REGULAR MEETING AGENDA

1. Approval of 5/20/20 Meeting Minutes (A) Mary Esther Reed
   TPB Chair

2. Public Comment

3. Action Items:
   a. Res. TPB-2020-04 Adopt Amendment to the FYs 2020-23 TIP (A) Anna Emerson
      Principal Planner
      Staff have held a 21-day public review and comment period for Cycle C amendments to the FYs 2020-23 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). The TPB is requested to hold a public hearing prior to adoption.

4. Informational Items:
   a. Presentation of Amendment to the FYs 2020-21 UPWP (A) Sean Pfalzer
      Transportation Planning Manager & MPO Coord.
      Staff will present an amendment to the Unified (Transportation) Planning Work Program (UPWP) scheduled to be released for public review and comment on June 20.
   b. Update on the Unified Transportation Plan Process (A) Sean Pfalzer
   c. Unified Transportation Plan: Traffic Congestion (A) Max Baker
      Director of Research & Analytics
      Staff will present on update of various efforts related to the congestion management process for the Unified Plan to include an overview of data and monitoring, performance measures, management and mitigation strategies.

5. Regular Reports:
   a. TDOT Report TDOT Representative
   b. Chair’s Report Mary Esther Reed
   c. Staff Report Sean Pfalzer

6. Other Business

7. Adjourn

GNRC will be using the Microsoft Teams platform for the online meeting. Meeting Link and Call-In Details available at www.GNRC.org/Calendar

(A) Indicates an attachment is available in the packet

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Agenda Item 1.

Meeting Minutes - May 20, 2020

Background

Meeting minutes have been prepared and are ready for approval.

Recommendation

Approve meeting minutes.
Attendees: Mayor Rogers Anderson, Mr. Andy Barlow (For Mayor Ed Hagerty), Mr. Stephen Bland, Mayor Paige Brown, Mayor Mike Callis, Ms. Faye DiMassimo (for Mayor John Cooper), Mr. Preston Elliott (for Gov. Bill Lee), Mr. Tim Ellis (for Mayor Jeff Duncan), Mayor Rick Graham, Mr. Gerald Herman (for Mayor Michael Arnold), Mayor Anthony Holt, Mr. Eddie Hood, Mr. Jim Kerr (for Mayor Shane McFarland), Mayor Bill Ketron, Ms. Pam Kordenbrock, Mayor Ken Moore, Mayor Mary Esther Reed, Mayor Billy Vogle

Call to Order

Mayor Mary Esther Reed, Chair, opened the meeting at 10:20 a.m. via Microsoft Teams.

Approval of the February 19, 2020 Meeting Minutes

Mayor Anthony Holt moved to approve the February 19, 2020 meeting minutes. Mayor Rick Graham seconded. The minutes were approved unanimously.

Public Comment

There was no public comment.

Action Items

a) Resolution TPB 2020-02 Guiding the Distribution of HIP Funds

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

She said that the money would be held in a grouping for projects within the TIP with immediate right-of-way or construction cost needs.

Mayor Ken Moore moved to approve Resolution TPB-2020-02 Guiding the Distribution of HIP Funds. Mayor Holt seconded and the motion passed unanimously.
b) **Resolution TPB 2020-03 Amending the FYs 2020-23 TIP**

Ms. Emerson said that the amendments have undergone public review and comment and staff received no comments.

Mayor Reed opened the public hearing. There were no comments. Mayor Reed closed the public hearing.

Mayor Moore moved to approve Resolution TPB-2020-03 Amending the FYs 2020-23 TIP. Mayor Graham seconded, and the motion passed unanimously.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Amendment #</th>
<th>TIP #</th>
<th>RTP #</th>
<th>Project Name</th>
<th>Sponsor</th>
<th>Action</th>
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<td>2016-76-237</td>
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<td>Elzie Patton Elementary &amp; Mt. Juliet SRTS</td>
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**Informational Items**

a) **Proposed Amendments to the FYs 2020-23 TIP**

Ms. Emerson briefly went over the proposed Cycle C amendments for the FYs 2020-23 TIP. She said they will be released for the required 21-day public review and comment period.

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<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Project Name</th>
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<th>Action</th>
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<td>2020-008</td>
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<td>Mt. Juliet</td>
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<td>2020-010</td>
<td>2014-111-051</td>
<td>1018-202</td>
<td>Dickerson Pk (US41/31W)/CSX Underpass Reconstruction</td>
<td>TDOT</td>
<td>Add funds</td>
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<td>2020-011</td>
<td>2015-111-069</td>
<td>Active Transportation</td>
<td>North Nashville Transit Center</td>
<td>Nashville MTA (WeGo)</td>
<td>Add funds; clarify scope</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2020-013</td>
<td>2020-14-101</td>
<td>Safety</td>
<td>I-24 Ramp Improvements at Exit 35</td>
<td>TDOT</td>
<td>Add project</td>
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<tr>
<td>2020-014</td>
<td>2020-14-102</td>
<td>Safety</td>
<td>I-24 Ramp Improvements at Exit 57</td>
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<td>Add project</td>
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<tr>
<td>2020-015</td>
<td>2020-14-103</td>
<td>Safety</td>
<td>I-24 Ramp Improvements at Exit 59</td>
<td>TDOT</td>
<td>Add project</td>
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<td>2020-56-104</td>
<td>Multimodal</td>
<td>Richland Park Sidewalk Connector</td>
<td>Portland</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>2020-017</td>
<td>2018-26-074</td>
<td>Active Transportation</td>
<td>Harvey Park Greenway – Phase 1</td>
<td>Spring Hill</td>
<td>Add funds</td>
</tr>
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</table>
b) **Updates on Transportation Planning (MPO) Activities**

Mayor Reed provided a summary of the past couple months, an update on where we are now, a preview of where we are headed, and an overview of considerations as we move forward.

She said that transportation issues have been top priorities for quite a few years but COVID-19 has recently shifted public health and economic concerns to the forefront.

She said that a letter has been sent to TDOT, FHWA, and FTA about the impact of the March 3rd tornado and COVID-19 on the schedule for updating our regional plan. She said that we want to make sure that the Plan is usable and that transportation issues are too important to not engage the citizens.

Mayor Reed said that the GNRC staff continue 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, including the ongoing implementation of a Congestion Management Process, coordination of roadway safety data, and an assessment of the emerging technologies and smart mobility applications.

She noted that community engagement activities are on hold for major studies, including South Corridor and Downtown Inner Loop, but that staff is reaching out to Metro Nashville and TDOT to learn more about how the COVID-19 pandemic has impacted their planning efforts. These plans are to be included in the RTP as these are a major part of having a successful and usable regional plan.

Mayor Reed requested that staff reach out to state and federal partners in the coming weeks to discuss the challenges involved in completing a plan under the current circumstances. She expressed a need to complete these meetings soon so that we can bring back an updated schedule to the board by the June 17th meeting.

Mayor Reed said that mayors will need to assess how COVID-19 will impact our local funding priorities, the region will need to assess how the State of Tennessee will react to the budget shortfalls, and staff will need to assess how to engage the public and stakeholders in a meaningful conversation about transportation in a post COVID-19 world.

She reminded members that the major update is to be adopted in February 2021. She noted that there is a sound Plan through 2040 and that the RTP is important for the region. She requested assistance from Pam and FHWA in seeking flexibility with this plan update.

Mayor Moore said that he wants to compliment Mayor Reed for her leadership. He said that COVID-19 has affected the thought process. Traffic will come back and it is important all on same page to solve the problem. It needs to be a team effort.

He thanked the staff for their hard work and TDOT and FHWA for their efforts. He said that he was happy that Mr. Preston Elliott is now at TDOT.
c) **Unified Transportation Plan: Growth Forecasting**

Mr. Max Baker, Director of Research & Analytics, said that the staff is refining the land use forecasting model and have developed an online application to work with the staffs of the jurisdictions. He said that the involvement of the local partners is important. They have 1) reviewed and commented on Woods and Poole Economics population, household, and employment projects, 2) provided 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) identified development approved for construction between the model base year (2017) and first horizon (2025) to account for known short-term growth.


d) **Unified Transportation Plan: Travel Demand/Traffic Forecasting**

Mr. Vince Bernardin, Resource Systems Group, Inc. a GNRC Consultant, reviewed the existing activity-based model and the new capabilities of the model.

Mr. Baker said that the next steps are 1) on Friday, May 22nd the modeling will have the complete results for 2017 base year for the travel demand model, 2) the final “trend” forecasts for 2025-2035, and 2045 will be available from the completed land use model. The forecasts for 2025, 2035, and 2045 will be presented to the TCC on June 3rd.

**Regular Report**

a) **TDOT Report**

Mr. Preston Elliot, TDOT, said that COVID-19 has been impactful on TDOT operations and the strategies for moving forward. He said that TDOT has several planning activities underway, including a I-40/I-81 Corridor Study and a Statewide Active Transportation Plan. TDOT recently held a virtual public meeting via Zoom for the I-40/81 Corridor Study and expect to complete it by early 2021. TDOT met with GNRC staff to discuss the Statewide Active Transportation Plan and are seeking input from members through an online survey that will be distributed. Statewide Active Transportation Plan is expected to be completed by late Fall of 2020.

Mr. Elliott also said that the TDOT Multimodal Access Grants and IMPROVE ACT Transit Grants have been awarded. There were 18 Multimodal Access Grant awards totaling $15 million. The cities of Lebanon and Mt. Juliet were both awarded grants. WeGo was awarded funds for the North Nashville Transit Center.

b) **Staff Report**

Mr. Pfalzer previewed the upcoming UPWP amendment that includes: 1) programming carryover funds, 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.

c) **Chair’s Report**
Mayor Reed said that she is in awe at seeing how everyone is doing in their communities. She said that the mayors in the region are lucky to be able to work with each other to help each other through these challenging times.

With no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 11:12 a.m.

Date: _______________________

___________________________
The Honorable Mary Esther Reed
Chairman, MPO Transportation Policy Board

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

Resolution TPB-2020-04 Amending the FYs 2020-2023 Transportation Improvement Program

Background

The proposed amendments to the TIP (Cycle C) have been requested by project sponsors and scheduled for adoption according to the following schedule.

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

Recommendation

Adopt Resolution TPB-2020-04 amending the TIP.
WHEREAS, the Nashville Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) is responsible for the development and adoption of a Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) for the metropolitan planning area in cooperation with the state, local governments, and public transit operators; and

WHEREAS, on October 16, 2019, the MPO adopted the TIP for federal fiscal years 2020 through 2023 to advance projects contained within the MPO's Regional Transportation Plan; and

WHEREAS, the TIP consists of a staged multi-year program of federally and regionally significant transportation improvement projects that are financially constrained by year and includes an annual element for Metropolitan Nashville and Davidson County, Maury County, Robertson County, Rutherford County, Sumner County, Williamson County, and Wilson County; and

WHEREAS, the MPO's Public Participation Plan allows the public and interested stakeholders a period of no less than 10 days to review proposed amendments to the TIP; and

WHEREAS, the following amendments have met all public noticing requirements, are consistent with the 2040 Regional Transportation Plan, and conform to the requirements of Title 23 Code of Federal Regulations Part 450.324;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Transportation Policy Board of the Nashville Area Metropolitan Planning Organization, that the Fiscal Years 2020 through 2023 Transportation Improvement Program is amended as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Amendment#</th>
<th>Project Description</th>
<th>Proposed Change</th>
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<td>2020-011</td>
<td>North Nashville Transit Center</td>
<td>Add funds; clarify scope</td>
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<tr>
<td>2020-012</td>
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Adopted this 17th day of June, 2020 by the Transportation Policy Board of the Nashville Area Metropolitan Planning Organization.

Attest:

The Honorable Mary Esther Reed, Transportation Policy Board Chair

Sean Pfalzer, MPO Coordinator
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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<td>Total</td>
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<td>205,621</td>
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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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<th>Type of Work</th>
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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

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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.

The current UPWP is online at www.GNRC.org/UPWP

Schedule

- June 3 – Initial Presentation to the TCC
- June 17 – Initial Presentation to the Transportation Policy Board (TPB)
- June 20-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, carpools, and vanpools 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%)

**Cool Springs Transportation Study (Franklin)**

This comprehensive study reviews the Cool Springs area's existing traffic conditions, along with approved, ongoing development and its effects on the transportation infrastructure in this area over the next 10 years. The study will then develop recommendations for future development and redevelopment within this area of Franklin as it relates to traffic impacts and analysis. It is anticipated this study will result in updated needs/requirements for Traffic Impact Studies (TIS) for new development. The Cool Springs Transportation Study is currently underway and has a budget of $290,100.
Agenda Item 4b.

Update on MPO Activities, Impact of COVID-19 Pandemic

- **May 20** Remarks from TPB Chair Mary Esther Reed re: Meeting with State and Federal Partners
  - **June 4** Response from FHWA
- **March 17** Letter from TPB Chair Mary Esther Reed to FHWA, FTA, and TDOT re: local response to COVID-19
  - **April 8** Response from FHWA
- **March 20** Letter from National Association of Regional Councils, Association of MPOs, and National Association of Development Organizations to U.S. Congressional Leadership re: Federal-Aid, Relief, and Flexibility
- **May 7** Letter from National Association of Regional Councils, Association of MPOs, and National Association of Development Organizations to U.S. Congressional Leadership re: Federal-Aid, Relief, and Flexibility
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.
Michael Skipper

From: Kordenbrock, Pamela (FHWA) <Pamela.Kordenbrock@dot.gov>
Sent: Thursday, June 4, 2020 4:37 PM
To: me.reed@townofsmyrna.org
Cc: bvogle@robcotn.org; ken.moore@franklintn.gov; Anthony Holt; paige.brown@gallatintn.gov; Michael Skipper; Michelle Lacewell; Sean Pfalzer; Claxton, Theresa (FHWA); Santalla, Sean (FHWA); Paul Degges; Preston Elliott; Kwabena Aboagye
Subject: RE: RE: FHWA/FTA, TDOT, GNRC Meeting to Discuss RTP (Doodle Poll)

Mayor Reed,

I appreciate the Nashville MPO reaching out regarding this meeting. Since we’re not able to attend the suggested dates next week, it gave me an opportunity to reflect on the meeting purpose and proposed agenda items.

As stated in our attached April 8th letter to you, FHWA recognizes the affects and difficulties faced by MPO leadership, staff, and partners, and are willing to engage with TDOT and the MPO in a discussion regarding a request for flexibility under these circumstances. However, FHWA and FTA need to understand the specific challenges faced by the MPO in order to best participate in such a discussion. We request the Nashville MPO indicate specific challenges it has faced, the impacts to the RTP development, the proposed response to these impacts with identified timeframes, and any specific requests for flexibility. This request should be shared in writing before holding a meeting. Doing so will allow FHWA, FTA and TDOT to meaningfully consider the request and we are certain you understand the importance of deliberate consideration in this matter. Once this request is received by FHWA, FTA and TDOT, we will be more than happy to set a meeting with the MPO to discuss. Until then, we will wait for more information.

Based on discussions at the last TPB meeting, our impression was that the Board agreed that the RTP update is a necessary activity to move forward even in the face of uncertainty. As such, we encourage MPO staff to hold the necessary conversations relating to the first three agenda items identified below. As for our involvement in those items, FHWA is confident we understand the relationship between the CMP and the RTP, and our participation is not necessary for discussions regarding State and local project priorities. However, we would strongly encourage these conversations regarding the RTP status/trajectory, the RTP/CMP integration, project priorities, and other matters with regional importance be discussed with the Transportation Policy Board at upcoming meetings to ensure full engagement with the members of the MPO.

Regards…Pam

Pamela M. Kordenbrock
Division Administrator
FHWA – Tennessee Division
404 BNA Drive, Suite 508
Nashville, TN 37217
O: 615.781.5770
C: 615.426.3215

From: Sean Pfalzer <SPfalzer@gnrc.org>
Sent: Thursday, June 4, 2020 4:08 PM
To: Kordenbrock, Pamela (FHWA) <Pamela.Kordenbrock@dot.gov>; Claxton, Theresa (FHWA) <Theresa.Claxton@dot.gov>; Santalla, Sean (FHWA) <sean.santalla@dot.gov>; Paul Degges <Paul.Degges@tn.gov>; Preston Elliott <Preston.Elliott@tn.gov>; Kwabena Aboagye <Kwabena.Aboagye@tn.gov>
Good afternoon TDOT and federal partners,
We were not able to accommodate all schedules with the initial dates and times so we have proposed other options for June 11, 12, 15 and 16. Please indicate your availability via the doodle poll link below. It is important that we find a time before June 17, so please offer alternatives if these options do not work for you.

https://doodle.com/poll/gxds5fffqgvvxqs2

Thanks,

SEAN PFALZER, GNRC
o: 615-862-8844
c: 812-493-4472

From: Sean Pfalzer
Sent: Tuesday, June 2, 2020 9:23 AM
To: 'Pamela.Kordenbrock@dot.gov' <Pamela.Kordenbrock@dot.gov>; Claxton, Theresa (FHWA) <Theresa.Claxton@dot.gov>; Santalla, Sean (FHWA) <sean.santalla@dot.gov>; Paul Degges <Paul.Degges@tn.gov>; Preston Elliott <Preston.Elliott@tn.gov>; Kwabena Aboagye <Kwabena.Aboagye@tn.gov>
Cc: me.reed@townofsmyrna.org; bvogle@robcotn.org; ken.moore@franklintn.gov; Anthony Holt <AHolt@sumnercountytn.gov>; paige.brown@gallatintn.gov; Michael Skipper <mskipper@gnrc.org>; Michelle Lacewell <mlacewell@gnrc.org>; Mark Cate <mark.cate@stonesrivergroup.com>
Subject: RE: FHWA/FTA, TDOT, GNRC Meeting to Discuss RTP (Doodle Poll)

Good morning TDOT and federal partners – Per the request made by MPO Chair and Town of Smyrna Mayor Mary Esther Reed at the May 20 meeting of the Transportation Policy Board, we are reaching out to find time to discuss a plan for completing the major update to the federally-required Regional Transportation Plan for the Nashville metropolitan planning area. Please indicate you availability via the doodle poll linked below. We are looking at options for June 10, 11, and 12.

https://doodle.com/poll/gxds5fffqgvvxqs2

Below are several objectives that we would like to achieve through the meeting, and we welcome your input to coordinate on an agenda prior to the meeting.

- Bring everyone onto same page with respect to current plan status and trajectory
- Bring everyone onto the same page about the relationship between the CMP and the plan
- Discuss importance of integrating Metro and TDOT projects and initiatives into the regional plan
- Assess COVID-19 Impacts on process and timelines
- Engage with FHWA/FTA on the degree of flexibility that they can provide under extenuating circumstances

Thanks,

SEAN PFALZER
Transportation Planning Manager
Greater Nashville Regional Council
o: 615-862-8844 c: 812-493-4472
220 Athens Way #200, Nashville, TN 37228
GNRC.org | SolveThisTogether.org
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 and 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,

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
Mayo Mary Esther Reed  
Chair, Transportation Policy Board  
Nashville Area Metropolitan Planning Organization  
220 Athens Way, Suite 200  
Nashville, TN 37228  

Subject: Request for Flexibility on Federal Deadlines for Transportation Planning  

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  The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Majority Leader, United States Senate   Speaker, United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20510                  Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Charles Schumer  The Honorable Kevin McCarthy
Minority Leader, United States Senate Minority Leader, United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20510                  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.
  o 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.
  o **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.
  o 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.
  o 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.
  o **Ease lapsing requirements** if a State can demonstrate that an impact of the national emergency declaration is the proximate cause of the funding lapse.
  o **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.
  o **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  
Interim Executive Director  
Association of Metropolitan Planning Organizations

Leslie Wollack  
Executive Director  
National Association of Regional Councils

Joe McKinney  
Executive Director  
National Association of Development Organizations
May 7, 2020

The Honorable Mitch McConnell  The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Majority Leader, United States Senate Speaker, United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20510 Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Charles Schumer  The Honorable Kevin McCarthy
Minority Leader, United States Senate Minority Leader, United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20510 Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairwoman Lowey, Ranking Member Granger, Chairman Price, and Ranking Member Diaz-Balart:

The Association of Metropolitan Planning Organizations (AMPO), the National Association of Regional Councils (NARC), and the National Association of Development Organizations (NADO) write to request that Congress appropriate at least $20 billion in flexible transportation funds through the Surface Transportation Block Grant Program (STBGP) in the next coronavirus relief bill. These funds will be used to maintain vital transportation-related jobs, keep projects and programs moving forward, and address the loss of state and local revenues that support locally-selected transportation investments. State and local funding makes up two-thirds of the nation’s investment in transportation infrastructure and pays the non-federal share of federally funded projects and programs.

Further, we urge that these **additional funds be suballocated in the same manner as funds that were apportioned in 2020 for urbanized and non-urbanized areas** under STBGP in the FAST Act (23 U.S.C. 133(d)(1)(A)). Eligible uses of these funds should be expanded to include **serving as the non-federal match** attributable to MPO and state planning activities and serving as the non-federal match for any program or programs under Title 23 (Highways) or Chapter 53 of Title 49 (Public Transportation). Further, any **eligible uses for these funds should be allowed a 100% federal share**.

In conjunction with this immediate funding, we also urge you to **support the passage of a long-term surface transportation bill** before it expires September 30 of this year. These two actions taken together provide Congress a unique opportunity to increase federal transportation investments to help restart the economy that is reeling from the impacts of the coronavirus and to provide certainty of surface transportation policy and funding once the country moves past the pandemic.

As Congress seeks to promote recovery from the COVID19 crisis and stimulate the U.S. economy through infrastructure investments, utilizing the existing STBGP minimizes the need to design new systems or rules, so federal funding can more easily and quickly flow to local governments. Under the STBGP, projects are already programmed so have been vetted and are locally supported. STBGP provides flexibility that allows targeting highest priority projects, based on local economic circumstances and transportation conditions and needs. This is particularly compelling now as cities and counties are facing significant revenue losses in sources that they use for capital investment, including gas taxes and sales taxes. As local communities are forced to shift funds to cover revenue losses and pay for immediate needs in public health and safety, cities and counties are considering delaying or reducing their capital investment programs. This will result in a reduction of construction spending and
associated job losses in public works departments as well as in private-sector contractors. As such, when our nation is trying to move to economic recovery, we may have a drain on capital investment just when it would be most beneficial. An STBGP funding supplement could help to avoid job losses and stimulating economic recovery.

Additional suballocated funding through the STBGP would effectively allow already planned and programmed transportation capital projects to continue, i.e., help avoid project delays, deferrals, and corresponding public and private sector layoffs, and function as economic stimulus by injecting capital funding into the economy and accelerating some projects.

As Congress debates these important relief and recovery funds for transportation, we request that Congress ensure that states coordinate with the relevant Metropolitan Planning Organizations before changes are made to the state transportation improvement program (STIP) to prevent any possible delay in project schedules that have already been agreed to by the state and MPO.

Lastly, the impacts of the coronavirus have impacted more than the funding to support transportation investments. Members of AMPO, NARC, and NADO are also confronted with statutorily required deadlines and processes. To this end, we request that Congress:

- **Grant extensions to MPOs for requirements** such as long-range transportation plan (LRTP) and Transportation Improvement Program update and approvals, Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) updates, FTA triennial reviews, quadrennial certifications, invoice processing, and other relevant deadlines that occur during fiscal year’s 2020 and 2021.
- **Authorize and permit administrative Transportation Improvement Programs and UPWP amendments.** This will allow the MPOs to add new studies, consulting work or data purchases and budget changes related to the COVID-19 pandemic as these costs may exceed 5% of the existing budget. In addition, allow for flexible carry-over of any unspent 2020 planning funds directly into the 2021 budget year. These actions would not require a formal MPO meeting per the adopted and federally required Public Involvement Plans. This provision is only permitted during the time period that a state-level emergency declaration is in effect.
- **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.
- **Direct USDOT to develop guidance through FHWA and FTA or pass a statutory framework 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.
- **Direct USDOT to develop guidance through FHWA and FTA or pass a statutory framework to allow a MPOs policy board to meet electronically or telephonically** during the period in which a national disaster is declared. Policy boards that meet 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.

Federal investments in the next stimulus bill and through the reauthorization of a surface transportation bill will provide immediate and future funding certainty essential to preserving transportation investments as the country continues to operate under the Federal and State health directives due to the coronavirus and beyond. Again, we appreciate your leadership during this unprecedented time and for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,

Bill Keyrouze  Leslie Wollack  Joe McKinney
Interim Executive Director  Executive Director  Executive Director
Association of Metropolitan  National Association  National Association
Planning Organizations  of Regional Councils  of Development Organizations
Agenda Item 4c.

Unified Transportation Plan Activities on Traffic Congestion

**Background**

GNRC is currently working with federal and state partners on an update to the federally required “congestion management process” or CMP as part of the development of the 2045 Regional Transportation Plan (RTP).

Staff will present an overview of CMP progress and preview the June 19 online workshop set to reveal the future year forecasts for growth and traffic trends for Middle Tennessee. **Details for how to join the 10:30 a.m. June 19 workshop will be posted at [www.GNRC.org/calendar](http://www.GNRC.org/calendar).**

An overview of the current CMP for the Nashville metropolitan planning area is available online:


An overview of federal guidance for the development of a CMP is available online.