



Board Meeting Minutes
6th Floor Conference Room, 320 Chestnut Street
Wednesday, November 28, 2018

Members Present

David Piepmeyer, Pender County
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
Skip Watkins, New Hanover County
Mike Forte, Brunswick 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 3:01 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 Ms. Batleman, Mr. Rivenbark, Mr. Alford and Mr. Anderson have requested to be excused from today's meeting.

Mr. Willis made a motion to excuse the absences of Ms. Batleman, Mr. Rivenbark, Mr. Alford and Mr. Anderson. Mr. Watkins seconded the motion, and it carried unanimously.

4. Approval of the Agenda

Mr. Barfield made a motion to approve the agenda, seconded by Mr. Ellen, and the motion carried unanimously.

5. Public Comment Period

Mr. Buddy Martinette, 7001 Long Boat Circle, spoke to the Board and expressed concerns regarding a feeder road to Military Cutoff Road, which is visible four feet above the six-foot privacy fence in his backyard. He noted that his neighborhood did not qualify for a sound wall and that the vegetative buffer has been removed. He added that he is advocating for another sound study and requested support for a 1,000-foot barrier (sound, berm or vegetative) to protect impacted residents of Snug Harbour and Covil Crossing.

Mr. Watkins affirmed that an impact exists.

Ms. Collette stated that the sound measurements were taken during the spring and noted that she is asking for a winter study. She noted that a vegetative buffer would not be objectionable; although NCDOT would need to partner with the city for it.

6. Presentations

a. Cape Fear Moving Forward 2045 Public Input Results

Mr. Madsen gave an overview of trends in public comments from four months of public input on the Cape Fear Moving Forward 2045 Plan. He noted that survey responses numbered 2,287, and that the map generated 1,905 hits (averaging 15.5 per day) with 563 comments and more than 4,554 votes on comments. Responses totaled 7,400, surpassing public outreach for the last plan.

Mr. Madsen stated that Roadway led in comments (267), and Bicycle/Pedestrian led in votes (2,347). He gave an overview of the usage timeline, which showed that the kick-off event, open houses, media interviews, e-mail blasts and social media posts generated the most responses. Trends for comments in each of the modes included the following:

- Roadway: 1) Signage and signaling; 2) traffic and road widening, and 3) intersection improvements (potential roundabouts).
- Bicycle/Pedestrian: 1) Safety; 2) crosswalks; 3) new facilities such as bike paths. (Many similar comments were made in the same areas.)
- Public Transportation: Concentration of comments for downtown. Trends included 1) light rail, and 2) beach and tourism connectivity.
- Ferry: 1) Leland ferry; 2) high-speed ferry, and 3) multi-modal connections to the ferry.
- Freight/Rail: Light rail and Amtrak comments were transferred to the Public Transportation mode.
- Aviation: 1) Connection to Raleigh-Durham International Airport (RDU); and 2) additional airline services (Wilmington International Airport (ILM)).

In response to concerns expressed by Mr. Watkins, Mr. Kozlosky stated that the plan would concentrate on projects to enhance ILM. Mr. Madsen clarified that most of the comments involved flight connections from ILM to RDU.

Mr. Madsen stated that the overarching trends were safety and better interconnectivity between all modes of transportation. To help identify projects, the results were organized into categories by type and mode and compared to those included in existing plans. Duplicates, complaints, maintenance items, and policies were separated from projects, which were then sorted by mode and provided to the modal subcommittees for consideration. He noted that the comments and a new map have been posted at www.CapeFearMovingForward2045.org.

b. North Carolina Department of Transportation Project Development and Merger Process

Mr. Chad Kimes gave an overview of NCDOT's Project Development and Merger Processes to clarify the alternative selection process. Key factors in determining the final alternate include purpose and need, environmental impacts, property impacts, traffic data (level of service), public input, benefit versus cost, growth in an area, and constructability. Key stakeholders throughout the process include NCDOT, MPO, city, county, environmental agencies, design firm and public input. He noted that

projects are identified from NCDOT and MPO long-range plans and put into prioritization.

Mr. Piepmeyer pointed out that the county or municipality first identifies many of these projects.

Mr. Kimes stated that although the prioritization process to pick up funding is two or more years; projects may date back 20 or 30 years.

Mr. Piepmeyer requested that this presentation be made available electronically to Board members. Mr. Kozlosky responded that it would.

Mr. Kimes stated that after a project has been identified for funding, a scoping meeting is held by DOT with MPO, and the city or county to identify the project's purpose and need, establish the limits, get deeper into environmental issues, set tentative public meeting dates, consider bike/pedestrian accommodations, aesthetics, landscaping, and develop a draft schedule. He noted that environmental analysis and planning greatly affect the timeline and are the first priority of scoping.

Mr. Kimes stated that environmental discussions begin by determining if a project is merger (three years or more) or non-merger (12 months or quicker). Merger projects are new locations such as the Cape Fear Crossing, Hampstead Bypass, and Military Cutoff Road extension. Most non-merger projects are in urban settings that have fewer environmental impacts, such as College Road, Market Street and the interchange projects in the region. He gave a brief overview of events that trigger merger projects such as wetland impacts of one acre or greater, and stream impacts of 500 feet or greater. Both merger and non-merger projects go through a system starting at scoping and progressing through alternatives, which are chosen at 15%. The rest of the process now continues simultaneous to design to expedite the timeframe.

Mr. Piepmeyer pointed out that this is a lengthy and complex process with many opportunities for public input.

Mr. Kimes stated that most of the work occurs between scope and 15% to present the most viable alternatives at the first public meeting. He emphasized the importance of attendance at the local elected officials meetings. He noted that the entire DOT staff is present at the first meeting and available to address questions. He added that a 30-day public comment period precedes the meeting of the alternate selection committee, which does not recess until agreement is reached on the best alternate. He gave several examples of the impact of public input on the alternate selection process.

A lengthy question/answer and discussion period was held.

Mr. Miller expressed concerns regarding changes that impact property owners. He commented that although the public meetings are well planned and participated in, the outcome for Military Cutoff Road/Eastwood Road was unexpected.

Mr. Forte commented that the NC 211/US 17 interchange process effectively addressed concerns of the public.

Mr. Kimes pointed out that hydraulics can be problematic.

Mr. Kozlosky inquired about returning to the public after hydro and before right-of-way acquisition (at 75%) instead of earlier (at 65%).

Ms. Collette expressed concerns regarding the importance of understanding this process and the opportunities for input.

Mr. Piepmeyer concurred and expressed a desire for this presentation to be given with greater frequency, especially to new Board members.

Ms. Collette invited members to attend this concurrence point for the Cape Fear Crossing, to go through an entire project merger at least once, and to attend DOT meetings regarding projects of particular interest.

Mr. Piepmeyer stated that as another resource, DOT accommodates requests from the jurisdictions for information/presentations.

Mr. Kozlosky stated that this presentation would be included in the new member orientation, and would be given every few years.

7. Consent Agenda

a. Approval of Board Meeting Minutes – October 31, 2018

b. Resolution endorsing the North Carolina Department of Transportation's Statewide Safety Targets for the Wilmington Urban Area Metropolitan Planning Organization

c. Resolution approving 2018-2027 STIP/MPO TIP Administrative Modification #18-8

d. Resolution adopting the 2019 Wilmington Urban Area Metropolitan Planning Organization Meeting Schedule

Mr. Miller made a motion to approve the Consent Agenda as presented, seconded by Mr. Shuttleworth, and the motion carried unanimously.

8. Regular Agenda

a. Resolution approving the Wilmington Urban Area Metropolitan Planning Organization's Division Needs Tier Local Input Point Assignment for Prioritization 5.0

Mr. Kozlosky stated that no comments were received during the 14-day public comment period opened at the Board's last meeting. He noted that this proposal would deploy the most capital using local input points for this region. Both staff and the Technical Coordinating Committee (TCC) recommend approval. He advised the Board that this submission is due tomorrow and requested that action be taken today.

Mr. Watkins made a motion to approve the Resolution approving the Wilmington Urban Area Metropolitan Planning Organization's Division Needs Tier Local Input Point Assignment for Prioritization 5.0, seconded by Mr. Forte, and the motion carried unanimously.

b. Resolution approving the Cape Fear Moving Forward 2045 Goals and Objectives

Ms. Lorenzo stated that the Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) has tasked the modal subcommittees with developing goals and objectives for the Cape Fear Moving Forward 2045 Plan. She reminded the Board that the subcommittees are comprised of

subject matter experts for each of the modes, who have worked tirelessly over the past few months to develop the goals and objectives as a map to the future of transportation in the region. She added that the goals and objectives will also form a foundation of scoring criteria for the projects and policies of the plan.

Mr. Kozlosky stated that that the TCC recommended that staff make two slight modifications as follows:

- 1) Remove “roundabouts” from bicycle/pedestrian safety considerations; and
- 2) Relocate the word “appropriate” from the beginning of a sentence to the end of it to modify corridors instead of bicycle/pedestrian facilities.

Mr. Watkins made a motion to approve the Resolution approving the Cape Fear Moving Forward 2045 Goals and Objectives, seconded by Mr. Forte, and the motion carried unanimously.

c. Resolution adopting the 2018 Congestion Management Process Biennial Report

Ms. Lorenzo stated that the MPO was designated as a Transportation Management Area (TMA) and adopted a Congestion Management Process (CMP) in 2013. The CMP established performance measures that require the MPO with collecting data and developing a biennial report to measure the efficiency of the transportation network based on those measures. She noted that the data collected during the past two years has remained relatively unchanged regarding delay and safety. She explained that many of the proposed safety mitigation techniques are still under development and will take a few years for improvements to be realized.

Mr. Shuttleworth made a motion to approve the Resolution adopting the 2018 Congestion Management Process Biennial Report, seconded by Mr. Miller, and the motion carried unanimously.

9. Discussion

a. INFRA Grant

Ms. Lorenzo stated that before the end of this year, staff expects a call for projects for the Infrastructure For Rebuilding America (INFRA) Grant with \$950 million available for surface transportation projects. Last year, the MPO applied to upgrade US-74 in Brunswick County to interstate standards. Neither staff nor the TCC has been able to identify rail or roadway projects with an emphasis on freight that could be shovel-ready within 18 months of being awarded this money. She reminded members that the MPO is eligible to apply for this grant and that a call for projects is anticipated.

Mr. Kozlosky stated that NCDOT will be submitting an INFRA Grant application to upgrade Interstate-40 and Interstate-95, which experienced flooding as a result of Hurricane Florence. The Secretary visited earlier this week and spoke about plans to improve I-40. Mr. Kozlosky recommended that the Board consider supporting the state in their efforts to secure funding. He noted that something would be brought forward to the Board at the time the call is made.

In response to an inquiry by Mr. Forte, Mr. Kozlosky stated that DOT intends to use FEMA funds to address US 421.

Mr. Piepmeyer stated that DOT is discussing elevating long portions of I-40 and I-95. He estimated that the I-40 and I-95 project would cost \$110 million.

b. TASA Call for Projects

Ms. Kimes stated that the call for Transportation Alternatives Set Aside (TASA) projects was issued on November 15th with pre-application review ending December 18th and a submittal deadline of 5:00 p.m., January 25th. So far, one jurisdiction has shown interest.

c. Military Cutoff Road Extension- Snug Harbour

Mr. Kozlosky reminded the Board that a number of public comments were received at the Board's last meeting regarding the Military Cutoff Road Extension and the new connection between Market Street and Military Cutoff Road, which Mr. Martinette also spoke about during the public comment period earlier today. He added this discussion was added to today's agenda at the request of the Board.

In response to inquiries by Mr. Shuttleworth, Ms. Collette responded that a noise wall cannot be installed where unwarranted. She suggested that one might be installed by encroachment. However, they are expensive and she knows of none being installed by private citizens. She expressed concerns that the trees have been removed although NCDOT agreed to minimize their removal three of four years ago.

Mr. Kozlosky stated that in the past, the Board requested that the state review its noise policy for a similar situation (Windsor Park). He noted that the date of public knowledge was so far in advance of the development that it became an issue. He added that the state has not revised its noise policy to his knowledge.

Ms. Collette stated that at the end of a project, enhancement funds become available. She noted that the noise study might be done again in the winter.

Mr. Shuttleworth expressed concerns regarding a noise study being conducted before there is traffic.

Ms. Collette responded that the noise study is guided by a 165-page document to account for it. She added that she can only request another study; not guarantee one.

Following further discussion, Mr. Miller made a motion to direct the Executive Director to draft a letter requesting that the state re-evaluate its noise analysis and the Chairman to review and sign it. Mr. Ellen seconded the motion and it carried unanimously.

In response to concerns expressed by Mr. Barfield, Mr. Piepmeyer requested that staff consider a process for escalating matters outside its jurisdiction.

d. 2018-2027 STIP/MPO TIP Administrative Modification #18-9

Mr. Kozlosky stated that this item is for informational purposes only and would come back to the Board for consideration at its next meeting.

9. Updates

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

10. Announcements

- WMPO Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee Meeting: December 4th
- The next WMPO Board Meeting: January 30th

The Board expressed appreciation to Mr. Watkins for his service as a Board member.

Mr. Ellen stated that Military Ocean Terminal Sunny Point (MOTSU) will hold two public information meetings next week regarding its joint land use study.

11. Adjournment

With no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 4:27 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.**