

Meeting Minutes
Wilmington Urban Area Metropolitan Planning Organization
Transportation Advisory Committee
Date: September 24, 2008

Members Present:

Lanny Wilson, Chairman, NCBOT
Nancy Pritchett, Cape Fear Public Transportation Authority
Bill Sue, Brunswick County
Tommy Wallace, Town of Leland
Mike Ballard, Town of Navassa
Mac Montgomery, Town of Kure Beach
Bill Kopp, New Hanover County
Chuck Thurlow, Town of Belville
Laura Padgett, City of Wilmington
Bill Saffo, City of Wilmington

Staff Present:

Mike Kozlosky, Senior Transportation Planner
Joshuah Mello, Transportation Planner
Anthony Prinz, Transportation Planner

1. Call to Order

Mr. Wilson called the meeting to order at 4:05 PM.

2. Approval of Minutes

The motion to approve the minutes from the August 27th meeting carried unanimously.

3. Public Comment Period

Mr. Paul Parker addressed members regarding the College Road and Oleander Intersection improvements. He asked members to consider the elevated left turn plaza or center-turn overpass for the intersection. He told members he felt the major advantage of this plan is that it could be built within the existing footprint of the intersection. He went on to explain how this intersection would function using an elevated left turn plaza and the advantages it would offer.

Mr. Andy Koeppel told members he would like to speak about the design of the Multi-Modal Center. He said the Wilmington City Council passed a resolution authorizing Moffitt and Nichols to work on the functional design for the Multi-Modal Center. He stated that he wanted to be certain that all stakeholders in Wilmington have a meaningful level of input as the design proceeds. He requested that interested stakeholders have an opportunity to periodically review the design as Moffitt and Nichols proceeds with the different stages of their work to ensure that citizens have an attractive and functional Multi-Modal Center in downtown.

Mr. Alvin Rogers provided Mr. Wilson a copy of a petition asking NCDOT to consider using the one-way alternative for the intersection at College Road and Oleander Drive. He went on to explain how this intersection would function using the one-way alternative and the advantages it offers. He also asked members to consider having the meetings of the TAC televised over the government channel to let the public have access to more information so they might have input earlier into transportation projects.

Mr. Wilson told members the public comment period for the College and Oleander project has been extended until November 13th to give the public a longer window of opportunity to submit their comments for this project. He asked Mr. Kozlosky to send Mr. Rogers' petition to the appropriate Department of Transportation officials.

Ms Linda Coite told members she is in favor of the solution offered by the Department of Transportation professionals at College Road and Oleander Drive. She feels the quadrant approach is a very good plan for the intersection.

Mr. Don Bullard told members he does not feel the current plan for the intersection at College and Oleander is a good solution for the long term problem. It is just putting a "band-aid" on the intersection. He explained that we are looking at the same amount of traffic, but this plan is just rerouting and twisting the bottleneck into different areas from where it is now. He asked members to reconsider other alternatives for the intersection and find a long-term solution.

Mr. David Brent, a resident of Leland, told members he came to the meeting today to discuss the proposed interchange of the I-140 bypass and existing US 74/76. It is not designed to provide the optimal use of the bypass. He said the bypass is proposed to carry 8000 vehicles per day initially from US 17. The remaining traffic on US 17 is shown driving thru the signalized Leland Superstreet. A free flowing interchange design that would carry vehicles from the bypass to US 74/76 eastbound without going through a signalized intersection has the potential to draw 20,000 to 25,000 vehicles per day initially onto the bypass at US 17 and create a "Leland Bypass" that would pull traffic off of the busy superstreet section of US 17. At build out, the superstreet is proposed to need an additional lane added to handle traffic. He told members that a properly designed and signed alternative may eliminate the need and expense of expanding the existing superstreet. Building a properly designed interchange is crucial to relieving congestion in the Leland area in the years to come.

4. Presentation – "Getting Connected" Organization

Ms. Peg Schroeder and Mr. Bret Russell with "Getting Connected", a citizen's advocacy group pursuing new bicycle and pedestrian paths in the Middle Sound Loop and Ogden Elementary School area, gave a presentation to members on their efforts to promote this initiative. Mr. Bret Russell told members their organization is requesting help with efforts to seek funding to build these facilities. Their organization is asking NCDOT to consider the use of state funds for the project.

Mr. Wilson pointed out that projects are more successful in getting the Department of Transportation's participation if they have support at the local level. He suggested that "Getting Connected" go to the county commissioners and seek their assistance. He told Ms. Schroeder and Mr. Russell that a good example of support is when the city council stepped up on the multi-use path on Military Cutoff Road in which \$600,000 of that project was picked up by the City of Wilmington taxpayers. The city has also been involved with other projects that involve enhancement dollars that require a local match. Under the new statutes, the counties can now participate in such projects.

Mr. Kopp said he understands the group is meeting with the County Parks Advisory Board next week. He said that right now there is not any mechanism at the county level for this type of thing. Counties have been given the authority to get into this business and this may be possible by working through the parks department. He suggested the item be added to the agenda for the next meeting.

5. Old Business

Mr. Kopp asked about the intersection at Oleander Drive and College Road. Mr. Kozlosky told members the item was not included on this month's agenda because of the Department of Transportation's extension of the public comment period. He said after the November 13th deadline, DOT will review all comments received and come back with their recommendations.

6. New Business

a. Resolution supporting a feasibility study for transportation improvements related for the proposed International Terminal in Southport

Mr. Kozlosky told members the resolution is to support a feasibility study for transportation improvements related to the International Terminal in Southport. He pointed out that a

correction to the text in the sixth paragraph was needed. It should read "Whereas, the Wilmington Urban Metropolitan Planning Organization's Transportation Advisory Committee recognizes the importance....." Ms. Ayers, from the NC State Ports Authority, told members the study will look at exit corridors, as well as the connection to the interstate system. The feasibility study is estimated to cost about \$250,000 and take about 2 ½ years to complete. Mr. Saffo asked if the study will include rail. Ms. Ayers said it is her understanding that this is a study to look at road infrastructure, not rail. Rail infrastructure in Brunswick County is owned by the Department of Defense. Ms. Padgett said rail needs to be included in the study because we can not put enough roads there to handle all the cargo. If the Department of Defense rail line is not available to the terminal, then there needs to be some study on the cost and feasibility to put in a rail line to get the containers out of the Port. She said we don't need to create a situation like already exists in ports across the country where you can't get the goods out of the ports because you don't have adequate separated rail.

Mr. Wilson said there is already a study underway by the rail division to deal with the rail access to the Port. The funds for this resolution have already been set aside by the Department of Transportation to move forward with the feasibility study because no one is taking a look at the true cost for the road infrastructure is going to be to the port. This is just part of the equation. The rail feasibility is being done separately. Mr. Sue suggested that in the last paragraph of the resolution we should add text to determine not only the most cost-effective, but also the safest way to relieve the traffic congestion. Ms Padgett said there should be some kind of reference in the resolution to integrating this study with the rail study.

Mr. Sue made the motion supporting a feasibility study for transportation improvements related for the proposed International Terminal in Southport with the added text requesting cost effective, safe transportation alternatives and integrate the findings of the transportation improvements feasibility study with the rail feasibility study. Mr. Thurlow seconded the motion and it carried unanimously.

b. Resolution supporting the implementation of the Bicycle Facilities Study for the Blue Clay Corridor

Mr. Kozlosky told members the resolution is to support the implementation of the study and request that New Hanover County, the Airport Authority, the Cape Fear Public Transportation Authority and the Department of Transportation work together to get this project moving. Ms. Padgett made the motion to support the implementation of the Bicycle Facilities Study for the Blue Clay corridor. Mr. Saffo seconded the motion and it carried unanimously.

c. Notification of US 17 Bypass as an future addition to the Interstate System and I-140 designation request on the Wilmington Outer-Loop

Mr. Kozlosky told members the Department of Transportation has requested that the MPO be notified that a letter was submitted to Federal Highway Administration requesting US 17 Bypass be added to the interstate system and I-140 designation be applied to the Wilmington Outer-Loop. Ms. Padgett made a motion to support the requested designations. Mr. Sue seconded the motion.

Mr. Wilson asked Mr. Kozlosky to get in touch with the appropriate officials at DOT and update Mr. Koepfel pertaining to his question regarding the designation and signing of the portion of I-140 from Interstate 40 back to US 17 in New Hanover County. Mr. Wilson told member there are reasons why they have asked that portion not signed Interstate 140 at this time. It is based on environmental issues as it relates to the environmental documents for Military Cutoff Road.

Mr. Thurlow asked if we are only approving that section. Mr. Kozlosky said there is no formal action needed. This is just a notification requirement that the Department of Transportation must follow in submitting the request to FHWA.

With no further discussion, Mr. Wilson called for the vote. The motion to support the requested designations carried unanimously.

7. 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. Staff will hold the first set of public meetings on October 7th through October 9th to evaluate the study of Colonial Drive to the city limits. On October 28th through October 30th the next set of public meetings will be held at Ogden Elementary School to look at the corridor from the city limits out to the New Hanover/Pender County line.

b. Dow Road Corridor Study

Mr. Kozlosky told members staff in the process of reviewing the revised scope for the Dow Road Corridor Study project just received from Wilbur Smith and Associates.

c. 17th Street Streetscape Project

Mr. Kozlosky told members staff has reviewed the comments received at the August 26th public meeting and is working with the Department of Transportation. Staff has developed a plan that will meet the needs for reducing speed, helping to improve pedestrian and vehicular safety, and also retain the parking along 17th Street, which was a concern of the business community along that corridor. Staff will present the proposal to the Wilmington City Council in October.

d. NCDOT Project Update

attached

8. Announcements

- a. **2008 Commuter Challenge- Kick-off- September 10th**
- b. **Neighborhood Traffic Meeting- September 23rd**
- c. **Market Street Corridor Study Public Workshop- October 7th & 9th**
- d. **Wilmington Bike/Pedestrian Committee meeting- October 16th**
- e. **Market Street Corridor Study Public Workshop- October 28th & 30th**

9. Adjournment

With no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 5:33pm

Respectfully submitted

Mike Kozlosky
Executive Director
Wilmington Urban Area Metropolitan Planning Organization