

Meeting Minutes
Wilmington Urban Area Metropolitan Planning Organization
Transportation Advisory Committee
Date: October 31, 2012

Members Present:

Laura Padgett, Chair, City of Wilmington
Dean Lambeth, Vice-Chair, Town of Kure Beach
Pat Batleman, Town of Leland
Bill Sisson, Town of Wrightsville Beach
Jonathan Barfield, Cape Fear Public Transportation Authority
Earl Sheridan, City of Wilmington
Brian Berger, New Hanover County
Mike Alford, NC Board of Transportation

Staff Present:

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

1. Call to Order

Ms Padgett called the meeting to order at 4:04 PM.

2. Approval of Minutes:

Ms. Padgett requested that the minutes be corrected to reflect that Mr. Sheridan needs to be referred to as Dr. Sheridan. With that correction, the minutes from the September 26, 2012 meeting were approved unanimously.

3. Public Comment Period

Mr. Andy Koepfel addressed members regarding the proposed MPO boundary expansion. He noted that a southern expansion into Brunswick County could disproportionately affect voting. He suggested that those communities have a seat at the table as an observer. He noted that often a board can become less functional when it has too many members.

4. Presentations

a. Local Programs Management – Marta Matthews, NCDOT

Ms. Matthews from the NCDOT Program Management Office gave a presentation on the local program management and transportation project delivery requirements when using federal and state funds.

Mr. Sisson asked Mr. Kozlosky what was the amount allotted for the STP-DA funding for our MPO. Mr. Kozlosky said the actual allocation was \$3,069,352.00 but is subject to the 90% obligation authority with NCDOT, which takes it down to \$2,762,416.80. If you include the 20% local match, it increases the amount to \$3,453,021.00.

5. Old Business

Ms. Batleman told members she would like to discuss the need for creation of a policy regarding communication procedure between NCDOT and TAC Board. When a decision was made regarding the closure of the Cape Fear Memorial Bridge on September 28th, it was not mentioned to members at the regular monthly meeting held two days prior to the closing. She said it is very puzzling why members were not informed.

Ms. Padgett noted that the members were informed at the meeting in August that the closing was coming up. Ms. Padgett told members when it was discussed at the August meeting, it was more of a discussion on the need to completely close the bridge to traffic for the weekend. Ms. Batleman told members she feels that we need to improve communications when something like that is going to occur. Mr. Kozlosky asked Ms. Fussell if TAC members could be added to the NCDOT media email list. She said that would be a good option and she will request that TAC member information be added to the media list.

6. New Business

a. Resolution Seeking Affiliate Membership in the I-95 Coalition

Mr. Rashid provided information to the members on the I-95 Coalition and their affiliate membership program. Included with this membership is free access to software with information on congestion mitigation, along with periodic updates from the I-95 Corridor Coalition. She noted that there are no requirements or financial contributions associated with the membership.

Dr. Sheridan made the motion to seek affiliate membership in the I-95 Coalition. Mr. Barfield seconded the motion and it carried unanimously.

b. Resolution Adopting STIP/MTIP Amendments

Mr. Kozlosky told members that the amendments to the STIP/MTIP include the Gary Shell Cross-City Trail bicycle, pedestrian and trail accommodations, the Middle Sound Loop multi-use trail, the maintenance and operations facility on Division Drive and the Fordham Station park and ride facility. The MPO conducted the 30-day public comment period.

Mr. Barfield made the motion to adopt the STIP/MTIP amendments. Mr. Sisson seconded the motion and it carried unanimously.

c. Resolution Supporting I-74 as a Priority Project for the Eastern North Carolina Coalition

Mr. Kozlosky told members that the North Carolina MPOs and RPOs east of I-95 formed a Coalition to support projects of mutual interest to this region. They endorsed a list of projects that have regional significance to the area; however, US 74 was not among those priority projects. The resolution is requesting the Eastern North Carolina Coalition include US 74 as a priority project.

Mr. Sisson made the motion to adopt the resolution supporting US-74 as a priority project for the Eastern North Carolina Coalition. Dr. Sheridan seconded the motion and it carried unanimously.

d. Resolution Adopting the Direct Appropriation Funding – Local Prioritization Process and Funding Allocation

Ms. Rashid reviewed the constraints for using STP-DA funds. She noted that funds can only be used where projects are federal-aid eligible and require a 20% match. Roadway projects must be on the Federal functional classification. Transit project funds must be used strictly for capital projects/acquisitions. Bicycle and pedestrian projects have to be transportation related. Projects must meet federal reporting requirements by being NEPA compliant, competitively bid and based on NCDOT Standards and Specifications. Projects must also be compliant with the long range transportation plan.

Ms Rashid told members at the TAC's request, the TCC formed a workgroup to determine the modal mix budget percentages and develop a prioritization process for programming funds. The group's recommendations included setting aside 15% for a reserve and to supplement for the UPWP for planning and staffing needs. The remainder of the funding would be designated at 15% for roadway projects, 15% for intersection improvement projects, 20% for transit projects and 50% for bicycle and pedestrian improvement projects. She noted that the workgroup recommended allocating 50% of the funds for bicycle and pedestrian improvements because unlike roadway projects, intersection projects and transit projects, bicycle/pedestrian projects have limited dedicated funding sources available. The workgroup also developed evaluation criteria as an evaluation tool to be used for ranking all project submitted for funding. She noted that as the TAC works through the proposed STP-DA funding process, if there are adjustments to the process, they could easily be made through resolution at any time.

Ms Batleman asked why 50% was allocated to bicycle and pedestrian improvements and only 20% of the funds recommended for Transit. Mr. Eby told members due to the Transit Authority's ability to fund the required 20% local match when using STP-DA dollars, they asked for the 20% budget allocation because it was the best amount they could match. The Transit Authority doesn't have a regional funding source to serve as a local match.

Ms. Padgett noted that the decision today should be viewed as a start. We have access to the money and we need to start somewhere with deciding exactly how we're going to spend it so that everybody gets a fair share and each jurisdiction knows what it has to do in order ask for these funds. She reminded members that we can look at the allocation again in a year and make changes that may be needed.

Mr. Berger asked if there were reports or notes that could be provided to the committee that would shed light on how these percentages were determined. Ms. Rashid told the committee that the workgroup did not keep minutes at their meetings; but, she will be happy to provide the research they used in determining the percentages for the modal allocations. She reminded members that this was a recommendation by the workgroup and TAC members can make changes.

Ms. Padgett asked if the money is transferable to future years so if we agree on projects and for various reasons the length of time it takes get federal documentation in place, does the money flow into the next year and go with the project. Mr. Kozlosky told members that would depend on how the TAC wants to set up the programming of the projects. He noted that right now we need to

establish the modal mixes and the criteria in which the projects will be evaluated so we can conduct a call for projects.

Ms. Padgett asked if the TCC will make recommendations on those projects once they're submitted. Mr. Kozlosky suggested that a subcommittee be established to evaluate projects using the criteria adopted by the TAC and that information will be brought to the TCC and the TAC for consideration.

Mr. Lambeth told members he questions setting aside 15% for a reserve and supplement for the UPWP for planning and staffing needs. Mr. Kozlosky noted that additional staff will be needed to meet the TMA designation requirements. Those requirements include the updated long range plan every four years (as opposed to every five years), the development of a congestion management process, as well as the implementation and administration of the STP-DA funds. Mr. Kozlosky indicated the MPO proposes to utilize funding to hire someone who could potentially do design work and cost-estimating in order to get projects to a point where they are ready to go forward, as well as work with the towns on implementation of the projects. The remainder of the funds would be put into a reserve account for possible cost-overruns on projects. Mr. Lambeth said he thinks 10% is enough.

Ms. Padgett told members that this MPO is rapidly getting to the point where we are going to need additional staff. That expense will be coming out. In using the STP-DA funds, we get most of that expense covered because the population of the area is getting bigger, the projects are getting more complex as a result of that; and, it's not fair to expect the same staff to do more and more work. We have already heard that using the STP-DA funds for our projects will take a lot more work and effort. We are going to need additional expertise and we're going to need additional people. While we're new at this, it's especially important that we have a reserve fund. If at some point in the future that builds up to a point where we find it unacceptable, this board can make a change in that. She told members that she would urge that we accept the 15%, which is standard for administration across the board.

Mr. Sisson said he thought it was a reasonable figure to start out with and if we don't have that, many of the smaller jurisdictions wouldn't submit projects simply because they just don't the staff time or expertise to go through all the steps that are required. He said he also likes the idea of a contingency fund because you can never tell what will create a cost overrun. He noted that as a starting point, he doesn't have a problem with the 15%. If we wind up with a huge amount going into contingency that's not being used, we can always trim it back in the next time around.

Mr. Lambeth told members that if it were added to the resolution then it would be fine, but he will not vote for it like it's written. Mr. Sisson asked what kind of conditions Mr. Lambeth had in mind. Mr. Lambeth said if the fund goes up to a certain point that we will revisit the 15%. Mr. Kozlosky told members the TAC will revisit the modal mix every year. Ms. Padgett noted that any member of this board can put it on the table.

Mr. Barfield said he thought it would be wise to put the money in place to help the small jurisdictions with project administration. With that, he made the motion to accept the resolution as written. Dr. Sheridan seconded the motion.

Ms. Padgett told members she would like to suggest taking 5 points for the Proximity to a School and add that to Safety Concerns under the Bike/Pedestrian Investment Target Evaluation Criteria. She said she believes safety concerns are undervalued. Mr. Barfield and Dr. Sheridan accepted the change in the evaluation criteria for their motion.

The motion carried with 6 members voting in favor and 2 in opposition. Mr. Lambeth and Mr. Berger voted against the resolution.

e. Amendment to the TAC Meeting Calendar – November 26th

Mr. Kozlosky told members that the meeting calendar needs to be amended to include a workshop to discuss a crossing for the Cape Fear River on November 26th at 9:00am.

Mr. Sisson made to motion to add the November 26th meeting to the TAC calendar. Ms. Batleman seconded the motion and it carried unanimously.

7. Discussion

a. STIP/MTIP Administrative Modifications

Ms. Padgett told members the STIP/MTIP Administrative Modifications for the roundabout at NC 133, US 117/NC 132 in Castle Hayne will delay right-of-way and construction from FY 12 to FY 13 to allow additional time for design.

Mr. Sisson made the motion to accept the STIP/MTIP administration modifications. Mr. Lambeth seconded the motion and it carried unanimously.

b. Wilmington MPO Boundary Expansion

Mr. Kozlosky presented the three options for possible boundary expansion and a pros/cons list relative to the possible expansion to include the City of Southport, City of Boiling Springs, Lakes, Town of Oak Island, Town of Caswell Beach, Village of Saint James and Village of Bald Head Island. He also presented a list of current projects or projects in NCDOT's prioritization process for this area of Brunswick County. He noted that a decision on the boundary must be made by the end of this year.

Mr. Sisson told members he does not feel we should include the southern part of Brunswick County because of the huge rural gap that exists between the area we now serve and the nearest urban area or cluster in the southern part of Brunswick County. That boundary could be expanded at a later date.

Mr. Sisson made a motion to ask staff to bring a resolution to the December meeting expanding the boundary following Hwy 210 up to the edge of Surf City (Alternative 2). Mr. Lambeth seconded the motion and it carried unanimously.

8. Updates

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

Mr. Eby noted that WAVE Transit will be one of the first transit authorities in the state to commit to using compressed natural gas and they will be building a compressed natural gas fueling station.

9. Announcements

10. Adjournment

With no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 5:35 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.**