

The Greater Dalton Metropolitan Planning Organization (GDMPO) held a Joint Policy Committee (PC) & Technical Coordinating Committee (TCC) on:

February 24, 2011 – 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
Ken Gowin, Mayor, City of Tunnel Hill
Mark Gibson, Administrator, Whitfield County
Dan Peeples, Mayor, City of Varnell
Dick Lowry, Councilman, City of Dalton
Kyle Mote, Urban Planner, GDOT/Matthew Fowler*

PC Members Absent:

Matthew Fowler, Asst. Planning Admin., GDOT

TCC Members Present:

*Kent Benson, Engineer, Whitfield County
Chad Thompson, Trans. Manager, Shaw Industries
Benny Dunn, Director, Dalton Public Works
Randy Cook, Director, Whitfield County BOE
Heath Harrison, W&WW Manager, Dalton Utilities
Karen Quarles, Transit Planner, GDOT
Greg Hood, District 6 Plan/Program Eng., GDOT
Roger Rollins, Dalton Airport Authority
Palmer Griffin, Director of Operations, Dalton BOE*

TCC Members Absent:

GDMPO Advisors Present:

*Ron Hale, Finance Director, Whitfield County
Kevin Herrit, Planner, Whitfield County
Barnett Chitwood, NWGRC, Community Planner*

GDMPO Advisors Absent:

*Kent Sager, District 6 Engineer, GDOT
Michelle Nystrom, Regional Coordinator, GDHR
David Schilling, Community Planner, FTA
Ronnie Nix, Moreland Altobelli Associate,*

Guests Present:

*Carlos Gonzalez, Transportation Planner, FHWA
Phil Peevy, Urban Planner, GDOT Office of Planning
Audrey Johnson, Transit Planner, GDOT*

GDMPO Staff Present:

Susan Paredes, GDMPO Coordinator

General: The GDMPO Meeting was called to order and began at 10:05 AM with Chairman Ty Ross and introductions of all attending members were made.

Item 1 - Approval of the June 2010 MPO Joint TCC and PC Committee Meeting Minutes. There was a change made to push the March 17th meeting back due to UPWP and TIP deadlines, and it was determined a Late April or early May meeting would be better to allow time for public review and information flow for the UPWP and TIP. Motion to Approve minutes was made by Ty Ross and seconded by Ken Gowin. The Motion carried.

Staff Report – GDMPO Director reviewed a staff and listed the past quarter achievements of the GDMPO - PL and 5303 Quarterly Reports submitted; the FY 12-5303 5307 Transit Grant

Applications submitted to GDOT. Staff was in process of development of unconstrained project list for HB277 funding.

GDOT Status Report - Greg Hood, GDOT District 6,

Greg Hood-GDOT stated

- **I-75 @ Rocky Face Interchange** - Right of Way funding was authorized for 2011 and Construction approved for 2013.
- **SR 3 @71** Lump sum Right of Way funding was completed March 2011 and project will be let 3/15/2012.
- **Roundabout at Interstate 75 and SR 52 (Walnut Ave)** An open house meeting was held in January 2011 and the County Engineer reports there was a good turn-out of citizens. A beneficial comment was brought up during the open house meeting about a minor design change which was incorporated to address the concern. GDOT reports we are still on target for the 4/2012 Let date. Ty Ross asked if there had been any comments made about the Roundabout requested a summary regarding how we arrived on the roundabout design. The County Engineer gave a summary listing the traffic congestion and growing College and T-SPLOST funded a study to evaluate the best solution. A Site Map was produced for committee review addressing the questions on the Roundabout. The County Engineer discussed some of the steps of the Roundabout project where signalization was rejected due to ROW acquisition problems and the intersection is unique in that it is on a 9% grade slope. There was a functionality question however there were no direct questions in the forum – mostly issues regarding how the trucks and trailers would handle the curb. The County Engineer then discussed the included design of an apron in the design that would protect the curbs in the event Tractor-Trailers cut the radii too closely. GDOT Representative pointed out one of the unique points of this project is that it would be the first multi-lane roundabout to be built in the state and referenced other successful roundabouts currently in use in the Metro Atlanta area.
- **Carbondale Interchange** - A Public Information meeting was scheduled to commence at Valley Point Middle School in early March. Projected time to acquire ROW was 2012 with construction to begin in 2016. The ROW for Carbondale – Kevin Herrit requested designs for Carbondale and it was noted these would be available at the PIOH meeting on 3/29. The plans are available but are not on the website yet but Greg Hood stated it would be added to the website no later than the day of the meeting, at which time the GDOT update was concluded.

Item 4 - New Business

Meeting Schedule for GDMPO FY 2011 Proposed Technical Coordinating Committee and Policy Committee meeting schedules were reviewed and approved by attending members without discussion. These dates will be posted and available on the GDMPO Website.

Upcoming Elections for TCC And PC Officers - will be held in the June Meetings. Whitfield Chairman Babb noted the GDMPO Executive Director has remained vacant since Bob McLeod's retirement in December and motioned to elect an interim replacement during this meeting. Whitfield BOC Chairman Babb motioned to appoint County Administrator, Mark Gibson for the interim position and a second followed. The Motion held.

Corridor Study and Transit Feasibility Study -Two MPO Studies have been outstanding since Zach Montgomery left. The first was the Multimodal Feasibility Study and the other the North Georgia Whitfield County Corridor Study. This study will look for best possible modes and alternatives to meet our public transportation needs during these tough times. The Transit Feasibility study would look at best, most cost-feasible routes to start a fixed-route system, as well as any other possible modes and alternatives to improve public transportation for the College, the elderly and low-income residents who are in serious need of public transportation throughout Dalton and Whitfield County. In an effort to retain funding for these studies, it was unanimously agreed that these contracts were to be let as soon as possible in order to meet the recommendations of GDOT to receive the funding reimbursement as applied for. GDOT Transit Program Administrator indicated we needed to move forward with this as soon as possible and send her a revised schedule. The MPO agreed to get both under contract within two weeks. Mayor Gowin of Tunnel Hill motioned to approve moving forward with this feasibility study as proposed and Chair Babb seconded. The motion held.

Ron Hale, Transit Director, gave a summary of future plans beyond the transit feasibility study and explained WC currently operates a limited on-demand transit service, however, projections of growth at Dalton State College, would leave Whitfield County underserved. WC will explore creating a fixed – transit route and bus to alleviate the ridership turn-away and serve the local population with other multimodal options. Whitfield already has an administrative structure in place; therefore, adding the fixed route would a higher ROI. Ridership has more than doubled in two years and the current Transit system tapping into the potential that exists.

The Meeting discussion then moved to the next item on the list which was the HB277 unconstrained project list. A question was asked as to where the projects fell in terms of resurfacing or other type of work. The County Engineer noted approximately 1/3 to 1/2 of the current projects were included in the WC T-SPLOST program with the PE phase complete. The MPO would produce the final list to be submitted to the Commission for review. June 1st was the expected date to receive the first list from GDOT.

GDMPO asked about a few of the projects that had a reduction of scope - how to address that difference in the list – to be sure GDOT’s Project Identification number did not misrepresent the reduced scope requesting and GDOT office of Planning advised this could be handled in the description area.

Additional discussion has held by Mayor Gowin of Tunnel Hill, Mike Babb, Chairman – Whitfield County and Mayor Peoples regarding the TSPOLST prioritization by Referendum.

Another discussion regarding the HB277 Projects meeting the Criteria of the Roundtable Meeting – Ty Ross mentioned other safety projects were still needed such as Sound barriers on I75, Safe Routes to Schools – and thought they have separate funding he asked if these projects were also added to the list.

In other business, June 30th PL Funds would be posted – Karen Quarels from GDOT Multimodal Division mentioned the due date for the UPWP was March 15th and the MPO should send a draft copy to her. There will then follow a public comment period of not less than 30 days. After that time and any changes are made to the document, the MPO Policy Committee will vote to adopt in the June meeting. An additional discussion was held regarding the date the Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP) should be drafted, and it was determined the information to include in the TIP would not be available to the MPO

from GDOT until late April upon receipt of the funding decisions by GDOT. the GDMPO staff was reminded to post this document for public review and comment during May and vote to approve this in the June MPO Meeting.

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

J. Tyson Ross, Chairman, GDMPO - Policy Committee

Mike Babb, Vice-Chair, GDMPO - Policy Committee

Kent Benson, Chair, GDMPO - Technical Coordinating Committee