

**Wilmington Urban Area
Technical Coordinating Committee
Wednesday, October 11, 2017
Meeting Minutes**

Members Present:

Mike Kozlosky, Wilmington MPO	Kyle Breuer, Pender County
Don Bennett, City of Wilmington	Allen Serkin, Cape Fear Council of Governments
Adrienne Harrington, Wilmington MPO	Alan Pytcher, NCDOT Division of Highways
Ed Parvin, Town of Carolina Beach	Nazia Sarder, NCDOT Planning
Ken Vafier, New Hanover County	Megan Matheny, Cape Fear Public Transportation Authority
Stephanie Ayers, NC Ports Authority	
John Allen, Town of Bellville	
Helen Bunch, Brunswick County	

1. Call to Order

Mr. Kozlosky called the meeting to order at 10:03 a.m. He introduced Abby Lorenzo and Jason O'Brien, new Associate Transportation Planners.

Ms. Lorenzo and Mr. O'Brien expressed appreciation and gave a brief overview of their backgrounds.

2. Approval of Agenda

Mr. Breuer made the motion to approve the agenda as presented with no changes. Ms. Bunch seconded the motion and it carried unanimously.

3. Presentation

a. International Walk to School Day Results, Adrienne Harrington, WMPO

Ms. Harrington gave a presentation on this year's International Walk to School Day, which was held on October 4th. She noted that outreach to New Hanover, Brunswick and Pender County Schools differed this year with the provision of a link to an online survey that captured interest in an educational curriculum and materials, and/or a walking event.

Ms. Harrington stated that five (5) schools took advantage of the materials, and six (6) schools participated in the event. She reported that more than 1,200 students walked to school this year; three (3) times the number of last year's participants. She added that most of the programs' promotional materials were exhausted during this event. She commented that other schools may have participated in addition to those captured.

Mr. Breuer commented that Pender County will begin its Safe Routes to School project next year. He expressed a desire to partner with the NCDOT for a ribbon cutting ceremony.

A question/answer and discussion period was held.

4. Consent Agenda

- a. **Approval of TCC Meeting Minutes – September 13, 2017**
- b. **Resolution supporting the North Carolina Ports Authority’s submission for the INFRA grant**
- c. **Resolution supporting the North Carolina Department of Transportation’s submission of Rail Improvements for the INFRA grant**
- d. **Resolution supporting the Wilmington Urban Area Metropolitan Planning Organization’s submission of an Infrastructure for Rebuilding America (INFRA) grant request for the upgrade of US 74 from east of NC 87 to Mt Misery Road**

Ms. Bunch expressed the desire to pull Item 4a (Approval of TCC Meeting Minutes of September 13, 2017) for a minor correction.

Mr. Bennett made a motion to approve the Consent Agenda excluding Item 4a, and to forward Items 4b through 4d to the Board for consideration. Mr. Vafier seconded the motion and it carried unanimously.

Mr. Kozlosky stated that a correction has been made to the minutes of September 13th to record the arrival of Ms. Bunch at 10:14 a.m. (instead of 10:41 a.m.).

Mr. Breuer made a motion to approve TCC Meeting Minutes of September 13, 2017 with the correction. Ms. Bunch seconded the motion and it carried unanimously.

In response to an inquiry by Mr. Serkin regarding Item 4d, Mr. Kozlosky displayed a map of the rail sites, connections, grade separations, and crossing closures between Wilmington and Charlotte. He expressed regret that the map was not available in time to be included in the agenda packet.

5. Regular Agenda

- a. **Resolution requesting the North Carolina Department of Transportation designate US 74 from Whiteville to Interstate-140 and Interstate-140 from US 74 to US 17 as “Future I-74”**

Mr. Kozlosky stated that this Resolution is the result of discussions with Mr. Serkin and the Department of Transportation. He noted that the National Highway System Act of 1995 identifies the locations for Interstate 73 and 74, and the route to be identified for I-74 in North Carolina, specifically southeastern North Carolina. He reminded members that the DOT has a map that shows a corridor running through the Green Swamp, which is not supported by the RPO or Brunswick County. He pointed out that if the DOT would designate these sections, it would help encourage the goal of the MPO to bring I-74 to Wilmington.

Mr. Serkin suggested that a request should be made to change the map for the designated route.

Mr. Bennett made a motion to approve the Resolution requesting the North Carolina Department of Transportation designate US 74 from Whiteville to Interstate-140 and Interstate-140 from US 74 to US 17 as “Future I-74,” and to forward it to the Board for consideration. Mr. Serkin seconded the motion, and it carried unanimously.

b. Resolution supporting the allocation of additional Direct Attributable funds to the Carolina Beach Greenway and Harper Avenue Bike Lanes projects

Ms. Kimes stated that this project bid came in higher than anticipated. She noted that the Town of Carolina Beach has requested additional money, and a Resolution was adopted at the Town Council's meeting last night to award it, request additional funds, and provide the 20% match.

Mr. Kozlosky reminded members that this was one of the projects with anticipated overruns.

Ms. Kimes stated that this request is for about \$167,000 in unanticipated costs, and approval would allow the Town to move forward with the project. A question/answer and discussion period was held.

In response to an inquiry by Mr. Breuer, Ms. Kimes stated that the surplus has been updated with capital costs and overages based on the original match. She noted that only some of the projects are ready to go to construction at this time. She added that the current shortfall is approximately \$3.4 million, which translates to a potential maximum of \$2.7 million. She estimated that current available funding of this year's allocation minus UPWP (Unified Planning Work Program) is \$3.725 million, which leaves a balance of \$1 million.

Ms. Kimes expressed the desire to wait until next week when NCDOT can validate percent completion, and projections can be updated based on award dates, before allocating this year's funds.

A lengthy question/answer and discussion period was held.

Mr. Breuer made a motion to approve the Resolution supporting the allocation of additional Direct Attributable funds to the Carolina Beach Greenway and Harper Avenue Bike Lanes projects, and to forward it to the Board for consideration.

Mr. Serkin seconded the motion, and it carried unanimously.

6. Discussion

a. Direct Attributable Programs

Ms. Kimes reminded members that over the past few months she and Ms. Lorenzo have been working on the process for the Direct Attributable Programs. She stated that following discussions with the TCC and the Board, staff identified the four (4) main areas for improvements as follows:

1. Application submittal and award timeline;
2. The use of "pots" or targets allocating funding for projects to different modes of transportation;
3. Inaccurate engineering and construction cost estimates; and
4. Understanding the NCDOT expectations and basic timelines of a project from NCDOT Agreement to Project Closeout.

Ms. Kimes pointed out that this will be a living document that will evolve over time. She reported that a more similar mindset exists within the state than outside it. She noted that options include:

- Continue as usual with applications and awards for funding after the funds are released; or
- Do a call for projects a year in advance of funds being released, which would give towns time to be prepared to start projects on the first day of funding; or
- Use a Board or TCC approved mini-five (5)-year TIP of funded projects rotated every two (2)-years.

A question/answer and discussion period was held regarding a mini-TIP with a local prioritization process.

Mr. Kozlosky stated that if the Board agrees, the next step would be to return to the Committee with criteria.

In response to an inquiry by Mr. Breuer, Mr. Kozlosky responded that the process is moving toward requiring projects to be in the MTP. He noted that the match makes the application necessary.

Ms. Kimes gave an overview regarding various funding target categories. She noted that the targets will not work with current legislation.

Mr. Serkin expressed a desire for flexibility in the targets.

Ms. Kimes gave an overview of the inaccuracy of original engineering estimates. She attributed some of the challenges to the newness of the program. She pointed out that local rules and requirements differ greatly from federal rules and requirements. She proposed that feasibility study completed for projects.

In response to an inquiry by Mr. Serkin, Ms. Kimes stated that it is her understanding that the studies are separate from the projects. She recommended that the town or local municipality be in charge of the studies so that they can make their own decisions about the projects.

Mr. Kozlosky stated that staff will need to determine if DA (Direct Attributable) money can be used for feasibility studies; and the amount to be programmed for it. He commented that if DA funds can't be used, the local jurisdictions may want to assume responsibility for them. He expressed a reluctance to flex PL funds for this purpose without consulting with the DOT first.

Ms. Kimes pointed out that if a project can't be completed, the municipality/county would have to reimburse the funds, which could be costly.

In response to an inquiry by Mr. Serkin, Ms. Kimes stated that Mr. Lowe estimated the cost of a feasibility study at \$5,000 based on his experience. She noted that it may be necessary to engage local firms to obtain a better estimate.

Mr. Breuer inquired about the MPO doing the contracting and feasibility study if the LGA were to give it the funds. Mr. Kozlosky stated that this could be considered.

Mr. Serkin suggested the possibility of on-call firms. Mr. Kozlosky pointed out that the MPO uses on-call firms for planning.

Ms. Ayers stated that the Ports operate differently from municipalities and counties by making decisions based on the marketplace. She noted that the Ports have an infrastructure capital plan and a full engineering staff.

Ms. Matheny pointed out that feasibility studies are done on all transit projects, and are included in the capital improvement TAM Plan.

Ms. Kimes commented that airport transit may be different from municipalities as well. She noted that the MPO does not have the internal engineering staff to conduct feasibility studies in-house.

Mr. Kozlosky identified a consensus regarding the need for feasibility studies although the funding mechanism has not been identified yet.

In response to an inquiry by Ms. Matheny, Ms. Kimes stated that staff hopes to move forward with a new process in January. She noted that the call for this year's funds (2018) may be unnecessary, and the call for next year (2019) would go out in February or March.

Ms. Kimes provided some recommendations for meeting NCDOT's expectations and timelines, including a manual, check list, and project management software.

A question/answer and discussion period was held.

Ms. Kimes reminded members that MPOs across the state and in the southeastern region are struggling with this process as well.

Mr. Breuer suggested that members reach out to the LGAs regarding administration at the local level. Ms. Kimes responded that further input will be requested.

Mr. Serkin expressed appreciation for progress to date.

Mr. Kozlosky pointed out that this essentially creates a capital improvements program. He noted that more work will be required.

Ms. Ayers volunteered to participate in any subcommittee.

Mr. Kozlosky stated that the potential creation of a workgroup will be discussed at the next TCC meeting.

Ms. Kimes reiterated that the goal is to have a plan ready by January, with the creation of materials such as a handbook and updating letters of interest to follow.

b. Old Fayetteville Road Multi-use Path (U-5534D)

Mr. Kozlosky stated that in 2013 the Town of Leland was awarded funds for the Old Fayetteville Road Multi-use Path, and agreed to provide a 50% local match. In 2015, the town executed an agreement with DOT for some additional funds, at which time the match was reduced to 35%. He noted that the project has changed significantly in cost since the original proposal. The original estimate was \$380,000. The most recent estimate is \$2.2 million, which excludes the DOT's resurfacing portion of the project.

In response to an inquiry by Mr. Breuer, Ms. Kimes stated that the plans are at 65%, and soon to be at 95%.

Mr. Bennett expressed concerns regarding the rapid shift in the market for construction costs and the increase in cost estimates.

Ms. Ayers expressed concerns that no one from Leland is present during this discussion.

Mr. Kozlosky concurred with Ms. Ayers and noted that the town is short staffed currently. He stated that the town would like to move forward with the project and reduce the local match to 20%. He expressed concerns regarding setting a precedent where other jurisdictions have remained committed to their match percentages.

A question/answer and discussion period was held regarding the change in match.

In response to an inquiry by Mr. Bennett, Ms. Kimes stated that only Leland has matches greater than 20%.

Mr. Kozlosky requested discussion to identify any interest or support for reducing Leland's match to 20%. If so, staff would bring to the TCC in November an Item acknowledging support. He noted that the Town will not proceed unless it can secure the match.

In response to an inquiry Mr. Vafier, Ms. Kimes stated that the path was to be installed in 60 feet of right-of-way; but needs a little more right-of-way, pipe, and curb and gutter.

Mr. Bennett requested more information about the inflation of cost.

Ms. Harrington expressed concerns regarding the other projects at 30%. Ms. Kimes responded that those projects are further along and have better estimates.

In response to an inquiry by Mr. Bennett, Mr. Kozlosky stated that the town is seeking a commitment from the Board to provide the match equaling about \$1.5 million.

Ms. Kimes noted that without a commitment the town will stop the project, pay back any reimbursements, and consider it a loss.

Ms. Ayers pointed out that a surplus of STP funds will exist even with moving this and other projects forward. She expressed concerns regarding delaying the Resolution of support and not advancing the project.

In response to an inquiry by Mr. Serkin, Mr. Kozlosky stated that the MPO must expend its funds, and the town must complete the project within 10 years.

A lengthy question/answer and discussion period was held.

Ms. Kimes pointed out that a feasibility study would have prevented this situation. Committee members concurred.

Mr. Breuer requested documentation from the town for the cost increase, and a Resolution of support for members to consider at the November meeting.

Following further discussion, Mr. Kozlosky reminded the Committee that the goal is to expend the funds.

7. Updates

Mr. Kozlosky reminded members that the two (2) new Associate Planners were introduced earlier. He noted that the Senior Planner position will close on the 15th and the Project Engineer position will close around the same time. He added that interviews for the GIS Analyst position are in progress and efforts are focused on the return to full staffing.

Mr. Breuer pointed out that the public meeting for the Hampstead Bypass median project is next Thursday.

Mr. Kozlosky reminded members that updates are in the agenda packet.

Mr. Pytcher stated that the Greenfield Lake project should be open to traffic in December of this year. He noted that the contractor has completed the culvert, and is rebuilding 3rd Street, beginning with installation of base pavement, and curb and gutter next week. He added that the backfilling for the second phase of the culvert on 3rd Street is underway.

Mr. Pytcher stated that the Wilmington Bypass should be open to traffic in December; a delay of one month. He noted that two (2) paving crews are working to complete the project by December 15th.

8. Announcements

- Hampstead Bypass meeting: October 19th
- Carolina Beach Road meeting: October 30th at Sunset Elementary School
- South Front Street Widening public meeting: November 13th
- The next WMPO Bike/Ped Committee meeting: October 17th
- The next TCC Meeting: November 15th

In response to an inquiry by Ms. Matheny, Mr. Kozlosky stated that he would forward public meeting times and locations to members.

Ms. Harrington reminded members that the Commuter Challenge starts on Monday.

Mr. Kozlosky expressed appreciation to members for their efforts on the STP-DA process.

Mr. Breuer requested that the member jurisdictions be updated regarding the revised DA program.

Mr. Kozlosky stated that training has been suspended until that time as well.

9. Adjournment

With no further items, the meeting was adjourned at 11:54 a.m.

**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.**