

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

May 3, 2011 – 10:00A.M.

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

PC Members Present:

*J. Tyson Ross, Administrator, City of Dalton
Radney Simpson, Asst. Planning Admin., GDOT
Dan Peoples, Mayor, City of Varnell
Dick Lowry, Councilman, City of Dalton
Radney Simpson, Asst. Planning Admin., GDOT
Steven Walker, Urban Planner, GDOT
Kyle Mote, Urban Planner, GDOT*

TCC Members Present:

*Kent Benson, Engineer, Whitfield County
Benny Dunn, Director, Dalton Public Works
Allen Peters, W&WW Manager, Dalton Utilities
(For Heath Harrison)*

GDMPO Advisors Present:

*Ron Hale, Finance Director, Whitfield County
Karen Quarles, Transit Planner, GDOT
Barnett Chitwood, NWGRC, Community Planner*

Guests Present:

PC Members Absent:

*Mike Babb, Chairman, Whitfield Co BOC
Ken Gowin, Mayor, City of Tunnel Hill
Mark Gibson, Administrator, Whitfield*

TCC Members Absent:

*Chad Thompson, Trans. Manager, Shaw Industries
Randy Cook, Director, Whitfield County BOE
Greg Hood, District 6 Plan/Program Eng., GDOT
Roger Rollins, Dalton Airport Authority
Palmer Griffin, Director of Operations, Dalton BOE*

GDMPO Advisors Absent:

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

GDMPO Staff Present:

Susan Paredes, GDMPO Coordinator

General: The GDMPO Meeting was called to order by Chairman Ross and began at 10:00 with introductions of all attending members.

Kyle Mote of GDOT provided a summary update to the committees on recent changes within GDOT. He was reassigned to the Atlanta Region from this region. Whitfield County welcomed Steve Walker, Urban Planner to replace Kyle. Kyle excellent service was noted and greatly appreciated. Radney Simpson, Assistant Planning Administrator, is taking the place of Matt Fowler and will oversee our MPO and the Planning processes effective immediately. Radney will also be a voting member of the PC. Kyle mentioned there were promotions that contributed to these changes.

Meeting Minutes approval from the April MPO Joint TCC and PC Committee Meeting was deferred until a quorum was present. These will be brought before the next meeting for approval.

The Department of Transportation Report was deferred to later in the meeting and GDMPO moved to the activities summary taken place since the last meeting.

The third Quarter Planning Grant Progress Report and invoice were submitted to GDOT on April 15th. This report summarizes activities of the MPO and serves as an invoice for work completed during the quarter.

The Unified Planning Work Program also referred to as the UPWP is the document that GDOT uses to create the annual MPO contract and it lists all the planning projects planned for the upcoming fiscal year. GDOT received the 2012 fiscal year draft in late April and the MPO will have the final copy in their office by June 17th 2011. Our MPO Business Meeting on June 15th will vote to adopt the UPWP.

The Participation Plan describes the policies and procedures for obtaining public involvement and there was discussion as to it needing to be updated. Kyle Mote of GDOT indicated it does not require updating at this time. We are continuing with the participation plan drafted last year at the recommendation of GDOT and because no substantial changes have occurred to amend the document. The GDMPO will review annually to ensure any updates are made or when a substantial change occurs.

The FY2012-2015 Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP) draft was sent to all members for review and comment. It was also posted on the website and across the county in 8 locations - Dalton Public Library, Dalton City Hall, Whitfield County Administrative Buildings 1 and 2, the Chamber of Commerce, Varnell and Tunnel Hill City Halls, and the Northwest Georgia Regional Commission offices - as required and will be available for review and comment no less than 30 days. A Public Service Announcement was also posted in the TheDaily Citizen, E l Informador and La Voz newspapers. This Document with revisions be brought back to the GDMPO for approval at the June meeting.

The MPO web page has been updated with recent documents for public review and meeting documents. Links to the Corridor Study and Transit Feasibility Study will be created by July.

Updates on the studies:

The North Georgia Corridor study is now under contract with Moreland Altbelli and a deliverables timeline The estimated date of completion is mid September 2011 at which time findings will be presented to the MPO committees and recommendations will be sought

The Transit Feasibility study is now under contract with Dovetail Consulting and the timeline for completion of the study which is required for funding from the 5303 Grant. The estimated date of completion for that study is February 2012 which is outside of the FY2011, but the GDMPO has been in discussion with GDOT and a request to extend funding will be sought in September once more progress has been made.

Barnett Chitwood suggested in order to avoid confusion with the new session HB277 having to do with hunting, the MPO should change use of House Bill 277 to another name. Kyle Mote suggested GDOT referred to it as TIA – and to minimize confusion, we should refer to it as Regional Sales Tax Initiative or TIA which was agreed.

The Transportation Investment Act (TIA) Unconstrained Project list for Whitfield County was submitted to the NWGRC and is posted on the website. According to the last teleconference with Todd Long, Director of GDOT planning, the district investment list will be returned to the MPO on June 1, 2011.

Copies of the Whitfield County Greater Dalton list submitted were made available to each of the meeting attendees.

With no further items or discussion, GDMPO New business and Staff Report was concluded.

Ty Ross raised a concern about the North Georgia Corridor Studies and if these were based on the presumption that Wacker, VW and Amazon would provide jobs, and questioned whether this study was still important. Kent Benson stated the criteria that put this study back into action was discussed and voted on in the April 26th MPO Joint committee meeting. Though it was not initially known these employers would not hiring Georgians, Ron Hale suggested we should also look beyond the initial hiring to the impact on suppliers and routes used in the logistic. The corridor has not been studied at great length before, it was legitimate to update and determine if anything had changed. Barnett Chitwood mentioned the recent tornadoes and subsequent interstate closure also proved that Dalton cannot reach Chattanooga unless it goes through Ringgold. Ringgold turned out to be the major route and only convenient route to Chattanooga. This was another reason a study of this area would be important in identifying alternate routes. Radney Simpson of GDOT stated the GDMPO was on the right path in conducting this and other studies to either prove or rule out what was currently speculation. The need for facts requires looking gathering the facts and data in order for the GDMPO to make future planning decisions.

Karen Quarels of GDOT inquired if the Transit Feasibility Study had begun and GDMPO responded it was under contract and underway with meetings and deliverables occurring now.

The First Draft UPWP was presented and PC Chair Ross asked the MPO Coordinator to review each Item. Various explanations and clarifications were also added by GDOT as to the Activity Line Items and purpose. The UPWP describes the funding mechanism for what will be planned to work on in 2012. Once approved by Policy Committee, GDOT can then write a contract using federal money and local match at that time. Once the Contract is sent back to the GDMPO, local officials sign, then it's sent back where the money is administered. Each Quarter, the MPO staff prepare a report of progress for projects stated in the UPWP and the money is paid according to work completed. Planning activities only relate to roadways, not land use. Review and comments were encouraged from each member.

With no other questions or comments, PC Chairman Ross moved to the GDOT status report, prepared by Greg Hood. The following summary was read by Kent Benson in Mr. Hood's absence: .

Meeting Schedule for GDMPO FY 2012 Proposed and will be voted on in the next meeting which is the Annual Business Meeting. According to the GDMPO PC and TCC By-laws, elections will be held in the June 15th 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

Kent Benson, Chair, GDMPO - Technical Coordinating Committee