

Blueprint 2000 TCC Meeting Minutes

Monday, February 3, 2003

Amtrak Station

2:00 pm – 5:00 pm

Meeting was called to order at 2:10 pm by Gabriel Menendez, Chairperson.

Attendees (**TCC members in bold**):

Kathy Archibald
Tommy Barfield
Bruce Barrett
David Bright
John Buss
Jim Davis
Craig Diamond
Sally Dowlen
Shelonda Gay
Scott Golden
Dinah Hart
Theresa Heiker
Val Hubbard

James Johnson
Jack Kostrzewa
John Kraynak
Brian Little
Gene Martin
Gabriel Menendez
Anil Panicker
Tony Park
Debra Schiro
Jimmy Smith
Jean Weekley
Bill Woolery
Michael Wright

Agenda Modifications

Mr. Davis stated that Informational Items would be presented in reverse order. He further stated that the agenda should reflect Gabriel Menendez as the Chairman of the Blueprint 2000 Technical Coordinating Committee.

Mr. Menendez stated that he would like to add an item to the agenda, discussion of the MPO process as it related to Blueprint 2000 and federally funded highways.

Informational Items

Item #b: Capital Circle Northwest

Mr. Brian Little, FDOT, provided the BP2K TCC with a presentation of the progress of the design for the widening of Capital Circle Northwest from I-10 to US-90. He stated that FDOT would need approximately \$25M from Blueprint 2000 for right of way acquisition by March 31, 2003. Mr. Jim Davis stated that Blueprint 2000 was in the process of selling bonds to raise the money to give to the FDOT by the March 31st deadline. Mr. Little stated that the acquisitions could take up to 2 years to finalize. He stated that the FDOT would be submitting the 60% design plans by the end of the month, 90% plans by mid summer and 100% plans by early 2004. He further stated that the \$17M construction costs were not funded and construction bids could be submitted by July 2005. Mr. Little stated that there would be a public information meeting on February 11, 2002 and he continued with his presentation and mentioned the placement of holding ponds, landscaping plans and sidewalks.

There was discussion of the stormwater ponds and whether FDOT would be maintaining all three of the stormwater facilities. FDOT noted their ponds handled all the existing and future water

from their right of way and over attenuated. There was discussion of the roadway cross-section and the need for pedestrian refuge at the Tharpe Street intersection, at a minimum.

Ms. Hubbard stated that since this would be the first Blueprint 2000 project there should be more landscaping and trees in the median and in the right-of-ways. Mr. Gene Martin stated that more right-of-way would need to be purchased in order to provide more landscaping. He further stated that if challenged in court it would be hard for FDOT to prove a need to take land in order to plant more trees and landscape. Ms. Hubbard stated that she thought this would be considered a reasonable need. Mr. Martin mentioned that the landscaping locations for the roadway project could be better identified as they acquire right of way and identify parcel remnants, and that the actual plantings would be handled as a separate contract once the roadway construction has been completed.

Mr. Davis asked FDOT to put together a landscaping plan within the currently identified right-of-way, however the landscape contract should not be included in the in the road construction contract. Mr. Martin stated that developing the landscaping plan would not impact the schedule of the current roadway plan and that it would be a conceptual plan, not construction plans.

Ms. Kathy Archibald expressed concern that the Blueprint 2000 conceptual design is not being followed and that the design was the same as all other existing FDOT roadways. She noted that the Secretary of FDOT bought into the concept during development of the Blueprint Plan. She asked if the lane width could be cut to 11 feet and that width added to the median. Mr. Little stated that this would reduce roadway capacity. Ms. Archibald stated that the roadway needs medians to insure that pedestrians are able to cross the road safely; the median would be a halfway point or rest area. She stated that it is not possible to make it across a large intersection on one signal phase. Mr. Martin stated that it is not considered safe to have pedestrians in the median and there is no way to trigger the signal to complete the crossing from the median. He further stated that the widening of the median and/or increases in the right of way would increase costs and impact the established schedule. Mr. Bruce Barrett stated that at a previous MPO meeting the members (elected officials) stated that they would not do anything that would impact the schedule for the construction of Capital Circle Northwest. He further stated that the decision was made to go back during or after construction to add certain amenities without impacting the schedule.

Mr. Martin stated that he would have the FDOT landscape architect draw preliminary plans for the landscaping of the roadway. Mr. Davis stated that it was important that this roadway does not look like Capital Circle Northeast.

Mr. Park stated that another consideration would be the maintenance of the medians and right of way. He stated that landscaping of the medians would impact City and County departments that will have to continue to maintain these areas.

This was an informational item and no action was required from the committee.

Item #a: Headwaters of the St. Marks River (and Capital Circle Northwest)

Mr. Craig Diamond stated that the Planning Department performed an analysis to define the specific parcels for fee simple purchase or acquisition of a conservation easement by Blueprint 2000 for the preservation of the headwaters of the St. Marks River and lands west of Capital Circle Northwest. He stated that the method of acquisition was being evaluated, as well as the priority of the properties. Mr. Diamond showed the committee GIS maps of the St. Marks headwaters area and the Capital Circle Northwest area, that identified in detail, the 100-year flood plains, wetlands, hydrography, known conservation easements, etc. He stated that they studied the connectivity to other projects, the size of the parcels, whether the parcels were developed, etc. to determine the feasibility and method of acquisition. He mentioned that they would rank the parcels in three levels by priority for acquisition.

Mr. Diamond noted that for the Capital Circle Northwest area, they had identified approximately 425 acres (250 acres fee simple, and 175 acres conservation easement), some of which abutted the Talquin State Lands to the west. Val Hubbard asked how these lands linked to sensitive lands south of US 90, and stated that they needed to be ranked together based on criteria.

Ms. Archibald stated that this analysis should be combined with the restoration of Gum Swamp and if there could be recreational connectivity to other projects.

Mr. Davis reviewed the funding for the acquisition of these sensitive lands. He stated that a CAC Sensitive Lands Working Group needed to be formed in order to give direction and recommendations.

There was discussion of the Southern Belle Trailer Park and the need to purchase the property in this wetland area to relieve flooding in areas where people dwell instead of vacant pristine wetland. There was further discussion of other wetland areas.

This was an informational item and required no action from the committee.

Consent Items

Item #1: November 18, 2002 Technical Coordinating Committee Minutes

Mr. Menendez called for approval of the minutes for the November 18, 2002 Technical Coordinating Committee Meeting.

Mr. Davis moved approval of the November 18, 2002 minutes. Michael Wright seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously 9-0 without discussion.

Presentations/Action

Item #2: Capital Circle Southeast Update

Mr. Bill Woolery made a presentation to the TCC on the status of Capital Circle Southeast. He stated that he would be asking the Intergovernmental Agency for conceptual approval of the project and the six-lane cross-section and approval of funding for the project's construction from Connie Drive to Tram Road, beginning by February 2006. He further stated that they were in the process of finalizing right-of-way and stormwater facility locations.

Mr. Michael Wright stated that FDOT was in the process of letting the construction on Capital Circle Southeast from Park Avenue to south of Apalachee Parkway. He further stated that Arvida, per their development order, was required to make certain improvements to Capital Circle in order to continue developing in the SouthWood area. He stated that the City, by moving the multi-laning forward, was trying to avoid having to come in at a later date and reconstruct the roadway to a full six lane section after Arvida made their required interim improvements. He stated that Tram Road would be the logical place to temporarily end the improvements to Capital Circle. Mr. Wright stated that there was also an issue of the stormwater facilities. He further stated that because of a planned development at Woodville Highway and Capital Circle Southeast it would be more cost effective to purchase the ¼ mile right-of-way to Woodville Highway now rather than later.

Mr. Davis asked if there was a schematic available to show the connectivity of the trail projects. Mr. Woolery stated that the SouthWood stormwater system was planned and mapped and that the roadway runoff would utilize the internal SouthWood stormwater pond and treatment system and reduces our costs for construction. Mr. Davis stated that the Blueprint philosophy needed to be upheld and that all of the facets are incorporated, that the trails are inter-connected, water is handled properly and the holistic concepts are adhered to. He asked to see the SouthWood trail and stormwater system plans.

Mr. Park stated there could be a problem with hurricane evacuation if two sections of Capital Circle (NW & SE) are under construction at the same time. Mr. Woolery stated that in most cases the new lanes would be built to one side and the traffic would be shifted; the traffic would be able to proceed and that it should not affect road capacity very much. Mr. Kostrzewa stated that other roads could be under construction at the same time and could further aggravate the problem: Orange Avenue, Tharpe Street, Welaunee Boulevard.

There was further discussion of the construction costs for the projects.

Mr. Park moved approval to forward the project to the Intergovernmental Agency for conceptual approval and approval of funding for the construction from Connie Drive to Tram Road. Mr. Buss seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously 9-0.

Item #3: General Engineering Consultant and Capital Cascade Stormwater Management Master Plan Consultant Selection Status and Authorization to Negotiate and Award Contract

Mr. Bright provided the committee with information regarding the rankings of the firms that responded to the two RFQs and provided the short listed recommendations for each. He stated that the recommendation on the three Proposals submitted for each RFP would be presented to the Intergovernmental Agency at the April 2003 meeting. He stated that for the Cascade Trail Project, the recommendation will be to negotiate with the top ranked firm and to authorize the Intergovernmental Management Committee (Anita Favors and Parwez Alam) to award the contracts. For the GEC contract, the IA will need to authorize moving on to the negotiation and award stage.

Mr. Menendez stated that he would have a problem if there needed to be negotiations with the 2nd and 3rd ranked firms should the 1st firm not work out. He expressed that the TCC should be consulted on the problems and that the 1st firm should not be cut out of negotiations. Mr. Davis stated that it was not in the TCC's bylaws to make recommendations on the awarding of the contracts, that they were only to review scopes of services.

Mr. Davis stated that he would like to amend his recommendation to apply only to the stormwater study to authorize negotiations.

No action is required from the committee on this item. Mr. Davis withdrew the agenda item from the committee.

Unagendaed Items

Item #4: Discussion of the MPO process as it related to Blueprint 2000 and federally funded highways

Mr. Barrett stated that there was an upcoming meeting of MPO staff and FDOT/FHWA representatives to discuss MPO procedures, public involvement, and certification issues. He stated that Blueprint 2000 projects needed to be included in the Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP) and the State Transportation Improvement Plan (STIP) and that the MPO must approve the projects on the record to insure that all federal procedures are followed correctly. This insures that federal funds will be available in the future and that the public is involved in all phases of the process.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 4:43 p.m.