

**Wilmington Urban Area
Technical Coordinating Committee
Wednesday, September 11, 2019
Meeting Minutes**

Members Present

Mike Kozlosky, Wilmington MPO
Don Bennett, City of Wilmington
Nick Cannon, Wilmington MPO
Jerry Haire, Town of Carolina Beach
Nancy Avery, Town of Kure Beach
Danielle Villegas, Town of Wrightsville
Beach
Rebekah Roth, New Hanover County
Stephanie Ayers, North Carolina State
Ports Authority

Cheryl Page, Town of Belville
Ashli Barefoot, Town of Leland
Barnes Sutton, Town of Navassa
Helen Bunch, Brunswick County
Travis Henley, Pender County
Caitlin Marks, NCDOT Division of
Highways
Nazia Sarder, NCDOT Planning
Megan Matheny, Cape Fear Public
Transportation

1) Call to Order

Mr. Kozlosky called the meeting to order at 10:02 a.m.

2) Approval of the Agenda

Ms. Ayers made a motion to approve the agenda as presented, seconded by Ms. Bunch, and the motion carried unanimously.

3) Presentation

a. Prioritization 5.0 Update - Caitlin Marks, NCDOT

Caitlin Marks, NCDOT Division of Highways, gave an update on the State Transportation Improvements Project (STIP) Prioritization 5.0 (P5.0) that the Board of Transportation approved the week before. She gave an overview of NCDOT's cash flow balance with its statutory floor at 7.5% of total revenue or \$250 million. She added that starting in fiscal year 2019, NCDOT was billing below what was targeted. She pointed out that the deviation approaching the red line necessitated some changes.

Ms. Marks stated that severity of storms over the last three years contributed to the downward trend in fund balance. She noted that between fiscal years 2017 and 2019, DOT spent an average \$222 million a year, compared to an average of \$65 million a year between 2004 and 2016. Additionally, reimbursements from the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) are not immediate. To date, the FHWA has reimbursed only 50% of the costs from Hurricane Matthew (2016) and 11% from Hurricane Florence (2018).

Ms. Marks stated that the impact of the Map Act is another factor. She noted that settlements currently total \$311 million and rising in addition to the right-of-way costs.

In response to an inquiry by Ms. Ayers, Ms. Marks stated that she would need to research the expected percent of reimbursement from FEMA.

In response to an inquiry by Mr. Bennett, Ms. Marks stated that storm expenses do not include the rebuilding of NC 12 on Ocracoke Island.

Ms. Marks stated that the August revision to January's draft 2020-2029 STIP changed some of the dates. She noted that even though the schedule has been

revised, P5.0 is still ahead of P3.0 projections due to accelerations in P4.0. She displayed a list of projects that were unaffected by the revision. She pointed out that the B Section of the Hampstead Bypass is still on schedule. And although the let date of the A Section has been delayed, the project completion date has remained the same.

Ms. Ayers requested the list [a copy of the presentation].

Ms. Marks stated that the temporary suspension of projects has been implemented statewide. She explained that project designs will remain stalled until the cash balance increases. She gave a brief overview of six projects that will continue to move forward, such as Front Street and the Hampstead Bypass. She noted that a request for U-5710A Eastwood Road/Military Cutoff Road to move forward is awaiting a response. She reiterated that the suspension is only temporary, and that she would continue to bring updates to the group.

Ms. Marks gave an overview of prioritization buckets or tiers. She stated that the Cape Fear Crossing project did not score high enough in the Statewide Tier, and could not be fully funded by either the Regional or Division Needs Tiers. She noted that the STIP that was just released included \$21 million for right-of-way, only a portion of the total right-of-way costs estimated at \$114 million, and construction was unfunded. Although the project has been suspended for economic reasons, it can continue to be included in prioritization in future years. Meanwhile, NCDOT repurposed the \$21 million to fund the Gordon Road right-of-way, which advanced right-of-way from 2029 to 2025 and prevented reprioritization.

Ms. Marks stated that on August 30th NCDOT launched a feasibility study for the replacement of the Cape Fear Memorial Bridge, separate from the Cape Fear Crossing. She noted that the fixed span has a life of 20 years and the moveable span, a lifetime of 10 years. She commented that it's very expensive to maintain. She noted that the bridge will not be closed during construction.

A lengthy question/answer and discussion period was held regarding the timeline and prioritization for restoring projects to the list. Ms. Marks stated that she would research the impact to rail projects and report back.

Mr. Kozlosky expressed concerns regarding the potential impact to NCDOT staff. He noted that some money is going back into the fund balance, although it is frozen for the time being. He expressed appreciation to Ms. Marks.

4) Consent Agenda

- a. Approval of TCC Meeting Minutes – August 14, 2019**
- b. Resolution adopting the Wilmington Urban Area Metropolitan Planning Organization Rules of Procedure**
- c. Resolution approving 2018-2027 STIP/MPO Transportation Improvement Program Administrative Modification #19-4**
- d. Opening 30-day public comment period for 2020-2029 State/MPO Transportation Improvement Programs**

Ms. Matheny pulled Item 4a (TCC Meeting Minutes of August 14, 2019) for further consideration.

Ms. Bunch made a motion to approve the Consent Agenda, Item 4b through Item 4d, and to forward these items to the MPO Board for consideration. Ms. Roth seconded the motion, and it carried unanimously.

In regard to the meeting minutes of August 14th, Ms. Matheny pointed out a typographical error in the third paragraph of the third page. She noted that the sentence should read, "...percentage on an annual basis." In addition, she requested that the last sentence of that paragraph be clarified by adding, "...as Wave does not have a dedicated source of funding."

Mr. Bennett made a motion to approve the minutes as amended, seconded by Ms. Roth, and the motion carried unanimously.

5) **Regular Agenda**

a. **Resolution Endorsing the Fiscally Constrained Project Lists for Inclusion in the Cape Fear Moving Forward 2045**

Ms. Lorenzo stated that amended fiscally constrained project lists have been included in the agenda packet. She gave an overview of the process to date for the 2045 Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP). She noted that the project lists were presented in July to the MPO Board, who requested an additional month for review. At their August meeting, the MPO Board members provided feedback for revisions. She displayed a map illustrating the proposed changes as follows:

- Remove RW-94, Castle Hayne Streetscape Improvements
- Replace with RW-181, Blue Clay Road Interchange
- Remove RW-215, Kerr Avenue Extension, 2
- Replace with:
 - RW-16, Myrtle Grove Road Widening
 - RW-25, Piner Road Improvements and Intersection Realignment
 - RW-129, Navaho Trail and Masonboro Loop Road Roundabout, Northern Intersection
 - RW-191, Mohican Trail and Masonboro Loop Road Roundabout
 - RW-192, Navaho Trail and Masonboro Loop Road Roundabout, Southern Intersection
 - RW-193, Myrtle Grove Road, Piner Road and Masonboro Loop Road Roundabout
 - RW-166, Sidbury Road and Hampstead Bypass Interchange

Ms. Lorenzo stated that the last six projects are located along an existing north-south corridor. She noted that these projects will potentially achieve the same north-south connection without major impacts to existing, established neighborhoods. She added that the Kerr Avenue Extension would establish a new route on new location.

Ms. Lorenzo stated that these changes would allow five additional projects to move into the fiscally constrained portion of the roadway list, as follows:

- RW-10, New Centre Drive Extension to Clear Run Drive
- RW-137, US 17 and NC 210 Intersection Improvements
- RW-6, Hoover Road Widening

- RW-99, Murrayville Road Widening
- RW-226, US 17/421 and US 17/76 Merge Lane Addition

Ms. Lorenzo stated that these additions were based on next ranking projects and cost. She noted that the MPO Board will consider these lists at its next meeting.

Mr. Kozlosky stated that this list does not include any alternative funding.

Ms. Lorenzo stated that the MPO Board will consider politically viable alternative funding sources at its September meeting. She noted that this committee will consider alternative funding sources at its October meeting.

Mr. Cannon made a motion to approve the Resolution Endorsing the Fiscally Constrained Project Lists for Inclusion in the Cape Fear Moving Forward 2045 Metropolitan Transportation Plan. Mr. Henley seconded the motion, and it carried unanimously.

6) **Discussion**

a. **River to Sea Cap**

Mr. Cannon stated that this past May was the 30th Annual River to Sea Bike Ride. He noted that due to the popularity of the event, staff is considering capping participation. He added that registration was online this year. Over the past five years, participation has fluctuated from 300 to 500 cyclists. This year the ride had 600 registrants; although not all participated.

Mr. Cannon stated that it was the consensus of the Wilmington Police Department, the Wrightsville Beach Police Department, and the New Hanover County Sheriff's Office that the capacity should be 400 riders. He noted that such a cap would necessitate a commitment from participants, such as a \$5 fee to encourage a good turnout.

Mr. Bennett proposed dividing the event into two rides, spring and fall, with 300 participants each. Mr. Cannon responded that much effort goes into the event, and law enforcement supports it voluntarily. He noted that the Bicycle/Pedestrian Advisory Committee has considered keeping the three-hour River to Sea Bike Ride Event in the spring, and holding more educational, smaller, family-oriented event in the fall.

In response to an inquiry by Ms. Matheny, Mr. Cannon reported that 400 cyclists participated this year. He noted that the committee is also considering how best to track participation. He added that Wrightsville Beach Parks and Recreation rented porta-potties and that a registration fee could help offset the cost.

Ms. Avery inquired about holding the event off-season when traffic is less congested. Mr. Cannon responded that the event is usually held the first Saturday of May to kick off National Bike Month. He added that the event was started one hour earlier this year, and finished by 10:00 a.m.

There was no opposition to implementing a cap on the number of participants.

b. Cape Fear Public Transportation Authority's request for FY 20 Surface Transportation Block Grant- Direct Attributable Funding

Ms. Kimes gave an overview of the Cape Fear Public Transportation Authority's request for Fiscal Year 2020 Surface Transportation Block Grant-Direct Attributable (STBG-DA) funding and distributed copies of the request. She stated that last month for this fiscal year Wave Transit requested \$100,000 in addition to \$500,000, the amount requested last year, with the similar purpose of offsetting ADA and preventative maintenance costs. She noted that the intent of today's discussion is to consider the amount to be funded, how Wave expends the funding, and how this year's request will affect the MPO's ability to cover anticipated cost overruns on projects already awarded.

Ms. Kimes stated that the City of Wilmington has four projects with plans that are close to finalization and more accurate estimates, and expected to go to bid within the next year. Of those, three projects from 2013 are anticipated to need additional funding totaling roughly \$1.7 million.

Ms. Kimes stated that one of the Town of Leland's projects encountered utility conflicts during the final plan review. She added that staff is awaiting a revised estimate from the design engineer. She noted that two other projects for the Town of Belville are further out, and one other project is on hold due to Department of Transportation's work in the area. At minimum, \$1.6 million to \$1.7 million will be needed to cover overruns within the next 18 months.

Ms. Kimes stated that for ADA last year, Wave used \$150,000 of the DA funds to cover the majority of 10,110 Dial A Ride Transportation (DART) rides between July 1, 2018 and December 31, 2018 for people with a verified disability within a certain distance of the bus. She noted that Wave charges DART passengers \$4 per ride, which costs Wave an average of \$21.97 per passenger per ride.

Ms. Kimes stated that \$350,000 of DA funds went towards preventative maintenance last year, which is subject to audit by the federal government. She noted that preventative maintenance items include salaries and benefits for mechanics, services and facilities, fuels and lubricants, maintenance on the buses such as parts, towing, small tools, shop supplies, cleaning supplies, building repairs, equipment maintenance, cellular phones, tires, professional services such as management, utilities for the building, other services such as employment testing, security monitoring, software licensing, pest control, employee training, landscape services, and other expenses such as office supplies, janitorial and uniforms, etc.

Ms. Matheny stated that the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) allows ADA and preventative maintenance to be capitalized, and sets the definitions. She added that annual independent audit shows that Wave is using the funds as allowed and defined by the FTA.

Ms. Kimes stated that although the MPO flexes the money over, STBG-DA funds are designed more for construction projects rather than maintenance/operations.

Ms. Barefoot stated that an additional \$163,000 is anticipated to be needed for Town of Leland projects (I, J, and K).

Ms. Kimes stated that after the last round was awarded, about \$988,000 remained in Fiscal Year 2020 and \$1.7 million in Fiscal Year 2021 – before the Wave Transit request. She noted that about \$1 million was initially put in reserve to cover cost overruns. Given projected overruns during the next 18 months and possible Transportation Alternative Set Aside (TASA) fund rescission, she recommended that Wave's initial funding request of \$500,000 be considered.

A question/answer and discussion period was held regarding the remaining funds. Ms. Kimes commented that funding should be adequate for the next 18 months. However, the next call for projects might be delayed.

Mr. Kozlosky summarized that from a two-year perspective and a total of \$2.8 million will be available with \$1.9 million in projected need and \$500,000 requested by Wave, which leaves roughly \$400,000 remaining.

In response to an inquiry by Ms. Matheny, Ms. Kimes stated that the buckets per mode approach was abandoned since funding did not follow that framework.

Mr. Kozlosky stated that staff anticipates a request by Wave for Fiscal Year 2021.

Ms. Matheny explained that based on past awards, Wave would advocate for a percentage, especially in the absence of a dedicated funding source and the recent reduction of state funds due to population growth. She noted that New Hanover County provides a local match of \$350,000, and the City of Wilmington provides \$1.3 million.

In response to an inquiry by Ms. Barefoot, Ms. Kimes stated that the Town of Leland provides the 20 percent match and would have to come up with additional money to bid the project or pay back DOT and the federal government any money that the town spent on a project that was not completed.

Mr. Kozlosky added that the project could wait until the next fiscal year.

In response to an inquiry by Ms. Matheny, Ms. Kimes stated that about \$600,000 in TASA funds are at risk for rescission.

Mr. Bennett inquired about alternative funding sources for Wave. Ms. Matheny responded that a vehicle registration fee was recommended but was not supported by the New Hanover County Board of Commissioners.

Ms. Avery pointed out that the towns already charge a vehicle registration fee.

In response to an inquiry by Ms. Bunch, Ms. Matheny stated that the result would be a reduction of service if a dedicated funding source could not be identified. She noted that this consequence has been communicated to decision makers.

Following further consideration, Ms. Ayers made a motion to approve \$500,000 in funding for the Cape Fear Public Transportation Authority in Fiscal Year 2020 STBG-DA funding, seconded by Mr. Haire.

Ms. Bunch expressed concerns regarding the importance of public transportation and the need for support.

Ms. Matheny commented that the funding structure is complex and the reduction of dollars does not translate cleanly, complicated further by ADA requirements.

Mr. Kozlosky recommended that next year's budget take into consideration the current status of DA funds.

Following further discussion, Mr. Kozlosky called the question and the motion carried 15-1. (Ms. Bunch voted "No.")

7) **Updates**

Mr. Kozlosky stated that updates are included in the agenda packet. He noted that copies of the latest MPO Annual Report are available.

8) **Announcements**

- a. **Bike/Pedestrian Committee Meeting: October 8th**
- b. **Next TCC meeting: October 16th**

9) **Adjournment**

With no further items, the meeting was adjourned at 11:33 a.m.

**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.**