

Meeting Minutes
Wilmington Urban Area Metropolitan Planning Organization
Transportation Advisory Committee
Date: September 28, 2011

Members Present:

Jonathan Barfield, Chairman, Cape Fear Public Transportation Authority
Jack Batson, Town of Belville
Pat Batleman, Town of Leland
Brian Berger, New Hanover County
David Williams, Pender County
Mike Ballard, Town of Navassa
Dean Lambeth, Town of Kure Beach
Kristi Campos, City of Wilmington
Lonnie Lashley, Town of Carolina Beach

Staff Present:

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

1. Call to Order

Mr. Barfield called the meeting to order at 4:05 PM.

2. Approval of Minutes:

The motion to approve the August 10th minutes carried unanimously.

3. Public Comment Period

Ms. Becky Miller spoke to members regarding the need for controlling the speed of vehicles around Holly Tree Elementary School. Children are walking and bicycling through the neighborhood yards of Greenhowe Drive, because sidewalks are not available. She had worked with city staff three years ago on a Safe Routes to School grant for Holly Tree Elementary that was not approved. Due to lack of funding, nothing has been done. She told members two weeks ago her 6-year old son was struck by a car while riding his bike. She requested that stop signs be added at several intersections to help control the amount of traffic using their neighborhood streets as a short-cut. She also requested that pavement markings for bike lanes and crosswalks be added, as well as adding stop signs, slow traffic signs, and caution signs warning motorists that children are walking to school.

Mr. Jonathan Miller told members when the area was annexed residents were told sidewalks would be installed in the area. Those sidewalks have not been added and it is a critical need especially for the routes to the school. Ms. Miller presented Mr. Barfield with a petition from the neighbors supporting their requests.

Mr. Andy Keppel spoke to members regarding the rail connection between Castle Hayne and Wallace. He told members he is in favor of the re-establishment of the rail line because he feels it will greatly benefit the area.

4. New Business

d. Resolution Supporting the Re-establishment of the Rail Line between Wallace and Castle Hayne (moved ahead)

Representative Susi Hamilton told members at the end of session this past year, the Joint Committees for the House and Senate on Transportation Appropriations sent a letter to the Secretary of Transportation at NCDOT asking that the re-establishment of the rail line between Wallace and Castle Hayne be given priority consideration during the development of the budget next year for the Mobility Fund.

She noted that the 27 miles of rail bed right-of-way is still owned and maintained by the state of North Carolina but the steel was removed by CSX back in the 1980s. The joint committee is requesting that the Department of Transportation do an Environmental Assessment for the project so that the design for returning the steel to the rail bed can take place. This rail will provide a connection between two existing CSX rail lines that go through the middle of southeastern North Carolina, joining Pender, New Hanover, Duplin, Sampson, Wayne and Onslow Counties. It will provide dual access to the Port, and they believe it will be a major economic development initiative.

She told members the current rail line leaving the State Port crosses over the Cape Fear River on two bridges that are more than 100 years old. If something should happen to either of those bridges, the Port would be out of the freight business until the repairs could be made. This alternate route would be a vital link that will help drive industry to this area and alternative connection to the Port. It will also provide support for military deployment for the state's five military bases, rather than having to use the Ports located at Charleston or Norfolk. This is an important economic development opportunity.

Mr. Lambeth asked if CSX is in support of the initiative. Representative Hamilton told members it is maintenance issue for them. They need to make sure the demand is there before they agree to take over the maintenance of this additional line. She noted that she believes demand will increase once this process begins.

Mr. Williams made the motion to Support the Re-establishment of the Rail Line between Wallace and Castle Hayne and Ms. Campos seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Kozlosky told members that the MPO has been asked to spearhead this effort by Representative Hamilton. He would like each member to take the resolution back to their boards to request support for re-establishment of the rail line. It will let the Legislature know that the area is united in support for the initiative.

a. Resolution Adopting the Village Road Phase II and Gordon Road Phase A Purpose and Need/ Minimum Problem Statements

Mr. Kozlosky told members because funding for the Village Road Phase II and Gordon Road Phase "A" was de-obligated at the last meeting, a Purpose and Need/ Minimum Problem Statements will need to be submitted to the Department for the Prioritization 2.0 process. He noted that at the next meeting, the MPO is going to be moving forward the development of the Prioritization for STIP that funds projects in 2018 through 2022. We will be asking that this board prioritize projects that will be submitted to NCDOT. The Department will also allocate funding based on their formula.

Ms. Batleman expressed her concern regarding the Village Road traffic counts and capacity data. She voiced a concern about Dow Road and noted that it would seem to her that it should be given more priority than Village Road Phase II.

Ms. Rashid explained that the figures on the draft minimum problem statements were pulled from the NCDOT Model. Mr. Kozlosky told members staff used the information in the model for development of all the other problem statements and in order to be consistent, that information should be used in the development of the Village Road Phase II Purpose and Need/ Minimum Problem Statements.

Mr. Batson said it seems like this Village Road thing keeps coming back up again. He noted that the committee voted last time to defund the project. He asked if this was a way to get it back on the funding list again. Mr. Kozlosky told members that all the projects that this board had approved that were submit to NCDOT will be prioritized as part of Prioritization 2.0 at the next meeting. Although the funding was de-obligated, the MPO and NCDOT will be moving forward with the development of STIP that funds projects in 2018 through 2022. Mr. Batson said he knows this has been an issue, but the Town of Leland said they don't want the project and all of a sudden we're re-visiting this again.

Mr. Barfield reminded members that they are not ranking this project as a priority with this needs statement. We will do that at the next meeting and at that point we can pull the project out all together if that's the wish of this body.

Mr. Pope told members projects can be pulled from the list of projects going forward if it is the wish of this committee during the prioritization process. Mr. Kozlosky reminded members if they wish to pull any projects, the project would have to be removed from the long range plan and that will take an additional action by the board. Today's resolution is just an administrative function so that the data can be submitted to NCDOT for the Prioritization 2.0 process.

Mr. Williams made the motion to adopt the Village Road Phase II and Gordon Road Phase A Purpose and Need/Minimum Problem Statements and Ms. Campos seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

b. Resolution Amending the East Coast Greenway Alignment

Ms. Rashid told members the adopted 2009 East Coast Greenway alignment includes the Riverwalk and the original alignment for the Cross City Trail at Shipyard Boulevard and Independence Boulevard. Because the Cross City Trail alignment has changed and the Riverwalk does not allow bicycles on the boardwalk, the Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee has recommended changes to the East Coast Greenway alignment. If approved, the new alignment will take bicyclist along 5th Avenue, by way of the Ann Street Bicycle Boulevard. The new alignment will also differentiate facilities that are exclusive to bicyclist or pedestrians. Ms. Rashid noted that a presentation on the new alignment was made at the East Coast Greenway Regional Meeting and the group supported the new alignment.

Ms. Batleman made the motion to approve the resolution amending the East Coast Greenway alignment. The motion was seconded by Mr. Ballard and the motion carried unanimously.

c. Resolution Amending the Wilmington MPO Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee Bylaws

Mr. Kozlosky told members the Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee requested an amendment to their Bylaws in order to change the time frame for the election of officers and address the addition of new members to the board representing the Cape Fear Cyclists and the University of North Carolina-Wilmington. Any changes to the Wilmington MPO Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee bylaws must also be approved by the TAC.

Mr. Lambeth suggest that the Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee solicit input from the biking community to see if there are any other organizations interested in participating on the committee. He made a motion that the item be tabled until the next meeting to give staff the opportunity to contact the bicycling organizations in the area. Mr. Batson seconded the motion and it carried unanimously.

e. **Resolution Supporting the Dedication of Portions of the Cross City Trail in honor of the Cameron Company, Oleander Company and Trask Families**

Mr. Kozlosky told members the Cross City Trail is named after Gary Shell, the former Parks and Recreation Director who came up with the concept and vision for the trail. The Cameron Company, Oleander Company and Trask Families have been instrumental in the efforts to establish the Gary Shell Cross City Trail. The Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee recommended that portions of the facility be dedicated in their honor for their efforts. If approved, a plaque will be installed along the trail to dedicate a portion of the trail to honor the families. A similar dedication was done for Chancellor DePaolo on the campus of UNCW.

Mr. Berger made the motion to dedicate portions of the Cross City Trail in honor of the Cameron Company, Oleander Company and Trask Families

f. **Opening of the 30-day Public Comment Period for the US 17/NC 210 Corridor Study on October 1, 2011**

Mr. Kozlosky told members the draft US 17/NC210 Corridor Study has been completed. The 30-day Public Comment Period for the plan will open on October 1st. Following the 30-day comment period, the plan will go before the Pender County Planning Board and Commissioners for adoption on November 21st.

5. Discussion

a. **Hampstead Bypass Transportation Corridor Official Map**

Mr. Kozlosky told members a public hearing must be held before filing the corridor map for the Hampstead Bypass Transportation Corridor Official Maps. The public hearing must be advertised for four consecutive weeks prior to that public hearing, maps must be posted 21 days prior to the meeting at the court house steps, and we are required to send a letter to the Chairman of the County Commissioners, the Secretary of Transportation and the Mayor of any of the municipalities in which this corridor would cross, as well as send a letter to each of the property owners within the corridor. If this board wishes to file the map in the month of November, a TAC meeting date will need to be set so that staff can begin the process. He suggested holding the meeting in Pender County because a large portion of the corridor is located in Pender County.

Mr. Williams told members he felt it would be best to have a meeting in November to deal with the filing of the corridor map. Mr. Kozlosky suggested meeting Wednesday, November 16th. Mr. Williams told members he will talk with his board and determine a location for the meeting in Hampstead. He suggested holding the Public Hearing be held at the end of the meeting to give the general public more time to arrive.

Mr. Williams made the motion to amend the calendar to hold a TAC meeting on November 16th and Mr. Berger seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

b. **NCDOT Prioritization 2.0**

Ms Rashid gave an overview of the Prioritization 2.0 scoring process with the local input of projects. Mr. Kozlosky told members that a SPOT representative will be at the October 26th meeting to provide guidance and answer questions about the process.

Ms. Batleman suggested beginning the October 26th meeting at 3:00 to allow adequate time for the prioritization process.

Mr. Williams made the motion to begin the October 26th TAC meeting at 3:00pm and Mr. Batson seconded it. The motion carried 8 to 1, with Ms. Campos voting against the time change.

6. Updates

Project updates for the Wilmington MPO/City of Wilmington and NCDOT are available in the agenda packet.

7. Announcements

8. Adjournment

With no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 5:43 PM

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

**THE ABOVE MINUTES ARE NOT A VERBATIM RECORD OF THE PROCEEDINGS.
THE ENTIRE PROCEEDINGS ARE RECORDED ON A COMPACT DISC AS PART OF THIS RECORD.**