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Henderson County
TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE
May 22, 2008

Members in attendance were Chair Jim Crafton, Hendersonville representative Barbara Volk, Laurel Park representative Keith Maddox, Flat Rock representative Don Farr, Fletcher representative Eddie Henderson, Jamie Wilson of NCDOT, Planner Hope Bleecker and Planning Director Anthony Starr.

Jim Crafton called the meeting to order.

Chair's Report – Jim Crafton indicated that the charter has been approved by the Board of Commissioners and that the committee will discuss the bylaws at a future meeting. It was noted that Avalina Merrill has been the secretary to the group for a number of years and no longer will be in that role because of her relocation and other responsibilities. The County Planning Department will now serve as the primary staff to the committee.

Work Plan – Hope Bleecker reminded the group of the contents of the draft work plan. Addressing the work plan and reviewing the contents of the work plan which, we will be reviewing that next meeting. The work plan will guide the efforts of the committee and staff for the year.

Secondary Roads Project – Hope Bleecker informed the committee that Mark Gibbs, who is the District Engineer of the Henderson County area office of NCDOT, previously made a presentation to the County Commissioners on the Secondary Roads Program. The program provides for the paving of unpaved NCDOT maintained roads and also provides for the maintenance of other paved roads. The proposed funding for Henderson County is lower than anticipated because NCDOT is reallocating a portion of the funds based on a new distribution method that does not count unpaved roads where property owners refuse to provide adequate right-of-way. Because the program has reduced the number of unpaved roads, the funds are now allocated to different areas. For the foreseeable future, the County can expect roughly 1.6 M per year.

Staff Report on TIP/CTP

Hope Bleecker introduced Jamie Wilson, project construction engineer from NCDOT. The presentation started by discussing the details of Comprehensive Transportation Plan(CTP), Long Range Plan, Priority Needs list, and the Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP). The CTP is a 30 year vision plan and is mandated by the State. It is multi-modal, meaning it considers highway, transit, rail, bicycle and pedestrian modes of transportation. The highway aspect of the CTP (replaces the old thoroughfare plans) is classified into Freeways, Expressways, Major and Minor Arterials. All of the projects that were requested by the Henderson County TAC were incorporated with the CTP with the exception of minor collectors that were mentioned by the group. Hope discussed the priority needs list and the incorporation into the State TIP (STIP). Jim stressed the importance of being involved in the priority needs listing process and how it may impact Henderson County. Anthony Starr stated that it is important that the MPO's MTIP and the STIP match up to assure federal funding. Under federal law, the MPO plays an

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important role in the allocation of the federal transportation funds for highway construction.

The status of TIP projects was discussed by the committee. I-26 widening inside the median within the existing right of way was delayed by environmental protest several years ago and the money for that project is no longer available. Paving and some rehabilitation work will occur throughout the next several summers. There will be travel information updated daily on the NCDOT website. Hope Bleecker informed the committee that Strategic Highway Corridors are the old NC network of primary highways. A push by the State to enhance capacity and planning to upgrade the corridors to carry more traffic with less delay is expected.

Rural projects - Upward Road - 80% of the right of way has been acquired and the schedule is to begin February 2009. The R505/US25 contract will be let in the spring 2010. This roadway segment will be upgraded to an interstate type facility. NCDOT acquired new right of way for the access roads in the project area. The improvement of NC 191 has been delayed however there is money for engineering scoping. It will likely not progress until there is more community support and the project involves three different local governments. Keith Maddox suggested that the group advocate the project and discuss it at a future meeting.

Jaime Wilson further updated the committee regarding US 64. US 64 plans between US 25 and Blythe Street currently show three lanes through the cemetery area. NCDOT will be working for about 2 and a half years on the project and the planned community meetings will be folded into the process to address the concerns regarding moving graves. Utilities will be relocated soon. Hendersonville has formed a committee to look at all the options on the project and to determine what is in the best long term interest of the community. The committee process is intended to take six months. Litigation over the issue is a concern and alternative designs are actively being explored.

Jaime Wilson stated that Erkwood and Shepherd streets are due to be aligned. However, right of way costs are very significant. The Closed loop signal system is under construction through the Hendersonville area. The project involves new mast arm poles and signal heads as well for 47 signals.

Flat Rock Bridge Replacement – The one lane bridge at Crail Farm and Middleton Road (Flat Rock area) is on the NCDOT schedule to be rebuilt. There are property owners who object to the bridge and have contacted NCDOT and the Village of Flat Rock. The Mayor wrote a letter to Henderson County asking for an opinion on the issue. Some Flat Rock residents do not support replacing the bridge because the amount of traffic is very small and it is in rural environment. The neighbors are concerned about the change and desire to keep the bridge in its current state. Jamie Wilson stated that NCDOT has probably given a little more (effort, time and possible expense) than normally would be the case. NCDOT wants to replace the bridge for safety reasons. The legal weight

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limit is low, it has a weak wooden foundation and the possibility of flooding could cause the bridge to wash away. This particular bridge ranks pretty high on the list of safety hazards. If and when the bridge is replaced, it will be replaced as a two lane bridge. The proposed architecture lends itself to a country theme. If NCDOT does not build the bridge the money will be spent in another area of the state. Jaime Wilson stated that for right now handling a low amount of car traffic, the bridge is safe at these load limits. He stated that it is not prepared to handle any growth or additional weight and it needs to accommodate hydraulic challenges. NCDOT will forward the plans to the HTAC and Hope will distribute them in the next packet for committee review. The committee members voiced the desire to see the plans and want to discuss it at their next meeting on July 24, 2008. NCDOT will also provide pictures of a controversial Polk County bridge which was approved as well.

Bikeway and Greenway Update – Bikeways and greenways extension of the Oklawaha trail from Jackson Park to Patton Park is funded and is on schedule for completion next year. There are requests for US 64 West to include greenways and bike lanes.

The next meeting will be July 24, 2008. The meeting adjourned at 5pm.

Jim Crafton, Chairman