

Board Meeting Minutes
6th Floor Conference Room, 320 Chestnut Street
Wednesday, September 25, 2019

Members Present

David Piepmeyer, Pender County
Brenda Bozeman, Town of Leland
Charlie Rivenbark, City of Wilmington
Mike Allen, Town of Belville
Steve Shuttleworth, Town of Carolina Beach
John Ellen, Town of Kure Beach
Pat Kusek, New Hanover County
Eulis Willis, Town of Navassa

Others Present

Mike Kozlosky, Executive Director, WMPO
Karen Collette, NCDOT Highway Division 3

1. Call to Order

Chairman Piepmeyer called the meeting to order at 3:00 p.m.

2. Conflict of Interest Statement

Chairman Piepmeyer 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 Frank Williams, Mike Alford, Jonathan Barfield and Hank Miller have requested to be excused from the meeting.

Mr. Rivenbark made a motion to excuse the absences of Mr. Williams, Mr. Alford, Mr. Barfield and Mr. Miller. Ms. Kusek seconded the motion, and it carried unanimously.

4. Approval of the Agenda

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

5. Public Comment Period

Andrew Koeppel spoke to the MPO Board and expressed concerns regarding the suspension of the Cape Fear Crossing Project. He requested that the MPO Board direct staff to draft a resolution of support for the continuation of the project, which could be later endorsed by the City Council and County Boards of Commissioners. He noted that the resolution should also encourage the consultant to continue its work leading to the selection of a designated route (currently within 95% completion). In addition, Mr. Koeppel requested that the resolution call for an investigation into the feasibility of the Turnpike Authority constructing the bridge, rather than to have the project re-enter the prioritization process. He commented that without action by the MPO Board, the Cape Fear Crossing Project would not move forward.

6. Presentations

a. Go Coast Annual Report

Nick Cannon, Transportation Demand Management (TDM)/Go Coast Coordinator, WMPO, gave a brief presentation on the Go Coast Annual Report.

The fiscal year update on the TDM/Go Coast Program included the following:

- **Commuter Friendly Employer Program** – a program recognizing employers who offer incentives for encouraging alternate forms of transportation via carpooling, bike racks, etc.
- **Be A Looker Campaign** (April - September) – 200 pledges
- **Commuter Challenge** (October) – 11 sponsors; 723 participants; 6,000 trips total; more than 26,000 miles and 18,000 pounds of CO₂ emissions reduced
- **River to Sea Bike Ride** (May) – 400 participants, most attendance in the history of the 20-mile round-trip ride from Wilmington to Wrightsville Beach
- **Bike to Work Week** – 68 participants and an unknown number of unrecorded participants (staff is seeking better participation tracking)
- **Bike Share** – although the City of Wilmington signed an agreement in May, the vendor (Zagster) is no longer able to fulfill its terms and staff is exploring termination of the agreement
- **Go Coast Visibility/Marketing** – more than 1,600 likes on Instagram, 92 posts
- **Go Coast Committee** – 16 members, meets quarterly
- **Go Coast Web Site** – currently under development

b. Bike/Pedestrian Web Application – Abby Lorenzo, WMPO

Ms. Lorenzo gave an overview of a web application (app) developed by staff in response to interest expressed by member jurisdictions. The app is an interactive tool centrally located on the WMPO GIS portal page to access bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure data for parks, hiking and biking trails, sidewalks and crosswalks across the WMPO region. She noted that it allows users to zoom in and out of any location to view the available facilities, and is designed to remain a work in progress that will accommodate updates easily as the region continues to grow and add facilities.

Ms. Lorenzo stated that staff is working on a policy to update the application regularly with available data working in conjunction with our member jurisdictions. She noted that during the course of the next 15 weeks, an intern will map bicycle and pedestrian data in the smaller jurisdictions. Although the site is mobile-friendly, staff plans to develop a mobile app with GPS functionality.

7. Consent Agenda

- a. **Approval of Board Meeting Minutes of August 28, 2019**
- b. **Resolution adopting the Wilmington Urban Area Metropolitan Planning Organization's Rules of Procedure**
- c. **Resolution approving 2018-2027 STIP/MPO Transportation Improvement Program Administrative Modification #19-4**
- d. **Opening 30-day public comment period for 2020-2029 State/MPO Transportation Improvement Programs**

Ms. Kusek made a motion to approve the Consent Agenda as presented. Mr. Allen seconded the motion, and it carried unanimously.

8. Regular Agenda

- a. **Resolution Endorsing the Fiscally Constrained Project Lists for Inclusion in Cape Fear Moving Forward 2045**

Ms. Lorenzo gave a brief overview of the draft fiscally constrained project lists for inclusion in Cape Fear Moving Forward 2045 that were amended at the MPO Board's August meeting. She listed the proposed changes to the Roadway Projects list as follows:

- Remove:
 - RW-94, Castle Hayne Streetscape Improvements
 - RW-215, Kerr Avenue Extension, 2
- Replace with:
 - RW-181, Blue Clay Road Interchange
 - RW-16, Myrtle Grove Road Widening
 - RW-25, Piner Road Improvements and Intersection Realignment
 - RW-129, Navaho Trail and Masonboro Loop Road Roundabout, Northern Intersection
 - RW-191, Mohican Trail and Masonboro Loop Road Roundabout
 - RW-192, Navaho Trail and Masonboro Loop Road Roundabout, Southern Intersection
 - RW-193, Myrtle Grove Road, Piner Road and Masonboro Loop Road Roundabout
 - RW-166, Sidbury Road and Hampstead Bypass Interchange

Ms. Lorenzo stated that the removal of RW-94 and RW-215 would allow five additional projects based on ranking and cost to move into the fiscally constrained Roadway Projects list. She noted that these additions include the following:

- RW-10, New Centre Drive Extension to Clear Run Drive
- RW-137, US 17 and NC 210 Intersection Improvements
- RW-6, Hoover Road Widening
- RW-99, Murrayville Road Widening
- RW-226, US 17/421 and US 17/76 Merge Lane Addition

Ms. Kusek made a motion to approve the resolution endorsing the fiscally constrained project lists for inclusion in Cape Fear Moving Forward 2045.

Mr. Rivenbark expressed concerns regarding the removal of RW-215.

Mr. Ellen seconded the motion, and it carried 7-1. (Mr. Rivenbark voted "No.")

b. Resolution supporting the allocation of FY 2020 Surface Transportation Block Grant-Direct Attributable funds to the Cape Fear Public Transportation Authority

Ms. Kimes gave an overview of the Cape Fear Public Transportation Authority's request for Fiscal Year 2020 Surface Transportation Block Grant Program-Direct Attributable (STBG-DA) funding and distributed copies of the request. She reminded members that at its February meeting, the MPO Board agreed to continue to assist Wave with DA funds toward ADA and preventative maintenance expenses this year, and to consider future funding if available.

Ms. Kimes stated that Wave Transit has requested \$600,000 for ADA and preventative maintenance expenses. She noted that staff recommends providing \$500,000 – the amount included in Wave's current adopted budget. She added that the Technical Coordinating

Committee (TCC) requested further details regarding ADA and preventative maintenance expenses.

Ms. Kimes stated that the ADA portion funds the Dial A Ride Transportation (DART) Program for individuals who show proof of a disability, live within three-quarters of a mile of a fixed bus route, and an inability to access the bus route. She noted that \$150,000 of the DA funds covered 80% of the cost of 10,110 DART rides during the six months from July 1, 2018 to December 31, 2018. She added that other federal funding covered the beginning of the year.

As for the maintenance portion of funds, Ms. Kimes explained that the state of good repair defined by the federal government includes such categories as salaries, fuels, maintenance, communications, tires, utilities, insurance, office supplies, uniforms, professional services, etc. to keep buildings and equipment in good repair. She noted that similar to ADA spending, Wave exhausts one pot of money before using another, and the \$350,000 in DA funds went to pay a portion of Wave's maintenance expenses for the year.

Ms. Kimes stated that the TCC also requested best practices for transit in other MPO regions across the state. She reported that the WMPO was found to provide the highest percentage (15%) of funds for ADA and preventive maintenance. Last year, Greensboro provided 12% for preventative maintenance. However, some regions benefit from Congestion Mitigation & Air Quality (CMAQ) funds, which the WMPO does not receive. In general, DA funds are not given for transit or are given for specific fiscal projects such as the purchase of a bus or a building.

Mr. Kozlosky pointed out that some of the other MPOs have dedicated revenue sources such as a county sales tax that go directly to fund transit.

In response to an inquiry by Mr. Rivenbark. Ms. Kimes stated that staff researched all the other MPOs in the state that have STBG funds.

Chairman Piepmeyer requested that the comparison be forwarded to MPO Board members.

Ms. Kimes gave an update on the DA budget with revised estimates from the jurisdictions. She stated that seven of the 13 active projects in design or close to construction have additional needs including three in the City of Wilmington and four in the Town of Leland. In addition, two of the remaining projects may come forward for additional funding. However, one is in the early stages and the other is on hold due to utility complications. She noted that if the MPO Board wishes to award the additional funds requested, about \$89,000 would remain. She pointed out that although \$992,000 was held in reserve as a buffer for unintended overruns, about \$2.3 million is needed.

Ms. Kimes reminded the MPO Board members that the periodic rescission of Transportation Alternative Set Aside (TASA) funds is expected. Although the amount is unknown, she estimated that about \$1 million remains in unobligated TASA funds. She noted that each phase of TASA funded projects must be obligated first. Of the three that were awarded in the spring, one received obligation prior to the shutdown of the federal government's system on September 15th. Some older projects did not make it to construction, and may remain unfunded if the MPO Board so desires. However, the jurisdictions that have spent federal

money, may have to repay the federal government any reimbursements received for previous work on an incomplete project or complete it with funds from the jurisdiction.

A question/answer and discussion period was held.

Mr. Rivenbark made a motion to approve the Resolution Supporting the Allocation of FY 2020 Surface Transportation Block Grant- Direct Attributable funds in the amount of \$500,000 to the Cape Fear Public Transportation Authority. Ms. Bozeman seconded the motion, and it carried unanimously.

9. Discussion

a. Cape Fear Moving Forward Alternative Funding Sources

Ms. Lorenzo gave an overview of alternative funding sources for the Metropolitan Transportation Plan and requested direction from the MPO Board members as to those it would consider supporting. She noted that the alternative funding sources were presented in July to the MPO Board by the consultant (WSP), which prepared a forecast of potential revenue projected out to 2045.

- Quarter-cent Local Option Sales Tax (General Transportation or Transit) – \$612 million
- Driver's License Tax (\$5 annual fee) – \$25 million
- Vehicle Registration Fee (\$7 per vehicle) – \$40 million
- Vehicle Rental Tax (5%) – \$29 million
- Bicycle Registration (\$10 annual fee) – \$7 million

Ms. Lorenzo reminded the MPO Board members that tolling and municipal bonds are not included as they are project-specific funding sources. She noted that any supported alternative funding would determine which other projects might be considered in the fiscally constrained plan. She expressed a desire to return recommended additional projects to the MPO Board for consideration in October.

Chairman Piepmeyer expressed a desire to schedule a presentation to the Pender County Board of Commissioners in order to determine support for the alternative funding sources. He suggested that the presentation be given to each of the member jurisdictions as well over the next couple of months. Mr. Rivenbark concurred.

In response to an inquiry Ms. Kusek, Ms. Lorenzo stated that the asterisks indicate alternative funding sources that would be implemented at a countywide level only.

Mr. Kozlosky pointed out that bonds can be used for leverage and would raise the ranking or scoring of projects as well.

b. River to Sea Ride Cap

Mr. Cannon stated that the River to Sea Bike Ride that took place this May was the most successful to date with about 400 participants. He noted that the committee and police officers overseeing the event discussed capping participation at 400. The ride would continue to be 10 miles in each direction, beginning at 7:00 a.m. and ending at 10:00 a.m.

Mr. Cannon stated that the law enforcement officers expressed concerns regarding maintaining the safety of the event and traffic for participation greater than 400 cyclists. He noted that registration was online this year and was opened two weeks in advance of

the event. He commented that thankfully not all of the 600 registrants participated. He suggested that a cap and a fee would necessitate a commitment from participants and encourage a good turnout. He reported that the Technical Coordinating Committee had no objections to a cap.

A brief question/answer and discussion period was held. The MPO Board members had no objection to a cap.

10. Updates

Mr. Kozlosky requested assistance in expediting the scheduling of the presentations to member jurisdictions on funding alternatives for the Metropolitan Transportation Plan in order to maintain the timeline for the plan. Chairman Piepmeyer agreed.

Mr. Kozlosky acknowledged the presence of new MPO staff members: Associate Transportation Planner Rachel McIntyre, and GIS Analyst Luke Foreman. Ms. McIntyre and Mr. Foreman gave some brief professional background information and expressed appreciation.

In response to an inquiry Chair Piepmeyer, Mr. Kozlosky stated that one staff vacancy remains. He noted that the rest of the updates have been included in the agenda packet.

11. Announcements

- a. **Bike/Pedestrian Committee Meeting – October 8th**
- b. **The next WMPO Board meeting – October 30th**

12. Adjournment

With no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 3:56 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.**