

**Meeting Minutes**  
**The Greater Dalton Metropolitan Planning Organization Joint Coordinating Committee**  
**August 23, 2012 – 10:00A.M.**

Whitfield County Administrative Building #1 - 301 West Crawford Street, Dalton, Georgia  
30720

**PC Members Present:**

*Mike Babb, Chairman, Whitfield County BOC*  
*J. Tyson Ross, Administrator, City of Dalton*  
*Radney Simpson, Asst. Pl Dir GDOT*  
*Ken Gowin, Mayor, City of Tunnel Hill*  
*Mark Gibson, Administrator, Whitfield County*  
*Jason Hall, Manager, City of Varnell*

**TCC Members Present:**

*Kent Benson, Engineer, Whitfield County*

*Benny Dunn, Director, Dalton Public Works*  
*Dave Cox, GDOT Planner*  
*Heath Harrison, W&WW Manager, Dalton Utilities*

*Greg Hood, District 6 Plan/Program Eng., GDOT*  
*Frank Hubbs, Dalton Airport Authority*

**GDMPO Advisors Present:**

*Jean Price-Garland*

**GDMPO Staff Present:**

*Susan Paredes, GDMPO Coordinator*  
*Kent Benson, GDMPO Director*

**Guests Present -** *Mike Haithcock, GDOT, American Consulting, Anna Peterfreund and Tony Catalina, American Consulting*

**PC Members Absent:**

*Steve Walker, GDOT*  
*Dick Lowry City Council*

**TCC Members Absent:**

*TBD - . Plnr, FHWA*  
*Brendan Stinson, Shaw Trans. Mgr*  
*Mike Ewton, Whitfield County BOE*

*Karen Quarles, Transit PL GDOT*

*Brandon Harrison, Dalton City BOE*  
**GDMPO Advisors Absent:**  
*Audrey Johnson, Transit Planner, GDOT*  
*Robert Buckley, FTA*  
*Barnett Chitwood, NWGRC, Comm Planner*

Meeting was called to order at 10:03 AM by Ty Ross, Policy Chairman. Ty noted Dalton Councilman Dick Lowry would be delayed.

Introductions of guests and new-comers to the Joint MPO meeting were greeted. Radney Simpson introduced Mike Haithcock, GDOT, District 6 Engineer since 1983 who will be joining Greg Hood. Haithcock gave a professional background with GDOT leading to his current position and is now taking on planning. Haithcock requested any issues that needed attention such as maintenance, utilities, construction or cutting of trees he could assist with or recommend the proper contact. Benny Dunn, Dalton PW Director and Haithcock toured current city projects to become familiar with them.

Ross introduced the consultant team - American Consulting, who were present to review findings from the Transit Feasibility Study recently completed for the MPO.

Ross discussed updates on the Runway Protection Zone clearing project at the Dalton Municipal Airport. This regionally significant safety project involves clearing trees obstructing pilots vision and interrupting instrument panel accuracy in landing. Frank Hubbs was commended for a successful community meeting. Seven (7) of thirteen (13) signatures were voluntarily received and there has been good community support. A second open house meeting is going to follow in one (1) week.

Status Report by Greg Hood, GDOT on current TIP Projects was updated.

**I75 @ Rocky Face – Had a three month delay, however, this project is still on schedule for a management let date of February 2013. The ROW is currently wrapping up now, and 18 of 21 parcels have been acquired. When pressed on the let date being a firm date, Mike Haithcock stated it was a solid date - could slide one (1) month, but not more than two (2).**

**Atlanta Campaign -March to the Sea- held recent local meeting and Hood noted there was quite a bit of progress going on behind the scenes in Whitfield with BOC Chairman, Mike Babb. Hood will forward this new information to the Atlanta DOT office Project Managers on the project so they are apprised.**

**Railroad Warning and Signalization – at Waring Road and various other locations have a management let date of 2/2014. This is a Lump Sum Funded project.**

**Little Swamp Creek @ 41 – (located just past Valley Point Elementary School) the culvert / bridge repair has a management let date of 2014.**

**Transportation Enhancement – for bike and pedestrian – lump sum funded project has a management let date of 10/2013. Hood inquired about the status of this project; Kent Benson, County Engineer added it was in progress. Kent reviewed this with Dewayne Comer (GDOT) after the last status update meeting.**

**Roundabout project at SR201 – still scheduled for a management let date of 1/2015**

**Roundabout project at SR52 is lump sum funded. The IMR was initially required by GDOT, and then not required. A Phase II Environmental Assessment was added to the project which increases the cost locally upwards of almost 30K dollars. Chairman Babb discussed the frustration with this particular project with the changing criteria and requirements DOT has requested, noting the project is getting more expensive. Committee members inquired what the concept model would entail, and GDOT has stated it must meet the VISSOM modeling (a highway capacity 3-d program). Funding was not authorized for that so in addition to the cost of ROW acquisition and design cost, the County would now be asked to cover the non-funded and very late noticed Phase II Site Assessment. GDOT will not move forward with funding on the project until a VISSOM Model has been completed.**

**Mike Haithcock, GDOT said this particular project is a “non-conventiona”l project, and roundabouts are often controversial within communities. Haithcock advised GDOT Project Managers were in the process of being re-assigned to different areas and it remains to be seen if Kimberly Nesbitt will continue to oversee this project. Benny Dunn noted it was FHA that provided the voice of encouragement for our community to address the capacity and congestion issue at this location with a roundabout, and now, it seems this has changed. Haithcock said at the October 18<sup>th</sup> meeting, he would know more about the Project Manager reassignment. At that time, he wanted to tour the various projects with County officials and the MPO to ascertain these types of issues.**

**Roundabout @ I75 -201 NB and SB ramp interchange – No management Let date has been assigned.**

**Safe Routes to Schools (SRTS) has a management let date of 4/2013.**

**Dalton City streets, a transportation enhancement fund – 725, 874, 726 and Railroads at three (3) locations are lump sum funded and have no management let date currently assigned. A concept report was submitted to GDOT and there are a few comments to address.**

**Carbondale Business Park Access Road – has a \$1M EDA grant – however, the Indiana endangered bat species is currently delaying the project. Environmental re-design was completed to move the driveway 30-40 feet. The cost for that was \$114K. However, after designing that, the County was told they would have to pay to get a concept plan. So the local cost has increased \$20K. Chairman Babb expressed frustration we were not able to use the design. The costs continue to increase.**

**Haithcock , GDOT noted to a smaller region, these costs could be prohibitive and agreed to meet with Kimberly Nesbitt, GDOT PM to determine if there are alternatives. Haithcock mentioned Albert Shelby was a new PM who took his place at GDOT, and it would be a good idea for them to go into the field and do a case by case review of the projects and some the issues. He will encourage the PM's to work closely with the MPO to get these types of problems solved.**

**Resurfacing and Maintenance – lump sum funded and in progress.**

Ty Ross addressed Actions Items – and asked in reviewing these for Susan Paredes, MPO Coordinator, to identify differences between action and discussion items and that each Amendment presented be addressed as to the involvement of our Technical Coordinating Committee (TCC) and if any comments received. Ross inquired if any comments were made from the TCC. Kent Benson, WC Engineer noted most changes did not involve the TCC, and were monetary or coding changes requested by GDOT.

Ms. Paredes noted the first amendment to the FY2013 Transportation Improvement Plan was to reflect the increased scope on the Rocky Face Interchange Project that increased construction costs due to a public meeting which added Noise Barriers to the interchange project. Project was posted across the county at the eight designated locations as well as on the MPO Website and posted in the legal notices in the three newspapers. Paredes noted no comments were received but did note the TCC and MPO held a teleconference with Peter Emmanuel, GDOT, to review each increase line item in the scope of work.

Ty Ross addressed rules governing the MPO regarding the per project increased cost \$10M 'trigger' amount and noting this project fell under this guideline and required a public meeting and information showing as well as an opportunity for the public to comment. Paredes acknowledged and advised GDOT confirmed the public meeting was held, which resulted in the addition of noise barriers to the project at a cost of \$315K. All requirements had been met. Radney Simpson, GDOT Planning, agreed this threshold was passed and Ross was correct in ensuring proper procedures were in place.

Paredes moved to Item B, which removed the Regional Traffic Control Center from the current TIP. Paredes stated this project was canceled at the DOT Board level, and confirmed in DOT Board Meeting Minutes. This project was removed from the TIP and all funding allocated for it as well removed.

Item C – is an administrative modification added to this Amendment process to expedite. Funding codes were incorrectly provided to the MPO in March when developing the TIP. Funding codes have been updated to reflect proper code is attached to Carbondale Interchange construction.

Last Amendment was the correction of the updated costs to each of the affected Project Sheets included in the TIP.

Radney Simpson, GDOT stressed this was a very important process for the MPO to complete and if not properly reflected in our Transportation Plan, our region could stand to lose millions of dollars. When a project is authorized the FHA will visit the website to corroborate funding and description. Simpson commended the MPO for doing a good job proactively to ensure federal funds flow to the area. Because MAP 21, active maintenance of the TIP has been increased. Dave Cox, GDOT noted the redesign of the web page and rapid response to update

with these critical documents was very valuable. Ty Ross agreed the funding was getting competitive and it was important to have the right people in place.

Ross moved for a motion to approve the Amendment as presented; motion was made and carried.

Ross asked for a motion to approve the meeting minutes from the June 8, 2012 MPO Joint Committee meeting; motion was made and carried.

Ross asked for a motion to approve the meeting minutes from the June 19, 2012 MPO Technical Coordinating Committee meeting; motion was made and carried.

Ross asked for a motion to approve the 8/23/2012 Draft agenda with a revision to the numbering of the items, MPO Joint Committee meeting; motion was made and carried.

Ross asked for a motion to approve the Amendments to the LRTP which were congruent with those in the TIP Amendment; motion was made and carried.

Discussion Item E included amendments to the FY2012 TIP which we are still funded until the Governor approves the FY2013 TIPs. Due to MAP 21, it was recommended the MPO take proactive measures which will ensure Rocky Face and other projects are not caught in any funding delays if the Governor delays signing the FY2013 TIP's. In a "house-keeping" measure, this current document (FY2012) was updated to reflect the additional costs to the projects so they match if so inspected. This Amendment is currently in the public posting and comment phase and the Committees will be presented with this as an action item in the October MPO meeting.

American Consulting lead a PPT presentation reporting findings of the recently completed Transit Feasibility Study- Phase II. The presentation, findings and recommendations may be found at <http://www.whitfieldcountyga.com/eng/mpo/GDMPOTransitFeasibilityStudyPart-IIPresentation.pdf>.

Public comment period – N/A - no visitors present.

With no other business, the meeting was concluded.

**Adjourn:** At which time no other business was noted for discussion and the TCC meeting adjourned.

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J. Tyson Ross, Chairman, GDMPO - Policy Committee

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Mike Babb, Vice-Chair, GDMPO - Policy Committee

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Kent Benson, Chair, GDMPO - Technical Coordinating Committee