TRANSPORTATION COORDINATING COMMITTEE
10:30 A.M., Wednesday, June 3, 2020
Online Meeting Details at GNRC.org/Calendar

REGULAR MEETING AGENDA

1. Approval of 5/6/20 Meeting Minutes (A) 
   Glenn Harper
   TCC Chair

2. Public Comment

3. Action Items:
   a. Endorse Amendments to the FYs 2020-2023 TIP (A)
      Cycle C amendments to the Transportation Improvement Program
      (TIP) are undergoing a 21-day public review and comment period
      and are scheduled for adoption by the Transportation Policy Board
      (TPB) on June 17.
      Anna Emerson
      Principal Planner

4. Informational Items:
   a. Presentation of Amendment to the FYs 2020-21 UPWP (A)
      Staff will present an amendment to the Unified (Transportation)
      Planning Work Program (UPWP) scheduled to be released for public
      review and comment on June 17.
      Sean Pfalzer
      Transportation Planning
      Manager and MPO
      Coordinator
   b. Update on Transportation Planning (MPO) Activities (A)
      Staff will provide an update on activities affected by COVID-19,
      ongoing correspondence with federal and state partners, and a look
      ahead as the region shifts its attention back to transportation issues.
      Sean Pfalzer
   c. Land Development Forecasts
      Staff will present refined land development forecast based on local
      government feedback received in May.
      Max Baker
      Director of Research &
      Analytics
   d. Analysis of Traffic Congestion and Future Forecasts
      Staff will present an analysis of existing traffic conditions and the
      resulting impact of future growth and development on levels of
      congestion and system reliability.
      Sean Pfalzer
      Max Baker

5. Regular Reports:
   a. Chair’s Report
      Glenn Harper
   b. Staff Report
      Sean Pfalzer

6. Other Business

7. Adjourn

(A) Indicates an attachment is available in the packet

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Meeting Link and Call-In Details available at www.GNRC.org/Calendar
Roll Call will be taken at www.GNRC.org/TCCRollCall

The Microsoft Teams desktop client can be downloaded for free at:
https://teams.microsoft.com/downloads

(A) Indicates an attachment is available in the packet
Agenda Item 1.

Meeting Minutes - May 6, 2020

Background
Meeting minutes have been prepared and are ready for approval.

Recommendation
Approve meeting minutes.
MINUTES

TRANSPORTATION COORDINATING COMMITTEE
Of the

Nashville Area Metropolitan Planning Organization

May 6, 2020

Attendees: Mr. Donald Anthony, Mr. Tom Brashear, Mr. Felix Castrodad, Mr. Ceagus Clark, Mr. Marc Corrigan, Mr. Doug Demosi, Mr. Chuck Downham, Mr. Keith Free, Mr. Elwyn Gonzalez, Mr. Grant Green, Mr. Glenn Harper, Mr. Mike Harris, Mr. Billy Higgins, Mr. Joe Horne, Ms. Katrina Jones, Mr. Bo Logan, Mr. Jonathan Marston, Mr. Bill McCord, Mr. Addam McCormick, Ms. Kim Norfleet, Mr. Kevin Rigsby, Mr. Jonathan Russell, Mr. Sean Santalla, Mr. Matt Schenk, Mr. Josh Suddath, Mr. Matt Von Lunen

Approval of the 2/5/20 Meeting minutes

Mr. Glenn Harper, Chair, opened the meeting at 10:40 a.m. Mr. Bill McCord moved to approve the February 5, 2020 meeting minutes with Mr. Mike Harris seconding. The motion passed unanimously.

Public Comment

There was no public comment.

Endorse Amendments to the FYs 2020-23 TIP

Ms. Anna Emerson presented an overview of proposed changes within the Cycle B amendments. She noted that the Cycle B amendments have undergone the required 21-day public review and comment period. Mr. McCord mentioned that there were three projects listed that were not on the list at the last meeting. Ms. Emerson said that the Highway Infrastructure Program (HIP) is a grouping of funds not identified for specific projects at this time. Mr. McCord asked if these funds could be used for the Gallatin project. Ms. Emerson said yes and that funds would be available for construction of highways (federal-aid system roads), bridges and tunnels.

Mr. McCord moved to endorse the Cycle B amendments for consideration by the Transportation Policy Board (TPB) with Mr. Jim Kerr seconding. The motion passed unanimously.
Ms. Emerson also presented the Cycle C amendments to be released for public review and comment. She said that TDOT will be sending more amendments prior to the TPB meeting on May 20th. Several clarifying questions were asked and answered.

Mr. McCord moved to endorse the Cycle C amendments for consideration by the TPB for public review and comment. Ms. Katrina Jones seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

**Endorse Resolution TPB-2020-03 HIP Distribution**

Ms. Emerson said that the resolution is to allow the distribution Highway Infrastructure Program (HIP) funds to projects with immediate needs. There is $4.85 million in federal funds available for construction of highways (federal-aid system roads), bridges and tunnels.

Ms. Jones asked if enacting this resolution is an official call for projects. Ms. Emerson said once the resolution is passed, the staff will decide how to spend the funds. Mr. Michael Skipper, GNRC Executive Director, added that there will be no official call-for-projects, but the funds will be used for existing TIP projects with cost overruns.
Mr. Doug Demosi moved to endorse the Resolution TPB 2020-03 HIP Distribution for adoption by the TPB. Mr. Keith Free seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

**Presentation of Proposed Updates to the FYs 2020-21 UPWP**

Mr. Sean Pfalzer, Transportation Planning Manager and MPO Coordinator, said that the upcoming UPWP amendment includes: 1) programming prior UPWP carryover funds into FYs 2020-21, 2) identifying additional planning activities to perform in FY 2021, 3) documenting related planning activities that are underway or scheduled within the region by TDOT, transit providers, or local governments, and 4) considering new requests from members as we look to develop the next two-year UPWP.

Mr. Pfalzer said that the proposed updates for the UPWP include the following.

1) Additional Planning Activities for FY 2021
   a. Regional Traffic Shed/Impact Fee Analysis (requested by Wilson County)

2) Related Planning Activities Underway
   a. WeGo Star Rail Improvements Planning Study (requested by WeGo)
   b. Regional Park and Ride Investment Strategy (requested by WeGo)

3) New Member Requests (consideration deferred until development of the new FY 2022-23 UPWP)
   a. Regional New School Impact Analysis (requested by Wilson County)
   b. Mt. Pleasant Major Thoroughfare Plan (requested by Maury County and is not eligible for regional planning funds as a stand-alone project)

Mr. McCord said that Gallatin, along with the other Sumner County cities, requested a countywide bike/ped study. He asked why this is not on the list. Mr. Pfalzer said that this request was more of a countywide effort than a regional effort. Mr. Skipper said that KCI Technologies is doing a regional update to the bicycle/pedestrian analysis.

Mr. McCord asked how this requested study was different from the traffic shed/impact fee analysis study for Wilson County. Mr. Pfalzer said that Wilson County requested the study be done for the region, not just Wilson County. Mr. Josh Suddath asked why the Wilson County New School Impact Analysis was being done. Mr. Skipper clarified that the study had been requested, but it has not yet been funded. Mr. Tom Brashear said that the traffic shed study will help all jurisdictions navigate development requests. Mr. Skipper said it would serve as an aid in growth management. He said that it would be considered for funding during the development of the next UPWP.

**Update on Land Use Forecasts**
Mr. Max Baker, GNRC Director of Research and Analytics, said that staff are using UrbanSim software to update the household and employment forecasts. The latest iteration of forecasts has been added to the online application, available at https://www.GNRC.org/2025Review.

He said that the local partners need to: 1) review and comment on Woods and Poole Economics population, household, and employment projections, 2) provide local (GIS) data representing current land use, zoning allowances, and future land use policy, 3) troubleshoot unexpected outcomes during base year calibration as a result of underlying data availability or quality issues, and 4) identify development approved for construction between the model base year (2017) and first horizon (2025) to account for known short-term growth. He asked that the members submit their remaining updates by the close of business today (May 6, 2020).

**Travel Demand Model Overview**

Mr. Baker introduced Mr. Vince Bernardin, Director at RSG consultants, who gave an overview of travel demand modeling. He said that regional travel demand models are useful despite their limitations because when used properly they can produce reasonably accurate forecasts of future traffic.

Regional travel models 1) understand high level/big picture trends, 2) compare projects across the region on a level playing field, 3) support special/subarea analyses, 4) produce project/design forecasts, and 5) are a starting point for more detailed/operational modeling.

Activity-based models are useful for 1) land use effects, 2) walk & bike planning, 3) equity analyses, 4) peak-spreading, and 5) TDMs (e.g., working from home).

He said that the advantages for analyzing transit include fares and ridership markets, consistent and contextual choice-making, and spatial detail and walkability.

**Chair's Report**

None.

**Staff Report**

Mr. Pfalzer said that the Regional Environment Roundtable will meet on May 13. The BPAC will also meet this month. Both meetings will be held virtually via Microsoft Teams.

He said that GNRC has been meeting with mayors across the region each Friday about the COVID-19 pandemic, and has launched a webpage

The Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (CARES Act) supports the public transit. FTA is allocating $25 Billion to recipients of urbanized area and rural area formula funds. The funding will be provided at a 100-percent federal share, with no local match required. The funds are available to support capital, operating, and other expenses generally eligible under those programs to prevent, prepare for, and respond to COVID-19.

The Nashville UZA will receive $75.7 million to be split between MTA, RTA, Franklin Transit, and Williamson County and the Murfreesboro UZA will receive $6.5 million.

Other Business

Mr. Pfalzer asked if TDOT had any updates on the CMAQ grant awards. Mr. Jonathan Russell said that he did not have an update today but would get the information and distribute it.

Mr. Harper asked, referring to Item 3A, if the staff needed endorsement of the Cycle C TIP amendments. Mr. Skipper said that the preview of Cycle C amendments was for information only. The amendments would be brought back before the members prior to being released for public review and comment. Mr. McCord moved to rescind his motion to endorse the Cycle C amendments on the assurance that the members would have another chance to vote on them. Ms. Jones seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

With no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 12:00 p.m.

Date: _______________________________

______________________________
Glenn Harper, Chair
Technical Coordinating Committee

______________________________
Sean Pfalzer, Transportation Planning Manager
MPO Coordinator
Agenda Item 3a.

Cycle C Amendments to the FYs 2020-2023 Transportation Improvement Program

Background

The following draft amendments have been requested by project sponsors as part of the Cycle C round of amendments to the TIP.

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<td>Highway 231N Sidewalk Project</td>
<td>Lebanon</td>
<td>Add funding</td>
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<td>2020-009</td>
<td>2020-76-100</td>
<td>Lebanon Rd (SR-24) Sidewalks – Phase 3</td>
<td>Mt. Juliet</td>
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<td>2014-111-051</td>
<td>Dickerson Pk (US41/31W)/CSX Underpass Reconstruction</td>
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<td>2020-011</td>
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<td>North Nashville Transit Center</td>
<td>Nashville MTA (WeGo)</td>
<td>Add funds; clarify scope</td>
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<td>Harvey Park Greenway – Phase 1</td>
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Schedule

- May 6 – Initial Presentation to the TCC
- May 20 – Initial Presentation to the Transportation Policy Board (TPB)
- May 22-June 17 – Public Review and Comment
- June 3 – Final TCC Presentation
- June 17 – Public Hearing; Adoption by the Transportation Policy Board

Recommendation

Endorse amendments for adoption by the TPB.
FY 2020-2023 TIP Amendment – June 2020 Adoption

TIP Amendment # 2020-008

TIP #:  2018-76-078
2040 RTP ID:  Active Transportation
Project:  Highway 231 North Sidewalk Project
Requested By:  Lebanon
Proposed Changes:  Add funds
Total Project Cost:  $1,213,621

FROM:  $205,621

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TO:  $1,021,381

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Amendment Description

This amendment proposes to add $774,972 state funds for preliminary engineering and construction in FY 2020 awarded to the project by TDOT’s 2019 Multimodal Access Grants.

This project involves the construction of a sidewalk project located on U.S. Highway 231 North, between Forrest Avenue and North Castle Heights Avenue/Oakdale Drive.
FY 2020-2023 TIP Amendment – June 2020 Adoption

TIP Amendment # 2020-009
TIP #: 2020-76-100
2040 RTP ID: Multimodal
Project: Lebanon Road (SR-24) Sidewalks – Phase 3
Requested By: Mt. Juliet
Proposed Changes: Add project
Total Project Cost: $992,769

TO: $992,769

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Amendment Description

This amendment proposes to add the project to the TIP with $943,131 state funds in FY 2020 awarded to the project by TDOT’s 2019 Multimodal Access Grants.

This project involves the construction of sidewalks along both sides of Lebanon Road (SR-24) from Benton Douglas Parkway to Nonaville Road.
FY 2020-2023 TIP Amendment – June 2020 Adoption

TIP Amendment # 2020-010
TIP #: 2014-111-051
2040 RTP ID: 1018-202
Project: Dickerson Pike (US41/31W)/CSX Underpass Reconstruction
Requested By: TDOT
Proposed Changes: Add funds; revise project description
Total Project Cost: $45,600,000

FROM: $300,000

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TO: $2,700,000

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Amendment Description

This amendment proposes to add $1,920,000 (federal) NHPP funds to the project for preliminary engineering in FY 2021 and to revise the project description as follows:

FROM: Reconstruction to include managed lanes and multi-modal accommodations to alleviate bottleneck caused by narrow CSX overpass.

TO: Widen Dickerson Pike (US41/31W) from Fannin Drive to Old Stone Bridge Road to 5 lanes and replace CSX railroad overpass structure.
FY 2020-2023 TIP Amendment – June 2020 Adoption

TIP Amendment # 2020-011
TIP #: 2015-111-069
2040 RTP ID: Active Transportation Program
Project: North Nashville Transit Center
Requested By: Nashville MTA (WeGo)
Proposed Changes: Add funds; clarify scope
Total Project Cost: $8,200,000

FROM: $936,120

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TO: $4,536,120

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Amendment Description

This amendment proposes to add $2,700,000 state IMPROVE Act funds awarded to the project by TDOT’s Multimodal Transportation Resources Division.

A transit center near 25th Avenue North and Clarksville Pike, designed to create and enhance multimodal transportation options and connections in the North Nashville area. The transit center will connect North Nashville neighborhoods, commercial areas, and recreational amenities (greenways, parks, and golf courses) to the greater MTA transit system. (Description previously referred to the project as a “mini-hub.”)
FY 2020-2023 TIP Amendment – June 2020 Adoption

TIP Amendment # 2020-012
TIP #: 2019-32-093
2040 RTP ID: 1632-168
Project: I-65 Widening from SR-25 to SR-109
Requested By: TDOT
Proposed Changes: Add funds; clarify scope
Total Project Cost: $64,000,000

FROM: $1,000,000

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TO: $4,536,120

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Amendment Description

This amendment proposes to add $63,000,000 state funds provided to the project by TDOT. Additionally, the project will be identified as Section 4 of the overall I-65 widening effort, the location has been updated to Robertson County, and the project length has been updated to 9.63 miles.

This project will consist of widening I-65 from 4 lanes to 6 lanes from near SR-25 at Exit 112 to near SR-109.
FY 2020-2023 TIP Amendment – June 2020 Adoption

TIP Amendment # 2020-013

TIP #: 2020-14-101
2040 RTP ID: Safety
Project: I-24 Ramp Improvements at Exit 35
Requested By: TDOT
Proposed Changes: Add project
Total Project Cost: $3,800,000

TO: $200,000

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Amendment Description

This amendment proposes to add the project to the TIP with $160,000 federal NHPP funds in FY 2021 allocated by TDOT.

This project involves the improvement of ramps at the I-24 and Whites Creek Pike (SR-65/US431) interchange (Exit 35).
FY 2020-2023 TIP Amendment – June 2020 Adoption

TIP Amendment # 2020-014

TIP #: 2020-14-102
2040 RTP ID: Safety
Project: I-24 Ramp Improvements at Exit 57
Requested By: TDOT
Proposed Changes: Add project
Total Project Cost: $5,200,000

TO: $300,000

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Amendment Description

This amendment proposes to add the project to the TIP with $240,000 federal NHPP funds in FY 2021 allocated by TDOT.

This project involves the improvement of ramps at the I-24 and Haywood Lane interchange (Exit 57).
FY 2020-2023 TIP Amendment – June 2020 Adoption

TIP Amendment # 2020-015
TIP #: 2020-14-103
2040 RTP ID: Safety
Project: I-24 Ramp Improvements at Exit 59
Requested By: TDOT
Proposed Changes: Add project
Total Project Cost: $24,000,000

TO: $1,200,000

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Amendment Description

This amendment proposes to add the project to the TIP with $960,000 federal NHPP funds in FY 2021 allocated by TDOT.

This project involves the improvement of ramps at the I-24 and Bell Road (SR-254) interchange (Exit 59).
FY 2020-2023 TIP Amendment – June 2020 Adoption

TIP Amendment # 2020-016
TIP #: 2020-56-104
2040 RTP ID: Multimodal
Project: Richland Park Sidewalk Connector
Requested By: Portland
Proposed Changes: Add project
Total Project Cost: $900,000

TO: $871,809

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Amendment Description

This amendment proposes to add the project to the TIP with $697,447 federal TAP funds awarded to the project by TDOT’s Transportation Alternatives Program.

This project involves the construction of sidewalks along Wheeler Street, North Russell Street, High Street, and Portland Boulevard in Portland. Project also includes curb and gutter, ADA upgrades, and pavement markings.
FY 2020-2023 TIP Amendment – June 2020 Adoption

TIP Amendment # 2020-017

TIP #: 2018-26-074
2040 RTP ID: Active Transportation
Project: Harvey Park Greenway – Phase 1
Requested By: Spring Hill
Proposed Changes: Add funds
Total Project Cost: $2,242,508

FROM: $747,510

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Amendment Description

This amendment proposes to add $1,195,998 federal TAP funds awarded to the project by TDOT’s Transportation Alternatives Program.

This project consists of constructing a greenway connecting Harvey Park in Spring Hill to residential subdivisions and commercial districts along McCutcheon Creek (east of US31/SR-6).
Agenda Item 4a.

Amendment to the Unified (Transportation) Planning Work Program or UPWP

Background

Staff has prepared an amendment to update the two-year UPWP.

The Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP), also known locally as the Transportation Planning Work Program, is updated annually to provide citizens and stakeholders the necessary transparency to see about how federal transportation planning funds are being used by GNRC, local governments and transit agencies, and the Tennessee Department of Transportation in order to meet federal metropolitan planning requirements.

The UPWP is developed by GNRC staff in consultation with partner agencies and input from local citizens and stakeholders. It may be amended to account for changes in funding or project needs. The current UPWP, adopted in August 2019, provides over $7 million for planning activities between October 1, 2019 and September 30, 2021.

Schedule

- June 3 – Initial Presentation to the TCC
- June 17 – Initial Presentation to the Transportation Policy Board (TPB)
- June 18-July 15 – Public Review and Comment
- July 1 – Final TCC Presentation
- July 15 – Public Hearing; Adoption by the Transportation Policy Board

Recommendation

For information only.
FYs 2020-2021 UPWP Updates for Proposed Amendment

Additional Planning Activities
Regional Traffic Shed/Impact Fee Analysis (GNRC; requested by Wilson County)
The work proposed would provide an opportunity to implement recommendations from the Unified Transportation Plan by identifying transportation revenue options and growth management help local communities manage future growth and development. Funding will be pulled from the “General Planning and Modeling” line item of the current UPWP.

Related Planning Activities
Statewide Active Transportation Plan (TDOT)
Through the SATP, TDOT will assess bicycle/pedestrian/accessibility transportation infrastructure, practices, policies, programs, resources, constraints and opportunities within Tennessee. After the assessment, the SATP will establish a long-term vision for Tennessee with goals, strategies and corresponding actions to inform both long-term (20-year) and short-term (5-year) decision-making for walking/bicycling/accessibility in our transportation systems. The primary purpose of the SATP is to provide consistency across TDOT division and regions for considering and addressing pedestrian and bicycle modes on TDOT’s state highway system (SHS). Understanding that the SHS is a small percentage of the overall public road miles in the state, the SATP will be developed to be used by other entities – including MPOs – as well. The secondary purpose of the SATP is to assess the interface and linkages between entities (e.g., TDOT, local and regional planning, public works and transit agencies) as they relate to providing walking and bicycling infrastructure. The SATP will provide a clear understanding of the resources, responsibilities and opportunities for bicycle and pedestrian transportation connectivity statewide. The SATP is underway and will be complete in November 2020.

WeGo Star Rail Improvements Planning Study (WeGo/RTA)
RTA is conducting a planning level analysis of the WeGo Star commuter rail corridor that will define various strategic levels of service improvements together with the associated capital and operating costs. This effort included the development of a railroad operating model to simulate various capital improvement and scheduling alternatives for impact on overall operations. This analysis will help determine future short and long-term options, particularly as the Nashville Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) develops its long-range plan update.

Total Project Cost: $281,734 ($225,387 federal)
Funding Source: Sect. 5307 (80%) / State (10%) / Local (10%)
Regional Park and Ride Investment Strategy (WeGo/RTA)

RTA is developing a Regional Commuter Park-n-Ride strategic investment plan that will provide guidance and direction on the approach to establishing park-n-ride lots for commuters in Middle Tennessee. The plan will identify and prioritize target areas and potential sites for bus service, carpool, and vanpool that reduce the number of cars on major commuter corridors in the Nashville area.

**Total Project Cost:** $227,400 ($181,920 federal)

**Funding Source:** Sect. 5307 (80%) / State (10%) / Local (10%)

Transit Shelter Planning and Implementation Study (Murfreesboro/Rover)

To support the development of a new transit facility and future park-n-ride facility, a study will be conducted for current and future bus routes that will prioritize target areas and potential sites for bus services and shelters to meet the growing needs of the community and maximize usage of sheltered stops. The study is expected to be completed by summer 2022.

**Total Project Cost:** $280,805 ($224,644 federal)

**Funding Source:** Sect. 5307 (80%) / State (10%) / Local (10%)
Agenda Item 4b.

Update on MPO Activities, Impact of COVID-19 Pandemic

- May 20 Remarks from Transportation Policy Board Chair Mary Esther Reed, Town of Smyrna Mayor
- Letter from National Association of Regional Councils, Association of MPOs, and National Association of Development Organizations to U.S. Congressional Leadership re: Federal Flexibility
- Letter from TPB Chair Mary Esther Reed to FHWA, FTA, and TDOT re: local response to COVID-19
- Letter of response from FHWA to Chair Reed
TPB Chair Mary Esther Reed Remarks regarding the Unified Transportation Plan and COVID-19, Transportation Policy Board Meeting, May 20, 2020

- I want to give you all a brief summary of things that have been taking place over the last couple of months, where we are now, where we are headed, things I think we need to think about, and most importantly asking for help.

- I know that transportation issues have been top priorities for all of us for quite a few years I think we would all agree they are still important but haven’t necessarily been the top priority over the last couple of months.

- I think we have all been focused on public health and economic concerns for our communities related to COVID-19

- Each one of our local governments have been affected in one way or another, and I think we all now have concerns about the impact that the pandemic will have on long-term unemployment, the financial sustainability of our local businesses, and our ability as governments to balance upcoming budgets and what projects become priorities

- I would like to say that GNRC has played a vital role in helping to keep the Middle TN mayors connected thru our coordination calls. I don’t know about you all, but they have been very beneficial for my community

- I think we would all agree that things have been changing hour by hour some days. I know we would get information out to our citizens and by the afternoon it might have changed. It has been nice to know I could lean on some of you to hear how you were handling things in your community.

- The virus has also impacted the work of this board, I sent a letter on March 17th to our partners at FHWA, FTA, TDOT and to each of you to let everyone know our concerns about the impact of the March 2nd tornado as well as the Coronavirus and how we thought it would impact our schedule for adopting the update to our regional plan.

- I wanted to make sure they understood that putting this plan together is important to us as a board and important to those that live in the Middle Tennessee region. We don’t just want to check the boxes to say it is complete. We want to make sure it is a plan that is going to be used over the coming years.

- We know that some of our partners have limited bandwidth to be able to effectively engage in detailed analytics or long-range policy making while the safer at home orders were in place.

- I think we would all agree that the transportation issues we have here in the region are too important for us to move forward without community engagement, and over the last couple of
months, our citizens have been focusing more on their health, their families health and the economy.

- In October of last year, we rolled out the Solve This Together campaign. Our goals from then to now have not changed. We have a serious commitment to partnership and collaboration to make this a good plan that is usable over the coming years. The only difference is we have had a series of events that have been out of our control in our region, with the tornadoes and COVID-19.

- In the letter that I sent to Pam I have asked for her help regarding flexibility as we approach the federal deadlines.

- I also asked that we have a meeting with the planning partners of GNRC, public transit, TDOT and the federal agencies to discuss a timeline for adopting the plan once the ongoing COVID-19 crisis stabilized.

- Now that the statewide safer at home order has been lifted, and things are starting to get back open I think we need to get our partners together to come up with a game plan.

LET ME PROVIDE YOU WITH AN UPDATE OF WHERE WE ARE:

- The GNRC staff have continued to meet with TDOT, FHWA and our local planning, public works, and transit agency staff that serve on the Transportation Coordinating Committee to continue to carry out the technical work of the plan

- This includes the ongoing implementation of a Congestion Management Process, coordination of roadway safety data, and an assessment of the emerging technologies and smart mobility applications.

- The GNRC planning consultants have continued their work on the major studies but have been on hold with the community engagement pieces since the March 2nd tornadoes.

- Both the South Corridor Study and the Downtown Interstate Loop Study will resume public involvement in the coming weeks, but obviously it will look a little differently than what we are used to.

- GNRC continues its work with area partners to finalize the forecasting tools that will help assess the impact of growth and development on transportation performance into the future. We are going to hear about two of these today.

- Finally, we have had multiple conversations with TDOT leadership on the status of our planning products and the challenges associated with COVID-19.

NOW LET’S TALK ABOUT WHERE WE ARE HEADED:

- We are reaching out to Metro Nashville and TDOT to learn more about how COVID-19 has impacted their planning efforts. As many of you may know, Mayor Cooper was in the process of developing a plan for Davidson County that was to be integrated into the regional plan, and TDOT was in the process of conducting a regional congestion study to identify new projects beyond those already incorporated from the Improve ACT. Obviously, both of these items are a major part of us having a successful and useable regional plan.

- We are going to be reaching out to our federal partners to discuss the challenges we are encountering and know that we will face in completing a regional plan given the circumstances.
I would really like to complete these meetings soon so that we can bring back to you all an updated schedule to the June 17th meeting of this board. So, staff will you please work with TDOT, our federal agencies and public transit to try and coordinate a date to get together to have this discussion.

THERE ARE SEVERAL THINGS I THINK WE ALL NEED TO CONSIDER AS WE MOVE FORWARD

- We had already absorbed a two month delay to our schedule earlier this year as we extended the board’s deadline for submitting projects to GNRC staff and then the next workday we were hit by the tornadoes.
- The technical work has continued but obviously at a slower pace as staff and consultants have worked remotely and away from their typical tools and resources.
- As Mayors, we need to assess how COVID-19 will impact our local funding priorities and specifically how we might need to reassess the information we submitted to GNRC in December. If your communities are like the Town of Smyrna, those are the things we are currently doing.
- As a region, we need to assess how the State of Tennessee will react to budget shortfalls. We need to have a conversation with TDOT about how declining revenues will impact their work program and investments planned for our region.
- As a planning organization, we need to assess how we can engage the public and stakeholders in a meaningful conversation about transportation in a post COVID-19 world. Not only will there be concerns about how best to engage, but it is also unknown at this time how people and businesses may have shifted their attitudes and opinions because of our experiences over the last couple of months.
- I do want you all to remember that we are scheduled to adopt a major update to the plan in early 2021, but we do already have in place a sound plan that has identified projects through 2040 and a newly adopted transportation improvement program that has allocated more than a billion dollars through the year 2023.
- With all of this said, I want to reiterate what I said in the beginning. This plan is especially important to this board, our partners, but most importantly to our citizens within this region. We must make sure we get it right and we aren’t just checking off boxes to say we have gotten it done. We want a plan that is used for years to come.
- I hope I have explained what has been taking place over the last couple of months, where we are now, where we are headed and things I think we need to seriously consider.
- The last thing I said was going to do was ask for help. Pam I am hoping you might be able to carry the flag for us in asking for assistance and flexibility without federal partners. I know that MPOs and regional councils across the country are expressing concerns to Washington DC. I also know how invested you and your staff have been in helping us with this plan. I can’t imagine there is a better person to take on this task than you and no other person in the Federal system understands our needs better than you.
March 17, 2020

Pamela M. Kordenbrock  
Tennessee Division Administrator  
Federal Highway Administration  
404 BNA Drive, Suite 508  
Nashville, Tennessee 37217

Subject: Request for Flexibility on Federal Deadlines for Transportation Planning

Dear Ms. Kordenbrock,

I hope this letter finds you and our federal colleagues well. I am writing to share our response to the COVID-19 pandemic and my concerns about the impact of the evolving situation on the development of the regional transportation plan for the Nashville metropolitan area.

As discussed at recent meetings of the Transportation Policy Board and Transportation Coordinating Committee, the remaining milestones for plan development, to include a fully integrated and federally compliant congestion management process, are as follows:

- **March and April** – Presentation of regional findings related to roadway safety and traffic congestion trends; Overview of regional land use model forecasts; Presentation of considerations and concerns related for economic opportunity, environmental impact, and social equity.
- **May and June** – Presentation of a draft regional vision and listing of candidate projects; Board endorsement of the updated policy framework to include refined goals, objectives, strategies, and project prioritization methodology.
- **August** – Board endorsement of initial draft plan for State and federal compliance review.
- **September thru Dec.** – Compliance review, interagency consultation, and plan optimization.
- **December** – Board endorsement of final draft plan for public review and comment.
- **February** – Public hearing and Board adoption of the final plan.

It has become clear to me, members of the Board, and GNRC staff that this schedule will be difficult to maintain given recent events and the uncertainty of the weeks ahead.

**Postponed Public Meetings and Workshops**

GNRC elected to cancel the March meeting of the Transportation Coordinating Committee as a result of the March 3 tornados that swept across Middle Tennessee. Since then, GNRC has elected to postpone all upcoming public gatherings in response to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic in accordance with the guidelines provided by The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the Tennessee Governor.
This includes public meetings of the Transportation Coordinating Committee, Transportation Policy Board, and workshops associated with ongoing transportation planning studies.

While staff is in continuous communication with Transportation Policy Board leadership and will make every effort to provide ongoing updates on progress, it is important to note that many members of the Board have pressing and evolving priorities within their community related to the public health crisis and ongoing recovery from the March storms.

**Technical Work Continues**

Though it will be difficult to carry-out the necessary meetings or to execute a robust public engagement strategy over the next several weeks, I want to assure you that GNRC staff and consultants are continuing the technical work required of the planning process. GNRC has made provisions to support telework and will be increasing its use of digital media and online platforms to continue its coordination with local and State planning partners. In addition, [SolveThisTogether.org](http://SolveThisTogether.org) and [GNRC.org](http://GNRC.org) will be updated with new information as it becomes available so that the public has a way to stay informed and involved.

**Request for Flexibility**

Given the situation in which the nation finds itself, I respectfully request your support as GNRC makes real-time decisions to adapt to current events. As mentioned above, we are taking steps to mitigate the impact as much as possible, but our ability to meet upcoming federal deadlines related to the regional transportation plan and the integrated congestion management process is going to be hampered.

We are committed to delivering a transportation plan that not only exceeds federal expectations, but also is fully responsive to the needs of our region. I welcome an opportunity to meet with you and TDOT leadership once the ongoing crisis stabilizes in order to discuss a mutually acceptable path forward. Until then, I believe it is appropriate for us proactively communicate with you our concerns and contingency plans.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

Mary Esther Reed
Transportation Policy Board Chair
Town of Smyrna Mayor

Cc: Members of the Nashville Area MPO Transportation Policy Board
Members of Middle Tennessee U.S. Congressional Delegation
Dr. Yvette G. Taylor, Regional Administrator, FTA Region IV
Clay Bright, Tennessee Commissioner of Transportation
Anthony Holt, Council President, GNRC
Ken Moore, Mayors Caucus Chair, GNRC
Sean Pfalzer, Transportation Planning Manager and MPO Coordinator, GNRC
Michael Skipper, Executive Director, GNRC
Dear Mayor Reed:

Thank you for your letter regarding the Nashville Area Metropolitan Planning Organization’s (MPO’s) response to the COVID-19 pandemic and its impact to the metropolitan transportation planning process. The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and our partners at the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) certainly understand the unique situation this presents to the Nashville Area MPO. We are also taking steps to carry out our mission while meeting recommended guidelines to limit the spread of the coronavirus, including teleworking, encouraging virtual meetings when possible, and limiting travel.

FHWA is committed to supporting the Tennessee Department of Transportation (TDOT) and all MPOs in carrying out their metropolitan planning processes while adapting to these events. The Nashville Area MPO is not alone in having to adjust its response to this situation, and TDOT and FHWA must ensure consistency across Tennessee’s MPOs regarding requests for flexibility. We are working together to better understand specific challenges faced by each MPO and to best advise on methods to address those challenges. Apart from any specific concerns, we have advised all MPOs to make reasonable efforts to continue to follow established schedules and meet the regulatory deadlines of the planning program. For example, FHWA encourages using virtual Board meetings and virtual public involvement to address the challenges you identified. We are prepared to assist the MPO in such an effort or addressing any other challenges. Please ensure the MPO staff is communicating as soon as possible with TDOT and FHWA as potential impacts to the planning process arise.

FHWA and MPO staff have met regularly for several months now regarding the MPO’s CMP update. These meetings have proven successful and we would like for this continue, albeit virtually for the foreseeable future. We would also welcome an opportunity to meet with you and TDOT virtually regarding a path forward to discuss any specific concerns.

Please don’t hesitate to further reach out with any questions.
Sincerely,

Pamela M. Kordenbrock
Division Administrator

cc: Dr. Yvette Taylor, Regional Administrator, Federal Transit Administration Region 4
Ms. Sabrina David, Deputy Division Administrator, FHWA TN Division
Mr. Clay Bright, Commissioner, Tennessee Department of Transportation
Mr. Michael Skipper, Executive Director, Greater Nashville Regional Council
March 20, 2020

The Honorable Mitch McConnell  
Majority Leader, United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi  
Speaker, United States House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Charles Schumer  
Minority Leader, United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy  
Minority Leader, United States House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Leader McConnell, Speaker Pelosi, Leader Schumer, and Leader McCarthy:

On behalf of the nation’s metropolitan, regional, and rural planning organizations, the undersigned organizations are writing to thank you for strong leadership and swift action to help contend with the extensive challenges raised by the COVID-19 pandemic, including confronting the public health issues and the economic fallout of this ongoing and unprecedented situation.

The nation’s metropolitan and regional planning organizations represent the collective voices of city, municipal, and county officials, all of which are contending with the extensive fallout from the COVID-19 pandemic. Our members are playing significant roles on behalf of their communities, including critical coordination for the provision of transportation services to support public health and the basic functions of the economy during this time of unprecedented challenges. These organizations will also help support the economic recovery through the efficient and prioritized expenditure of infrastructure funds. Like others, planning organizations face uncertain futures with regard to staffing and funding.

As you consider future legislation to promote the public health response and bolster economic recovery, we encourage you to include or consider the following:

- **Provide additional funds to metropolitan, regional, and rural planning organizations through the Metropolitan Planning (PL) program, Federal Transit Administration planning funding, and the State Planning and Research (SPR) Program.** Collectively, planning organizations anticipate tens of millions of dollars in unanticipated spending from additional IT expenses, additional sick time and health care costs, loss of productivity, and project delays. Additional and robust funding can help ensure they are able to continue their important efforts at the regional level to support the public health response and prevent staffing losses that could hamper the expenditure of recovery funds over time. **These additional planning funds should be provided at 100 percent federal share**, to reduce the burden on local areas and to ensure the availability to utilize these funds during times of critical challenges to local budgets.

- **Utilize the Surface Transportation Block Grant Program (STBGP) (23 U.S.C. § 133)** under the federal-aid highway program and public transportation program for stimulus spending. **Distribute this funding using existing formulas and suballocation procedures** under 23 U.S.C. § 133. **Remove local match requirements** so federal funds can cover 100% of a project’s costs.
- Allow funds provided in a stimulus bill to be used as the local share funds for any program, including Surface Transportation Block Grant Program, Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality, and Metropolitan Planning. Allowing new funds to be used to match other program funds would help ensure speedier project delivery.
- Waive all restrictions under 49 U.S.C. § 5307 on the use of funds for operating expenses for the remainder of fiscal year 2020 and fiscal year 2021. During this period, allow federal funds to be used for 100 percent of project costs.
- Consider ways to accelerate the current reimbursement of funds to States and subsequently to sub-state entities. The current reimbursement process can require states and local entities to incur expenses with their own funds and then wait to be reimbursed. In some cases, this may present an impediment that could slow down the expenditure of resources.
- Provide regulatory relief. The following changes will help planning organization meet federal requirements during a period of disruption to their normal operations while at the same time protecting public health by not requiring gatherings of any size.
  - Encourage the Federal Highway Administration, Federal Transit Administration, and others to **liberally grant extensions to organizations for requirements** such as long-range transportation plan (LRTP) approvals, Unified Public Work Program (UPWP), FTA triennial reviews, quadrennial certifications, invoice processing, and other relevant deadlines that occur during fiscal year 2020 to provide up to 180 days after the National Emergency Declaration is lifted for compliance.
  - **Extend deadlines for discretionary grant programs**, including obligation deadlines, so recipients are not penalized with the loss of their grant due to an extended period of slowdown or stoppage of required work.
  - Encourage FHWA and FTA to **provide maximum flexibility in regards to public involvement requirements**, allowing for distribution of materials on the internet or through other reasonable distribution methods, and allowing for gathering of comments electronically as sufficient under such requirements for the duration of the national state of emergency and until Federal, State, and local health officials agree that it is safe for public gatherings to recommence.
  - Encourage FHWA and FTA to **allow, pursuant to federal law, a MPOs policy board to meet electronically or telephonically** during the period in which a national disaster is declared. Policy boards meeting in this way should be able to vote and otherwise make decisions as if they were meeting in person. Further, **grant emergency powers to an organization’s Executive Director or Board Chairperson** to approve documents on behalf of the MPO as needed.
  - **Ease lapsing requirements** if a State can demonstrate that an impact of the national emergency declaration is the proximate cause of the funding lapse.
  - Provide **flexibility to states and MPOs to update required performance targets and set new targets** as appropriate to adequately reflect the anticipated conditions. Further, **allow for or automatically grant extensions of performance target setting deadlines** as appropriate, including the MPO CMAQ Performance Plan which is currently due on October 1, 2020.
  - **Consider changes to procurement processes** that will be necessary if whole offices are teleworking, such as allowing for electronic signatures.
Planning organizations play a critical supporting role for the ongoing local public health response and economic stimulus that will be required in the future. We look forward to working with Congress to help support these efforts and ensure as robust a response as possible to the many challenges raised by COVID-19.

Sincerely,

Bill Keyrouze
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Association of Metropolitan Planning Organizations

Leslie Wollack
Executive Director
National Association of Regional Councils

Joe McKinney
Executive Director
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