

MPO Board Meeting Minutes
6th Floor Training Conference Room, 320 Chestnut Street
Wednesday, February 26, 2020

Members Present

David Piepmeyer, Pender County
Pat Batleman, Town of Leland
Neil Anderson, City of Wilmington
Charlie Rivenbark, City of Wilmington
Woody White, Cape Fear Public Transportation
Authority
Mike Allen, Town of Belville
LeAnn Pierce, Town of Carolina Beach

Hank Miller, Town of Wrightsville Beach
Rob Zapple, New Hanover County
Mike Forte, Brunswick County
Eulis Willis, Town of Navassa

Others Present

Mike Kozlosky, Executive Director, WMPO
Chad Kimes, NCDOT Highway Division 3

1. Call to Order

Chairman Piepmeyer called the meeting to order at 3:00 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 John Ellen and Mike Alford have requested to be excused from the meeting.

Mr. Rivenbark made a motion to excuse the absences of Mr. Ellen and Mr. Alford. Mr. Miller seconded the motion, and it carried unanimously.

4. Approval of the Agenda

Vice Chair Batleman made a motion to approve the agenda as presented, seconded by Mr. Allen, and the motion carried unanimously.

5. Public Comment Period

Carl Parker, President, Brunswick County NAACP, spoke to the MPO Board and gave some background regarding the NAACP. Mr. Parker acknowledged the presence of NAACP member, Brayton Willis, who shared some information regarding a topic from a recent meeting.

Mr. Willis spoke to the MPO Board and gave a presentation, of which he distributed copies. He stated that a group in Southport had questions for the NAACP regarding improving evacuation routes. He noted that their interest was similar to the NAACP's letter of November 11, 2019 entitled "Looking Forward to 2050," and to a 2012 request to expand the MPO all the way to Southport in Brunswick County.

Chairman Piepmeyer clarified that Mr. Willis is the second speaker who signed up today and that he is requesting, on behalf of the NAACP, to add the City of Southport, the City of Boiling Springs Lakes, the Town of Bolivia, the Military Ocean Terminal Sunny Point (MOTSU), the Brunswick Nuclear Generation Station, and the Southport Terminal/Fort Fisher Ferry to the MPO's planning and study area.

Mr. Willis stated that he spoke with Patrick Flanagan of the Rural Planning Organization (RPO) at the Council of Governments (COG), Iona Thomas, Vice Chair, Board of Trustees, East Coast Greenway, and a number of citizens and members of the NAACP Branch. He gave an overview of reasons to support an expansion, and pros and cons of doing so.

Town of Leland Mayor Brenda Bozeman and Barry Donaghue, the next speakers on the list, yielded their time to Mr. Willis.

Mr. Willis continue to elaborate on the benefits of an MPO expansion. He expressed a desire to create the NC-133 Gullah Geechee Corridor. He noted that the Grand Strand MPO (Grand Strand Area Transportation Study or GSATS) is involved in North Carolina with NCDOT and a few North Carolina communities represented on its board. He pointed out that Brunswick County, the fastest growing county in North Carolina and the fourth largest in the country, is served by three transportation planning organizations (RPO, GSATS, and MPO). He expressed a desire for seamless and unified transportation planning for Brunswick County, to expand the Cape Fear Crossing study area beyond Town Creek, and to support for designating NC-133 as a Gullah Geechee Corridor and integrating it into the East Coast Greenway.

Mr. Andy Koepfel spoke to the MPO Board regarding today's proposed Prioritization 6.0 Rail Submittals on pages 77 and 78 of the agenda, Items 2 and 4. He commented that he is a proponent of restoring the rail connection between Castle Hayne and Wallace, which also mentions freight, and that one of the components of the Multi-Modal Transportation Center is passenger rail, which would need to access the Castle Hayne to Wallace connection. He requested that the two items be linked, or denoted as two phases of the same project. He noted that a representative of CSX at a rail meeting yesterday at the Rachel Freeman School, suggested CSX would be interested in maintaining the section; but not in financing restoration of the rail. He pointed out that land is available to be purchased and developed, and invited anyone interested to join the efforts of Pender County developers.

6. Presentation

a. Recognition of Citizen Advisory Committee (CAC) members

Chairman Piepmeyer acknowledged the efforts of the Citizens Advisory Committee members toward the completion of the draft Cape Fear Moving Forward 2045 Metropolitan Transportation Plan. He recognized each of the CAC members and presented Chair Laura Padgett, and Members Web Bostic, Harold King, Neal Andrew and Brayton Willis with a small token of the MPO's appreciation.

7. Consent Agenda

a. Approval of Board Meeting Minutes from January 22, 2020

b. Resolution approving 2018-2027 and 2020-2029 STIP/MPO Transportation Improvement Program Administrative Modification #20-1

c. Resolution supporting the WAVE Connect Advisory Committee's recommendations for the Award of the Section 5310 Community Grant Project Funds

d. Resolution authorizing the Executive Director to enter into an Inter-local Software Usage Agreement for the Rideshare Matching, Commute Calendar & Incentive Software Contract

Mr. Kozlosky requested to pull Item 7a for further consideration.

Mr. Zapple pulled Item 7d for clarification.

Mr. Rivenbark made a motion to approve Consent Agenda Items 7b and 7c as presented. Mr. Allen seconded the motion, and it carried unanimously.

Mr. Kozlosky stated that Item 7a needs to be amended to show the attendance of Mike Allen instead of Charles Bost.

Mr. Miller made a motion to approve as amended Item 7a, the MPO Board Meeting Minutes of January 27th. Mr. Forte seconded the motion, and it carried unanimously.

Regarding, Item 7d, Mr. Zapple inquired about liability to the MPO in providing software for rideshare matching. Mr. Kozlosky responded that legal counsel reviewed and did not find any issue with the agreement. He noted that legal counsel would need to advise on any liability.

Mr. Rivenbark made a motion to table Item 7d authorizing the software usage agreement for rideshare matching. Mr. Zapple seconded the motion, and it carried unanimously.

8. Regular Agenda

a. Opening of the 30-day public comment period for Cape Fear Moving Forward 2045

Mr. Kozlosky noted that copies of the Cape Fear Moving Forward 2045 draft plan have been distributed to each member today. He commended the efforts of staff and the Citizens Advisory Committee in preparing the draft plan. He commented that countless hours went into the development of the plan, and that the best product has been produced for this region for the next 25 years.

Mr. Kozlosky stated that the next step is public outreach. He requested that the MPO Board consider opening the 30-day public comment period, which is required by the MPO's public involvement plan. Additionally, a number of open houses will also be held to receive feedback. Those locations once finalized will be forwarded to MPO Board members by the end of the week.

Mr. Kozlosky requested a motion to open the public comment period.

Mr. Anderson made a motion to open the 30-day public comment period. Mr. Zapple seconded the motion, and it carried unanimously.

b. Resolution authorizing the Wilmington Urban Area Metropolitan Planning Organization to apply for FY 2021 Transportation Demand Management Program (TDM) Funding and Provide the Local Match

Mr. Kozlosky stated that the MPO is required to apply annually for the TDM Grant, and that the MPO has applied and received the grant for the past several years. He added that this Item would authorize an application to the state to continue the program. He noted that the funding is included in the draft Unified Planning Work Program to be considered following this Item. He stated that the funding would be used to fund the Transportation Demand Management Program.

Mr. Forte made a motion to authorize the application for Fiscal Year 2021 TDM Program funding and local match. Mr. Miller seconded the motion, and it carried unanimously.

c. Resolution approving the Wilmington Urban Area Metropolitan Planning Organization's FY 2021 Unified Planning Work Program

Mr. Kozlosky stated that this Resolution is for the MPO's Unified Planning Work Program. He reminded Board members that a draft budget was provided to them at their January meeting.

Vice Chair Batleman made a motion to approve the Fiscal Year 2021 UPWP. Mr. Miller seconded the motion, and it carried unanimously.

d. Resolution certifying the Transportation Planning Process for the Wilmington Urban Area Metropolitan Planning Organization

Mr. Kozlosky stated that this Item would certify the MPO's Transportation Planning Process. He noted that the MPO is required to adopt the process on an annual basis to certify that it conducts transportation planning in a continuing, cooperative and comprehensive manner in compliance with Title VI, DBE requirements and all other requirements.

Mr. Forte made a motion to certify the MPO's Transportation Planning Process. Mr. Zapple seconded the motion, and it carried unanimously.

e. Resolution supporting a cap on the Number of Participants and creating a day of Registration Fee for the River to Sea Bike Ride

Mr. Cannon stated that the Annual River to Sea Bike Ride has grown in popularity over the past several years. Last year, 600 people registered online prior to the event, and between 400 and 450 registrants participated on the day of the event. The Wilmington Police Department, the New Hanover County's Sheriff's Office, and the Wrightsville Beach Police Department who support the event, provided feedback and expressed concerns regarding their ability to safely escort any more than the 450 cyclists. In response to those concerns, the River to Sea Planning Subcommittee recommended capping the 31st Annual Bike Ride at 450 participants via any one of the following options:

1. Cap online registration at 450 with no day-of registration fee;
2. Charge a registration fee of \$15 that includes a ride t-shirt, a bib and packet on the day prior to the event with no day-of registration; or
3. Cap online registration at 450 and charge a day-of registration fee of \$5.

Mr. Cannon stated that the Technical Coordinating Committee (TCC) recommended the third option.

Mr. Zapple expressed concerns regarding a recommendation that could possibly yield a greater number of participants than 450. Mr. Cannon responded that the recommended option is an intermediary and less drastic step that can be amended for future events.

Mr. Rivenbark made a motion to approve the Resolution supporting a cap on the Number of Participants and creating a day of Registration Fee for the River to Sea Bike Ride. Mr. Zapple seconded the motion, and it carried unanimously.

9. Discussion

a. STIP/Locally Administered Projects

Mr. Kozlosky stated that this Item is for information purposes. He reminded members that staff provided a letter from Bobby Lewis identifying that NCDOT is experiencing some cash management issues and requesting that the MPO provide a list of projects with anticipated expenditures to DOT over the next 18 months to evaluate the locally administered projects to move forward. He noted that a list was provided after staff met with each of the municipalities and counties. After reviewing the project schedules, staff identified the monthly allocations for each of the projects, which has been submitted to the state for consideration. Staff is currently awaiting a response from the state.

Mr. Kozlosky stated that if municipalities and counties wish to move forward with expediting the projects through the locally administered program, they can submit invoices for any project started before December. However, municipalities and counties must hold invoices until June for any projects started after December, which should be paid between June of 2020 and January of 2021.

Mr. Kozlosky reminded Board members that these projects are on a reimbursable basis. He noted that the projects are fronted by municipalities or counties who seek reimbursement from the state who, in turn, seeks reimbursement by the federal government. He added that a project suspension list and summary has been provided to the Board. This information identifies projects reinitiated by the Department either previously or in January and tentative re-initiation dates for projects in April or May, and those not in the first five years of the program.

b. 2018-2027 and 2020-2029 STIP/MPO Transportation Improvement Program Administrative Modification #20-2

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

c. Prioritization 6.0 Project Submittals

Ms. Lorenzo stated that included in the agenda packet are memos for draft Prioritization 6.0 project submittals representing five of the six transportation modes. She explained that the Ferry projects in the Cape Fear 2045 Plan are either committed for funding or already programmed in the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). She noted that the Prioritization 6.0 Project Submittals are due by May 1st. She added that staff reviewed the currently adopted 2040 Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) and picked the remaining projects with the exception of bicycle and pedestrian projects. Staff reached out to the member jurisdictions for bike and pedestrian projects included in future Capital Improvement Programs (CIP). Only the Town of Leland responded. She added that this Item will be brought back to the MPO Board at its next meeting.

Mr. Kozlosky stated that bike and pedestrian projects require a 20% local match.

A question/answer and discussion period was held regarding the numbering of projects as priorities. He noted that once the projects are imported into prioritization, they will be scored and ordered. He added that the memos are for local point assignment only.

In response to an inquiry by Mr. Zapple, Ms. Lorenzo stated that cost estimates exist for these projects. She added that the rail line connection from Castle Hayne to Wallace includes a bridge component.

10. 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.

11. Announcements

- a. **NCDOT's CSX Rail Upgrade Public Meetings were held February 24th and 25th**
- b. **NC Ethics Information – Due April 15th (a short form is available)**
- c. **The next WMPO Board meeting – March 25th**

In response to an inquiry by Mr. Zapple, Mr. Kozlosky stated that the widening of Gordon Road to four lanes is on hold.

Mr. Kimes stated that projects in the last five years of the program are on hold due to NCDOT's cash balance impacted by storm costs, Map Act settlement costs, and increased costs for projects. He noted that the Department is reviewing the program so that the existing cash balance can meet the program for the next 10 years. He added that the Department lets projects every month. If there is not enough cash, projects are not let. Additionally, recent storm reimbursements are pending for a portion of this money (Hurricane Florence less than 25%; Hurricane Mathew less than 50%).

In response to an inquiry by Mr. Forte, only Vice Chair Batleman reported full reimbursement from FEMA.

12. Adjournment

With no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 3:53 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.**