

# ***TAC MEETING MINUTES***

***August 7, 2024***

## **Members In Attendance at This TAC Meeting:**

Rocky Mount – Reuben Blackwell, Richard Joyner, Sandy Roberson  
Edgecombe County – Evelyn Powell  
Nash County – Robbie Davis  
Nashville – Xavian Harrison  
NCDOT – Melvin Mitchell

## **Members Not in Attendance at This TAC Meeting:**

Sharpsburg – David Pride

## **Others Present at This TAC Meeting:**

*Brad Kerr, CRM; Jordan Reedy, RMUAMPO/CRM; Steve Yetman, CRM; Ramon Muckle, CRM; Linda Rideout, RMUAMPO/CRM; Todd Gardner; Carlos Montoya; Bill Marley; Tom Harris*

## **1. Welcome and Introductions**

Chairman Robbie Davis called the meeting of the TAC to order at 3:02pm and welcomed those online to the virtual TEAMS meeting. Jordan Reedy introduced those present on the TEAMS meeting and Chairman Davis established that a quorum was met.

## 2. Adoption of Previous TAC Meeting Minutes

Chairman Davis brought this item to the floor and mentioned that previous minutes are included at the end of the current agenda. Mr. Davis asked members if there were any questions or comments about the previous minutes. None were heard.

Mayor Roberson made the motion to approve the adoption of this item, and Reuben Blackwell voiced the second. The previous minutes were unanimously adopted.

## 3. Current TAC Meeting Agenda Action Items

### **3.1 Item N STIP Amendments**

*Adopt NCDOT Item N STIP Amendments for June and July.*

Chairman Davis brought this item forward to the members. Jordan Reedy discussed that at the regularly scheduled monthly NC Board of Transportation meetings, Item N is a standing order of business to adopt changes to the State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP). Mr. Reedy mentioned that adopted changes need to also be adopted by the respective MPO and RPO. He added that typically, changes are proposed in one month and brought back for the final review and adoption the following month.

Mr. Reedy pointed out that the STIP amendments from the **June and July** 2024 NCBOT meetings for the Rocky Mount MPO are attached to the current meeting agenda, and added that Amendments will be reflected in the MTIP. Specifically, Mr. Reedy discussed the following Item N Amendments:

C5549 – this item was amended to create a phase for the ROW that was originally not expected to be needed, but now has been found to be necessary.

EB5763 – This is the Monk to Mill Trail project. It was amended to move construction to FY23 to allow for more public engagement by the City.

Statewide – Mr. Reedy mentioned that there are also statewide amendment items for improvements across the state that are included in the Item N amendment list shown on the agenda.

Chairman Davis asked if there were any questions. None were heard.

Reuben Blackwell made the motion to approve this action item, and Sandy Roberson voiced the second. The action item was unanimously approved.

### **3.2 Local Input Point Assignment – Regional and Divisional projects**

*Adopt the P7.0 Local Input Point Assignment for Regional and Divisional Projects*

Chairman Davis brought this next item to the floor for discussion. Jordan Reedy gave a detailed explanation of the Point Assignment process for the P7.0 Prioritization. Mr. Reedy explained that

prioritization is the process in which the MPO submits transportation improvement projects (identified by priority in our Long-Range Transportation Plan) to the NCDOT for scoring and potential funding. He added that we are in the “Local Input Point Assignment” phase of Prioritization, meaning that the MPO is responsible for applying local input points on the submitted projects, and that he hopes that all members have had a chance to review the recommendations in the attached agenda.

Jordan Reedy continued to give an overview of the process by explaining that the MPO is allotted 1200 local input points for division level projects, and 1200 points for regional level projects. Mr. Reedy explained that a project cannot receive more than 100 points, and in accordance with our local input point methodology, any project receiving local input points must receive all 100 points allowed. The highest scoring project in each mode (Highway, Bike/Ped, Transit, Rail, Airport) automatically receive 100 local input points. The remaining points are divided amongst voting members of the TAC.

Mr. Reedy asked if any members had any questions. Mr. Blackwell asked if these are scored annually and if we have a number that we are able to apply? Mr. Reedy responded that this happens biannually. We look at the long-range list of projects by priority and take the highest scoring projects and submit them to the DOT. Brad Kerr added that the DOT assigns a qualitative score. Mr. Davis asked if this is by us, or just the DOT. Mr. Kerr responded by DOT. Mr. Blackwell asked, “Do you know what the score will be?” Brad Kerr further responded by saying that we don’t. We have a sense of what will score well and what won’t – we don’t know the actual number. Mr. Reedy further clarified that the number is dependent on what else is going on/submitted within the Division and how much money is available. He added that the DOT is short on funds, so we are lucky if we get a few.

Mr. Blackwell then asked if these are your recommendations, why are some more important than others? Mr. Kerr answered that the process generally recommends points, putting 100 points on highest, and putting them on lower scoring projects would be futile and may cost you another project in the process, but ultimately, it’s the board’s decision. Mr. Blackwell asked if this is discussed at other meetings. Mr. Davis responded that after the TAC, it is then reported to the Committee. Brad Kerr added that at times, projects have been advanced without points. Mr. Reedy also added that he had received a call from the Nashville Town Manager and he had to give him the blunt answer that their project got a 7 out of 50 for a score, and Nashville projects where local input points were recommended, scored higher. He added that he can talk to Xavien Harrison and see what is more important.

At this point, Mayor Roberson asked about the rail that is going through Rocky Mount, where before it was going through Wilson, he wanted some clarification on this. Jordan Reedy responded that the project is still being submitted by other towns, and our MPO threw this in as a way to let DOT know that we have interest in this rail project, and that it is important to us. Mr. Roberson asked if that means that there is Federal interest. Mr. Reedy responded that the S Line from Raleigh to Richmond seems to be the priority right now. Brad Kerr added that there has been a lot of money and corridor studies in that project, and that there is national backing for the S Line. He added that DOT is listening to us.

Robbie Davis, discussing the Thomas St. Pedestrian Bridge, asked if it is ever considered that we have partial funding, if it takes a lot of time, would money go elsewhere? Brad Kerr stated that

this project has already been recommended, has been approved, and has funding. Jordan Reedy added that in regard to the point assignment for this project, that the reason that it scored 33/50 – which is actually a good score – is because we already had local money. Brad Kerr added that this project already had money committed to it in the STIP and would try to push the DOT to fund because local money alone can't make it happen, and if there were 100 points to apply, it would improve the project scores.

Reuben Blackwell then asked about the difference between Regional and Divisional projects. Brad Kerr responded by explaining the methodology – in that each mode has the highest scoring project, and points are applied to the rest. Sandy Roberson asked if what is shown is the most likely for us to get. Brad Kerr responded “yes, going down the list, low scoring may not get funded at all.”

Rueben Blackwell asked how are we able to impact decision making at the higher levels – people are trying to build; how can we influence to ensure opportunity for everybody? Brad Kerr responded by saying that we do have a unit to look at projects – as of now – that is a quantitative part of the score. It's still an ongoing dialogue. Jordan Reedy added that the DOT sets metrics for these projects – the way the projects are scored in the City is the same as bigger cities. The Rocky Mount MPO meets with other MPOs and RPOs to see how to influence the impact for the City and smaller MPOs. Brad Kerr also added that it's evolving, scoring is a component. The money is divided up by division and region, so not everything is going to Charlotte and Raleigh. He added that we have an advantage, we are the bigger city within the Division, which helps us.

Chairman Davis asked about 7 of the 12 being bike/ped related, and wanted to know why? Jordan Reedy answered by saying that within the division category, it's the only way to get funded. Mr. Davis continued his question – don't we have other needs? Mr. Reedy continued – often times highway projects fall into regional projects. They score well, and then only place that they can get funded. Brad Kerr added that some are labeled as bike/ped but are really other types. Road diets are often in that group. They are trying to move those to highway, so they don't have to compete and won't have the 20% match requirement. Jordan Reedy continued by adding that in the previous long-range plan, the highest priority highway projects have already been completed, which leaves bike/ped. We don't have congestion issues so not a lot of highway projects. Brad Kerr added that a lot of big cities are converting from being vehicle centric to multi-modal priorities.

Chairman Davis asked if there were any other questions. None were heard.

Mayor Sandy Roberson made the motion to approve this action item, and Xavian Harrison voiced the second. The action item was unanimously approved.

### **3.3 TAC Chairman Appointment**

*Appoint a new (or reappoint) TAC Chairman*

Chairman Davis introduced this next item, and asked that Brad Kerr continue to facilitate this topic as this item is to comply with the Rocky Mount MPO's by-laws, and the task is that the TAC must appoint (or reappoint) a TAC Chairman at this time.

Mr. Blackwell asked if it is possible to rotate the roll of the Chairperson from the various

represented municipalities. He asked to nominate Mayor Roberson as the next TAC Chairman. He added that he is not complaining about current leadership, was just asking if a change could be made to allow for a process that allows for all municipalities to serve in the role of chairperson. Brad Kerr stated that it's ultimately up to the board, but the MPO took it's model from the Greenville by-laws, and this is just the 2<sup>nd</sup> election that the MPO has had since adopting those by-laws. Mr. Davis added that the City's normal custom was just to keep the chair, but that he thinks it's a great idea. Jordan Reedy added that rotating municipalities is a great idea, but that the only contrary point would be that some municipalities are not always present at all meetings. Brad Kerr added that he thinks it is probably a better way than to put it in the by-laws. Whatever the board wants to do. Keep it to every two years. Reuben Blackwell added that it would be a way to share power. Brad Kerr added that the current board makeup – Nash and Edgcombe have just one. Chairman Davis added that the task today is to elect a new chairman, and that going forward we can make the change. Reuben Blackwell added that the body is very collegial, and staff representation is very good.

Chairman Davis accepted the nomination of Mayor Sandy Roberson for the role of TAC Chairperson from Mr. Blackwell and put the item to vote. All members agreed to the nomination and election of Mayor Roberson. Chairman Davis and Brad Kerr congratulated Mayor Roberson on becoming the newly elected TAC Chairperson.

## **4. Transportation Planning Activities and Initiatives**

### **4.1 FY 25 PWP Budget Amendment – EcoInteractive Project Tracker Program**

• *Table decision until further notice.*

Jordan Reedy explained that at our previous meeting, he gave a presentation on the EcoInteractive Project Tracker program. After support from the TAC, he planned on creating an action item to amend our budget and pay for the software. Upon further discussion with the NCDOT's Transportation Planning Division and the STIP Unit, he learned that the state plans on deploying a new and (relatively) similar STIP data management program this Summer/Fall. Mr. Reedy asked that we table the decision to purchase the EcoInteractive program until the State has released their updated STIP software. Mr. Reedy asked Carlos Moya if he has any updated information on this project. Mr. Moya responded that they are currently looking for a new director, so he thinks that everyone's waiting for that to happen to see what route this will take. Mr. Moya added that he will contact Jordan Reedy if he hears anything, but to his knowledge, the new director position should be posted within the next couple of weeks, and interviews will happen after that.

### **5.2 Safe Streets For All (SS4A) Grant Update**

Jordan Reedy gave an update on the SS4A grant. He stated that the grant is for \$175,000 to develop a Safety Action Plan. This is a 2-year planning process, and we can then apply for Construction Funding through the grant. He added that MPO and City staff have attended a

webinar for the next steps and have met directly with an FHWA and results from that meeting were very good.

Brad Kerr added that the City of Rocky Mount is working on the agreement between the City and the Federal Highway Association (FHWA). A formal agreement between the FHWA and the City of Rocky Mount must be established before the City can release a Request For Letters Of Intent (RFLOI) to seek out qualified consultant to assign to the project.

Mr. Blackwell asked what the funding is for. Jordan Reedy explained that it is to create a study to identify and address safety concerns – a multi-modal approach to safety. Brad Kerr added that the planning part of the grant is a required step to have in place before we can apply for construction funding. Mr. Blackwell further asked if this is just for the City of Rocky Mount. Jordan Reedy responded by saying that yes, the MPO did not apply for this grant, although we may in the future as we get more experience with the grant application process, then we can apply for an MPO wide plan. Brad Kerr added that we are finalizing the agreement, which will then go in front of the council for approval. This is the 1<sup>st</sup> step in applying for other funds. Jordan Reedy explained that the agreement is different with this being a federal agency as opposed to the NCDOT – and has hoops such as Title VI, equity, foreign language. Brad Kerr concurred by saying that there are other strings and red tape with a federal program.

### **4.3 TAC Members Potential Conflict of Interest**

Jordan Reedy asked Linda Rideout to discuss the Ethics filing requirements and the topic of conflicts of interest with the members. Ms. Rideout first thanked the members for their diligence in getting the ethics filings completed, the board acknowledged that the MPO was one of the first to have all members in compliance and thanked them for doing that.

Ms. Rideout added that the Ethics Commission begins reviewing the filings for potential conflicts of interest after the filing period has ended. The Ethics Commission has recently sent out letters to some individual members where the potential for conflict may arise. Ms. Rideout explained that receiving that letter is not a statement of conflict, rather it's simply a letter of caution. Ms. Rideout asked members to not be alarmed if you received the letter, but just to keep this in mind as items are brought to the floor as part of the MPO proceedings. If you have any questions or comments, please contact me or Jordan Reedy.

Chairman Davis added that as explained, the letter is nothing to worry about. If a conflict is revealed, excuse yourself from participation.

## **5. Information Items**

### **5.1 STIP Project Status**

Jordan Reedy discussed the following projects:

- U-5026& R-5720 (Sunset Ave / I-95 Interchange and Eastern Ave widening)
  - \$60.5M

- 90% Complete.
- Original completion date 6/30/2023
- Revised completion date Spring 2025. Mr. Reedy added that this is not a specific date.
- B-5980 (I-95 Interchange Improvements at Halifax Road, SR1544)
  - \$23M (work began 9/9/2021)
  - 100% Complete.
- U-5996 Old Carriage Road widening
  - \$20.3M (work began 7/12/2022)
  - 66% Complete.
  - Completion date – 4/30/2025
- U-5947 Benvenue Rd/US 64 Ramp Roundabout
  - \$4.8M Let date 4/26/2022
  - Revised completion date – 05/11/2024.
  - 100% complete. Jordan added that it's complete except for the City getting landscaping and Gateway to City signage installed.
  - Full Functioning

Kim Moore added that there will be another roundabout added. Mr. Blackwell asked if it would be on that corridor. Mr. Davis responded that the reason for the roundabout is if you want to change direction to get on the interstate. Jordan Reedy added that Ramon Muckle and Steve Yetman are working on wayfinding signs at the Roundabout. He discussed the benefits of safety and functionality of the roundabouts.

Brad Kerr added that in regard to the landscaping, that every plan has money set aside for landscaping. It should be attractive and low maintenance, no mowing. He said that rock features are going in. The current state of overgrowth is the fault of the contractor during the warranty period (1 year). The goal is to get it installed this fall. Finalizing now. Wayfinding has been approved, they worked out conflicts, and happy with the location. Mr. Kerr added that the new gateways signs took a long time. Parks and Rec are coming back to do some planting, etc.

Mr. Davis asked to reiterate that Kim Moore promised that the roundabouts will be getting lighting.

Brad Kerr stated that no discussions so far about Falls Rd? Jordan Reedy responded that Kim Moore said that it would be – there was a push from local officials that helped to get it done. Mr. Davis added that there was a push to get lighting, and Kim agreed, make sure that's on record.

## 6. Other Business

### **6.1 Open Discussion for TAC Members and the public**

Jordan Reedy thanked everyone for making the time for this meeting, due to all of the meeting times being changed. Brad Kerr agreed, especially for this meeting.

Mr. Davis brought up one item that had come up at the RPO – he became aware of a project on the books for 20+ years, on the west side of 43 where it stops at the City line. Board members asked that it be moved. Met with them several times, kept it at #3 with Mr. Outlaw's help. Rerouted from Halifax Rd – will have emergency exit from there. Asked about utilities – put in where they wouldn't have to be moved. Hopes that the project gets moving.

## **7. Announcements**

### **7.1 Next TAC Meeting**

The next TAC meeting is scheduled to be held November 18th, 4:30 PM. Visit the MPO website at [www.RMUAMPO.com](http://www.RMUAMPO.com)

## **8. Adjourn**

### **8.1 The TAC meeting held on August 7, 2024 adjourned at 4:08pm**

Reuben Blackwell made the first motion to adjourn the meeting held on that date, and Mayor Sandy Roberson voiced the second. The TAC meeting was unanimously adjourned.