

**Wilmington Urban Area MPO
Technical Coordinating Committee
Wednesday, March 17, 2021
Meeting Minutes**

Members Present

Mike Kozlosky, WMPO Executive Director
Marty Little, New Hanover County
Nick Cannon, MPO Go Coast Program
Robert O'Quinn, Town of Wrightsville Beach
Granseur Dick, Wilmington International Airport
Stephanie Ayers, NC State Ports Authority
Adrienne Harrington, Town of Belville
Ashli Barefoot, Town of Leland

Barnes Sutton, Town of Navassa
Helen Bunch, Brunswick County
Sam Shore, Pender County
Patrick Flanagan, Cape Fear Council of Governments
Caitlin Marks, Division of Highways, NCDOT
Nazia Sarder, Transportation Planning Branch, NCDOT
Vanessa Lacer, Cape Fear Public Transportation
Authority

Others Present

Abby Lorenzo, WMPO Deputy Director
Trevor Stewart, WMPO GIS Analyst
Scott James, WMPO Transportation Planning
Engineer
Regina Hopkins, WMPO Senior Accountant
Zach Manfredi, WMPO Associate Transportation
Planner
Marie Parker, Executive Director, Wave Transit

Megan Matheny, Deputy Director, Wave Transit
Zachary Bugg, Senior Engineer, Kittelson &
Associates
Cheryl Hannah, Senior Transportation Planner, HDR
Eric Keravuori, Professional Engineer, Planner,
Realtor and Development Consultant
Sandy Faulk

1) Call to Order

Chairman Mike Kozlosky called to order the remote meeting at 10:00 a.m. and took a roll call pursuant to Section 4.31 of Senate Bill 704 (Session Law 2020-3). A quorum was present, as follows:

Present: Mike Kozlosky, Marty Little, Nick Cannon, Robert O'Quinn, Stephanie Ayers, Adrienne Harrington, Ashli Barefoot, Helen Bunch, Sam Shore, Patrick Flanagan, Nazia Sarder and Vanessa Lacer.

Absent: Denys Vielkanowitz, Ed Parvin, Mandy Sanders, Granseur Dick, Barnes Sutton and Caitlin Marks.

2) Approval of the Agenda

Chairman Kozlosky requested to add a discussion item on the Environmental Justice Small Grant.

Mr. Shore made a motion to approve the agenda as amended. Ms. Ayers seconded the motion and it carried unanimously by roll call, as follows:

Ayes: Mike Kozlosky, Marty Little, Nick Cannon, Robert O'Quinn, Granseur Dick, Stephanie Ayers, Adrienne Harrington, Ashli Barefoot, Helen Bunch, Sam Shore, Patrick Flanagan, Caitlin Marks, Nazia Sarder and Vanessa Lacer. **Nays:** None. **Absent:** Denys Vielkanowitz, Ed Parvin, Mandy Sanders and Barnes Sutton.

3) Presentation

a. Go Coast Change in Motion 2020 TDM Plan - Nick Cannon, WMPO

Go Coast TDM Program Coordinator Nick Cannon gave brief presentation on the short-range TDM plan, Change in Motion 2020, which has been in development during the last few months. He noted that the plan identifies strategies that can be implemented in one to five years to mitigate traffic congestion in diversified modes within the region. He added that the overall goal of the plan

is to reduce vehicle miles traveled by 10% over the next five years and read the mission statement, as follows:

To provide area residents with the resources and offer motivation to choose healthy, sustainable, and effective multi-modal transportation to reduce stress on the road network and to increase alternative means of mobility.

Mr. Cannon stated that the Go Coast Committee reviewed the TDM element and survey responses from the long-range Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) to develop a survey for the short-range TDM plan. He added that a 30-day public comment period including a virtual open house were held prior to the committee prioritizing the resulting seven strategies, as follows:

1. Alternative work schedules – deploy education and outreach to area employers
2. Bike share program – identify points of interest for connection through bike share
3. Carpooling and vanpooling – promote Share the Ride NC, and park-and-ride lots
4. Consulting for telecommuting opportunities – provide new service to Go Coast members first and later to employers throughout the region
5. Fostering a bicycle and pedestrian friendly culture – continue programs such as “Be A Looker,” Watch For Me NC, and NC Vision Zero
6. TDM-focused collaboration – apply TDM strategies, advocacy, multi-modal infrastructure, coordination with the Technical Review Committee (TRC), Wave Transit, Bicycle Pedestrian Advisory Committee, and planning staffs of member jurisdictions
7. Personalized commuter plans - offer to those within the MPO planning boundary

Mr. Cannon said that a scorecard was developed to assess the priorities – ease of implementation, cost, existing conditions, demand, impact on traffic, and impact on multi-modal transportation. He noted that work plans will give actionable and measurable guides to the success of each strategy. He added that the plan can be implemented and presented to member jurisdictions after being presented to the MPO Board for consideration next month.

4) **Consent Agenda**

- a. **Approval of TCC Meeting Minutes - February 10, 2021**
- b. **Resolution approving the 2020-2029 STIP/MPO TIP Amendment 21-1**
- c. **Resolution approving the 2020-2029 STIP/MPO TIP Administrative Modifications 21-2**
- d. **Resolution approving the FY 22 Section 5310 Grant Awards**
- e. **Resolution approving the FY 22 Unified Planning Work Program**
- f. **Resolution certifying the Wilmington Urban Area Metropolitan Planning Organization’s Transportation Planning Process**
- g. **Resolution supporting the allocation of additional Direct Attributable Funds to the US 421/ Lake Park Drive and Hamlet Avenue Traffic Signal**
- h. **Opening of the 30-day public comment period for 2020-2029 STIP/MPO TIP Amendment 21-2**

No items were pulled from the Consent Agenda.

Mr. Dick made a motion to approve the Consent Agenda, Items 4a through 4h, as presented, and to forward the items to the MPO Board for consideration.

Mr. Flanagan seconded the motion, and it carried unanimously by roll call as follows:

Ayes: Mike Kozlosky, Marty Little, Nick Cannon, Robert O’Quinn, Granseur Dick, Stephanie Ayers, Adrienne Harrington, Ashli Barefoot, Barnes Sutton, Helen Bunch, Sam Shore, Patrick Flanagan, Caitlin Marks, Nazia Sarder and Vanessa Lacer. **Nays:** None. **Absent:** Denys Vielkanowitz, Ed Parvin and Mandy Sanders.

5) Regular Agenda

a. Resolution approving the Allocation of Surface Transportation Block Grant-Direct Attributable Funds to New Hanover County for the Middle Sound Connector, Cape Fear Public Transportation Authority for the Automated Passenger Counters, and NC State Ports for North Gate Feasibility Study

Transportation Planning Engineer Scott A. James gave brief presentation on the proposed allocation of Surface Transportation Block Grant-Direct Attributable (STBG-DA) funds. He noted that in November of 2020, the MPO issued a call for projects in response to the one-year extension of the FAST Act. In response to the call, three applications were received:

1. New Hanover County – Middle Sound Loop to Porters Neck Connector Construction. Total cost: \$691,481 (MPO \$553,472)
2. Cape Fear Public Transportation Authority, Wave Transit – Install automatic passenger counter technology. Total cost \$200,000 (MPO \$160,000).
3. NC Ports Authority – Partially fund a feasibility study for a north gate access. Total cost: \$212,500 (MPO \$200,050).

Mr. James recommended that all three receive the award of funds requested totaling \$960,472.

Ms. Harrington made a motion to approve allocations as recommended by staff. Mr. Cannon seconded the motion, and it carried unanimously by roll call as follows:

Ayes: Mike Kozlosky, Marty Little, Nick Cannon, Robert O’Quinn, Granseur Dick, Stephanie Ayers, Adrienne Harrington, Ashli Barefoot, Barnes Sutton, Helen Bunch, Sam Shore, Patrick Flanagan, Caitlin Marks, Nazia Sarder and Vanessa Lacer. **Nays:** None. **Absent:** Denys Vielkanowitz, Ed Parvin and Mandy Sanders.

6) Discussion

a. COVID-19 Direct Attributable Funding Allocation

Chairman Kozlosky stated that with the COVID-19 Relief Bill, the MPO received \$1,133,045. He noted that these funds must be obligated by September 30, 2024. He added that based on the legislation, the funds are payable up to 100% and can be used in a similar manner to the MPO’s Direct Attributable funding. He explained that this allocation will act more as a stimulus than a relief fund for COVID issues. He requested feedback from the committee regarding the MPO’s approach for the allocation of these funds. He reminded the committee that Surface Transportation Block Group-Direct Attributable (STBGP-DA) and Transportation Set Aside-Direct Attributable (TASA-DA) allocations are 80% payable and require a 20% match from the members. He pointed out that funds might go further with the 80/20. However, having to provide a 20% match might limit participation.

In response to an inquiry by Mr. Flanagan, Chairman Kozlosky said that no community has communicated difficulty in securing a match as an obstacle to submitting projects for funding. He proposed the 100% payable approach. Mr. Dick concurred with the 100% approach.

It was the consensus of the committee to move forward with a 100% payable call for projects.

Ms. Harrington pointed out that not having to provide the match would be helpful, although the match has not prevented the Town of Belville from applying in the past.

In response to an inquiry by Ms. Matheny, Chairman Kozlosky said that establishing a timeline is the next step in issuing a call for projects within the next two to three months if not sooner.

b. Surface Transportation Legislation (Earmarks)

Chairman Kozlosky stated that the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee is considering a new surface transportation authorization legislation in view of the FAST Act expiring at the end of September. As part of this review, the committee is considering including earmarks. He noted that some requirements for members of Congress to submit earmarks have been established, which have been included in the agenda packet.

Chairman Kozlosky stated that the MPO has had some discussion with NCDOT who encouraged that any earmarks be included in the existing State and MPO Transportation Improvement Programs (TIP). He asked if there was any desire to pursue earmarks. If so, a recommendation would be presented to the MPO Board for consideration. He explained that the earmarks would mean seeking to add federal dollars to existing STIP projects, which would require coordination with the Department.

Mr. Flanagan inquired about any conversation with MPOs across the state. He noted that the RPOs have expressed concerns regarding negative impacts to STI legislation. Chairman Kozlosky said that although the MPOs have not discussed it, a conversation was held with DOT, who pointed out that if a project is submitted for an earmark and is not in the STIP, the money would likely sit there because it would circumvent the prioritization process that the Department has established.

Mr. Flanagan inquired if it would work like the BUILD Grant. Chairman Kozlosky said that it would. He commented that this would be an opportunity for projects in the back years of the STIP to be accelerated. He cautioned that any earmarked project would need to meet federal qualifications. For example, the Hampstead Bypass Project would not qualify, because it was prepared with a state environmental document and not a federal one. Therefore, it is not eligible for federal funds.

Mr. Flanagan inquired about the number of projects the Department would support across the state. Chairman Kozlosky said that this has yet to be determined and that the MPO would need to ascertain the support of the Department.

Ms. Marks commented that she has not worked with earmarked projects before; but has a call with the State STIP Unit tomorrow. She speculated that earmarks would still need to adhere to the program requirements of keeping dollar amounts within a certain percentage. She anticipated challenges in avoiding overprogramming.

Chairman Kozlosky commented that earmarks have created issues for the Department and the City of Wilmington in the past. He noted that this item would be brought back for discussion at next

month's meeting. He added that Congress is holding a hearing on April 14 after which time additional information may be available.

Mr. Flanagan inquired if higher or lower dollar projects are preferred. Chairman Kozlosky said the MPO would need to consult with the Department as to which projects it would want to advance.

c. 2021 River to Sea Ride

Go Coast TDM Coordinator Nick Cannon reminded the committee members that the 2020 River to Sea Bike Ride event was canceled due to COVID-19. He noted that at the last WMPO Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee meeting, the committee recommended postponing this year's event until the fall, likely September or early October. He noted that a day has not been finalized yet and would need to be coordinated with the Town of Wrightsville Beach.

d. 2020-2029 STIP/MPO Transportation Improvement Program Administrative Modifications #21-3

Chairman Kozlosky noted that this item is for information purposes only and will be brought back for consideration at the next TCC meeting.

e. 2021 Environmental Justice Small Grant

Chairman Kozlosky stated that Ms. Ayers forwarded this information to him and requested that it be added to the agenda. He noted that the 2021 Environmental Justice Small Grant is an opportunity for communities living near port or rail facilities to address air quality issues at coastal and inland ports or at rail yards. The maximum grant amount is \$50,000 and applications are due May 7, 2021.

Ms. Ayers said that the Ports are willing to partner with any entity eligible for this grant that has an interest. She commented that much is coming from the current administration related to environmental justice, and the port is adjacent to environmental zones. She pointed out that the Town of Navassa with Davis Rail Yard may have some interest in this grant.

Mr. Barnes inquired about language for the grant. Chairman Kozlosky said he would forward the information to the entire committee.

7) 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 included in the agenda packet.

Ms. Marks inquired about additional DA funds requested for the Carolina Beach traffic signal at Lake Park Boulevard and Hamlet Avenue. Chairman Kozlosky responded that it was approved as part of the Consent Agenda.

Chairman Kozlosky stated that under the Division updates, the Department notified the MPO that it restarted the Independence Boulevard Extension Project and the Military Cutoff and Eastwood Road Interchange projects in March, which was among an increasing number of projects being restarted by the Department.

TCC Meeting Minutes
March 17, 2021

Ms. Marks reminded the group that Division receives a list of added projects monthly, and that she revises the Division update monthly for the MPO.

8) **Announcements**

a. **Bike/Pedestrian Committee Meeting – April 13, 2021**

b. **Next TCC meeting – April 14, 2021**

9) **Adjournment**

Ms. Ayers made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Ms. Bunch, and the motion carried unanimously by roll call as follows:

Ayes: Mike Kozlosky, Marty Little, Nick Cannon, Robert O’Quinn, Granseur Dick, Stephanie Ayers, Adrienne Harrington, Barnes Sutton, Helen Bunch, Sam Shore, Patrick Flanagan, Caitlin Marks, Nazia Sarder and Vanessa Lacer. **Nays:** None. **Absent:** Denys Vielkanowitz, Ed Parvin, Mandy Sanders and Ashli Barefoot.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 10:42 a.m.

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