, that the checklist is a works in progress. The quicker we can move funding projects forward and spend the money, the more we will be with the intent of the stimulus bill.

Barbara Monty, Knox County CAC, indicated that Projects S15 and S17 were duplicate projects, and one of those could be dropped. Jeff mentioned that Project S2, intersection of Kingston Pike and Lovell Road/Canton Hollow, is currently fully funded with CMAQ dollars. It was recommended that the project continue to move forward as a CMAQ funded project and not use economic stimulus money to supplant the CMAQ dollars. Bruce Wuethrich concurred that he had no issues with dropping S2 from the potential economic stimulus project list. Brian Boone, City of Maryville, indicated that projects S7, S8 and S9 would not meet the criteria for economic stimulus funding and should be dropped from the potential candidate list.

Jeff indicated that sidewalks and curb cuts for ADA accessibility do not have to be on roads that are part of the functional classification system. Jeff mentioned that the TPO could create a bucket as a possibility if we want to fund these types of projects along with a bucket for resurfacing and safety/operations. The TPO would have to determine a selection process to identify projects for the buckets in order to fund projects within jurisdictions.

Steve King suggested that it makes the most sense to take projects that are ready now and fund those with the economic stimulus money. He asked that the local jurisdictions make sure their projects are ready to go.

John Lamb asked if there were any other candidate projects that are ready to go. Chris Hamby stated that Alcoa had another project, Alcoa Highway/Wright Road intersection improvement, of which \$100,000 has been allocated for safety improvements, but it needs an additional \$120,000. They believe that project can be ready to go within 90 days. It is currently not in the TIP and may require hot spot analysis.

There was discussion on the signal retiming for Knoxville, Maryville and Alcoa regarding economic stimulus funding being used to accelerate the implementation of those projects.

Melissa Roberson, KAT, noted that KAT could use economic stimulus funds to replace up to 20 buses if the money came available right now. Barbara Monty indicated that Project S12 (CAC capital to purchase passenger vehicles) is a low priority and could be eliminated from the list. Mark Donaldson, MPC, indicated that investment in the public transit system should be part of the mix and encouraged consideration of that option. Darryl Smith, Town of Farragut, indicated that the major purpose of the economic stimulus funding is to create jobs and that we should be looking at projects that are construction related. He was not sure whether transit vehicles would create more jobs and whether they would be

created locally or not. Darryl also noted that construction projects created a need for jobs with a wider variety of skills. Brian Boone stated that we need to create a balance and not dismiss resurfacing projects.

There was discussion about resurfacing projects versus the number of jobs that would create versus construction related projects. There was some sentiment that resurfacing money would be spent locally versus building transit vehicles in another state.

Further discussion involved packaging economic stimulus potential projects with an ability to use economic stimulus funds and spend down the STP fund balance. A couple of scenarios were discussed by the Technical Committee to recommend to the Executive Board a group of projects ranging in cost between \$5 and \$11 million for economic stimulus funding. John Lamb indicated he would not mind seeing a package one time, including economic stimulus and the STP fund balance.

Bruce Wuethrich asked how the cost overruns may apply. Jeff indicated they would be picked up locally or go to our cost overrun buckets for the STP program that is currently in the TIP. Darryl Smith indicated that the Campbell Station Road, Project #S6, is set for a June letting and would like the TIP amended to include economic stimulus funding of approximately \$2.355 million. The question was asked about when TIP amendments need to be in place, and Jeff indicated that based on the notes he received from TDOT, in order to meet the May and June letting, TIP amendments should be completed by the end of March. That was just tentative information at the time. There is currently no letting date for the Alcoa Highway pedestrian bridge. There are a few more issues to be signed off on regarding property acquisition. Otherwise, that project is ready to go according to Alcoa officials.

Bruce Wuethrich indicated Lovell Road improvements, Project #S1, is ready to be moved forward as that section was in an earlier letting but had to be dropped due to lack of funds. That project would need to be identified in the TIP as a separate stand alone project.

**A motion was made by Darryl Smith and seconded by Bruce Wuethrich to recommend two projects for economic stimulus funding to the Executive Board:  
Project #S1 – Lovell Road (SR131) section between Pellissippi Parkway ramps and Schaeffer Road in the amount of \$3.1 and Campbell Station Road in the Town of Farragut, widen 3 to 5 lanes from Jamestown to Parkside Drive in the amount of \$2,355, 370.  
The motion carried unanimously.**

The TPO staff will develop a list of economic stimulus projects and other STP projects for discussion at the March Technical Committee meeting.

### **3. Recommend Amendments to the 2008-2011 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)**

**Presenter:** TPO Staff

**a. Item Summary:** The proposed amendments to the TIP are geared to the Economic Stimulus program. New TIP buckets (Items 3a.-3c.) for TDOT must be amended into the TIP. Staff has left 3d.-3f on the agenda for discussion and possible inclusion into the TIP. There may be other specific projects to add or amend the existing TIP.

**b. Background:** At this point TPO staff is asking the Technical Committee to consider only adding Economic Stimulus (ES) buckets to the TIP. Specific highway projects will be added once the details of the final economic stimulus legislation are made available. The TIP does have eligible projects for additional funding for public transportation projects.

**Add projects 3a-3c to the 2008-2011 TIP:**

**3a. TDOT ES Bucket- Bridge repair/Replacement - \$500,000**

**3b. TDOT ES Bucket- Interstate 3R Improvements - \$500,000**

**3c. TDOT ES Bucket- State Route 3 R Improvements - \$500,000**

The following are for discussion purposes.

**3d. TPO ES Bucket Enhancements - \$100,000**

**3e. TPO ES Bucket 3R, Safety and Operations - \$100,000**

**3f. TPO ES Bucket Transit Capital - \$100,000**

A motion was made by Bruce Wuethrich and seconded by Kathryn Baldwin to approve the following amendments to the 2008-2011 TIP:

**Amend project #2008-64 – Bridge Repair and Replacement-to include economic stimulus funds**

**Amend project #2008-71 - Interstate 3 R Improvements – to include economic stimulus funds**

**Amend project #2008-99 SR – 3R Improvements to include economic stimulus funds**

**The motion carried unanimously.**

#### **4. Other Business**

John Lamb announced that Monday, February 23 from 5:30-7:30 p.m. there will be a green infrastructure workshop in Blount County with planning commissioners and local elected officials. Anyone in the community is invited.

**Rees Shearer, founder and Chair of RAIL Solution, to speak at Blount County Library, Monday, February 23, from 7-9 p.m.**

**Executive Board Meeting, February 25 at 9 a.m. in the Small Assembly Room of the City/County Building.**

**Technical Committee Meeting, March 10 at 9 a.m. in the Small Assembly Room of the City/County Building.**

#### **5. Public Comment**

There was no public comment.

#### **6. Adjournment**

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.