



Board Meeting Minutes
6th Floor Conference Room, 320 Chestnut Street
Wednesday, March 27, 2019

Members Present

Pat Batleman, Town of Leland
Neil Anderson, City of Wilmington
Charlie Rivenbark, City of Wilmington
Jonathan Barfield, Cape Fear Public
Transportation Authority
Steve Shuttleworth, Town of Carolina Beach
John Ellen, Town of Kure Beach
Hank Miller, Town of Wrightsville Beach
Pat Kusek, New Hanover County
Mike Forte, Brunswick County
Eullis Willis, Town of Navassa

Others Present

Mike Kozlosky, Executive Director, WMPO
Jerry Haire, Town of Carolina Beach
Vagn Hansen, Benchmark Planning
Nick Cannon, WMPO
Nazia Sarder, NCDOT Transportation Planning
Leta Huntsinger, WSP

1. Call to Order

Vice Chair Batleman called the meeting to order at 3:02 p.m.

2. Conflict of Interest Statement

Vice Chair Batleman read the conflict of interest statement and asked if any members had a conflict with any of the items on the meeting agenda. No members reported having a conflict.

3. Approval of Board Members' Excused Absences

Mr. Kozlosky stated that Mike Allen, Mike Alford, and David Piepmeyer requested to be excused from the meeting.

Mr. Rivenbark made a motion to excuse the absences of Mr. Allen, Mr. Alford, and Mr. Piepmeyer. Mr. Anderson seconded the motion, and it carried unanimously.

4. Approval of the Agenda

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

5. Public Comment Period

No one from the public signed up to speak during the public comment period.

6. Presentations

a. Town of Carolina Beach Pedestrian Plan – Jerry Haire, Town of Carolina Beach

Jerry Haire, Project Manager, Town of Carolina Beach, gave a presentation on the Town's Pedestrian Plan, a 2½-year, \$40,000 project completed with a grant from the bike-pedestrian division of NCDOT. The study was conducted by VHB of Raleigh. He noted that it focuses on a general lack of sidewalks, interconnectivity, the need for a decision making tool, and 33 pedestrian crashes between 1997 and 2012. The process included substantial public outreach and involvement, the appointment of a steering committee, a successful public survey, public workshop events, and the appointment of a bike-pedestrian committee.

Mr. Haire stated that for a town of 6,000, more than 1,000 responses were received, 64% of which were from full time Carolina Beach residents, and 86% from full time or seasonal residents (14% were nonresidents). Key themes include more connected facilities. Fifty percent of respondents indicated a willingness to have a sidewalk installed in front of their property. The first public workshop was held in July of 2017, which was followed by another in October of 2017 to present a refined plan. Residents identified major destinations and safety issues. He pointed out that Lake Park Boulevard, the Town's main street and a state highway, is a source of conflict.

Mr. Haire stated that full plans will be posted online at www.wmpo.org. He added that primary and secondary corridor networks, and a total of 38 intersection and corridor projects were ranked from high to low priority and were added to the map. He explained that the steering committee evolved into the Bike-Pedestrian Advisory Committee, which was appointed the same night that Town Council adopted the plan.

Mr. Haire stated that the steering committee identified the next steps, which carried over to the advisory committee, as follows:

- Educational outreach programs;
- Encouragement programs;
- Enforcement activities with the Town's Police Department;
- Evaluation, yearly
- Infrastructure actions, review state and local funding sources; make facility recommendations, applying for grant funds;
- Priority projects based on the plan, collect data to review annually (ongoing evaluation);

Mr. Haire stated that currently it's necessary to apply for either a bicycle planning grant or a pedestrian planning grant. Although the Town has both, it's currently working on a multimodal plan. NCDOT has considered combining them, but hasn't yet.

b. Military Ocean Terminal Sunny Point Joint Land Use Study – Vagn Hansen, Benchmark Planning

Vagn Hansen, Benchmark Planning, gave an overview of the Joint Land-Use Study (JLUS) for the Military Ocean Terminal Sunny Point (MOTSU). He stated that the purpose of the study is to assure the future sustainability of the military mission and the military installation. He noted that the Department of Defense's Office of Economic Adjustment funded the project, and that the grantee is the Cape Fear Council of Governments (COG). He added that the goals of the JLUS are to promote compatibility between the military mission and land uses in the civilian communities that host them, to strengthen coordination, and improve communication between the military installation and its partner host communities.

Mr. Hansen stated that the JLUS focus area encompasses about three miles around the main terminal, a buffer zone at Sunny Point, and about $\frac{3}{4}$ of a mile around the rail corridor and the interchange yard in Leland. He noted that the MPO jurisdictions involved in the study included Brunswick County, the Town of Leland, New Hanover County, the Town of Carolina Beach, and the Town of Kure Beach. Other partners included the COG and MOTSU. The focus area spanned two different transportation planning organizations: the Wilmington MPO and Cape Fear RPO. The Town of Belville and Town of Navassa will be included toward the end of the study.

Mr. Hansen described Sunny Point as a purpose-built ammunitions transshipment terminal designed and operated for safety. He noted that ammunitions are not stored there; merely staged temporarily during transshipment operations. He added that the terminal, buffer zone, interchange yard and 16-mile rail corridor total more than 10,000 acres.

Mr. Hansen stated that Sunny Point represents four times as much capability and capacity for transshipping ammunitions as any other ammunitions terminal in the continental United States, and about three times as much as all other ammunitions terminals combined. Since its inception after the Korean War, it supplied between 85% and 90% of all ammunitions expended in wartime, and received ammunitions for transshipments from all across the United States (in bound about 80% by rail, 20% by truck; outbound via Cape Fear River main channel). He estimated the export workload between fiscal years 2007 and 2017 at between 200,000 and 300,000 tons per year (high of 500,000, low of 150,000).

Mr. Hansen stated that the areas of mission compatibility include maintaining full use of the explosive safety zone; managing and maintaining safe transportation access; and maintaining a minimal level of environmental constraint. He gave some details about the calculations and examples of explosive safety zones, and impacts to ferry service and traffic (particularly along Dow Road) due to capacity of those modes of transportation.

Mr. Hansen stated that 50 recommendations have been identified in five separate categories (coordination, land use, public safety, transportation and buffer zone property on Pleasure Island). An excerpt of recommendations includes the following:

1. WMPO Technical Coordinating Committee (TCC) membership to include a representative from Sunny Point;
2. Expanding the restricted area of the Cape Fear River;
3. Eliminating rail road at-grade crossings from the MOTSU-Leland rail corridor;
4. Supporting construction of the Cape Fear Crossing;
5. Studying/mitigating impacts of Sunny Point freight traffic;
6. Exploring opportunities for redundant regional rail access;
7. Coordinating with DOT on the ferry route expansion;
8. Including Sunny Point in regional transportation planning efforts.

Mr. Hansen stated that additional information about the study is available online at www.capefearcog.org/sunnypoint/ or at the COG website. He noted that the last round of public meetings will be held in late May in Kure Beach and Southport.

Mr. Willis expressed concerns regarding the temporary staging area at Davis Yard in Navassa, which has been excluded from the plan. Mr. Hansen responded that CSX brings ammunition trains into the Davis Yard initially. He commented that the Army has little control over CSX, which delivers ammunitions to Sunny Point's Interchange in Leland. He noted that once at the interchange, locomotives take transshipments to Sunny Point immediately or keep them under guard, unless they are empty.

A question/answer and discussion period was held regarding the Cape Fear Crossing. Mr. Shuttleworth expressed concerns regarding a potential conflict of interest. Mr. Forte stated that the public has expressed concerns regarding the impact of potential alternatives on residential neighborhoods in Brunswick County.

c. “Be a Looker” Campaign – Nick Cannon, Wilmington Urban Area MPO

Nick Cannon, TDM/Go Coast Coordinator, WMPO, distributed samples of posters, bumper stickers, and brochures for the “Be a Looker” campaign. He stated that he and the Go Coast Committee, comprised of stakeholders throughout the region, identified the need for a major bicycle and pedestrian safety campaign. He noted that the “Be a Looker” campaign has similar pedestrian safety objectives to “Watch for Me NC,” a NCDOT grant initiative lead by law enforcement. Due to increased stipulations and reporting requirements, law enforcement has been hard pressed to keep the program a priority.

Mr. Cannon stated that the safety campaign is designed to educate area drivers to be respectful of cyclists and pedestrians, to convey quality of life, mobility options, the values of health and safety, and to give merit to bicycling and walking as legitimate modes of transportation. The campaign will target drivers of motor vehicles primarily, as well as cyclists and pedestrians.

Mr. Cannon stated that the campaign will run from April 1st through September 30th. He noted that May is National Bike Month, and that the bike share program is anticipated to begin sometime this year.

Mr. Cannon stated that marketing materials will include the following:

- Wave Transit shuttles, exterior side (204 Brunswick Connector and 107 South College Road) for all six months of the campaign (117,000 impressions per month);
- Free digital billboards (169,000 impressions per month for each of nine billboards);
- Email blasts to a list of more than 12,000 community members;
- Press releases to all media outlets;
- Major employers and member jurisdictions targeting employees and communities;
- Social media (Instagram, Facebook, and Twitter) posts and ads;
- Dining and retail locations;

Mr. Cannon stated that a major component of the campaign is the “Be a Looker” pledge, which will be on the website (www.wmpo.org/bealooker) with other campaign information and incentives to drive interaction. He noted that the number of impressions and interactions would measure success of the program.

Mr. Barfield recommended a press conference.

Mr. Shuttleworth requested that this presentation be given to the public at an upcoming Carolina Beach Town Council meeting. He noted that several hundred residents have expressed ideas regarding pedestrian enhancements. He requested to be involved in any kick-off event.

Mr. Ellen pointed out that a tri-fold bicycle and pedestrian is brochure available at the Town of Kure Beach includes golf carts, and respective laws.

Mr. Shuttleworth offered as a PSA spot on the electronic billboard near the bridge to Carolina Beach.

Mr. Cannon requested that members send jurisdiction-specific information to him for inclusion on the campaign website. He stated that the printed promotional materials will include the website and a QR scan code that links to the website. He noted that he met with Mr. Haire, who offered that Carolina Beach would feature the City of Wilmington’s

social media posts. Mr. Cannon added that social media contacts at the other member jurisdictions would soon be contacted to participate.

Ms. Batleman recommended that the grandmother involved in the recent pedestrian tragedy in Carolina Beach be contacted prior to the media launch.

d. NC Moves 2050 Plan – Nazia Sarder, NCDOT

Nazia Sarder, Transportation Engineer III, NCDOT Transportation Planning Unit, distributed handouts regarding the NC Moves 2050 Plan, NCDOT's long-range transportation plan currently in progress. She pointed out that technology and transportation have evolved slowly during the past 100 years compared to what is anticipated during the next 30 years.

Ms. Sarder compared the process as similar to buying a car -- starting with a current assessment, planning for uncertainties and possible futures; and then developing an action plan. She encouraged both private and public planning partners to remain engaged throughout the process. She stated that an interactive map at www.ncdot.gov/ncmoves has received more than 600 responses to date and will remain open until April 30th. The NC Moves 2050 Team will have a presence at statewide festivals such as at the NC Azalea Festival, as well as at designated libraries, town halls or municipal buildings.

Ms. Sarder stated that the eight major categories for development of the plan include demographics, changing economy, tourism, partnerships, funding, technology, security, and resiliency. She noted that the population is expected to increase by 4 million people by 2050. Healthcare and technology sectors are expected to grow over the next 30 years. She noted that 90% of North Carolina's 46 million annual visitors drove to the state in 2017. In addition, the need to strengthen existing partnerships and build new ones with private and non-profits organizations will increase as the federal government shifts its focus from financing to programmatic oversight.

Ms. Sarder stated that total funding is expected to increase slower than inflation. She added that the majority of new vehicle sales might be autonomous vehicles. Security breaches will continue to be a concern. In addition, the coast will continue to experience more flooding and the mountains, more wildfires and mudslides. She requested that members provide their top transportation concerns and any others that may have been omitted from the eight categories.

A brief question/answer and discussion period was held.

Mr. Ellen noted that the Southeast North Carolina Regional Resilience Workshop for Local Governments will be held all day on May 14th at the Holiday Inn, 5032 Market Street, starting at 9:30 a.m.

7. Consent Agenda

a. Approval of Board Meeting Minutes – February 27, 2019

b. Resolution amending the FY 2019 Unified Planning Work Program

c. Resolution adopting the Town of Carolina Beach Pedestrian Plan

Mr. Forte made a motion to approve the Consent Agenda as presented. Mr. Ellen seconded the motion, and it carried unanimously.

7. Regular Agenda

a. Resolution approving the Wilmington Urban Area Metropolitan Planning Organization's FY 2020 Unified Planning Work Program

Mr. Kozlosky stated that in January staff presented the Fiscal Year 2020 Unified Planning Work Program to the Board. He noted that working through the City's budgeting process, it was necessary to increase the budget by \$600 for gas for the intern, 80% of which will be covered by federal funds. The remaining 20% will be passed along to the member jurisdictions.

If approved today, a revised letter will be sent with each of the members. He noted that this Item is required to be approved by March 31st.

Mr. Barfield made a motion to approve the Resolution approving the Wilmington Urban Area Metropolitan Planning Organization's FY 2020 Unified Planning Work Program.

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

b. Resolution Certifying the Transportation Planning Process for the Wilmington Urban Area Metropolitan Planning Organization

Mr. Kozlosky stated that the MPO is required to self-certify on an annual basis. He noted that this resolution fulfills that requirement.

Mr. Anderson a motion to approve the Resolution Certifying the Transportation Planning Process for the Wilmington Urban Area Metropolitan Planning Organization. Ms. Kusek seconded the motion, and carried it unanimously.

c. Resolution adopting the FY 2020-2024 Surface Transportation Block Grant Program-Direct Attributable (STBGP-DA) and Transportation Alternatives Set Aside- Direct Attributable (TASA-DA) Program Submittal Guide and Competitive Process

Ms. Kimes stated that last month this item went to the TCC and the MPO Board for review. As no comments were received, the revised application was brought back for consideration. If adopted today, staff would like to send out a call on April 1st with a pre-application review date of May 6th and a submittal date of July 1st.

Mr. Kozlosky stated that this item has been discussed during the last few months. He reminded members that the process would be extended to a five-year program with the first two years committed, and an update every two years. He noted that a direct allocation will be provided to the Transit Authority, which will be revisited by the Board at a later date. In the meanwhile, this resolution will initiate a call projects, to score the projects and return them to the Board for consideration in August or September.

Mr. Anderson made a motion to approve the Resolution adopting the FY 2020-2024 Surface Transportation Block Grant Program-Direct Attributable (STBGP-DA) and Transportation Alternatives Set Aside-Direct Attributable (TASA-DA) Program Submittal Guide and Competitive Process.

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

8. Discussion

a. 2018-2027 STIP/MPO TIP Administrative Modification #19-2

Mr. Kozlosky stated that this item is for informational purposes only and will be brought back for consideration at the Board's next meeting.

b. Cape Fear Moving Forward 2045 Financial Forecast and Alternative Funding Sources

Mr. Kozlosky stated that Leta Huntsinger, WSP, the consultant on the Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP), will provide an update on the financial forecast and a discussion on potential alternative funding sources for inclusion in the next MTP.

Ms. Huntsinger gave an overview of the planning and financial forecast process. She noted that the Wilmington MPO is somewhat unique in that it includes all modes of transportation. She stated that historic data was entered into a model to forecast funding 30 years out. Although, maintenance and operations were also considered, capital funding was the focus for plan development of new projects.

Ms. Huntsinger gave a comparison of the results to the last long-range plan update. She stated that highway funding has shown the most growth. She noted that the Wilmington MPO region has had success with DOT's new scoring process in programming projects into the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) compared to previous years. She added that growth has also occurred in bicycle and pedestrian funding.

Ms. Huntsinger stated that transit and rail have had a decrease in capital funding as a result of growth of the region, which has eliminated some sources of funding. She noted that next steps would bring projects by mode through costing models, which is 98% complete and should be ready in the next few weeks. She noted that a funding gap is to be expected.

Ms. Huntsinger gave an overview of potential alternative funding sources without dollars to determine which sources should be pursued further. She recommended funding sources that were approved but not implemented from the last MTP (with dollar amounts from the last plan) as follows:

- A ¼ quarter-cent local option sales tax for general transportation;
- A quarter-cent local option sales tax (implemented at a county level) for public transportation (not at a county level);
- Motor vehicle rental tax; and
- Motor vehicle license tax.

Ms. Huntsinger stated that project-specific alternative funding sources include municipal bonds, public-private partnerships, toll facilities, grants, and loans.

Mr. Forte expressed concerns regarding the vehicle license tax.

Ms. Huntsinger stated that the CAC has proposed some additional alternative funding sources. She noted that new development and tourism are two of the largest factors contributing to transportation challenges. She added that the intent was to find mechanisms that would not impact residents; but rather to collect transportation dollars from new development, or non-residents and visitors. This might include a hotel/room occupancy tax (ROT), a marina or dockage fee, and impact fees. She added that a bicycle registration fee is currently being proposed. Also, a reallocation of SPOT funds was also proposed to return money to the region for projects, which would require further research.

A lengthy question/answer and discussion period was held. Suggestions included scooter registrations, and vehicles for hire. Members expressed concerns regarding funding streams requiring state legislative change such as development impact fees and ROT, and the need for a dedicated funding source for public transit.

Members expressed concerns about the ROT. An additional ROT might be considered.

Mr. Eby stated that the ¼-cent sales tax for transit would bring additional revenue. However, Wave Transit does not currently have the capacity for it. He noted that it would be better suited for nontraditional transit services.

Mr. Forte expressed concerns regarding sales tax. He pointed out that those that live in the southern half of the Brunswick County can easily cross the state line, as they do for fuel.

Mr. Barfield pointed out that South Carolina is raising its fuel tax and giving local towns the option of taking over the local roads with a payout from the state DOT. He noted that North Carolina is one of seven states where the counties do not maintain roads and has no mechanism to do so.

Following a lengthy discussion, it was the consensus of the Board to proceed with developing funding estimates for all of the proposed alternate funding sources.

c. Wilmington Multi-modal Transportation Center – Phase 1B

Mr. Kozlosky stated that the MPO has been discussing the Multi-modal Transportation Center project since the 1990s. In 2000, a feasibility study identified the location as the former police headquarters. In 2005, Louis Berger completed a site analysis study of six alternative sites and recommended the location between 3rd and 4th, and Hanover and Red Cross. The City Council supported the effort and, following a vote by Council, NCDOT acquired all of the properties necessary to build the Multi-modal Transportation Center.

Mr. Kozlosky stated that in 2016, the property was transferred from NCDOT to the City of Wilmington and to the Cape Fear Public Transportation Authority, where the transfer station is currently under development with completion of the transit portion expected this summer. The property located at 525 North 4th Street was transferred from the state to the City of Wilmington. He noted that since the property was purchased with transportation dollars, it is required to be used for public agency/transportation purposes. He requested that the Board consider it for use as MPO office space since it would meet the following needs:

1. Rehab/reuse a historic structure contributing to a historic district;
2. Meet the requirements of the state for a public agency/transportation purpose; and
3. Address space needs of the City of Wilmington

Mr. Kozlosky stated that some of the STBGP (Surface Transportation Block Grant Program) federal allocation could be used to rehabilitate the building, which would require a 20% local match. He noted that the city currently has some funds available that could be used towards the match. He added that some increased operating expenses might be expected. Wave has estimated annual operating costs for the transit portion of the Multi-modal Transportation Center at \$100,000, 80% of which could be covered by federal funds, and 20% would be requested as an enhancement in a future budget.

In response to an inquiry by Mr. Rivenbark, Mr. Kozlosky stated that several years ago a floor plan was developed for seven or eight offices on the top floor with mercantile space below. He noted that currently the entire 4,000-square-foot building could be used for offices. He added that this would free up space for the city at 305 Chestnut Street.

Mr. Eby stated that the Transit Authority, as part of its agreement with the state and the City of Wilmington, stabilized this building temporarily last year by putting a roof on it, and

removing some mold with state funding. He added that the longer it sits, the less stable it will become.

Mr. Kozlosky requested to work with the city to submit the project through the Direct Attributables (DA) process approved today to see how it will score.

In response to an inquiry by Mr. Shuttleworth, Mr. Kozlosky stated that the MPO's current space is an in-kind contribution by the City of Wilmington. He noted that the increased operating cost would go toward utilities and operating and maintenance.

Mr. Barfield commented that it would be a natural fit with Wave.

Mr. Anderson pointed out that it would give the MPO a face to the public.

Following further discussion, Mr. Kozlosky stated that the up-fit is estimated to cost approximately \$1.5 million, which could come from STBGP funds and the available city capital funds set up during the purchase of the land. He noted that with the Board's consent he would next work with the City of Wilmington to seek the support of the City Council, and then proceed in coordination with the city to prepare a grant application to be submitted to the MPO for consideration through the DA process.

Vice Chair Batleman commented that she would need to get concurrence from the Leland Town Council. Mr. Kozlosky estimated a \$1,070 increase in two to three years.

In response to an inquiry by Mr. Forte, Mr. Kozlosky stated that this would be a reoccurring cost based on the estimates Wave received.

Mr. Forte pointed out that the longer that the building remains vacant, the more rehabilitation costs would increase.

Vice Chair Batleman commented that prolonged delay might necessitate demolition.

It was the consensus of the Board to proceed with the proposal.

Mr. Kozlosky expressed appreciation to the Board.

9. Updates

Mr. Kozlosky stated that updates are included in the agenda packet.

11. Announcements

a. MPO Ethics Information due – April 15th

Vice Chair Batleman and Mr. Forte commented that they had difficulty accessing the site.

b. Bike/Pedestrian Committee Meeting – April 9th

c. The next WMPO Board meeting – April 24th

12. Adjournment

With no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 4:56 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Mike Kozlosky
Executive Director
Wilmington Urban Area Metropolitan Planning Organization