



## TRANSPORTATION & INFRASTRUCTURE WORKING GROUP Meeting #1

Tuesday, February 21, 2012

10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

Cansler YMCA, Community Room

616 Jessamine Street, Knoxville, TN 37917

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### Welcome and Introductory Presentation

Cindy Pionke, Transportation and Infrastructure Working Group Chair, welcomed participants to the meeting and prompted participants to introduce themselves. Kevin Tilbury of Gresham, Smith & Partners (member of the PlanET consultant team) gave an introductory presentation, including an overview of the PlanET process and the major findings of the draft Existing Conditions Memo.

### Large Group

A general discussion followed the introductory presentation. Group members were asked to provide feedback on relevant parties who were not present and if they had any questions, particularly with respect to the draft Existing Conditions Memo. The notes are provided below.

#### **PARTIES PRESENT:**

1. Caron Beard (*Beard Farin*)
2. Brian Boone (*City of Maryville*)
3. Jim Ullrich (*Citizen*)
4. Kathryn Baldwin (*City of Oak Ridge*)
5. Ellen Smith (*City of Oak Ridge*)
6. Jerry Everett (*UT Center for Transportation Research*)
7. Rebecca Longmire (*MPC Commission*)
8. Jake Tisinger (*City of Knoxville*)
9. Mike Conger (*Knoxville TPO*)
10. Kelsey Finch (*TDOT*)
11. Jay Clark (*CAPPE*)

12. Anne Wallace (*City of Knoxville*)
13. Cindy Pionke (*Knox County*)
14. Warren Seacrest (*CAC Office of Aging*)
15. Frances Hall
16. John Lamb (*Blount County Planning Department/PlanET Community Leadership Team*)
17. Cindy McGinnis (*KAT*)
18. Jim Hagerman (*City of Knoxville*)
19. Sean Vasington (*CRJA*)
20. John Hunter (*City of Knoxville*)
21. Jeremy Pearson (*City of Alcoa*)

**PARTIES MISSING FROM THE DISCUSSION:**

- Union County
- Loudon County
- Non-transportation infrastructure groups
  - Utilities
  - Broadband Providers
  - Wireless Providers (*3G/4G – as an alternative to broadband*)
- Private Bus Operators
- MegaBus
- CAC
- ETHRA
- Large employers who could benefit from transit services
  - ORNL, UT, etc.
- Knox County Health Department
- Schools
- Greenways (*Ellen Zavisca*)
- Bicycle Program (*Kelley Segars*)
- Rail and freight

**QUESTIONS:**

- **How were transportation costs calculated? (Ellen Smith)**  
Will be coming out in white papers
- **Unaffordable or less affordable? (John Lamb)**  
Less affordable, more vulnerable
- **Copies of full reports available at tables (Kevin Tilbury)**
- **Broadband – wired or wireless? Move toward wireless coverage (John Lamb)**

Currently only wired, but will look into wireless

**OTHER COMMENTS:**

- Congestion map – colors are not showing up properly
- Check Blount waste capacity
- Existing Infrastructure map – may not be accurate
- Roane County section between Loudon and Anderson County

**Small Group Discussion**

The Working Group then transitioned into three smaller breakout groups, facilitated by Kevin Tilbury and TPO staff members Alan Huff and Nathan Benditz. Each breakout group briefly reviewed the issues and trends, identified any items that were missing, and identified the group's highest priorities. Below is a summary of each breakout group's discussion.

**Group A**

**ADD:**

**Transit:**

- Lack of concentration in corridors to allow transit
- Need for models of successful transit-oriented development
  - Look at potential nodes for transit (being strategic)
  - Possible park and ride locations
  - Discussion of BRT/Bus vs. long-term vision for possible rail
  - DOE, airport
- Looking at fixed routes outside City of Knoxville
  - Improve van pools (actually worse than in previous years)
  - Emphasis on programs like Smart Trips
- No fares = need for funds
  - Private sector
  - Counties
- KAT – needs to expand into Knox County
- Need safe places to leave vehicles – look strategically at locations
- When people choose to live in rural areas
  - Transit network may not be possible
  - Nodes (park-n-ride) to catch their commute is strategic way to serve their need
- The region needs a regional transit authority

**Need for more/better information:**

- Need a better understanding of why people live where they do
  - Especially when it differs from what would make financial sense (quality of life, lifestyle choice)
  - People may live in outlying counties because of housing costs
  - Issue of property taxes
  - Issue of families is huge
- Need a better understanding of growth
  - Who will move here & what they want/need

#### **Need to change the culture (mindset):**

- People need to become accustomed to using transit
- UT – students cannot bring cars – presents a way to expose people to transit early
- Bicycling/walking
  - Currently is recreational
  - Need to work to incorporate into commute
  - Issue of terrain limits the number of bicycles and pedestrians
  - But need to be bicycle and pedestrian friendly
  - Lack of bicycle/pedestrian friendliness is also about land use
- Politically, construction is more attractive as an accomplishment but improving utilization of infrastructure is a better use of resources
- Need for a focus on improving existing infrastructure over building new
  - More efficient infrastructure

#### **General Issues:**

- Lack of coordination and development
- Need to differentiate issues: which issues for which counties
- Keep in mind that these issues relate to counties outside PlanET area
- Lack of discussion of land use in both transportation and infrastructure

#### **PRIORITIES:**

- Transit: Look at potential nodes for transit (being strategic)
- Transit: Looking at fixed routes outside City of Knoxville
- Transit: The region needs a regional transit authority
- Transit: Need for models of successful transit-oriented development
- Transit: Looking at fixed routes outside of City of Knoxville
- Transit: No fares = need for funds
- Lack of discussion of land use in both transportation and infrastructure
- Need to change the culture (mindset)
- Lack of coordination and development
- Need for a focus on improving existing infrastructure over building new

- Politically, construction is more attractive as an accomplishment but improving utilization of infrastructure is a better use of resources

### **MOST URGENT:**

- Know where right-of-way needs to be preserved
- Making transit more available & improve utilization and efficiency
- Political understanding: new infrastructure vs. existing
- The region needs a regional transit authority

## **Group B**

### **INFRASTRUCTURE:**

- Report only looks at area within the region (**See Priority A**)
  - Look at movement in/out of region
  - Source capacity
- The accuracy of reported capacities of natural gas, water, and wastewater
- Y-12 does have services (being provided by Oak Ridge)
- How does climate change affect the capacity to continue to provide services?

### **ADD:**

- Map: cargo-oriented vacancy
- Address transportation needs of cargo area
- Funding (lack of Federal Transportation Bill) (**See Priority B**)
  - Increased gas prices
  - Inflation (lack of increase in gas tax)
- Rising maintenance cost moving to locals only (**See Priority C**)
- Regional Transit Corridor Study
- Water freight planning (barges and other users of the rivers)
- General aviation (McGhee Tyson is addressed, but many small general aviation airports exist across the region)
- Need for a stronger link of transportation/land use coordination (**See Priority A**)
- Outside interstates/highways, regional connectivity breaks down (e.g., rural areas with limited connectivity) (**See Priority A**)
- Topography limitations
- Congestion extends beyond Central and Western Knox County (Oak Ridge, Alcoa, Maryville, North Knox)
- Delays with project development along significant corridors

- Planning further out (50 years) (**See Priority A**)
- Roane corner (Add the section of Roane County between Anderson County and Loudon County due to transportation corridors)

**PRIORITIES:**

- A. Planning needs for region
- B. Funding uncertainty (rising transportation costs)
- C. Rising maintenance costs (rising transportation costs)

**Group C**

**ADD:**

*NOTE: (I) = Imminent issue*

- Aging population **(I)**
  - In place
  - Choices
  - Cost
  - Ability
  - Income
- Aging Infrastructure
  - Union County
- “Split” Planning Structure **(I)**
  - Union County is in a different RPO
- Cultural Barriers (Appalachian Spirit)
  - For example, transit
- Maintain Connectivity
  - Economic advantage
- Freight
- Water transportation

**PRIORITIES:**

**Top Priorities:**

- Dispersed development patterns (4 votes)
- Transportation costs **(I)** (4 votes)
- Funding **(I)** (4 votes)
- Limited transportation options (3 votes)

### **Other Priorities:**

- Connectivity (1 vote)
- Transit hub (1 vote)
- TOD potential (1 vote)

### **FINDINGS FROM REPORT:**

1. Connectivity
2. Dispersed development patterns
3. Transportation costs **(I)**
4. Cross-county community
5. Single-occupancy vehicle use (high)
6. Congestion not “too” bad
7. Congestion in west/central
8. Limited transportation options
9. Growing greenway network
10. Transit hub
11. TOD potential
12. Funding **(I)**

### **Closing**

Kevin Tilbury closed the meeting by stating that meeting notes would be posted to the PlanET website soon. He noted that the next working group meeting would occur soon after the second Regional Forum Series meeting in April, most likely in the May/early June time frame.