

**Meeting Notes**  
**Wilmington Urban Area Metropolitan Planning Organization**  
**Transportation Advisory Committee**  
**Date: January 27, 2010**

**Members Present:**

Laura Padgett, Vice Chairman, City of Wilmington  
Bob Lewis, Town of Carolina Beach  
Jim Dugan, Town of Kure Beach  
Mike Ballard, Town of Navassa  
Bill Saffo, City of Wilmington  
Jason Thompson, New Hanover County  
Jonathon Barfield, Cape Fear Public Transportation Authority  
Bill Sue, Brunswick County  
Jack Batson, Town of Belville  
David Williams, Pender County  
Walter Futch, Town of Leland

**Staff Present:**

Mike Kozlosky, Executive Director

**1. Call to Order**

Ms. Padgett called the meeting to order at 4:00 PM.

**2. Approval of Minutes:**

Minutes for the meetings on December 16<sup>th</sup> were approved unanimously. Following the approval of the minutes Mr. Kozlosky told member staff had a purchased a plaque to honor Mr. Lanny Wilson for his years of dedicated services while serving as Chairman of the TAC since 2003. Ms. Padgett said she would like to suggest a letter be drafted of behalf of the TAC be sent to Mr. Wilson to thank him. She told members that he has worked over the years and we wouldn't have some of the roads that we have today without him.

**3. Public Comment Period**

No one wished to address the Committee.

**7.d. Election of Officers (moved ahead)**

Ms. Padgett opened the floor for nominations for the Chairman of the TAC. Mr. Sue nominated Ms. Padgett. Mr. Saffo seconded the nomination. Mr. Futch nominated Mr. Batson for chairman. There was not a second. Mr. Thompson nominated Mr. Barfield. Mr. Williams seconded the nomination. Mr. Ballard made the motion to close the nominations. Mr. Thompson seconded his motion.

Mr. Futch asked if discussion could be opened before the voting took place. Ms. Padgett opened the floor for discussion.

Mr. Futch told members that it seems to him that a lot of phone calls and backyard dealings were made and he doesn't understand why we can't come to a meeting and do our business here. He stated that he got a phone call from someone and he said he thinks we have enough problems in this country with hidden meetings and hidden agendas. We need to bring all this stuff more out in the open.

Mr. Barfield told members he called almost everyone to ask for their support of his nomination for chairman because he knew it was something he wanted to do. All he asked was to support his nomination and there was nothing about trying to do things in secret. The calls were about his

letting the membership know of his interest in the chairmanship and would like to request their support.

Mr. Saffo told members Ms. Padgett has served on this board since before 2003 and she is serving on the National Transportation Board with the National League of Municipalities and she is also involved at the state level. She is very knowledgeable regarding transportation matters and she is well versed on transportation projects and initiatives throughout the state.

Ms Padgett thanked Mr. Saffo for his statement and she said she called members to request support of her election to chairman. She told members the only way to let people know you want to be chairman is to call and ask. There was certainly was nothing done behind the scenes and there has been no agreements made behind the scenes. Everyone is free to vote their conscious. She said on her behalf that she has spent a lot of time on transportation issues, work on issues that affect both Brunswick County, Pender County, as well New Hanover County and the City Wilmington. She told members she has been involved in regional activities for many years and she has taken a regional view of all things. With that in mind, she expressed her interest in being chairman of the TAC.

Mr. Thompson told members he served with Ms. Padgett for years on the Wilmington City Council and there is probably no one more passionate about transportation matters than her. She knows a lot and serves on many national boards. However, the City may not need to take the lead because everyone feels that Wilmington drives the show and drives the dollars. Wilmington, as large as it is, is still part of New Hanover County and it might be good to have the leadership of this board to have a county prospective with all municipalities. Even if it is not true that Wilmington gets the lion-share of the dollars, that's the perception. He said he felt the combination of Mr. Barfield and Ms. Padgett would be a good way to bridge that relationship. There is a need for balance and there is a need for the perception to change and that is what he would like to see.

Ms. Padgett said she feels that one of the reasons that some of those perceptions exists is because the Federal designation is the Wilmington Urban Metropolitan Planning Organization. That is true of MPOs across the country and that is also true that when the budget is divided and the various municipalities are asked to contribute. The City of Wilmington contributes the lion-share for the running of this organization monetarily.

Mr. Barfield told members in looking at the times we are dealing in and everything that is happening across the State, he believes we need strong leadership to take this organization to the next level. The State is watching what is done here on many different fronts and the one talent he has, among many, is the ability to build consensus. He said he knows how to be a team player and his goal is to bring Brunswick, Pender and New Hanover counties together with every municipality to find ways to work together. This has to be a regional team and have a strong message going to Raleigh.

Mr. Dugan told member in looking at Brunswick County, New Hanover County and Wilmington, he does not know that there is a "right choice" or a "wrong choice" for him to make. He said he appreciates being able to get as much information as he can from all the candidates.

Ms. Padgett called for the vote on the office of chairman. Mr. Barfield was elected chairman in a six to five vote.

Ms. Padgett opened the nominations for vice-chairman. Mr. Thompson nominated Ms. Padgett. Mr. Williams seconded the nomination. Mr. Ballard made the motion to close the nominations for Vice-chairman. Mr. Thompson seconded the motion. Ms. Padgett was elected vice-chairman by unanimous vote.

#### **4. Presentations**

##### **a. College Road Upgrade Feasibility Study**

Mr. Kozlosky told member the Department of Transportation recently completed a feasibility study on the upgrade of College Road from New Center Drive to Gordon Road. At the last TAC meeting, Mr. Wilson requested a presentation on this item. Mr. Kozlosky introduced Mr. Chris Warner with URS who gave the presentation.

Mr. Warner told members that the feasibility study was done to look at making improvements for NC 132 (College Road) from SR 1272 (New Centre Drive) to the SR 2048 (Gordon Road) interchange. The study is the initial step in the planning and design process for the project and the study areas were evaluated based on the ability to improve north-south mobility along the College Road corridor between the Gordon Road interchange and New Centre Drive. The study looked at:

- improving College Road to a six-lane facility, from New Centre Drive to Martin Luther King Jr. Parkway (MLK) and to an eight-lane facility from MLK to Gordon Road
- improving the US 17 Business (Market Street) interchange with College Road
- improving the MLK at-grade intersection with College Road
- managing access along College Road from New Centre Drive to the Gordon Road interchange
- improving the Gordon Road interchange

Following the presentation, Mr. Kozlosky told member they can contact him if they would like a copy of the presentation and the feasibility study report.

##### **b. Wake County Corridor Preservation**

Mr. Kozlosky gave a presentation on the efforts made to preserve the corridor for the south eastern expressway in Wake County.

#### **5. Old Business**

none

#### **6. Public Hearing**

##### **a. Resolution supporting the MTIP/STIP Amendment for Public Transportation Program**

Mr. Kozlosky told members based on the public involvement policy we are required to conduct a 30-day public comment period and hold a public hearing on any amendments to the Metropolitan and State Transportation Improvement Program. He stated that staff conducted the required 30-day public comment period. The item identifies several improvements associated with the Cape Fear Public Transportation Authority and the funding for the projects is coming from the Federal Stimulus Program (ARRA).

Ms. Padgett opened the public hearing. With no one wishing to speak, Ms. Padgett closed the public hearing. Mr. Williams made the motion to support the MTIP/STIP amendments. Mr. Thompson seconded the motion and it carried unanimously.

#### **7. New Business**

##### **a. Opening of 30-day Public Comment Period for EB-5118, ER-5100 and U-5200**

Mr. Kozlosky told members staff took the liberty to place the legal ad to open the 30-day public comment period on January 21<sup>st</sup> in order to meet the 30-day requirement with the month of

February only having 28 days. The period will end February 22<sup>nd</sup> and staff will bring the item to the February meeting for consideration.

Ms. Padgett asked if the \$650,000 in U-5200 was for paving of N. 3<sup>rd</sup> Street or just the bridge paving. Mr. Kozlosky said if any additional Federal Stimulus funds were available, the amendment to the Statewide and Metropolitan Transportation Improvement Program for the resurfacing in the amount of \$650,000 required will be used to pay for a portion of the cost to resurface N. 3<sup>rd</sup> Street from south of the bridge to Market Street. It will be in conjunction with the City of Wilmington's N. 3<sup>rd</sup> Street Streetscape Enhancement project. Ms. Padgett said that it was her understanding that they would receive about \$900,000. Mr. Kozlosky said that is part of an agreement staff is working on, and is only a portion of those funds. The remainder of those funds would come from the Division's resurfacing program.

Mr. Ballard made the motion to support opening the 30-day comment period for the MPIP/STIP amendments. Mr. Thompson seconded the motion and it carried unanimously.

**b. Resolution Supporting an Administrative Modification for TO-4751**

Mr. Kozlosky told member the City of Concord un-allocated a portion of their economic stimulus funding for operation assistance. The Cape Fear Transportation Authority was able to secure \$139,000 of those operating assistance funds. In order to meet the stimulus time frame, staff is asking this board to approve an Administrative Modification to the Statewide and Metropolitan Transportation Improvement Program to allow those funds to be utilized by WAVE Transit. Mr. Thompson made the motion to support an Administrative Modification for TO-4751. Mr. Barfield seconded the motion and it carried unanimously.

**c. Resolution Supporting Painting of the Cape Fear Memorial Bridge FS 34670 and FS 34325**

Mr. Thompson told members the color selected was two different shades a green. The lighter green color will match the color already in place on the support structure, with darker green accent color bands around to top of the towers and along top and bottom rail of the lift span. Mr. Futch made the motion to support the color selection for the Cape Fear Memorial Bridge. Mr. Thompson seconded the motion and it carried unanimously.

**8. Discussion**

**a. Wilmington MPO Legislative Agenda**

Mr. Kozlosky told members staff has been working on developing a legislative agenda to submit to our elected representatives. This is the first time staff has put together a specific agenda for presentation. Items suggested for consideration include gap-funding for the Cape Fear Skyway, transportation financing in general, and exploration of corridor preservation tools. Mr. Kozlosky explained that WMPO currently has the authority to file a corridor preservation maps for projects identified in NC General Statute 136-179, but would like to request that the WMPO be authorized to file these maps for any projects throughout the MPO planning area boundary.

Mr. Kozlosky asked the group to provide a list of any additional legislative agenda items to have by February 3<sup>rd</sup> and staff will present the finalized list to this board at the February meeting.

**9. Updates**

**a. Cape Fear Commutes**

Mr. Mello provided the update on the committee's activities

**b. City of Wilmington/Wilmington MPO**

Mr. Kozlosky provided the update on transportation projects in the City of Wilmington

**c. Cape Fear Public Transportation Authority**

Mr. Eby provided the update for the Cape Fear Public Transportation Authority

**d. NCDOT**

Mr. Pope provided the update on the department's projects

**10. Announcements**

Ms. Padgett asked members if they had anything they wished to address before the meeting is adjourned.

Mr. Batson said he has a concern about the College Road study. He told members that somehow he gets the impression that we have this room of people that are working on the College Road study. We have another room of people over here that are working on the Market Street Corridor study. They are all trying to make budgets of \$40 million or \$60 million and he didn't get a good feeling that there are good coordination efforts between those to see a good integration. It should be early integration in the process, before things get fixed in stone. He said that he understands that you may be trying to work within the budget, but if you can combine them, it may be less expensive than working on separate projects. After you're done you have to figure out how to patch them in together. To combine things may be smoother and cheaper. He said he hopes some coordination goes on early on in the process before you get locked in particular routes, maps and interchanges.

Mr. Pope told members when it gets down to saying this is a need and this is our priority for this urbanized area, then we need sit down and make sure it all fits together. Don't lose sight that a feasibility study is a very high-elevation look at a problem that will identify some show-stoppers, problems and impacts. It gives you the general idea of what kind of volumes you are talking about and will also give you a generalized view of where we need the improvements.

Mr. Batson said it seems to him that if you just focus on College Road without looking at anything else, you are not getting the best use of dollars. You can't say look at this and nothing else. There needs to be some combination.

Ms. Padgett thanked Mr. Batson for his comments. She stated that hopefully as members serve on the committee longer, they'll see that is actually part of the process.

Mr. Futch told members his town is being pressured to preserve a corridor that was drawn up some time around October 14<sup>th</sup> without their participation. He said he did not appreciate that. He doesn't know who, if anyone, around this table participated, but he doesn't think anyone would like somebody picking a corridor through your town or jurisdiction without asking and then trying to pressure you in every way possible to adopt the corridor. He said he is just speaking out to let you know that if this is the right corridor, they'll study it. They have got to have answers to a lot of questions. He told members they had a meeting about the Skyway last Friday. It was a good meeting but only answered very few of their questions. He said he got a letter from Mr. Joyner and the way he read it, basically the Turnpike Authority is not going to answer his questions. If that is going to be the case, then I think we have serious problem with this group. It seems we are going to get stonewalled when we need to know answers about our territory. We just want to bring that to your attention. It's going to happen to every one of you sooner than later. I can tell you that's what happened, and not a single representative from Leland helped draw the map that put the corridor through Leland.

Mr. Thompson pointed out that Leland had representation on this board when it was approved.

Mr. Futch said in 2007, Leland passed a resolution and sent it to this board that said not toll the I-140 bypass and you ignored it. You didn't care what we said. In 2006, I went before the TIP and

offered to swap a project to get the causeway widened because it is the number-one project for traffic in this area. He stated that he doesn't care what anybody says, it will do more good for the Cape Fear Memorial Bridge than anything that you'll see. We were told outside of normal funding mechanism that it would be done immediately. The next thing you know, it's in the TIP and it's in 2013. They haven't even started it. They fast-tracked the Cape Fear Skyway but haven't done a thing about the causeway. He said he was lied to and he doesn't know who here lied to him, but somebody lied to him and he doesn't appreciate that. He said he also believes that some of these projects, like not completing section "B" and not widening the causeway, are to make the traffic look worse than it really is so we'll buy into this \$4 billion boondoggle. He said that he hasn't gotten answers to his questions so that is the only thing he can believe.

Ms. Padgett pointed out that this is a regional board and some projects are regional and some are local and we have to deal with all of them.

Mr. Thompson said he was glad to hear Mr. Futch's comments and concerns but there are a lot of things that we as individual cities or counties say we don't want you to do, but we are out-voted all the time. Your district or municipality doesn't get to determine if there is going to be tolls on a road. All members of the board make the decisions. The toll on the I-140 bypass was one of the options. That's what it boils down to.

Mr. Futch said it wasn't to pay for the I-140 bypass, but to pay for the bridge.

Ms. Padgett said we have had this discussion. She wanted to know if anyone has anything to bring from their particular municipality or area.

Mr. Lewis told members he feels everybody is going to have a voice here. If we are going to have a regional committee, each voice will be heard. He said he is sure that representation from Leland was heard. In the 2035 strategic plan, these other types of projects are just tactics within that plan. They are executable as you go. He said he will just look at the things presented today, especially the corridor and bike route, as being just one tactic in a multiple-tactic solution. If we don't take that approach, we are going to be wasting money.

Ms. Padgett told members that through the years, as long as the representatives from the municipalities came to the meetings, they had a voice. Anything that is done by this board is voted on and like any other board, the majority rules. She said we have a regional goal and we have to provide transportation facilities for the region. There have been many times when a representative from the municipalities has not come to the meetings. As long as they were here, they had a voice and a vote.

Mr. Barfield thanked everyone for their support.

## **11. Adjournment**

With no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 5:40 PM

Respectfully submitted

Mike Kozlosky  
Executive Director  
Wilmington Urban Area Metropolitan Planning Organization