



WILMINGTON URBAN AREA
METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION

MPO Board Remote Meeting Minutes
Wilmington Convention Center, 10 Convention Center Drive, Wilmington, N.C.
Wednesday, May 26, 2021

Members Present (In-Person)

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
LeAnn Pierce, Town of Carolina Beach
Frank Williams, Brunswick County
Eulis Willis, Town of Navassa

Members Present (Remotely)

Deb Hays, Cape Fear Public Transportation Authority
Jonathan Barfield, Jr., New Hanover County
Landon Zimmer, NC Board of Transportation

Others Present (Remotely)

Trevor Stewart, GIS Analyst, WMPO
Regina Hopkins, Senior Accountant, WMPO
Megan Matheny, Deputy Director, Wave Transit

Others Present (In-Person)

Mike Kozlosky, Executive Director, WMPO
Abby Lorenzo, Deputy Director, WMPO
Nick Cannon, Go Coast TDM Program Coordinator, WMPO
Scott A. James, Transportation Planning Engineer, WMPO
Chad Kimes, Division Engineer, NCDOT
Caitlin Marks, Planning Engineer, NCDOT
Chris Peoples, Deputy Chief Engineer, NCDOT
Greg Burns, Eastern Deputy Chief Engineer, NCDOT
Christopher Werner, Director of Technical Services, NCDOT
Rodger Rochelle, Chief Engineer, Innovative Delivery, NCDOT Turnpike Authority
Matt Nichols, MPO General Counsel

1) Call to Order

Chairman David Piepmeyer called the meeting to order at 3:00 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, Charlie Rivenbark, Mike Allen, LeAnn Pierce, Jonathan Barfield, Frank Williams, Eulis Willis and Landon Zimmer. **Absent:** Neil Anderson, Deb Hays and John Ellen.

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 Mr. Ellen and Mr. Anderson requested to be excused from this meeting.

Mr. Rivenbark made a motion to excuse Mr. Ellen and Mr. Anderson from the meeting, seconded by Vice-Chairman Miller and the motion carried unanimously by roll call as follows:

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

4) Approval of the Agenda

Mr. Williams 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, Charlie Rivenbark, Mike Allen, LeAnn Pierce, Jonathan Barfield, Frank Williams, Eulis Willis and Landon Zimmer. **Nays:** None. **Absent:** Neil Anderson, Deb Hays and John Ellen.

5) Public Comment Period

Mr. Kozlosky stated that no public comments were received.

6) Closed Session

Chairman Piepmeyer moved to hold a closed session for the purposes of discussing two separate matters:

1. The first matter is a closed session pursuant to N.C. Gen. Stat. § 143-318.11(a)(1) to prevent the disclosure of information that is privileged or confidential pursuant to the law of this State or of the United States, or not considered a public record within the meaning of Chapter 132 of the General Statutes. The citation of the law that renders the information to be discussed privileged or confidential is N.C. Gen. Stat. § 132-1.2, subsections (1) and (9).
2. The second matter is a closed session pursuant to N.C. Gen. Stat. § 143-318.11(a)(3) to discuss with our attorney matters within the attorney-client privilege.

Mr. Miller made a motion to enter a closed session, seconded by Mr. Rivenbark and the motion carried unanimously by roll call as follows:

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

The meeting reconvened to open session with those present indicated by the following roll call:

Present: David Piepmeyer, Brenda Bozeman, Neil Anderson, Charlie Rivenbark, Deb Hays, Mike Allen, LeAnn Pierce, Jonathan Barfield, Frank Williams, Eulis Willis and Landon Zimmer. **Absent:** Hank Miller and John Ellen.

7) Presentation

a. NCDOT Division 3 Project Update- Chad Kimes, Division Engineer

NCDOT Division 3 Planning Engineer Caitlin Marks gave an update on the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP). She reminded the MPO Board members that last summer Leigh Wing gave a presentation to the Board about reprogramming the STIP. A major reason for reprogramming was due to rising project construction costs, which led to the STIP not being fiscally constrained. This led NCDOT to take a closer look at the project estimating process by forming a committee, the Cost Estimation Improvement Process (CEIP) group.

Ms. Marks listed the three major findings of the CEIP group were as follows:

1. Project estimate costs were based on GIS (a computer-generated cost estimating tool)

2. The right-of-way and utility construction estimates were not updated on a regular basis
3. The estimates were not centrally located

Ms. Marks stated that the group decided to correct the cost estimating tool with express designs, in which an engineering team identifies real line items for a project with greater accuracy. The Sticker Committee reviews project cost increases of 35% or a flat fee of \$25 million and decides whether the committed project re-enters the prioritization cycle or remains in the STIP. This would apply to projects in Prioritization 5.0 moving forward.

Ms. Marks said that other activities of the Division include compiling a new project estimate for every committed project in the STIP by June 30th; value engineering proposals for many of the projects in the STIP; and examining all the projects in the STIP to cut costs and make it more fiscally constrained. She noted that after the deadline, another update would be presented to the Board.

Division Engineer Chad Kimes gave an update on current STIP projects in the first five years after many of the changes from last year. He suggested that the MPO Board members keep a copy of this presentation to use as a reference. Each slide gives a let date, the approximate construction start date, and an estimate for the duration of the project. Project highlights include the Hampstead Bypass (January 2022), Drysdale Drive Extension (January 2022), NC-133 Widening (June 2022), new route from 23rd Street to 26th Street (December 2023), Gordon Road (July 2024) and I-140 (October 2024). He gave an overview of 14 projects in the last five years of the STIP and 10 committed projects scheduled post year (after the 10-year STIP), such as the College Road projects.

Chairman Piepmeyer inquired about committed projects and expressed a desire to accelerate the College Road and Oleander Drive intersection project.

Ms. Marks responded that she would forward a list of committed projects since the shift in reprogramming.

Mr. Kimes explained that NCDOT needs to determine which projects will need to go through reprioritization and how much revenue is available in the STIP. He noted that it was necessary to focus on the top-five projects to rebalance the STIP. He anticipated more discussions between the Division and the MPO, and that more would be known by August.

Mr. Kimes stated that NCDOT has acquired 50% of the property for the Hampstead Bypass, is in negotiations for 18%, and down to the last 15% of appraisals. He noted that NCDOT will stage it so it can start to be constructed in 2022, although utilities will still need to be moved. He added that the project is so large that it can be phased or segmented to proceed with construction by acquiring right-of-way and moving utilities strategically, which is why the Hampstead Bypass project is still on time.

Mr. Kimes displayed plans and photos of active construction in progress. He offered to take members on a field trip to see the work on the Military Cutoff Extension. He added that the Smith Creek Bridge was damaged by a trash truck and closed recently, which has accelerated its replacement for a July let.

Mr. Kozlosky stated that he would forward this presentation to the Board for their review.

8) Consent Agenda

- a. **Approval of Board Meeting Minutes from April 28, 2021**
- b. **Resolution approving the 2020-2029 STIP/MPO TIP Amendments 21-2**

- c. Resolution approving the 2020-2029 STIP/MPO TIP Administrative Modifications 21-4
- d. Resolution supporting the allocation of additional Direct Attributable (DA) funding to the Town of Carolina Beach for the Island Greenway (U-5534L)
- e. Resolution supporting the City of Wilmington's application for the North Carolina Department of Transportation for the 2021 Bicycle and Pedestrian Planning Grant Initiative to update Walk Wilmington: A Comprehensive Pedestrian Plan
- f. Resolution endorsing the Draft Prioritization 6.0 Local Input Methodology for Review and Approval by the North Carolina Department of Transportation
- g. Resolution approving Amendment #2 to the FY 20-21 Unified Planning Work Program
- h. Resolution adopting the Re-alignment of On-Road sections of the East Coast Greenway in the Wilmington Urban Area Metropolitan Planning Organization's Boundary
- i. Opening of the 30-day Public Comment Period for 2020-2029 STIP/MPO TIP Amendments #21-3

Ms. Bozeman made a motion to approve the Consent Agenda, Items 8a and 8i. Ms. Hays 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, Jonathan Barfield, Frank Williams and Eulis Willis. **Nays:** None. **Absent:** John Ellen and Landon Zimmer.

9) Regular Agenda

- a. Resolution adopting the Cape Fear Public Transportation Authority's Locally Coordinated Public Transportation Plan

Wave Transit Deputy Director Megan Matheny gave a presentation on the 2021 Locally Coordinated Plan (LCP). She stated that regular updates to the plan are required on a four- to five-year basis by the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) to receive Section 5310 grant funds. She explained that these funds support the Wave Connect program for older adults and individuals with disabilities. She noted that the Cape Fear Public Transportation Authority's last LCP was adopted in 2016.

Ms. Matheny stated that the LCP includes comments and data received pertaining to transportation needs and gaps, which was gathered through an extensive public outreach campaign. The plan includes three elements required by FTA: identification of available services, an assessment of transportation needs, and a discussion of strategies, prioritization, and implementation. She noted that the data used to inform the plan was solicited from public outreach and engagement, and the includes the three FTA required elements. She added that she would provide the plan to Mr. Kozlosky who will distribute it to the MPO Board.

Ms. Rivenbark made a motion to adopt the Wave's Locally Coordinated Plan. Mr. Barfield 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, Jonathan Barfield, Frank Williams and Eulis Willis. **Nays:** None. **Absent:** John Ellen and Landon Zimmer.

- b. Resolution supporting the Completion of a Feasibility Study to Evaluate Potential Solutions for an Improved Bicycle and Pedestrian Crossing on College Road in the vicinity of the University of North Carolina- Wilmington

Mr. Kozlosky stated that there have been ongoing discussions regarding safety on College Road in vicinity of the University of North Carolina – Wilmington (UNCW). He noted that the MPO, City of Wilmington, UNCW, and NCDOT, have met. NCDOT has agreed to complete a feasibility study that would evaluate a potential bridge, tunnel, or other options to improve safety for crossing College Road. This resolution will support the Department's efforts to complete a feasibility study.

Mr. Williams made a motion to support the feasibility study. Mr. Rivenbark 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, Jonathan Barfield, Frank Williams and Eulis Willis. **Nays:** None.

Absent: John Ellen and Landon Zimmer.

c. **Resolution adopting the Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act (COVID-19 Direct Attributable) Project Submittal Guide and Competitive Process**

Mr. Kozlosky noted that there was some discussion about this Item at the Board's last meeting and some changes have been made based on feedback received.

Transportation Planning Engineer Scott A. James stated that this part three of the continuing conversation regarding the supplemental funds made available through the Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations (CRRSA) Act. He noted that the amount of allocation to the Wilmington MPO is \$1,133,044. He added that staff received direction to make the funds 100% payable and to revise the allocation guidelines to allow for a COVID-19 pandemic hardship factor. In summary, the following changes are proposed:

- Increase the total point score from 83 to 100
- Add a metric for the COVID pandemic (20 points)
- Remove local match, local project manager training, and capacity reduction metrics
- Reduce review period for reported crashes on the network from five calendar years to three calendar years (2017, 2018 and 2019)
- Add tiebreaker metrics as follows:
 1. Prioritize existing project over a new project
 2. Project readiness to construction
 3. Overall project cost

Mr. Williams made a motion to adopt the CRRSA project submittal guide and competitive process. Mr. Willis 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, Jonathan Barfield, Frank Williams and Eulis Willis. **Nays:** None.

Absent: John Ellen and Landon Zimmer.

10) Discussion

a. **2020-2029 STIP/MPO Transportation Improvement Program Administrative Modifications #21-5**

Mr. Kozlosky stated that this item is for information purposes only.

b. **Northern Brunswick Bicycling Event**

Due to technical difficulties, MPO Deputy Director Abby Lorenzo directed the Board to a map on page 81 of the agenda packet. She said that representatives from the from the WMPO's Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee approached members of the MPO staff this past spring for assistance

in planning a northern Brunswick County bicycle ride event to recognize the area's unique culture and history. The route proposes to follow approximately eight miles of the 32-mile Gullah Geechee Heritage Corridor through the towns of Navassa, Leland, and Belville. Additionally, the ride intends to serve as an opportunity to reinforce the importance of safe biking and community collaboration. The event has staff support from the towns of Navassa, Leland, Belville, and Brunswick County as well as their respective local law enforcement agencies. With proper planning, NCDOT has given its support as well. The vision is to create an annual ride event like the River to Sea Bike Ride in New Hanover County. Staff is currently working to coordinate a meeting with all stakeholders and law enforcement to work through the specifics and to choose a date for the event later this fall.

11) Updates

a. Wilmington Urban Area MPO

b. Cape Fear Public Transportation Authority

Mr. Kozlosky stated that the City Council and the County Commissioners took action to delay the go-live date for the network redesign to July 1, 2022 that was previously scheduled for August 15th. He added that the proposal is expected to change based on recommendations from the Authority's new executive director.

c. NCDOT Division

d. NCDOT Transportation Planning Division

Mr. Kozlosky stated that the updates are included in the agenda packet.

12) Announcements

a. Go Coast TDM Committee Meeting – May 20, 2021

b. Next MPO Board meeting – June 30, 2021

Mr. Kozlosky said that NCDOT will give a presentation at the next meeting. Also, a strategic planning exercise is upcoming. He noted that staff is looking into another meeting location for the next meeting and plans to resume meetings at 320 Chestnut Street soon.

13) Adjournment

Mr. Miller made a motion to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Mr. Rivenbark. 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, Jonathan Barfield, Frank Williams and Eulis Willis. **Nays:** None. **Absent:** John Ellen and Landon Zimmer.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:06 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.**