

Meeting Minutes
Wilmington Urban Area Metropolitan Planning Organization
Transportation Advisory Committee
Date: August 27, 2008

Members Present:

Laura Padgett, Vice-Chairman, City of Wilmington
Bill Blair, Town of Wrightsville Beach
Bill Saffo, City of Wilmington
Nancy Pritchett, Cape Fear Public Transportation Authority
Bill Sue, Brunswick County
Tommy Wallace, Town of Leland
Alan Gilbert, Town of Carolina Beach
Eulis Willis, Town of Navassa
Mac Montgomery, Town of Kure Beach
Bill Kopp, New Hanover County
Chuck Thurlow, Town of Belville

Staff Present:

Mike Kozlosky, Senior Transportation Planner
Joshuah Mello, Transportation Planner
Anthony Prinz, Transportation Planner
Lawless Bean, Cape Fear Breeze Program

1. Call to Order

Ms. Padgett called the meeting to order at 4:02 PM.

2. Approval of Minutes

The motion to approve the minutes from the June 25th meeting carried unanimously.

3. Public Comment Period

Ms. Padgett asked if anyone would like to make any comments.

Mr. Alvin Rogers addressed members regarding improvements at the intersection of Oleander Drive and College. Mr. Rogers outline his suggested plan for a one-way pair alternative. Following his presentation, he gave the vice-chairman a petition of 524 citizen signatures in favor of his suggested alternative.

Ms. Jennie Wright-Frierson addressed members regarding improvements for 17th Street. She told members she lives on the corner of Princes Street and 17th Street and she and her neighbors are concerned about the speed of traffic and the number of accidents along the corridor. Residents are requesting improvements that would better define the area as a residential neighborhood. She presented her suggested design to members along with a petition of 126 signatures in favor of her request. Mr. Kozlosky told members there is a resolution under new business that supports streetscape enhancements along portions of the 17th Street corridor. Ms. Padgett suggested to bring the item forward immediately after the public comment period.

Mr. Garry McDaniel addressed members about his concerns regarding the intersection of College Road and Oleander Drive and offered his suggestion for improvements for the corridor. He told members his plan would bleed-off traffic before it reaches the intersection by converting some of the area streets along the corridor to one-way traffic to better handle the traffic volumes.

Mr. Andy Koeppel told members he would like to speak about a matter that came from the public hearing portion of the last Wilmington City Council Meeting. A lady living in the eastern section of Pine Valley, east of College Road, was complaining about the amount of traffic on Bragg Drive. He said he wanted to bring the matter to the TAC's attention. He suggested installing two additional stop signs at

the intersection of Pine Valley and Bragg Drive to create a 4-way stop intersection in an effort to discourage using Bragg Drive as a cut-through for traffic.

Mr. Pat O'Donnell told members he is a trustee for the Oleander Point Shopping Center which is located at the intersection of College Road and Oleander Drive. Mr. O'Donnell said unless modified, the NCDOT plan for the intersection will cause a substantial reduction in the value of the property. He stated the publicity has already caused concern among the tenants. His plan offers an alternate solution by changing the traffic signals to creating two left-turn lanes from the east and west on Oleander Drive, synchronizing traffic signals and the extension of Kerr Avenue to Oleander Drive.

Mr. Ed Mondello with "Get Connected" addressed members regarding the installation of bicycle and pedestrian paths in the Ogden Elementary School area. Following his presentation, Ms. Padgett suggested that he contact Mr. Joshua Mello, the WMPO Bicycle and Pedestrian Committee and work with the Safe Routes to School Program.

Ms Padgett suggested item number 7e be moved ahead because we have already had some discussion on the issue. She told members she attended the public meeting and there are valid concerns. Mr. Kozlosky told members staff has studied traffic volumes and speeds and anticipate that by developing streetscape enhancements, it will improve vehicular traffic and pedestrian safety. It will also help slow traffic and improve aesthetics. Staff has worked with NCDOT and the first step in the process is to request support for the project before they begin trying to secure funding. Mr. Saffo made the motion to support the concept of the streetscape enhancement project on North and South 17th Streets between Dock Street and Grace Street. Mr. Wallace seconded the motion and it carried unanimously.

4. Presentation – College/Oleander Traffic Simulation – Bill Martin

Mr. Bill Martin and Mr. Andrew Topp with Martin/Alexiou/Bryson gave a presentation explaining the concept of the quadrant design completed for the College/Oleander intersection in 2005. They were challenged to find alternatives to improve the movements through the intersection and reduce the delays. He said they looked at all viable options including the one-way pair. Mr. Martin told members that the one-way pair option, as discussed earlier in the public comment period, posed problems due to the storage distance between those one-way pairs for the movements east and west. This design would not allow those intersections to work without backing up and crossing into the other intersection. They also examined functional designs to see what the impact the project would have business and adjacent land owners. After they completed the functional design, NCDOT then took the project in-house and did the next level of design.

Ms. Padgett said when this was initially proposed, members were looking at using the quadrant approach for the intersection. Mr. Todd explained that the current plan uses both the quadrant approach and widening to allow a third lane in the northbound direction. Ms. Padgett pointed out that the cost of this project has grown significantly, going from \$9 million to \$38 million. That increase is due to the cost for buying significantly more right-of-way than was originally included. Now that it is \$38 million, maybe we should look at the other 2 or 3 alternatives to make sure this is still the best solution.

Mr. Pope told members this is the reason NCDOT came to this committee in 2005 when they were trying to decide between this quadrant design and the jug-handles. They have spent 3 years working on this project in getting it to this point.

Mr. Kopp told members he does not like to delay things, but he is not satisfied that what we've got is the right thing. Mr. Kozlosky reminded members that this board voted for NCDOT to move forward with the quadrant approach in 2005.

Mr. Saffo asked what would happen if we delay the project; where would the money go? Mr. Pope said that \$100 million dollars was just taken out of the TIP budget for the Division and he would guess the money would move back to where it was taken. Mr. Pope explained that if the project goes back to redesign, it will be delayed a couple years. Ms. Padgett asked if we would be making more progress if we used the money to take projects like Independence Boulevard extension to the Martin Luther King, Jr. Boulevard and move them forward in an effort to move traffic to an alternative road.

Mr. Gilbert told members this intersection is not an easy fix. This board gave the go ahead to proceed and now we are questioning their judgment. We need to trust the professionals with NCDOT, who are the experts.

Mr. Wallace agreed that it was the best option at \$9 million; but is it the best option at \$38 million? Ms. Pritchett told members she has not had any positive feedback that this is a good plan. She said citizens are lined up in opposition, saying this is the wrong way to address the problem.

Mr. Sue told members he feels the biggest bottle-neck is the single left turn lane at the intersection. He said that it seems the simplest solution is to put double left turns off College Road and off Oleander Drive. Ms. Padgett pointed out that it would still remain as an 8-phase intersection. Mr. Sue agreed, but pointed out that vehicles will be moving through faster, rather than sitting through multiple light changes. Ms. Padgett suggested adding this item back to the agenda for next month. Everyone agreed.

5. Presentation – Pennies for Progress Initiative – Mr. Myron George

Mr. George gave a presentation on the “Pennies for Progress” initiative in South Carolina. He told members the “Pennies for Progress” initiative was created to raise funds for transportation projects. South Carolina has had local option sales tax legislation since 1997. York County took it to a referendum immediately and it only passed by 200 votes. They named their local option sales tax “Pennies for Progress.” Through the program, York County has built over a half-billion dollars in roads projects. The program is so effective that they are able to spend \$1.82 for every \$1.00 of sales tax money collected. The initial program was so successful that in 2003 a new list of projects was taken to the voters and they passed it by over 73%. The program has been very successful and now many other counties in South Carolina have followed York County’s lead.

Ms. Padgett told members communities across the country are passing these types of referendum and it’s valuable to hear information on how they are finding funding for transportation projects.

6. Old Business

a. Dow Road Corridor Study

Mr. Kozlosky told members the MPO received a resolution from the Town of Kure Beach endorsing the widening of Dow Road from the Snows Cut Bridge to K Avenue, improving the shoulder section as well as the bike lane. However, they did state opposition to the Dow Road extension from K Avenue to Fort Fisher Boulevard. The reasons given in the resolution were that the new right of way will impose additional security risks, the route will interfere and infringe on the Air Force Recreation Center at Fort Fisher, the route will divert traffic away from the town’s business district and the project will have significant and profound impacts on the environmental makeup of the Kure Beach community. At the last meeting, staff was asked to meet with town officials from Kure Beach and Carolina Beach.

Staff is requesting direction from this committee on how to proceed with the Dow Road Corridor Study. Staff went to the public meeting in June and received mixed comments from the citizens of Kure Beach. Mr. Kozlosky told members the resolution recommends that we amend the scope of the work to focus directly on the widening project and look at the capacity analysis on Dow Road from Snows Cut Bridge to K Avenue.

Mayor Montgomery told members the Kure Beach Town Council has reviewed the proposed revised resolution. The biggest concern is the impact on the Air Force Recreation Center and the Air Force Base with this project going through their territory. The route will have to be terminated early and will bring it back through a residential area to rejoin Fort Fisher. The Kure Beach Town Council supports the improvement of Dow Road and also supports a multi-use path along the corridor. However, they feel very strongly about the negative impact that would be created in diverting traffic around the business district. The Kure Beach Town Council would like the MPO to endorse revising the study to continue the improvements to Dow Road, but terminate the project at K Avenue.

Mr. Gilbert told members the Carolina Beach Town Council would like the study to go forward. They respect the economic concerns of Kure Beach.

7. New Business

a. Resolution supporting an amendment to the scope of work for the Dow Road Corridor Study to focus on capacity improvements Between K Avenue and the Snow's Cut Bridge

Mr. Montgomery made the motion to support an amendment to the scope of work for the Dow Road Corridor Study to focus on capacity improvements between K Avenue and the Snow's Cut Bridge. Mr. Gilbert seconded the motion and it carried unanimously.

b. Resolution adopting the 2009-2015 Statewide and Metropolitan Transportation Improvement Program

Mr. Wallace made the motion to adopt the 2009-2015 Statewide and Metropolitan Transportation Improvement Program and Mr. Gilbert seconded the motion. It carried in a 10 to 1 vote.

c. Resolution supporting amendments to the 2009-2015 Statewide and Metropolitan Transportation Improvement Program

Mr. Kozlosky told members since the adoption of the 2009-2015 there have been several amendments to the State and Metropolitan Transportation Improvement Program that have modified the schedules and/or funding for the replacement of Bridge No. 26 over the CSX railroad (B-3881), Randall Parkway widening (U-4920), Wilmington computerized signal system (U-5017) and Cape Fear Public Transportation Authority Transfer/Administration facility. The amendments were approved by the Board of Transportation in July and would need to be included prior to adoption by FHWA. Mr. Saffo made the motion to approve the resolution supporting the amendments to the 2009-2015 STIP and MTIP. Ms. Pritchett seconded the motion and it carried unanimously.

d. Policy and Resolution for amendments to the adopted Functional Classification Map

Mr. Kozlosky told members staff has developed a policy for the updating the Functional Classification map in order to address the requests from developers to reclassify certain segments of roadways in order to increase density in their developments in New Hanover County. The proposed policy states that the MPO will update the Functional Classification Map after the census data is released, which is required by FHWA and also in conjunction with the Long Range Transportation Plan, Comprehensive Transportation Plan and the development of regional travel demand models. Interim updates would be allowed at the request of the WMPO, NCDOT or FHWA. Updates could also be done if the planning area is expanded and we don't currently have the roads classified as well as for newly constructed or improved roadways. We would also update with a written request from a member of the TCC or the TAC. Mr. Saffo made the motion to approve the resolution. Mr. Wallace seconded the motion and it carried unanimously.

e. Resolution supporting the streetscape enhancement project on North and South 17th Streets between Dock Street and Grace Street
(moved ahead)

f. Resolution requesting a Feasibility Study for Scientific Park Drive extension

Mr. Kozlosky told members in June of 2005, the TAC endorsed a resolution supporting Martin Luther King Jr. Parkway being a fully-controlled access facility. Following the opening of the Martin Luther King Jr. Parkway, NCDOT eliminated the left-over into the Creekwood neighborhood. However, to make the Martin Luther King Parkway facility fully controlled, the right-in and right-out movement at Kornegay Drive needs to be eliminated. The only way to do that is to provide additional access into the Creekwood neighborhood. Staff has identified the extension of Scientific Park Drive into the Creekwood neighborhood as a feasible option and is requesting the Board of Transportation support the completion of a feasibility study. Mr. Saffo made the motion to approve the resolution requesting a feasibility study for Scientific Park Drive. Mr. Willis seconded the motion and it carried unanimously.

g. Resolution requesting NCDOT immediately fill the Safe Routes to School Coordinator position

Mr. Kozlosky told members the Safe Routes to School Coordinator resigned recently. The MPO has four very important projects in progress right now and the resolution is to encourage NCDOT to immediately fill the position. Last time the position was vacant, it took several months to fill the position. Mr. Gilbert made the motion to adoption the resolution. Mr. Thurlow seconded the motion and it carried unanimously.

h. Resolution endorsing Executive Director position title

Mr. Kozlosky told members Mr. Wilson recommended changing the title of the executive officer from Sr. Transportation Planner to Executive Director. This new title would provide a designation that would be more influential when dealing with local, state and federal officials. Mr. Sue made the motion to approve of the resolution. Ms. Pritchett seconded the motion and it carried unanimously.

8. Project Updates

a. Market Street Corridor Study

Mr. Kozlosky told members that Kimley-Horn & Associates has been selected to complete the Market Street Corridor study from Colonial Drive to the New Hanover/Pender County line. Funding was provided by the Board of Transportation member. Staff will be holding the first public meetings October 7th through October 9th. The findings and general recommendations will come back to this board in February.

b. NCDOT Project Update

attached

9. Announcements

- a. **North and South 17th Street Public Informational Workshop- August 26th**
- b. **Cross City Trail Ribbon Cutting- August 29th**
- c. **Wilmington Bike/Pedestrian meeting- September 11th**
- d. **Neighborhood Traffic Management Program meeting- September 23rd**
- e. **Cape Fear Breeze Commuter Challenge 2008 Kickoff**
Ms Lawless Bean told members the commuter challenge begins on September 15th.
She briefly outlined some of the upcoming events taking place throughout the month of September and October.

10. Adjournment

With no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 6:18pm

Respectfully submitted

Mike Kozlosky
Senior Transportation Planner