

Meeting Minutes

Wilmington Urban Area Metropolitan Planning Organization Transportation Advisory Committee

Date: May 25, 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
Pat Melvin (proxy for 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
Eulis Willis, Mayor, Town of Navassa

Staff Present:

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 April 27th Meeting

Ms. Medlin made the motion to approve the April 27th meeting minutes. Ms. Carlisle seconded the motion, and the motion carried unanimously.

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) updated everyone on the meeting to be held at the Northeast Library on June 8th between 5:30 and 7:30. The purpose of the meeting is to address traffic issues in the Ogden and Porters Neck area. She told members the agenda has been completed and the discussion panel members have agreed to attend.

No others in attendance wished to speak.

4. Presentation – Cape Fear Breeze Ride-matching Software

Mr. Wilson turned the floor over to Ms. Lawless Bean, the TDM Coordinator.

Ms. Bean told members the new Cape Fear Breeze ride-matching program is intended to provide and promote alternative transportation in southeastern North Carolina. It is part of a larger project that consists of the internet based ride-matching software, which is a state-wide initiative. The second part of the project is a registration and incentive program for alternate mode commuters. The last component of the program is the employee benefits that some of the area employers are beginning to provide for their employees. They are starting with two pilot sites, the City and Corning, to begin the database. Ultimately,

staff will begin to do a general public outreach which will include advertising to increase awareness. The website address can be found at www.capefearbreeze.com. Ms. Bean went on to give a power point presentation on the information found when visiting the website and the registration process for participating in the program.

Mr. Wilson thanked Ms. Bean for the presentation and complemented her on all her hard work to get this program up and running.

5. Old Business

a. 2006-2012 Draft TIP

Mr. Wilson told members it is scheduled to be approved by the Board of Transportation in July. They will immediately go back into preparation for next years TIP, which will get us back on the seven year cycle. Meetings will be held in the fall with the individual MPOs to discuss transportation projects to be added to the TIP.

b. NC133/US 17 Collector Street Plan

Mr. Kozlosky told members the Town of Leland, Town of Belville and Brunswick County have endorsed the plan. Staff will request TAC adoption of the plan.

Mr. Wilson called for the motion to adopt the NC133/US 17 Collector Street Plan. Ms. Carlyle made the motion and Ms. Medlin seconded it. With no further discussion, the motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Wilson told members he would like to thank Mr. Kozlosky for all his efforts on the plan. He told members that Ms. May Moore, the County Commissioner from Brunswick County was so impressed with the workshop that she is looking into expanding the plan to incorporate Boiling Springs and other parts of the community for development of a collector street plan.

c. Wilmington/Columbus County Public Transit Initiative

Ms. Padgett told members she is working on finding private participation for funding in order to put together money that can be used for local matches. She reported that the response has been very positive. She has talked to some employment agencies and she is on the June 14th Wilmington Contractors Association agenda.

6. Project Updates

a. Cape Fear Skyway

Mr. Wilson told members the NC Turnpike Authority met last week and are moving forward with the study to begin the environmental process. The study, which is the first part of the four step process, is to establish the purpose and need. The work order was issued to HNTB to proceed with the preparation of the document necessary to move forward with the process. The Turnpike Authority will move forward with the second task at its June meeting. The Authority will request HNTB to prepare a corridor preservation map.

Mr. Wilson reported that the Turnpike Authority plans to look at some alternative means of contracting for the project. The Authority discussed the idea of looking at public/private partnership as a way to expedite the process. Mr. Wilson and Mr. Allen Pope met with contractors who have suggested that they have an interest in building a turn-key project. Not only would they be involved in completing the environmental document, but they would also complete the design and construction. This is something new for North Carolina, and legislation is pending to give DOT authority to enter into public/private partnerships

During the discussion regarding funding for future projects, Mr. Wilson suggested that the TAC should take a position to stop transfers occurring from the Highway Trust Fund and the Highway Fund to the General Fund. These transfers are taking funding that should be spent on highways and spending it for non-highway purposes. The figures are somewhere around \$100 million to \$200 million a year. Mr. Wilson said he hoped in the next several months, the we take a position to encourage the legislature to discontinue that transfer to the general fund.

Mr. Kozlosky told members he presented in December to the Blue Ribbon Commission on Urban Mobility in Fayetteville. One of the issues at the meeting was the need to stop bleeding the trust fund because it's diminishing at a rapid rate. He said he will bring a resolution on the issue to the next meeting.

Ms. Padgett told members the State League is also taking a fairly strong position on the fund transfers.

b. Leland Area Collector Street Plan

Mr. Kozlosky told members the project is anticipated to be complete by September. When complete, Staff will bring the plan for adoption by the TAC for adoption and municipalities.

c. Associate Transportation Planner vacancies

Mr. Kozlosky told members they are ready to make an offer to a candidate for one of the positions available and they will be interviewing three more applicants next week for the second position.

d. House Bill 1280

Mr. Wilson told members another important project is House Bill 1280, which was passed by the House last week. That house bill references the study that requires DOT to look at proceeding with the funding mechanisms for the completion of the Old Wilmington – Weldon Line between Goldsboro and Castle Hayne. Mr. Wilson suggested that we should also ask the Legislature to look at the rail access to the Port. While they are seeking funding for the re-establishment of the Wilmington – Weldon Line, it probably would be a good idea to look a funding for the alternate route to get the rail traffic outside the city limits. It currently takes about 45 to 50 minutes to get through the City of Wilmington. It would be a good idea to complete that study and find how much the project is going to cost and try to secure funding for the entire package.

With everyone in agreement, Ms. Padgett made the motion and it was seconded by Ms. Medlin. The motion carried unanimously.

e. Area DOT Construction Update

Mr. Allen Pope, NCDOT Division Engineer told members Martin Luther King Jr. Parkway should be complete sometime in August/September. The contractors are working on the grading/paving work and once that is complete, they feel they will be very close to opening both sections at the same time. If not, arrangements have been made to open the Isabelle Holmes / Castle Hayne Road piece first.

Ms. Padgett told members she would like to take this opportunity to complement DOT for an amazingly organized project. It has never once cut the traffic off and everyone who saw to that has done a remarkable job.

Mr. Pope told member they are comfortable to say the US 17 Bypass project should open from I-40 to Castle Hayne Road. We feel that it would be of benefit to go ahead and open it to get traffic out of Castle Hayne. There are some concerns that the Isabelle Holmes intersection may be overloaded. The other piece of the bypass is the big bridge. It is behind schedule according to the

contractor, but because of changes and contractual problems, it looks like completion will occur around December. They will be able to open up the remainder of the bypass.

Mr. Wilson told members it is important that the MPO take a stance with respect to a proposed change to the design. If we get the support of the MPO, we are looking to change the portion of the bypass under construction from I-40 to the Pender County line. The NCDOT would modify the portion from Porters Neck Road to where the project ends over in Pender County, and modify it from a normal divided highway to a superstreet so we won't run into the same problem that we're experiencing in Brunswick County. There is an explosion of growth up there and the way the project is currently designed, you come off the overpass straight down into a stop light. This intersection is going to be very dangerous at the stop light. We are proposing that we go ahead now, while we can do it with loop funds, and upgrade the highway to a superstreet. This change will actually require us to hold a public hearing, but it would be nice to have the MPO's endorsement in making those changes now rather than coming back and trying to make the changes to the road later.

Mr. Doetsch made the motion to support changing that to a superstreet. Ms. Padgett seconded the motion.

Mr. Pope said he would like to note that NCDOT has already begun looking at the design. They are verifying if the design may affect our permits and making sure we can still do this work under our existing permits.

With no further discussion regarding the motion, the vote carried unanimously.

Mr. Doetsch updated members on the Carolina Beach Enhancement Study. The town of Carolina Beach is about to start construction on the north-end phase of that project. The sidewalks are under construction and about halfway completed. The Town of Carolina Beach swapped land with one of the owners at the corner of Winter Avenue, Carolina Beach and Lake Park Blvd so all the property has been acquired to do the intersection improvements at Winter Avenue. They are also working on doing the parking realignment that was proposed to come off Lake Park Blvd. in the very near future. Mr. Doetsch said they anticipate coming to the MPO to accelerate the project. Mr. Wilson said the good news is that DOT was able to reallocate some funds (\$87,000) that were not going to be used for the project down at Carolina Beach.

Mr. Kozlosky told members that staff has begun the process to expand the MPO boundary. Mr. Kozlosky said he has spoken to Mr. John Bower, the new Pender Co. Manager, and is in the process of drafting a letter to Mr. Bower that identifies the benefits of joining the MPO. Mr. Kozlosky said they anticipate having the boundary expanded by the end of the year.

Mr. Wilson told members they will be scheduling a ground breaking ceremony to re-establishing the 5th Street Bridge within the next month. The City of Wilmington has worked closely with NCDOT to provide funding for the project. NCDOT is waiting for the contractor to let them know if they are going to accept the contract.

7. New Business

a. Local Planning Organization Partnership Procedures

Mr. Kozlosky told members the purpose of the procedures is to advance projects in a timely manner. These guidelines have been in the development process for about three to four years to incorporate the merger process and how to advance that process through the environmental and regulatory agencies. These procedures provide guidance to the MPOs as to their role in the merger team and the merger process. NCDOT has requested that each of the MPOs and RPOs to

endorse a resolution confirming the participation in the development of the transportation improvement program and the merger process.

Mr. Kozlosky suggested that the MPO assign the Designee as the Senior Transportation Planner and the Alternate be the Associate Transportation Planner. That will give more flexibility as to who will attend.

With no further discussion, Mr. Wilson called for the motion to approve the Local Planning Organization Partnership Procedures. Mr. Doetsch made the motion to certify the MPOs participation by selecting the Senior Transportation Planner and/or the Associate Transportation Planner to act on behalf of the MPO at the meetings.

8. Announcements

a. **Citizen Advisory Committee Meeting – June 8th @ Northeast Library 5:30-7:30**

b. **Prioritization of Transportation projects at the next TAC meeting**

Mr. Kozlosky asked members to contact him with projects for prioritization.

9. Adjournment

With no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 5:08.

Respectfully submitted

Mike Kozlosky
Senior Transportation Planner
/pb