

Meeting Minutes

Wilmington Urban Area Metropolitan Planning Organization Transportation Advisory Committee

Date: April 27, 2005

Members Present:

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

Staff Present:

Mike Kozlosky, Senior Transportation Planner
Lawless Bean, TDM Coordinator

1. Call to Order

Mr. Wilson called the meeting to order at 5:02 PM.

2. Approval of Minutes for the March 30th Meeting

Mr. Sue made the motion to approve the March 30th meeting minutes. Ms. Padgett seconded the motion, and the motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Sue said because he was going to have to leave early, he would like to make a motion to move item 7.d. (Election of Officers) forward. Ms. Medlin seconded the motion. With no discussion, the motion carried unanimously.

7. d.: Election of Officers

Mr. Sue told members he would like to put in the form of a motion that they keep the same slate of officers currently serving (Mr. Wilson as Chairman and Ms. Padgett as Vice-chairman). Ms. Doetsch seconded the motion. With no discussion, the motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Wilson thanked members for their vote of confidence on behalf of himself and Ms. Padgett and they look forward to working with the TAC another year.

3. Public Comment Period:

Mr. Wilson thanked everyone for attending today's meeting and asked everyone to introduce themselves. Mr. Wilson asked if anyone would like to make any comments to the group.

Ms. Barb Lynch with the Citizen Advisory Committee (CAC) asked to address the group to make a request for assistance and support with an upcoming meeting. The CAC is hosting a meeting at the Northeast Library on June 8th between 5:30 and 7:30 to address traffic issues in the Ogden and Porters Neck area. She said they are currently putting together an agenda and the panel of speakers for the meeting.

No others in attendance wished to speak.

4. Presentation – College Road/Oleander Drive Intersection Improvements

Mr. Wilson introduced representatives from Martin/Alexiou/Bryson.

Mr. Martin, one of the principals with Martin/Alexiou/Bryson, told members he and Mr. Andrew Topp, Senior Associate with the Firm, are here to make a presentation on the Median U-Turn and Quadrant Approach options for the intersection. Mr. Martin said the next step in the process will be a series of environmental studies and the final detailed design will go forward to quantify the exact impact of the recommended alternative. It could be any where from a 6 to 18-month process, depending on the level of environmental studies conducted. Mr. Martin told members in his professional opinion the Quadrant Approach will provide the best outcome because it offers the best long term solution for the future.

Mr. Wilson told members this is a funded project for right-of-way acquisition in 2009 and construction in 2010. He suggested that the MPO make a recommendation on which of the two solutions they prefer. Ms. Padgett made the motion to support the Quadrant Approach. The motion was seconded by Mr. Doetsch. With no discussion the motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Wilson thanked Mr. Martin and Mr. Topp for the presentation and complemented the firm's innovative approach for the intersection improvements.

5. Old Business

a. Wilmington/Columbus County Public Transit Initiative

Ms. Padgett told members this initiative is to address two issues. The first is the extremely large amount of construction that is taking place at the PPD site, downtown, at the university and around the county. New Hanover County has a fairly low unemployment rate; and in looking around the region, noting that Columbus County has a high unemployment rate. This is an effort to bring people into New Hanover County for jobs and hopefully work with the community college in Columbus County to train people and perhaps provide a reverse direction for people in New Hanover County who may want to train for these particular construction skills. She told members we did get help from Secretary Fain's office with the State Department of Commerce in our effort to get the Job Access Reverse Commute (JARC) grant local matching dollars at the last minute for our application. We are moving forward and hopefully we will also be able to work with contractors involved with this project and bring some private dollars to support this program in the future.

Mr. Eby said the deadline for submitting applications is Friday (April 29, 2005) and they will be meeting on the following Monday to start reviewing the JARC applications. We should have an answer in the next 4 to 6 weeks.

b. Brunswick Connector

Mr. Wilson told member that DOT will provide the \$35,000 for the additional funding out of the discretionary funds they have set aside in Public Transportation because DOT is committed to public transportation and the service provided by the Brunswick Connector. He received a call yesterday from the chief deputy secretary assuring him that money for the next year is available. Mr. Wilson said DOT expected that it would take some time to get a program up and running and they are hopeful that by funding it another year, we will see continued increases in ridership.

c. 2006-2012 Draft TIP

Mr. Kozlosky told members that we were one of the more fortunate areas to see increased funding available thanks to Mr. Wilson's efforts on our behalf. The public hearing for Division 2 and Division 3 will be held in Jacksonville on May 10th from 2 to 4 pm at the Coastal Carolina Community College.

Mr. Wilson reminded members the MPO should now be considering updating the list of priorities for the area. Many of the priority projects have been funded and the list needs to be updated in the next couple months in preparation for the draft TIP coming out this fall that will be approved next year because we will be going back to that seven year TIP. We need to be looking ahead.

Mr. Wilson said he would also like to note that they are moving the Village Road Project in Leland up a year. NCDOT will be buying right-of-way in 2011 instead of 2012 and have some money for construction in 2012. Another thing the MPO should be involved in early on is the money added (approximately \$10 million) for Market Street. We have already identified a source for funding to do the project between New Center Drive and the King Parkway, so this is money that would be use to address the other issues from Colonial all the way out to the bypass or Porters Neck Road. As we move forward with this, the MPO needs to be involved from the very beginning. He will be bringing information to try to get the committee set up to deal with issues on all of Market Street in the next few months.

Mr. Kozlosky said he would like to add that one of the projects included in the Planning Work Program was a corridor study for US Highway 17 and routing US Highway 17 through town. As part of this project, we could also look at improvements to US Highway 17 as part of that corridor study from Covil to downtown. Funds were reprogrammed into the MPO's and the Cities' budget for the project. Mr. Wilson suggested teaming up both projects in order to save money on the study. Mr. Kozlosky agreed that it would be a good idea.

6. Project Updates

a. Military Cut-off Extension

Mr. Wilson told members the BOT agenda for next week will include the setting aside money to begin the environmental work.

Mr. Kozlosky told members the highway administrator signed a municipal agreement yesterday which means we can now proceed with hiring the LPA Group to do the surveying and preliminary engineering on the project. We are also working with NCDOT and sent a letter requesting that the municipal agreement be modified to allow the City to file the official transportation map and any actions that would need to be taken to preserve that corridor, which includes the purchase of right-of-way.

b. NC133 and US17 Area Collector Street Plan

Mr. Kozlosky told members the Town of Belville adopted the NC133 and US17 Area Collector Street Plan on April 19th and the Town of Leland adopted it on April 21st. We will be going to the Brunswick County Commissioner on May 2nd to make the request to adopt the plan and then we will bring it back to the TAC to request endorsement.

c. Wilmington Bypass

Mr. Allen Pope, Division 3 Engineer with NCDOT, told members the 4th interchange is complete and hoping the I-40 to Castle Hayne Road section ready for possible completion in August or September. The question then will become do we put traffic on it or do we wait until we get it over to US-421. We feel very comfortable in saying we will have it over to US-421 by the end of the year. I think the bridge will be through but there are still some issues with some of the

roadway. The roadway contractors are not moving as fast as anticipated, but we still feel very comfortable that by the end of the year the bypass from I-40 to 421 will be open to traffic. In the month of June we will actually move traffic from the Porters Neck signal up to Scotts Hill over to the new lane where the old lane can be reconfigured.

Mr. Wilson said he would also like to mention the Cape Fear Skyway project. The Turnpike Authority approved a contract last week with HNTB to begin the environmental work. Whitt Webb is the HNTB contact person for the study. At the next Turnpike Authority meeting, the engineers will have a work order dealing with the corridor preservation.

7. New Business

a. Wave Transit Apprenticeship

Mr. Eby told members they have recently applied to DOT for a transit apprentice. DOT Transit Apprenticeship Program will allow an apprentice for one year in which DOT will pay 90% of the cost.

b. Leland Area Collector Street Plan

Kimley Horn and Associates are working on the Leland portion of a collector street plan. This will provide an entire collector street network for all Brunswick County. As part of the contract, they will also provide a map showing the whole interconnected road network. The project should be complete by September.

Ms. Carlyle asked what will happen with areas that are being annexed into the Town of Leland. Some of the areas are currently in the RPO and of course Leland is in the MPO.

Mr. Kozlosky said we are planning on expanding the MPO boundaries within the next month or two to encompass the Hampstead area as well as an area included in the Skyway Bridge project. That may be a good opportunity to coordinate with the Development Services Director to take a look at expanding boundaries in those areas.

c. Transportation Impact Analysis

Mr. Kozlosky told members this item was included on the agenda at Mr. Quinn's request. He has compiled information from other municipalities regarding Transportation Impact Analysis requirements.

Because Mr. Quinn had to leave the meeting early, Mr. Wilson asked Mr. Kozlosky to contact him to determine if this item needs to be added back to the agenda for the next meeting.

8. Announcements

Mr. Kozlosky told members April 20th was Jonathan David's last day. He has taken a position back in Oregon. He is in the process in interviewing for the vacant positions and hopefully be up to full staff in another two months.

Mr. Kozlosky asked members if it would be possible to move the meetings back to the City of Wilmington's meeting room because we are having problems exiting this building. The doors are promptly locked at 5:30 and you must have a special pass to operate the doors. With no one having any objections, the next meeting will be moved to the Lord Spencer Compton Conference Room.

Ms. Bean said she would like to let everyone know that May is National Bike Month and Bike-to-Work Week is May 9th – 13th. The River to the Sea ride is Saturday May 7th. If anyone would like to participate or would like more information, please contact her.

9. Adjournment

With no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 6:15.

Respectfully submitted

Mike Kozlosky
Senior Transportation Planner
/pb