

**TPO Technical Committee Minutes  
November 9, 2010  
Training Room, Knoxville Station  
301 Church Avenue  
Knoxville, Tennessee**

The Knoxville Regional Transportation Planning Organization (TPO) Technical Committee met on November 9th at 9:00 a.m. in the Training Room of Knoxville Station, the administrative headquarters of Knoxville Area Transit. John Lamb, Chair, presided and called the meeting to order.

Technical Committee Members in Attendance (\*Voting Member)

John Lamb, Chair*	Blount County
Kathryn Baldwin*	Anderson County
Rich DesGroseilliers*	Lakeway Area Transportation Planning Organization
Mark Donaldson*	Knoxville/Knox County Metropolitan Planning Commission
Barbara Monty*	Knoxville/Knox County Community Action Committee
Leslie Johnson*	Lenoir City
Steve King*	City of Knoxville
Don Brown*	East Tennessee Development District (for Terry Bobrowski)
Deborah Fleming*	Tennessee Department of Transportation (for Angie Midgett)
Ted Newsom*	Knoxville Commuter Pool
Pat Phillips*	Loudon 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

Others in Attendance

Cindy McGinnis	Knoxville Area Transit
Belinda Woodiel-Brill	Knoxville Area Transit
Warren Secrest	Knoxville/Knox County Community Action Committee
Karen Estes	Knox County CAC Transit
Bob Whetsel	City of Knoxville
Anne Wallace	City of Knoxville
Brent Johnson	City of Knoxville
John Hunter	City of Knoxville
Kim Henry	The Development Corporation of Knox County
Jim Ullrich	Citizen
Amy Brooks	Knoxville Regional Transportation Planning Organization
Mike Conger	Knoxville Regional Transportation Planning Organization
Ellen Zavisca	Knoxville Regional Transportation Planning Organization
Katie Habgood	Knoxville Regional Transportation Planning Organization
Kelly Segars	Knoxville Regional Transportation Planning Organization
Doug Burton	Knoxville Regional Transportation Planning Organization

## **Determination of Quorum**

### **1. Approval of the September 14, 2010 Minutes**

Attachments or handouts: A copy of the September 14, 2010 minutes.

John Lamb asked for approval of the minutes from the September 14, 2010 TPO Technical Committee meeting. A motion was made by Cindy Pionke and seconded by Blake Sartin to approve the minutes. The motion carried unanimously.

### **2. Update on Congestion Management & Air Quality Projects (CMAQ)**

Attachments or handouts: (1) TDOT CMAQ Quarterly Status Report, (2) FY 2011 CMAQ Projects Recommended for Award by TDOT for the Knoxville Regional TPO spreadsheet, and (3) TDOT CMAQ Projects Fact Sheet.

Katie Habgood and Doug Burton reviewed several new initiatives and discussed important issues concerning both current and new CMAQ projects. TDOT is now requiring quarterly updates, which involves maintaining up-to-date information in a new CMAQ project tracking spreadsheet. The tracking spreadsheet was developed by TDOT using Excel software. Joe Carpenter, TDOT's new Chief of Environment and Planning, feels it is important to have up-to-date information including each project's status. The new quarterly updates are not elective but are required by TDOT. Katie reviewed the spreadsheet and noted there are two sides of the handout. One side lists current projects and the other side lists projects TDOT thinks are complete. Katie urged the Technical Committee members, who have CMAQ projects, to review both lists for their accuracy and to report to her any changes that are needed. While it will be up to the Technical Committee members to complete the quarterly updates, Katie said the TPO staff is available for technical assistance or to answer questions.

Katie then reviewed the list of new CMAQ projects that TDOT just awarded. Katie reviewed the project selection process noting it was different than years past. Instead of the selection process being held by the TPO locally, TDOT did a statewide competition. All Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPO) submitted projects and then met at TDOT headquarters in Nashville to present each project to the TDOT selection committee. After analyzing the merits of each project, TDOT selected projects to be funded. Katie felt that in general, that the Knoxville area did very well with the amount of projects selected. Katie noted, that at least in the short-term, TDOT will continue with this CMAQ project selection process and not return the responsibility back to the MPOs.

Leslie Johnson (Lenoir City) asked what the notation "subtract ineligible" in the Comments column of the spreadsheet for the Lenoir City project meant. Deborah Fleming of TDOT was not sure. Doug said the TPO staff would work with TDOT to get a clarification.

Katie also went over a CMAQ Projects Fact Sheet prepared by TDOT which outlines project and grant regulations. Highlights of the sheet include:

1. Project sponsors should work with the MPO coordinator to ensure that the project is in the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP).

2. As soon as the project is in the TIP, the project sponsor should send a letter to Teresa Estes to request a contract. Do not wait for TDOT to contact you. Project sponsors that need to flex funding to FTA should request the flex through Ronnie Porter and copy the letter to Teresa Estes and Alan Jones.
3. One contract can be written for projects receiving multiple year funding. The MPO needs to be sure to show each years funding in the TIP. Even though the contract is for multiple years, you can only spend the first year of funding. You can not proceed into the next year until TDOT gives permission.
4. Scope changes will not be permitted unless with MPO and TDOT approval. TDOT will be very strict and, in most cases, will not allow a scope change, which will result in the funds reverting to the state to be re-awarded on a competitive basis.
5. Cost overruns are the responsibility of the MPO or project sponsor. Katie noted the TPO will need to discuss how we will want to handle this locally.
6. Project sponsors must incur expenses and begin billing TDOT within one year of project obligation.
7. Funds may revert to the state if not obligated within two years of the date of contract.

Doug noted that there was some confusion on the teleconference between the MPOs and TDOT concerning the one contract for projects with multi-year funding. Deborah Fleming of TDOT went back over the issue, noting in most cases the multiyear funding would be placed in one contract. However, she was not sure how TDOT will notify the local sponsor of when they can spend the next years funding. This may be best answered by local programming.

TDOT hopes to send out the request for proposals for the next round of CMAQ funding around January of 2011, with a deadline in March of 2011, and the meeting to discuss proposals occurring in June of 2011. Proposals must include an estimate of emission reductions of all regulated air pollutants that the project will reduce. Project proposals must also identify whether the funds will be flexed to FTA. And, project proposals should identify the amount and source of all matching funds, including projects where a state match is requested.

### **3. Update on Knoxville Area Transit (KAT) Initiatives and Activities**

Cindy McGinnis, General Manager of Knoxville Area Transit (KAT) made a powerpoint presentation on recent initiatives and activities KAT has accomplished.

KAT employs 286 people, provides 3.5 million trips per year, and has an operating budget of \$18 million a year. Most of the revenue comes from the City of Knoxville, TDOT and FTA, the University of Tennessee, and passenger fares. The greatest expense is wages and benefits. KAT operates 75 buses, 11 trolleys, and 35 small buses and vans. KAT has 23 regular routes, six that serve UT, and 3 trolley routes. KAT also offers a door-to-door van service for persons who are disabled. KAT annually provides 250,000 hours of service, covers 3 million miles, and uses 1 million gallons of fuel.

One of KAT's greatest accomplishments recently is the construction of a brand new, state-of-the-art transit center located at 301 Church Avenue in downtown Knoxville. Prior to the new center, KAT passengers had to make transfers along Main Avenue. Congressman Jimmy Duncan obtained federal funding for the construction of the new center. The total project cost was \$33 million. The new center has 20 bus platforms with covered passenger

walkways, climate tempered passenger waiting areas, an indoor waiting area with restrooms, vending, and a café. The facility also houses a bus operator break room, customer services, security, and administrative offices. The Knoxville Station is in the process of being certified Silver LEED by the US Green Building Council. Some of the “green” friendly features include: geothermal HVAC system, low flow plumbing systems, lighting occupancy sensors, extensive natural lighting, vegetative roofs, solar demonstration projects, and a commitment to recycle. KAT still maintains its Magnolia Avenue location, which is where most of the bus operations and dispatching occurs.

Cindy noted that in preparing to move to a new location, where the majority of bus transfers would occur, KAT took a more detailed look at the overall routing and determined additional modifications needed to occur. In partner with the TPO, a KAT Transit Development Plan (TDP) was prepared that made significant routing and operating recommendations. There was an extensive public involvement effort. The opening of Knoxville Station and the implementation of the new routing has gone relatively smooth. There will be some minor corrections in January of 2011. Despite all of the changes ridership remains very strong.

#### **4. Overview of the Knoxville Knox County Community Action Committee (CAC) New Freedom and Volunteer Assisted Transportation Programs**

Attachments or handouts: (1) New Freedom slide show handout, (2) Volunteer Assisted Transportation Fact Sheet, and (3) Volunteer Assisted Transportation brochure.

Warren Secrest, Director of the New Freedom Program with the Knoxville Knox County Community Action Committee (CAC) Office on Aging, gave a powerpoint presentation that highlighted the program. The New Freedom program has four main components: (1) Volunteer Assisted Transportation, (2) Transportation Information and Referral, (3) Increase Opportunities for Social and Recreational outings, and (4) Taxicab Service Enhancement. The program is mainly funded by a FTA New Freedom Section 5317 grant through the TPO. Matching funds are provided by the Tennessee Department of Transportation and CAC. Other partners in the effort include Covenant Health, AAA of East Tennessee, Pilot Travel Centers, Patricia Neal Rehabilitation Center, and the National Center on Senior Transportation.

The Volunteer Assisted Transportation program is for seniors and people with disabilities who require aid and assistance to travel safely. Volunteers drive agency-owned vehicles after comprehensive screening and training. CAC has available to the drivers a fleet of hybrid sedans and two wheelchair-accessible minivans. The main goal of the program is to increase independence for riders. As such, there are no restrictions on trip purpose. The volunteer driver provides door-through-door transportation assistance which is different than most of the other public transportation services for the disabled who provide curb-to-curb service. The service area of the program is anywhere in Knox County with out-of-County trips being provided on a case-by-case basis. Since the program’s first month of service in April of 2009, volunteer drivers have provided 3,036 trips.

For the other components of the program, staff serves as transportation information and referral advisors and assists callers with finding the right transportation options for their needs. So, far 1,200 callers have been helped. The program also provides increased social and recreational opportunities under an agreement with Knox County CAC Transit.

Approximately, 2,500 trips have been provided for group outings to various events and attractions for seniors and people who are disabled. The customer friendly taxicab certification project seeks to partner with AAA of East Tennessee, the Knoxville Police Department, and local taxicab companies to provide options for seniors and people with disabilities who face transportation barriers. Often, the taxicab is the best option. However, some vulnerable citizens are hesitant to use taxicabs due to problems with poor service and questionable driver credentials. Once the taxicab driver completes the program, the Office on Aging promotes the driver as “Certified Customer Friendly”. Training includes background check, drug and alcohol screening, driver improvement lessons, CPR and first aid, and passenger assistance techniques and disability sensitivity training.

## **5. Overview of the Knoxville Regional Plan for Sustainable Development**

Attachment or handouts: (1) Knoxville RPSD Abstract sheet.

Amy Brooks gave a presentation highlighting key aspects of the recently awarded Knoxville Regional Plan for Sustainable Development (RPSD). This planning process will be funded by a \$4.3 million grant awarded by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) to a consortium led by the City of Knoxville, the Knoxville Regional Transportation Planning Organization (TPO) and the Knoxville-Knox County Metropolitan Planning (MPC).

MPC and TPO staff prepared the application on behalf of a consortium of organizations across the Knoxville Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA). The City of Knoxville submitted the application to HUD on behalf of the Consortium. The grant was awarded to assist the region in developing a comprehensive plan for a more sustainable East Tennessee. The regional plan will address a wide range of issues including air and water quality, economic and workforce development, healthy living, equitable housing, land use and transportation. The process to develop a RPSD will focus on capacity building and community engagement in the five counties that make of the Knoxville Metropolitan Statistical Area: Anderson, Blount, Loudon, Knox, and Union.

The grant will be administered by the City of Knoxville Community Development Department and the TPO and MPC will be the lead planning agencies and will oversee the planning process. More information including the grant application can be found on the TPO website at [www.knoxtrans.org](http://www.knoxtrans.org).

The TPO staff will seek to utilize the work-efforts, the public participation, and the results as key inputs into shaping the next Mobility Plan update.

## **6. Other business**

Attachments or handouts: (1) Mobility Plan 2013 draft schedule, (2) Knoxville Regional High Priority Projects (draft) Preliminary Request for Federal/State Funding FY 2011-2014. Katie Habgood handed out a Mobility Plan 2013 draft schedule. Katie noted that it was time again to start working towards an update of the Mobility Plan. This time, the Mobility Plan work efforts will be synchronized with the Regional Plan for Sustainable Development (RPSD). The data collection, back ground report, public involvement, and scenario planning activities that will be accomplished in the RPSD can also be used for inputs into the Mobility Plan. The RPSD covers the five-county Knoxville MSA. This does not include Sevier

County which is also in the TPO Non-Attainment Planning area. Thus, one challenge will be to incorporate data concerning Sevier County into the RPSD information that will be used in the Mobility Plan.

Doug Burton handed out a copy of the Knoxville Regional High Priority Projects FY 2011-2014. Doug reminded the Technical Committee that each year the TPO Executive Board presents to TDOT and the State Legislators a list of High Priority Projects for the urban area. In the past, this list has been composed of 13-15 roadway projects and several transit projects (including a narrative on the local transit needs). At the annual Tennessee MPO Conference, TDOT had mentioned that the development of a high priority list and meeting with TDOT staff and the State Legislators was an effective way to communicate the region's needs. This action represents the region speaking together with one voice. TDOT noted most MPOs statewide were following Knoxville's lead in developing a High Priority Project lists. However, TDOT felt it was more effective to have a High Priority Project list that contained fewer projects (no more than five roadway projects). Doug said the TPO staff wanted to work with the Technical Committee to see if it was possible to reduce the number of projects on the Knoxville list. Several of the projects from last year are now complete or at least funded and underway. Therefore, those projects can be removed from the lists. Doug asked the Technical Committee to give this serious thought and to try to come up with a fair and equitable way to reduce the number of projects. This would be discussed in more detailed at subsequent meetings. John Lamb and Daryl Smith acknowledge it would be a challenge to reduce the project list.

Doug reminded the Technical Committee that the next meeting was scheduled for December 14th at 9:00 a.m. in the Small Assembly Room of the City County. Doug also noted that the staff might have a special called Executive Board Meeting in December to adopt the new CMAQ projects into the Transportation Improvement Program. Staff was thinking of having the Executive Board meeting directly after the Technical Committee meeting on December 14<sup>th</sup>.

**7. Public comment**

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

**8. Adjournment**

Meeting was adjourned.

**9. Tour of Knoxville Station**

Cindy McGinnis, General Manager of Knoxville Area Transit provided the Technical Committee members a tour of the new Knoxville Station.