

Meeting Notes
Wilmington Urban Area Metropolitan Planning Organization
Transportation Advisory Committee
Date: January 26, 2010-Revised

Members Present:

Jonathan Barfield, Chairman, Cape Fear Public Transportation Authority
Laura Padgett, Vice-Chairman, City of Wilmington
Jack Batson, Town of Belville
Walter Futch, Town of Leland
Mike Ballard, Town of Navassa
Kristi Tomey, City of Wilmington
Bob Lewis, Town of Carolina Beach
David Williams, Pender County
Brian Berger, New Hanover County
Mike Alford, NC Board of Transportation
Dean Lambeth, Town of Kure Beach

Staff Present:

Mike Kozlosky, Executive Director
Tara Murphy, Associate Transportation Planner
Bill McDow, Staff Engineer

1. Call to Order

Mr. Barfield called the meeting to order at 4:01 PM.

2. Approval of Minutes:

The minutes from the 12/15/11 TAC Meeting were approved unanimously.

3. Public Comment Period

Mr. David Beachamp told members he owns Leland Veterinary Hospital at 508 Village Road. He said he is voicing his opposition to NCDOT Project R-4063, the proposed widening to 4-lanes of Village Road from Old Fayetteville Road to Lanvale Road. At \$21.5 million, he felt that the taxpayer's money can be spent more effectively. He said that with fewer than 4,000 cars that travel that segment of Village Road daily and this expansion will not address the growing traffic problem they have in Leland. He suggested enhancing western Village Road by modifying the two-lane design by including sidewalks and lighting for pedestrians. A resolution requesting these changes was passed at the Town of Leland at their last meeting. He stated that if the right-of-way is extended 60-feet into his property, the 4-lane road will be 34-feet from his waiting room wall. He said it will pose a safety hazard to his staff and clients because they would not feel safe entering and leaving the property. He asked members to imagine the tragedy if a car leaves the road at 45-mph and hits the waiting room during office hours. He told members a representative from NCDOT told him if the road is located too close to his office, he could be relocated in a similar facility on a similar piece of property. He said he cannot afford to relocate and start his career over at 55 years old. His economic future could be wiped out by an unnecessary 4-lane road. He told members that the proposed road has limited turning access and will inconvenience local residence trying to reach their homes and business. He asked members to please vote in favor of the new resolution proposed by the Leland Town Council.

Mr. Andy Koeppel told members he would to talk about the Hampstead Bypass. He said he was looking at the maps that are part of the agenda package and he was impressed with the fact that rather than have a bypass, it seems that it is the intention of NCDOT to have connectivity with Military Cutoff Road. It is his hope that the Department will build the Hampstead Bypass to interstate highway standards.

4. Old Business

Mr. Futch told members he would like to discuss two items of old business. He said the Town of Leland passed a resolution unanimously asking the NC Department of Transportation to amend the Village Road Phase II project so that instead of widening to 4-lanes, they end up with two 14-foot travel lanes, a new bridge and a multi-purpose path along that road. They are also asking the MPO to endorse the request. He said that his board thought that would save a considerable amount of money.

He told members at the last meeting Mr. Sue asked Mr. Pope what was happening with the causeway project. Mr. Futch said that Mr. Pope said not really much and we don't really have money for the causeway. Mr. Futch told members that they are willing to cut down on their project so that there will be money to help the causeway. His council feels like this is a sacrifice that they can make. That road today at the Navassa end carries 10,577 cars. They cannot imagine that this road will ever need to carry 64,000 cars per day because of the topography. It is an impediment to the people living there and it would displace people from business and homes. It is not something the Town of Leland has ever asked for and this is the second time they have asked that it not be done. He said they were told in 2006 or 2007 that if we shut our mouths they would get both projects, the widening of the causeway and Village Road. They are surveying Village Road and nothing is happening on the causeway. He said they feel like that this could be part of a solution to widening the causeway and help with the diverging diamond. He said before the process gets too far along on Village Road, we would like to start saving that money now and do something the Town of Leland would like to be done instead of others. Mr. Futch distributed copies of the resolution passed by his Board for TAC review.

Ms. Padgett asked if he wanted Village Road to be like the "road diet" they recommended for Market Street in Wilmington and to take the difference in the money and put it to the causeway widening. Mr. Futch said no median or center turn-lane.

Mr. Futch said when looking at the topography, the south side of Village Road is within a thousand feet of a four-lane road (US 74/76) and there is also a creek along most of Village Road. If you go north of Village Road there is a creek. It's not like this is ever going to be a road that is going to be a collector for all kinds of other streets coming into it from anywhere. When we look at planning for our future, we don't see that there is any way that the density could be such that this road could carry that much traffic. With the design they have been shown, most people would have to come out of their homes and drive at least a half-mile to make a u-turn to go in the opposite direction. There would only be two turn-arounds in approximately two miles. Then it would have to go up Lincoln School Road with a four-lane road in order to connect back with Mt Misery where there are two lanes. You are now on its present path and go along Lanvale Road where they would like to see a stop-light. He told members making it 4-lane road doesn't make sense and they are not looking to divide it or commercialize it. Right now, a lot of it is commercial and they are coming up with a new flexible plan that will allow different things to occur in different places. They are not going to have strip-development like Market Street. They see the failure there and have the zoning capabilities to put nodes along the road where there will be commercial. All five of their council members could not see the need for a road that was four-lanes wide with 120 foot right-of-way and a 23-foot median, essentially making Village Road like Shipyard Boulevard, only there would be no roads connecting into it.

Mr. Williams said this is really getting into "New Business" for a new resolution. He asked if he wanted this resolution at the next meeting. Mr. Futch said he knows that this is on the draft-project list and it does not become final until June. They were told the first step was to get the MPO to endorse this resolution and then get NCDOT to endorse it. If NCDOT does not endorse it, the next step is to go to the Legislature on Financing.

Ms. Padgett asked if people are going to constantly be turning left or right off the road. Mr. Futch said yes, it is just like a city street. Ms. Padgett asked if they considered a center turn lane to get those people out of the two travel lanes. Mr. Futch said it would depend on what comes there. If a development comes there, they will be required to have a bulb-out and/or a turn-lane. It cannot all be developed because there are a lot of wet lands and there is only a little tiny corridor to put this major road in the middle of and it doesn't go anywhere. When you put the major road in it, you make this little tiny corridor even smaller.

Mr. Ballard told members he can agree with what Mr. Futch was saying. Once you get passed the library, he could not envision the area having a 4-lane road because of the wet lands at Sturgeon Creek Bridge and beyond.

Mr. Batson told members the issue to him is making a 4-lane road, but it all falls back down to the causeway and there being no where to go.

Mr. Alford told members the prioritization process was used to develop the TIP and data drove the process in terms of funding. The funding has been driven by that prioritization. If that needs to change, those dollars could be utilized somewhere else. The long-term ramifications of not doing this project also need to be considered. He said he thought it would be appropriate to bring this back to this committee as an agenda item next month or the month after to give all parties time to study it and react accordingly.

Mr. Barfield asked Mr. Futch if he was agreeable to bring this to the next meeting so that staff can prepare a report with maps. That would also let NCDOT and other Leland citizens have a chance weigh-in on the project. Ms. Padgett told members that Mr. Sue has been in favor of Village Road widening and he is not here today to say why he's felt that way.

Mr. Futch said this money could be used on the causeway. They were told that the diverging diamond will take \$10 million dollars more than budgeted. The causeway project has been on the list since March of 2007. The project update stated that we will have the merger process on the causeway project in a couple of month. If you read today's list, it says we will have the merger process in months and that's been three years the way he looks at it.

Mr. Kozlosky told members the Causeway Project is included in the 5-year program. It's identified for funding in 2013 and right-of-way for 2012. There is a meeting next week with the Department in which they will be looking at the public hearing maps. They are moving through the process and it has been identified for funding.

Mr. Futch told members he had one more item of Old Business. We passed a resolution that all of the municipalities and counties were going to adopt the Northern Corridor alignment for the Cape Fear Skyway. As of this time, to his knowledge, the Town of Leland is the only one who has had an official meeting and public hearing. He said he does not understand why there was such a rush to judgment on these resolutions from everybody when in fact, nobody has moved except the Town of Leland to adopt this corridor.

Mr. Kozlosky told members the City of Wilmington preserved the corridor for two pieces of property in 2006. There was then a resolution carried forward to New Hanover County, Brunswick County and the City of Wilmington that directed staff to proceed with the filing of a corridor preservation map for the Northern Alignment of the Cape Fear Skyway. Staff has not brought that to these Boards yet and they are working with management on right now. He said he was in Raleigh earlier in the week for a meeting with the environmental agencies to talk about the potential alignments. At that time six of the potential alignments or segments were eliminated for the proposed Cape

Fear Skyway. They have moved through the first- and second-tier screenings and the next part of the process will be to review the third-tier screening.

Mr. Futch asked why did we vote on a resolution to preserve this land and ask each municipality to have a transportation corridor official map adopted when nobody did it with the exception of the Town of Leland. Mr. Kozlosky stated that he was directed by the TAC to move forward with preservation of the corridor. Staff was directed to complete it within six months. He said they were unable to complete development of those maps within six months. The North Carolina Turnpike Authority came back with the maps in August of 2010. Staff is moving forward with public workshops on the Cape Fear Skyway in April, but the specific dates have not yet been set. They will hold a public hearing on the Wilmington side of the river and another on the Brunswick County side to get feedback on the alignments that are still on the table as well as the process that has followed to develop those alignments.

5. New Business

a. Resolution supporting corridor preservation for the Hampstead Bypass

Mr. Williams told members that the corridor preservation for the Hampstead Bypass is something that the Pender County Board of Commissioners supports and a vast majority of the community support us doing anything we can to move along with this bypass. It is something his board recognized they have to have, and if things work out it will become an extension of Military Cutoff Road. You will be able to get on the bypass and connect with Interstate-40. It is badly needed because the amount of cars on US Hwy 17 through Hampstead continues to grow exponentially.

Ms. Padgett asked if we will need Military Cutoff Road extension if the Hampstead Bypass is built. Mr. Kozlosky told members Military Cutoff Road extension is currently from Market Street to the Wilmington Bypass. The Hampstead Bypass will begin at Wilmington Bypass and terminate at US Hwy 17 in Pender County. He said the Military Cutoff Road project will alleviate congestion on Market Street from Military Cutoff Road to Porters Neck and allow a limited access facility that will provide for improved traffic flow north/south through the region. It will also tie into the Hampstead Bypass and allow for traffic to move with a fully-controlled access facility from the Wilmington Bypass to US 17 in Pender County.

Mr. Batson said it is a great plan and does not interfere with the Holly Shelter Game Preserve. It is a special place and he does not want to see any harm come to it.

Mr. Williams told members they have an issue with the northern part on how it will intersect with US 17 because of an endangered woodpecker. Mr. Kozlosky said there is the potential for the Red Cockaded Woodpecker habitat within the Holy Shelter Game Lands. These are state game lands and staff has been told by the environmental agencies that we cannot traverse those game lands. That is the reason the corridor terminates prior to Holly Shelter. There were 17 alignments studied by the Department of Transportation in the beginning of the process. Those alignments have been narrowed down to six. In looking at impacts and other issues, it is anticipated that the preferred alignment by the MPO is alternative EH and staff continues to work through the environmental process.

Mr. Kozlosky told members that there are two potential developments located within the corridor that already have approval from Pender County. They are the Caisson Drive project and Bayberry. The resolution will help preserve the Hampstead Bypass corridor from potential encroaching development.

Mr. Williams told members that the Pender County Board of Commissioners support the resolution and are willing to do what they have to preserve the corridor.

Mr. Futch told members this process includes taking peoples land without compensating them for it. This seems even more heinous because we have multiple alignments that we are going to maybe end up adopting. This board uniquely has the authority to file the transportation corridor official maps for the Hampstead Bypass. It is one of the few exemptions that the Wilmington MPO has the authority to file. He said he thinks that we are using a resolution to keep people from using their land until we can file an official map. He told members we should go ahead and file the official map and do what's right. Mr. Williams said he lives there and he can assure everyone that the corridor preservation has full public support.

Ms. Tomey told members that you must have a process in place in order to keep development from going into where you need the roads. If the Pender County Board is in support of the preservation of the corridor, then we need to move forward with it. Mr. Williams said he has not had any phone calls or emails from citizens against it since his board passed their resolution to support the preservation of the corridor for the bypass. His board recognizes that they must have a bypass and must do what it takes to get it built. This is not a surprise to the land owners in the area.

Mr. Lewis said he agreed with Mr. Futch and he would rather see us pick a corridor and say this is what we recommend in a resolution versus holding all the land.

Mr. Pope told members the corridors on the existing US 17 have been removed and the only thing to be able to tie into the north side of Hampstead is this one corridor. There is only one corridor and it is the preferred corridor. Mr. Kozlosky said they have to pick an alignment to file the map and the EH alignment is the preferred alignment from the Department based on the minimal impacts to the natural and human environment. This resolution will begin the process to develop these maps, which may take 6 to 9 months based on history. In that period of time, the Department and the Merger Team will select a preferred alternative. This resolution will allow us to get ahead of the game and once the preferred alternative is selected, they will have the maps already prepared.

Mr. Williams made the motion to support the corridor preservation for the Hampstead Bypass and Ms. Padgett seconded the motion. The motion carried in a 10 to 1 with Mr. Futch voting in opposition.

b. Resolution reappointing members of the Wilmington Metropolitan Planning Organization Citizen Advisory Committee

Mr. Williams made the motion to re-appoint members to the Citizen Advisory Committee. Ms Padgett seconded the motion.

Mr. Futch told members if the federal government says we have to do this every five years, it seems to him that to continue this process every two years is just spinning our wheels. He said his second point is that if this passes, it names the people to the committee. Those names are the original appointments made by representatives who are no longer on the TAC. He suggested postponing this until the next meeting in order to give the current members time to select someone for the Citizen Advisory Committee.

Mr. Barfield told Mr. Futch he has the leeway to choose someone else to represent the Town of Leland. These members will serve as an advisory group to the TCC and TAC.

Ms. Padgett told members this is the first time a committee on the 5-year plan has asked to continue. A good deal of effort and time was put into the development of this plan. If allowed to continue. The continuation of the CAC will offer stability and consistency of the advise they brought

to the development of the long range plan and this would be a good thing. That does not mean we cannot appoint a new committee in five years for the 2040 plan at that time. She said she thinks it is valuable input to keep the same people that worked on 2035 plan.

Mr. Ballard said he made a new appointment for the Town of Navassa due to commitments of the previous appointee. Each municipality has the right to change their appointment.

Mr. Barfield called for vote on the motion. The motion carried in a 10 to 1 with Mr. Futch voting in opposition.

Mr. Futch told members he would like to change his representative. Mr. Kozlosky told him to submit the name to him and he will make that change.

c. Election of Officers

Mr. Kozlosky opened the floor for nominations for Chairman. Mr. Williams nominated Mr. Barfield for Chairman. Ms. Tomey seconded the nomination. Mr. Futch nominated Mr. Lewis for Chairman. Mr. Lambeth seconded that nomination. Mr. Ballard made the motion to close the nominations for Chairman.

Mr. Futch said he would like discussion on the nominations. He told members he does not feel like Mr. Barfield has been a fair chairman. Mr. Futch said he has e-mails threatening to have his town council appoint someone else to the TAC simply because he dissents on a number of items. He said Mr. Barfield also brought back a rumor from the Governor that we were the laughing-stock of the State of North Carolina. He said he has written the Governor a letter asking if that is the case. Mr. Futch told members he does not believe Mr. Barfield understands the rules of parliamentary procedure. At a past meeting, the TAC voted to allow him to give a presentation. He was interrupted during that presentation by another member. Mr. Futch said that instead of letting him continue, he was asked to sit down. Mr. Barfield, as Chairman, then allowed members of the TAC to vote if they wanted him to continue with his presentation. Mr. Futch said that was completely incorrect parliamentary procedure. Once you have the floor, you have the floor.

Mr. Futch told members Mr. Lewis has been fair in every way. He looks at the agenda items and knows what's going on. In his opinion, Mr. Lewis would give everyone a fair voice. He doesn't seem to have a pre-disposed position on the items.

Mr. Lewis told members he would like to say that he appreciates that Mr. Barfield has kept members informed and provides information in a timely manner.

Mr. Kozlosky called for the vote. Mr. Barfield was elected chairman with seven votes in favor.

Mr. Barfield nominated Ms. Padgett as Vice-Chairman. Mr. Ballard seconded the nomination. Mr. Futch nominated Mr. Lewis. Mr. Lambeth seconded the nomination. Mr. Kozlosky called for the vote. Ms. Padgett was elected Vice-Chairman with seven votes in favor.

6. Discussion

a. Local Project Prioritization

Mr. Kozlosky told members the Department of Transportation is currently moving through their prioritization process. NCDOT is working on their statewide Prioritization 2.0. Mr. Kozlosky said the MPO does not have a prioritization tool locally for projects. It is primarily done based on the political process. Mr. Kozlosky said a prioritization process was developed as part of the *Cape Fear Commutes 2035 Transportation Plan*. Several of the larger cities in North Carolina also have

a prioritization process. He said that staff would like input from members into developing a local prioritization tool in an effort to be more transparent in prioritizing projects.

Mr. Williams said he would like to see alternative so that we could determine if members would like to do it differently. Mr. Batson said he would like to see information so the board could see if it would be the best method. Mr. Futch told members that if the state is going to use a prioritization process, then it behooves us too because when it gets to DOT, if their priority is a lot higher than ours or a lot lower, then we will get kicked to whatever is their priority. We need a very similar prioritization process.

Mr. Kozlosky told members staff would like to establish a steering committee of TCC members to start the process and bring something back to the TAC in a couple months for input.

Ms. Padgett said she thought that would be appropriate.

b. Unified Planning Work Program Development

Mr. Kozlosky told members that staff is in the process of beginning to develop the Unified Planning Work Program for upcoming fiscal year. As part of the process, the MPO has funding in the budget to hire a consultant to complete some planning services within the MPO planning area boundary. Staff has received a resolution requesting that we update the Collector Street Plan for the Town of Leland. Staff has also received a request to complete a Comprehensive Transportation Plan for the Town of Wrightsville Beach. He told members if there are any other studies that this board feels we need to undertake, that staff be made aware of those so that we can develop a budget that is consistent with the board's priorities.

Mr. Batson said he would like to see that the study for the Town of Leland also include Belville because we are so intermingled.

c. Strategic Business Plan

Mr. Kozlosky told members staff is proposing to complete a Strategic Business Plan for the MPO. This board adopted Cape Fear Commutes 2035 Transportation Plan back in December. Staff envisions that the plan will serve as a comprehensive plan to guide for the way we do business at the MPO. It will serve as the high-level plan for operation that includes policies, guidelines, goals and objectives. Staff would like to develop and highlight some of those goals and objectives, and then identify performance measures in which the MPO would achieve over the fiscal year that would match our Unified Planning Work Program. He told members he would propose using the Citizen Advisory Committee to assist in developing and guiding the TAC in the strategic process. Mr. Kozlosky asked if TAC members support that initiative. Mr. Ballard said he thought staff should proceed with developing a Strategic Business Plan. Mr. Lambeth asked if this will be done "in-house". Mr. Kozlosky said this will be handled in-house.

7. Updates

a. City of Wilmington/Wilmington MPO

- **US 17/NC 210 Corridor Study in Pender County** - Mr. Kozlosky told members that the MPO held a public workshop on the US 17/NC 210 Corridor Study in Pender County on December 16th. The next public workshop will be in March and a presentation will be made in June. Staff anticipates a June competition date for the project.

- **Market Street Corridor Study** - Mr. Kozlosky told members the study is looking at mobility and safety, land use and transportation for the Market Street corridor. It's the first study of its kind in the state to include a market analysis. Staff has made presentations to the joint City Planning Commission and County Planning Board in October of 2010. They presented it to the County Planning Board again in December. In January, they recommended adoption of the plan to the Board of Commissioners. Staff has also presented it to the Wilmington Planning Commission and they recommended adoption to the City Council. Staff is now working through the Manager's Office for both the City and County to get it on their agendas for adoption. The consultant will be coming for a workshop with the County on February 21st.

b. Cape Fear Public Transportation Authority

Mr. Eby told members his staff is working on a plan to provide public transportation to the southern beaches in New Hanover County. In the coming weeks, they will be making presentations to elected officials for a plan to provide service down there. They are looking for support from municipalities, the school board, the housing authority and a lot of the local groups that need public transportation services. Following that process and once they determine how to proceed forward if the funding is available, they will go into a short-range plan which look more short-term. In looking at the last short-range plan, they have made all the improvements with the exception of providing service to the Wilmington Airport and southern-beaches. Mr. Eby told members as they develop the routes throughout the county, they are looking at opportunities to make sure that folks can get from one end of the county to the other in a seamless and comfortable way. He invited TAC members and their staff who may be interested in the working on the development of a short-range plan to contact him.

Mr. Barfield suggested that members from the beach communities contact their citizens and gage their response to a vehicle registration fee. This fee would be something paid county-wide to help fund a county-wide public transportation system. Mr. Eby told members based on the number of vehicles registered in New Hanover County in September of 2010, a vehicle registration fee could raise about \$1.1 million dollars a year. He said that would also help leverage additional funds from the state and federal governments.

c. NCDOT

Attached in the agenda package

8. Announcements

Mr. Barfield reviewed the upcoming meeting taking places for the next month.

9. Adjournment

With no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 5:27 PM

Respectfully submitted
Mike Kozlosky
Executive Director
Wilmington Urban Area Metropolitan Planning Organization