

**Wilmington Urban Area
Technical Coordinating Committee
Meeting Notes for June 11, 2003**

Members Present:

Dexter Hayes, Director, New Hanover County Planning
Penny Tysinger, CFCOG
Mark Tinkler, Senior Transportation Planner, City of Wilmington, MPO Coordinator
Lawless Bean, TDM Coordinator, City of Wilmington
Cameron Moore, Development Services, Town of Leland
Bill Bennett, NC State Ports
Don Eggert, Cape Fear RPO
Dave Brent, City of Wilmington, Traffic Engineering
Jonathan David, Transportation Planner, City of Wilmington
Joe Blair, Construction Engineering, NCDOT
Darrell Hensdale, NCDOT Statewide Planning
Jane Daughtridge, Planning & Development, Carolina Beach
Helen Bunch, Brunswick County Planning
Don Bennett, City Traffic Engineer, City of Wilmington
Traci Davis, Planning Director, Wrightsville Beach
Yvonne Hatcher, Brunswick Transit System

Guests

Harold King, Chairman, Citizen Advisory Committee
Kim Webb, Brunswick Transit System

1. Call to Order:

Chairman Mark Tinkler called the meeting to order at 10:10am

2. Approval Of Minutes:

The motion to approve the minutes from the May 7th meeting was made by Mr. Joe Blair and Mr. Darrell Hensdale seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

3. Old Business:

Mr. Tinkler asked members if there were any items of old business to address. Hearing none, Mr. Tinkler said we will go on to the next agenda item.

6. FY2004 PWP Amendment – Town of Navassa Collector Street Plan (moved ahead):

Mr. Tinkler updated members on the past activity regarding this amendment. The amendment allocates the money to roll over to next year PWP so they can conduct the study. Mr. Eggert moved the motion, and Mr. Hensdale seconded it. With no further discussion, the motion carried unanimously.

7. Citizen Advisory Committee – Safety letter to TAC, issue identification:

Mr. Tinkler introduced Mr. Harold King, Co-Chair of the Citizen Advisory Committee (CAC). Mr. King gave a special presentation on behalf of the CAC. Mr. King distributed copies of the minutes and handouts from the last meeting. He said at the last meeting members came up with a list of

transportation issues from each member-area they felt needed to be addressed. In addition, they feel traffic safety is a major issue affecting every one in the area. To that end, members of the CAC drafted a letter to the TAC expressing their concern and suggested establishing a task force to undertake the reduction of auto accidents. CAC members also expressed the concern that while TAC/TCC is working very effectively to plan for the long-range future, 10 to 20 years out, they feel attention needs to be given to current traffic problems; what can we do today and tomorrow.

Mr. Tinkler asked Mr. Blair if he would like to reference the NC Moving Ahead program and the intended outcome of the program. Mr. Blair said while he has not been directly involved in the program, the operations engineers have been putting it together. Mr. Blair explained that the Governor's initiative, as he understands it, is to make some of the minor improvements to existing facilities, such as widening, paving, addition of turn lanes, and widening or improving bridges; something that can be done quickly. Improvement projects are being submitted and are in the process of review. Mr. Tinkler added that the focus of this initiative is to upgrade sub-standard facilities, and it will translate to about 18 million dollars in the Division 3 area this next physical year and about 22 million dollars in the following year.

Mr. Tinkler said he agrees the message being sent by the CAC is very important and it should be a primary consideration in all projects; however, it is an important issue and should stand on it own as well. It is a growing concern with everyone. Mr. Tinkler reiterated, with this being a primary concern for the CAC, we should find ways to explicitly include safety in all that we do. Mr. Tinkler asked member of the TCC for any suggestions to solve this issue. Mr. Hayes suggested requesting auto insurance companies to participate in funding improvement projects. It would be cost effective for them because the improvement would help in deterring the number of claims generated from accidents.

Mr. Tinkler asked Mr. Hensdale about the High Hazard Program with the DOT. Mr. Hensdale said funds are administered through the Traffic Engineering Branch. Each division is allocated a certain amount of money. Mr. Eggert said he was recently at a presentation regarding this program. He went on to say, they have many more needs than money. Needs are prioritized on a quarterly basis and there is a waiting list. They only handle small projects – less than a million dollars.

Mr. Bennett asked if he could provide some clarification regarding the ranking of New Hanover County in accident rate statistics. He told members larger cities, such as Charlotte, have urban loops that carry heavy traffic. Because of the nature of their construction, these loops have very limited conflict. Wilmington only has one interchange, College and Market. Everything else is moved on surface streets. Most of these surface streets are over capacity. We move all our traffic through intersections and each intersection has about 32 conflict points. Statistically, we are only a fraction of a percentage point behind those cities. While we are moving an equivalent amount of traffic, we don't have the higher-classed roadways with the limited conflict that would reduce the rates.

Mr. King said perhaps a solution might be found in identifying the most dangerous intersection and go to work on them one at the time. Mr. Tinkler said he feels the increase focus on access management will become an important safety component.

Mr. King completed his presentation and thanked everyone for inviting him. Mr. Tinkler thanked him on behalf of the TCC for the information and the important contributions from the Citizens Advisory Committee.

5. Public Participation Policy:

Mr. Tinkler turned the floor over to Mr. David for presentation of the first draft for the Public Participation Plan. Mr. David told members it came to attention that the MPO is lacking a public participation policy. After researching the subject, he put together a rough draft for review and asked members to contact him with feedback and suggestions by the next meeting.

8. Transportation Summit – July 23rd:

Mr. Tinkler review plans thus far for the upcoming transportation summit. Mr. Tinkler told members he was having trouble with the 10:30 session for the summit. After talking with other MPO groups in several areas, perhaps it would be best to take Mr. Lanny Wilson up on his offer to ask if the Lt. Governor might speak. She is a very inspirational speaker and will do an excellent job. Mr. Tinkler asked members for contributions of materials for the opening slide show presentation at 8:15. Mr. Tinkler asked members for suggestions on the final wrap up session. Mr. Eggert said he thinks that there needs to be someone to deliver a final challenge for the future, someone to really give that punch to it, our marching orders so to speak.

4. MTIP – Transportation Improvement Program 2004-2010:

Mr. Tinkler said the Board of Transportation approved the state TIP on Thursday, June 5th. There seems to be a number of errors on the transit element.

There were 4 additional roadway projects funded.

1. Widening Wrightsville Ave between Forest Hills and Wilshire
2. Independence Blvd extension to the MLK Parkway
3. Village Road widening project
4. Blue Clay Road interchange on the Bypass

Mr. Tinkler asked if there are any comments to pass on to the TAC regarding the MTIP. There were none.

9. Project Updates:

Ms. Daughtridge updated members on the addition of a bike lane on 421 between Carolina and Kure Beach by DOT. Carolina Beach also has a grant project underway through Parks and Recreation that funds a bike path around the lake. The project will also include the addition of an amphitheater at a later date. Council has decided to leave Carolina Beach Avenue two-way traffic for the time being.

Mr. Tinkler said there was a meeting last Friday morning regarding Military Cutoff Road. Traffic at Sir Tyler Drive is taking as much as 10 minutes to get out. The safety issue regard traffic volume is a real problem. People are getting more aggressive and there have been several accidents. With it being the only entrance into Mayfaire for construction trucks getting in and out, it is causing major problems. Mayfair construction will be adding 2 or 3 temporary entrances to help alleviate some of the traffic problems. Traffic signals installation, funded by Mayfair, are scheduled go in March 2004 will provide some relief. The City was meeting with some of the developers this morning to looking at putting in a temporary road between Research Park and the Forum.

Mr. Tinkler said he would not have updates on the Multi-Modal Transportation Center until after tomorrow. He will keep everyone posted as details develop.

Ms. Bean said she is working on a project with stakeholders, Navassa and Belville to create a public transportation link between those communities and services available in Wilmington and New Hanover County. Ms. Daughtridge said Carolina Beach has met a couple times with Ms. Deborah Houston and Mr. David to provide a link to Carolina Beach as well.

Mr. Tinkler said the travel survey numbers went up for the I-40 portion of the survey and the process has gone very well. The final presentation for the information is scheduled for July 22nd. Ms. Bricka will also make a short presentation at the Transportation Summit on the 23rd.

10. Gateway Rest Area Northern New Hanover County – June 17th meeting:

Mr. Tinkler told members there will be a meeting at 10:30 in Thalian Hall on the 17th to discuss a possible gateway rest area on I-40. They have only had one informal meeting thus far. If anyone is interested in additional information he will be glad to provide contact information to anyone interested.

11. New Business:

Ms. Daughtride asked if we had any influence on welcome signs. Mr. Tinkler said if your sign meets the breakaway standards, you won't have any problems, but if you do anything beyond that, anything that is permanent in the right of way, you have almost zero chance. She said that was the issue and if all communities are struggling with this, what is the process for influencing/changing the policy. After the Carolina Beach welcome sign was removed by the construction of the shopping center, DOT would not let them put it back up. They have asked Mr. Lanny Wilson to act as point of contact to try to mediate the situation with DOT. Mr. Tinkler suggested she also contact the League of Cities for guidance.

12. Announcements:

Mr. Tinkler told members he will be leaving this coming weekend for the Naval Reserve Training in Pensacola, Florida for two weeks.

13. Adjournment:

With no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 11:50.