



WILMINGTON URBAN AREA
METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION

MPO Board Remote Meeting Minutes
Wilmington Convention Center, 10 Convention Center Drive, Wilmington, N.C.
Wednesday, July 29, 2020

Members Present In-person

David Piepmeyer, Pender County
Frank Williams, Brunswick County

Members Present Remotely

Pat Batleman, Town of Leland
Chuck Bost, Town of Belville
LeAnn Pierce, Town of Carolina Beach
John Ellen, Town of Kure Beach
Hank Miller, Town of Wrightsville Beach
Rob Zapple, New Hanover County
Eulis Willis, Town of Navassa

Others Present In-person

Mike Kozlosky, Executive Director, WMPO
Abby Lorenzo, Deputy Director, WMPO
Zachary Manfredi, Associate Transportation
Planner, WMPO
Scott A. James, Transportation Planning
Engineer, WMPO

1) Call to Order

Chairman Piepmeyer called the remote meeting to order at 3:05 p.m.

MPO Executive Director Mike Kozlosky took rollcall pursuant to Section 4.31 of S.L. 2020-3, SB 704, as follows:

Present: David Piepmeyer, Pat Batleman, Chuck Bost, LeAnn Pierce, Hank Miller, Rob Zapple, Frank Williams, and Eulis Willis. **Absent:** Neil Anderson, Charlie Rivenbark, Woody White, John Ellen, and Landon Zimmer.

A quorum was present.

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 no members requested to be excused from this meeting.

4) Approval of the Agenda

Mr. Williams made a motion to approve the Agenda as presented, which was seconded by Vice Chair Batleman. The motion carried unanimously by rollcall as follows:

Ayes: David Piepmeyer, Pat Batleman, Chuck Bost, LeAnn Pierce, John Ellen, Hank Miller, Rob Zapple, Frank Williams, and Eulis Willis. **Nays:** None. **Absent:** Neil Anderson, Charlie Rivenbark, Woody White, and Landon Zimmer.

5) Public Comment Period

Mr. Kozlosky reported that no written or audio public comments were received.

6) Consent Agenda

- a. Approval of Board Meeting Minutes from June 24, 2020
- b. Resolution approving 2018-2027 and 2020-2029 STIP/MPO Transportation Improvement Program Amendments #20-1, #20-2 and #20-3
- c. Resolution supporting FY 21 Unified Planning Work Program Amendment #1
- d. Resolution supporting applications for the deployment of CASSI in the City of Wilmington and Town of Carolina Beach

Mr. Ellen made a motion to approve the Consent Agenda, Items 6a through 6d, which was seconded by Vice Chair Batleman. The motion carried unanimously by rollcall as follows:

Ayes: David Piepmeyer, Pat Batleman, Chuck Bost, LeAnn Pierce, John Ellen, Hank Miller, Rob Zapple, Frank Williams, and Eulis Willis. **Nays:** None. **Absent:** Neil Anderson, Charlie Rivenbark, Woody White, and Landon Zimmer.

Mr. Chuck Bost, Town of Belville, stated that he is present in place of Mayor Allen.

7) Regular Agenda

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

MPO Deputy Director Abby Lorenzo gave an update on the final draft of the Cape Fear Moving Forward 2045 Plan. She stated that at the direction of the MPO Board in June, staff held three additional open houses virtually at the beginning of July, during which a total of 17 individuals submitted 20 comments. These comments have been appended to the plan.

In response to an inquiry by Chairman Piepmeyer, Ms. Lorenzo stated that the additional open houses were valuable in drawing media attention and press coverage, and in further interacting with the public regarding the future of transportation in the region. She added that within the last few weeks, MPOs, both within and outside of the state, and organizations such as NCDOT contacted staff for best practices regarding the MPO's virtual public outreach efforts. Also, the National Association of MPOs' newsletter reported on the virtual meetings. She noted that staff plans to continue the virtual component of public outreach in the future.

Ms. Lorenzo stated that input from the virtual meetings brings the total number of public comments to 87, plus 26 formatting or typographical-related comments from staff. She noted that three comments received during the initial phase of public outreach questioned cost estimates or project redundancy, and resulted in staff recommending additional roadway and bicycle and pedestrian projects be added to the fiscally constrained lists.

Additionally, the appendices have been amended with proposed scopes and cross sections for the fiscally constrained projects in the aviation, bicycle and pedestrian, ferry and water, freight and freight rail, and public transportation categories. Ms. Lorenzo stated that at the request of the Port of Wilmington, language was added to help secure future federal grants. She added that staff expanded the degree of impact analysis for fiscally constrained bicycle and pedestrian and public transportation projects, and provided a table of potential mitigation strategies.

Next steps include the MPO Board considering the final draft of the plan for approval. Ms. Lorenzo noted that presentations at member jurisdictions are scheduled for August and September. The final step will be for the Board to consider the final plan for adoption in October or November.

Mr. Ellen made a motion to approve the final draft of Cape Fear Moving Forward 2045 Plan, which was seconded by Mr. Williams.

Mr. Zapple expressed concerns regarding budgetary constraints and questioned the project timelines. Ms. Lorenzo pointed out that NCDOT's cash flow issues occurred within the last six months after most of the plan had been developed. She commented that these challenges will be reflected in the financial forecast for the 2050 plan, and that it will be important to have a plan ready for when funding becomes available.

Chairman Piepmeyer called the question. The motion to approve the final draft carried unanimously by rollcall as follows:

Ayes: David Piepmeyer, Pat Batleman, Chuck Bost, LeAnn Pierce, John Ellen, Hank Miller, Rob Zapple, Frank Williams, and Eulis Willis. **Nays:** None. **Absent:** Neil Anderson, Charlie Rivenbark, Woody White, and Landon Zimmer.

8) **Discussion**

a. **Congestion Management Process 2020 Biennial Report**

Associate Transportation Planner Zachary Manfredi gave an update on the 2020 Congestion Management Process (CMP). He noted that the CMP is a methodical, data driven approach to managing traffic congestion regionally. He added that federal law requires all regions designated as a Transportation Management Areas (TMA) with populations greater than 200,000 to develop this process. He noted that the Wilmington Urban Area became a TMA in 2012, and that the MPO Board adopted its first CMP in 2014 with system monitoring reports on a biennial basis.

Mr. Manfredi stated that in anticipation of the proposed adoption of the Cape Fear Moving Forward 2045 Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) this fall, staff began a review of the process. He pointed out that although the report is a federally required document, the process is flexible in that it provides some leeway for regional traffic differences. He noted that the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) created a guidebook in 2011 outlining eight steps for the process, of which the MPO is currently half-way through. He added that since biennial data collection is by far the most intensive step, staff has developed goals/objectives and measures aligned with the MTP.

Mr. Manfredi stated that staff reviewed the traffic network of 30 total corridors. He noted that 25 were retained from the 2018 CMP, and five were changed to accommodate new data elements. He added that two performance measures, travel time/reliability and multimodal performance, were defined due to consistency with the plan objectives. Data collection, being the most labor-intensive step, involved collaboration with NCDOT, Wave Transit, City of Wilmington, WMPO, and a consultant, Kittleson. Data included travel and delay time, crashes, vehicle volume, and bicycle and pedestrian counts. New to this process is the use of a large sample size of raw data from the National Performance Management Research Data Set (NPMRDS), which has been analyzed by the consultant.

Mr. Manfredi stated that staff next plans to meet with planners and stakeholders from our local jurisdictions in August to identify congestion management strategies for each of the 30 monitored corridors. He noted that the CMP Biennial Report is anticipated to be considered for adoption in late 2020.

Chairman Piepmeyer expressed appreciation.

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

Mr. Kozlosky stated that that this item is for information purposes. He noted that this administrative modification is to delay the Drysdale Drive Extension Project from fiscal year 2021 to fiscal year 2022. He added that no action is required at this time and that it will be brought back to the MPO Board for consideration at its next meeting.

c. MPO Funding Release Recommendation

Mr. Kozlosky stated that the memo included in the agenda packet outlines staff's recommendation to release of some of the MPO's Direct Attributable (DA) funds. He reminded the Board that NCDOT is undergoing some cash management issues, and the Department indicated that the MPO should suspend all local DA funded projects. Since then, staff has worked with the Federal Highway Administration and NCDOT to release funds, of which NCDOT has agreed to release \$754,302 in DA funds and \$262,482 in INFRA funds. Staff recommends pursuing a swap of INFRA funds, which need to be utilized on highway projects, with state DA monies. This will allow funds to be used for multimodal transportation efforts, and staff recommends the following:

- Allow New Hanover County to complete construction of the Middle Sound Loop Multiuse Path Project from Oyster Lane to Middle Sound Village;
- Proceed with design of MPO offices at 525 North 4th Street;
- Allow Town of Belville proceed with designs of the Rice Hope Multi-use Path and the Belville Elementary Multi-use Path;
- Hold in reserve \$619,901 for the Town of Leland's D, I, J and K Projects with bids that exceeded the engineer's estimates (rebid opening scheduled for August 27th) - these projects have temporary construction easements due to expire

Mr. Kozlosky stated that NCDOT has indicated that it would provide additional allocations. He noted that staff will bring forward additional recommendations as those funds are released.

Mr. Zapple expressed concerns about the status of the Military Cutoff Extension Project and the Hampstead Bypass Project. Mr. Kozlosky responded that the MPO has 33 projects in the DA program, and that staff has made recommendations based upon readiness of the projects. He pointed out that only \$619,901 has been earmarked for the Town of Leland although \$3.5 million is the anticipated need. He added that the Military Cutoff Extension Project and the Hampstead Bypass Project are much larger projects, included in the State Transportation Improvement Plan (STIP) and not in the DA program, which totals about \$4 million a year.

In response to an inquiry by Mr. Ellen, Mr. Kozlosky requested that the Board consider supporting staff's recommendations as a whole.

Mr. Zapple made a motion to support staff's recommendations, which was seconded by Mr. Ellen. The motion carried unanimously by rollcall as follows:

Ayes: David Piepmeyer, Pat Batleman, Chuck Bost, LeAnn Pierce, John Ellen, Hank Miller, Rob Zapple, Frank Williams, and Eulis Willis. **Nays:** None. **Absent:** Neil Anderson, Charlie Rivenbark, Woody White, and Landon Zimmer.

d. **2020 Meeting Calendar**

Chairman Piepmeyer stated that he requested this item.

Mr. Kozlosky stated that staff has reviewed the calendar, and, due to the COVID pandemic, has identified an opportunity to amend the adopted meeting schedule to eliminate MPO Board meetings in August and October.

In response to an inquiry by Mr. Ellen, Mr. Kozlosky stated that an additional meeting could be called should the need to convene arise.

Mr. Ellen made a motion to amend the 2020 meeting calendar.

In response to an inquiry by Vice Chair Batleman, Mr. Kozlosky clarified that the MPO Board would meet on November 18, 2020, which coincides with the date that the MPO must adopt its plan.

Vice Chair Batleman seconded the motion to remove the August and October MPO meetings.

Mr. Zapple expressed concerns regarding potentially burdensome agendas to compensate for the omitted meetings. Mr. Kozlosky commented that staff has concluded that the remaining meetings would be manageable in this case, and that a special meeting could be called if necessary.

Mr. Kimes stated that NCDOT anticipates the STIP program will have a few schedule changes in August and only allow 30 to 60 days for review and comments. He pointed out that the changes will need to be approved by the first week in October.

Chairman Piepmeyer requested that the changes be forwarded to the MPO Board members for review in advance of the meeting.

Following further consideration, Chairman Piepmeyer called the question and the motion to amend the 2020 MPO Meeting Calendar carried unanimously by rollcall as follows:

Ayes: David Piepmeyer, Pat Batleman, Chuck Bost, LeAnn Pierce, John Ellen, Hank Miller, Rob Zapple, Frank Williams, and Eulis Willis. **Nays:** None. **Absent:** Neil Anderson, Charlie Rivenbark, Woody White, and Landon Zimmer.

9) **Updates**

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

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

10) **Announcements**

- a. **Next Bike Ped Committee meeting – August 11th, 2020**
- b. **Acknowledgement of the MPO's new Transportation Planning Engineer, Scott A. James, PE**
Mr. James expressed appreciation and gave a brief overview of his professional background.
- c. **Next MPO Board meeting – September 30th, 2020**

11) **Adjournment**

In response to an inquiry by Mr. Zapple, Mr. Kozlosky stated that TransPro Consulting is completing a study and recommendations for the potential restructuring and rerouting of routes for Wave Transit. He noted that the Wave Board received an update from TransPro in July. Following that, TransPro met with Wave Transit staff and both are currently working together to review the recommendations. TransPro will return on August 3rd and 4th to lock itself in a room with Wave staff prior to delivering the final unified report and recommendations to the Wave Board.

Mr. Zapple expressed concerns regarding the impact to public transportation in the region and requested discussion by the MPO Board. Mr. Kozlosky responded that the Wave Board could consider action on the recommendations in August. He noted that staff has provided the report and recommendations to the MPO Board. However, the Wave Board will make the final decision on any restructuring or rerouting. Although, the MPO has provided some STBGP-DA funds to Wave in the past, staff would not recommend that Board provide the funds to Wave since the federal government provided funds from the CARES Act.

Chairman Piepmeyer stated that periodically over the last few years, the MPO has awarded funds to subsidize operations. However, these were not otherwise identified for spending.

With no further business to discuss, Mr. Ellen made a motion to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Mr. Williams. The motion carried unanimously by rollcall as follows:

Ayes: David Piepmeyer, Pat Batleman, Chuck Bost, LeAnn Pierce, John Ellen, Hank Miller, Rob Zapple, Frank Williams, and Eulis Willis. **Nays:** None. **Absent:** Neil Anderson, Charlie Rivenbark, Woody White, and Landon Zimmer.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:26 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 DIGITALLY AS PART OF THIS RECORD.