



WILMINGTON URBAN AREA
METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION

MPO Board Remote Meeting Minutes
Wilmington Convention Center, 10 Convention Center Drive, Wilmington, N.C.
Wednesday, February 24, 2021

Members Present

David Piepmeyer, Pender County
Hank Miller, Town of Wrightsville Beach
Brenda Bozeman, Town of Leland
Neil Anderson, City of Wilmington
Charlie Rivenbark, City of Wilmington
Deb Hays, Cape Fear Public Transportation Authority
Mike Allen, Town of Belville
LeAnn Pierce, Town of Carolina Beach
John Ellen, Town of Kure Beach
Jonathan Barfield, Jr., New Hanover County
Mike Forte, Brunswick County
Eulis Willis, Town of Navassa

Others Present

Mike Kozlosky, Executive Director, WMPO
Abby Lorenzo, Deputy Director, WMPO
Trevor Stewart, GIS Analyst, WMPO
Nick Cannon, Go Coast TDM Program Coordinator, WMPO
Scott A. James, Transportation Planning Engineer, WMPO
Chad Kimes, NCDOT Division Engineer

1) Call to Order

Chairman David Piepmeyer called the remote meeting to order at 3:02 p.m.

Mr. Kozlosky took the roll call pursuant to Section 4.31 of S.L. 2020-3, SB 704. A quorum was present as follows:

Present: David Piepmeyer, Hank Miller, Brenda Bozeman, Neil Anderson, Charlie Rivenbark, Deb Hays, Mike Allen, LeAnn Pierce, John Ellen, Jonathan Barfield, Mike Forte and Eulis Willis.

Absent: Landon Zimmer.

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

Mr. Kozlosky stated that no excused absences from this meeting were requested.

4) Approval of the Agenda

Mr. Barfield made a motion to approve the meeting agenda as presented. Ms. Bozeman seconded the motion and it carried unanimously by roll call as follows:

Ayes: David Piepmeyer, Hank Miller, Brenda Bozeman, Neil Anderson, Charlie Rivenbark, Deb Hays, Mike Allen, LeAnn Pierce, John Ellen, Jonathan Barfield, Mike Forte and Eulis Willis.

Nays: None. **Absent:** Landon Zimmer.

5) **Public Comment Period**

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

6) **Presentations**

a. **Go Coast TDM Update – Nick Cannon, WMPO**

Mr. Cannon gave a brief overview of the Go Coast Transportation Demand Management (TDM) Program. He stated that the overall goal of all TDM programs is to reduce vehicle miles traveled and to decrease traffic congestion within a designated area. He noted that the advisory committee for the program, the Go Coast Committee, is comprised of representatives from large and mid-size employers, WAVE Transit, UNCW and CFCC, as well as member jurisdictions. He added that the main influences on the TDM program include the short-range TDM plan, a scorecard provided to TDM grant recipients from NCDOT, the Go Coast Committee, the MPO Board, needs from member jurisdictions, and feedback from the community.

Mr. Cannon gave an overview of Go Coast activities since July, as follows:

- Cape Fear Change in Motion 2020 – update to the short-range (five-year) TDM plan, included a survey with more than 250 responses, and a 30-day public comment period (December 2020 to January 2021). A draft will be presented to the MPO Board next month.
- 5th Annual Commuter Challenge - held in October with 100 participants. Due to COVID-19, this year's event had increased telecommuting, which also impacted on-premises promotion at major employers represented on the Go Coast Committee.
- Watch for Me NC – law enforcement-led bicycle and pedestrian safety initiative of NCDOT, in-person police presence was impacted by COVID-19.
- CASSI application – three-month autonomous vehicle pilot program. Wilmington and Carolina Beach applied, however, neither were selected for the program.

Mr. Cannon said that one of the goals of the TDM program is to increase the visibility of the Go Coast program. He noted that Go Coast hosted an alternative transportation social media week with a series of visual and video posts, of which he displayed an example. He added that the posts were interacted with 1,500 times, and the Go Coast Instagram following increased by 400 since November 2020.

Mr. Cannon said that the City of Wilmington was designated as a bronze level Bicycle Friendly Community by the League of American Bicyclists, which came with a report card on how to become even more bicycle friendly. He noted that the designation lasts four years.

Mr. Cannon said a July 2020 survey revealed that telecommuting in the MPO area increased from 28% to 69%, employer-offered telecommuting increased from 44% to 100% where applicable, alternative work schedules doubled, and bicycling for recreation and commuting also increased. Meanwhile, carpooling and transit ridership decreased due to social distancing.

Mr. Cannon gave an overview of upcoming Go Coast initiatives, as follows:

- Go Coast Subcommittee to increase participation in the Annual Commuter Challenge
- Bicycle Friendly Community Task Force comprised of City staff to focus on achieving a silver level designation for Wilmington in the 2024
- Bike Suitability Map update for the region
- National Bike Month in May
- 31st Annual River to Sea Bike Ride, preliminary planning for a fall event

b. StreetLight Data – Abby Lorenzo and Trevor Stewart, WMPO

Mr. Kozlosky stated that in the current fiscal year, the MPO Board authorized the MPO to purchase StreetLight Data. He noted that this is big data that can be used for several different analyses and is available to each of the MPO's members.

Deputy Director Abby Lorenzo reminded members that the MPO Board was introduced to StreetLight Data this time last year when considering the MPO's Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP). Staff proposed to purchase this dataset for in-house data analysis, which was traditionally outsourced for costly studies and plans. She explained that StreetLight Data is a location-based service dataset collected from smart phone apps that track location, combined with data from navigation devices in connected vehicles. StreetLight uses a proprietary analysis tool to process trillions of location-based data points with other mapped datasets of personal data, roadway networks, land use data, etc. This data integration produces a contextualized dataset that can be further analyzed within the StreetLight platform or be taken out and analyzed in GIS. StreetLight has its own method for validating the data based on with actual observed traffic conditions. Although the data is used for estimates traditionally, it has statistical accuracy. The tier purchased allows for origin and destination analysis, trip attribute analysis (speed, time of day) as well as segment corridor type analysis, which would assist in congestion management process monitoring. Additionally, the tier allows for the segmentation of heavy truck traffic, which is critical due to the region's proximity to the Port.

GIS Analyst Trevor Stewart gave a brief demonstration of the StreetLight visualization dashboard and some parameters used for analysis. He noted that StreetLight is geographically based with the ability to complete analysis at a regional level using Census blocks or traffic analysis zones, at a more local level by creating zones around neighborhoods, or streets. Customizations include date ranges, days (weekends or weekdays), day parts into hour groups, and time increments down to 15-minute events. Optional parameters include trip duration, length, average speed, and circuitry as well as traveler attributes derived from Census data. He gave an example of a morning origin and destination analysis.

Ms. Lorenzo said that staff has developed a procedure for MPO members and planning partners to request this data or analysis. She noted that an application form is available at <https://www.wmpo.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/Data-Request-Application.pdf>, which will also be distributed to member jurisdictions. She noted that staff will review applications with applicants to better understand the expectations and timelines for each request.

Chairman Piepmeyer expressed appreciation.

7) Consent Agenda

- a. Approval of Board Meeting Minutes from January 27, 2021**
- b. Opening of the 30-day Public Comment Period for Draft FY 22 Unified Planning Work Program**
- c. Resolution Supporting the Allocation of Additional Direct Attributable Funds to the City of Wilmington for the South College Road/Holly Tree Crosswalk (U-5534Q) Project**
- d. Resolution Supporting the Allocation of Additional Direct Attributable Funds to the Town of Leland for the Village Road Multi-Use Path (U5534I) Project**
- e. Resolution Supporting the Allocation of Direct Attributable Funds to the Town of Leland for the Leland Middle School Sidewalk (U-5534K) Project**
- f. Resolution Supporting the Endorsement of Targets for Safety Performance Measures Established by the North Carolina Department of Transportation for 2021**
- g. Resolution approving the 2020-2029 STIP/MPO Transportation Improvement**
- h. Program Administrative Modifications #21-1**

Mr. Barfield expressed appreciation regarding the South College Road/Holly Tree crosswalk. Mr. Rivenbark commented that the crosswalk has been needed by the city for a long time and is well needed with the trail at that intersection.

Mr. Barfield made a motion to approve the Consent Agenda, Items 7a through 7h. Vice-Chairman Miller seconded the motion and it carried unanimously by roll call as follows:

Ayes: David Piepmeyer, Hank Miller, Brenda Bozeman, Neil Anderson, Charlie Rivenbark, Deb Hays, Mike Allen, LeAnn Pierce, John Ellen, Jonathan Barfield, Mike Forte and Eulis Willis.

Nays: None. **Absent:** Landon Zimmer.

8) Regular Agenda

a. Resolution Supporting the Allocation of Additional Direct Attributable Funds to the City of Wilmington for the Wilmington Multi-Modal Transportation Center Phase 1B (U-6234) Project

Chairman Piepmeyer said that at the agenda review meeting, he requested this item be pulled from the consent agenda for further discussion due to its dollar amount.

Mr. Kozlosky stated this item is consistent with the presentation provided to the MPO Board at its last meeting regarding the upgrade and rehabilitation of the building at 525 North 4th Street, sometimes referred to as the Thomas Grocery Building, which was built in 1894. He noted that the condition has deteriorated, and the building is in neglect. He reminded the Board that it authorized the MPO to evaluate the possibility of using the building for MPO office space. He added that the Board in partnership with the city has provided funding.

Mr. Kozlosky said that staff received the building plan designs on Friday. He reiterated that consistent with the presentation last month, there is a request for additional funds. He added that the city has approved the use of \$290,039, and this resolution requests that the MPO provide the additional \$1,160,158 in MPO Direct Attributable funds for the rehabilitation and reuse of the building.

Chairman Piepmeyer stated that office space is needed, and this is an opportunity for new office space to be created and for a new location for MPO staff as there is some need for its current space. He commented that although pricey, it is not as pricy as building a new building or trying to meet the need for new office space.

In response to an inquiry by Mr. Barfield, Mr. Kozlosky stated that the funds are Surface Transportation Block Grant (STBG) funds available through the MPO to its members. He pointed out that this is like other projects where MPO members need to return to ask for additional funds due to project increases like those on the agenda. He commented that this is an expensive ask. However, the project would fulfill the vision of the Multi-Modal Transportation Center on the property south of Campbell Street. The rail component, planned later, would occupy the properties to the north of Campbell Street. He noted that it would use available funds from a federal program with the city providing the local match.

Chairman Piepmeyer pointed out that if the MPO did not utilize these funds from the federal program, it could result in increased contributions from the membership. He expressed concerns regarding the lack of parking at this facility.

Mr. Rivenbark concurred with the concerns regarding the lack of parking. Mr. Kozlosky responded that the number of available on-street parking spaces on Campbell Street is 23. He added that staff has discussed with NCDOT reestablishing the parking lot in the gulch between 3rd and 4th Street, with

a cost of \$550,000, which is not funded currently. Another option would be to approach Cape Fear Community College (CFCC) regarding meeting or event parking at their deck on 3rd Street.

Mr. Forte expressed concerns regarding the lack of parking as well.

Ms. Bozeman expressed interest in ADA parking at the building. Mr. Kozlosky responded that he would investigate it. He noted that he would reach out to the city's parking division as well as CFCC.

Chairman Piepmeyer requested that this be made a priority.

Mr. Anderson made a motion to support additional DA funds for the Multi-Modal Transportation Center, Phase 1B. Mr. Ellen seconded the motion, and it carried unanimously by roll call as follows:

Ayes: David Piepmeyer, Hank Miller, Brenda Bozeman, Neil Anderson, Charlie Rivenbark, Deb Hays, Mike Allen, LeAnn Pierce, John Ellen, Jonathan Barfield, Mike Forte and Eulis Willis. **Nays:** None.

Absent: Landon Zimmer.

9) Discussion

a. Surface Transportation Block Grant-Direct Attributable and Transportation Alternatives Set Aside-Direct Attributable Funding Requests

Mr. Kozlosky stated that the MPO held a call for projects with a deadline of February 5th. He noted that two requests and one incomplete application were received.

Transportation Planning Engineer Scott James reminded committee members that there was a call for projects in November of 2020. In response to the call, the MPO received two applications by the deadline of February 5, 2021, as follows:

- Middle Sound Loop Connector and Sidewalk along Market Street to Porters Neck, New Hanover County. Total: \$691,481 (\$553,472 from the MPO)
- Automated Passenger Counters, Wave Transit. Total: \$200,000 (\$160,000 from the MPO)

Mr. Kozlosky stated that the NC Ports submitted an incomplete application for improvements to the north gate. As the incompleteness was due to a miscommunication on the part of the MPO, staff worked with the Technical Coordinating Committee to provide the Port with an opportunity to resubmit an application until February 25th. He anticipated the ask to be \$250,000 for some conceptual plans for the north gate improvements. He noted that staff would bring this back for consideration at the MPO Board's March meeting.

In response to an inquiry by Chairman Piepmeyer, Mr. Kozlosky stated that the issue has been addressed and would not recur in the future.

Mr. Rivenbark inquired if the improvements to the north gate would reduce traffic on Carolina Beach Road. Mr. Kozlosky explained that the Port is improving the south or container gate and this will move traffic to the north gate. This plan would provide either a new location facility into the Port off South Front Street or improve the north gate as it exists today. The Port is exploring conceptual designs for both those alternatives.

Mr. Rivenbark expressed concerns regarding reducing 18-wheeler traffic on Carolina Beach Road for the section from Greenfield Lake to Shipyard Boulevard.

b. 2020-2029 STIP/MPO Transportation Improvement Program Administrative Modifications #21-2

Mr. Kozlosky stated that this item is for information purposes only and would be brought back for Board consideration at its next meeting.

10) Announcements

- a. **NC Ethics Forms - Due April 15, 2021**

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 in the agenda packet. One additional update relates to an effort in conjunction with NCDOT, Wave Transit, Brunswick Transit and Columbus Transit. He noted that Deputy Transportation Secretary Julie White reached out related to the MPO's interest in partnering with those agencies to provide on-demand transit service for vaccinations. He added that the Department has funding for this service and the effort is still in the works. Marie Parker will brief the Cape Fear Public Transportation Authority Board tomorrow. He commented that this will also allow Wave Transit to test on-demand service, which it plans to start providing on August 15th.

12) Adjournment

Next MPO Board meeting – March 31, 2021

Mr. Ellen encouraged fellow Board members to join him on the seven-day (400-mile) Mountains to the Coast Bike Ride the first week of October.

With no further business to discuss, Mr. Rivenbark made a motion to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Mr. Ellen. The motion to adjourn carried unanimously by roll call as follows:

Ayes: David Piepmeyer, Hank Miller, Brenda Bozeman, Neil Anderson, Charlie Rivenbark, Deb Hays, Mike Allen, LeAnn Pierce, John Ellen, Jonathan Barfield, Mike Forte and Eulis Willis.

Nays: None. **Absent:** Landon Zimmer.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:48 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.