

MACORTS Technical Coordinating Committee

A-CC Planning Department Auditorium

Wednesday, April 27, 2011

10:00 a.m.

Summary Minutes

Members Present: Brad Griffin - ACC Planning Department
Sherry McDuffie - ACC Planning Department
Anie Bassey – GDOT – Planning Office
David Clark – ACC Transportation & Public Works
David Ballard – Athens Transit System
Kim Coley – GDOT Planning - District 1
B.R. White – Oconee County Planning Department
Butch McDuffie – Athens Transit System
Audrey Johnson – GDOT Intermodal Office
Eric Blair – ACC Central Services
Ron Hamlin – UGA Campus Transit
Linda Fortson – Madison County Planning Department
Phil Munro – Madison County Engineer
Robert Mahoney – GDOT – District 1
Emil Beshara – Oconee County Public Works

Others Present: Norma Craddock – Arnoldsville Citizen
George Rodriguez – Watkinsville Citizen
Joseph Walter – Mayor, City of Watkinsville
Billy Pittard – Chairman, Oglethorpe County Board of Commissioners

I. CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Griffin called the meeting to order at 10:02 a.m. A quorum was present.

II. PUBLIC COMMENT OPPORTUNITY

Ms. Norma Craddock, a resident of Arnoldsville in Oglethorpe County, spoke about the Lexington Road Widening project. She expressed her opinion that the project should not go through Arnoldsville because it would destroy the serenity of the area. The residents in Arnoldsville do not want the additional lights and noise that the roadway would bring. She acknowledged that the project could bring businesses to Oglethorpe County, but she told the group that the residents of the area do not want the project.

Mr. Billy Pittard, Chairman of the Oglethorpe County Board of Commissioners, spoke to the committee regarding the Lexington Road project as well. He acknowledged that the project could be detrimental to Arnoldsville, but he emphasized that the economic development potential would be good for Oglethorpe County. Mr. Pittard reminded the committee that the alignment for the project is not what is on the agenda for MACORTS to consider. He added that this project is vital to Oglethorpe County and to the travelers that use the US 78 corridor.

III. APPROVAL OF MARCH 23, 2011 MEETING MINUTES

Mr. Clark made a motion to approve the March 23, 2011 TCC meeting minutes. Mr. Beshara seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous.

IV. REVIEW OF ADMINISTRATIVE MODIFICATION TO FY 2011 – 2014 TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM FOR SR 10 LOOP AT ATLANTA HIGHWAY PROJECT AND RECOMMENDATION TO POLICY COMMITTEE

Ms. McDuffie reminded the group that this is the same project that was amended earlier this month to bring the right-of-way phase into FY 2011. The cost estimate for right-of-way acquisition that was supplied by the Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) project manager was incorrect. Therefore, the cost estimate must be changed from \$13,329,550 to \$10,475,776. As an administrative modification, this action requires no additional public involvement and only 1 vote from the Technical Coordinating Committee and Policy Committee.

Mr. Clark asked where the \$2.8 million difference in the cost estimate would be spent. Mr. Bassey said he would try to get an answer to that question for the committee. Mr. Clark mentioned that the Old Hull Road project would be a good candidate for those funds. Mr. Griffin indicated that any answer to this question will be forwarded to TCC and Policy Committee members.

Mr. Clark made a motion to recommend approval of the administrative modification to update the right-of-way cost for the SR 10 Loop at Atlanta Highway project. Mr. McDuffie seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous.

V. REVIEW OF DRAFT FY 2012 – 2015 TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM (TIP) AND RECOMMENDATION TO POLICY COMMITTEE

Ms. McDuffie presented the Draft FY 2012 – 2015 TIP document to the committee. She distributed the proposed public involvement schedule, which includes a special call TCC meeting to be held on June 29, 2011.

Mr. Clark noted that there will probably be a few changes in the local projects for Athens-Clarke County after the budget is finalized. They should be reflected in the final draft of the document.

Mr. Clark made a motion to recommend approval of the Draft FY 2012 – 2015 Transportation Improvement Program to go to the public for review and comment. Mr. White seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous.

VI. DISCUSSION: CONSIDERATION OF NEW GDOT REQUEST TO ADD LEXINGTON ROAD WIDENING PROJECT TO THE 2035 LONG RANGE TRANSPORTATION PLAN

Mr. Griffin relayed a request from the Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) to reconsider the addition of the Lexington Road Widening project into the 2035 MACORTS Long Range Transportation Plan. The memo from GDOT was provided to TCC members prior to the meeting. Mr. Griffin outlined the GDOT proposal to delete the US 29 Widening projects (2 phases) from the LRTP so that there would be funds available for the Lexington Road Widening project. He informed the group that there had been brief discussion with Chairman Dove in Madison County concerning GDOT's proposal. Madison County officials are examining alternatives to the proposal.

Mr. Munro noted that the proposed request would eliminate most of the funding for Madison County projects in the LRTP. He said that Madison County was not opposed to doing what they could to help the group; however, completely deleting the US 29 project was not what they wanted to see happen. Mr. Munro expressed the need to examine Madison County's options carefully. Mr. Clark reiterated the Athens-Clarke County staff position of supporting the Lexington Road project but not at the expense of Athens-Clarke County projects. He added that if the project is added to the LRTP at the expense of a portion of Madison County's funding, it would be appropriate that the funds in the LRTP in excess of those that would be necessary for the Lexington Road Widening project should remain in Madison County projects. Mr. Beshara commented that GDOT should not be asking Madison County to give up the lion's share of their funding in the LRTP to add a project that they want in the LRTP.

There was brief discussion concerning the project alignment for the Lexington Road project. Mr. Clark asked if all of the public meetings have been held for the project. Mr. Mahoney responded that there will be other public meetings held during the environmental phase of the project. He directed the group to the GDOT website for those interested in the project information provided to the public previously. Mr. Mahoney recounted his experiences with the US 29 public meetings. He said that most of the comments regarding the US 29 project was not in favor of a 4-lane widening. There was general support for scaling back the project.

Mr. Beshara made a motion to table this request until the next TCC meeting on May 25, 2011. Mr. Clark seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous.

VII. OLD BUSINESS

There was no old business to discuss.

VIII. NEW BUSINESS / UPDATES

Mr. Beshara - Oconee County Public Works

The Oconee Connector Extension project is about 80% complete. The goal is for the project to be completed in September, ahead of schedule.

Mr. Clark – Athens-Clarke County Transportation & Public Works

Work on the Barnett Shoals / Old Lexington Road intersection project is scheduled to begin on May 23, 2011. The portion of Barnett Shoals Road between Snapfinger Drive and Old Lexington Road will be closed for the summer. Whit Davis Road will be used as an alternate. Work on the Plaza Street drainage project will begin next month. The Fowler Mill Bridge replacement project is scheduled to begin in the next 6 weeks or so.

Mr. Ron Hamlin – UGA Campus Transit

The University has a new contract for buses with Orion. A 'Request for Proposals' will be out shortly for Automatic Vehicle Locator and passenger counting technologies.

Mr. McDuffie – Athens Transit System

The system is waiting for the Athens-Clarke County budget to be released. There could be service reductions. Four new buses are expected to arrive in July. Summer bus service begins on Monday, May 2, 2011.

Mr. Mahoney – Georgia Department of Transportation, District 1

The right-of-way acquisition phase of the SR 53/Mars Hill Road Phase 1 in Oconee County is underway. Right-of-way acquisition continues on the SR 72 project in Madison County. Questions regarding the status of LMIG funding are still unresolved. Interviews for staff vacancies at the GDOT Area Office in Athens are underway. Those positions will be filled soon.

Mr. Munro – Madison County Engineer

An upgrade of the intersection at SR 29 and Glenn Carrie Road will begin shortly.

IX. ADJOURN

The meeting was adjourned at 10:41 a.m. The next TCC meeting is scheduled for May 25, 2011.