

**Wilmington Urban Area
Technical Coordinating Committee
Meeting Notes for October 13, 2010**

Members Present:

Mike Kozlosky, City of Wilmington
Sam Burgess, New Hanover County
Robert Waring, Town of Leland
Ken Vafier, Pender County
Eryn Moller, Town of Wrightsville Beach
Albert Eby, Wave Transit
Helen Bunch, Brunswick County
Shane York, NCDOT
Travis Marshall, NCDOT
Jessie Brookes, NCDOT
Chad Kimes, NCDOT

Others Present:

Jeffery Teague, NCDOT
Ron McCollum, NCDOT
Regina Page, NCDOT
Kristine O'Connor, NCDOT
BenJetta Johnson, NCDOT
Megan Matheny, WAVE
Joshuah Mello, City of Wilmington
Tara Murphy, City of Wilmington
Bill McDow, City of Wilmington

1. Call to Order

Mr. Kozlosky called the meeting to order at 10:06 am.

2. Approval of Minutes

The motion to approve the minutes for the September 22, 2010 meeting carried unanimously.

3. Presentation – US 17/NC 133 Design Alternatives

Kristine O'Connor and BenJetta Johnson from NCDOT's Project Development and Environmental Analysis Branch gave a presentation on the design alternatives for the US 17-74-76/NC 133 project in Brunswick County.

Ms. O'Connor told members that the original project scope was to add an auxiliary lane on the causeway in each direction (Alternative A). The current scope now includes an alternative that would widen the causeway and make improvements at the NC 133 interchange to address heavy congestion (Alternative B). Due to the budget concerns needed for right-of-way acquisition for Alternative B, they presented another alternative to the committee for consideration. Alternative C is a Diverging Diamond Interchange (DDI).

Ms. BenJetta Johnson told members the DDI offers safety improvements with fewer conflict points and better sight distance for drivers. The DDI also has operational benefits with simple left and right turns from all directions and the DDI will increase left turn lane capacity without adding lanes. The two-phase signal cycle in the design will also offer reduced delays. Ms. Johnson said the cost benefit for Alternative C will use the existing bridge in this retrofit. She stated that additional right-of-way is rarely needed and the construction time is reduced. In a cost comparison of the three alternatives, the DDI is estimated at just under \$20.4 million and will offer improved traffic operations

at the NC 133 interchange. She told members NCDOT recommends Alternative C as the preferred alternative.

Mr. Mello asked if they had coordinated with the Town of Belville and their downtown redevelopment plan. Ms. O'Connor said they had discussions with Mayor Batson and the property owners that could potentially be affected by Alternative B several times over the past month.

Mr. Mello told members he is familiar with the DDI and the intersections are similar to a one-way street. The configuration is not complicated and you don't notice when passing through it.

Mr. Mello told members the important thing to note is that this is an expansion of the scope of project R-3601. The long-range plan has \$25.1 million programmed toward the project. The project as defined in the current TIP is just the widening project. Any addition of this interchange will be expanding the scope of the project and potentially taking funding away from other projects that are in the long range transportation plan.

Ms. O'Conner said Alternative C is less than they have budgeted. Mr. Kozlosky said it will not affect anything in the long range plan. Mr. O'Conner told members Mr. Ray McIntyre told her they have \$21.4 million budgeted with the updated draft budget and Alternative C comes in at \$20.4 million. Mr. Kozlosky told members that funding is available to complete the project if we use the DDI. He said DDI is unique and new to this area but his opinion it would be the best alternative. Mr. Kozlosky stated that the item will go before the TAC at their next meeting and he would like to get a recommendation from the TCC. He suggested making a recommendation in the form of a resolution. Mr. Kozlosky said if NCDOT were to move forward with the DDI design, it should not have a significant impact on the schedule for the widening project.

Ms. O'Conner said the Department is not anticipating any kind of delay if they can get a decision by the end of the month. They will need to go out and conduct public involvement, although it is not federally mandated. They want to make sure citizens are aware of the potential changes at the NC 133 interchange. Mr. Kozlosky said the current scheduled let date is July 2013.

Mr. Mello suggested adding language to the motion that the Department coordinate with the Town of Leland and the Town of Belville with their comprehensive plans. Ms. O'Connor said they did coordinate with both towns at the initial citizen's workshop. Mr. Kozlosky suggested including the Town of Leland in the plan coordination. Mr. O'Connor said the Department will contact them.

Mr. Kozlosky asked for a recommendation from members. Mr. Eby made the motion to draft a resolution in support of the Diverging Diamond Interchange design at the US 17-74-76/NC 133 interchange location and forward it to the TAC for consideration. Ms. Bunch seconded the motion and it carried unanimously.

4. Old Business

No items

5. New Business

a. Resolution Supporting the Town of Belville for the NCDOT Bicycle/Pedestrian Planning Grant Initiative

b. Resolution Supporting the Town of Wrightsville Beach for the NCDOT Bicycle/Pedestrian Planning Grant Initiative

Mr. Kozlosky told members NCDOT released a call for projects for the Bicycle and Pedestrian Planning Grant initiative. The Town of Belville indicated that they would like to apply for a bicycle planning grant and the Town of Wrightsville Beach is considering submitting an application for pedestrian planning grant. Mr. Kozlosky said the grant applications are due December 4th and they must have a resolution adopted by the MPO included with the application.

Ms. Moller made the motion to support both resolutions and forward to the TAC for consideration. Mr. Eby seconded the motion and it carried unanimously.

c. Resolution adopting Cape Fear Commutes 2035 Transportation Plan

Mr. Kozlosky told members staff has now received the *Cape Fear Commutes 2035 Transportation Plan* final draft plan. A copy of the plan has been posted on the MPO website.

Mr. Mello told members staff opened the public comment period in May. The public comment period ended in June and throughout the month of July and August staff consolidated all the comments received into a spreadsheet for review by the Cape Fear Commutes committee. They held two meeting in the month of August to review those comments and make recommendations. The table will be included in the public involvement section of the plan. He said the Federal Highway Administration and NCDOT are reviewing the plan. He told members this is the first real comprehensive transportation plan for the region and the committee is very proud of it. New projects in the plan came directly from the public process through the surveys submitted.

Mr. Kozlosky told members this planning effort has taken over 2½ years and staff is very excited about it. The CAC has been very dedicated to development of the plan and put many hours into this initiative.

Ms. Bunch made the motion to recommend adoption of the *Cape Fear Commutes 2035 Transportation Plan* and forward to the TAC for consideration. Mr. Burgess seconded the motion and it carried unanimously.

6. Discussion

a. North Carolina Mobility Fund

Mr. Kozlosky told members that last year the General Assembly created the NC Mobility Fund to help relieve congestion and address access and mobility issues across the state. They developed a timeline for the completion of a report that establishes a selection process and project criteria. As part of the legislation, the General Assembly identified the I-85 corridor and the Yadkin River bridge as the first project to be funded by the mobility fund. The legislature directed the Department to identify the selection criteria and process for future projects. The legislature asked for the preliminary report to be presented to the Joint Transportation Oversight Committee on October 1st and a final report on December 15th.

The Department received public comment during the month of September. They established a work group to prepare a draft report for presentation to the legislature on October 1st. As part of this draft, they established minimum project requirements along with two scoring options for the projects. One option was a needs based approach and the second was a cost/benefit approach. NCDOT is currently receiving comments on the draft report. Mr. Kozlosky said he would like to receive feedback from the TCC by October 20th so that he might include these comments in discussions with the TAC at their next meeting on the 27th.

b. Wilmington Multi-modal Transit Center

Mr. Kozlosky told members the Department sent a letter to stakeholders within the MPO and City of Wilmington requesting feedback and comments on the scoping for the Wilmington Multi-modal Transportation Center. If anyone has comments, please submit them to him by October 20th so that the information can be presented to the TAC. The Department is moving forward with the environmental assessment on the multi-modal transportation center and it's expected to be completed in nine months. NCDOT is negotiating with U-Haul for an option for one-year and then one-year to allow U-Haul to vacate the property.

7. Updates

a. Wilmington MPO/City of Wilmington

Mr. Kozlosky updated members on projects within the City of Wilmington. He told members the consultant has been selected for the US 17/NC 210 Corridor Study. Staff received nine proposals and based on the scoring by the selection committee, Martin/Alexiue/Bryson was chosen for the project. The committee has developed the project scope. Staff anticipates the Wilmington City Council, who serves the lead planning agency for the MPO, will issue the authorization to proceed with hiring MAB at their November 2nd meeting.

Mr. Kozlosky told members that the Market Street Corridor Study has been completed and a copy has been placed on the MPO website. There will be a joint presentation to the City of Wilmington Planning Commissions and the New Hanover County Planning Board on October 26th. The next step will be to present the plan to the Wilmington City Council and the New Hanover County Commissioners for adoption. It will then come back to the TCC and TAC for approval.

b. Cape Fear Public Transportation Authority

Mr. Eby told members last week they announced that they were awarded \$6 million for the construction of the new maintenance and operations facility. The design for the facility was "kicked off" last week and it will take about 10 months to complete the design.

Mr. Eby said in reference to the long-range plan regarding the public comments requesting benches and bus stop shelters, one of the biggest challenges has been acquiring right-of-way encroachments from NCDOT. The state has just set up an internal committee to look at amenities within state rights-of-way and hopefully they come up with a standard design for amenities to shorten the process requirements.

c. NCDOT Project Update

Mr. Kimes updated members on the projects for NCDOT.

8. Announcements

9. Adjournment

With no further items, the meeting was adjourned at 11:30am