

Meeting Minutes
Wilmington Urban Area Metropolitan Planning Organization
Transportation Advisory Committee
Date: August 28, 2013

Members Present:

Dean Lambeth, Vice-Chair, Town of Kure Beach
Bill Sisson, Town of Wrightsville Beach
Tom Bridges, Town of Carolina Beach
Frank Williams, Brunswick County
Earl Sheridan, City of Wilmington
Eulis Willis, Town of Navassa
Joe Breault, Town of Belville
Woody White, New Hanover County
Pat Batleman, Town of Leland
Michael Lee, NC Board of Transportation
Jonathan Barfield, Cape Fear Public Transportation Authority

Staff Present:

Mike Kozlosky, Executive Director
Suraiya Rashid, Associate Transportation Planner
Adrienne Harrington, Transportation Planner

1. Call to Order

Mr. Lambeth called the meeting to order at 4:00pm.

2. Ethics Statement

3. Approval of Minutes

Ms Batleman noted a correction to the minutes on page 5, Item 8.a., it should read "project completion date." not "project competition date". With that correction made, the minutes for July 31st were approved unanimously.

4. Public Comment Period

Mr. Andy Koeppel addressed members regarding the resolution supporting the construction of I-74 to I-140, the Wilmington Bypass. Mr. Koeppel told members this is an important priority in terms of seeing better connectivity throughout the State. He suggested including a section in the resolution regarding the benefits the connection will provide to our State Port.

Mr. Zachary Steffey, President of the Student Government Association at UNCW spoke to members regarding the pedestrian overpass. He told members that the Student Government Association conducted a 3-hour survey of students on campus regarding a pedestrian bridge for S. College Road. The 246 students surveyed expressed their support for the project and hope the project will be approved.

5. Old Business

a. Resolution supporting the allocation of STP-DA funds to the selected 2013 projects

Mr. Kozlosky noted at the last meeting TAC members postponed making a final decision on the funding allocation of STP-DA funding for the planning and design for the pedestrian overpass on S. College Road until after the August 22nd meeting of the UNCW's Board of Trustees. Mr. Kozlosky told members that based on the outcome from the Board of Trustees, staff brought back the list of Bicycle/Pedestrian projects submitted for STP-DA funding for review.

Mr. Sisson asked if that was a vote by their entire Board; or, did it not make it out of the committee assigned to review the proposal. Mr. Zachary Steffey, President of the Student Government Association told members he is an ex-officio member of the Board of Trustees and this request did not leave the Business Affairs Committee.

Ms. Batleman suggested that Mr. Steffey go back to the student body and let them know that if they want the pedestrian bridge, they should start lobbying for the project. She told Mr. Steffey that the MPO receives STP-DA funding every year and this project can be resubmitted for funding next year. That will give students an opportunity to garner support for the project.

Mr. White told members he has not heard any support for going forward with the project and he thinks it's a bad idea. He noted that the project will cost millions of dollars. It's the idea of putting a bridge span over one of the busiest road in this part of the state and there is no data what so ever to support that it would ever be used. He suggested making crosswalks safer for a cheaper amount of money.

Dr. Sheridan told members he feels the idea has merit and is worth exploring. He encouraged Mr. Steffey to continue his work on behalf of the student body.

Mr. Breault told members he agreed with Mr. White. He went on to say that if their Board of Trustees indicated a higher level of interest, that would be a different story. He said he is not in favor of going forward with the project.

Mr. Barfield asked Mr. Kozlosky if the University was not in favor of the bridge due to funding; and if so, is it worth having a conversation with them to ask if they would be in favor of this bridge if it didn't cost them anything.

Mr. White stated that the TAC asked the University for a resolution of support and to identify funding. The Chancellor's letter said they did support it subject to the consent of the Board of Trustees. It went to the Board and the Board voted it down.

Mr. Sisson told members when Wilmington started its collector street plan every TAC member got a ton of emails from residents of Wilmington opposing the plan. He said he has not received any email regarding the overpass. He noted that he spoke to a few students and they thought this would be a safer way to get across S. College Road. He suggested that perhaps the City of Wilmington could discuss the project with the University at a later date.

Mr. Frank Williams made a motion to amend the resolution by substituting the Park Avenue Multi-use Path Phase II and approve the allocation of STP-DA funds to the selected 2013 projects. Mr. Breault seconded the motion and it carried with 10 members voting in favor and Dr. Sheridan voting in opposition to the motion.

6. New Business

a. Resolution requesting the removal of certain routes within the Wilmington MPO from the North Carolina Truck Network with Reasonable Access Routes designation

Mr. Kozlosky told members if approved, the resolution would be submitted to NCDOT and FHWA to request removal of certain routes within the Wilmington MPO from the North Carolina Truck Network with Reasonable Access Routes designation. He said that this is the first step in the process to remove the designation. The Department would then solicit comments and feedback from the trucking companies prior to making a final determination. He noted that this removal would only affect the 53-foot and twin-trailer trucks and would not affect Port traffic.

Ms Batleman asked if staff knows who is using twin trailers right now. Mr. Kozlosky said no. She then asked if grocery stores use 53-foot trucks. Mr. Sisson said that most grocery stores use 42-foot trailers because of access to loading docks.

Mr. Lee made the motion to adopt the resolution requesting the removal of certain routes within the Wilmington MPO from the North Carolina Truck Network with Reasonable Access Routes designation. Mr. Sisson seconded the motion and it carried with 10 members voting in favor and Ms. Batleman voting in opposition to the motion.

b. Resolution adopting the 2014 Modal Target Investment Strategies and Competition Processes for STP-DA and TA funding

Mr. Kozlosky told members staff proposed that the TAC use the same competitive process and scoring criteria for the next call for Surface Transportation Program-Direct Attributable (STP-DA) and Transportation Alternatives (TA) funding. If approved, staff has outlined a time frame in which to begin soliciting projects for 2013. It would begin in mid-September of 2014 and the submission period closing in mid-November. The projects would then come to this Board in January 2014.

Mr. Sisson asked when staff will announce the 2013 projects selected. Mr. Kozlosky said staff will review the project on Friday, August 30th and will bring them to the TAC for consideration at the September meeting.

Mr. Sisson made a motion to adopt the 2014 Modal Target Investment Strategies and Competition Processes for STP-DA and TA funding. Dr. Sheridan seconded the motion and it carried unanimously.

c. Resolution adopting Household Socio-economic data

Ms. Rashid told members the Household Socio-economic data must be adopted by the TAC. She noted that staff gave a presentation on how the data was collected at the last TAC meeting.

Mr. Frank Williams made the motion to adopt the Household Socio-economic data. Ms. Batleman seconded the motion and it carried unanimously.

d. Resolution supporting the construction of I-74 to I-140 (Wilmington Bypass)

Mr. Kozlosky told members the resolution supports the construction of a connection of I-74 to I-140 (Wilmington Bypass). The connection would be a key route in our roadway network and will offer positive economic and tourism benefits. He noted that the resolution has already been adopted by the Cape Fear RPO.

Mr. Frank Williams made a motion to adopt the resolution supporting the construction of I-74 to I-140 (Wilmington Bypass). Mr. Barfield seconded the motion and it carried unanimously.

e. Resolution supporting the NCDOT pursuing safety funds for the construction of a median on Market Street between the Martin Luther King, Jr Parkway and Station Road and between Middle Sound Loop Road and Mendenhall Drive/Marsh Oaks Drive

Mr. Kozlosky told members the Market Street Corridor Study, completed in 2010 included access management improvements. The resolution supports NCDOT pursuing safety funds for the construction of a median on Market Street between the Martin Luther King, Jr. Parkway and Station Road and between Middle Sound Loop Road and Mendenhall Drive/Marsh Oaks Drive.

Mr. Breault made a motion to adopt the resolution supporting NCDOT pursuing safety funds for the construction of a median on Market Street between the Martin Luther King, Jr. Parkway and Station Road and between Middle Sound Loop Road and Mendenhall Drive/Marsh Oaks Drive. Mr. Sisson seconded the motion and it carried unanimously.

f. Resolution approving the Administrative Modifications to the STIP/MTIP (July)

Mr. Kozlosky told members the administrative modifications include delaying the construction from FY 13 to FY 14 for the Wilmington Bypass to assist with balancing projects lettings. He noted that the delay on the bypass will not impact the overall project competition date. The second modification is to delay construction for the Kerr Avenue from Randall Parkway to Martin Luther King, Jr. Parkway from FY 14 to FY 15 to allow additional time for utility relocations.

Ms. Batleman suggested substituting “modify” instead of the word “delay” when referring to the start of construction for the Wilmington Bypass.

Mr. Willis asked what was meant by the term “balancing project lettings”. Mr. Patrick Riddle told members when looking at revenue as it comes into the Department, they are always trying to balance the TIP as it rolls out 5 to 7 to 10 years. In this case, the Wilmington Bypass (BA) project, which is on this side of the river going back to US 74/76, will be let in January. The Big Bridge (BB) from US 421 and going over the Cape Fear River, will be let next month. It will take longer to build the BB project and it’s more expensive. The intent of all this is to have everything completed at the same time, without any delays to the completion date.

Mr. Willis asked if balancing the project lettings will impact the schedule. Mr. Kozlosky said no. Mr. Sisson told members that he would hate to see the resolution be used in any shape or form for the purpose of delaying the completion date for the project. He suggested that the resolution include that the modification that does not interfere completion date of the project.

Mr. Kozlosky noted that the Board of Transportation has already adopted the modifications. He told members that the TAC is being asked to mutually adopt the STIP/MTIP.

Mr. Frank Williams made a motion to support the modifications of the 2012-2020 STIP/MTIP with the following changes: “.....to modify the start date of the Wilmington Bypass (R-2633BA) with the understanding that it will not impact the completion date from.....” Ms. Batleman seconded the motion.

Mr. Willis told members that the project has been delayed twice already and he is not satisfied with the delays.

The Chair called for a vote on Mr. Frank Williams’ motion. The motion carried with 10 members voting in favor and Mr. Willis voting in opposition to the motion.

Opening of the 30-day Public Comment Period for STIP/MTIP Amendments (August)

Mr. Barfield made a motion to open the 30-day public comment period for STIP/MTIP amendments. Mr. Lee seconded the motion and it carried unanimously.

7. Discussion

a. Wilmington MPO Weighted Voting Structure

Mr. Kozlosky told members that staff contacted all the MPOs across the State of North Carolina to determine if, and how they have addressed weighted voting. The findings were compiled into a memo and sent to TAC members for consideration. In that report, staff suggested four options for weighted voting. They are: 1) Do not institute weighted voting 2) Add additional voting members to the TAC based on population 3) Institute weighted voting by population for all votes 4) Institute weighted voting by population for votes only on a “called” basis.

Ms. Batleman suggested going with the 1st option of not institute weighted voting at this time. She noted that there are also 3 other options to consider. One would be institute weighted voting by location of a proposed project. It would be on a per-project basis. Dow Road, for instance the Town of Kure Beach would get more votes. Another option would be to change the voting allocation to two votes per county and one vote per municipality. She also suggested that given the fact that we’ve got new funding criteria now, maybe it would be best to postpone this until next year after the TAC has a chance to work through the new funding system.

General consensus of the group was to postpone the issue of weighted voting to allow time for the TAC to work through the new funding system.

b. NC Ethics Commission – Senate Bill 411

Mr. Kozlosky told members there have been changes to the ethics law. MPOs no longer fall under the State Ethics Act and are not subject to the gift ban, conflicts provisions or the ethics training requirements. Members are still required to submit the statement of economic interest, as well as fill out the real estate disclosure form by April 15th on an annual basis. Another change to the ethics law is that there needs to be a document attached to the minutes that discloses any conflicts of interest in which any vote or discussion has taken place.

Mr. Kozlosky asked members if they would like to have a form to circulate at meetings in which members would note if they have a conflict of interest with regard to the meeting's agenda. The consensus of the Board was to have a form to circulate at each meeting.

c. Strategic Mobility Formula

Mr. Kozlosky told members staff will be soliciting input for projects in September and October. Staff will then be submitting the list of projects to NCDOT in January. He noted that staff will continue to disseminate information received from the Department regarding the Strategic Mobility Formula.

8. Updates

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

9. Announcements

10. Adjournment

With no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 4:56 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.**