

The Graham County Board of Commissioners met Tuesday, December 20, 2022, at 5:00 p.m. in the Graham County Community Building located at 196 Knight Street Robbinsville, NC for their regular workshop session. All board was present.

1. Chairman Nelms called the meeting to order.
2. Chairman Nelms asks Amin M. Hezaveh, NCDOT Transportation Engineer to speak. Mr. Hezaveh thanked the board for their time and stated that he was here to give a presentation of the Southwestern RPO Travel Demand Model Socio-Economic Data Projection for Graham County. Mr. Hezaveh stated the CTP is a long range plan that was developed and is continually updated through a collaborative process among public and transportation agencies to envision future transportation needs. Mr. Hezaveh stated that a comprehensive transportation plan is a plan that supports community priorities, local land use plans and protects local assets, a shared vision for the people of one County. Mr. Hezaveh stated that federal law mandates that States look at long-term planning for both urban and rural areas and also that it has to be a cooperative effort between the stakeholders and under NC state law they must have development of a coordinated transportation system and provisions for streets and highways in and around municipalities.
3. Mr. Hezaveh explained the Travel Demand Model Coverage which is a mathematical approach to understanding how changes in land use, population and area employment will impact the transportation system. Mr. Hezaveh stated that they are used at various planning levels; local, regional and statewide and is a way to measure the future impacts of growth and development by examining the limits of the existing infrastructure and it is just one of the tools used in the analysis of transportation systems. Mr. Hezaveh stated that the purpose of the travel demand model is to assist decision makers in making informed transportation planning decisions but are not based on this tool alone; the ability to ask critical “what if” questions about proposed plans and policies and to help decision makers see what the future may hold so it is not a provider of the answers it is a tool that requires professional judgement but it is a good way to estimate probable outcomes. Mr. Hezaveh stated that the model provides local travel data, shows the impacts of road widenings and new road additions, can analyze the impacts of transportation plans, shows the impacts of new interchanges, forecasts changes in corridor volumes, can be used as a basis for microsimulation, can test alternative land use plans and provides visual (live/accurate) information and pretty maps to decision makers. Mr. Hezaveh stated that the model can't be used to time traffic signals, can't design interchanges-lanes, configurations; can't show impacts of new turn lanes at intersections; can't identify induced growth or shifts in land use because of new road; does not represent true speed; does not understand intersection queues; does not limit capacity so over assignment can occur; does not give accurate turning movements at all intersections and will not give you true peak hour volumes. Mr. Hezaveh stated the model does give future year outputs for future capacity deficiencies, level of service, congestion; does scenario testing for natural disaster and special events; improvements to existing roads, number of lanes and speed; impacts of new routes; evaluate system outcome, air quality, vehicle miles traveled, route volumes and travel time.
4. Mr. Hezaveh stated that the population trends in Graham County recommend a 1% growth rate for both population and employment in Graham County for 2020-2050 period and Graham County's population will reach 10,800 by April 2050 and the employment will reach 3,896 by April 2050.
5. Mr. Hezaveh stated that growing traffic and future growth based on local data and land use plans will help assist with long range transportation network alternatives. Mr. Hezaveh stated that that the growth rate is based on our historical trend.
6. Mr. Hezaveh asks for any questions. Mr. Hezaveh stated that he would need the board to accept the 1% population and employment growth rate as presented.
7. Chairman Nelms adjourned the workshop session.

Signature page for Workshop Session December 20, 2022

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Jacob Nelms, Chairman

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Natasha Williams, Vice-Chair

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Lynn Cody, Member

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Keith Eller, Member

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Connie Orr, Member

ATTEST:

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Kim Crisp, Clerk to the Board