

Transportation and Air Quality Committee
Mark Mathews, Chair

Wednesday, August 11, 2021
10:30AM - Noon
Online Meeting Notes

Members Present	Members Absent
Mr. Kerry Armstrong	Commissioner Marcello Banes
Mayor Eric Dial	Mayor Keisha Lance Bottoms
Ms. Tamara Hayes	Commissioner Pat Graham
Commissioner Harry Johnston	Mr. Rudy Bowen
Mayor Eric Clarkson	Commissioner Dave Carmichael
Mayor Mike Mason	Mayor Rey Martinez
Commissioner Romona Jackson Jones	Commissioner Paul Poole
Mayor Vince Williams	CEO Michael Thurmond
Commissioner Cindy Mills	Commissioner Jeff Turner
Commissioner Lisa Cupid	Mayor Rochelle Robinson
Commissioner Nicole Love Hendrickson	Commissioner Oz Nesbitt
Mr. Jim Durrett	Mayor Rusty Paul
Commissioner Carlotta Harrell	Commissioner David Thompson
Mr. Tread Davis	Commissioner Lee Hearn
Ms. Jannine Miller	Ms. Martha Martin
Mr. Greg Cantrell	Mr. Paul Radford
	Commissioner Robb Pitts
	Mr. Mark Mathews
	Ms. Liane Levetan

Transportation and Air Quality Committee
Mike Mason, Vice Chair

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1. Welcome; Acceptance of July 14, 2021 TAQC Meeting Summary

Mike Mason, TAQC Vice Chairman, greeted the committee and welcomed them to the August TAQC meeting. Vice Chair Mason mentioned that Chair Mathews had a work conflict and then stated that no comments or edits were received for the July 14, 2021, meeting summary. Hearing no additional comments from TAQC members, the summary was accepted as submitted. Vice Chair Mason asked John Orr, ARC, for any written public comments. There were none.

Vice Chair Mason noted that Secretary Buttigieg visited the city of Peachtree Corners recently.

1. TIP Amendment #3 (FIRST READ)

John Orr, ARC, noted that there was no request for public comment on the TIP Amendment.

Patrick Bradshaw, ARC, reviewed the contents of the TIP Amendment #3. This Amendment is necessary because of the major changes to the scope, timing, and funding of the projects included in the TIP. There are major changes to the MMIP projects, among others. This Amendment is a conformity amendment that requires the running of the travel demand model and an air quality analysis.

The new projects include a diverging diamond interchange at I-75 and SR 20 in Henry County that is using federal funds. The project is currently underway. There is an interchange project at I-85 and McGinnis Ferry Road. The project is currently in Phase 1 and there are new ramps proposed for Phase 2 in addition to new collector-distributor lanes. There is a new multiuse trailer connecting downtown Tucker to Northlake Mall in DeKalb County. This project has existed for a while, but due to a clerical error the project has been left off of the TIP until now. There is a new interchange and relocation occurring at I-75 and Bethlehem Road in Henry County. In the long range plan, this project was separated into two projects, and now this is being combined and accelerated in time. The MMIP project changes include changes to the extents along the west wall on I-285 and changes to the extents of the I-75 commercial lanes.

Bradshaw noted that the official public comment period is ongoing. This TIP Amendment process began in March 2021. The proposed committee and board actions include TCC on Sept. 17, ARC and GRITA Board on Sept. 8, and TAQC on Oct. 13. The documentation will be submitted to USDOT and USEPA in mid-October and ARC expects a conformity determination by mid-November at the latest.

2. ARC Regional Safety Plan

Byron Rushing, ARC, presented the ARC Regional Safety Strategy. He noted that safety is a required part of the USDOT's mandate and a core element of the MPO enabling legislation. ARC's plan is refocusing the safety discussion around reducing fatalities and serious injuries in a data-informed, proactive, and aggressive way. ARC has set aspiration targets for the federally required performance measures around safety. ARC's targets are aimed at reducing the real number of fatalities and serious injuries, which is counter to the previous methodology. The current methodology is a simple 5% annual reduction across all performance measures. The majority of fatalities and serious injuries occur on state roads within the ARC boundaries. There is a disparity here, because on 14% of the lane-miles with the ARC boundaries are state-owned but host the majority of the region's VMT. This suggests that ARC and local jurisdictions need to focus on the relationship between the region and GDOT.

This Safety Strategy is a 1.5 year study that will use a consulting team that includes planners and engineers from VHB, Gresham Smith, Sycamore Consulting, and Modern Mobility Partners. Frank Gross, VHB, introduced himself as project manager on this study. The study is scheduled to run from April 2021 to the fall of 2022. We are currently in the literature review, stakeholder input, and data analysis phases. The study also plans to research the national status of safety, including how similarly positioned regions are handling safety issues. The outcome of this project will influence the TIP project evaluation framework used by ARC to select projects for funding. There is a survey available for TCC and local staff to given information on local priorities and current practices.

4. ARC Transportation Demand Management (TDM) Plan

Roz Tucker, ARC, presented a project overview of the TDM Plan. The ARC Mobility Services group is beginning this plan that will include short- and long-term strategies and funding sources. The Plan will become a required element of future regional transportation plan updates. The Plan is being developed by ARC and a consulting team from ICF.

There are four main Tasks for the Plan and we are currently in Task 1, stakeholder outreach and participation. The other tasks include a needs assessment, the development of an action plan, and the final report. The stakeholder pool includes the TDMCC, agency partners, employer partners, and the general public. Tucker noted that an equity analysis is a highlight of this Plan that aims to include often overlooked stakeholders and targeted communications as part of the Task 2 needs assessment. The Task 3 strategy review will include aspects of workforce development and economic development. The implementation of the action plan will include deploying the framework, staff training, and performance evaluation over time. The Task 4 final report will include cheat sheets and target messaging available for the local jurisdictions to freely use.

This project is expected to run from the fall of 2021 to the first quarter of 2023.

Tread Davis asked if remote working is being considered as a core component of the commute patterns going forward. Tucker answered that it is being considered as a permanent part of commuting going forward, based on the survey results the Mobility Services group has gotten over the past 18 months. Chairwoman Harrell of Henry County noted about the staggering of commute times during the rush period is an effective way to control congestion.

5. FAST Act Transportation Reauthorization Update

John Bayalis, ARC, noted that the Senate has passed a \$1 trillion plus package. There are major increases for planning, transit, roads, bridge, electrification of the fleet, etc. The House will now examine at the package. The House is using the budget reconciliation process and will start in earnest after the August break concludes. The Senate also passed its \$3.4 trillion overall budget resolution that the House will need to reconcile. The items that didn't make it into the Senate's infrastructure package are largely included in the general budget. Bayalis noted that the current budget ends September 30 and he expects a continuing resolution to maintain current funding because the new legislation is unlikely to pass before then. He noted that there is a reduced match of funding for areas of poverty, which is a good step for this committee. He hoped to keep that issue included in the final package.

John Orr, ARC, noted that the proposed funding increases in both versions of the reauthorization bills are much larger than those seen in the past. Either version of the bill will represent a large increase in overall funding for the region.

6. Other Staff Items

John Orr, ARC, read off the attendance list and noted that a quorum was present. He noted that copies of the presentation given today are available on the ARC website.

Orr also reviewed a part of the GDOT presentation given to TCC last week. GDOT anticipates significant traffic delays resulting from the repair of several bridges along the I-285 top end. They are closing several lanes to accommodate the construction and the lanes will remain closed through at least September.

7. Other Committee Introduced Items

None.

8. Announcements

John Orr, ARC, announced that a survey for TAQC members will be released soon that asks about the project evaluation weights for the TIP cookbook.

9. Adjourn