



WILMINGTON URBAN AREA
METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION

MPO Board Meeting Minutes
6th Floor Training Conference Room, 320 Chestnut Street, Wilmington, N.C.
Wednesday, November 18, 2020

Members Present (In-person)

David Piepmeyer, Pender County
Pat Batleman, Town of Leland
Rob Zapple, New Hanover County

Members Present (Remote)

Neil Anderson, City of Wilmington
Charlie Rivenbark, City of Wilmington
Mike Allen, Town of Belville
Steve Shuttleworth, Town of Carolina Beach
John Ellen, Town of Kure Beach
Hank Miller, Town of Wrightsville Beach
Frank Williams, Brunswick County
Eulis Willis, Town of Navassa
Landon Zimmer, NC Board of Transportation

Others Present (In-person)

Mike Kozlosky, Executive Director, WMPO
Chad Kimes, NCDOT Division Engineer,
Abby Lorenzo, Deputy Director, WMPO
Caitlin Marks, NCDOT Division Planning Engineer
Matt Nichols, MPO Attorney

Others Present (Remote)

Zachary Manfredi, WMPO
Allison Fluit, Kimley-Horn

1) Call to Order

Chairman Piepmeyer called the remote meeting to order at 3:01 p.m.

Executive Director Mike Kozlosky took a rollcall pursuant to Section 4.31 of S.L. 2020-3, SB 704.
A quorum was found to be present as follows:

Present: David Piepmeyer, Pat Batleman, Charlie Rivenbark, Mike Allen, Steve Shuttleworth, John Ellen, Hank Miller, Rob Zapple, Frank Williams, Eulis Willis and Landon Zimmer. **Absent:** Neil Anderson and Woody White.

2) Conflict of Interest Statement

Chairman Piepmeyer read the conflict of interest statement and asked if any member has a conflict with any of the items on the meeting agenda. No members reported having a conflict.

3) Approval of Board Members' Excused Absences

Executive Director Mike Kozlosky stated that no members have requested to be excused from this meeting.

4) Approval of the Agenda

Mr. Zapple made a motion to approve the Agenda as presented. Vice Chair Batleman seconded the motion carried unanimously by rollcall as follows:

Ayes: David Piepmeyer, Pat Batleman, Charlie Rivenbark, Mike Allen, Steve Shuttleworth, John Ellen, Hank Miller, Rob Zapple, Frank Williams, Eulis Willis and Landon Zimmer. **Nays:** None. **Absent:** Neil Anderson and Woody White.

5) Public Comment Period

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

6) **Presentations**

a. **FHWA/FTA 2020 Wilmington MPO Certification Review - Bill Marley, FHWA**

Mr. Bill Marley, Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), gave an overview of the MPO's Certification Review. He said that every four years the Federal Highway Administration and Federal Transit Administration certify the metropolitan planning process in the larger MPOs, those with over 200,000 in population including Wilmington. Back in July, FHWA held a virtual meeting instead of a day-long, onsite meeting to discuss the planning products that the MPO produces such as the Planning Work Program, the Transportation Improvements Plan (TIP), public involvement, Title VI, environmental justice, etc.

Mr. Marley said that three commendations were cleared in the findings, and one recommendation. He noted that commendations were as follows:

- Citizens Advisory Committee, a bonified committee to assist with updating the WMPO's plan;
- Innovative public outreach; and
- Freight providers in the planning process, which are difficult to bring to the table due to their proprietary nature.

Mr. Marley said that the recommendation regarding environmental justice, Title VI, is to further analyze past projects to assure that the cumulative effects of benefits and burdens to the minority and low-income populations are considered. He noted that it's important to make sure that highways, transit lines, and transportation facilities including sidewalks, don't adversely affect minority and low income populations. He pointed out that this is not unique to one MPO.

Mr. Marley stated that the WMPO is certified for four years from the date of the report, July 7, 2020. He noted that the next certification is due July 7, 2024. He expressed appreciation to the MPO Board for the opportunity to present the findings.

Chairman Piepmeyer expressed appreciation to Mr. Marley.

b. **2020 Congestion Management Process Draft Report - Zachary Manfredi, WMPO**

Deputy Director Abby Lorenzo stated that MPO staff has been working over the past year on an update to the Biennial Report for the Congestion Management Process (CMP). She noted that at the MPO Board's last meeting, Kittelson and Associates gave a presentation on the data in preparation for this report. She noted that a draft of the report is included in the agenda packet, which will be brought back to the MPO Board for consideration at its next meeting.

Associate Transportation Planner Zachary Manfredi gave a presentation on the 2020 Congestion Management Process (CMP) Biennial Report. He noted that the CMP is a federally required process for all Transportation Management Areas (TMAs) of populations greater than 200,000. Although guidelines are provided by the Federal Highways Administration (FHWA), the process gives MPOs latitude on how to develop the report. He noted that last month, Kittelson & Associates reported on the National Performance Management Research Data Set (NPMRDS) for this report. Since then, staff has analyzed the data, and met with stakeholders from NCDOT, New Hanover, Brunswick and Pender counties to receive feedback on strategies, which have been organized and compiled.

Mr. Manfredi gave an overview of the findings. He noted that the regional objectives offer a summary of the status of the roadways in the region. He added that the objectives were

developed to align with the seven goals of the Cape Fear Moving Forward 2045 Metropolitan Transportation Plan (Safe, Efficient, Reliable, Realistic, Multimodal, Environmentally and Socially Responsible, and Innovative). He gave an overview of the associated regional performance measures and metrics.

Mr. Manfredi said that this year, 14 regional maps have been added to the report to help visualize the results. For example, the Volume/Capacity map illustrates the high traffic corridors of the Cape Fear Memorial Bridge, College Road, Market Street, and Carolina Beach Road that connect residential areas to the centralized destinations of downtown, midtown and the university. Segment snapshots give a more in-depth look. The Pedestrian Sustainability map includes shaded areas indicating the density of pedestrian infrastructure. He explained that these are just some of the tools used to analyze congestion in the region.

Mr. Manfredi gave an overview of corridor scoring. He noted that travel time and multi-modal infrastructure scores were created using metrics with each receiving individual scores. He pointed out that corridors have congestion for different reasons. For travel time, for example, Market Street from College Road to NC-140 is probably the most congested road in the region with high volume, accidents, and traffic signals lending to unreliability. College Road from Gordon Road to Wilshire Boulevard also scored high with volume and crashes; although, it less traffic signals, which improves reliability slightly. Front Street, has high volume, some of which due to trucks, which decreases reliability.

As for multi-modal infrastructure, Mr. Manfredi said that 17th Street/16th Street scored well having good accommodations and only moderate crash rates. Independence Boulevard with a multi-use path scored well with good accommodations and a low crash rate due to the separation between vehicles and bicycles and pedestrians. Although Randall Parkway also has a multi-use path, it has many conflict points, which lead to higher crash rates, resulting in a lower score.

Mr. Manfredi pointed out that most CMPs provide regional analysis, scoring level, and one large map. Historically, the WMPO has provided a greater depth of analysis with segment snapshots of each corridor that include scores, planned projects, and additional strategies. This report serves as a starting point for a true corridor analysis.

Mr. Manfredi explained the context of the CMP within the transportation planning process. He said that its development is guided by corridors and goals of the 30-plus-year Comprehensive Transportation Plan (CTP). He noted that analysis in the CMP can be used to identify additional strategies for inclusion in the 20-plus-year Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) from which projects move to the 10-year MPO Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP). As a part of the submittal process, data is used to help prioritize projects. The CMP serves to support projects that enter the MPO's TIP process. Regarding the timeline for CMPs, two more updates will be completed before the adoption of the 2050 MTP, and an additional prioritization process will likely occur before the adoption of the State and MPO TIP, which may be influenced by the CMP findings.

Mr. Manfredi said that two future considerations to improve the CMP include data sources and non-recurring congestion. He noted that as a data-driven document, staff strives to keep the CMP updated with the latest technology and analysis tools. The NPMRDS has significantly expanded the CMP data sets from tens of runs for travel time to thousands of runs. He added that data collection for transit, bicycle, and pedestrians would improve the report in the future. Also, most CMPs focus

on recurring congestion that is easily identifiable. Yet, seasonal travel/tourism, special events, traffic incidents, and weather also contribute to traffic congestion. He commented that NPMRDS will play a larger role in collecting this data.

In response to an inquiry by Mr. Zapple, Ms. Lorenzo stated that most of the data for this report was collected late last year. She noted that staff has not begun monitoring the data since the onset of the COVID-19 restrictions. It will likely be reflected in the 2022 report.

7) **Consent Agenda**

- a. **Approval of Board Meeting Minutes from September 30, 2020**
- b. **Resolution adopting the 2021 Meeting Calendar**
- c. **Resolution authorizing the Chairman to enter into an agreement between the City of Wilmington, Wilmington Urban Area Metropolitan Planning Organization and Cape Fear Public Transportation Authority for the FY 21 Section 5303 Funding**
- d. **Resolution approving the 2020-2029 STIP/MPO TIP Amendment #20-4**
- e. **Resolution approving the 2020-2029 STIP/MPO Transportation Improvement Program Administrative Modifications #20-6**
- f. **Opening of the 30-day Public Comment Period for 2020-2029 STIP/MPO TIP Amendment #20-5**

Mr. Zapple made a motion to approve the Consent Agenda, Items 7a through 7f. Vice Chair Batleman seconded the motion and it carried unanimously by rollcall as follows:

Ayes: David Piepmeyer, Pat Batleman, Charlie Rivenbark, Mike Allen, Steve Shuttleworth, John Ellen, Rob Zapple, Frank Williams, Eulis Willis, Landon Zimmer, and Neil Anderson. **Nays:** None. **Absent:** Hank Miller and Woody White.

8) **Regular Agenda**

- a. **Resolution adopting Cape Fear Moving Forward 2045 and the 2045 Wilmington Regional Travel Demand Model**

Mr. Kozlosky pointed out that this item is cause for celebration.

Ms. Lorenzo stated that since the final draft of Cape Fear Moving Forward 2045 was approved in July by the MPO Board, staff has been sharing highlights of the Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP). She noted that official adoption of the plan will satisfy federal requirements for the update and adoption of the MTP every five years and will replace Cape Fear Transportation 2040 with a transportation plan through 2045. This collaborative plan development effort, ongoing for the past three years, has been successful due to the dedication and support of the MPO's members, planning partners and citizens. Staff recommends passage of this resolution.

Mr. Kozlosky expressed appreciation to staff and the Board as well as to stakeholders for their efforts during the past three years. He commented that he has been involved with the drafting of four such plans and this is the best so far.

There being no further comments or questions, Mr. Ellen made a motion to adopt the Cape Fear Moving Forward 2045 and the 2045 Wilmington Regional Travel Demand Model. Mr. Zapple seconded the motion, and it carried unanimously by rollcall as follows:

Ayes: David Piepmeyer, Pat Batleman, Neil Anderson, Charlie Rivenbark, Mike Allen, Steve Shuttleworth, John Ellen, Hank Miller, Rob Zapple, Frank Williams, and Eulis Willis and Landon Zimmer. **Nays:** None. **Absent:** Woody White.

b. Resolution adopting the Wilmington Rail Trail Master Plan

Ms. Lorenzo noted that in the summer of 2019, the Friends of the Wilmington Rail Trail applied to the MPO Board to fund the development of a master plan for the vacant NCDOT-owned rail corridor in downtown Wilmington. The Board awarded the group \$40,000 towards the cost of plan development. The Friends of the Wilmington Rail Trail in partnership with WMPO staff and Kimley-Horn kicked off the endeavor in January 2020, which was modified due to the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. She acknowledged the remote presence of Allison Fluitt, Kimley-Horn, to give a presentation on the Wilmington Rail Trail Master Plan.

Ms. Fluitt expressed appreciation to the MPO Board and gave a brief overview of the plan process and a summary of outreach, which included small group interviews of 18 community organizations, 10 of which were virtual. A press release in collaboration with the City of Wilmington was launched in September to raise awareness of the effort and to build support with a YouTube video (https://youtu.be/MJD6j4h3_Zw) that received more than 650 views. Outreach transitioned to a public survey, which was visited by more than 1,900 participants, resulting in more than 2,400 written comments. Recreation and exercise were the top reasons for visiting the trail. The top three benefits of the trail were identified as a generally improved facility, improved quality of life, and enhanced connections to downtown/northside destinations. More than 1,000 comments expressed support for aesthetic and educational elements along the trail.

Ms. Fluitt said the master plan gives some background and history of the Wilmington Rail Trail area starting with the importance of the railroad to northside community. Also included in the plan are vision and goals of the rail trail, and multi-modal linkage opportunities (school, work, etc.).

Ms. Fluitt said the recommendations illustrate a conceptual layout of the six-block trail from 3rd Street to McRae Street, connecting to the Cape Fear Community College Multi-use Path and the Riverwalk, and having four access points (3rd Street parking lot, North 5th Avenue ADA entrance, North 8th Street/Brunswick Street, and McRae Street). A three-phased implementation in conjunction with NCDOT is recommended. Other recommendations include public art and local history. Next steps involve identifying funding for preliminary engineering on a functional design. Total preliminary construction costs are estimated at about \$5.4 million, which excludes stormwater retrofits and soft costs such as public art.

Ms. Fluitt stated that the master plan will go to the City Council on December 1, 2020 and to the Friends of the Wilmington Rail Trail on December 9th.

In response to an inquiry by Mr. Anderson, Ms. Fluitt stated that the trail would hug the rail and that the preliminary estimate is for the entire length.

In response to an inquiry by Mr. Zapple, Ms. Fluitt said due to the legalities of the green space being owned by NCDOT, it would not be used for recreation, but perhaps an alternate use such as for art installations. She noted that the walking path is 10 to 12 feet in width with grass shoulders on either side.

Mr. Zapple expressed concerns regarding the use of motorized scooters on the trail. Ms. Fluitt commented that the city may decide to limit use to non-motorized use, such as with the Riverwalk; but it's too early to tell. She estimated the length of the trail to be a half mile.

Mr. Anderson made a motion to adopt the Wilmington Rail Trail Master Plan. Mr. Ellen seconded the motion, and it carried unanimously by rollcall as follows:

Ayes: David Piepmeyer, Pat Batleman, Neil Anderson, Charlie Rivenbark, Mike Allen, Steve Shuttleworth, John Ellen, Hank Miller, Rob Zapple, Frank Williams, and Eulis Willis. **Nays:** None.

Absent: Woody White, and Landon Zimmer.

9) **Discussion**

a. **2020-2029 STIP/MPO Transportation Improvement Program Administrative Modifications #20-7**

Mr. Kozlosky stated that that this item is for information purposes only and will be brought back to the MPO Board at its next meeting.

b. **FY22 Budget Discussions**

Mr. Kozlosky stated that staff is working on the Fiscal Year 2022 budget. As such, some things are being considered and will be included in the draft budget for the Board's consideration in January. Staff anticipates occupancy of the new office space at 525 N. 4th Street in January of 2022. Therefore, one half year of operating costs and one-half year of an administrative assistant position will be included in the draft budget. Also, the city has notified the MPO that the city provides indirect costs (HR services, IT support, and other services) to the MPO for which the city may begin to request some reimbursement. Additionally, the MPO has identified planning needs including a potential transit study for northern Brunswick County requested by the Town of Leland. Staff has requested that MPO members provide any planning needs by December 11.

Furthermore, the MPO Board approved the purchase of StreetLight data in the last budget. Due to the pandemic, staff delayed the start of the subscription until January. NCDOT has indicated that it will either purchase StreetLight data or some other data in the future. Therefore, the MPO may be able to remove the purchase out of its budget in the future. Finally, NCDOT has funded 50% of the Transportation Demand Management (TDM) Program since 2016, with the local members contributing the other half of the program. Based on conversations with executive leadership at the Department, it's unknown or unlikely that TDM funds will be available based on the cash management issues. Two options for funding are as follows:

- i. Discontinue the program; or
- ii. Shift funding to Surface Transportation Block Grant Program-Direct Attributable (STBGP-DA)

Mr. Kozlosky stated that with the second option, members would realize a cost savings since the local match is 20% instead of 50%. However, less funds would be available for projects if STBGP-DA funds are used for TDM. Although, the funds are available now, he anticipated that they would be needed in the future. In addition, the MPO Board has previously allocated between \$350,000 and \$500,000 in funding to the Cape Fear Public Transportation Authority. Based on the Authority's receipt of CARES Act funds, staff recommends that the Board not provide STBGP-DA funds to the Transit Authority until the CARES Act funds expire. Weighing the pros and cons, the TDM program is important and provides the purpose of transitioning people from single occupancy vehicles through ride-share, bicycle and pedestrian initiatives. Also, DA funds have greater flexibility, and the program would be budgeted at a reduced amount from \$123,000 to \$100,000. Staff recommends the second option to fund the program with STBGP-DA funds and that the program become more visible.

c. **MPO Direct Attributable (DA) Funding**

Mr. Kozlosky stated that staff is working diligently on a call for DA funds. He noted that the FAST Act expired on September 30, 2020. Congress voted on a continuing resolution and a one-year extension that also provides funding for one additional year of STBGP-DA funds. He anticipated that a call for those funds would be issued next week. Since the funds will only be available for one year, the call is for one year to prevent overprogramming.

10) **Announcements**

a. **Bike/Pedestrian Committee Meeting – December 8, 2020**

11) **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

12) **Closed Session**

Chairman Piepmeyer suggested the Board go into a closed session for the purpose of discussing two separate matters. The first matter is a closed session is to discuss with the MPO Attorney matters within the attorney-client privilege related to the following pending lawsuit: Jamestown Pender v. North Carolina Department of Transportation and the Wilmington Urban Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (Case Number 14-CVS-528, Pender County). The second matter is closed session pursuant to the North Carolina General Statute Section 143-318.11(a)(1) to prevent the disclosure of information that is privileged or confidential pursuant to the law of this state or the United States or not considered a public record within the meaning of chapter 132 of the general statutes, citation of the law that renders the information to be discussed privileged or confidential North Carolina General Statute Section 132-1.2, Subsection 1, and 8 and 9.

Vice-Chair Batleman seconded the motion and it carried unanimously by rollcall as follows:

Ayes: David Piepmeyer, Pat Batleman, Neil Anderson, Charlie Rivenbark, Mike Allen, Steve Shuttleworth, John Ellen, Hank Miller, Rob Zapple, Frank Williams, and Eulis Willis. **Nays:** None.

Absent: Woody White, and Landon Zimmer.

The MPO Board meeting resumed open session with all present as follows:

Present: David Piepmeyer, Pat Batleman, Neil Anderson, Charlie Rivenbark, Mike Allen, John Ellen, Hank Miller, Rob Zapple, Frank Williams and Eulis Willis. **Absent:** Steve Shuttleworth, Woody White and Landon Zimmer.

Chairman Piepmeyer stated that no action was taken in closed session.

13) **Adjournment**

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

Ayes: David Piepmeyer, Pat Batleman, Neil Anderson, Charlie Rivenbark, Mike Allen, John Ellen, Hank Miller, Rob Zapple, Frank Williams, and Eulis Willis. **Nays:** None. **Absent:** Steve Shuttleworth, Woody White, and Landon Zimmer.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:49 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.