

Meeting Notes
Wilmington Urban Area Metropolitan Planning Organization
Transportation Advisory Committee
Date: September 30, 2009

Members Present:

Lanny Wilson, Chairman, NCBOT
Jonathan Barfield, Cape Fear Public Transportation Authority
Jim Dugan, Town of Kure Beach
Alan Gilbert, Town of Carolina Beach
Mike Ballard, Town of Navassa
Bill Blair, Town of Wrightsville Beach
Bill Saffo, City of Wilmington
Jason Thompson, New Hanover County
Bill Sue, Brunswick County
Chuck Thurlow, Town of Belville
David Williams, Pender County
Tommy Wallace, Town of Leland

Staff Present:

Mike Kozlosky, Executive Director
Bill McDow, Transportation Engineer

1. Call to Order

Mr. Wilson called the meeting to order at 4:00 PM.

2. Approval of Minutes

The motion to approve the minutes for the September 9th meeting carried unanimously.

3. Public Comment Period

Mr. David Jones addressed the committee regarding the installation of medians on Market Street from Kerr Avenue to Colonial Drive. He feels that they will adversely affect businesses in that area. He told members he does not see how the project justifies being in the Top 25 Projects based on the needs in our area. He said he feels that there are other needs that are greater.

Mr. Andy Koeppel addressed the members regarding the possible land-swap for the U-Haul Property. He told members he hopes there is mechanism in place that if a suitable property was found, the Department can move forward to acquire the property. Mr. Wilson stated that the Department of Transportation is currently working on land acquisition for the Multi-modal Center.

Mr. Koeppel told members he would also like to speak about the matter of the Interstate-20 extension. The resolution presented at the last meeting was intended to request NCDOT begin conversations with South Carolina Department of Transportation about the extension of the I-20 designation. Instead it was tabled in order to research more detail on weight restrictions if the route was designated as I-20. He told members he felt it was premature to hold up the process over the matter of weight restrictions. Mr. Koeppel suggested that weight limits and such things could be a conversation for another day. He requested that this committee move forward with the resolution immediately so that conversations between North and South Carolina on the extension of I-20 can begin as soon as possible.

Mr. Steve Coggins, council for Mr. Dennis Anderson, addressed the group regarding the medians on Market Street. He told members that Priority # 8 on the Top 25 priority list will create devastating affects on the McDonald restaurant on Market Street. He reiterated that the project will have adverse impacts on the character and efficiency of the corridor. It may also create a negative affect the economic vitality of the area and possibly cause a decline in property values. He stated that Mr. Anderson respectfully requests the project not appear on the priority list.

Mr. Alvin Rogers addressed the committee regarding a one-way alternative utilizing Kerr Avenue. He told members he would like to request members have another look at the one-way alternative. He felt it would be a more economical alternative for solving the traffic problems on College Road.

5. New Business – Moved ahead

a. Resolution adopting the Prioritized List of Bicycle Projects for the Wilmington MPO (2009)

Mr. Kozlosky told members that the Department of Transportation asked for a prioritized list of multimodal projects. He suggested using the list from the 2030 Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) for prioritization by the NCDOTs Bike and Pedestrian Division.

Mr. Gilbert asked who compiled the list. Mr. Kozlosky said the list was taken from the 2030 LRTP.

Mr. Thurlow made the motion to adopt the prioritized list of bicycle projects for the Wilmington MPO. Mr. Gilbert seconded the motion and it carried unanimously.

b. Resolution adopting the Wilmington MPO Transportation Model

Mr. York gave a presentation to the committee on the Transportation Model. Mr. York told members NCDOT has been in the process of updating the MPO's transportation model for the last year. Household information came from the 911 database and employment information was provided from Info USA. The new model information shows the number of households will increase from 163,000 to 185,000, with Brunswick County having the largest growth in the MPO area. Info USA is predicting 221,000 jobs and the biggest employment center will continue to be Wilmington. The model also reflects traffic volumes for the area.

Mr. Wilson asked if the model corrected some problems that were associated with the Martin Luther King, Jr. Parkway. Mr. York said they had made a few minor changes in the calculations which include speed limit, number of lanes and capacity corrections. Mr. Kozlosky told member that staff is more comfortable with the numbers we have today with the new model than back in 2005 when it was originally adopted.

Mr. Williams made the motion to adopt the new transportation model. Mr. Sue seconded the motion and it carried unanimously.

4. Old Business

a. Resolution adopting the Top 25 Highway projects for the Wilmington MPO (2009)

Mr. Kozlosky told members that based on Executive Order #2, NCDOT is trying to become more transparent and more data driven in their decision making processes. The TCC prioritized the list of Top 25 projects for the region. The list was submitted to this committee at the last meeting for discussion. Staff was requested to provide the Top 10 projects for the region for the 2009-2015 TIP to the members.

Mr. Kozlosky stated that staff compiled two lists of the Top 25 projects for review by this committee. The first list is the Top 25 projects for the Wilmington Urban Area MPO (2009). The second list is the Top 25 projects without Loop and Toll Projects (2009). Staff recommended submitting the list to the Department of Transportation that does not include the Cape Fear Skyway and the Wilmington Bypass. Mr. Wilson stated the reason the two projects will be left out is because they are coming from different funding sources.

Mr. Montgomery asked if a list was adopted for submittal without the two projects, will it in any way diminish the committee's commitment that the Wilmington Bypass in Brunswick County. Mr. Kozlosky stated that is why staff recommends adopting the two lists.

Mr. Montgomery told members he would like to see the Dow Road project moved from the bottom of the priority list up because it will benefit the entire area economically, not just for traffic congestion. Mr. Thompson told members said he felt that the Dow Road project should be moved up into the top-10. Mr. Saffo suggested moving it to number 7.

Mr. Wilson reminded members that projects having a regional significance will be given more weight in the prioritization process by the Department.

Mr. Sue made a motion that on both lists this committee start at position # 3 and put Village Road, # 4 – Dow Road; # 5 - Hampstead Bypass; and Old Fayetteville Road as the # 6 project.

Mr. Saffo reminded members that this committee just took \$38 million from New Hanover County to go to the Wilmington Bypass. He pointed out that New Hanover County made a sacrifice by taking the money and putting it toward the Wilmington Bypass in Brunswick County as its part in a regional effort. If we are trying to help each other regionally, he said he felt it is unfair to take those kinds of projects forward as Mr. Sue suggested when we have major traffic issues on this side of the river. Mr. Thurlow said the I-140 project is not just a Brunswick County project, it is a regional project. It will benefit Wilmington just as much as Brunswick County. Mr. Saffo said he wanted to demonstrate that we also felt the same way, which is why we took \$38 million and moved it to that project. He explained that there are major projects here that we have also been waiting on.

Mr. Ballard told members you have to fix the problem at both ends. It's a give and take situation. He said he agreed with Mr. Sue's motion and he would like to see the Market Street Corridor project put on the back-burner. Mr. Saffo said he agreed with moving the Market Street #8 project to the bottom of the list. Mr. Ballard pointed out that Village Road is not in the position to handle traffic that is running in and out now.

Mr. Wilson asked if Mr. Sue's motion was for Village Road to be the number 3 project, number 4 will be Dow Road, number 5 will be the Hampstead Bypass, and number 6 will be Old Fayetteville Road. Mr. Sue said that was correct. Mr. Ballard seconded Mr. Sue's motion.

Mr. Williams asked if this list was going to be updated in two years. Mr. Kozlosky replied that was correct. He said the next updated list will come from the 2035 Long Range Transportation Plan and not the 2030 plan.

Mr. Wilson suggested that Mr. Kozlosky read through the revisions requested in Mr. Sue's motion. Mr. Ballard told Mr. Kozlosky that he understood that the Market Street improvements – B section was moving to the bottom of the list. Mr. Kozlosky said to do that would take a substitute motion. Mr. Saffo said he would make a substitute motion to submit the Top 25 Project list as read but move the Market Street improvements to the bottom of the list of 25. The corrected list follows:

Project by Rank

1. Independence Boulevard
2. Military Cutoff Extension – Market Street to Martin Luther King, Jr. Parkway
3. Village Road
4. Dow Road
5. Hampstead Bypass
6. Old Fayetteville Road

7. Upgrade College Road from Gordon to Martin Luther King, Jr. Parkway
8. Kerr Avenue interchange
9. Market Street improvements – C section
10. Market Street improvements – D section
11. Northbound through lane on College to Shipyard
12. Castle Hayne Roundabout
13. Castle Hayne Road/NC 133 widening
14. Gordon Road widening
15. River Road widening (NC 133)
16. Scientific Park Drive Extension
17. Carolina Beach Road (US 421) widening
18. Masonboro Loop Road connection
19. Blue Clay Road interchange
20. River Road relocation
21. North 23rd Street widening
22. Plantation Road improvements
23. Wide Way Connector
24. Magnolia Drive extension
25. Market Street improvements – B section (Colonial to Kerr)

Mr. Thompson seconded Mr. Saffo's substitute motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Wilson called for a motion on the list that includes the Loop and Toll projects. Mr. Thompson made the motion to approve the list with the Wilmington Bypass as the number 1 project and the Cape Fear Skyway as the number 2 project and then follow the same order as the list from Mr. Sue and Mr. Saffo's earlier motions. Mr. Ballard seconded the motion and it carried unanimously.

6. Updates

a. Citizen Advisory Committee (CAC)

Mr. Kozlosky updated members on Cape Fear Commutes and the CAC activities.

b. NCDOT Project Update

attached

8. Announcements

- a. Dow Road Corridor Study Public Meeting- September 28th 5-7 pm
- b. Citizen Advisory Committee meeting-October 7th at 4pm
- c. Bike/Pedestrian Committee meeting- October 8th at 5:15pm
- d. Special meeting with TAC representatives to discuss the Cape Fear Skyway- October 14th

Mr. Montgomery told members he would like to pay a complement to Mr. Kozlosky and his staff, especially Mr. Bill McDow. Mr. Kozlosky's staff conducted a parking and traffic study for the Town of Kure Beach over the 4th of July weekend. The results from the study will be presenting to their Town Council next week. The preliminary results are phenomenal. The study will provide valuable information over the next several years for the town.

9. Adjournment

With no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 5:30 pm

Respectfully submitted

Mike Kozlosky
Executive Director
Wilmington Urban Area Metropolitan Planning Organization