

**Wilmington Urban Area
Technical Coordinating Committee
Wednesday, July 15, 2020
Remote Meeting Minutes**

Members Present

Mike Kozlosky, Chair, MPO Executive Director
Marty Little, New Hanover County Planning
Department
Denys Vielkanowitz, City of Wilmington Traffic
Engineer
Nick Cannon, Transportation Demand
Management (TDM)
Robert O'Quinn, Wrightsville Beach
Stephanie Ayers (Cody Basile, Intern), NC State
Ports Authority
Athina Williams, Town of Belville

Ashli Barefoot, Town of Leland
Barnes Sutton, Town of Navassa
Sam Shore, Pender County Planning Department
Patrick Flanagan, Cape Fear Council of
Governments
Caitlin Marks, Division of Highways, NCDOT
Nazia Sarder, Transportation Planning Branch,
NCDOT
Vanessa Lacer, Cape Fear Public Transportation
Authority

1) Call to Order

Mr. Kozlosky called the remote meeting to order at 10:02 a.m., and took a rollcall of the members present pursuant to Section 4.31 of Senate Bill 704 (Session Law 2020-3), as follows:

Present: Mike Kozlosky, Marty Little, Denys Vielkanowitz, Nick Cannon, Robert O'Quinn, Athina Williams, Ashli Barefoot, Barnes Sutton, Sam Shore, Patrick Flanagan, Caitlin Marks, Nazia Sarder, Vanessa Lacer. **Absent:** Mandy Sanders, Jerry Haire, Granseur Dick, Stephanie Ayers, Helen Bunch.

2) Approval of the Agenda

Ms. Williams made a motion to approve the agenda as presented. Ms. Sarder seconded the motion and it carried unanimously by rollcall as follows:

Ayes: Mike Kozlosky, Marty Little, Denys Vielkanowitz, Nick Cannon, Robert O'Quinn, Athina Williams, Ashli Barefoot, Barnes Sutton, Sam Shore, Patrick Flanagan, Caitlin Marks, Nazia Sarder, Vanessa Lacer.

Nays: None. **Absent:** Mandy Sanders, Jerry Haire, Granseur Dick, Stephanie Ayers, Helen Bunch.

3) Presentation

a. NCDOT Project Updates/Cape Fear Memorial Bridge Replacement Feasibility Study- Caitlin Marks, NCDOT

Ms. Marks stated that prior to COVID-19, NCDOT's cash balance hovered above its cash floor due to rising construction costs, Map Act settlements, and severe storms. She noted that from fiscal year 2017 to present, NCDOT spent more than \$800 million on approximately 350 storm site repairs and 75 road closures due to disaster frequency and storm severity.

Ms. Marks stated that NCDOT's revenue streams, 40% of which were derived from motor fuel tax and 16% from the highway use tax, have been further impacted by the COVID pandemic. As a result of outbreak precautions, motor vehicle traffic volumes have decreased 40% to 50%.

Ms. Marks estimated that the revenue loss was \$300 million for fiscal year 2020, and is estimated at \$370 million for fiscal year 2021. She noted that although traffic volumes are on the rise at about 90%, impacts would be difficult to predict, particularly should there be a second wave of the virus.

Ms. Marks stated that House Bill (HB) 77 decreased NCDOT’s cash floor limit from \$292 million to \$267 million. She noted that the weekly cash report as of this morning reported a cash balance of \$334 million. However, the cash balance cannot be reported as being above the cash floor until a letter from the Chief’s office officially says so. Usually, the letter is released the last week of the month.

Ms. Marks stated that cash floor limitations include no new contracts or contract modifications for transportation projects; no new contracts with consultants (although temporaries or embeds can be used to “restart” projects in the interim); and property purchases are prohibited. Additional actions include temporarily suspending engineering and right-of-way (ROW) acquisition on most projects, adjusting let dates, suspending programs such as the wildflower program, freezing new hires, cutting additional contract employees, and imposing a furlough for all NCDOT employees.

Ms. Marks stated that projects scheduled to proceed with engineering in the WMPO area include I-40 Pavement Rehabilitation from Mile Marker 420 to NC210 in Pender County, Wilmington Rail At-Grade Crossing Improvements, and US 421 Widening. She noted that the Hampstead Bypass project included in the list is misleading since it’s in ROW acquisition. She pointed out that Division 3 has no design-build projects, and, therefore, no projects on the ROW list to move forward.

Ms. Marks gave further details on HB77, which passed into law on July 6, 2020 (SL 2020-91). She noted that the legislation includes some spending cuts to rail, transit, and airports. She pointed out that the CARES Act is intended to cover some of those losses. She explained that the Bill was designed to help restore stability by restarting some suspended projects, expanding NCDOT’s bonding authority, stabilizing funding as hurricane season begins, and providing money for road maintenance and resurfacing. She commented that NCDOT has already begun changing the structure of the cash reports.

Ms. Marks stated that an updated list of current let dates is included in the agenda packet. She pointed out that the Hampstead Bypass let date has been changed from September to March.

Ms. Marks stated that NCDOT gave a presentation on the Cape Fear Memorial Bridge (CFMB) Feasibility Study to the Wilmington Historic Foundation recently, and some media coverage is expected on the response to it. She reminded TCC members that the bridge is a 50-year-old, aging structure, which costs approximately \$550,000 per year to maintain. Additionally, a major rehabilitation project completed late last year cost \$15 million from NCDOT’s High Value Bridge Preservation (HVBP) program. A report released in April estimates current traffic volumes at 51,000 vehicles per day, which is projected to increase to 81,000 vehicles per day by 2045.

Ms. Marks stated that the proposed median-divided facility would be increased from four lanes to six, and include a separated multi-use path on the north side. She noted that one of the options includes a railroad component. She gave an overview of estimates for four options as follows:

Option	Design	Construction Cost	Utility Relocation Cost	ROW Cost	Total Cost
1.	Fixed span, 65’ vertical clearance	\$185.1 M	\$2.0 M	\$9.5 M	\$196.6 M
2.	Fixed span, 135’ vertical clearance	\$213.6 M	\$2.0 M	\$30.1 M	\$245.7 M
3.	Movable span, 65’ vertical clearance	\$475.7 M	\$2.5 M	\$9.5 M	\$487.7 M
4.	Movable span, 65’ vertical clearance with railroad component	\$596.7 M	\$2.5 M	\$9.5 M	\$608.7 M

Ms. Marks noted that highlights of the impacts state that the Wilmington local historic district and the downtown business district of the City of Wilmington are not anticipated to have impacts, because the options shift the bridge south away from those districts. She added that the Cape Fear Memorial Bridge project is unfunded and that results of Prioritization 6.0 will not be known until May 2022. Once funding is obtained, the detailed design and environmental merger process will begin.

Mr. Kozlosky inquired about the design-build decision making process. Ms. Marks responded that these depend on Division engineers and the central design team in Raleigh. She added that this is discussed during the initial phases of projects, or if they need to be done quickly. She pointed out that the design-build scenario tends to hold more uncertainty.

4) **Consent Agenda**

a. **Approval of TCC Meeting Minutes – June 10, 2020**

b. **Resolution approving 2018-2027 and 2020-2029 STIP/MPO Transportation Improvement Program Amendments #20-1, #20-2 and 20-3**

Mr. Shore made a motion to approve the Consent Agenda, Items 3a and 3b, as presented, and to forward the items to the MPO Board for consideration. Mr. O'Quinn seconded the motion, and it carried unanimously by rollcall as follows:

Ayes: Mike Kozlosky, Marty Little, Denys Vielkanowitz, Nick Cannon, Mandy Sanders, Robert O'Quinn, Stephanie Ayers, Athina Williams, Ashli Barefoot, Barnes Sutton, Helen Bunch, Sam Shore, Patrick Flanagan, Caitlin Marks, Nazia Sarder, Vanessa Lacer. **Nays:** None. **Absent:** Jerry Haire, Granseur Dick.

5) **Regular Agenda**

a. **Resolution approving the Final Draft of Cape Fear Moving Forward 2045**

Deputy Director Abby Lorenzo gave an overview on the final draft of the Cape Fear Moving Forward 2045 Plan. She stated that the MPO Board requested an additional three virtual open houses as a replacement for the three in-person open houses that were canceled due to COVID-19. As a result of virtual public outreach, 20 comments have been added to the summary of comments for the plan, bringing the total to 87 with an additional 20 comments added by staff. However, comments from the virtual meetings did not result in any additional recommended changes to the plan. She noted that a total of 17 members of the public participated during the additional virtual open houses, which were held on July 6th, July 7th and July 8th from 5:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. on the Zoom online remote meeting platform.

Ms. Lorenzo stated that recommended changes by staff were based on three comments received during the initial public outreach from February 26th to May 15th. She explained that two comments were related to cost estimates for roadway projects, which resulted in the addition of five projects to the fiscally constrained list. The third comment was related to bicycle and pedestrian projects that were duplicated by the State Transportation Improvement Plan (STIP). Removing these projects allowed the addition of other bicycle and pedestrian projects to the plan's fiscally constrained list.

Ms. Lorenzo stated that based on comments, notes were added to the appendices as follows:

- Proposed cross sections or scopes were added to the fiscally constrained lists to help describe the projects;

- In the Freight and Freight/Rail element, staff added language to assist the Port in securing future federal grants; and
- In the Environmental Justice section, staff expanded the degree of impact analysis to include fiscally constrained bicycle and pedestrian, public transportation projects, and added potential benefits and burdens of the projects.

Ms. Lorenzo stated that the next steps would be for the MPO Board to consider a resolution accepting the final draft of the plan this month. Then, staff would proceed with making presentations of the final draft plan to member jurisdictions in August and September, prior to the Board considering the plan for adoption in October.

Ms. Marks made a motion to approve the final draft of the Metropolitan Transportation Plan, and to forward it to the MPO Board for consideration. Mr. Cannon seconded the motion, and it carried unanimously by rollcall as follows:

Ayes: Mike Kozlosky, Marty Little, Denys Vielkanowitz, Nick Cannon, Mandy Saunders, Robert O'Quinn, Stephanie Ayers, Athina Williams, Ashli Barefoot, Barnes Sutton, Helen Bunch, Sam Shore, Patrick Flanagan, Caitlin Marks, Nazia Sarder, and Vanessa Lacer. **Nays:** None.

Absent: Jerry Haire, and Granseur Dick.

Mr. Kozlosky expressed appreciation to staff for their efforts on the plan.

b. Resolution supporting FY 21 Unified Planning Work Program Amendment #1

Ms. Lorenzo stated that this is an amendment to move \$10,000 from the special studies line item for the Pender County Streets Plan to assist in the final funding for the Wilmington Rail Trail Master Plan. She explained that due to the COVID restrictions that were implemented mid-March, staff was unable to complete the Rail Trail Master Plan in fiscal year 2020. She noted that about \$10,000 is needed to complete it, and that the streets plan is expected to come in under budget.

Mr. Shore made a motion to approve the amendment to the Unified Planning Work Program. Mr. Cannon seconded the motion, and it carried unanimously by rollcall as follows:

Ayes: Mike Kozlosky, Marty Little, Denys Vielkanowitz, Nick Cannon, Mandy Saunders, Robert O'Quinn, Stephanie Ayers, Athina Williams, Ashli Barefoot, Barnes Sutton, Helen Bunch, Sam Shore, Patrick Flanagan, Caitlin Marks, Nazia Sarder, Vanessa Lacer. **Nays:** None.

Absent: Jerry Haire, Granseur Dick.

c. Resolution supporting applications for the deployment of CASSI in the City of Wilmington and Town of Carolina Beach

Mr. Cannon stated that earlier this year, NCDOT released an application for two communities in North Carolina to have a pilot program for an autonomous vehicle shuttle. He noted that previously, only NC State had Connected Autonomous Shuttle Supporting Innovation (CASSI). He added that NC State's CASSI deployment began in February; but ended prematurely when the university closed due to COVID-19 restrictions.

Mr. Cannon stated that NCDOT has proceeded with its plan to launch pilot routes in two cities/towns in North Carolina in 2021. He noted that the MPO plans to apply for routes in downtown Wilmington and in the Town of Carolina Beach next summer. He commented that the applications are subject to change, since research of the technology continues.

Mr. Kozlosky pointed out that this is an opportunity to deploy alternative technologies.

Ms. Barefoot made a motion to approve the applications. Ms. Bunch seconded the motion, and it carried unanimously by rollcall as follows:

Ayes: Mike Kozlosky, Marty Little, Denys Vielkanowitz, Nick Cannon, Mandy Saunders, Robert O'Quinn, Stephanie Ayers, Athina Williams, Ashli Barefoot, Barnes Sutton, Helen Bunch, Sam Shore, Patrick Flanagan, Caitlin Marks, Nazia Sarder, Vanessa Lacer. **Nays:** None.

Absent: Jerry Haire, Granseur Dick.

6) Discussion

a. Congestion Management Process 2020 Biennial Report

Associate Transportation Planner Zach Manfredi gave an overview of the Congestion Management Process (CMP) Report, which is updated every two years. He noted that the CMP is a methodical, data driven approach to managing traffic congestion in the region. He added that all regions with a population greater than 200,000 and designated a Transportation Management Area (TMA) are required to develop this process. He noted that the WMPO became a TMA in 2012, and that the MPO Board adopted its first CMP in 2014.

Mr. Manfredi pointed out that although the CMP is a federally required document, it's not a prescriptive process. He commented that this provides some leeway for regional traffic differences. He added that the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) created a guidebook in 2011 with eight steps, of which the MPO is currently half-way through. He noted that since biennial data collection is by far the most intensive step, staff has developed goals/objectives and measures aligned with the MPO's Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP).

Mr. Manfredi stated that the traffic network includes 30 total corridors. He noted that 25 were retained from the 2018 CMP, and five were changed to accommodate availability of data and changing priorities of the National Performance Research Data Set (NPRDS). He added that each corridor will receive a score for two performance measures: travel time/reliability and multimodal improvement, which will ultimately help rank the projects for the region.

Mr. Manfredi stated that data collection efforts took about six months and involved the efforts of a consultant (Kittelson), and the WMPO with staff collecting individual a.m. and p.m. peak traffic counts, NCDOT's volume and crash data, Wave Transit's transit data, and the MPO's infrastructure data (sidewalks, bike lanes, multi-use paths, etc.).

Mr. Manfredi explained NPRDS in more detail. He pointed out that the data set has a large sample size. He noted that the consultant has reviewed and provided an analysis of the data. He commented that the value of internal metrics can be appreciated in a comparison to national metrics. On a national level, the MPO region is not considered to be congested compared to communities like Los Angeles. He added that Kittelson would provide a presentation with more detail in August.

Mr. Manfredi gave an overview of the remaining steps of the CMP. He stated that feedback from local stakeholders will be sought to identify strategies to address congestion, and requested participation from TCC members. He added that three iterations (2020, 2022, and 2024) of the CMP will lend itself to the next MTP and future STIPs. He noted that the last step of the CMP will be to evaluate strategy effectiveness, and that this year will serve as a baseline for that evaluation. He added that that virtual stakeholder meetings will be held in August.

In response to an inquiry by Mr. Flanagan regarding the truck times in the multimodal category, Mr. Manfredi stated that the NPRDS was originally created for freight lines, and that travel time was included in multimodal previously; but that staff would review it.

Ms. Lorenzo stated that staff would put together a toolbox of traffic congestion mitigation strategies to discuss with planning staffs of local jurisdictions to determine appropriate corridor implementation and multimodal suitability.

b. 2020-2029 STIP/MPO Transportation Improvement Program Administrative Modifications #20-5

Mr. Kozlosky stated that this administrative modification would be to delay the Drysdale Drive Extension from fiscal year 2021 to fiscal year 2022. He noted that this item is for information purposes only and will return to the Committee for consideration at its next meeting.

7) Updates

- a. Wilmington Urban Area MPO
- b. Cape Fear Public Transportation Authority
- c. NCDOT Division
- d. NCDOT Transportation Planning Division

Mr. Kozlosky stated that updates are included in the agenda packet. There were no questions on the updates.

8) Announcements

- a. Bike/Pedestrian Committee Meeting - August 11th
- b. Next TCC meeting - August 12th

9) Adjournment

Ms. Bunch made a motion to adjourn. Mr. Kozlosky seconded the motion and the meeting was adjourned unanimously at 10:53 a.m. by rollcall as follows:

Ayes: Mike Kozlosky, Marty Little, Denys Vielkanowitz, Nick Cannon, Mandy Saunders, Robert O'Quinn, Stephanie Ayers, Athina Williams, Ashli Barefoot, Barnes Sutton, Helen Bunch, Sam Shore, Patrick Flanagan, Caitlin Marks, Nazia Sarder, Vanessa Lacer. **Nays:** None. **Absent:** Jerry Haire, Granseur Dick.

THE ABOVE MINUTES ARE NOT A VERBATIM RECORD OF THE PROCEEDINGS.
THE ENTIRE PROCEEDINGS ARE RECORDED DIGITALLY AS PART OF THIS RECORD.