

## MINUTES

### TRANSPORTATION COORDINATING COMMITTEE Of the

#### Nashville Area Metropolitan Planning Organization

April 6, 2022

Attendees: Mr. Calvin Abram, Ms. Kimberly Atlee, Mr. Andy Barlow, Mr. Tom Brashear, Mr. Felix Castrodad, Ms. Ceagus Clark, Mr. Carlton Cobb, Mr. Keith Free, Mr. Glenn Harper, Ms. Billy Higgins, Mr. Joe Horne, Mr. Jim Kerr, Mr. Jonathan Marston, Mr. Bill McCord, Mr. Addam McCormick, Mr. Andrew Pieri, Mr. Kevin Rigsby, Mr. Sean Santalla, Mr. Brent Schultz, Mr. Marty Sewell, Mr. Josh Suddath, Mr. Jonathan Wellemeier, Mr. Micah Wood

#### Approval of Previous Meeting Minutes

Mr. Andy Barlow, Chair, opened the meeting at 10:30 a.m. Mr. Jim Kerr moved to approve the February 2, 2022 meeting minutes. Mr. Keith Free seconded. The motion was approved unanimously.

#### Public Comment

There was no public comment.

#### Amendments to the FYs 2020-23 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)

Ms. Anna Emerson, Principal Planner, gave an overview of the proposed amendments for Cycle C. The amendments will be considered for adoption on April 20<sup>th</sup> by the TPB. She said that there may be some added amendments due to lapsing HIP and TAP funds.

<b>Amend #</b>	<b>TIP #</b>	<b>RTP #</b>	<b>Project Name</b>	<b>Sponsor</b>	<b>Action</b>
2022-047	2018-56-079	Active Transportation	Portland Pedestrian Connector Project	Portland	Revise scope; revise funds
2022-048	2017-47-029	Congestion Mitigation	Smyrna ITS Phases 3, 4, & 5	Smyrna	Add funds

She said that the programs with lapsing federal funds are the Highway Infrastructure Program (HIP), and Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP). She said that the MPO adopted a resolution in May 2020 for the HIP program that targeted cost overruns for ROW and Construction phases of projects. She noted that there is \$3.77 million in HIP funds that are scheduled to lapse by September 30, 2022 and \$1.33 million in TAP funds subject to lapse by September 30, 2022.

Ms. Emerson said that staff went through a process to identify suitable candidates for these funds. She said that the factors for the suitable candidates for the funds are 1) is the project in or approaching ROW or construction phase, 2) is the project consistent with HIP or TAP funding eligibility, 3) how much HIP/TAP funding could the project utilize and is there additional funding necessary to complete the project, and 4) what is the level of risk that the project will not be able to obligate the funds by August 2022.

Mr. Felix Castrodad asked how the process works with the swap with TDOT. Ms. Emerson said it would likely involve a conversation between the MPO and TDOT asking them to identify one of their projects that can utilize this funding quickly. We would receive in return most likely STBG funds that would be put into the general pot of funds available to projects.

Mr. Sean Pfalzer, Transportation Planning Manager, said that the easiest situation to ensure timely obligation would be a funding swap, which would be an adjustment to the TIP. Ms. Emerson said that there has been a lot of uncertainty on local projects and when they would be able to obligate the funding, which makes the funding swap a suitable approach.

#### **Project Delivery Task Force Updates**

Mr. Barlow gave an overview of the work completed thus far with the task force. He said that the task force is made up of TCC members, elected officials, GNRC staff, and TDOT staff. He said that the meetings have been very productive.

Mr. Pfalzer said that there have been five meetings so far. He went over the obstacles to obligation, the areas of opportunity, and outstanding questions. He said that work is underway on a memorandum to provide an update on the progress the task force has made through the five meetings. He said that the task force has reviewed programming and obligation history, current practices for programming, and surveyed members to identify obstacles to obligation.

Mr. Pfalzer went over the common challenges identified in the task force:

- **Major Challenges:** Complex Review/Approvals, Utility Relocation
- **Moderate Challenges:** Staffing Challenges, Insufficient Funding
- **Minor or Occasional Challenges:** Conflicting Expectations on Design, Lack of Public Buy-In

Mr. Pfalzer gave an overview of the task force's objectives, current practices, and areas of opportunity.

- **Information Exchange:** To disseminate meaningful information about project updates and set clear expectations for meeting deadlines

- **Policy and Programming:** To optimize programming policies and procedures to minimize obstacles and better position projects for success
- **Training and Education:** To raise awareness of TIP programming policies, federal obligation requirements, and TDOT local programming guidelines
- **Workflow and Process:** To improve predictability in the process and align the level of effort with project scale and scope

Mr. Andy Barlow covered the next steps for the task force. He said that the next steps are to invite TDOT local programs and the environmental division to discuss their perspective on issues and challenges with the task force. He also said that the task force needs to assess each of the identified areas of opportunity and potential solutions, and to begin drafting recommendations to include roles, responsibilities, timelines, and resources. He said that a good example is the change in guidelines for driveway easements, and that there are opportunities to coordinate among agencies to ensure easier implementation of new guidelines.

Mr. Bill McCord said that the local programs flow chart was good but wondered if there is a similar chart for other types of projects. He said that this would be helpful.

Mr. Jonathan Marston said that realistic timeframes have been discussed depending on the type of project. He said that timeframes are difficult to implement.

Mr. Tom Brashear said that TDOT needs to consider prioritization of some projects to alleviate any bottlenecks between projects. These bottlenecks then become emergency local projects.

Mr. Jonathan Wellemeyer said that project management at TDOT is reviewing their process.

Mr. Barlow said that Mr. Jim Kerr, Mr. Josh Suddath, Mr. Jonathan Marston, and Mr. Glenn Harper are on this task force.

Mr. Kerr said that he has had direct conversations with TDOT and that they are listening to the concerns.

Mr. Pfalzer said that all agencies are included in conversation as to what they can do to improve.

#### **Update on the Development of the FYs 2023-26 TIP**

Ms. Emerson thanked all for being responsive regarding projects. She went over how funding is allocated. She said that the bulk of TIP funds are allocated for specific programs. There is a shortfall of funding for the list of existing requests for the FY 2023-26 TIP. Ms. Emerson said that total requests for funding was \$298.5 million across all

programs. She showed a summary of existing requests for FYs 2023-2026 TIP by fiscal year.

Mr. Brashear asked if project carryover should be a smaller percentage. Ms. Emerson said yes ideally.

Mr. Pfalzer said that there is more in carryover funds in the life of the TIP than there is for the next four years. This is true for the STBG funds for the Nashville UZA. He said that the Carbon Reduction Program is a new formula program to reduce transportation emissions. Eligible projects are ITS, electrification upgrades, vehicle to vehicle infrastructure, public transit, bicycle and pedestrian facilities, and street lighting and traffic signal upgrades. The annual funding amounts for the carbon reduction program are \$2.6 million for the Nashville UZA and \$0.3 million for the Murfreesboro UZA.

Mr. Sean Santalla said that no program guidance has been released yet. The March appropriation allowed FHWA to start work on new projects. He said that there should be something soon. TDOT will be required to develop a carbon reduction strategy and must coordinate with the MPOs to develop the strategy.

Mr. Brashear asked if the funding breakdown is done with new Census 2020 numbers. He asked if there are any new UZAs. Mr. Santalla said that there are no new UZAs yet and the numbers are based on the Census. Mr. Max Baker said that criteria for establishing urbanized areas was finalized and it is significantly different from a couple of years ago. Things may or may not change. He said that they have identified late Summer when the UZAs will be released.

Mr. McCord asked if this program is similar to CMAQ and could be combined with CMAQ funds. Mr. Santalla said combining it would be a programming decision. He said that the core difference is that carbon reduction can be used anywhere in the State where CMAQ can only be used in non-attainment and maintenance areas.

Mr. Pfalzer said that CMAQ funds remain pretty level. Mr. Pfalzer said staff inflated the 2022 funding levels by 2% per year.

Mr. Pfalzer said that the factors to guide project prioritization are:

1. Existing commitments: carryover projects with U-STBG funds
2. Readiness: Active phase of work/stage of development
3. Local priority: level of priority of project proponent
4. Estimated cost: remaining funding to complete project
5. Funding eligibility and expiration: align funding sources with candidate projects that obligate in a timely manner

With understanding that there is not much money for large new projects, Mr. Pfalzer said that we are exploring a call for projects for RTP projects, non-construction phases

of TAP projects, and cost increases for Active Transportation Program, Transportation Alternative Program, Multimodal Access Grant, and Safe Routes to School projects.

Mr. McCord asked about safety projects. Mr. Pfalzer said that there has not been much discussion with TDOT's safety division on some of the implementation of RSAs. This could be an option for additional funds dedicated to safety.

### **Annual Call for Studies for UPWP**

Mr. Pfalzer said that the purpose for the call for studies is to account for all activities going on in the region and prioritize and program federal planning grants in support of transportation goals across the metropolitan planning area.

The planned activities led by GNRC include the Regional Growth Management Study, Coordinated Human Services Transportation Plan, and Regional Freight Study.

The recently updated planning emphasis areas are:

- Tackling the climate crisis
- Equity and justice
- Complete streets
- Public involvement
- STRAHNET and DOD Coordination
- FLMA Coordination
- Planning and environment linkages
- Data in transportation planning

The presentation of amendments to the work program will be on June 1. The public hearing and adoption will be June 15<sup>th</sup>.

The link to the call for studies survey is: [www.gnrc.org/UPWP/FY22-23](http://www.gnrc.org/UPWP/FY22-23)

Mr. McCord asked if a Corridor Study is requested does it need to be in the cost feasible plan or can it be an Illustrative project. Mr. Pfalzer said it must be regional in nature and probably a multi-county effort.

Mr. Josh Suddath said that Sumner County economic development team is keen on getting a feasibility study in the UPWP.

Mr. Keith Free asked where the MPO is in the purchasing of software. Mr. Pfalzer said that the project initiation form has been submitted to TDOT Local Programs.

## **2022 Nashville TMA Federal Certification Review**

Mr. Sean Santalla said that FHWA will be looking at the MPO's compliance and best practices through the Federal Certification Review.

He said that FHWA will review the MPO program in carrying out the continuing, cooperative, and comprehensive "3C" process, engaging the public and stakeholders, and addressing the 10 federal planning factors.

He said that the review will be conducted by defining the review scope which includes a desk review and conduct outreach. There will be site visit with planning partners and the certification decision and follow-up. August 3, 2022 is the deadline.

He said that feedback from the members is needed. There will be a virtual listening session on April 13<sup>th</sup> at 1:00 p.m. Comments will be accepted until May 1, 2022. Email Sean Santalla at [sean.santalla@dot.gov](mailto:sean.santalla@dot.gov) or Andres Ramirez (FTA) at [andres.ramirez@dot.gov](mailto:andres.ramirez@dot.gov)

Mr. McCord asked for a summary of the main issues from the last review. Mr. Santalla said that there were 4 corrective actions: 1) redefining the congestion management process 2) public participation plan update, 3) planning agreements, and 4) public participation plan requirements. He said that all have been resolved.

## **Regular Report**

- **Federal Report**

Mr. Santalla said that the funding opportunity for RAISE is \$1.5 billion nationally. The eligible projects are capital and planning projects. The maximum award is \$25 million with a 20% match required. The deadline is April 14, 2022.

The multi-modal project discretionary grant (MPDG) fund formerly known as BUILD and TIGER has released a notice of funding opportunity. The objectives are to improve racial equity, reduce impacts of climate change, and create good paying jobs. There is \$1.5 billion available nationally. Capital and planning projects are eligible. The deadline is April 14, 2022.

The INFRA program targets freight movement. The MEGA program is focused on large multi-modal projects. A new program, Rural surface transportation grant, targets projects in the rural areas. These three programs are combined into one funding opportunity. The deadline is May 23, 2022.

Mr. Santalla said that there are changes to TAP. FHWA has a document out that outlines all of the changes.


- **TDOT Report**  
Mr. Jonathan Wellemeyer said the release of the Urban Transportation Planning Grant will be sent out April 7<sup>th</sup>. The program goals include assisting urban jurisdictions to identify solutions and/or determine strategies. He said eligible applicants include cities and counties within the MPO planning area. The maximum award is \$200,000 and requires a 10% local match.
- **Chair's Report**  
Mr. Barlow said he was glad to see the Project Delivery Task Force is moving along.
- **Staff Report**  
Mr. Pfalzer said that the Vital Signs 2021 report is out. This year's report highlights are workforce, childcare, housing, and transportation & infrastructure.

The full report is available at <https://www.nashvillechamber.com/public-policy/vital-signs>

With no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 12:01 p.m.

Date: 6/1/22

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Andy Barlow, Chair  
Transportation Coordinating Committee

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Sean Pfalzer, Transportation Planning Manager  
Secretary, Transportation Coordinating Committee