

**Wilmington Urban Area
Technical Coordinating Committee
Wednesday, March 13, 2019
Meeting Minutes**

Members Present

Don Bennett, City of Wilmington
Amy Kimes, Wilmington MPO
Nick Cannon, Wilmington MPO
Ed Parvin, Town of Carolina Beach
Nancy Avery, Town of Kure Beach
Danielle Villegas, Town of Wrightsville
Beach
Rebekah Roth, New Hanover County
Stephanie Ayers, North Carolina
State Ports

Ashli Barefoot, Town of Leland
Helen Bunch, Brunswick County
Allen Serkin, Cape Fear Council of
Governments
Caitlin Marks, NCDOT Division of
Highways
Nazia Sarder, NCDOT Planning
Albert Eby, Cape Fear Public
Transportation

1) Call to Order

Mr. Bennett called the meeting to order at 10:03 a.m.

2) Approval of the Agenda

Mr. Serkin made a motion to approve the agenda as presented, seconded by Mr. Eby, and the motion carried unanimously.

3) Presentations

a. Town of Carolina Beach Pedestrian Plan – Ed Parvin, Town of Carolina Beach

Ed Parvin, Assistant Town Manager, Town of Carolina Beach, gave an overview of the Town's Pedestrian Plan, which began with grant applications in 2015 and finished last summer. He identified Jerry Haire as the planner in charge, John Vine-Hodge as DOT administration, and VHB as the contractor. He noted that the main goals of the plan were safety, grant funding, and community support.

Mr. Parvin stated that a steering committee met during the year and a half process. He noted that community outreach included a public survey with more than 1,000 respondents out of a total population of 6,000-plus residents, and two well-attended public workshops over two days.

Mr. Parvin stated that the plan connects major destinations including the beach, the downtown area, Carolina Beach Lake, the school, and the parks. Last Friday, the Town completed the Island Greenway from Alabama Avenue to Chapel Park. In addition, the bike-pedestrian committee has continued to meet during the last nine months following adoption of the plan.

Mr. Parvin gave an overview of the priorities of the plan including a recommendation of 90-foot right-of-ways to accommodate multi-use paths or sidewalks. He added that many flashing lights and crosswalk improvements have been implemented as part of intersection projects on three DOT roads: Lake Park Boulevard, Dow Road, and Ocean Boulevard.

Mr. Parvin stated that the bike-pedestrian committee is working on implementation of the plan that outlines educational outreach, bike routes and signage, bicycle-pedestrian encouragement programs, a route map, and a safety

program that is currently in progress in cooperation with the town's Police Department. He added that Clarendon Avenue, the top project in the pedestrian plan will connect the school, Chapel Park and the greenway, has gained additional support and is expected to begin soon. He requested the TCC's approval.

A brief question/answer and discussion period was held. Mr. Parvin pointed out that the plan garners support for improvements that will benefit the entire community.

b. Military Ocean Terminal Sunny Point Joint Land Use Study – Allen Serkin, Cape Fear Council of Governments

Allen Serkin, Local Government Services Director, Cape Fear Council of Governments (COG), stated that the Military Ocean Terminal Sunny Point (MOTSU) approached the COG about applying for a Department of Defense grant for a Joint Land Use Study. He explained that the COG was identified as the likely lead sponsor since the study area impacts portions of the Wilmington MPO as well as the Cape Fear RPO.

Mr. Serkin stated that the purpose of the Joint Land-Use Study (JLUS) was to identify and mitigate barriers of long-term sustainability of Sunny Point's mission to promote compatibility between civilian land uses and military operational requirements, to strengthen coordination and communication between local governments and Sunny Point, and to raise public understanding of Sunny Point broadly as well as provide some compatible growth issues.

Mr. Serkin gave an overview of study partners and the study area. He noted that the steering committee was structured with an advisory committee of staff members, and a policy committee including the Sunny Point Commander and elected officials from the participating jurisdictions. He added that a number of public meetings and policy committee meetings were held, which will be followed by additional public meetings in May and a final document to be adopted by early summer.

Mr. Serkin stated that the study area included the three miles around the main Sunny Point Terminal, the Pleasure Island buffer zone, and $\frac{3}{4}$ mile on either side of the rail corridor that connects Sunny Point to the Leland Interchange Yard. He added that the area spans two counties and five municipalities.

Mr. Serkin stated that Sunny Point is an ammunitions transshipment terminal built in the 1950s for safety in response to the ammunitions explosion of a decade earlier at Port Chicago in the San Francisco Bay area. He explained that the Sunny Point Terminal stages ammunition temporarily while waiting to be shipped, and is neither an ammunition depot nor an armory. The storage facility is comprised of three geographically separate areas with an 8,600-acre main terminal and 2,200-acre Pleasure Island buffer zone connected by a 16-mile rail line to the 650-acre Leland Interchange Yard.

Mr. Serkin stated that Sunny Point offers critical defense capabilities and more capacity than all of the other ammunitions shipping terminals and facilities

combined. He noted that the terminal is similar to the Port of Wilmington with cranes moving containers from ships to trains, etc. He added that 85% of ammunitions were shipped through MOTSU during the Vietnam War, and about 90% today. He noted that the current workload of the active freight terminal in terms of tons of freight is about half of what it was in 2010.

Mr. Serkin stated that most freight is shipped via the main CSX rail line through the Davis Yard in Navassa, continuing through Leland to the Leland Interchange Yard where CSX drops it for Army locomotives to pick up and transport by rail through Leland under US-17, through Brunswick Forest and the Town of Boiling Springs Lakes, across NC-133/River Road, and into the terminal. He noted that a small portion is shipped via truck. However, trucks were entirely relied upon after the hurricane that disabled the rail line. Also, a small portion of ammunition that tests invalid is shipped in the opposite direction – from the ship to the terminal and ultimately to depots for destruction.

Mr. Serkin gave an overview of areas of compatibility that include maintaining full use of the explosive safety zone when not in transit; managing and maintaining safe transportation access; and maintaining a minimal level of environmental constraint. Recommendations of the study related to the TCC include:

1. Expanding TCC membership to include representation from Sunny Point;
2. Monitoring of the State Port property by the local government;
3. Temporarily expanding the restricted area of the Cape Fear River;
4. Seeking opportunities to elevate at-grade rail crossings from I-140 to at least River Road
5. Identifying potential impacts of the highway on Sunny Point operations;
6. Establishing redundant rail access to the Leland Interchange, such as with the Whiteville to Malmö line or the Castle Hayne to Wallace corridor;
7. Coordinating with the Ferry Division on the ferry expansion;
8. Including Sunny Point's needs in the transportation planning efforts of the MPO, the RPO and individual local jurisdictions.

Mr. Serkin stated that more information about the study is online at www.capefearcog.org/sunnypoint/.

A brief question/answer and discussion period was held.

- c. **“Be A Looker” Campaign – Nick Cannon, Wilmington Urban Area MPO**
Nick Cannon, TDM/Go Coast Coordinator, WMPO, stated that the “Be A Looker” Campaign has similar pedestrian safety objectives as the “Watch for Me NC” program, and former “See, Share, Be Aware” campaign. He noted that these grants are administered through law enforcement and have become less of a priority with increased stipulations and reporting requirements. He added that the intent of the new campaign is designed to be more specific to this area, to save some lives, and to reduce bicycle and pedestrian accidents on the roadways.

Mr. Cannon stated that the first objective of the campaign is to educate drivers on the rules of the road regarding safety for cyclists and pedestrians as a legitimate

mode of transportation. The campaign will also promote the values of health and safety, quality of life, and transportation alternatives to driving. It will target drivers of motor vehicles primarily, as well as cyclists and pedestrians.

Mr. Cannon stated that marketing will include the following:

- Wave Transit shuttles (204 Brunswick Connector, 107 South College Road) for all six months of the campaign (117,000 impressions);
- Digital billboards for all six months (169,000 impressions per month);
- Email blasts to a list of more than 12,000 community members;
- Press releases to all media outlets;
- E-mails and on-campus programs at major employers;
- Social media posts and paid ads

Mr. Cannon stated that the campaign runs from April 1st through September 30th. He added that May is National Bike Month, and that the bike share program is anticipated to begin sometime in 2019 conditioned upon obtaining sponsorships. He displayed promotional material for the “Be A Looker” campaign. He noted that the number of impressions and interactions would be the measure success. Features of the campaign, including a pledge, will be available online at www.wmpo.org/bealooker.

In response to an inquiry by Ms. Ayers, Mr. Cannon stated that promotional materials are designed to drive people to the website where more details are available.

Mr. Eby requested that the addition of educational materials for drivers regarding pedestrian crossings with HAWK signals.

In response to an inquiry by Ms. Marks, Mr. Cannon stated that the bike share program would be stationed and does not include scooters.

Mr. Cannon encouraged members to e-mail him with any further questions.

Mr. Bennett suggested including Jimmy John’s sandwich shop in the campaign whose drivers use either cars or bicycles for deliveries.

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 stated that transportation has evolved fairly slowly during the past 100 years compared to what is anticipated during the next 30 years. She noted that the 2050 Plan would include a strong focus on technology trends.

Ms. Sarder gave a brief overview of the planning process and encouraged 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 identifying transportation needs in each area. Public engagement will continue this spring and, for this region, the plan will have a presence at the NC Azalea Festival in April.

Ms. Sarder stated that planning for uncertainties includes population growth of four million by 2050, an increase in health and technology economic sectors, and a decline in manufacturing and agricultural sectors. She noted that 90% of North Carolina's 46 million annual visitors drove to the state in 2017. She added that funding will continue to be a challenge, autonomous vehicles will be the majority of new vehicle sales in 20 years, and security and resiliency will continue to be a concern. She requested that members provide top transportation concerns and any that may have been omitted from the eight categories. She noted that her team would be available to answer any questions regarding the plan.

Ms. Ayers expressed concerns regarding strategizing priorities and prioritizing projects to maximize cooperation and the use of assets. She also suggested considering cultural changes since future generations can have very different ideas about transportation.

Other concerns included land use changes, environmental changes, access especially during natural disasters, development and public street requirements, and transportation of residents versus tourists.

Leta Huntsinger, Project Manager, WSP, stated that the uncertainties help identify potential futures for North Carolina. She noted that this is an attempt to categorize concerns in the face of anticipated changes. She added that climate-change, resiliency, unprecedented growth, tourism, demographics and land use have been included. She noted that respondents want changes to and greater diversity in transportation options.

Mr. Serkin expressed interest in exploring tourism or retirement components.

Ms. Ayers expressed an interest in pursuing the technology component for transportation solutions.

4) Consent Agenda

- a. Approval of TCC Meeting Minutes - February 13, 2019**
- b. Resolution amending the FY 2019 Unified Planning Work Program**
- c. Resolution adopting the Town of Carolina Beach Pedestrian Plan**

Ms. Avery made a motion to approve the Consent Agenda, Items 3a, 3b and 3c, and to forward them to the MPO Board for consideration. Ms. Barefoot seconded the motion, and it carried unanimously.

5) Regular Agenda

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

Ms. Kimes stated that this resolution needs to be adopted by the Board this month.

Ms. Bunch made a motion to approve the Resolution approving the Wilmington Urban Area Metropolitan Planning Organization's FY 2020 Unified Planning Work Program, seconded by Ms. Avery, and the motion carried unanimously.

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

Ms. Moore stated that this certification is required annually from the Board. She noted that the resolution states that the MPO's planning process follows federal requirements.

Ms. Roth made a motion to approve the Resolution Certifying the Transportation Planning Process for the Wilmington Urban Area Metropolitan Planning Organization. Mr. Parvin seconded the motion, and it carried 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 this would expand the process to five years. She added that no comments or concerns were received since last month's presentation.

Ms. Avery 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. Ms. Ayers seconded the motion, and it carried unanimously.

6) **Discussion**

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

Ms. Kimes stated that this item was included in the agenda packet for informational purposes only.

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

Leta Huntsinger, Project Manager, WSP, gave an update on the financial forecast for the Cape Fear Moving Forward 2045 Metropolitan Transportation Plan. She stated that project cost estimating is about 80% complete. She requested some direction regarding the alternative funding plan to help bridge the gap between traditional funding and the cost of projects in order to get more projects into the plan. She noted that the ones that do not make the fiscally constrained list can be placed on an illustrative list with identified funding for study.

Ms. Huntsinger gave an overview of the financial forecasting process. She stated that historic data was entered into a model to help forecast capital funding for plan development. She noted that Wilmington is somewhat unique in that it includes all modes of transportation. She pointed out that the Wilmington MPO has been successful in programming projects into the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP).

Ms. Huntsinger stated that transit has lost access to some funding due to the growth of the region. She commented that a dedicated funding source for transit should be considered. She noted that funding for ferries has seen modest growth, while aviation funding has remained relatively flat. In addition, rail funding also experienced a decrease due to some sources that are no longer available.

Although, \$41.4 million was recently awarded for rail safety improvements, grants are not traditionally included the financial forecast.

Ms. Ayers expressed concerns regarding news of the rail grant.

Mr. Serkin expressed concerns regarding the change in funding structure during the period examined.

Ms. Huntsinger responded that incorporating it into the model would have created an inconsistency in data sources. She added that the financial forecast is only a snapshot in time. She noted that no drastic changes have emerged yet.

Mr. Bennett pointed out that the 66% growth in highway funding is only locally within the MPO region. He also noted that a bicycle registration fund for bicycle facilities is currently being considered in the legislature.

In response to an inquiry by Mr. Serkin, Ms. Huntsinger stated that although operations and maintenance were also studied, capital funding is the focus of this forecast.

Ms. Huntsinger stated that alternative funding sources for the last MTP were reviewed (none of which were implemented in the last plan), and new ones were sought and vetted by subject matter experts to address the anticipated funding gap with options that could be reasonably implemented. More innovative strategies were put aside for further research for a future plan. Existing alternatives included a quarter-cent local option sales tax and/or one specific for transit, vehicle registration fees, vehicle license tax, vehicle rental tax, and tolling. She gave an overview of several grant and loan programs, as well as bonds and financing mechanisms that could be used to advance projects.

Concerns were expressed regarding the viability of transportation impact fees, and the complexity of counties administering a ¼-cent sales tax.

Ms. Huntsinger requested some feedback regarding alternative funding sources that should be researched further.

Discussion ensued regarding communicating the implications of funding and/or the lack of funding scenarios to the community.

Ms. Huntsinger stated that the Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) suggested additional funding alternatives focusing on the impact of tourism and new development, and benchmarking research to capture funds from visitors. She questioned whether hotel occupancy tax could be increased and earmarked to support transportation. She noted that the statewide plan is researching partnerships that go hand-in-hand with travel and tourism. She added that a marina or dockage fee was also suggested.

Ms. Huntsinger requested feedback from the group regarding the CAC's recommendations and any missing alternatives.

Mr. Bennett expressed doubt as to the flexibility of implementing some of the recommendations.

Ms. Huntsinger stated that non-resident fees are not allowed currently in North Carolina. As far as using transponders to differentiate nonresidents, tolling would only be allowed on new facilities. She added that the Triangle region and Charlotte are contemplating managed lanes; but have more freeways.

Further discussion was held regarding capturing tourism dollars for transportation.

Ms. Ayers expressed concerns regarding the lack of a park-and-ride/transit/trolley/bus service to the beaches, which would require its own funding mechanism. She pointed out that high-end residential housing development is preferred over transportation solutions.

Mr. Eby pointed out that priority is given to visitors over those who serve them.

Ms. Ayers stated that Wrightsville Beach is removing parking and developing a park/community area by Johnny Mercer's Pier. She suggested a bus drop off and shuttle to under-used parking at UNCW.

Mr. Eby stated that the model already exists with WAVE taking 1,500 students there during Beach Blast on the first day of school. However, elected officials do not currently support it.

Mr. Serkin pointed out that alternative funding sources could be used in the prioritization process to leverage other funds.

Ms. Avery expressed concerns regarding the loss of parking revenues to accommodate visitors. She noted that a portion of the Room Occupancy Tax (ROT) is used for marketing the Town, and about \$180,000 of it is for lifeguards. She explained that the county's efforts to collect ROT were previously limited, but are expanding.

In regard to next steps, Ms. Moore stated that the financial forecast update will be given at the next Board meeting, and that staff will bring the recommendations to the Board for consideration in April.

It was the consensus of the Committee to advance the alternative funding options with the addition of the potential bicycle registration fee to the Board.

Mr. Serkin reminded Ms. Huntsinger about a prioritization-related alternative funding source. She responded that it would likely shift the order of projects; but not necessarily be a new source of money over the life of the plan.

Mr. Serkin stated that it could create additional state funding available only to the region and shift the historical track. Ms. Huntsinger responded that she would research a program to leverage those funds, and return to the group when the forecast is complete.

7) **Updates**

Updates are included in the agenda packet.

8) **Announcements**

- a. **Bike/Pedestrian Committee Meeting: March 12th**
- b. **Next TCC meeting: April 10th**

9) **Additional Items**

Ms. Kimes announced that Eloise Amelia Lorenzo, 6 lbs. 4 oz., was born a week ago Tuesday at 5:44 a.m.

Ms. Sarder reminded members to list their top transportation priorities and to add any that have been omitted for the NC Moves 2050 Plan.

10) **Adjournment**

With no further items, the meeting was adjourned at 12:15 p.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.**