

Meeting Minutes

Wilmington Urban Area Metropolitan Planning Organization Transportation Advisory Committee

Date: March 30, 2005

Members Present:

Lanny Wilson, Board of Transportation, Chair
Lynette Carlisle, Town of Leland
Gary Doetsch, Town of Carolina Beach
Bill Kopp, New Hanover County
Elly Lister, Council Member, Town of Belville
Catherine Brunjes, Wrightsville Beach
Laura Padgett, Council Member, City of Wilmington
Bill Kopp, Commissioner, New Hanover County
Jim Quinn, Council Member, City of Wilmington
Bill Sue, Brunswick County

Staff Present:

Jonathan David, Associate Transportation Planner
Mike Kozlosky, Senior Transportation Planner
Lawless Bean, TDM Coordinator

1. Call to Order

Mr. Wilson called the meeting to order at 4:00 PM.

2. Approval of Minutes for the February 24th Meeting

Ms. Carlyle made a correction to the date in item number 2 of the minutes. With the correction noted, Mr. Doetsch made the motion to approve the February 24th meeting minutes. Ms. Lister seconded the motion, and the vote carried unanimously.

3. Public Comment Period:

Mr. Wilson thanked everyone for attending today's meeting and asked if anyone would like to make any comments to the group. There was no one present who wished to speak.

4. Presentation – NC 133/US 17 Collector Street Plan

Mr. Kozlosky introduced Mr. Mike Rutkowski from Kimley-Horn and Associates. Mr. Rutkowski's firm has been working on this NC133/US17 Collector Street report and is here to present the draft plan to the members.

Mr. Rutkowski said he is here today to update members on the draft report prepared by Kimley-Horn. Over the next month, this report will be presented to local municipalities for their approval. The final report will be brought to the TAC in May for final adoption.

Mr. Rutkowski told members the report has been prepared for the purpose of developing a plan, strategies, standards, and policies to promote and enhance connectivity, ultimately to improve access and mobility. The report is the result of a public design planning charrette held at Belville Elementary School on January 12th and 13th. The overwhelming consensus was that the citizens attending want complete streets; streets that include provisions for bicycles and pedestrians. The design plan should also be able to accommodate transit in the future. With the potential growth coming to the area, Mr. Rutkowski said it is important that we plan now. At this point we have the opportunity to work with the development community and local planning staff to protect the integrity US17 and NC133. We will be able to provide a plan showing interconnected street systems, design standards, recommendations for local ordinances that can be adopted, as well as street spacing standards with typical cross sections.

Mr. Wilson thanked Mr. Rutkowski for his presentation.

5. Old Business

a. Adoption of the Long Range Transportation Plan

Mr. Kozlosky distributed copies of the Long Range Transportation Plan to members and told them the draft was sent to local municipalities for review.

Mr. Wilson told members he had received one phone call regarding the plan from the Home Builders Association over their point of concern. Mr. Kozlosky said he also had received a call from the Home Builders and Realtors Association last week. They are requesting that the language on page 69 of the document, under "Transportation Impact Analysis", be changed. The language in the plan reads:

Transportation Impact Analysis

The municipalities located within the MPO planning area boundary should maintain current zoning and subdivision ordinances that require developers, when the development meets an identified threshold, to submit Transportation Impact Analysis (TIA). This TIA should analyze and evaluate the potential development and the mitigation measures necessary to facilitate the safe and efficient movement of people and goods.

Mr. Kozlosky said the Home Builders and Realtors Association would like the language changed to read:

The municipalities located within the MPO planning area boundary may maintain current zoning and subdivision ordinances that require developers, when the development meets an identified threshold, to submit Transportation Impact Analysis (TIA).

Mr. Kozlosky told members it is the recommendation of staff that the wording remain "should" because this is a recommendation to improve mobility within the urban area.

Mr. Sue said he thought we had adopted a plan requiring a TIA several years ago.

Ms. Padgett said the City of Wilmington has done that, and it seems like, as an "overall transportation planning agency", we should be encouraging our member municipalities to require TIAs.

Mr. Doetsch said if you change the wording to "may", you are going to be fighting it every step of the way.

Mr. Quinn asked who is going to prohibit your municipality from requiring it.

Mr. Sue said this is just a recommendation from us. We don't control the planning and the zoning.

Mr. Quinn said he too got a call, and he is not as familiar with the implications of what this may or may not do. He would like to hear more about it. He said he would like to talk with staff, and he would like to hear from some of the people that would be affected by it. Because this is new information, he said he can see some problems. He is not prepared to approve it today. He would like to at least hold off until the next meeting. The issue is if all municipalities are mandated to do this with no parameters.

Mr. Quinn said there is a large element of people that would be affected by that who have a concern, and he'd like to know more about it.

Mr. Doetsch said down at the beach they had a situation where Arcadia Group had proposed to build a fairly sizeable group of buildings that were going to be in a fairly tight area as far as road size. In the preliminary meetings with them, we said maybe they should look at having a traffic impact study done and the developers took it to heart. The TIA findings caused them to change some of their designs, and that has reduced the impact from the construction.

Mr. Wilson suggested that we approve the plan today, then immediately have the staff go and investigate it and come back with a recommendation where we could amend the plan next month. Mr. Wilson said with the funding situation at DOT and the Wrightsville Ave. Bridge replacement project on the agenda for next Thursday, he just doesn't want to jeopardize losing that funding.

Mr. Quinn said the concern that he's got are the same concerns that the Home Builders have. If they get in a position where they have got to do a \$5,000 to \$10,000 traffic study in every single situation, and the DOT is going to do the same thing, what is the sense of it?

Mr. Allen Pope said if DOT and municipality are requiring a TIA, in most cases they work together and only do one TIA.

Mr. Wilson said while they were working on the driveway manual for DOT, they found that business people would rather see \$10,000 spent on improvements, rather than studying to determine the improvements. What we did was to leave it up to the discretion of the district and division engineers to require a TIA for the larger projects.

Mr. Quinn said let's not put the people who are paying the tab in a position where they are going to be compelled to do something.

Mr. Doetsch said he thinks that "should" gives you that latitude.

Ms. Padgett said "should" is a recommendation, we are not requiring anything, but we definitely need to have a position on it.

Mr. Kozlosky said developments can negatively impact adjacent street network, when TIAs are completed, they identify measures to mitigate those negative impacts so from a staff standpoint, we recommend that the language stays as written.

Mr. Doetsch said from an elected official standpoint, I think the "should" should be kept in because it protects us on council when somebody comes with a big development. We have the option of saying that we think with the impact that is being caused, that maybe we should have a traffic impact analysis.

Mr. Quinn said he's having a hard time understanding why the difference in "should" and "may".

Mr. Quinn asked would the difference in the language here in the plan have made a difference. Could you have compelled them to do it if it would have said "should" in this document?

Mr. Wilson said this is just a policy statement suggesting that we're encouraging municipalities to do the TIA.

Mr. Quinn said it sounded like that to him when he first read it, but it was pointed out to him that it might be a problem. He would like to have it clarified.

Ms. Padgett said, in her opinion, that as a transportation advisory committee, we ought to be taking a position. We are not requiring anything, but we need to provide a recommendation.

Mr. Quinn said if that is what this is, then he doesn't have a problem; but, if upon further study, can he sponsor an amendment to the plan.

Mr. Wilson said yes, but, because we can't approve the use of federal funds for the two projects, we will need to vote on it now and then if we need, amend it next month. He suggested that Mr. Quinn bring it up at the next meeting for discussion if he would like.

Ms. Padgett moved the resolution and Mr. Doetsch seconded it. With no further discussion, the motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Wilson asked Mr. Kozlosky to come back next month with clarification, and if we need to amend the plan, we can. He suggested that Mr. Kozlosky have some examples of the language from the City, DOT and some of the municipalities' requirements that have been adopted.

6. Project Updates

a. College Road/Oleander Drive Study

Mr. Kozlosky told members DOT held a public workshop on March 28th at Roland-Grise Middle School. The consultant, Martin/Alexiou/Bryson, presented the Median U-Turn and Quadrant Approach options to the citizens attending. DOT will analyze the feedback from the citizens, as well as staff's recommendations.

Mr. Wilson asked Mr. Kozlosky if someone from Martin/Alexiou/Bryson could come to the next MPO meeting to make a presentation. He has received some email criticizing the plans.

b. Military Cut-off Extension

Mr. Kozlosky told members the LPA Group has been selected to complete the preliminary engineering and surveying for the official transportation corridor map. The cost of the project came in well under DOT's anticipated cost. New Hanover County and the Dallas Harris Land Trust company are going into mediation for the four lots on April 11th. DOT and staff have been invited to attend. Based of the schedule that LPA has proposed, if the contract is signed this week, they anticipate having the map recorded in July.

c. NC133 and US17 Area Collector Street Plan

Mr. Wilson said because we have already discussed this item, we will move on.

7. New Business

a. Wilmington/Columbus County Public Transit Initiative

Mr. Kozlosky requested support of a resolution for a proposed bus route from Wilmington to Whiteville. The proposed connector is intended to bring skilled workers to the area. Because the unemployment rate in Columbus County is rather high and the local unemployment rate is low, it is hoped that this initiative will encourage workers to come to Wilmington to find employment.

Ms. Padgett told members the request for this route came from the Greater Wilmington Chamber of Commerce along with the several local committees. There is a growing need for workers in the construction industry here in Wilmington and the latest figures from the Employment Security Commission show 3.5% unemployment rate in New Hanover County. This will give us an opportunity to work with neighboring counties to provide the much needed workforce for the future.

CFPTA is working to find grant money to fund the project, but we will still need to find the local matching funds. It is hoped that private companies will help fund this program.

Mr. Don Eggert with the Cape Fear RPO told members there is a lot of support for this program from state and local legislators. This collaboration is also creating a lot of good-will in the surrounding counties.

Ms. Padgett made the motion to support the idea of operating a public transportation service from Whiteville to Wilmington. Ms. Lister seconded the motion and with no further discussion, the motion carried unanimously.

b. Brunswick Connector

Mr. Kozlosky told members this service is programmed until June 30th of this year. If the service is going to be continued, it will need to be included in the local municipalities' next fiscal years budgets. Staff has been exploring ideas for funding the project and they came up with four options. They are: 1. fares based on population 2. fares on a weekly passenger ridership 3. private financing 4. a combination thereof.

Mr. Eby gave a brief history of what was done at the TCC level to come up with the possible solutions for finding the local match. He distributed a copy of a Boarding Count report broken down by each municipality.

Mr. Kozlosky told members the committee is providing this information to members today because it is budget time. This funding will need to be identified in order to continue the service.

Mr. Wilson asked how much money will be required to keep the service operating. Mr. Eby said the funding for the program is \$75,000 so the amount needed will be approximately \$35,000. Mr. Wilson said he is meeting with Miriam Perry next week and he will talk to her about funding options. NCDOT knows it will take some time to get this program up and operational. Mr. Wilson suggested tabling this until the next meeting.

c. FY 2006 Section 5307 Budget

Mr. Kozlosky told members this is the operation budget for the Cape Fear Public Transportation Authority. The budget was prepared by them and goes through the MPO because it is a budgeting item. Mr. Kozlosky turned the floor over to Mr. Eby.

Mr. Eby told members the annual Section 5307 allocation went from \$704,000 to \$1.5 million. He reviewed the general expansion project changes requested in the TIP update.

With no further discussion, Ms. Padgett moved to adopt the Section 5307 Budget and Mr. Quinn seconded it. The motion carried unanimously.

d. FY 2006 Planning Work Program

Mr. Kozlosky said the Planning Work Program includes the operating budget for the upcoming fiscal year. The amounts on the line items are similar to last year. The items included in this request are the LRTP update with the model development and the re-routing of US17 through the City of Wilmington. The re-routing of US17 was included in the budget last year but was not undertaken due to staff availability. There is also a \$20,000 allotment for data collection in Pender County due to the possible expansion of the MPO boundary to include portions of Hampstead around the bypass.

Ms. Padgett moved the approval of the Planning Work Program and Mr. Sue seconded the motion. The vote carried unanimously.

8. Announcements

Mr. Wilson told members we will hold the election for officers at the next meeting.

Mr. Kozlosky review meeting locations and times for the upcoming meetings:

- a. **College/ Oleander Road Public workshop- March 28, 2005**
- b. **Wilmington Bypass Citizen Informational workshop- March 31, 2005**
- c. **NC 133/ US 17 Collector Street Plan Public workshop- April 7, 2005**
- d. **Election of Officers at the April 27th TAC Meeting**
- e. **Spring "Litter Sweep" Roadside Clean-up**

9. Adjournment

With no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 5:25.

Respectfully submitted

Mike Kozlosky
Senior Transportation Planner
/pb