

Minutes

Wilmington Urban Area Metropolitan Planning Organization Transportation Advisory Committee

Date: February 25, 2004

Members Present:

Lanny Wilson, Board of Transportation, Chair
Laura Padgett, Council Member, City of Wilmington, Vice-Chair
Lynette Carlisle, Council Member, Town of Leland
Gary Doetsch, Council Member, Carolina Beach
Betty Medlin, Mayor, Town of Kure Beach
Nancy Pritchett, Commissioner, New Hanover County
Jim Quinn, Council Member, City of Wilmington
Bill Sue, Commissioner, Brunswick County
Eulis Willis, Mayor, Town of Navassa

Staff Present:

Mark Tinkler, Transportation Planner, Wilmington MPO

1. Call to Order:

Chairman Lanny Wilson called the meeting to order at 4:05 pm.

4. Presentation – Carolina Beach North End Traffic & Circulation Study:(moved ahead)

Mr. Calvin Peck gave a short slide show and presentation on the Carolina Beach North End Traffic and Circulation Study. This was an MPO-funded study just completed.

2. Approval Of Minutes for January 28th

Mayor Medlin made the motion to approve the January 28th meeting minutes. Mayor Willis seconded the motion, and the vote carried unanimously.

3. Old Business

There were no items of old business.

5. Slide Show – Multimodal Transportation Center Bus Tour on February 10th:

Mr. Tinkler apologized to members because he left the CD with the pictures from the bus trip in his office. He asked if everyone got an email containing a link to the NCDOT site on 2/18/04 where the pictures from the trip were posted, and if not, contact him. The link will take you to the site that has four or five photos posted from each of the four stops during the day. Mr. Tinkler asked if anyone who made the trip would like to share their observations.

Mr. Quinn told members he came back from the trip with different ideas than when he left. He said he is still skeptical about justifying the cost but feels this will be a good opportunity to connect Wilmington to the nation-wide Amtrak system. As he understands, this is an attempt to take the federal highway tax funds and use them for a mass transit system for the future and not just plow them back into more and more highways. This is a good opportunity for the City of Wilmington and we should take advantage of the opportunity. He said he feels this could be a nice addition to Downtown.

Mr. Wilson told members he was impressed with the quality of the structures in the different cities. He felt the committee is now off to a good start for the facility being proposed in Wilmington.

Mr. Tinkler thanked everyone for their comments.

6. 2004-2005 Planning Work Program (PWP) Schedule:

Mr. Tinkler told members the current schedule has been revised from what was reflected in last month's minutes. The vote to approve PWP will be held at the April meeting, which will allow the discussion of ideas again today and then have a draft for consideration in March by the TCC and then the TAC. The uncertainty with the reauthorization of the transportation bill precipitated the deadline extension of the PWP. There have been a couple of suggestions for possible items of special study in the PWP.

a. Leland Collector Street Plan:

Representatives from the Town of Leland have requested an update of their Collector Street Plan. Ms. Carlisle told members the plan was about 4 years old.

b. Magnolia Collector Street Engineering Feasibility:

Commissioner Sue suggested this item. Mr. Tinkler distributed maps showing the areas involved. Mr. Sue explained that long trains carrying ammunition are creating safety issue for traffic movement. In an emergency, vehicles have no alternative than to sit and wait for trains to move. The restoration of Magnolia Drive west over Mill Creek would give people an alternate route to get over to Lincoln Road.

Mr. Tinkler said he wanted to encourage efforts be made in bring cohesion between this item, the Leland Collector Street Plan and the Collector Street Plan for Navassa.

Mr. Tinkler pointed out that there are two types of collectors, regional and local. Regional collectors are such as those shown as minor thoroughfares on the Thoroughfare Plan. Local collectors serve large neighborhoods or commercial areas but are below the scale of a regional collector. The proposal here would be that long term this connection would extend Magnolia and will be a connection to Leland Industrial Park. At that point, it could be categorized as a regional collector as apposed to something just serving a neighborhood.

Mr. Tinkler mentioned that the pre-TIP planning study being done by a consultant for NCDOT on the widening of the western two-thirds of Village Road is looking at Village Road in this area and will be considering improvements to its tie-in with Lincoln Road and Old Mill Road at the railroad tracks.

Mr. Wilson told members because Magnolia currently exists as a dirt road, the State cannot apply funds for improvements until it is adopted on a thoroughfare plan.

Mr. Sue told members what he needs is to add it as an amendment to the current existing Thoroughfare Plan so they could qualify for funding to restore the bridge.

Mr. Wilson said this same situation is taking place in Boiling Springs. They, in conjunction with the county, are amending the Brunswick County Transportation Plan in order to add a project. The State will then be able to acquire the right-of-way and make the needed improvements.

Mr. Wilson suggested that Mr. Tinkler bring this back to the next meeting on an appropriate map that could be adopted jointly by the MPO and the Board of Transportation.

Mr. Sue asked that he include a proposed resolution to modify the thoroughfare plan to include this addition. He would like it modified to connect the end of Magnolia Drive with Lincoln Road.

Mr. Tinkler said he would bring this item back next month.

c. Others items:

Mr. Tinkler told members Ms. Padgett and Mr. Quinn had suggested a couple other items to be drafted for consideration. The first is to take a look at Route 17 Business routing through Wilmington after MLK opens and determine the best routing for the future. The other, also related to the MLK opening, would take a look at the practicable improvements that will be needed to North 3rd Street. The suggestion was to look at pedestrian needs, aesthetics and utilities.

7. Southern Bridge/Tunnel – NC Turnpike Authority Meetings March 18th:

Mr. Wilson told members he has the draft agenda for the meeting taking place on the 17th and 18th. He asked everyone to make sure to get copies of the resolutions in support of the Southern Bridge to Mark prior to the meeting on the 17th. Mr. Tinkler said he would email the draft agenda to members.

Mr. Tinkler updated everyone on the Southern Bridge logo selection. He had conversations with key people in the community and several organizations regarding the current concept for the logo. Consensus from these people was that the message should be kept simple and not confuse the Authority or the rest of the state regarding what the community wants. If further study demonstrates the feasibility of a tunnel after the Turnpike Authority has accepted the projects, then that could be pursued at that time.

Mr. Wilson called for a motion to approve the logo as presented. Mr. Doetsch made the motion and Mayor Medlin seconded the motion. With no further discussion the motion was passed unanimously.

8. TIP Workshop – March 17th:

Mr. Wilson told member Mr. Calvin Leggett and members of the Program Development Branch with the DOT will be here on the 17th and 18th and fortunately for us Mr. Leggett has offered to do a TIP workshop presentation on the afternoon of the 18th. If this is not a good time and date, he has offered to return at a more convenient time.

Several members had prior commitments and were not going to be available. Consensus of the group was that another time would be best. Mr. Wilson said he will contact Mr. Leggett to reschedule and Mr. Tinkler will inform members of the new date.

9. Transportation Planning Branch MPO Evaluation Report:

Mr. Tinkler introduced Ms. Alena Cook with the Transportation Planning Branch of the NCDOT. Ms. Cook told members the report on the MPO boundaries is a new requirement from the General Statutes for all MPO to submit to the Joint Legislative Oversight Committee for Transportation. It is documenting this effort. Members will notice there are a lot of items in this report that do not apply to this MPO. It is a format that they want to keep consistent across all MPOs, so some items are dealing with air quality or MPO that are contiguous with neighboring MPOs. Mr. Tinkler has already sent several corrections regarding the non-voting members of the TAC and they will make those corrections.

Mr. Wilson asked if there were any questions regarding this report. There were none.

10. NCDOT Bicycle and Pedestrian Planning Grant Initiative:

Mr. Wilson turned this item over to Mr. Tinkler. Mr. Tinkler asked Ms. Cook if she would like to update members on this item.

Ms. Cook said there is a link on the DOT website that gives all the information regarding this grant initiative. It includes all applications and necessary forms to apply. The grant is intended to be use for individual towns or municipalities to study either pedestrian or bicycle plans. The intent of the grant is to

go to greater local detail than with the MPO-wide elements of the transportation plan that address these modes. She said it is a good opportunity and she encouraged everyone to look at the website.

11. Wilmington MPO Logo:

Mr. Tinkler referred to the new letterhead on the agenda for today's meeting. It is the recommended logo change to replace the old WordPerfect graphics that had been use in the past. It is an effort to modernize our logo and have it available for use on the new MPO website.

Everyone agreed it was an attractive change and complemented Ms. Haynes, the City graphics person. Mr. Sue made the motion to approve the new letterhead and the new graphic. Mr. Doetsch seconded the motion and with no further discussion, the motion carried unanimously.

12. Project Updates:

a. Transit Service Master Plan and WTA/NHTS Merger

Mr. Tinkler told members we should have the Final Transit Master Plan in the next few weeks. He asked Ms. Pritchett, who is a member of the Wave Transit Board, if she had anything she wished to add. He said the implementation of the Plan is scheduled for July of '05 and in the interim the new authority would have one year of extended hours in the evenings and on weekends, as well as extending service to Monkey Junction.

Ms. Pritchett asked Ms. McNamee, who is chairman of WNHTA, to comment. Ms. McNamee told members they had a very successful joint meeting. They hope to meet with both the City and County at their second meetings in March to address additional items, including funding for expansion of services.

b. WNHTA Administrative/Maintenance/Transfer Facility

Mr. Tinkler told members the selected consulting team has been asked to give us a fee estimate so we can negotiate a contract for them to do site evaluation and conceptual design. Phase one will evaluate specific parcels for general suitability, conduct detailed suitability and environmental review of selected site(s), and complete conceptual design.

c. Military Cutoff Road Widening

Mr. Wilson told members the project was on schedule. They are scheduled to "let" the project in April. The county passed a resolution at their last meeting to allow the DOT to work at night. It is hoped that will help take a few months off the completion date.

d. Navassa Collector Street Plan

Mayor Willis updated members on the Navassa Plan. They hope to have the plan completed in March.

e. Other member agency projects

There were no other project updates.

13. 2004 NCAMPO Conference Planning Update:

Mr. Tinkler told members the Conference Planning Committee has finalized arrangements for the hotel and the location for the social functions for the conference on Oct 21-22. They expect attendance to be around 225 to 250 participants.

14. New Business:

Mr. Tinkler said he had one item of new business. He told members he did receive communication from the DOT Feasibility Studies Unit regarding the 133 Feasibility Study. They confirmed they did receive the request and they will be working with our board member to get it conducted in the next fiscal year.

15. Announcements:

a. Carolina Bays Parkway public meeting Feb. 24th

Mr. Wilson told members there was a meeting last night on the Carolina Bays Parkway. They had a good turnout for the meeting.

b. I-140 Bridge Tour – March 10th

Mr. Tinkler invited members of the TAC to attend the tour of the I-140 Bridge that is currently under construction on the Northeast Cape Fear River between Castle Hayne Road and US 421. He told members it is an impressive construction project.

The tour has been scheduled for the 11th at 10:30am. If interested in attending, please contact him.

c. Representative McIntyre in Wilmington area on March 29th

Mr. Wilson announced that Representative McIntyre will be in the area on Monday the 29th to do a four-county tour to lead efforts to bring I-74 to Wilmington. He is forming a committee and they will be meeting for that purpose in Lumberton, Whiteville, and Brunswick County, as well as the Wilmington Chamber of Commerce at 1:00pm that day.

d. Public Meeting regarding the widening of Wrightsville Ave.

Mr. Wilson informed members there will be a public meeting on March 9th to discuss the widening project on Wrightsville Avenue, from Wilshire west to Forest Hills, at 4:30 at Forest Hills Elementary School. This is a fast-track project; DOT has expedited it and will begin to acquire right-of-way next year, with construction to begin the following year.

e. Other Announcements

Mr. Wilson said he had two other brief announcements. Within two months, NCDOT should have a preliminary plan for a portion of Market Street, from New Center Drive to Eastwood Road, to present to the City dealing with the numerous traffic accidents along that stretch of Market Street. Also on March 8th they are kicking off the study of the Oleander Drive and College Road intersection. If interested in participating, Mr. Wilson said to contact him for more information.

16. Adjournment:

With there being no further business, Ms. Medlin moved to adjourn and Mr. Sue seconded the motion. The meeting adjourned at 5:35.

Respectfully submitted

Mark Tinkler
TAC Secretary
/pb