

**Wilmington Urban Area  
Technical Coordinating Committee  
Wednesday, April 11, 2018  
Meeting Minutes**

**Members Present:**

Mike Kozlosky, Wilmington MPO  
Don Bennett, City of Wilmington  
Amy Kimes, Wilmington MPO  
Danielle Villegas, Town of  
Wrightsville Beach  
Rebekah Roth, New Hanover County

Stephanie Ayers, North Carolina  
State Ports Authority  
Barnes Sutton, Town of Navassa  
Pat O'Mahony, Pender County  
Nazia Sarder, NCDOT Planning  
Megan Matheny, Cape Fear Public  
Transportation Authority

**1. Call to Order**

Mr. Kozlosky called the meeting to order at 10:04 a.m.

**2. Approval of Agenda**

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

**3. Presentations**

**a. Cape Fear Memorial Bridge Rehabilitation Project – Mr. Kevin Bowen, NCDOT**

Mr. Bowen gave a presentation on the High Value Bridge (HVB) program and goals of the Cape Fear Memorial Bridge Rehabilitation Project. He stated that the Cape Fear Memorial Bridge is one of 200 structures in the program having replacement costs exceeding \$20 million each, and a total asset value of \$9 billion. He noted that the Division has many HVB structures in Brunswick County, New Hanover County and some in Pender County that span waterways along the coast and serve as critical evacuation routes. He added that Oak Island received a presentation this week regarding the need to close its bridge for six months to replace 28 spans.

Mr. Bowen stated that in 2017 the General Assembly established \$80 million in funding for the HVB Program for fiscal year 2018 and \$85 million for fiscal year 2019 with the expectation that funding would continue in future years in order to address major issues across the state. He estimated that the current backlog of work is \$400 million. He noted that many bridges in this region are on the list. He explained that it's necessary to restore a bridge while still in fair condition, before it becomes necessary to replace the entire structure once its condition has become too poor.

Mr. Bowen gave an overview of the Cape Fear Memorial Bridge rehabilitation project. He noted that a contract for \$13 million was awarded in February. He added that the total length of the structure is 3,000 feet with 35 spans including the lift span.

Mr. Bowen stated that the work will include electrical and mechanical work, cleaning and painting of structural steel (other than the lift span that was recently done), and replacement of grid deck, the existing median barrier, elevators in the lift span, application of a polyester overlay, and rehabilitation of the control house. He displayed some examples of the corrosion cycle and assured members that the condition of the bridge is not yet critical. He also displayed some photos of the current deterioration.

Mr. Bowen gave an overview of the timeline for rehabilitation and two necessary closures. He noted that a preconstruction conference was held with PCL Civil

Constructors. He added that the availability date of April 2<sup>nd</sup> has passed, and materials have been ordered. The first closure is expected prior to June 22<sup>nd</sup> for three week-day nights (9:00 p.m. to 5:00 a.m.) to remove some of the components of the counterweights, and restore them three or four weeks later after rehabilitation.

Ms. Ayers expressed concerns regarding coordination with the Ports. She noted that the fall is peak season for freight. Mr. Bowen pointed out that the South College Road repavement will also need to be coordinated.

Mr. Bowen stated that the contract estimates a window of six weeks for a fall closure, after Labor Day, and a consecutive 14-day and night closure will be necessary. He added that the contracted completion date is April of 2019. He noted that meetings with emergency services from the surrounding area are planned, and encouraged members to attend.

A brief question/answer and discussion period was held. Mr. Kozlosky expressed appreciation to Mr. Bowen.

**b. Emerging Technologies (Aerial Drones) – Jason O’Brien, WMPO**

Mr. O’Brien gave a presentation on aerial drones. This is the second in the series on emerging technologies. He reminded members about the expected rapid transformation of transportation through emerging technologies for the long-range planning consideration. He noted that autonomous vehicles are not apparent yet due to the incomplete nature of the technology; whereas drones are ready but banned by federal regulations, which prohibit drone flights over populated areas in the United States. He displayed videos on the planned drone delivery services of Amazon, Walmart and UPS.

Mr. O’Brien stated that 2,000 new drones (excluding toys) are registered by the Federal Aviation Authority (FAA) daily -- a total currently twice the number of manned aircraft in the U.S. He added that the FAA expected 1.3 million licensed drone pilots by 2020. He noted that drone development includes swarms, in-air refueling and repair, nested systems with larger drones deploying smaller ones, and support eco-systems such as beaming high-speed 5G internet to other crafts in the area.

Mr. O’Brien stated that drone technology is advancing and is expected to surpass truck delivery especially for lighter packages over short distances in rural areas, and to fill first and last mile gaps where truck delivery is inefficient. He noted that drones are expected to work together with trucks for some time before overtaking them. He added that 44% of the public is in favor of the future prospects of rapid delivery and delivery anywhere. Concerns focus mainly on safety related to malfunctions. He gave a brief overview of some emergency management and humanitarian applications.

Mr. O’Brien gave an overview of current regulations. He stated that individual exemptions are granted on a case-by-case basis, a list of which is hosted online by the FAA. He noted that drones and helicopters are limited to airspace below the altitude of 400 feet, and fixed-wing, manned aircraft, to 500 feet and above.

Mr. O’Brien displayed videos featuring passenger drones in Dubai that cost around \$200,000-\$300,000. He gave an overview of some of the specifications and noted that they have multiple, redundant power systems. He pointed out that no regulatory pathway exists yet to bring this technology to the United States market.

Mr. O'Brien gave a comparison of drones and autonomous vehicles. He pointed out that drones are more cost effective and less complicated to operate, and are expected to outpace autonomous vehicles. He noted that Dubai is expected to have passenger drone taxis before autonomous surface taxis. He commented that drone technology is a hotbed of innovation with low barriers to entry, and displayed some examples.

Mr. O'Brien stated that the emergence of drones will be dependent on the evolution of regulations and gave a rough timeline for their emergence. He recommended developing a vision, engaging in policy making, consideration during long-range planning, re-evaluating long-term investments in truck freight, incorporating drones into emergency management plans, developing long-term traffic projections in rural area, and maintaining awareness of advancements in drone use over populated areas in other countries.

A brief question/answer and discussion period was held.

**c. NCDOT's Public Transportation Strategic Plan Video**

Ms. Kozlosky stated that MPO staff attended the North Carolina Department of Transportation's Public Transportation Strategic Plan meeting on March 21<sup>st</sup>.

Ms. Lorenzo displayed the video on public transportation featured at the meeting.

**4. Consent Agenda**

**a. Approval of TCC Meeting Minutes – March 14, 2018**

Ms. Roth made a motion to approve the Consent Agenda, seconded Ms. Kimes, and the motion carried unanimously.

**5. Regular Agenda**

**a. Resolution Approving Administrative Modification #18-3 to the 2018-2027 State/MPO Transportation Improvement Programs for Performance Management**

Mr. Kozlosky stated that this resolution adds a statement to ensure that the MPO is compliant with federal regulations. Mr. O'Brien added that this is a routine modification.

Mr. Bennett made a motion to approve the Resolution Approving Administrative Modification #18-3 to the 2018-2027 State/MPO Transportation Improvement Programs for Performance Management. Ms. Kimes seconded the motion, and it carried unanimously.

**b. Resolution Approving the Allocation of Additional Direct Attributable Funding for the Shipyard Boulevard Bus Pull-out and Sidewalk Project**

Mr. Kozlosky stated that the City of Wilmington designed the bus pull-out and sidewalk. He noted that the previous estimate was \$300,000, and the new one based on the design and specifications is \$400,000. He added that the City has requested \$80,000 in Direct Attributable funds and has agreed to fund the 20% local match. Approval of this item is consistent with the Board's policies of completing projects on the books and would allow the project to go to bid.

Ms. Ayers made a motion to approve the Resolution approving the allocation of additional Direct Attributable funding for the Shipyard Boulevard Bus Pull-out and Sidewalk Project. Mr. Bennett seconded the motion, and it carried unanimously.

## 7. Discussion

### a. Draft Prioritization 5.0 Programmed Statewide Mobility Projects

Mr. Kozlosky reminded members that this is the first part of the Prioritization 5.0 process to score projects. He noted that ten projects were identified in the Wilmington Region. One project would make safety improvements for signals, gates and a few crossing closures on the rail line within the City of Wilmington, which are consistent with the adopted Traffic Separation Study. Also, these would improve access and operations to the Port (increasing the speed limit from 10 mph to 25 mph, consistent with the report presented by Mott MacDonald to this Committee and the Board).

Mr. Kozlosky pointed out that nine aviation projects were identified for funding at Wilmington International Airport (ILM) that were part of the statewide tier. The next part of the process will be for the MPO to score the Regional Impact and Division Needs projects. Data has been received from NCDOT to score the projects based on the adopted local input methodology. These will be brought forward for discussion, consideration, and public comment at the May meeting.

In response to an inquiry by Ms. Matheny, Mr. Kozlosky stated that projects need to be submitted to the state by July 27<sup>th</sup>. By late August, the state will release the projects receiving funds at the Regional Tier. Beginning in September, Division Needs points will be assigned. And by January, the state will release the draft 2020-2029 STIP.

In response to an inquiry by Ms. Ayers, Mr. Kozlosky stated that the project for the rail line is proposed to be funded in 2027 and some of the aviation projects are also in this timeframe. He noted that in this Division many projects were able to be accelerated into the first five years.

A question/answer and discussion period was held.

### b. 2018-2027 STIP/MPO TIP Modification #18-4

Mr. Kozlosky stated that this is a statewide amendment for various transportation improvement programs for roads and bridges constructed on federal government lands. He noted that this item would be brought back for consideration at the next meeting.

## 8. Updates

### a. MPO Staffing

Mr. Kozlosky acknowledged that Ms. Lorenzo has been promoted to the Senior Transportation Planner. He noted that this will leave a vacancy that has been advertised, for which three qualified candidates will be interviewed. He added that an offer is being negotiated with a potential TDM Planner and will be filled by the end of the week if all goes well.

Mr. Kozlosky stated that updates regarding Crossing over the Cape Fear River and the MPO are also included in the agenda packet.

### b. Cape Fear Moving Forward 2045 Transportation Plan

Ms. Lorenzo stated that staff officially kicked off the Cape Fear Moving Forward 2045 Plan on April 3<sup>rd</sup>. She distributed some posters and brochures promoting the event. She noted that staff will make presentations to all the member jurisdictions. She pointed out that the QR code is on the back of the brochure. She encouraged members to scan the code and take the survey at this time. She noted that the survey will be open until July 31<sup>st</sup> and that five open houses will be held throughout the region in May.

Mr. Kozlosky reminded members that this is the first phase of the public outreach and engagement campaign. After the closing date on July 31<sup>st</sup>, the information will be reviewed and staff will work with this Committee, the Board and modal subcommittees to develop project lists for the draft plan, which will be presented to the public in early 2020 to obtain feedback. He added that the feedback will be incorporated into the final plan, which will need to be adopted in 2020.

Mr. Kozlosky stated that the kick-of event on April 3<sup>rd</sup> was well attended and expressed appreciation to Mr. Ron Lucas for his speech at the event. He requested that members disseminate the information to their respective jurisdictions and return any feedback to the group.

Ms. Matheny offered to help coordinate and put information on buses by the end of the month. She inquired about emerging trends.

Mr. Kozlosky responded that these would be incorporated into the plan.

**c. Cape Fear Public Transportation Authority**

Ms. Matheny gave a brief overview of transportation amenities for the Azalea Festival. She noted that a 15-minute shuttle will operate from a park-and-ride at the mall (\$2 per adult/\$1 per child, one way) from 7:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m. the day of the parade. Also, the revised trolley service will include two trolleys tomorrow through Sunday.

**d. NCDOT Division**

Ms. Sarder stated that the base year data is currently under final review, which she anticipated having for the May meeting. She noted that future year data will be projected thereafter.

**e. NCDOT Transportation Planning Division**

Mr. Lucas announced that he will be transitioning back to the projects in the area and stated that this would be his last meeting. He introduced Ms. Kristina Solberg as the new Federal Highway Authority liaison to the group.

Ms. Solberg expressed appreciation and gave a brief overview of her professional background.

**9. Announcements**

- The last WMPO Bike/Ped Committee meeting was April 10<sup>th</sup>
- NCPTA Conference: April 23<sup>rd</sup>-25<sup>th</sup>
- River to the Sea Bike Ride event will be held May 5<sup>th</sup>
- Next meeting of the TCC, May 16<sup>th</sup>

**10. Adjournment**

With no further items, the meeting was adjourned at 11:43 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.**