

**Citizens Advisory Committee**  
**6<sup>th</sup> Floor Conference Room, 320 Chestnut Street**  
**Wednesday, July 10, 2019**  
**Meeting Minutes**

**Members Present:**

Laura Padgett, City of Wilmington  
Web Bostic, New Hanover County  
Sallie Rochelle, Pender County  
Patrick Boykin, Town of Carolina Beach  
Harold King, Town of Wrightsville Beach  
Stuart Smith, Town of Belville  
Brayton Willis, Town of Leland  
Vanessa Lacer, Cape Fear Public  
Transportation Authority  
Neal Andrew, North Carolina Board of  
Transportation

**Members Absent:**

John Cawthorne, Town of Kure Beach  
David Hollis, Brunswick County  
Valorie Hatten, Town of Navassa  
Jason Windham, City of Wilmington

**Staff Present:**

Abby Lorenzo, Senior Transportation Planner  
Zach Manfredi, Associate Transportation Planner  
Michael Madsen, GIS Analyst

**1. Call to Order**

Chairman Padgett called the meeting to order at 2:02 p.m.

**2. Approval of Agenda**

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

**3. Approval of Minutes – April 10, 2019**

Mr. Smith made a motion to approve the minutes of April 10<sup>th</sup>, seconded by Ms. Rochelle, and the motion carried unanimously.

**4. Cape Fear Moving Forward 2045 Funding Alternatives Forecast Presentation**

Leta Huntsinger gave a brief overview of the process leading up to the Funding Alternatives Forecast for the Cape Fear Moving Forward 2045 Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP). She reminded committee members that WSP prepared the financial forecast, and that WMPO staff provided a systems analysis regarding future growth and development to identify transportation needs and a list of projects to match those needs. She stated that WSP developed project costs based on detailed descriptions provided by WMPO staff.

Ms. Huntsinger stated that the highway project costs and the bicycle/pedestrian project costs were the easiest to estimate due to analytical tools made available by the North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT). However, right-of-way (ROW) costs in this region were more challenging to forecast due to the diversity of land values. She commented that staff provided a more advanced approach to forecast ROW costs than other MPOs in North Carolina. She explained that staff separated the WMPO region into districts, and applied tax parcel data to calculate average costs within each district categorized by land type (residential vs. commercial, vacant vs. occupied).

Ms. Huntsinger stated that costs for public transportation projects relied primarily on data from Wave Transit and its Capital Improvements Program (CIP). Meanwhile, data for newer

transit components came from other agencies. She noted that cost estimates for ferry projects were based on data from NCDOT, which recently purchased a new ferry and other support equipment at the ferry terminal documented in the State Transportation Improvement Plan (STIP). She added that data for the aviation mode came from NCDOT as well as the Wilmington International Airport's CIP. For rail, project costs were sourced from the Wilmington Rail Realignment Feasibility Study and the STIP.

Ms. Huntsinger estimated that the total project cost for all transportation modes in the 2045 MTP is about \$3.47 billion in 2020 dollars, or \$7.25 billion in 2045 dollars. With the \$3.9 billion in projects already programmed in the Transportation Improvements Program (TIP), needs across the region total \$7.4 billion in 2020 dollars. She noted that the costs for the Rail Realignment Project and potential light rail transit have been estimated; but remain separate from the overall summary so as not to distort projections.

Chairman Padgett pointed out that the Rail Realignment Project will include a 10-mile trolley or tram system rather than light rail for reuse of the right-of-way. Ms. Lorenzo responded that the three light rail projects that have been proposed are unrelated to the Wilmington Rail Realignment Project.

Ms. Huntsinger stated that due to the discrepancy between project costs and historic funding, some projects may not be covered fiscally in the plan. She gave an overview of alternative funding sources suggested by the Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC), the Technical Coordinating Committee (TCC), and the MPO Board that may help close the gap, as follows:

Alternative Funding Sources	Amount in 2020 dollars	Notes
<b>Quarter-cent (¼¢) Local Option Sales Tax (General Transportation or Transit)</b>	\$612 million	Adjusted for all of New Hanover County and portions of Brunswick and Pender counties within the MPO boundary
<b>Driver's License Tax (\$5 annual fee)</b>	\$25 million	Population assumptions and data challenges regarding the number of registered vehicles; federal highways
<b>Vehicle Registration Fee (\$7 per vehicle)</b>	\$40 million	Population assumptions and data challenges regarding the number of registered vehicles; federal highways
<b>Vehicle Rental Tax (5%)</b>	\$29 million	New Hanover County only (no car rental agencies currently exist in Brunswick or Pender counties within the MPO boundary)
<b>Bicycle Registration (\$10 annually)</b>	\$7 million	Population assumptions and data challenges in estimating bicycle ownership

Ms. Huntsinger stated that the quarter-cent tax on sales would generate the greatest amount of alternative revenue, followed by the vehicle registration fee.

In response to concerns expressed by Mr. Bostic, Ms. Huntsinger stated that many agencies use the quarter-cent local option sales tax to fund transit projects.

In response to an inquiry by Mr. Andrew, Ms. Lorenzo stated that she would forward a copy of Ms. Huntsinger's presentation to committee members.

**5. Cape Fear Moving Forward 2045 Draft Project Redline Analysis (All Modes)**

Ms. Lorenzo gave an overview of the Cape Fear Moving forward 2045 Draft Project Redline Analysis of ranked projects for each transportation mode. She stated that the proposed projects have been sorted into five-year funding bands from 2020 to 2045 with project costs and projected revenues adjusted with a conservative inflation rate of 3%. She requested feedback from the committee, especially for those modes with a greater number of projects (bicycle/pedestrian, public transportation, and roadway).

Chairman Padgett pointed out that the lists are constrained fiscally due to specific sources of revenue; although other forms of revenue may be available.

Ms. Lorenzo explained that the alternative sources of revenue have not been included in the projections due to the lack of data for sources that have not be tapped previously.

Mr. Willis expressed concerns regarding the inflation rate. Ms. Lorenzo responded that the plan will be updated again in five years, and that the funding year is represented in the analysis. She noted that the aviation mode is unique in that its needs change so rapidly, and that its project lists represent capital projects only.

Chairman Padgett stated that these lists would also be considered by the Technical Coordinating Committee (TCC) and the MPO Board.

Mr. Smith made a motion to approve the Aviation Mode Project Redline Analysis, seconded by Mr. King, and the motion carried unanimously.

Ms. Lacer pointed out that BP-456, College Road Bike Lanes, is incorrectly marked on the map as a public transportation project. Ms. Lorenzo responded that it would be corrected.

A question/answer and discussion period was held regarding bicycle and pedestrian projects. Ms. Padgett advised that the committee may approve the draft redline analysis as presented or propose changes, such as swapping projects in the interest of safety.

Mr. Smith expressed concerns regarding the proportion of Bike/Pedestrian Projects.

Ms. Lorenzo responded that funding for Public Transportation Projects does not include funds for operations and maintenance.

Ms. Huntsinger pointed out that capital expenses for public transportation are less costly.

Ms. Padgett reminded the group that comments from the Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) will be forwarded with the draft redline analysis to the TCC and the MPO Board.

Mr. Bostic expressed concerns regarding moving fiscally constrained projects forward without further input from the modal subcommittees. Chairman Padgett responded that re-engaging only some of the modal subcommittees would skew the process.

Discussion was held regarding projected revenues, ranking, and distribution of funds.

Mr. Smith expressed concerns regarding the \$15 million bike/pedestrian project. Ms. Lorenzo pointed out that the \$15 million project is ranked second.

Chairman Padgett concurred with Mr. Smith and suggested that two or three \$5 million multi-use paths (MUPs) on College Road might be considered in place of bike lanes on roadways with high volumes of traffic.

Ms. Lorenzo responded that the redline analysis to be presented to the TCC next week would include smaller and more affordable projects costing \$5 million or less in the fiscally constrained portion. She added that the higher dollar projects for the region would remain in the plan in out years beyond 2045.

Ms. Lacer pointed out that bike/pedestrians projects are more beneficial than those that serve cyclists only.

Mr. Willis expressed concerns regarding the distribution of projects/benefits to the member jurisdictions. Ms. Padgett responded that this is a complex topic with numerous contributing factors that would require further analysis outside the scope of the current process.

Following further discussion, Mr. Andrew suggested replacing the College Road bike lanes with as many multi-use paths in close proximity to the project as possible.

No questions or concerns were raised regarding the ferry and waterway project lists.

In response to an inquiry by Chairman Padgett, Ms. Lorenzo stated that the FRA grant has been included as an alternative funding source.

Chairman Padgett pointed out that the Port has independent sources of revenue as well.

In response to an inquiry by Mr. Andrew, Chairman Padgett stated that the beltline improvements include signalized crossings, bridges and other improvements to increase the speed of trains.

Regarding the Public Transportation Project List, Mr. Smith commented that similar to bikes, the PT-153, Creekwood On-Demand Service Off-Peak Hours, at a cost of \$760,000, could be replaced with 34 other projects.

Ms. Lorenzo responded that the Public Transportation Subcommittee explored several different approaches, such as amenities and route frequency or additional routes. She noted that projects for amenities are much less expensive.

Mr. Manfredi pointed out that most of the projects selected for the fiscally constrained portion of the list were amenities and that no new routes were included.

Mr. Smith commented that the goal of public transportation should be to increase ridership; however it may best be achieved.

Ms. Lacer pointed out that the price of Project PT-153 is much greater than Wave's estimate for a new route (\$200,000 annually). She noted that the project ranked high on the list (9<sup>th</sup>) due to its criteria (serving an underserved low income neighborhood). She commented that accessibility is just as important as comfort.

In response to an inquiry by Chairman Padgett, Mr. Manfredi stated that the \$1.7 million Multi-modal Transportation Center, Phase 1B Project is funded with an alternative source that was excluded from the forecast, and not funded in the STIP.

Chairman Padgett expressed concerns regarding the cost of light rail and its inclusion in the plan. She commented that tramway systems used in most other cities are significantly less expensive and have the same public perception.

Following a brief discussion, Ms. Lorenzo stated that the rail-related public transportation projects are ranked separately. She noted that no funding source has been identified in the public transportation forecast for rail since no history exists for it in the region; although, funding is obtainable. She reminded the committee that the projects are desired by the public, and the costs are approximate and can be revised with comments by this committee.

Chairman Padgett also expressed concerns regarding the total cost of the Rail Realignment Part B, Alternatives 1, 3, and 5, and requested that the feasibility cost of \$135 million be used instead of the billions of dollars projected in the redline analysis.

Ms. Lacer pointed out that PT-149 on the map is refers to Route 107 and should be Route 201, the high ridership route, instead. She also inquired about PT-5 and PT-155.

Mr. Manfredi responded that these were projects recommended by the public, and are separate from existing routes.

Ms. Lacer pointed out that regarding PT-5, Masonboro Loop Road, Route 302 is not an existing route. Ms. Lorenzo stated that staff would correct it.

Mr. Willis requested that Roadway Project U-4738, Cape Fear Crossing, be removed from the list. He expressed an objection to the project on behalf of the Town of Leland.

Ms. Lorenzo responded that the cost of the STIP project has not been included in the calculations.

Chairman Padgett stated that STIP projects are not generally excluded from the plan.

Ms. Lorenzo reiterated that the recommendations of the CAC for the regional plan will be forwarded to the TCC and the MPO Board.

Mr. Smith questioned the feasibility of RW-106, US-17 to NC-133 Connection. Ms. Lorenzo advised that particular alignments are of less importance since the specifics can change once a project is included in the plan, especially in view of the planning horizon. She noted that the needs and priorities of the region identify the projects. In addition, this project has been submitted continually for the past few rounds of prioritization.

Chairman Padgett pointed out that once a project is included in the plan it can move around.

Mr. Willis expressed concerns regarding the scoring system and streetscapes taking precedence over safety improvements. He pointed out that RW-78, Old Fayetteville Road Widening, ranked 64<sup>th</sup>, and RW-160, Lanvale Road and Old Fayetteville Road Intersection Improvements, ranked 65<sup>th</sup>, are in proximity to schools.

Chairman Padgett reminded committee members that representatives of Brunswick County participated in the modal subcommittees and in identifying the criteria for scoring projects. She commented that the recommendation to advance projects RW-78 and RW-160 above the red line would be forwarded to the TCC and the MPO Board.

Ms. Rochelle expressed concerns regarding the placement of Project RW-166, Sidbury Road/Hampstead Bypass Interchange, at the end of the list.

Ms. Lorenzo responded that RW-166 is an additional interchange. During planning study and design, NCDOT found insufficient demand at Sidbury Road to include an interchange. However, RW-166 was included in the redline analysis in response to those in the Hampstead area who felt the exclusion was a mistake. Currently, the Hampstead Bypass is designed to start at I-140 where Military Cutoff Extension ends and continue along US-17, just north of the high school.

Mr. Smith suggested that the evaluation system for the plan needs to be revisited. Chairman Padgett responded that for the 2050 Plan, the scoring system will be addressed.

Ms. Lorenzo stated that for the 2050 Plan, a different scoring system will be developed. She noted that this is the purpose of the subject matter experts at the subcommittee level.

Mr. Bostic inquired about the group's purpose between now and the next meeting. Chairman Padgett responded that the purpose is to collect and forward comments on the draft redline analysis to the TCC and the MPO Board. She noted that the lists and comments will return to the CAC, the TCC, and the MPO Board before going to the boards of each of the member jurisdictions. She pointed out that the plan needs to be approved unanimously by all entities in order for it to become a plan and for the MPO to receive federal funding.

Ms. Lorenzo stated that for the next meeting of the CAC, staff will bring back finalized lists of projects with comments from the CAC, TCC and MPO Board for a final look.

Mr. Bostic commented that the amount of money proposed for bicycle/pedestrian projects is 25% of roadway's funding, which is too high.

Mr. Smith proposed that bike/pedestrian projects be combined with roadway projects wherever possible to reduce costs. Chairman Padgett responded that this is an existing goal of the City of Wilmington and NCDOT. However, NCDOT often requests that cities and counties fund bike/pedestrian improvements on roadway projects.

Mr. Bostic pointed out that multi-use paths (MUPs) are a better alternative than separate (bicycle or pedestrian) paths.

Mr. King inquired if MUPs are required by the City of Wilmington on new development, similar to it requiring sidewalks. Ms. Lorenzo responded that if a MUP is included in an adopted plan, the city may reference it.

## **6. Additional Items**

Mr. Willis expressed appreciation to MPO staff.

In response to an inquiry by Mr. Bostic, Ms. Lorenzo stated that staff works with the TCC and the MPO Board as well as the CAC.

Ms. Lorenzo acknowledged the absence of Associate Planner Katie Moore, who has accepted a position with Horry County in South Carolina, in closer proximity to her home.

Mr. Madsen stated that he has accepted a GIS Analyst position with NCDOT Division 3, and that his last day is the July 25<sup>th</sup>.

Chairman Padgett expressed appreciation and congratulations to departing staff members.

Ms. Lorenzo expressed regrets and stated that staff is working diligently to fill the vacancies.

**7. Next Meeting**

Ms. Lorenzo pointed out that the work of the CAC is almost complete. She expressed doubts that the committee would meet in October or November. However, it may meet in December to review the draft plan. She added that in early spring 2020, staff will present the plan for public comment. She expressed appreciation to CAC members and MPO staff for their efforts.

Chairman Padgett expressed appreciation to committee members and staff as well.

**8. Adjournment**

With no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 4:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Abby Lorenzo  
Senior Transportation Planner  
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.**