

TPO Technical Committee Minutes
March 13, 2012
9:00 a.m.
Small Assembly Room
City/County Building
Knoxville, Tennessee

The Knoxville Regional Transportation Planning Organization (TPO) Technical Committee met on March 13, 2012 at 9:00 a.m. in the Small Assembly Room of the City County Building in Knoxville. Chair, Andrew Sonner presided and called the meeting to order.

*Kathryn Baldwin	Anderson County
*Brian Boone	City of Maryville
*Don Brown	East Tennessee Development District (ETDD) <i>for Terry Bobrowski</i>
*Mark Donaldson	Knoxville-Knox County MPC
*John Lamb	Blount County
*Angie Midgett	Tennessee Department of Transportation (TDOT)
*Barbara Monty	Knox County Community Action Committee (CAC)
*Ted Newsom	Knoxville Commuter Pool
*Patrick Phillips	Loudon County
*Cindy Pionke	Knox County <i>for Dwight Van de Vate</i>
*Melissa Roberson	Knoxville Area Transit (KAT)
*Darryl Smith	Town of Farragut
*Andrew Sonner	City of Alcoa
*Perrin Anderson	Sevier County <i>for Greg Patterson</i>
*Rich DesGroseilliers	Lakeway Area Metropolitan TPO
*John Hunter	City of Knoxville, <i>for Jim Hagerman</i>
Anne Wallace	City of Knoxville
Corbin Davis	Federal Highway Administration-TN
Jeff Welch	Director, Transportation Planning Organization (TPO)
Bryan Berry	Metropolitan Planning Commission Staff
Doug Burton	Transportation Planning Organization Staff
Mike Conger	Transportation Planning Organization Staff
Alan Huff	Transportation Planning Organization Staff
Kelley Segars	Transportation Planning Organization Staff
Amy Brooks	Transportation Planning Organization Staff
Ellen Zavisca	Transportation Planning Organization Staff
Sara Martin	Transportation Planning Organization Staff

Determination of Quorum

1. Approval of February 14, 2012, minutes

Item Summary: Approval of February 14, 2012, TPO Technical Committee minutes.
Attachment #1 – February 14, 2012 Minutes

A motion was made by Perrin Anderson (Sevier County) and seconded by Cindy Pionke (Knox County) to approve the February 14, 2012 Minutes. The motion carried unanimously.

2. Socioeconomic Data Projections Regional Mobility Plan Update

Item Summary: The population and employment projections for the 10-county travel modeling region will be presented for endorsement by the Technical Committee for use in developing the 2013 Knoxville Regional Mobility Plan update.

Attachment #2 – Population and Employment Projections for the 2013 Mobility Plan

Discussion: Mike Conger (TPO) referenced an updated Attachment #2 that was distributed at the meeting. He noted the three sources used to obtain population projections for input into the Regional Mobility Plan: (1) the numbers from our consultant, (2) Woods and Poole and (3) the UT Center for Business and Economic Research. He noted he had followed up with several Committee members to review the three sets of numbers for their individual jurisdictions and obtain their feedback. The default assumption was to use the population forecast numbers from our consultants, Bernardin, Lochmueller and Associates, Inc. (BLA).

Mike Conger (TPO) noted that the numbers from BLA will not be used for the forecasted population growth in Blount County. After discussion with John Lamb (Blount County), it was decided that it would be more appropriate to use the population forecast numbers taken from a planning document prepared specifically for Blount County. It was noted that the population forecasts from this document were previously adopted by the Blount County Planning Commission. It was clarified that the only change in the original Attachment #2 at this time was the population forecast numbers for Blount County for the years 2020, 2030 and 2040.

John Lamb (Blount County) stated that he felt BLA's population projections were potentially over predicting future growth in Blount County as they were much higher than even his "very high" population growth estimate. He stated that the Woods and Poole projections were more in line with the numbers he had developed in a "high" growth scenario for Blount County in the previously mentioned planning document and that he was more comfortable with using. He further noted that he does not want any misallocations to occur because of inflated numbers. Both Andrew Sonner (City of Alcoa) and Brian Boone (City of Maryville) stated they were comfortable using the lower numbers.

Cindy Pionke (Knox County) asked if the employment projections for Blount County were also changed. Mike Conger (TPO) responded that he was planning to coordinate with BLA to determine whether to revise the Blount County employment projections to ensure they are in line with the population projections now being used. Mike noted that the employment projections are not as important as are the population projections for input into the Travel Demand Model as the population is what drives the number of trips whereas the employment projections mostly drive the trip distribution.

Jeff Welch (TPO) asked whether there were other regional population forecasts available that we should be aware of that the East Tennessee Development District may have done. Don Brown (East Tennessee Development District) clarified that to the best of his knowledge ETDD does not do any independent projections.

TPO staff is looking for endorsement from the TPO Technical Committee on use of this set of numbers in the development of the 2013 Knoxville Regional Mobility Plan.

Once the numbers are approved, Mike Conger (TPO) stated that the next step will be to determine how to allocate the actual growth (population and employment) to smaller areas within the region in TPO's Travel Demand Model and their respective Traffic Analysis Zones. The allocations will be reviewed with each individual jurisdiction to ensure they will be accurate. This will occur in the next several weeks.

A motion was made by Pat Phillips (Loudon County) and was seconded by Kathryn Baldwin (Anderson County) to approve Socioeconomic Data Projections for the Regional Mobility Plan Update. The motion carried unanimously.

3. [Long Range] Regional Mobility Plan (RMP) Review of Principles and Strategies

Item Summary: As an initial component of the Regional Mobility Plan Update, the TPO must review its core Principles and Strategies for the Plan. This update will be a smaller update from the current Plan and will leave a comprehensive update to follow the completion of Plan East Tennessee and will occur around late 2014. Staff would like to begin consideration of the current Principles and Strategies to continue into the 2013 update of the Mobility Plan.

Attachment #3 – Current Regional Mobility Plan Principles and Strategies

Discussion: Alan Huff (TPO) referenced Attachment #3, the current Principles, Strategies, and SAFETEA-LU Planning Factors from the current (2009) Mobility Plan. In keeping with the schedule reviewed at the last meeting the TPO staff wanted to bring these to the TPO Technical Committee for discussion.

Identified are 4 primary principles for the Mobility Plan, strategies to support those principles, and SAFETEA-LU planning factors that are addressed. TPO staff's intent is to ask the Committee to review these. TPO staff will continue to review them as they receive guidance from the state. They will also be updated to include climate change factors.

Jeff Welch (TPO) noted that the Livability Principles that are part of HUD, EPA and USDOT and will be integrated into this document as well.

Per John Lamb's (Blount County) request, TPO staff will e-mail a link to the independent research conducted by the Cornerstone Foundation to the members of the Committee.

4. [Long Range] Regional Mobility Plan (RMP) Outreach Program

Item Summary: As an initial component of the Regional Mobility Plan Update, the TPO must establish an Outreach Program for the Plan. This Program will incorporate input from traditional outreach tied directly to Plan development as well as drawing from input related to regional transportation collected throughout the Plan East Tennessee Process.

Attachment #4 – RMP Outreach Program Overview

Discussion: Alan Huff (TPO) reviewed the updates to the Long Range Mobility Plan Outreach Program. A major outreach effort is being conducted under the auspices of PlanET. This outreach effort will generate a tremendous amount of data from the public input received, particularly in the area of transportation, which is a major component of the Mobility Plan.

Highlights of the PlanET outreach efforts include input already received from Forum Series I which focuses on discussion surrounding Strengths and Challenges in the region and our communities from Forum events last fall, ongoing Meeting in a Box events, Online Town Hall Discussions that took

place December of 2011 through March 2012 as well as input from the Transportation and Infrastructure Working Group from February 2012.

Input will also include information obtained from an independent, statistically valid telephone survey conducted in February and March of 2012.

TPO staff will then begin Forum Series II in late April of 2012 and continue outreach efforts with this series through August of 2012. This Forum Series will focus on Shared Values and Aspirations for 2050. TPO staff will conduct a third Forum Series currently targeted to begin in September of 2012 and continuing through October of 2012 which will focus on Imagining Alternative Scenarios for the Region's Future. Depending on the timeframe of when we get that input, and its subsequent content, staff may be able to incorporate that data as well. A second statistically valid telephone survey will be conducted in the fall and those results will be utilized if they are available. There will also be input from Stakeholder Focus Groups throughout the process.

Outreach efforts within the Mobility Plan, consistent with previous Plan updates, will include a Public Survey, expansion of our List of Stakeholders, a Public Comment Period on the Final Draft as well as remaining flexible in our ability to add new methods.

Consistent with guidance TPO staff received during our recent Certification Review, we will strive to expand the number of people who receive information from us. There will be two Public Comment Periods, the first one for the Initial Draft Plan and the second one on the Final Draft Plan. The Final Draft Plan will include updates taken from information gathered in the first Comment Period.

Alan Huff (TPO) clarified that the Meeting in a Box outreach efforts take large public forums into a smaller group setting, providing an outline for those smaller groups to provide input.

5. TPO Outreach Plan

Item Summary: The Outreach Plan is a core TPO document, required by Federal Regulations, which require TPO staff to review and update the Plan every four years. The Draft must be released for a 45-day public review period prior to adoption. Draft was released for public review on March 9, 2012 and reflects comments received prior to release.

Attachment #5 – Overview of Changes to Outreach Plan

Discussion: Alan Huff (TPO) noted that TPO staff had made some changes to the Draft Plan based on input received. Most updates were minor and are included in Attachment #5. The only major change was improving the readability of documents. This was based on feedback also received during our Certification Review and is concurrent with a Federal initiative to improve the readability of documents they publish.

Jeff Welch noted that last week TPO started the formal a 45 day public comment period.

6. PlanET Transportation and Infrastructure Working Group

Item Summary: As a follow-up to the first round of regional forums in November, PlanET convened a series of working groups, focusing on Healthy Communities, Housing and Neighborhoods, Environment, Economy and Workforce, and Transportation and Infrastructure. These working groups responded to a draft of an existing conditions report, prepared by the PlanET consultant team. The following attachments pertain to the subject of transportation in these efforts. The next working group is expected to convene in May.

Attachment #6a – Draft Existing Conditions Report – Transportation
Attachment #6b – Notes from Transportation and Infrastructure Working Group

Discussion: Jeff Welch (TPO) stated that in addition to public meetings, PlanET also involves working advisory groups as part of the input process. TPO has created 5 working groups. These groups met approximately 3 weeks ago. Their input is being compiled and should be available on the website soon.

Each group has a Chair. Cindy Pionke (Knox County) is the Chair of the Transportation and Infrastructure working group. Ms. Pionke noted that although there were 21 people present who were not TPO staff, there was not anyone in attendance from the non-transportation infrastructure side. There will be a special outreach effort conducted to get these entities on board. Ms. Pionke further noted that there were multiple entities from which there was no representation including private bus operators, CAC, ETHRA, school systems, large employers and the health department. These are all entities that regularly utilize transportation systems. It was noted that there was no representation from Loudon or Union counties. There was representation from KAT. The group felt TPO staff could pick up the bicycle and greenway element.

The group broke out into 3 focus groups.

The first group concentrated on the element of transit. The priorities they came up with include the need for a Regional Transit Authority, transit needs to be more available with improved utilization and efficiency to make it a more viable option, preservation of future right of ways and then need for a political understanding of “new verses the existing” infrastructure. The second group focused on funding. Their priorities centered on the uncertainty of funding. There is no legislation in place for where transportation is going and that transportation costs are widening. They also noted rising maintenance costs, which ties into the first group that identified the need to plan for the region and maintain what is in place, as well as the funding necessary for both. The third group also noted as priorities transportation costs and related funding. They further noted as a priority our aging population, and for whom we need to be planning.

All 3 groups overall were consistent in their prioritizing the need for regional planning and legislation for both transportation planning and maintenance of the transportation system already in place.

Jeff Welch (TPO) stated these working groups will meet 4-5 more times and that they are open to the public. The next series of meetings will probably be in June 2012

Amy Brooks (TPO) is the PlanET Project Manager. Ms. Brooks noted that in addition to the June meetings the groups will meet in December of 2012, and into 2013. She also discussed the Leadership Dialogue, an upcoming event on 4-19-12 in Oak Ridge. The audience for this event is community leaders from all 5 counties. Discussion will surround major trends and issues affecting the region and opportunities and challenges identified by the working groups. They will be asked what regional and local outcomes are the most important to them. In addition, the regional Forum Series II will be starting at the end of April. There will be 6 forums, beginning in Blount County on April 23 and ending in Union County on April 28. They will also be developing Meeting in a Box tool kits.

TPO is now working with a Community Outreach liaison, Sherith Colverson, whose focus will be to get people who are not traditionally involved in planning to come to the table.

Ms. Brooks (TPO) noted the online community engagement tool for input “Engage.PlanEastTN.org”.

Stakeholder Focus Groups will be asked the same questions.

7. Other Business

- Smart Trips: Kelly Segars (TPO) stated that Smart Trips, through additional funding obtained from TDOT, has hired Sara Martin to assist with the program. Her role will be to focus on employer outreach as well as future initiatives.

Sara Martin (TPO) noted there was an upcoming event in March, the Best Workplaces for Commuters. This is a national program that started in 2002 with 300 companies certified nationally. Six employers in Knoxville have received this certification and will receive their plaques at this event, one of whom is the Metropolitan Planning Commission. Sara will be reaching out to these and other employers in the region.

- TDOT Update: Angie Midgett noted that TDOT will be hosting the upcoming annual MPO conference, taking place April 10 through April 13.
- Jeff Welch (TPO) stated that the TPO had been invited to participate on a Transportation Reform Demonstration Project by the TDOT Commissioner. This initiative relates to a partnership TDOT has entered into with the Smart Growth America Program.

Upcoming Meetings

- Technical Committee Meeting, April 10, at 9 a.m. in the Small Assembly Room of the City County Building
- Executive Board Meeting, Wednesday, April 25, at 9 a.m. in the Small Assembly Room of the City County Building

8. Public comment

Members of the public may address the Technical Committee with a five-minute time limitation for each person.

9. Adjournment