

Meeting Minutes

Wilmington Urban Area Metropolitan Planning Organization Transportation Advisory Committee

Date: March 29, 2006

Members Present:

Lanny Wilson, NC Board of Transportation
Catherine Brunjes, Town of Wrightsville Beach
Tim Fuller, Mayor, Town of Kure Beach
Alan Gilbert, Town of Carolina Beach
Bill Saffo, City of Wilmington
Tommy Wallace, Commissioner, Town of Leland
Eulis Willis, Mayor, Town of Navassa

Staff Present:

Mike Kozlosky, Senior Planner
Joshuah Mello, Associate Planner
Aruna Reddi, Associate Planner
Lawless Bean, TDM Coordinator

1. Call to Order

Mr. Wilson called the meeting to order at 4:03 PM.

2. Approval of Minutes for the February 22nd Meeting

Mr. Willis made the motion to approve the minutes and Mr. Wallace seconded it. The motion carried unanimously.

3. Public Comment Period

Mr. Wilson asked if anyone would like to make any comments to the group. No one in the audience requested to speak.

4. Presentations

a. Strategic Highway Corridors

Mr. David Wasserman from NCDOT's Transportation Planning Branch gave a presentation on Strategic Highway Corridors.

b. Cape Fear Breeze Priorities

Ms. Lawless Bean, TDM Coordinator, and Mr. John Phelps, a member of the Cape Fear Breeze Program Employer Group, gave a presentation on the Cape Fear Breeze Program FY 06 - 07 Priority List.

5. Old Business

There were no items of old business.

6. New Business

a. Safe Routes to School Program

Mr. Kozlosky told members Secretary Tippet appointed Terry Canales as the Statewide Coordinator for the Safe Routes to School Program. The monies appropriated for the program can be used to install sidewalks, street-crossing improvements, safety, ITS improvements, and bicycle and pedestrian facilities within two miles of schools that are K-8. The program is 100% federally funded and projects will most likely have to be endorsed by the MPO. Mr. Kozlosky said staff is looking at potential projects for submittal to the Department of Transportation. Mr. Wilson suggested contacting the school systems to make them aware of the program.

b. Transportation Improvement Program

Mr. Wilson brought up the subject of the Transportation Improvement Program, which is the seven year blueprint of how the Department of Transportation is going to spend funding. Early in February he received an email asking the Division to come up with \$125 million of funding to move from the funded to unfunded line item. Due to the increased cost of construction, it will be necessary to find other funding sources and delay projects within Division 3. The deficit is now anticipated to be closer to \$185 million. The Division found a significant portion of this funding, but is about \$3 or \$4 million short. This will ultimately impact some of the urbanized areas projects.

At the January meeting, information was distributed regarding alternative financing methods and included the Garvee Bonds. Mr. Wilson said the good news about the Garvee Bonds is that we are sitting here in the MPO boundary with a project that is partially funded and partially unfunded. There is a possible way of using Garvee Bonds funds to accelerate the project. This would complete the portion of the Wilmington Bypass in Brunswick County from US 421 to US 17. Within a year, we will begin acquisition of right-of-way and have the permits to extend I-140 Bypass around Wilmington from US 421 to US 74/76. The next portion, from US 74/76 to US 17 in Brunswick County, is funded for right-of-way acquisition only. New cost estimates have increased about \$70 million and it just so happens that our allocation of the Garvee Bonds is close to \$70 million. The Garvee Bonds are a way of utilizing dollars that are available now to be able and go ahead to complete a project and pay for it over a period of time.

Mr. Sue told members there was a group comprised of County Commissioners from Columbus, Brunswick, New Hanover, and Pender Counties, as well as Council Members from the City of Wilmington, who met and developed a list of regional priorities. The US 17 Bypass was the number one priority. He said the main thing is that we spend so much money on getting permits, if we let this project lay there, and then later have to re-permit it, we are going to put a whole lot more money down the drain. He told members it is his recommendation that we move forward because it was established as the number one priority for the entire region by that group.

Mr. Wilson told members he spoke with the NCDOT Chief Financial Officer, Mark Foster, who has agreed to take a look at the Garvee Bond issue.

7. Project Updates

a. Wilmington Multi-modal Transportation Center

Mr. Kozlosky told members the City has received site plan application for a 17-unit development located on two essential tracts of the proposed Multi-modal facility. Staff is working with the Department of Transportation and the State Attorney General's office to preserve the site by filing the Transportation Official Corridor preservation map. The City has agreed to pay 10% (local match) of the cost in filing the map. A resolution will be going to the Cape Fear Public Transportation Board on April 13th for approval.

Mr. Wilson said he wanted to thank Mr. Kozlosky for bringing this item to DOT's attention. Mr. Wilson said the DOT Board will include information on filing the corridor preservation map on its agenda next week.

b. Cape Fear Skyway

Mr. Wilson told members the cost estimates for the Skyway project are a concern. The project time line is on schedule and public hearings are being held on April 10th and 11th in New Hanover and Brunswick Counties.

c. 2005 Traffic Count and Accident Report

Mr. Kozlosky distributed copies of the 2005 Traffic Count and Accident reports to TAC representatives. He told members this report can also be seen at the MPO's website (www.wmpo.org).

d. US17 Corridor Study

Mr. Kozlosky told members staff is working with Ralph Whitehead and Associates. In the future when Independence Boulevard is extended, there is a possibility of re-designating the US 17 designation on Independence Boulevard and routing it down Independence Boulevard to Oleander Drive and down Dawson and Wooster Streets to the Cape Fear Memorial Bridge. Staff is analyzing some road diet measures on Market Street, that include potential of narrowing it down to one lane in each direction within the mansion district, installing bike lanes and aesthetic improvements. The study will also analyze the possibility of reverting 16th and 17th Streets back to two-way traffic. An advisory committee meeting is scheduled for April 4th at 2pm.

e. NCDOT Project Updates

There were no other questions regarding the update.

8. Announcements

a. Local Elected Officials Meeting (New Hanover County)- Wilmington City Council
Chambers - April 10th @ 1 pm

b. Cape Fear Skyway Public Meeting (New Hanover County)- Codington Elementary - April
10th @ 4:30 pm

c. Local Elected Officials Meeting (Brunswick County)- Brunswick County Commissioners
Chambers - April 11th @ 1 pm

d. Cape Fear Skyway Public Meeting (Brunswick County)- Belville Elementary - April 11th @
4:30

9. Adjournment

With no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 5:42.

Respectfully submitted

Mike Kozlosky
Senior Transportation Planner
/pb