

**MINUTES OF
THE WILMINGTON URBAN AREA
TECHNICAL COORDINATING COMMITTEE
August 7, 2002**

MEMBERS PRESENT

Renee B. Roach, Area Traffic, NCDOT
Cris Mowry Director, State Ports Authority
Jackson Provost, Division 3, NCDOT
Dexter Hayes, Director, New Hanover County Planning Department
Roger D. Hawkins, NCDOT
Penny Tysinger, CFCOG
Roger Hawkins, Division Traffic Engineer, NCDOT
Mark Tinkler, Senior Planner, City of Wilmington
Don Bennett, City Traffic Engineer, City of Wilmington
Cameron Moore, Town of Leland
Albert Eby, WTA
Mike Bruff, Statewide Planning, NCDOT

MEMBERS ABSENT

Jane Daughtridge, Town of Carolina Beach
Jim Flechtner, Traffic Engineer, City of Wilmington
Andrea Surratt, Town of Wrightsville Beach
Helen Bunch, Brunswick County Planning
Loretta Barren, NC Division, FHWA
Cheryl Evans, NCDOT
Dave Weaver, Assistant County Manager
Allen Pope, Division Engineer, NCDOT
David Bender, NCDOT Rail Division
Jeff Crouchley, PTD, NCDOT

STAFF PRESENT

Lawless Bean, TDM Coordinator, City Of Wilmington
Don Eggert, Cape Fear COG

OTHERS PRESENT

Jim Medlin, Chamber of Commerce
Dick Scott, Chamber of Commerce
Howard Loving, Chamber of Commerce

CALL TO ORDER

The Chairman called the meeting to order at 10:05 a.m.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES – July 10, 2002 Meeting

A motion was made by Mr. Bruff and seconded by Mr. Hayes that the minutes of the July 10, 2002 meeting be approved as submitted. The vote carried unanimously.

OLD BUSINESS

Mr. Tinkler gave updates from the previous TAC meeting. He said the TAC met on July 25th and Mayor Harper Peterson was elected Chairman. They started their discussion of the MOU. Mr. Tinkler said he did research on five (5) other MPOs in the State that had weighted provisions. The TAC's voting arrangements will remain the same. On the 22nd of this month, the TAC will take up the issues of local match funding, bylaws, and other issues. Mr. Tinkler said he has outlined a schedule to try to get the MOU approved by the end of the year. The TAC has agreed to discuss it on the 22nd and finalize everything on the 24th of October so members have time to present to their own local government boards by the December TAC meeting.

Mr. Tinkler said the TAC approved the RFP for the Regional Travel Surveys and it was issued the next day. They also approve the Amendment of the budget line item (from \$100,000 to \$150,000) for the Travel Surveys. The RFP was issued on the 26th. A list of consultants that received RFPs was included in the Agenda packets. He mailed out copies of all responses to questions he had received as of August 5th.

PROJECT UPDATES

Mr. Tinkler stated that a meeting was held Tuesday on the transit system merger and Master Plan. Several different alternatives were looked at for a merger of the County. NHTS and WTA services may be part of a phased long-term approach to establishing a region transit authority. At the meeting it was decided that they would meet with each of the respective Boards and then have a joint meeting with the Steering Committee to discuss the merger.

Mr. Eby said the WTA was disappointed with the progress of the Study. He pointed out that in the early stages of the Study, they were not included in the selection of the consultants. He thinks that the TCC did not clearly define the scope in the early stages of the Study and that the consultants were not given any direction. Mr. Eby further stated that the WTA might recommend to rescind the consultant's contract.

Mr. Tinkler said a meeting with reps from both Boards will discuss that. They will evaluate the whole process and make a decision on it. They will try to stay with the project and the consultant team to make decisions before they jump into the Master Plan component of it. He said one of the consultants on the team was responsible for the Merger Feasibility Study. Another consultant whom they have not worked with yet is responsible for the Master Plan portion.

Ms. Tysinger wanted to know what percentage of the contract was completed.

Mr. Tinkler said we were about 30% into the contract. The consultants are at a point where they have done some general analyses of merged operations, but they have not gone into detail on how merger would proceed beyond basic route data of the Master Plan component.

Ms. Bean said the thought at this point is that initially there will be a single point of contact for information from both transit systems. The next step would be to synchronize the contracts with WTA and New Hanover Transportation Services so that an RFP can be issued for a single operating management company.

Mr. Tinkler said, basically, the problem was that there were four levels in which they could merge operations without creating a new authority. This wasn't clearly outlined in detailed originally.

MULTI-MODAL CENTER UPDATE

He pointed out that last night at the City Council meeting, Mayor Peterson made his official proposal to look at an alternate site. In the previous Study, the Red Cross Street site was chosen. The alternate site is an adjacent site that is intended to address the concerns of the Community College and others. City Council approved pursuing a contract for the original Study with NCDOT and the Community College. They will be developing a Scope of Service.

Mr. Loving asked if there were more than one site for the new Study and if the results of the previous Study would be compared with the proposed new site that the Community College is suggesting .

Mr. Tinkler said they will be looking at both sites, the Red Cross Street site and the alternate site. They will compare both sites using the same criteria. Funding the Study will be 50% DOT, 25% Community College, and 25% the City of Wilmington. This means that they will be the official parties to the contract. The Study will take place within three to four months.

Ms. Tysinger asked if this was something that was covered in the budget.

Ms. Tysinger further asked if this was something that the TAC would have to approve.

Mr. Bruff said officially, this would still involve the MPO and come through the TAC.

Mr. Tinkler distributed copies of a memo from NCDOT on a completed Feasibility Study for the Independence Boulevard Extension from Randall Parkway to Martin Luther King, Jr. Parkway. He said this was the first step in project development. The memo identifies several options for the extension of Independence Boulevard. He said no action was required immediately. There is time for comments to be received. Two alternates have been proposed. The difference between the two is that one will have four lanes, two in each direction from Randall Parkway to just north of Market and the other will have six lanes, three in each direction. The six-lane option is officially favored in order to allow the performance of the intersection with Market to operate at acceptable levels. He feels, however, that a four-lane option would be more favorable in terms of staying in character with the facilities already in the area.

Mr. Bennett stated that there was a proposal for an interchange at Princess Place Drive. However, it being a residential neighborhood, he feels that it should not be impacted with a thoroughfare since we have Martin Luther King Boulevard and Market Street corridors. Not including this interchange or connection would help reduce costs.

REGIONAL TRAVEL SURVEYS

Mr. Tinkler stated that we will have proposals coming in next Tuesday. The schedule will be tight in trying to get this project started shortly after Labor Day. Consultants brought to our attention that the time required to do a pilot survey, which identifies issues and problems that need to be worked out before doing a full survey would require that we wait until spring for the full survey. The consultants estimated it takes a minimum of eight weeks after contract letting before one is prepared to do a full survey. Mr. Tinkler said the pilot survey will be done this fall and a full survey will be down after the Azalea Festival in the spring.

Mr. Tinkler further stated that proposals will be coming in next Tuesday. He asked for three volunteers from the TCC to review the proposals. He said on Friday afternoon, the 16th, they will get together and decide on interviews which, if necessary will be done on the 21st. He, and Mike Bruff, along with someone from NCDOT will review the proposals. (Update: Selection Committee also included Dexter Hayes and Penny Tysinger.)

CITIZENS ADVISORY COMMITTEE (CAC)

Mr. Tinkler said the TAC was interested in re-establishing this Committee. He feels the CAC could be a valuable asset by providing citizens input on plans. He attended a meeting a couple of weeks ago with the Community Growth Planning Team at the Chamber of Commerce which has a subcommittee on transportation. The agenda at that meeting was focused on public outreach and transportation in the community. The Group has offered to provide the MPO assistance in establishing the CAC and in ensuring that they meet the goals we would like to have for public participation. He introduced Mr. Jim Medlin of the Community Growth Planning Team.

Mr. Medlin introduced Mr. Dick Scott, who is also a member of the Community Growth Planning Team. Mr. Medlin stated that the Community Growth Planning Initiative was started by the Chamber several years ago. He and Mr. Scott were representing the Transportation Committee of that group. The task they were given is to provide citizens input and support for a unified transportation plans and projects. Presently, they are in the process of determining the groups that need to be contacted and how they are going to be contacted. They feel that if the general public is educated as to the transportation plans, needs, funding, etc., they can make better decisions on how they want to improve transportation in the future. This includes not only roads, but rails, bikes, pedestrians, buses, trains, etc.

Mr. Medlin explained that his reason for being at today's meeting was to offer his group's support and to get the TCC's endorsement to continue their efforts in trying to make the general public aware of the transportation efforts going on in the region. He said public hearings are fine. Advertisements are published in the local newspapers, but the general public does not read the newspaper or go through the public hearings to determine if a hearing is going to be held on a certain project. The Growth Planning Team is trying to supplement the governments in informing the general public. Again, he asked the TCC for its endorsement and support for his group to continue their efforts to educate and make the general public aware of public meetings and how they can participate in the transportation process.

Mr. Tinkler stated that this was a comprehensive effort that Mr. Medlin offered the TCC. Mr. Tinkler said he would be glad to have Mr. Medlin's Team assist the TCC.

Mr. Mowrey said he was a part of that Community Growth Planning Team at one time. Not only does it give the TCC access to an established group, it validates what Community Growth Planning is doing. In addition, it allows public input into the decision-making process. Another factor is that it is part of a bigger picture; it's not just focused on transportation. It will offer comprehensive views.

Mr. Medlin said the Transportation Team of the Community Growth Planning Initiative welcomed the opportunity to serve on the Citizens Advisory Committee.

Ms. Tysinger stated that as long as the TCC understood what the Community Growth Planning Team was doing, they could work together rather than form another committee. Further, she feels there is a TCC connection with that Committee.

Ms. Bean said it was important to know that the Community Growth Planning's subcommittee have identified some target areas and have collected data on people who either work or live in those areas.

Mr. Tinkler said he would work with Mr. Medlin in drafting a proposal to be taken to the TAC.

Mr. Medlin pointed out that the Transportation Committee was open to anyone who wanted to be on it. Membership is not restricted. He welcomed the TCC members.

Mr. Tinkler said he will make presentation at the August 22nd TAC meeting regarding Mr. Medlin's offer and concept. He will not have an official proposal until it is reviewed by the groups in October.

Mr. Medlin asked Mr. Tinkler if he wanted him to appear at the August 22nd TAC meeting and Mr. Tinkler said yes.

TCC BYLAWS – DISCUSS AND FINALIZE FOR VOTE ON 10/9

Mr. Tinkler stated that Ms. Tysinger brought this topic up at the last meeting. He asked the TCC if they had any suggestions or questions before finalizing and adopting them.

Ms. Tysinger said that page 2, Section V – Agenda, second line, states "The Secretary or his designee shall be responsible for the preparation of the agenda and also signing the Bylaws." She was not sure if the Secretary would know all of the things that needed to be placed on the agenda unless she was told by the Chair. She recommended it be changed to read "that the Secretary was responsible for getting it out."

Mr. Tinkler said the Secretary of the TAC and the Chairman of the TCC was the same person.

Ms. Tysinger suggested that it be changed to "Recording Secretary" versus "Secretary to the TAC" since Ms. Chavious actually prepares the minutes. However, she agreed to leave it as is.

Mr. Eggert had a question on “ex officio members” mentioned in Article V, Section IV, Voting Procedures. He said Roberts Rules of Order defines ex officio members as those who are by virtue of their office.

Ms. Tysinger recommended “ex officio” be changed to “advisory members”.

Mr. Hayes said traditionally, the Chairman has been the Chairman of the LPA. He recommended Article IV, Section I, Officers Defined, be changed to read: “The officers of the TCC shall consist of a Chairman from the Lead Planning Agency”.

Mr. Tinkler recommended the word “Elections” be deleted from “Section III, Elections”. He said he would make all the changes and the TCC could vote on them at the October 9th meeting.

MPO ORIENTATION – NEW MEMBERS

Mr. Tinkler said a couple of years ago, Ms. Hinton prepared a notebook for new TAC members that had material on their functions and the TIP process. He thought this was a good idea to bring back. As part of the education effort, he has scheduled Calvin Leggett or someone from NCDOT on August 22nd to give a power point presentation on the TIP and the funding process. He and Mr. Bruff have also discussed a possible presentation on the MPO Planning Process for later in the fall.

Mr. Mowrey suggested that the TAC have a joint meeting at the August 22nd meeting on TIP funding.

Mr. Tinkler said he would send out an e-mail to the TAC regarding the joint presentation on TIP funding. The MPO Planning Process will be worked out for both groups in October.

CITY OF WILMINGTON AND NEW HANOVER COUNTY COOPERATIVE AGREEMENT FOR TRANSPORTATION INFRASTRUCTURE – DISCUSSION OF TWO PROJECTS

Mr. Tinkler said there are a couple of unique projects in New Hanover County that are critical to the future of transportation in this region. Due to the structure of government in North Carolina, the County is prohibited from having involvement in transportation facilities themselves. The facilities are under the jurisdiction of NCDOT. He said we would like to initiate the planning process for two projects with the County, the City, and NCDOT. Anyone from this group could be on the subcommittee. We have a formal agreement already with the

Wilmington City Council and the New Hanover County Commissioners regarding cooperative efforts on projects in the County that are of mutual interest. Monkey Junction is one of the projects with agreements on impact fees. So far, the County has collected the fees. Mr. Tinkler pointed out that in the Monkey Junction case, the City is the only agency that can collect those fees.

Mr. Hayes said that there was a time constraint of five (5) years placed on spending the money that the developer agreed to.

Mr. Tinkler asked if the funds could be used for a consultant planning study.

Mr. Hayes said the funds are to be used only for improving the designs of the intersection. There has to be a commitment for improvements and the improvements have to benefit development.

Mr. Tinkler asked him if he could get the details and give it to him so that he could submit it to the TAC.

Mr. Tinkler stated that the other project that is on the Thoroughfare Plan and is so critical to extend Military Cutoff Road up towards the US 17 Bypass. He pointed out that that area was already being developed north of there and the New Hanover County School District plans to build new schools in the area. They are worried about transportation. They will have to go up College Road in order to get to that area. As he understands it, NCDOT is not in a position to deal with land use issues. The County is the land use entity in the area. Mr. Tinkler said the Military Cutoff Road project is similar to the Monkey Junction issue. The County and the City will have to take the lead on preserving the right-of-way.

Mr. Hayes said a section of the potential Military Cutoff extension right-of-way has homes on it. One developer has set aside an 80 ft. corridor to preserve the Bypass. They have to work with the developers to get that alignment included in their plans. He said NCDOT is not going to buy a right of way for a future road and the County can only reserve it for a short period of time, eighteen (18) months.

MEETING AND OTHER ANNOUNCEMENTS

Mr. Tinkler stated that Mr. Eggert made him aware of the RPO meeting to be held on Monday. There will be a presentation on an Access Management.

Mr. Eggert said NCDOT is stressing access management techniques. Laura Cove of Statewide Planning will give a power point presentation on it. The meeting will be held Monday at 9:30 a.m. at Brunswick Community Collge, Leland Center on Hwy US 74/76/

Mr. Tinkler said on September 13th, Secretary Tippett will be in Wilmington to talk about Bird Island. This was brought up in the last TAC meeting. Also, on September 20th, there will be a design charette for North Third and Fourth Streets Entryway into Downtown Wilmington.

Mr. Tinkler said there was some discretionary money that was committed by NCDOT for \$100,000 to do landscaping in the Dawson/Wooster corridor. All the City has done so far is discuss it. They don't want to do a study yet because we are just embarking on a Long Range Land Use Plan Update which would define things for that corridor. They will probably meet internally with City departments and come up with some plantings they can do in the area.

Mr. Tinkler said there is a meeting scheduled for the RPO in October at which there will be a presentation on ITS. He encouraged everyone to attend. Mr. Eggert said one of the things that he is interested in is the 511 phone number which gives travel information on weather, evacuations, tourisms, etc.

NEW BUSINESS

Mr. Tinkler said the TAC has made a request for a bus tour for new members. They feel the tour would give them perspective on new and old issues in the area.

Mr. Mowrey suggested that the TCC members be included on the tour as well.

Mr. Tinkler said Mr. Peterson recommended research be done on transportation impact fees. Also, he said there has been a delay in some projects in Jacksonville and, as it turns out, there is not enough money to do a drainage project on Village Road in Leland. The TAC approved making a request to NCDOT to move that money to Wilmington for that project.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 12:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Mark Tinkler,
TCC Chairman

/dmc