Meeting Minutes

Wilmington Urban Area Metropolitan Planning Organization

**Transportation Advisory Committee**

**Date: January 28, 2015**

**Members Present:**

Laura Padgett, Chair, City of Wilmington

Pat Batleman, Town of Leland

Eulis Willis, Town of Navassa

Joe Breault, Town of Belville

Frank Williams, Brunswick County

Skip Watkins, New Hanover County

David Piepmeyer, Pender County (non-voting today)

Gary Doetsch, Town of Carolina Beach

Jonathan Barfield, Cape Fear Public Transportation Authority

**Staff Present:**

Mike Kozlosky, Executive Director

**1. Call to Order**

Ms. Padgett called the meeting to order at 3:02pm.

**Conflict of Interest Reminder**

Ms. Padgett asked if any members had a conflict of interest with any items on the meeting agenda. No members reported having a conflict of interest.

**2. Approval of Minutes**

The minutes for the December 10th meeting were approved unanimously.

**3. Public Comment Period**

Mr. Andy Koeppel addressed members regarding the Multi-Modal center. He said he’s concerned that the MPO does not do more to show how critically important the Multi-Modal center is to the area. He told members that NCDOT has shown that they feel very strongly about the project by acquiring most of the property for the foot-print of the structure. He said a Multi-Modal center will offer much needed shelter for bus passengers who currently wait outside at the corner of 2nd Street and Market Street. He noted that the location could also offer potential for a rail shuttle between the center and the airport through the existing rail-bed. He asked that the MPO staff craft a resolution that NCDOT should see relative to the continued desire to have the Multi-Modal constructed at the earliest possible time.

**4. Presentations**

**a. Westgate Nature Park Phase II, Neil Brooks, Town of Leland**

Mr. Neil Brooks, Director of Parks and Recreation for the Town of Leland gave a presentation on the Westgate Nature Park, Phase II. He told members that the Town of Leland received a $500,000 PARTF Grant in 2010 for the construction of Phase I. He noted that the Phase II grant application is requesting $250,000 and the town will match that amount. If approved, Phase II will consist of a 1.5 mile loop trail. Mr. Brooks told members that the MPO’s Bike/Ped Committee supported the resolution at their meeting last month.

**5. Consent Agenda**

1. **Resolution adopting “Work Cape Fear: Expanding Commuter Options in the Cape Fear Region” TDM Short Range Plan**
2. **Resolution of support for the Brunswick Battleship Connector**
3. **Resolution of support for a PARTF Grant for the Westgate Nature Park Phase II**
4. **Resolution encouraging the North Carolina Department of Transportation to install landscaping in areas of New Hanover County to improve the aesthetics for the Wells Fargo Golf Tournament**
5. **Resolution authorizing the Wilmington MPO to submit a NCDOT Transportation Demand Management Grant**
6. **Resolution approving 2015-2016 Unified Planning Work Program**
7. **Resolution Certifying the Planning Process for the Wilmington MPO**
8. **Opening of the 30-day Public Comment Period on the DRAFT 2015-2025 STIP/MTIP**

Ms. Batleman requested that item b. be pulled from the consent agenda for discussion.

Mr. Williams made the motion to approve items a., c., d., e., f., g. and h. on the consent agenda. Mr. Doetsch seconded the motion and it carried unanimously.

Ms Batleman told members that she wanted to pose some questions and comments for consideration regarding the resolution of support for the Brunswick Battleship Connector. Ms. Batleman said it is her understanding that the Town of Belville has yet to receive approval to acquire the 133 acres believed to be needed to build the multi-use boardwalk from the NC Ports Authority. She noted that at the TCC meeting, the Port Authority representative recused herself from the vote on the resolution because of the fact that they have not yet made a decision on the request. She noted that there are also other owners of property who will need to agree to participate as partners. They include the New Hanover Soil and Water Conservation District, Arundel Corporation, SG Prestress Concrete Company, Private owners John Bellamy, Floyd Hufhan and the Orrell Family. The proposed routes is outside of the jurisdictional boundary of the Town of Belville and the property owners are not confirmed to sell or grant the easements so Belville would not have the ability to condemn the land. Ms. Batleman told members that according to the Town of Belville, the boardwalk cost will be about $50 a square foot, or $300 a lineal foot for a 6-foot wide path. At the time the estimate came out, the total project cost was determined to be $850,000. She noted that according to information the Town of Leland has gathered in other studies, the cost is more-realistically pegged at about $5.5 million. That does not factor in the cost for the long term maintenance. Ms. Batleman suggested that the Brunswick Battleship Connector concept could be better managed by Brunswick County and New Hanover County. With their combined professional staffs and expertise, the project could be more thoroughly vetted. The route along Battleship Road will have significant issues with wetlands and easements. She said that was the reason she had the item pulled for further discussion.

In response to Ms. Batleman’s comments, Mr. Breault told members that the latest estimate is $1.1 million for the project. He said the Town of Belville made it clear from the start that this is concept and they are talking to the property owners, including the New Hanover Soil and Water Conservation. Mr. Breault stated that someone has to take the lead on being a project manager for envisioning a concept of this nature. He said the Town of Belville is a small town and they are willing to do the investigative work. They are willing to spearhead the project and meet and talk with the appropriated agencies. He told members that the Town of Belville feels it is a very feasible project and they are comfortable with the $1.1 million. He noted that they have identified sources and they made those clear in the past. They’ve talked to people at the Wildlife Commission, and the state and federal agencies that are involved, as well as the Battleship Commission. He told members that they are asking the board to approve the concept. Mr. Breault said if the property is not granted from the NC Ports Authority, the project is dead. He stated that the Town of Belville is asking the TAC to endorse the fact that they think the idea of what they are trying to do is feasible and reasonable. If so, allow the Town to pursue it further until they reach a point where they have a fully documented, fully engineered and fully vetted plan for the project. He reminded members that this is a concept and projects have to start somewhere.

Mr. Williams told members that he called the Brunswick County member of the WMPO’s Bike/Pedestrian Committee to hear his thoughts on the project. Mr. Williams said he was told when it came through that committee, they liked the idea and were excited about it in principal; however, they have questions about the costs and permitting.

Mr. Williams said he would like to propose two minor amendments to the resolution. In the title of the resolution, after to word “supporting”, add the words “further study” of the concept. In the “Now Therefore” section of the resolution, change that to read “further study” rather than “further development”. Mr. Williams made the motion to approve the Resolution of support for the Brunswick Battleship Connector with those amendments. Mr. Doetsch seconded the motion.

Ms. Padgett told members she had two comments. She said if the project is connecting to the battleship, it bears some transportation value. It’s not just recreation related. She noted that one of her concerns is that we must remember that the TAC is a transportation board. She said she also wanted to point out that the resolution does not ask the TAC to pay for the project or enter it into the transportation plan. Members are only being asked to support a concept.

Ms. Padgett called for the vote on Mr. William’s motion. The motion carried unanimously.

**6. Regular Agenda**

1. **Resolution approving the draft Cape Fear Transportation 2040 mode-specific projects for public review**

Ms. Rashid distributed the revised mode-specific lists of roadway projects for review. She told members that the new list was modified slightly from the January 6th workshop based on changes requested at the workshop and by email from the members following that meeting. Ms. Rashid reviewed the modifications to the roadway list. She noted that the alternative funding mechanism potential allocation project list was based on the information gathered on the mechanisms supported by members. Staff estimated the amount of alternative-funding that would be generated by those mechanisms and developed the list of projects that could be funded.

Ms. Batleman suggested that when the lists go out to the public, it would be helpful if the maps had more detail showing neighborhoods and street names so that people will actually be able to visualize what is being proposed. Ms. Rashid said staff will send out the maps prior to the public meetings.

Mr. Kozlosky asked members to provide contact information for the jurisdiction’s Public Information Officer so that they may be included on any updates.

Ms. Padgett called for questions and concerns regarding the bike/pedestrian project list. There were no questions.

Ms. Padgett called for questions and concerns regarding the mass transit project list. Ms. Padgett asked that the committee re-analyze at the Multi-Modal Transportation Center because it has been on the list for years and it would provide a needed regional transportation hub.

Ms. Padgett called for questions and concerns regarding the aviation project list. There were no questions.

Ms. Padgett called for questions and concerns regarding the freight/rail project list. There were no questions.

Ms. Padgett called for questions and concerns regarding the ferry/water transportation project list. Mr. Willis told members that he does not feel that the future mooring facility should be located in Belville. He suggested that Navassa would be a better choice. Mr. Breault told members he agreed that it would be better located in Navassa. Following a brief discussion, members agreed that the mooring facility location identified in the 2040 MTP should be changed to Navassa. Ms. Rashid said staff will make the change prior to the list going out for public comment.

Ms. Padgett called for question regarding the draft alternative funding project ranking and funding list. There were no questions.

Ms. Rashid said staff will update the lists to reflect the changes requested prior to public release. Ms. Padgett reminded members that the resolution is to take the projects forward for public review and comment.

Mr. Barfield made the motion to approve the draft Cape Fear Transportation 2040 mode-specific projects for public review. Mr. Williams seconded the motion and it carried unanimously.

1. **Resolution approving draft the Cape Fear Transportation 2040 mode-specific policies for public review**

Mr. Williams suggested that the word ensure be changed to encourage in policies number 4 and 5 in the roadway section. Ms. Rashid said staff will make that change.

Mr. Willis made the motion to approve the draft Cape Fear Transportation 2040 mode-specific policies for public review. Mr. Breault seconded the motion and it carried unanimously.

1. **Resolution supporting the retention of Independence Boulevard Extension on the MPO’s Long range Transportation Plans and Supporting Alternative North-South Capacity**

Ms. Padgett told members that the resolution supporting the retention of Independence Boulevard Extension on the MPO’s long range transportation plans and supporting alternative north-south capacity and the resolution supporting the completion of the draft environmental impact statement, preservation of the preferred corridor, opposing the design of an elevated facility and encouraging the MPO, NCDOT and CSXT to develop an at-grade option for Independence Boulevard extension were passed by the City of Wilmington.

Mr. Breault made the motion to approve the resolution supporting the retention of Independence Boulevard Extension on the MPO’s long range transportation plans and supporting alternative north-south capacity. Mr. Doetsch seconded the motion and it carried unanimously.

1. **Resolution Supporting the Completion of the Draft Environmental Impact Statement, Preservation of the Preferred Corridor, Opposing the Design of an Elevated Facility and Encouraging the MPO, NCDOT and CSXT to Develop an At-Grade Option for Independence Boulevard Extension**

Mr. Barfield made the motion to approve the resolution supporting the completion of the draft environmental impact statement, preservation of the preferred corridor, opposing the design of an elevated facility and encouraging the MPO, NCDOT and CSXT to develop an at-grade option for Independence Boulevard extension. Ms. Batleman seconded the motion and it carried unanimously.

1. **Resolution Approving the 2015 Surface Transportation Program-Direct Attributable (STP-DA) Allocation**

Mr. Knight stated that staff issued a call for project applications in September for the 2015 STP-DA allocation. Staff received four submittals, and a request from WAVE Transit. Applications were received from the City of Wilmington, Pender County, Town of Carolina Beach and Town of Leland. He said staff reviewed the applicants using the modal target investment strategies and prioritization process to score the submittals. They recommended funding all projects through construction, with the exception of the Westgate Multi-use path submitted by the Town of Leland. Staff recommended funding the preliminary engineering and design phase of the project. He noted that by funding only that phase, the Town of Leland can get the project underway. Mr. Knight explained that breaking out a portion of the project cost will give the Town of Leland the opportunity to break the costs down into more manageable portions.

Mr. Williams made the motion to approve the 2015 STP-DA allocations. Mr. Doetsch seconded the motion and it carried unanimously.

1. **Resolution adopting the 2015 Wilmington MPO Legislative Agenda**

Mr. Kozlosky reviewed the draft 2015 legislative agenda.

Mr. Barfield made the motion to approve the 2015 Wilmington MPO Legislative Agenda. Mr. Breault seconded the motion and it carried unanimously.

1. **Election of Officers**

Mr. Doetsch nominated Ms. Padgett as Chair of the TAC. Mr. Breault seconded the nomination. Mr. Doetsch made the motion to close nominations and Mr. Breault seconded the motion. The vote to elect Ms. Padgett as Chair carried unanimously.

Ms. Padgett nominated Ms. Batleman as Vice-Chair. Mr. Barfield seconded the nomination. Mr. Doetsch made the motion to close nominations and Mr. Breault seconded the motion. The vote to elect Ms. Batleman as Vice-Chair carried unanimously.

**7. Discussion**

1. **Cape Fear Transportation 2040**
   * 1. **Public Outreach Schedule**

Ms. Rashid told members that staff will be holding open houses for public review and comment on the draft Cape Fear Transportation 2040 plan through March. Once the public comments are received, the Modal Subcommittees and the CAC will review the comments and make any necessary revisions. Those changes will be presented to the TCC and TAC for consideration. The CAC members and staff will present the final plan to the individual member jurisdictions for adoption. Mr. Kozlosky told members that staff will also be available to attend local board and commission meetings to address concerns and answer questions.

1. **Wilmington MPO Logo**

Ms. Windle told members that TCC recommended bringing the name change of Wilmington Area Transportation Planning Organization (WATPO) or Greater Wilmington Transportation Planning Organization (GWTPO) to the TAC for consideration. They also narrowed the graphic design selection down to three designs.

Following a brief discussion, Mr. Barfield made the motion to approve the name change to Greater Wilmington Transportation Planning Organization (GWTPO) and the traffic circle graphic design. Mr. Watkins seconded the motion and it carried unanimously.

*\*Note from staff: This will become effective following an update to the MPO’s Memorandum of Understanding*

1. **Transportation Alternatives Program-Direct Attributable (TAP-DA Funding)**

Mr. Kozlosky told members staff did not receive applications for TAP-DA funds during the call for projects in September. He told members this year’s allocation for TAP-DA is $222,151.50. He suggested opening a 30-day call for bike/pedestrian projects beginning February 1st.

Mr. Watkins made the motion to open a 30-day call for TAP-DA projects to begin February 1, 2015. Mr. Williams seconded the motion and it carried unanimously.

Mr. Kozlosky asked members if the motion could be amended to extend the call for projects for 60 days, rather than 30 days. He noted that the extension would give member jurisdictions time to discuss the call for projects with their boards and commissions.

Ms Batleman made the motion to amend the motion as requested by Mr. Kozlosky. Mr. Watkins seconded the motion and it carried unanimously.

1. **February 4th One-on-One Meetings**

Ms. Padgett told members that she and Ms. Batleman will be going to Raleigh to meet with NCDOT on February 4th to discuss Draft State Transportation Improvement Program point allocation. She asked members to contact her or Ms. Batleman if there were any items they wanted to include in the discussions.

**8. Updates**

Project updates for the Crossing over the Cape Fear River Work Group, Wilmington MPO, CFPTA and NCDOT Division and NCDOT Transportation Planning Branch are included in the agenda packet.

**9. Adjournment**

With no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 4:30pm

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.**