

**Wilmington Urban Area MPO
Technical Coordinating Committee
Wednesday, July 14, 2021
Meeting Minutes**

Members Present (in-person)

Mike Kozlosky, WMPO Executive Director
Nick Cannon, MPO Go Coast Program
Ed Parvin, Town of Carolina Beach
Matt Kirkland, Town of Leland
Patrick Flanagan, Cape Fear Council of Governments
Caitlin Marks, NCDOT Division of Highways

Members Present (remotely)

Rebekah Roth, New Hanover County
Denys Vielkanowitz, City of Wilmington
Robert O'Quinn, Town of Wrightsville Beach
Granseur Dick, Wilmington International Airport
Stephanie Ayers, NC State Ports Authority
Adrienne Harrington, Town of Belville
Barnes Sutton, Town of Navassa
Helen Bunch, Brunswick County
Vanessa Lacer, Pender County
Nazia Sarder, NCDOT Transportation Planning Branch
Megan Matheny, Cape Fear Public Transportation Authority

Members Absent

Mandy Sanders, Town of Kure Beach

Others Present (in-person)

Abby Lorenzo, WMPO
Zachary Manfredi, WMPO
Paula Kempton, Town of Carolina Beach
Rachel LaCoe, New Hanover County
Marty Little, New Hanover County

Others Present (remotely)

Joanna Rocco, AECOM
Lucy Kreuger, NC State Ports Authority
Cheryl Hannah, HDR
Rachel McIntyre, WMPO
Regina Hopkins, WMPO
Trevor Stewart, WMPO
Marie Parker, Wave Transit

1) Call to Order

Chairman Mike Kozlosky called to order the remote meeting at 10:01 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, Rebekah Roth, Denys Vielkanowitz, Nick Cannon, Ed Parvin, Robert O'Quinn, Granseur Dick, Stephanie Ayers, Adrienne Harrington, Matt Kirkland, Barnes Sutton, Vanessa Lacer, Patrick Flanagan, Caitlin Marks, Nazia Sarder and Megan Matheny. **Absent:** Mandy Sanders and Helen Bunch.

2) Approval of the Agenda

Mr. Parvin made a motion to approve the agenda as presented. Mr. Flanagan seconded the motion and it carried unanimously by roll call, as follows:

Ayes: Mike Kozlosky, Rebekah Roth, Denys Vielkanowitz, Nick Cannon, Ed Parvin, Robert O'Quinn, Granseur Dick, Stephanie Ayers, Adrienne Harrington, Matt Kirkland, Barnes Sutton, Vanessa Lacer, Patrick Flanagan, Caitlin Marks, Nazia Sarder and Megan Matheny. **Nays:** None. **Absent:** Mandy Sanders and Helen Bunch.

3) Presentation

a. Rail Re-alignment Environmental Review Update - Aubrey Parsley, City of Wilmington

Mr. Parsley gave an update on environmental review for the Rail Re-alignment. He acknowledged the remote presence of the consultant (AECOM), Joanna Rocco, who is assisting with the compilation of documentation for the federal NEPA process. He said that the process includes three virtual public outreach sessions, of which the second is currently in progress. He encouraged member jurisdictions to provide feedback and provided a link to the website for virtual public outreach.

Mr. Parsley said that a preferred route will be recommended to the lead agency, the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA), shortlisted to two alternatives from a total of six alternatives. He gave a brief overview of the project schedule, saying that environmental assessment is estimated to take two years and is currently at the half-way point. He added that engineering is at 50% (conceptual vertical and horizontal alignment) and strives to reach 30% by mid-2023. He displayed a diagram of two proposed alternatives.

Ms. LaCoe and Mr. Dick requested that the presentation be distributed to TCC members.

4) **Consent Agenda**

- a. **Approval of TCC Meeting Minutes- June 16, 2021**
- b. **Opening of the 30-day public comment period for 2020-2029 STIP/MPO TIP Amendments #21-5**
- c. **Resolution approving 2020-2029 STIP/MPO TIP Administrative Modifications #21-6**
- d. **Resolution approving FY 22 Unified Planning Work Program Amendment #1**
- e. **Resolution approving the Wilmington Urban Area Metropolitan Planning Organization's Local Input Methodology for Prioritization 6.0**

Mr. Dick made a motion to approve the Consent Agenda, Items 4a and 4e, as presented, and to forward the items to the MPO Board for consideration. Mr. Kirkland seconded the motion, and it carried unanimously by roll call as follows:

Ayes: Mike Kozlosky, Rebekah Roth, Denys Vielkanowitz, Nick Cannon, Ed Parvin, Granseur Dick, Stephanie Ayers, Adrienne Harrington, Matt Kirkland, Barnes Sutton, Vanessa Lacer, Patrick Flanagan, Caitlin Marks, Nazia Sarder, Megan Matheny and Helen Bunch. **Nays:** None. **Absent:** Mandy Sanders and Robert O'Quinn.

5) **Discussion**

- a) **2020-2029 STIP/MPO Transportation Improvement Program Administrative Modifications #21-7**

Mr. Kozlosky stated that this item is for information purposes only, to be brought back for consideration at the next meeting.

- b) **Go Coast TDM Short Range Plan**

Mr. Cannon stated that the MPO Board approved the update to the Go Coast TDM Short Range Plan, Cape Fear Change in Motion 2020, in April. He noted that the plan is active now and will guide Go Coast initiatives designed to decrease vehicle miles traveled and traffic congestion and to increase mode use in the MPO region for the next one to five years.

Mr. Cannon stated that the short-range TDM plan outlines seven strategies or tools developed by MPO staff, the Go Coast Advisory Committee, and through public input. He expressed a desire to work with member jurisdictions to achieve each of the identified strategies as well as to discuss and identify others. This rollout would start with presentations to the governing boards of member jurisdictions in September or October.

- c) **Replacement of the Cape Fear Memorial Bridge (Unsolicited Proposal)**

Mr. Kozlosky stated that in November of 2020, NCDOT received an unsolicited proposal to replace the Cape Fear Memorial Bridge via a public-private partnership that would include a toll. He noted that this information was presented to the MPO Board in closed session in May and in an open session in June. He added that the presentation is included in today's TCC agenda packet. Mr.

Kozlosky stated that at its June meeting, the MPO Board voted to calendar this item for consideration at its July meeting.

Ms. Marks emphasized that NCDOT does not advertise for unsolicited proposals. She noted that this proposal came to NCDOT without its advertisement. She added that the terms of the unsolicited proposal are confidential. However, what can be shared is that this would be a public-private partnership in which the proposer would cover the costs of replacing the bridge as well as operations and maintenance. To recoup the costs, it will have a toll.

The next step is for the proposal to be accepted or rejected. Ms. Marks said that NCDOT will only accept the proposal with the MPO's support. If accepted, NCDOT would not move forward with the proposal, but would perform its own preliminary research and vetting to create its own contract and terms, and advertise a normal, transparent bidding process. She added that the firm that submitted the proposal would not automatically be chosen but would be shortlisted for the project while other companies are considered.

Mr. Kozlosky stated that NCDOT assured him that it would not move ahead without a response from the MPO. He said that he anticipates a response from the MPO Board at its July meeting. He explained that the intent of today is to open the floor for discussion regarding the idea.

Mr. Flanagan inquired if the MPO would take a stance on tolling in the area. Mr. Kozlosky responded that the MPO does take a stance on tolling in the MPO area. He noted that the only project identified in the Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) as a toll facility is the Cape Fear Crossing. He added that if the proposal and scenario move forward, the MPO would need to update its financial forecast to reflect the toll facility, which would move projects to the funded category.

Ms. Marks said that if the toll project were to move forward, the MPO could potentially receive a bonus allocation. She noted that a formula exists to calculate the bonus allocation, which is capped at \$100 million and can only be spent in Brunswick and New Hanover counties where the project would be located.

Mr. Kozlosky pointed out that if the toll proposal moves forward, the MPO would need to develop a bonus allocation policy like those of the Charlotte and Raleigh MPOs.

In response to an inquiry by Mr. Flanagan, Ms. Marks said that the bonus allocation is specific to tolling and that a North Carolina General Statute refers to it.

In response to an inquiry by Mr. Parsley, Ms. Marks stated that NCDOT will do the NEPA document itself, although the proposer offered to do it. She reiterated that NCDOT will do all the preliminary work and that the NEPA document will decide the alternative based on NCDOT's study. She added that there would be much public involvement throughout the process. She noted that the traffic and revenue study would begin the discussion with the public prior to entering the NEPA process.

Mr. Cannon inquired about the life expectancy of the Cape Fear Memorial Bridge. Although Ms. Mark was unable to answer that question, she noted that the 51-year-old structure has recurring maintenance and rehabilitation needs, and that the moveable span requires constant maintenance. She added that NCDOT began a feasibility study in 2019 to plan for replacement,

although the bridge is safe today. She commented that NCDOT will do whatever is necessary to maintain the bridge.

Mr. Kozlosky clarified that under the proposal, once the replacement bridge is constructed, the existing bridge would be demolished. He noted that there would be no sister bridge. Ms. Marks confirmed that the existing bridge would be left open during construction of the replacement bridge, and demolished once the new bridge is complete.

Mr. Kirkland pointed out that regarding TDM strategies, road pricing and tolls are a tool. Mr. Cannon responded out that HOT lanes are more of a TDM strategy than tolls.

Ms. Marks said that the traffic and revenue study would address the amount of anticipated traffic on alternative routes and the rate of the toll.

In response to an inquiry by Mr. Sutton, Mr. Kozlosky said that a multi-use path is proposed for the replacement bridge on its north side.

6) **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.

7) **Announcements**

- a. **Coronavirus Response & Recovery Supplemental Appropriations Act Applications**
Due - August 9, 2021

Mr. Kozlosky noted that staff has received at least five applications and expects a couple more. He commented that it will be a competitive process for the \$1.3 million in CRRSAA funds. He encouraged members to contact Mr. James with any interest or questions.

- b. **Next TCC meeting – August 11, 2021**

8) **Adjournment**

There being no further business, Mr. Cannon made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Ms. Marks, and the motion carried unanimously by roll call as follows:

Ayes: Mike Kozlosky, Rebekah Roth, Denys Vielkanowitz, Nick Cannon, Ed Parvin, Robert O'Quinn, Granseur Dick, Stephanie Ayers, Adrienne Harrington, Matt Kirkland, Barnes Sutton, Helen Bunch, Vanessa Lacer, Patrick Flanagan, Caitlin Marks, Nazia Sarder and Megan Matheny. **Nays:** None. **Absent:** Mandy Sanders.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:37 a.m.

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