



Special Meeting
Wednesday, June 15, 2017
6th Floor Conference Room, 320 Chestnut Street

Members in Attendance

Gary Doetsch, Town of Carolina Beach
David Piepmeyer, Pender County
Pat Batleman, Town of Leland
Mike Forte, Brunswick County
Charlie Rivenbark, City of Wilmington
Emilie Swearingen, Town of Kure Beach

Others:

James H. Trogdon III, Secretary of the N.C. Department of Transportation
Karen Collette, Division Engineer, NCDOT
Mike Kozlosky, WMPO Executive Director

1. Call to order:

Mr. Doetsch called the Special Meeting to order at 3:05 p.m. He reminded the Board that no action would be taken in the absence of a quorum.

2. Discussion of North Carolina Department of Transportation and Wilmington Urban Area MPO Initiatives with NCDOT Secretary Jim Trogdon III

Mr. Trogdon expressed appreciation to the Board. He stated that he served for 25 years at NCDOT, the last three (3) years as a consulting engineer on the east coast, and the last year at the SAS Institute addressing traffic issues nationwide. He pointed out that although needs differ from city to city, there are no new transportation problems – only new opportunities to apply lessons learned with the right applications and support.

Mr. Trogdon stated that his first priority is improvement of project delivery. He noted that in the last five (5) years on schedule delivery of projects within the TIP averaged 78 percent (statewide, 95%; regional, 50%; and Division, 60%). He pointed out that the focus is to stay on schedule, and for the Divisions to deliver more Regional and Division-tier projects with compressed and improved timelines. He expressed the desire to reduce cycles from 10 and 14 years, to one to three (1-3) years.

A brief question/answer and discussion period was held.

Mr. Trogdon told members that he requested a delay in the approval of the draft TIP from this June in order to add 100 more projects through streamlining, cash management, and project acceleration. He noted that some unfunded projects would advance into years 6, 7, 8 and 9, and projects in those years may advance to the committed category. He added that a reset schedule should be available by the end of the month.

Mr. Trogdon stated although the General Assembly approved bonds for \$1.4 billion; it denied infrastructure bonds for \$2 billion due to an existing balance of \$1.7 billion committed to projects not delivered. He noted that making project delivery a priority for

two (2) years would reduce the cash balance on committed projects to under a billion dollars.

Mr. Trogdon stated that he has been tracking Division and central office projects monthly. He expressed the desire to extend the higher delivery rate from two (2) to five (5) years, and for transportation bonds to be reconsidered for unfunded requests, which are predominately at the Regional and Division levels. He added that this would focus the Garvey capacity on the Statewide tier to address projects with corridor caps and others that require substantially more investment than what can be accomplished in five (5) years. He noted that he's working closely with the General Assembly to achieve this.

Mr. Trogdon pointed out that the CAFE (Corporate Average Fuel Economy) standards are being aggressively incorporated into the vehicle fleet. He noted that two (2) years ago the average vehicle sold had 24 mpg; this year, it's 34 mpg; and by 2025, 54 mpg, which doesn't include the exponential growth of electric vehicles. He commented that this will significantly impact revenue sources in the future.

As a second priority, Mr. Trogdon expressed concerns and is preparing for a possible crisis that may occur between 2021 and 2025 involving the replacement of motor fuels revenue and reducing dependence on federal investment. He noted that the state is 50 percent dependent on motor fuels and the federal government, 70 percent. He pointed out that transfers from the (federal) general fund will no longer be available after 2021. He expressed concerns regarding the FTA (Federal Transit Administration) and the FAA (Federal Aviation Administration) with participation winding down. He commented that the FAA may focus primarily on air traffic control over CIP funding; although, planes can't land on cracked pavement or on short runways.

Mr. Trogdon pointed out that North Carolina is the ninth most populous state; and fifth highest for traffic fatalities. He expressed concerns regarding a lack of tools and partners to address behavioral drivers of that statistic (speeding, DUI/DWI, driving while distracted, leaving the roadway for no reason, etc.). He welcomed advice and volunteers to pilot impactful, and perhaps controversial ideas.

In response to an inquiry by Ms. Swearingen, Mr. Kozlosky stated that New Hanover County ranks higher in vehicular crash rate; but not in gross numbers.

Mr. Trogdon stated that his third priority is to support the state's economy by improving mobility and reducing congestion. He noted that one strategy is to break out projects from the STI that can't compete with those projects less than \$1 million to \$2 million such as the Hampstead Bypass. He noted that good legislative support exists for combining things at the Division level and from the highway fund (Mobility and Modernization). He added that additional resources may be realized following success of such a program.

A question/answer and discussion period was held.

Mr. Trogdon stated that his next priority would be to continue to improve bridges and pavements across the state. Although this has improved over the last five (5) to ten (10) years, the focus on bridges needs to be redirected funds from those on secondary (10%)

roads to primary roads (68%). He noted that improvements would also be seen in appearances, such as mowing and litter control, vegetation growing around guardrail signs, and better striping for safety and visibility. A brief question/ answer and discussion period was held.

Mr. Trogdon stated that the final priority is new technology. He noted that a center has been created in partnership with NC State and others partners for the use of drones or Unmanned Air Systems (UAS). He added that several years ago when the FAA was publishing the rules, no UASs were commercially registered. Now, there are a little more than 20,000, which outnumber registered aircrafts and are expected to continue to grow.

Mr. Trogdon stated that UASs are being researched for transportation purposes such as enhanced mapping, conditions assessments, disaster response, and incident management, and in partnership with other agencies such as law enforcement. He noted that rapid growth of the technology is anticipated with benefits of increased efficiency, reduced response time, and cost savings. He added that unmanned aerial systems are being researched for moving people in Europe and the UK, as well as for UPS and fast food delivery.

Mr. Trogdon commented that preparation for connected and autonomous vehicles is even more important. He stated that the Triangle Expressway is one of 10 test sites across the nation with an opportunity for familiarization and preparation of processes, policies, planning tools, and laws in order to enhance mobility.

Mr. Trogdon pointed out that significant impactors to the economy will include the Department's partnership with CSX and CCX intermodal facility, and the Ports with rail improvements such as the Carolina Queen City Express intermodal service in preparation for enhanced transatlantic/transpacific container service to/from the Ports. He commented that the next four (4) years will set the tone for competing interests nationally. Although transportation is a small part of the national budget, it's critical to all states, increasing the importance of being poised to leverage projects such as the President's infrastructure proposal.

A lengthy question/answer and discussion period was held.

Mr. Trogdon expressed appreciation to the Board.

Mr. Doetsch expressed concerns regarding the impact to attendance caused by a conflicting meeting to address water quality.

3. Adjournment:

With no other business, the meeting adjourned at 3:58 p.m.

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.**