

Minutes

Wilmington Urban Area Metropolitan Planning Organization Transportation Advisory Committee

Date: March 24, 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
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 4:00 pm. Mr. Wilson told everyone the first thing he wanted to do was to thank Mark Tinkler and Allen Pope for the excellent job they did in preparation for the Turnpike Authority Meeting held here on the 17th and 18th. Mr. Wilson said they went well beyond the call of duty, working many long hours, to ensure a successfully planned event.

2. Approval Of Minutes for February 25th

Ms. Carlisle made the motion to approve the February 25th meeting minutes. Mr. Doetsch seconded the motion, and the vote carried unanimously.

3. Public Comment

Mr. Wilson welcomed all the visitors to today's meeting. After everyone introduced themselves, he asked if anyone had any comments for the meeting. With there being no one in attendance who wished to make any comments, Mr. Wilson thanked them for attending today's meeting.

4. Old Business

There were no items of old business.

5. 2004-2005 Planning Work Program (PWP) (to be adopted 4/28)

Mr. Wilson turned the meeting over to Mr. Tinkler.

Mr. Tinkler told members there was a minor change to the draft PWP you received in your agenda packages. The FTA Planning Funds was adjusted upwards by \$1200.00 in available funds. He sent the revised copy in a later email.

Mr. Tinkler referred to the memo to TAC members dated March 24, 2004. He reviewed the break down of the funding estimates as outlined in the document. Part of his recommendation is to continue the appropriation to the Cape Fear Public Transportation Authority as well as add a new planning staff member to the MPO to assist with current staff in meeting workload requirements. Specific additional responsibilities added in the past two years were mentioned in the memorandum.

Mr. Tinkler also reviewed the TCC recommendations for two special studies for consideration as part of the PWP.

a. Leland Collector Street Plan

Mr. Tinkler said consultants will be contracted to conduct an update to the Collector Street Plan for the Town of Leland to include the unincorporated areas in Brunswick County immediately to the west of Leland and Navassa.

b. Evaluation of Re-routing US Business Route 17:

The second recommendation is to contract consultants to conduct a planning level assessment of the issues, impacts, and costs to a future re-routing of Route 17 Business through the City of Wilmington.

Mr. Tinkler told members the TCC will look at this again on April 14th and pass on any further recommendation to the TAC for approval at the April 28th meeting.

Mr. Wilson suggested that Mr. Tinkler look into the Apprentice Program that NCDOT offers because it will only require a 10% local match and the State will pay for 90% of the cost of the additional person. Mr. Tinkler told Mr. Wilson that he and Mr. Albert Eby have already had discussions about the possible benefits this program would provide to the new transit authority as well. Mr. Tinkler said the program requires that the person be dedicated to tasks that are relative to transit planning.

Mr. Wilson said he thinks this can be a little broader than that and perhaps share the costs with WNHTA.

Mr. Tinkler said the official program announcement has not been made yet, but they expect it soon.

Mr. Wilson told members there are actually two programs available, the Apprentice Program and the Intern Program. He said he suggests the Apprentice Program because it is a full-time position. The Intern Program is a part time position. Both opportunities will offer training and mentoring to individuals just out of school with little or no experience in planning.

Mr. Tinkler asked if anyone wished to submit any comments or questions regarding the PWP to please contact him.

6. NCAMPO Discussion - NCDOT PL Fund Allocation – Resolution:

Mr. Tinkler told members the North Carolina Association of MPOs has drafted a proposal regarding the NCDOT PL Fund distribution formulas. He reviewed the draft proposed changes NCAMPO was considering. They are asking that member MPOs review and respond to this request for implementation by the NCDOT.

Mr. Tinkler told members that after discussions regarding the funding changes requested by the NCAMPO, the TCC has recommended opposing the amendment because it has the potential to reduce future funding to the Wilmington Urban Area and requires state contributions that are unknown and not guaranteed.

Mr. Sue moved approval of the resolution to oppose any amendments to the North Carolina Department of Transportation Section 104(f) PL Fund Distribution Formula. Mr. Doetsch seconded the motion and without further discussion, the motion passed unanimously.

7. Resolution – Thoroughfare Plan Amendment: Add Magnolia Street in Brunswick County as an Urban Collector:

Mr. Tinkler distributed copies of the Thoroughfare Plan maps for the resolution requested by members at the last TAC meeting to add Magnolia Street and its extension west to Lincoln Road and Mount Misery Road as a minor thoroughfare in the town of Navassa and Brunswick County.

Mr. Tinkler told members the TCC discussed the proposed resolution at length and they recommend that the resolution be delayed until the collector street plan is done which will provide documentation of the road's function in the regional road system.

Mr. Sue said he recommends this resolution be passed due to the possible emergency situation that may arise for the 50 or more families living in the area that will be without services due to no access because of the trains. It will also shorten the route for buses going to Lincoln School.

Mr. Tinkler explained that there was a concern about setting a precedent for adding roads to the Thoroughfare Plan in the future that might not stand up to scrutiny if the documentation were not in order first.

Mr. Wilson said this is the first step in eligibility for NCDOT funding, as state funding cannot be expended on a facility that is not on the thoroughfare plan. Mr. Sue agreed and made the motion to approve the resolution. Mr. Quinn seconded the motion and with no further discussion, the motion carried unanimously.

8. TIP Amendment – Add Transit Administration, Maintenance, and Transfer Facility:

Mr. Tinkler explained that this resolution is more of a formality. It adds the WAVE Transit Administration, Maintenance and Transfer Facility to the TIP.

Mr. Sue moved for approval and Ms. Padgett seconded. The motion was approved unanimously.

9. Board of Transportation Update:

a. Intrastate highway system and Trust Fund eligibility

Mr. Wilson told members the Joint Transportation Oversight Committee has initiated a Highway Trust Fund Study Commission. They are evaluating whether to modify the process for selecting roads eligible to use resources from the Highway Trust Fund. Right now there are not any projects that trust fund dollars can be used for in the area. Mr. Wilson said he would encourage the TAC to follow the Highway Trust Fund Study Commission and work to pass a resolution that will support making the entire intrastate system trust fund eligible.

Ms. Padgett made the motion to support the changes and Mr. Doetsch seconded the motion. With no further discussion, the motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Wilson also encouraged everyone to speak to Representatives McComas and Stiller because both serve on the Joint Transportation Oversight Committee.

b. Transportation Oversight Committee study on project delivery process

The Joint Transportation Oversight Committee also has a study underway to examine the delivery process currently used for projects. It will be completed on May 24th. Its purpose is to determine if there are statutory improvements that can be made in the delivery process. If not, it would be more internal at DOT. The consultant, hired by the General Assembly, is to look at the process and come back with recommendations.

10. Follow-up on NC Turnpike Authority Meeting:

Mr. Wilson once again praised the efforts by Mr. Tinkler and Mr. Pope for the outstanding job they did for the Turnpike Meeting.

He said everyone is excited about the project. They are looking at non-traditional means of contracting the project. Not only Design-Build, but looking at whether we can hire a contractor that would be able to do the entire project, from the design to the permitting. The Turnpike Authority is hopeful that they could be receiving presentations later this summer where the contractor has formed a joint venture with an engineering firm to do a major project like this.

Ms. Padgett asked when the decision for project selection will be made. Mr. Wilson said the Authority is hopeful to make the announcement by August or September.

11. NC132/133 Castle Hayne roundabout:

Ms. Pritchett told members that the Fire Station in Castle Hayne, which is located north of the proposed roundabout, are looking for a way to get across the road so they can go north to answer fire calls. They feel it will take them a full minute to go down around the roundabout and go back north again, which doesn't sound like much unless it's your house on fire. They are asking us to look at this again for a possible solution.

Mr. Pope told members they have looked at this situation on several occasions. The problem is the North and South Bound Lanes of 133 are at different elevations and it is a very narrow median, which will prove difficult to address. One suggestion from DOT was to park trucks in both directions, some to the front and some in the direction of the side street. That will give quick access to the side street that leads directly to a crossover that will get them in the northbound lane. The fire station personnel did not feel this was a workable solution for them. Mr. Pope said they are again going to look at the roundabout design.

Mr. Wilson suggested that perhaps they should go ahead and schedule another meeting to discuss this with them again.

12. Project Updates:

a. Update on NCDOT projects:

Mr. Wilson turned the meeting over to Mr. Pope for project updates. Mr. Pope told members he would go down the list of major projects and talk about some of the larger Moving Ahead Projects and then open it up to questions.

Martin Luther King Parkway:

Currently scheduled for December 31, 2005 completion. Looking at possible having traffic on MLK from one end to the other by September of '05.

US17 Bypass:

The last construction contract completion time is July '05. The connector that goes back to 17 North has a completion date of June 2006.

Military Cutoff Road:

This project is scheduled to be "let" the 20th of April. They have received all necessary permitting this past week. The contract is set up for work during night. Due to the large traffic volume, the current contract completion date has been set for October 2006

Allen Creek Bridge:

This bridge was opened this past Saturday.

The next scheduled bridge for replacement is over Town Creek.

Major NC Moving Ahead Projects:

- Murrayville Road is scheduled for widening and resurfacing within the April "letting"
- Edgewood Road from Porters Neck to the end of the system is scheduled to be widened in the April "letting"
- Gordon Road widening to 3-lane from I-40 to Market Street has an anticipated "let" date of sometime in 2005.
- Roundabout in Castle Hayne anticipate a 2005 "let" date.
- Pine Grove Drive and Holly Tree intersection is to be reconfigured in 2005.
- Broadway Street in Navassa scheduled for 2005.
- Village Road is still on schedule for 2006.

Due to a schedule conflict, Chairman Wilson had to leave the meeting. He turned the meeting over to the Vice-Chair Laura Padgett.

b. Creation of Cape Fear Public Transportation Authority

Ms. Chris McNamee told members she just wanted to make an announcement regarding the new authority. She wanted to let everyone know that earlier this month City Council and the County Commission unanimously approved the interlocal agreement that created the Cape Fear Public Transportation Authority effective July 1, 2004. This will position the authority to effectively become a regional public transportation authority. The next step is to encourage the City Council and the County Commission to approve the requested budget increase so services can be expanded to improve public transportation in the region.

Mr. Tinkler told members the first of this month that Mr. Albert Eby became the Transit Director.

13. New Business:

There were no items for new business.

14. Announcements:

a. Representative McIntyre in Wilmington area on March 29th

Ms. Padgett told members that Representative McIntyre will be in the area on Monday the 29th at the Wilmington Chamber of Commerce at 1:00pm to try to gather support for the I-74 project.

b. TIP Workshop:

Mr. Tinkler told members the workshop has been rescheduled for the next TAC meeting on the 28th. It will be about a 20-minute presentation.

15. Adjournment:

With there being no further business, Mr. Sue moved to adjourn and Ms. Padgett seconded the motion. The meeting adjourned at 5:05.

Respectfully submitted

Mark Tinkler
TAC Secretary
/pb