

Meeting Minutes
Wilmington Urban Area Metropolitan Planning Organization
Transportation Advisory Committee
Date: August 26, 2015

Members Present:

Laura Padgett, Chair, City of Wilmington
Pat Batleman, Town of Leland
Pat O'Bryant, Town of Belville
Frank Williams, Brunswick County
Hank Miller, Town of Wrightsville Beach
John Lennon, NC Board of Transportation
Eulis Willis, Town of Navassa
Earl Sheridan, City of Wilmington
Dean Lambeth, Town of Kure Beach
David Piepmeyer, Pender County
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 3:03pm.

2. 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.

3. Approval of Minutes

The minutes for the July 22nd meeting were approved unanimously.

4. Public Comment Period

Mr. Andy Koeppel addressed the members regarding the resolution requesting NCDOT study the I-74/US74 Corridor in Brunswick and Columbus Counties. He said he would like to make everyone aware that the Cape Fear RPO recently passed a similar resolution. Because this is an important corridor to our region, he would like to suggest that TAC members encourage all jurisdictions along the corridor to unite in supporting the upgrade of the entire corridor between Wilmington and Charlotte to interstate standards.

Mr. Donald Messer addressed the members regarding the Cape Fear Memorial Bridge. He told members he and other residents of Brunswick Forest were concerned that the Cape Fear Memorial Bridge was not considered better than it was in the new 2040 plan. He noted that the current bridge is 46 years old and every year we wait to replace or upgrade it, it will be more expensive. He noted that work was being done on US 74/76 on the Brunswick County side, yet there is the choke-point of a 2-lane bridge each way. He said it's the lowest environmental impact area that you can come across from that direction and he would like to see more emphasis placed on the Cape Fear Memorial Bridge.

Mr. Messer told members he would also like to address the rail improvements. He said several people have told him it looks like Wilmington wants to transfer their traffic issues to Brunswick County. Mr. Messer asked what's in it for Brunswick County. Will it be more pollution, more noise, and it's going to take land from the people who bought property over there. He stated that he does not want to see a rail line running through the area that wasn't there when he purchased his property. He told members that he wanted to make sure his representatives understand how taking the Wilmington rail line would be of benefit to Brunswick County. He stated that Brunswick County is not a dumping-ground for the City. He told members that he would also like to request that Brunswick County representatives be included on the rail study group in order to make sure that both counties are getting benefit out of it, not just Wilmington.

Ms. Padgett told members that she will be chairing the task force appointed by the Mayor and they are extremely dedicated to making sure everybody that would be affected by the project knows about it and has the opportunity for input. She noted that there will be a myriad of companies affected by a rail relocation and the task force wants it to be of benefit on all sides.

5. Presentations

a. Cape Fear River Rail Relocation, Glenn Harbeck, City of Wilmington Planning Director

Mr. Glenn Harbeck, Director of the Planning, Development and Transportation Department for the City of Wilmington gave a presentation entitled "Moving the Rail, Transforming Greater Wilmington." In his presentation, Mr. Harbeck reviewed the purpose behind the initiative and the economic benefits that relocation of the rail will offer the City of Wilmington, the Port of Wilmington and CSX.

Following Mr. Harbeck's presentation a brief question/answer and discussion session was held.

6. Consent Agenda

- a. Resolution supporting the submittal of Prioritization 4.0 Project Modifications**
- b. Resolution supporting the submittal of Prioritization 4.0 Preliminary Interchange/Intersection Projects**
- c. Resolution supporting Prioritization 4.0 Region B and Division 3 Alternative Criteria**
- d. Resolution adopting Local Functional Classification Maps**
- e. Opening of the public comment period for the STIP/MTIP Amendments**

Mr. Kozlosky asked to pull item 6.a. from the consent agenda.

Dr. Sheridan made the motion to approve items 6. b. c. d. and e. Mr. Miller seconded the motion and it carried unanimously.

Mr. Kozlosky said staff will be asking members to delay item 7.b regarding Scientific Park Drive extension. That project is included the Independence Boulevard extension project. Included in the project modifications, Independence Boulevard extension is broken into two separate phases. Staff would also ask that the Scientific Park Drive extension project be broken out so that it can be scored separately.

Mr. Williams made the motion to approve the resolution supporting the submittal of Prioritization 4.0 Project Modifications allowing the Independence Boulevard extension project into 3-separate phases allowing them to be scored separately. Mr. O'Bryant seconded the motion and it carried unanimously.

7. Regular Agenda

a. Resolution supporting the allocation of Unified Planning Work Program funds in the amount of \$100,000 to complete a Feasibility Study to Relocate the Rail line from the City of Wilmington, improve access to the Port of Wilmington and to Recommend Alternative Transportation Uses for the Existing Rail Line

Dr. Sheridan made the motion to approve the resolution supporting the allocation of Unified Planning Work Program funds in the amount of \$100,000 to complete a Feasibility Study to Relocate the Rail line from the City of Wilmington, improve access to the Port of Wilmington and to Recommend Alternative Transportation Uses for the Existing Rail Line. Mr. Barfield seconded the motion and it carried unanimously.

b. Resolution requesting the North Carolina Department of Transportation and/or North Carolina General Assembly identify and accelerate funding for the Scientific Park Drive Extension

Mr. Kozlosky said staff is asking that the resolution requesting NCDOT and/or North Carolina General Assembly identify and accelerate funding for the Scientific Park Drive Extension be delayed to allow the Wilmington City Council can take formal action. The item is calendared for their September 15th meeting. He told members that staff will bring the resolution back to TAC for consideration at the September 30th meeting.

Mr. Williams made the motion to table item 7.b. until the next meeting pending action by the Wilmington City Council. Mr. Miller seconded the motion and it carried unanimously.

c. Resolution requesting the North Carolina Department of Transportation study the I-74/US 74 Corridor in Brunswick and Columbus Counties

Mr. Kozlosky told members that the Governor's 25-Year vision plan identifies upgrades to US 74 to interstate standards from Charlotte to Wilmington. The NCDOT Planning Branch is taking on a new initiative to complete one corridor study per year. Staff is requesting that the Department select upgrading US 74 to I-74 as one of their first corridor studies. It would also evaluate a project in the Cape Fear RPO where US 74 currently come down to Bolton and then does a button-hook down toward Myrtle Beach. That route traverses the Green Swamp and the RPO has expressed concerns. The MPO desires to bring I-74 to Wilmington. The Cape Fear RPO passed a similar resolution at their last meeting.

Mr. Williams stated that one of the reasons the Cape Fear RPO passed the resolution is because they wish to get the southern route through the Green Swamp off the map. He noted that Brunswick County also adopted a similar resolution.

Mr. Williams made the motion to approve the resolution requesting the North Carolina Department of Transportation study the I-74/US 74 Corridor in Brunswick and Columbus Counties. Mr. Willis seconded the motion and it carried unanimously.

8. Discussion

a. Prioritization 4.0 Project Deletions

Ms. Rashid told members that NCDOT is asking that we review the projects being carried over from P 3.0 to P 4.0 as part of the pre-submittal process. The Department divided the projects into three categories. The first category is Committed Projects. These projects have committed funding in the 2016-2025 STIP and will not need to go through the prioritization process again. The Existing Projects are projects that had been submitted in prior year prioritizations and NCDOT has agreed to carry them over for scoring again in the P4.0 prioritization process. These existing projects may be switched out for another project if members so desire. Ms. Rashid said in the final category, Removed-Placed in Holding Tank, the Department will not score these projects or allow them to compete in P4.0 unless they are re-submitted for scoring.

Ms. Rashid told members staff is requesting feedback in terms of any of the Existing Project(s) that the committee would be OK with deleting in order to have another project to submit in October.

Ms. Rashid asked members to review the list of Existing Projects and decide if there are any that they would like to switch out for another that may be higher-priority projects. Mr. Kozlosky asked members to send any request for changes and deletions by September 1st and staff will bring this back to TAC members for consideration at the September 30th meeting.

b. Prioritization 4.0 Local Input Methodology

Mr. Kozlosky told members that a Local Input Methodology was created for P 3.0. Modification can be made to the methodology for P 4.0. Mr. Kozlosky said staff is proposing to modify our Local Input Methodology by using the SPOT score, multi-modal accommodations, P 3.0 points, Consistency with the plans, and status of the project in development. Mr. Kozlosky stated that if this is agreeable with TAC members, staff will submit the changes to the Department for consideration. Mr. Kozlosky noted that staff will bring a resolution to adopt the final methodology once comments are received from NCDOT.

Consensus of the members was to forward the proposed changes to the P 4.0 Local Input Methodology to NCDOT for review and comments.

c. Wilmington MPO Call for Projects/Studies

Mr. Kozlosky told members that a few months ago there was significant discussion at the TCC regarding how to handle a call for planning projects/studies. Staff reached out to see how the call for planning projects/studies was conducted by other MPOs. He noted that in an effort to establish a process, staff proposes to solicit an annual call for projects/studies on September 1st with submittals due back to the MPO by September 30th. Submittals will include the name and description of the project, anticipated costs, and any identified local funding contributions. Once those documents are received, staff will review the UPWP and see what studies can be funded.

d. Crossing over the Cape Fear River Work Group

Mr. Kozlosky told members that staff received a suggestion that the Crossing over the Cape Fear River Work Group be dissolved.

Ms. Padgett reminded members that our Division Engineer suggested that TAC members designate a 3-person group to attend meetings regarding progress on the project. The main idea behind the suggestion was that we did not want the consultant to bring a final recommendation for which this group will have to vote yes or no. If the TAC members vote against their recommendation, the bridge will not move forward.

Ms. Padgett said Ms. Batleman made the suggestion that it might be better at this point if the consultant made presentations to the whole group. Ms. Padgett suggested that because the work group has not met in a very long time, it would be good if the entire group of TAC members are updated on where the consultant stands, what they have determined and what routes seem to be rising to the top before they get down to the last one.

Dr. Sheridan asked who serves on the work group. Ms. Padgett said the members are herself, Mr. Breault and Mr. Doetsch. She told members the work group attends the meeting to be there to speak if there are concerns. She noted that updates are provided in the meeting packet every month.

Dr. Sheridan asked if there is a sense that we don't need the work group anymore or that we can get information from another source. Ms. Batleman said she felt that the entire group would benefit from hearing a report from the consultant, rather than only three people who get together rather infrequently. This is an issue that has been looked at for years and with new people coming on the board, it's a good way to get them up to speed. She noted that to her it's better to involve all members, rather than just a handful of members and she would like everyone to have the ability to listen to the briefings. Ms. Padgett suggested that the consultants come to the meeting in September and give a report directly to members.

Mr. Barfield told members he has been happy to have the work group represent the TAC members and he sees no need to make changes. Mr. Williams said he felt it would be beneficial for the entire group to receive an update. He would like to receive an update before he decides to dissolve the work group or not. Ms. Batleman told members that Mr. Doetsch said he agreed that it made a lot of sense to just let the consultants come in when they are available and when there is news to impart and give it to all, rather than just a handful of members.

Consensus of the group was to bring the consultants in to update members at the September meeting and add discussion to dissolve the work group to the agenda for the October meeting.

9. Updates

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

10. Announcements

11. Adjournment

With no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 4:27pm

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.**