

**Wilmington Urban Area MPO
Technical Coordinating Committee
Thursday, November 12, 2020
Meeting Minutes**

Members Present (Remotely)

Abby Lorenzo, MPO Deputy Director
Rebekah Roth, New Hanover County Planning
Department
Denys Vielkanowitz, City of Wilmington,
Nick Cannon, MPO Go Coast Program
Jerry Haire, Town of Carolina Beach
Robert O'Quinn, Town of Wrightsville Beach
Mandy Sanders, Town of Kure Beach

Adrienne Harrington, Town of Belville
Ashli Barefoot, Town of Leland
Barnes Sutton, Town of Navassa
Patrick Flanagan, Cape Fear Council of Governments
Nazia Sarder, Transportation Planning Branch, NCDOT
Vanessa Lacer, Cape Fear Public Transportation
Authority

Others Present (Remotely)

Marty Little, New Hanover County Planning Department
Ed Parvin, Town of Carolina Beach
Joseph Lewis, HDR
Rachel McIntyre, MPO
Zachary Manfredi, MPO

1) Call to Order

Vice-Chair Rebekah Roth called the remote meeting to order at 10:01 a.m.

Pursuant to Section 4.31 of Senate Bill 704 (Session Law 2020-3), Deputy Director Lorenzo called the roll. A quorum was present, as follows:

Present: Abby Lorenzo, Rebekah Roth, Denys Vielkanowitz, Nick Cannon, Robert O'Quinn, Adrienne Harrington, Ashli Barefoot, Barnes Sutton, Patrick Flanagan, Nazia Sarder, and Vanessa Lacer.

Absent: Jerry Haire, Mandy Sanders, Granseur Dick, Stephanie Ayers, Helen Bunch, Sam Shore, and Caitlin Marks.

2) Approval of the Agenda

Ms. Lacer made a motion to approve the agenda as presented. Ms. Barefoot seconded the motion and it carried unanimously by rollcall, as follows:

Ayes: Abby Lorenzo, Rebekah Roth, Denys Vielkanowitz, Nick Cannon, Robert O'Quinn, Adrienne Harrington, Ashli Barefoot, Barnes Sutton, Patrick Flanagan, Nazia Sarder, and Vanessa Lacer.

Nays: None. **Absent:** Jerry Haire, Mandy Sanders, Granseur Dick, Stephanie Ayers, Helen Bunch, Sam Shore, and Caitlin Marks.

3) Presentations

a. 2020 Congestion Management Process Draft Report- Zach Manfredi, WMPO

Associate Transportation Planner Zachary Manfredi gave a presentation on the 2020 Congestion Management Process (CMP) Biennial Report. He noted that last month, the consultant, Kittelson & Associates, reported on the National Performance Management Research Data Set (NPMRDS) for this report. Since July, staff has met with regional stakeholders to receive feedback on proposed strategies for the report, which has been compiled and will be made available online.

Mr. Manfredi gave an overview of the regional measures and metrics for each of the goals and objectives that reflect those of the Cape Fear Moving Forward 2045 Metropolitan Transportation

Plan. He noted that 14 regional maps have been added to the report to help visualize the results. For example, the Volume/Capacity snapshot shows 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. Another snapshot indicates pedestrian sustainability areas in the MPO region.

Mr. Manfredi gave an overview of corridor scoring with seven measures contributing to travel time reliability, and five to multimodal considerations. He commented that most CMPs stop at the regional analysis and scoring level. However, this report continues the trend of the previous report to provide more in-depth information by including current projects and plans, and additional strategies. This report is 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). He added that the CMP supports the inclusion of projects in the MPO's TIP. Regarding the timeline of future CMPs, two more reports will be created before the adoption of the 2050 MTP, and an additional prioritization process will likely occur before the adoption of the State's TIP, which may be influenced by the CMP findings.

Mr. Manfredi said that two future considerations for 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 pedestrian would improve the report in the future.

Mr. Manfredi said that most CMPs focus on recurring congestion; although, traffic incidents, weather, tourism, and large special events contribute to traffic congestion. He anticipated that NPMRDS will play a large role in collecting this data.

Ms. Lorenzo stated that the draft report will be brought back to the TCC and the MPO Board in January for consideration.

- 4) **Consent Agenda**
- a. **Approval of TCC Meeting Minutes- September 16, 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. Flanagan made a motion to approve the Consent Agenda, Items 4a through 4f, as presented, and to forward the items to the MPO Board for consideration. Mr. Cannon seconded the motion, and it carried unanimously by rollcall as follows:

Ayes: Abby Lorenzo, Rebekah Roth, Denys Vielkanowitz, Nick Cannon, Jerry Haire, Robert O'Quinn, Mandy Sanders, Adrienne Harrington, Ashli Barefoot, Barnes Sutton, Patrick Flanagan, Nazia Sarder, and Vanessa Lacer. **Nays:** None. **Absent:** Granseur Dick, Stephanie Ayers, Helen Bunch, Sam Shore, and Caitlin Marks.

5) **Regular Agenda**

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

Deputy Director Abby Lorenzo stated that in July after two and a half years of work on the Cape Fear Moving Forward 2045 Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP), the MPO Board adopted a resolution approving the final draft. She noted that the MPO is federally required to approve a resolution adopting the final plan by November 18, 2020 at the expiration of the 2040 plan. This resolution would also approve the 2045 Wilmington Regional Travel Demand Model.

Mr. Cannon made a motion to adopt Cape Fear Moving Forward 2045 and the 2045 Wilmington Regional Travel Demand Model, and to forward them to the MPO Board for consideration. Ms. Lacer seconded the motion, and it carried unanimously by rollcall as follows:

Ayes: Abby Lorenzo, Rebekah Roth, Denys Vielkanowitz, Nick Cannon, Jerry Haire, Mandy Sanders, Robert O'Quinn, Adrienne Harrington, Ashli Barefoot, Barnes Sutton, Patrick Flanagan, Nazia Sarder, and Vanessa Lacer. **Nays:** None. **Absent:** Granseur Dick, Stephanie Ayers, Helen Bunch, Sam Shore, and Caitlin Marks.

b. **Resolution adopting the Wilmington Rail Trail Master Plan**

Ms. Lorenzo gave a presentation on the Wilmington Rail Trail Master Plan. She stated that in January 2020, the MPO partnered with the Friends of the Wilmington Rail Trail for the development of a master plan for the rail corridor located in downtown Wilmington between 3rd Street and McRae Street. She noted that public engagement in the form of a two-day charette was prevented by the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in March. After monitoring the situation, the core team devised an alternate strategy of holding virtual meetings with stakeholders (June and July) and engaging the public with a survey for three weeks. A press release was sent to the news media in September, and a YouTube video (https://youtu.be/MJD6j4h3_Zw) featuring City of Wilmington Mayor Bill Saffo, MPO Board member Charlie Rivenbark and Arts Council Executive Director Rhonda Bellamy was produced to generate awareness and feedback.

Ms. Lorenzo stated that 1,914 people participated in the survey generating more than 2,400 written comments. More than 90% of participants agreed that they would visit the trail if built. Three-quarters of respondents indicated they would use the trail for recreation and exercise, 14% for social/family gatherings, and 4% for commuting to work. The top-three benefits of the trail included a safer place to walk or bike, improved quality of life, and enhanced access to downtown/Northside neighborhoods. More than 1,000 comments expressed support for the inclusion of aesthetic and educational elements along the trail, especially those emphasizing the historic importance of the corridor.

Ms. Lorenzo stated that the Wilmington and Weldon Railroad was completed in 1840 and was the longest railroad segment in the world at one point. Passenger rail service ceased in downtown Wilmington in 1968 and the tracks were removed from the corridor when the then Atlantic Coast Railroad moved out of Wilmington. A feasibility study was completed in 2004 to identify interest in re-establishing passenger rail service downtown. She noted that the concept of a multi-use path

was included in the 2013 Wilmington/New Hanover County Greenway Plan. In 2017, the City sought to secure access to the railbed from NCDOT through legislation, as well as opportunities, such as the gulch initiative, to install a multi-use path in the corridor. In 2019, the Wilmington City Council tapped the Friends of the Wilmington Rail Trail organization to advance the rail trail. In turn, the Friends of the Wilmington Rail Trail reached out to partner with the MPO.

Ms. Lorenzo stated that the master plan outlines the goals of the plan, existing conditions of the corridor, linkage opportunities, area development potential, and recommendations for a three-phased implementation, alignment, access points, network safety enhancements, and future extension. Other recommendations include public art, and amenities. Next steps would involve preliminary engineering and design, securing funds, and exploring grant funding. Total construction costs are estimated at around \$5.4 million.

Ms. Lorenzo stated that the master plan will go to the MPO Board for consideration on November 18, to City Council on December 1, and to the Friends of the Wilmington Rail trail on December 9. She noted that the master plan is available online at www.wmpo.org/wilmington-rail-trail/.

Mr. Flanagan asked if staff has discussed with the NCDOT Rail Division the potential need for a barrier between the rail (tracks) and the multi-use path. Ms. Lorenzo commented that NCDOT Rail Division has been a wonderful partner in the development of the rail trail master plan.

In response to an inquiry by Mr. Cannon, Ms. Lorenzo stated that an at-grade access is proposed for both ends of the rail trail, and that ADA standards are proposed for ramp access at 5th Avenue, which is considered the mid-point of the rail trail.

Ms. Lacer inquired about law enforcement involvement. Ms. Lorenzo responded that the Wilmington Police Department was involved during the stakeholder interview process.

Following further consideration, Ms. Lacer made a motion to adopt the Wilmington Rail Trail Master Plan. Ms. Barefoot seconded the motion, and it carried unanimously by rollcall as follows:

Ayes: Abby Lorenzo, Rebekah Roth, Denys Vielkanowitz, Nick Cannon, Jerry Haire, Mandy Sanders, Robert O'Quinn, Adrienne Harrington, Ashli Barefoot, Barnes Sutton, Patrick Flanagan, Nazia Sarder, and Vanessa Lacer. **Nays:** None. **Absent:** Granseur Dick, Stephanie Ayers, Helen Bunch, Sam Shore, and Caitlin Marks.

6) **Discussion**

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

Ms. Lorenzo stated that this item is included in the agenda packet. She gave a brief overview of the proposed modifications.

In response to an inquiry by Ms. Roth, Ms. Lorenzo stated that this item would go to the MPO Board for discussion and return to the TCC and the MPO Board for consideration.

b. **FY22 Budget Discussions**

Ms. Lorenzo stated that a memo has been included in the agenda packet regarding the fiscal year 2022 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP). She noted that the first two items are related to an estimated half year of operating costs (\$15,000) associated with moving to a new office space in January 2022, plus a half year of salary and benefits (\$35,000) for an administrative assistant.

Other budget considerations include the 2050 Travel Demand Model (\$500,000) instrumental in forecasting travel patterns in the region, and the future of the Transportation Demand Management Program if grant funding were to end.

Ms. Lorenzo stated that staff is in the process of assessing the needs of member jurisdictions. She noted that the Town of Leland has expressed an interest in a transit study. She requested that planning needs be forwarded to her by December 11. She added that any increase in member dues are anticipated to be minimal.

7) **Updates**

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

Ms. Lorenzo noted that updates are included in the agenda packet.

8) **Announcements**

- a. **Bike/Pedestrian Committee Meeting – December 8th**
- b. **Next TCC meeting – January 13th**

9) **Adjournment**

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 10:58 a.m. by rollcall as follows:

Ayes: Abby Lorenzo, Rebekah Roth, Denys Vielkanowitz, Nick Cannon, Mandy Sanders, Robert O’Quinn, Adrienne Harrington, Ashli Barefoot, Barnes Sutton, Patrick Flanagan, Nazia Sarder, and Vanessa Lacer. **Nays:** None. **Absent:** Jerry Haire, Granseur Dick, Stephanie Ayers, Helen Bunch, Sam Shore, and Caitlin Marks.

THE ABOVE MINUTES ARE NOT A VERBATIM RECORD OF THE PROCEEDINGS.
THE ENTIRE PROCEEDINGS ARE RECORDED DIGITALLY AS PART OF THIS RECORD.