



Board Meeting Minutes
6th Floor Conference Room, 320 Chestnut Street
Wednesday, January 31, 2018

Members Present

David Piepmeyer, Pender County
Pat Batleman, Town of Leland
Neil Anderson, City of Wilmington
Jonathan Barfield, Cape Fear Public
Transportation Authority
John Ellen, Town of Kure Beach
Hank Miller, Town of Wrightsville Beach
Charlie Rivenbark, City of Wilmington
Noreen Slattery, Town of Belville
Steve Shuttleworth, Town of Carolina Beach
Skip Watkins, New Hanover County
Frank Williams, Brunswick County
Eulis Willis, Town of Navassa

Others Present

Matt Nichols, WMPO Attorney, Smith Moore
Leatherwood PLLC
Karen Collette, Division Engineer, NCDOT
Mike Kozlosky, Executive Director, WMPO

1. Call to Order

Mr. Piepmeyer called the meeting to order at 3:04 p.m.

2. Conflict of Interest Reminder

Mr. Piepmeyer read the conflict of interest statement and asked if any members had a conflict with any item on the meeting agenda. No members reported having a conflict.

3. Approval of Board Members' Excused Absence

Mr. Kozlosky stated that Mr. Zimmer has requested to be excused from today's meeting.

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

4. Approval of Agenda

Mr. Kozlosky requested that the Board consider changing the sequence of presentations, moving Items 7c and 7d ahead of Item 7b.

Mr. Rivenbark made a motion to amend the agenda by changing the sequence of presentations, seconded by Mr. Miller, and the motion carried unanimously.

Ms. Batleman made a motion to amend the agenda to include an item not on the agenda. She requested that a discussion be held regarding resolutions adopted by Brunswick County and the Town of Leland to support the naming of the new bridge on the I-140 Bypass after former Brunswick County Chairman Bill Sue. Mr. Williams seconded the motion. Following a brief question/answer and discussion period, the motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Miller made a motion to approve the agenda as amended, seconded by Mr. Rivenbark, and the motion carried unanimously.

5. Election of Officers

Mr. Nichols conducted the election of Officers and opened the floor for nominations for the role of Chairman of the Board.

Mr. Watkins made a motion to nominate Mr. Piepmeyer for Chairman, seconded by Mr. Rivenbark.

Seeing no other nominations for Chairman, Mr. Nichols closed the floor, and the motion carried unanimously. He expressed appreciation to Mr. Piepmeyer.

Mr. Nichols then opened the floor for nominations for the role of Vice Chairman of the Board.

Mr. Williams made a motion to nominate Ms. Batleman, seconded by Mr. Miller

Seeing no other nominations for Vice Chairman, Mr. Nichols closed the floor, and the motion carried unanimously. He expressed appreciation to Ms. Batleman.

6. Public Comment Period

Ms. Mary Jo Phillips, 1097 Ashland Way, Leland, in Windsor Park spoke to the Board and expressed concerns regarding Highway 140 including the clearance of trees separating the highway from the neighborhood and the resulting increase in noise.

Ms. Debby Correa, 1011 Ashland Way, Leland, spoke to the Board and expressed concerns regarding illnesses caused by noise pollution. She commented that the 140 Bypass has disturbed the peace, quiet and safety of the neighborhood, and is too close to the homes. She requested an intervention such as a sound barrier.

Ms. Gail Johnson, 1100 Ashland Way, Leland, spoke to the Board and expressed concerns regarding Highway 140. She suggested that bushes such as arbor vitae be planted in the meantime for the safety, privacy and wellbeing of residents.

Mr. Andy Koeppel, P.O. Box 4443, Wilmington, spoke to the Board regarding Item 9f and expressed appreciation to staff for the efforts to provide options for a connection between the Multi-modal Transportation Center and Wilmington International Airport. He requested that \$50,000 be budgeted for a feasibility study on a rail connection or that the NC Rail Division conduct a study. He pointed out that a bus shuttle would be inadequate due to traffic concerns and the unlikelihood of it building ridership.

Mr. Charles Blanton, 2023 Pender Avenue/Carolina Place-Ardmore Neighborhood Association, Wilmington, spoke to the Board and expressed concerns regarding the lack of safety at the intersection of Market Street and 21st Street. He expressed the desire for a crossing signal and noted that the residents have raised money and would be willing to contribute to the improvement. He requested that the MPO and municipality review and update the MPO Market Street Road Diet based on current conditions.

Mr. Watkins requested that Mr. Blanton forward his request to the Board via e-mail.

In response to an inquiry by Mr. Barfield, Mr. Kozlosky stated that there is a crosswalk but no signal at that location. One was installed at 3rd Street with questionable results, and another at Ashton Drive near the Point, which was hit and its parts could not be replaced. Since then, FHWA has done away with the rectangular rapid flashing beacons and has other

recommendations. He noted that NCDOT and the City considered a HAWK (High-intensity Activated crossWalk) signal at this location. He added that if the Board desires this could be considered for Surface Transportation Direct Attributable Program funding.

A brief question/answer and discussion period was held. Mr. Watkins inquired about a feasibility study for this crossing and expressed appreciation to Mr. Blanton.

Regarding the Winsor Park topic, Ms. Batleman stated that WMPO Board adopted a resolution last spring in support of identifying a way to assist residents of Windsor Park, and contacted the NCDOT's Chief Engineer.

Ms. Collette stated that the response was delayed due to a change in Chief Engineers in Raleigh. She read a memo from the Traffic Noise & Air Quality Group, Human Environment Section. It stated that the Date of Public Knowledge of the location and potential noise impacts of a proposed highway project found in the NCDOT Traffic Noise Policy is defined as the approval date of the project's final environmental document. She noted that this definition is taken from Federal Highway Administration rules, with which NCDOT must comply in order to receive federal funding.

Ms. Collette stated that according to the memo, NCDOT will consider no further noise impact identification or noise reduction measures for land that is developed after the project's Date of Public Knowledge. Subsequent new development occurs only through approval by the local government, and is the responsibility of agencies that regulate development. A question/answer and discussion period was held.

In response to an inquiry by Mr. Anderson, Ms. Collette stated that DOT would be glad to give an encroachment approval to any party willing to fund a wall. She noted that it would be more expensive on DOT property, and have to be certified by an engineer and meet DOT standards.

Mr. Williams requested the percentage of projects with an EI (Environmental Impact) document that are funded and constructed, and the timeframe between the EI and construction. Ms. Collette responded that the new Transportation Secretary has accelerated the timeframe. She added that zoning requirements could be changed to require a buffer.

Mr. Piepmeyer stated that any follow-up questions can be addressed to the Board via Mr. Kozlosky or to Ms. Collette.

Ms. Collette stepped out of the meeting to address further questions.

7. Presentations

a. Recognition of Former Chairman Gary Doetsch – 2018 Chairman

Mr. Piepmeyer expressed appreciation to Mr. Doetsch for his 12 years of service to the Board and awarded him with a plaque of appreciation.

Mr. Doetsch expressed appreciation to the Board, Mr. Kozlosky and WMPO staff.

Mr. Watkins expressed regret regarding the loss of Mr. Doetsch's leadership.

c. Update on Proposed Interchanges in the Wilmington Urban Area – Chad Kimes, NCDOT

Mr. Kimes gave an update on the proposed interchange projects in New Hanover County. He added that the 10-year program has been accelerated to a five-year program. He stated that the interchanges impact one another and must be studied together. He noted that roadway improvements on College Road from Gordon Road to Monkey Junction, Military Cutoff Road Extension, and Market Street are funded and must also be taken into consideration.

Mr. Kimes gave an overview of DOT’s process for recommending a final alternate. He encouraged members to attend local officials and public input meetings on the proposed interchanges. He displayed examples of various alternates such as Single-Point Urban Interchanges (SPUI) and Quadrants. He gave an overview of current right-of-way and let dates, and estimated cost for each project, as follows:

Interchange	ROW Date	Let Date	Current STIP Cost
1. MLK Jr. Pkwy. & Market St.	10/18	2/20	\$38M-\$40M
2. MLK Jr. Pkwy. & Kerr Ave.	5/18	12/19	\$23M
3. MLK Jr. Pkwy. & College Rd.	10/21	6/24	\$26M
4. College Rd. & Oleander Dr.	10/21	6/24	\$55M
5. College Rd. & Carolina Beach Rd.	10/21	6/24	\$25M
6. Eastwood Rd. & Military Cutoff Rd.	FY20	9/21	\$26M

A question/answer and discussion period was held.

Mr. Piepmeyer reminded members that it is the mission of the Board to bring such information to each jurisdiction and suggested that this presentation be given to their boards.

Mr. Anderson made a motion to add a resolution to the Board’s February meeting agenda in support of DOT’s recommendations for the proposed interchanges at Military Cutoff Road and Eastwood Road, and Market Street and Martin Luther King Jr. Parkway. Mr. Barfield seconded the motion.

Mr. Anderson pointed out that the City has set aside funds for aesthetic enhancements to these interchanges.

Following further discussion, the motion carried unanimously.

d. Independence Boulevard Extension – Chad Kimes, NCDOT

Mr. Kimes gave an update on the extension of Independence Boulevard from Randall Parkway to MLK Jr. Parkway:

Project	ROW Date	Let Date	Current STIP Cost
Independence Blvd. Extension	4/22	8/25	\$150M

Mr. Kimes pointed out that the current State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) cost is divided almost equally between right-of-way acquisition and construction

costs. He gave an overview of project goals, which include providing a north-south corridor, improving traffic flow and capacity, and congestion relief to Kerr Avenue, College Road, and Market Street as well as creating an urban loop potentially with the Cape Fear Crossing.

Mr. Watkins expressed concerns regarding the impacts to homeowners. Mr. Barfield concurred and pointed out that the homes in this area do not keep up with the market.

Mr. Kozlosky responded that this concern would be brought back for further discussion.

Mr. Kimes provided a forecast of build/no build scenarios for current and 2040 daily traffic volumes. He noted that resolutions were adopted in 2014 and 2015 by the City of Wilmington and the MPO, supporting the design of an at-grade facility; but opposing an elevated facility. He noted that CSX responded in 2017 that it was opposed to any at-grade option from operational and safety standpoints and the exposure index was 2.8 times the threshold.

Mr. Kimes gave an overview of three alternatives with various elevations, and two new options with bridging to minimize the effects and avoid 30-foot berms. He pointed out that the increased cost for structures may reduce right-of-way costs, which have yet to be calculated. He displayed renderings of the proposed structures over Darlington Avenue and Hurst Street.

b. Compensation Analysis Findings and Recommendations – Priya Patel, CAI

Mr. Kozlosky stated that with staff turnover, the Board requested a compensation and market analysis of the organization. He noted that staff hired CAI (Capital Associated Industries), a Human Resources firm.

Ms. Patel gave an overview of the study, and its findings and recommendations. She noted that about 15 MPOs were provided as peer organizations for comparison, and a little more than half participated. She added that compensation and salary ranges were reviewed as well as employee data relevant to findings. She explained that the market rate is the median or 50th percentile and the preferred compa-ratio (employee's current salary divided by the current market rate) range is 0.9 to 1.1 (90% to 110% of market rate).

Ms. Patel reported that on average, the WMPO is in line with the market. She noted however that certain pockets of individuals or jobs exists that are either above or below market. She pointed out that although pay for the Executive Director is okay, banding is at the lower end. She recommended that based on market research, the pay range be upgraded to an E10 (from an E8). She noted that some positions that report to this position are in the same grade.

Ms. Patel stated that although the Accountant position is correctly banded as an E4, there may be an opportunity to focus on increasing pay gradually. She added that market data suggested a lower rate of pay for the Senior Transportation Planner. However, considering the skill set and length of time to fill the role, Ms. Patel proposed the salary be increased to the low \$70,000s.

Ms. Patel stated that Senior Project Engineer is in line with the market. However, she recommended focusing on the individual in the role and increasing pay gradually. She added that although the Associate Transportation Planners are paid in line; one data point may be skewing the overall pay for these individuals. She noted that CAI's data for the GIS Analyst came in slightly higher than what is banded currently; but no change is recommended given the importance of the role and the individual in the role.

Ms. Patel commented that it's important to triangulate data points with the role's importance internally and to the region. She commented that the region is scrambling for Senior Transportation Planners. A question/answer and discussion period was held.

Mr. Kozlosky expressed concerns regarding the constraints of the City budget and filling positions based on available money. He noted that the City often budgets at the low end of the position. He requested funds to cover staff turnover and moving expenses, which have been included in the UPWP (Unified Planning Work Program). He advised that it will be necessary to amend the UPWP if the Board desires to add the recommendations of the study.

In response to an inquiry by Mr. Piepmeyer, Mr. Kozlosky estimated the additional amount to be \$20,000 with \$16,000 from federal and the rest to be spread among member jurisdictions. He estimated that the City's cost at \$1,685 and Brunswick County's at \$144, for example.

Following a question/answer and discussion period, Mr. Shuttleworth made a motion to upgrade the pay range of the Executive Director from E8 to E10.

In response to an inquiry by Mr. Shuttleworth, Mr. Kozlosky requested an increase in the starting salary of the Senior Transportation Planner.

Mr. Shuttleworth suggested that Mr. Kozlosky put it in the budget.

Following further consideration, Mr. Anderson seconded the motion and it carried unanimously.

e. Wilmington Metropolitan Transportation Plan Update – Abby Lorenzo, Jason O'Brien and Michael Madsen, WMPO

Mr. Kozlosky stated that staff has been working with the Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) to advance the 2045 Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP).

Ms. Lorenzo reported the top pick for colors and name of the plan. She noted that the CAC also participated in an exercise to draft a visioning statement and goals.

Mr. O'Brien gave members an overview of the public outreach process. He noted that the first phase would solicit public input from April to July through a variety of means including a dedicated website with an online commenting tool, and enhanced social media efforts. He added that the kickoff event is planned for April 3, 2018 at the Northeast Branch of the NHC Public Library. He noted that the second phase would present a draft plan for public comment.

Mr. Madsen gave an overview of the online commenting tool, a crowdsourcing map, and provided a demonstration of it. He displayed a QR scan code for quick linking access to the site via smart phones. He encouraged members to promote the tool.

Mr. Kozlosky stated that this tool will also be useful at public meetings to provide comments in place of paper surveys.

Ms. Collette and Mr. Miller left the meeting.

8. Consent Agenda

- a. Approval of WMPO Board Meeting Minutes – November 29, 2017
- b. Opening of the 30-day public comment period for the FY 19 Unified Planning Work Program
- c. Opening of the 30-day public comment period for 2016-2025 STIP/MTIP and 2018-2027 STIP/MTIP Amendment #18-1
- d. Resolution adopting Targets for Safety Performance Measures for the Wilmington Urban Area MPO

Ms. Batleman made the motion to approve Consent Agenda Items 7(a) through 7(d).

Mr. Rivenbark seconded the motion and it carried unanimously.

9. Discussion

a. Direct Attributable Programs

Ms. Kimes stated that the biggest change would be creating a five-year plan with the first two years of the program similar to a STIP. She noted that questions included adding feasibility studies, how to move projects along, and how to handle Wave Transit's funding if modal target categories are removed. She added that the new process would not start until Fiscal Year 2019.

Ms. Batleman stated that her Town Manager and Economic Development and Planning Director met with Ms. Kimes. She noted that they agreed with the changes; but suggested establishing a minimum project value of \$1 million due to complex federal requirements. She added that the estimated cost of the of one-mile long, eight-foot-wide asphalt path on Old Fayetteville Road is approaching \$2.5 million and will take three years to build, when it could have been accomplished by the town at a fraction of the cost.

Ms. Kimes pointed out that the project would have been complicated by its occupation of DOT right-of-way. She noted staff's recommendation that the TCC form a subcommittee to discuss such concerns.

Ms. Slattery expressed concerns regarding the impact of such a minimum on smaller jurisdictions.

Following further discussion, Mr. Kozlosky clarified that staff is requesting support to move away from an annual call for projects and go to a five-year plan.

Mr. Miller made a motion to approve the going to a five-year program, seconded by Ms. Batleman, and the motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Kozlosky proposed to move the discussion on the Social Media Policy, the Cape Fear Crossing – Toll Facility; the Feasibility Study for a Connection Between the Wilmington International Airport and Wilmington Multi-modal Transportation Center; and the MPO Bike/Pedestrian Committee Appointments to the next meeting.

Mr. Williams made a motion delay discussion on Items 9b, 9c, 9f and 9g to the next meeting. Mr. Miller seconded the motion and it carried unanimously.

e. Wilmington Urban Area MPO's Draft Prioritization 5.0 Local Input Methodology

Mr. Kozlosky reminded the Board that it is required to submit a local input methodology for the State to review. He noted that the board adopted local input methodology for Prioritizations 3.0 and 4.0. For Prioritization 5.0, he proposed to replace the ambiguous multi-modal criteria with the requirement that projects be included in the MPO's strategic business plan as a substitute criteria. He added that the local input methodology would be submitted to the state for review and comment, and be returned for adoption by the Board.

h. Naming of the New I-140 Bridge in Honor of Former Commissioner Bill Sue

Mr. Willis made a motion to table this Item, seconded by Mr. Rivenbark.

Mr. Williams stated that Brunswick County and the Town of Leland have both passed resolutions in support of this item.

Mr. Willis stated that the bridge is located in Navassa and requested the opportunity to submit a name.

In response to an inquiry by Mr. Rivenbark, Mr. Williams stated that Brunswick County has already applied to NCDOT and approved funding of the signs at its last meeting. He noted that it's up to NCDOT.

Mr. Barfield suggested that the Town of Navassa be considered.

Ms. Batleman stated that Mr. Sue put significant effort into the I-140 Bypass.

Following further consideration, Mr. Piepmeyer called the question and the motion carried unanimously.

10. Updates

Mr. Kozlosky stated that the Senior Transportation Planner position closed Sunday night. He noted that the new Project Engineer starts March 5th. He added that the TDM Coordinator position will be advertised shortly.

Ms. Batleman inquired about the status of the repair on the deck on the Cape Fear Memorial Bridge. Mr. Kozlosky stated that an update would be sought and given to the Board.

11. Announcements

Mr. Piepmeyer stated that the next meeting of the MPO Board would be February 28, 2018.

12. Adjournment

With no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 5:54 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Mike Kozlosky
Executive Director
Wilmington Urban Area Metropolitan Planning Organization

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THE ENTIRE PROCEEDINGS ARE RECORDED ON A COMPACT DISC AS PART OF THIS RECORD.**