

**TPO Technical Committee Minutes
April 12, 2011
9 a.m.
Small Assembly Room
City/County Building
Knoxville, Tennessee**

The Knoxville Regional Transportation Planning Organization (TPO) Technical Committee met on April 12 at 9 a.m. in the Small Assembly Room of the City County Building in Knoxville. Chair, Andrew Sonner presided and called the meeting to order.

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| *Brian Boone | City of Maryville |
| *Don Brown | East TN Development District for Terry Bobrowski |
| *Monica Austin Carroll | Anderson County |
| *Rich DesGroseilliers | Lakeway Area TPO |
| *Mark Donaldson | Knoxville/Knox County MPC |
| *Karen Estes | Knox County CAC for Barbara Monty |
| *Leslie Johnson | Lenoir City |
| *Steve King | City of Knoxville |
| *Kathy Knight | Loudon County for Pat Phillips |
| *John Lamb | Blount County |
| *Angie Midgett | Tennessee Department of Transportation |
| *Ted Newsom | Knoxville Commuter Pool |
| *Greg Patterson | Sevier County |
| *Cindy Pionke | Knox County for Dwight Van de Vate |
| *Melissa Roberson | Knoxville Area Transit |
| *Blake Sartin | Metropolitan Knoxville Airport Authority |
| *Darryl Smith | Town of Farragut |
| *Andrew Sonner | City of Alcoa |
| Jeff Welch | Director, Transportation Planning Organization |
| Nathan Benditz | Transportation Planning Organization Staff |
| Bryan Berry | Metropolitan Planning Commission Staff |
| Doug Burton | Transportation Planning Organization Staff |
| Mike Conger | Transportation Planning Organization Staff |
| Terry Gilhula | Metropolitan Planning Commission |
| Brent Johnson | City of Knoxville |
| John Mathews | EMA |
| Mike Patterson | East Tennessee Human Resource Agency |
| Kelley Segars | Transportation Planning Organization Staff |
| Britta Stein | Federal Highway Administration |
| Chris Tiller | East Tennessee Human Resource Agency |
| Jim Ullrich | Citizen |
| Anne Wallace | City of Knoxville |
| Charlotte West | Transportation Planning Organization Staff |
| Ellen Zavisca | Transportation Planning Organization Staff |

***voting members**

Determination of Quorum

Jeff Welch introduced Britta Stein, a representative from the Federal Highway Administration.

1. Approval of February 8, 2011 minutes

■ Action □ Possible Action □ Discussion □ Information

Presenter: Andrew Sonner, Chair

Item Summary: Approval of February 8, 2011 TPO Technical Committee minutes.

Attachment #1.

A motion was made by John Lamb and seconded by Cindy Pionke to approve the February 8 minutes. The motion carried unanimously.

2. Recommend Approval of Amendment to the FY 2011-12 Transportation Unified Planning Work Program

■ Action □ Possible Action □ Discussion □ Information

Presenter: TPO Staff

Item Summary: A consortium of partners representing the Knoxville MSA was successful in receiving a HUD grant to prepare a regional plan for livability. Staff for the Knoxville Regional TPO and Knoxville/Knox County Metropolitan Planning Commission will lead the planning effort. As a result the FY 2011 and 2012 Transportation Planning Work Program needs to be amended to reflect this effort over the next three years. TPO staff time working on this effort will be used as leveraged resources to match HUD planning funds. No additional funds are coming to the TPO. **Attachment #2. Recommended Text Addition to the Fiscal Year 2011 and 2012 Transportation Planning Work Program**

Jeff Welch stated that a consortium of partners representing the Knoxville MSA received a HUD grant for the next 30 months. The City of Knoxville, Knoxville/Knox County Metropolitan Planning Commission and staff for the Knoxville Regional TPO and will lead the planning effort. The grant totaled \$4.3 million. The outcomes of this regional effort will be very important as building blocks to the next Long Range Transportation Plan (Mobility Plan). Key efforts will include an extensive public involvement effort, scenario planning, goals setting, identifying of priorities, and establish working partnerships. While working of the Regional planning effort the TPO staff will also be working to update the next Mobility Plan. It will be a delicate balancing effort for staff to be able to manage both plans and timelines and to be sure both efforts are reflective of the other. Because of their interdependence staff will be able to use hours working on the project as in-kind match to the Regional grant.

Jeff asked that the following language be added to the FY 2011 and FY 2012 Transportation Planning Work Program (Work Program Priorities section (page 4)).

A consortium, including the public and private sector and many participants of the TPO, was successful in receiving a Housing and Urban Development planning grant to fund a comprehensive regional plan for the Knoxville Metropolitan Statistical Area. This effort will allow the region to address critical issues such as air and water quality, economic development, housing, livable communities and mobility access from a broad perspective.

TPO staff will assist in a variety of ways including public participation, scenario planning and technical assistance. TPO staff and other resources will help leverage HUD planning funds.

This effort will transect most of the planning work program activities identified in the FY 2011 and FY 2012 transportation planning work program.

A motion was made by John Lamb and seconded by Darryl Smith to recommend approval of an amendment to the FY 2011-12 Transportation Planning Work Program to the Executive Board. The motion carried unanimously.

Jeff noted that staff is also seeking requests for any special planning studies or Transportation Planning Reports that the TPO and TDOT should consider in the upcoming 2012 Transportation Planning Work Program. Requests should be submitted by Friday, April 22, 2011.

3. Recommend Approval of Amendments to the 2011-2014 Transportation Improvement Program

Action Possible Action Discussion Information

Presenter: TPO Staff

Item Summary: The following Amendments to the TIP were requested by our state or local governments.

- a. Add TIP Project 2011-324 (CMAQ Cost Overruns). This project is to cover cost overruns on project phases. **Attachment #3a.** This amendment is per TDOT's request.
- b. Amend TIP Project 2011-035 (Chapman Highway Improvements). Add a new phase under FY 2011 in the amount of \$1,149,850 for ROW & CONST. This amendment is per TDOT's request. **Attachment #3b.**
- c. Add TIP Project 2011-079 (Maynardville Highway Widening). This project is to widen Maynardville Hwy from Temple Acres Dr. to Union County line. Funding is for FY 2012 in the amount of \$29,000,000 for CONST. This amendment is per TDOT's request. **Attachment #3c.**

Jeff introduced Bryan Berry, TPO staff person who is now working on the TIP. Bryan reviewed the TIP amendments. Angie Midgett stated that the CMAQ bucket for cost overruns would be for local CMAQ projects that were funded prior to TDOT taking over the CMAQ project selection process a couple of years ago. Projects that went through the new TDOT selection process would have to submit cost overruns back through the competitive process for possible funding.

Jim Ullrich, 551 English Village Way, asked about Attachment #3b regarding Chapman Highway improvements, noting that curbs and gutters are mentioned. He asked if there are going to be sidewalks and bike lanes. Jeff responded that he has not seen the design but does not think there will be. They are adding a center turn lane. Jim urged TDOT to consider including sidewalks and bike lanes in order to accommodate these other modes of transportation.

A motion was made by Leslie Johnson and seconded by Darryl Smith to recommend approval of the TIP amendments to the Executive Board. The motion carried unanimously.

4. Discussion of TPO Planning Area Boundaries Expansion

Action Possible Action Discussion Information

Presenter: TPO Staff

Item Summary: The City of Oak Ridge has sought a state law that would require the TPO to add Oak Ridge on the TPO Executive Board. The TPO has its authority delegated by the U.S. Congress and federal regulations that define minimum responsibilities and requirements.

Membership is more specifically defined by the Bylaws for the Executive Board and Technical Committee. **Attachment #4** - Federal Regulations defining metropolitan planning area boundaries.

Jeff Welch stated that the City of Oak Ridge has asked the Tennessee Legislature to pass a bill that would require a representative of the City of Oak Ridge be placed as a member on the TPO Executive Board. State Representative John Regan and Senator Randy McNally are sponsoring this bill. Jeff became aware of it after the bill was introduced. No one representing the City of Oak Ridge has approached the TPO about the possibility of being added to the Executive Board. The bill was not on the Legislative agenda for today (April 12th), but it is not known whether the bill has been removed or simply delayed. In the TPO staff's opinion, using a State law to place a representative of the City of Oak Ridge onto the TPO Executive Board is not an appropriate. This should be done through a comprehensive assessment following the protocols outlined by the federal regulations.

Jeff noted that once he found out about this effort he went and met with Oak Ridge's Mayor and City Manager. Jeff also noted the he and TPO Executive Board chair Mike Hammond will have a follow-up meeting sometime soon to inform the City of Oak Ridge officials more about how they can become members utilizing the federal process. Jeff also discussed this issue with TDOT and FHWA and they agree the federal process should be followed and that the TPO staff should conduct a comprehensive review of the boundaries to ascertain if other areas should also be included.

Jeff explained that federal regulations allow an MPO to expand its boundaries to cover areas that may be urbanized in the next 20 years. The TPO has typically reviewed boundaries every decade when the updated Census information becomes available. In 2003, Oak Ridge was considered but it did not fit the urban criteria as defined in the 2000 Census. For the 2010 Census the urban boundary information is scheduled to be available in October of 2012. The 2010 Census is supposed to include a change to the definition of how to define an urban boundary that could allow Oak Ridge to be included in the Knoxville Urban Area. However, even if Oak Ridge is not included, the TPO can include them if it is felt they would be part of the urbanized area over the next 20 years. To determine the possible 20 year urban boundary involves a comprehensive study looking at a variety of attributes. A comprehensive and systematic process would be consistent with federal regulations. However, the City of Oak Ridge does not want to wait that long to have this issue addressed. However, the TPO itself can not compel Oak Ridge to drop their State bill effort.

Jeff also discussed issues associated with Oak Ridge becoming a member of the TPO. From a funding perspective, there will be no increase in funding for planning or in STP funds since those funds are distributed by a formula based on urban area population as defined by the Census. Oak Ridge is part of our metropolitan statistical area, and we receive air quality funding for this area. So, in a sense, the TPO is already doing comprehensive transportation planning for the Oak Ridge area. The TPO staff recently completed a Greenway Plan for the City of Oak Ridge. However, if the City of Oak Ridge projects would have to be included in the TIP and they would be able to compete for the TPO's local STP funds.

Brian Boone suggested we look at the area in October of 2012, during the normal review schedule, instead of now. Leslie Johnson asked if this would take away from the staff's work. Jeff responded that some projects may have to be delayed to do an assessment. John Lamb asked if the legislature has any control over this. Jeff responded there is no state legislative law for this. John added that they are on the Technical Committee, so we should look at all the criteria and not just the urbanized area. Jeff pointed out that the regulations are included in the agenda packet as Attachment #4. John responded that the regulations state, "An Metropolitan Planning Area (MPA) boundary may encompass more than one urbanized area." Jeff added Oak Ridge is funded separated by TDOT and would bring their allocated STP funds with them. STP funds can be spent outside the urban area if we choose, but we spend it in our urbanized area.

Andrew Sonner stated that a call for Oak Ridge to Jeff would have been appropriate instead of going to the State legislators. Andrew responded there may be other communities that want to be a part of this TPO. We need to treat everyone the same. Jeff noted that the current by-laws state that to be a voting member of the TPO the city has to have a population of 5,000 or greater. John Lamb added that the five counties and the cities within that are included in the Regional Planning Sustainability grant should be evaluated as part of the comprehensive review. As we begin the Regional effort to work better together it makes sense that some of these areas be added to the TPO who is charged with regional transportation planning and coordination. Andrew asked what will happen if we do not approve this motion or ignore the State law if passed. Jeff responded that we might have to talk to an attorney, amend the bylaws or ignore the State Legislature. Jeff noted that the other MPOs across the State were concerned with this issue and the precedent in may set. It is too early to determine all of the impacts will be.

Jeff noted that the TPO staff recommends that a comprehensive review of the planning area boundaries be conducted and that if the TPO Technical Committee agrees, they should send this recommendation on to the TPO Executive Board.

A motion was made by John Lamb and seconded by Mark Donaldson for the TPO staff to study the Knoxville-Sevierville-LaFollette Combined Statistical Area and to reevaluate our boundaries and come back with a recommendation to the Technical Committee on how the TPO might be changed and what the process would be. The motion carried unanimously.

5. TDOT CMAQ Grant Application Process

Action Possible Action Discussion Information

Presenter: TPO and TDOT Staff

Item Summary: TDOT will be soliciting proposals from MPO/TPOs over the next 60 days. Local jurisdictions will have approximately 30 days to submit an application(s) to the TPO staff for our analysis and evaluation. TDOT announced last week there will be upcoming meetings to discuss the application and selection process. Applications will be approved at the June Technical Committee and Executive Board meetings and then will be sent to TDOT. Angie Midgett stated the letters are going out today. The deadline has been changed to some time in July.

6. Use of Surface Transportation Program (STP) Funds for Sign Retroreflectivity Analysis and Implementation

Action Possible Action Discussion Information

Presenter: TPO Staff

Item Summary: TPO participants have inquired as to the availability of STP funds to help address the anticipated traffic control sign retroreflectivity requirement. FHWA has stated that the use of STP funds is allowable only on those roadways that are on the federal functional classification system. STP funds can not be used to address this requirement on local streets. The only other sources of federal funds that may be available are through the Highway Safety Improvement Program. This program is administered by TDOT.

Jeff Welch received a letter from Farragut and Knox County inquiring about funding sources to help offset the costs of replacing the signs. STP funds can only be used to conduct the analysis and to pay for signs on roadways that are on the federal functional classification system. Signs on local streets are not eligible. Andrew Sonner stated that he has heard because of the cost and the impact on municipalities the federal government may delay this requirement. Darryl Smith stated that hiring a consultant would be very expensive. Darryl asked when we would know if it is delayed. Jeff asked Britta Stein of the Federal Highway Administration to find out.

7. Federal Funding and Legislation

Action Possible Action Discussion Information

Presenter: TPO Staff

Item Summary: Staff will provide a brief overview of the discussion that is occurring at the federal level regarding federal transportation funding.

Jeff Welch stated that a federal shutdown was averted last Friday. There will be a follow-up bill that will fund the government through the end of September. There will be a \$37.7 billion cut in funding. Some of the transportation cuts include federal aviation, federal rail and high speed, and cuts to transportation research. There will be drastic cuts in transportation, and projects will be cut. The Transportation Committee will not spend any more than what comes in to the Highway Trust Fund. They are looking at consolidating programs.

8. Other business

- Executive Board Meeting, April 27, at 9 a.m. in the Small Assembly Room of the City County Building
- Technical Committee Meeting, May 10, at 9 a.m. in the Small Assembly Room of the City County Building

Kelley Segars announced that May 1st is the start of the Smart Trips commuter challenge and Bike month. May 20th is bike to work day. Let her know if you want to have an event in your area.

John Lamb discussed the Plain Talk on Quality Growth Conference that was held on March 30-31 with more than 600 people attending. It was a successful conference that concentrated on a tool box of information municipalities and citizens can utilize in promoting smart growth. They hope that TDOT will continue to support development of the tool box. There will be a comment form on the website. Everyone who registered at the conference will be able to get on to help in creating the tool box. He invited the Technical Committee to take part.

Andrew Sonner announced that the City of Alcoa has opened an additional 3 miles of greenway this week.

9. Public comment

There was no other public comment.

10. Adjournment

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.