



Board Meeting Minutes
6th Floor Conference Room, 320 Chestnut Street
Wednesday, September 27, 2017

Members Present:

Gary Doetsch, Town of Carolina Beach
David Piepmeyer, Pender County
Neil Anderson, City of Wilmington
Jonathan Barfield, Cape Fear Public
Transportation Authority
Pat Batleman, Town of Leland
Noreen Slattery, Town of Belville

Hank Miller, Town of Wrightsville Beach
Emilie Swearingen, Town of Kure Beach
Skip Watkins, New Hanover County
Frank Williams, Brunswick County
Eulis Willis, Town of Navassa
Danny McComas, NC Board of Transportation

Others Present:

Mike Kozlosky, Executive Director, WMPO
Karen Collette, Division Engineer, NCDOT
Brian Speight, PE, Mott MacDonald
Neil Perry, NCDOT Rail Division
Stephanie Ayers, NC State Ports Authority
Paul Worley, former Director, NCDOT Rail Division

1. Call to Order

Mr. Doetsch called the meeting to order at 3:01 p.m.

2. Conflict of Interest Reminder

Mr. Doetsch 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 Board Members' Excused Absence

Mr. Doetsch stated that Mr. Rivenbark and Mr. Zimmer have requested to be excused from today's meeting.

Mr. Piepmeyer made a motion to excuse the absence of Mr. Rivenbark and Mr. Zimmer. Mr. Williams seconded the motion, and it carried unanimously.

4. Approval of Agenda

Mr. Williams made a motion to approve the agenda as presented, seconded by Ms. Batleman, and the motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Willis and Mr. McComas arrived at 3:05 p.m.

5. Public Comment Period

Ms. Sandy Slocum spoke to the Board regarding developments and the impact to traffic, particularly in the Military Cutoff Road corridor. She expressed concerns regarding the lack of ability of Traffic Impact Analysis studies to consider future development. She requested that

the City and other entities take into consideration the traffic impact of large multi-use developments, particularly when the current service level of a road is poor.

Ms. Collette concurred and requested Ms. Slocum's contact information to discuss her concerns further after the meeting.

A question/answer and discussion period was held. Members expressed some concerns.

6. Presentation

a. "Go Coast" 2017 Commuter Challenge – Adrienne Harrington, WMPO

Ms. Harrington reminded the Board that the Commuter Challenge is a region-wide event focused on alternative transportation to mitigate growth and traffic congestion. She stated that this year the program will take place October 16th-29th (traditionally the last two (2) full weeks of October to avoid college breaks and the time change). She gave an overview of participation categories and prizes. She noted that participation will be tracked using a free app called My Open Road.

Ms. Harrington stated that more than 300 people have pledged to participate so far. She noted that Zoe Leonard, the Sustainable Transportation Intern, is attending many community events to promote the program. She noted that UNCW, CFCC, and Wave Transit are key partners, and two are major employers. She added that the Go Coast Committee members are also enlisting participants and promoting the event. She noted that outreach also includes wellness committees, HR groups, and past participants. She requested that members help promote the program.

b. Wilmington Rail Improvements – Landside Rail Improvements Serving the Port and Moving Trains Safely through the Community – Brian Speight, PE, Mott MacDonald

Mr. Speight gave an overview of the Wilmington Rail Improvement study for the NCDOT Rail Division and the NC Ports Authority. He acknowledged the presence of Mr. Perry, Ms. Ayers, and Mr. Worley. He noted that the study was triggered by the building of a new intermodal center at Rocky Mount (CCX or Carolina Connector); changes to the network/system/operations due to new CSX leadership, Hunter Harrison; and the return of intermodal service from the Port to Charlotte, in addition to increased demand in general.

Mr. Speight stated that the study reviewed the existing Rail and Port network, and projected capacity with the increased demand. The model estimates that the current capacity, five (5) 3,000-foot trains per week, could handle the expected net increase through 2021. He noted that a few more and/or longer trains may be required to handle demand through 2025, which could be mitigated by infrastructure improvements to the container yard, some heavy maintenance of general terminal railroad (WTRY short line), and improvements to the beltline.

Mr. Speight stated that two (2) minor curve realignments (Fernside and Smith Creek) are recommended to improve safety and accommodate increased speed (from 10 mph to 20 mph). Other recommendations include some bridge reinforcements and the implementation of the Wilmington Traffic Separation Study (TSS). He added that the six (6) beltline projects total about \$30 million, and have been submitted to the STI in coordination with the MPO and the DOT Rail Division.

A lengthy question/answer and discussion period was held. Several members expressed concerns regarding the limited scope of the model and recommendations.

Ms. Collette reminded members that planes, railroad and ships all take precedence over vehicular traffic.

Mr. Speight reminded members that although improvements to speed are planned, the speed of the trains is at the discretion of the railroad.

Following further discussion, Mr. Kozlosky stated that the TSS project would be scored in the STI during the Prioritization process.

Mr. Doetsch expressed appreciation to Mr. Speight.

7. Consent Agenda

a. Approval of WMPO Board Meeting Minutes

The minutes for the Regular Meeting of August 30, 2017 were approved unanimously.

b. Resolution authorizing the Wilmington Urban Area MPO's submission of a NCDOT FY 2019 Transportation Demand Management Grant and provide the required local match

c. Resolution adopting the Wilmington Urban Area Metropolitan Planning Organization's Public Transportation Funding Allocation Plan

Mr. Piepmeyer made the motion to approve Consent Agenda Items 7a through 7c.

Mr. Barfield seconded the motion and it carried unanimously.

8. Discussion

a. Direct Attributable Submittal Form Proposal

Ms. Kimes reminded members that during past few month the STBGP-DA (Surface Transportation Block Grant Program-Direct Attributable) and TASA-DA (Transportation Alternatives Set Aside-Direct Attributable) programs have been an ongoing topic of discussion. She noted that the process could be changed to be more user-friendly for member jurisdictions and to get more projects on the ground. Following discussion with the Board and the TCC, four (4) areas of concern have been identified:

1. The timeline from application submittal to award;
2. The use of buckets in allocating funding for projects in the different modes of transportation;
3. Accuracy of engineering and construction cost estimates; and
4. Understanding DOT expectations and basic timelines of projects from DOT agreement to close out.

Ms. Kimes stated that Ms. Lorenzo has been researching MPOs outside North Carolina, mainly in the southeast region, as well as those within the state, to identify best practices. She noted that outside of North Carolina where roads are not owned by the state, people are doing their own Transportation Improvement Programs. Within the state, CAMPO has the best and most detailed process. She added that Durham-Chapel Hill has a similar, yet less well defined process. She noted that staff plans to research CAMPO's process further.

Ms. Kimes stated that Fayetteville uses the top projects that scored in the SPOT to help determine allocation of funds, which would be a transparent way of scoring the projects. She commented that other MPOs across the state seem less involved; although this is not the preferred approach of the WMPO. She noted that Durham-Chapel Hill takes money off the top. She added that a feasibility study of the top projects is also being considered to get a better idea of project costs and to provide alternatives. She noted that the findings will be presented at the next TCC meeting on October 11th.

Mr. Williams expressed appreciation and requested that staff remain aware that the WMPO has a number of small towns without large staffs. Ms. Kimes responded that the DOT has a locally administered handbook, for which staff has plans to expand and provide a checklist. She added that parallel opportunities would be identified.

Mr. Doetsch requested to be kept apprised of any progress. Mr. Kozlosky reminded members that this would be an ongoing agenda item until staff and the Board are satisfied with the process, which he estimated would be ready by the end of the year.

Mr. Williams suggested a focus group to test it and gather feedback.

Mr. McComas left the meeting at 4:09 p.m.

b. Infrastructure for Rebuilding America

Mr. Kozlosky stated that on June 29th the USDOT announced the Infrastructure for Rebuilding America Grant, which will make available \$1.5 billion for transportation infrastructure projects across the country. He noted that as a transportation management area, the MPO has the ability to submit up to three (3) projects. Applications are due November 2nd. He added that staff has reviewed Prioritization 4.0 scoring and the Metropolitan Transportation Plan in preparation.

Mr. Kozlosky stated that the memo in the agenda packet outlines six (6) potential projects that could be supported by and submitted for this grant. He noted that this is a lengthy process that requires much work. He recommended submitting one (1) project if the Board desires and requested direction from the Board today.

In response to an inquiry by Mr. Watkins, Mr. Kozlosky stated that \$100 million will be available to the State of North Carolina. He noted that NCDOT will submit three (3) highway projects; the Ports, one (1) or possibly (2) rail projects. He added that these funds will help supplement or in the scoring in the SPOT.

Following a lengthy question/answer and discussion period, Mr. Williams made a motion to submit US 74/76 for the grant, seconded by Ms. Batleman, and the motion carried unanimously.

c. MPO Staffing and Retention

Mr. Kozlosky gave an update regarding MPO staffing. He stated that both Associate Planner positions have been filled, and introduced Ms. Abby Lorenzo.

Ms. Lorenzo expressed appreciation and made some brief comments.

Mr. Kozlosky stated that the other Associate Planner from Kansas will start on Monday. He noted the re-advertisement of the GIS Analyst position has brought in 21 new

applications. He added that the Senior Transportation Planner position was also re-advertised to obtain a larger applicant pool. Also, the Project Engineer position is currently being advertised.

Mr. Kozlosky stated that an HR firm has been contacted to develop scope and fee for the compensation analysis. He assured members that every effort is being made to restore a full staff.

9. Updates

Mr. Doetsch reminded the Board that updates are included in the agenda packet.

Mr. Kozlosky stated that the Board received an email from him regarding the Cape Fear Crossing on Monday due to a technical glitch. He noted that it was the same one he sent to members in August while he was on vacation.

10. Announcements

Mr. Doetsch stated that the next Bike/Ped Committee meeting will be held on October 15th, and the next meeting of the MPO Board on October 25th.

11. Adjournment

With no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 4:29 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.**