



**MPO Board Meeting Minutes**  
**6<sup>th</sup> Floor Training Conference Room, 320 Chestnut Street, Wilmington, N.C.**  
**Wednesday, October 27, 2021**

**Members Present (in-person)**

Mike Allen, Town of Belville  
Brenda Bozeman, Town of Leland  
John Ellen, Town of Kure Beach  
David Piepmeyer, Pender County  
LeAnn Pierce, Town of Carolina Beach  
Charlie Rivenbark, City of Wilmington

**Members Present (remotely)**

Jonathan Barfield, Jr., New Hanover County  
Mike Forte, Brunswick County  
Deb Hays, Cape Fear Public Transportation Authority

**Others Present (in-person)**

Abby Lorenzo, Deputy Director, WMPO  
Scott A. James, Transportation Planning Engineer  
Chad Kimes, Division Engineer, NCDOT  
Mike Kozlosky, Executive Director, WMPO  
Caitlin Marks, Planning Engineer, NCDOT  
Rachel McIntyre, WMPO Assoc. Transportation Planner

**Others Present (remotely)**

Nick Cannon, WMPO TDM Program Coordinator  
Veronica Carter, Town of Leland  
Katie Hite, NCDOT  
LB Haviland, NCDOT  
Regina Hopkins, WMPO Sr. Accountant  
Krista Kimmel, NCDOT  
Bill Kincannon, NCDOT  
David Leonard, NCDOT  
Zach Manfredi, WMPO  
Marie Parker, Exec. Director, Wave Transit  
Rebekah Roth, New Hanover County Planning  
and Land Use Director  
Nazia Sarder, NCDOT Transportation Planner  
Susan Westberry, AECOM

**1) Call to Order**

Chairman Piepmeyer called the meeting to order at 3:00 p.m.

Mr. Kozlosky called the roll. A quorum was present as follows:

**Present:** Mike Allen, Jonathan Barfield, Brenda Bozeman, John Ellen, Mike Forte, David Piepmeyer and LeAnn Pierce.

**Absent:** Neil Anderson, Deb Hays, Hank Miller, Charlie Rivenbark, Eulis Willis and Landon Zimmer.

Mr. Kozlosky noted that Mr. Rivenbark's presence has been delayed.

**2) Conflict of Interest Statement**

Chairman Piepmeyer read the conflict-of-interest statement. He asked if any member has a conflict of interest with any of the items on the meeting agenda. No members reported having a conflict.

**3) Approval of Board Members' Excused Absences**

Mr. Kozlosky said that Landon Zimmer and Hank Miller have asked to be excused from today's meeting.

Mr. Ellen made a motion to excuse Mr. Zimmer and Mr. Miller from the meeting, seconded by Mr. Barfield and the motion carried unanimously by roll call as follows:

**Ayes:** Mike Allen, Jonathan Barfield, Brenda Bozeman, John Ellen, Mike Forte, David Piepmeyer and LeAnn Pierce.

**Nays:** None. **Absent:** Neil Anderson, Deb Hays, Hank Miller, Charlie Rivenbark, Eulis Willis and Landon Zimmer.

**4) Approval of the Agenda**

Mr. Kozlosky requested that the Board add item "c" for discussion of a date for a special meeting to tour the Military Cutoff Extension project. Ms. Bozeman made a motion to approve the meeting agenda as amended to add a discussion item. Mr. Ellen seconded the motion.

The motion to approve the meeting agenda as amended carried unanimously by roll call as follows:

**Ayes:** Mike Allen, Jonathan Barfield, Brenda Bozeman, John Ellen, Mike Forte, David Piepmeyer and LeAnn Pierce.

**Nays:** None. **Excused:** Hank Miller and Landon Zimmer. **Absent:** Neil Anderson, Deb Hays, Charlie Rivenbark and Eulis Willis.

**5) Public Comment Period**

Mr. Denis McGarry, resident of South Third Street and member of the Residents of Old Wilmington, spoke to the MPO Board in-person. He expressed concerns regarding pedestrian safety and requested that the MPO help with NCDOT and the city to install stop lights on South Third Street between Market Street and Castle Street to reduce speeds and improve pedestrian safety. He pointed out that during an average week on South Third Street last year, 2,100 cars traveled at 45 mph or faster in the historic residential neighborhood based on a recent city study. He noted that there were 51 accidents last year on this section of the road, or one a week. He added that the accidents damage property, pedestrians, and drivers.

Mr. McGarry commented that the sole crossing at the bike path for the River to Sea Bikeway is ineffective. He noted that vehicles either don't stop or only stop in the inner lane, not the outer lane. He added that this request is being brought forward to tie-in with the upcoming repaving of the street. He requested stoplights to key sections of South Third Street, or, minimally, at the Ann Street crosswalk, as well as solar powered SpeedMinder signs, and the reduction of the speed limit from 35 mph to 25 mph consistent with other streets surrounding this area of South Third Street. He noted that studies are currently underway, and the residents are scheduled to meet with NCDOT in December.

Chairman Piepmeyer requested an update from NCDOT early next year. In response to an inquiry by Ms. Bozeman, Mr. McGarry said the section is six blocks long. He noted that the residents have been working with the City's Traffic Engineer. In response to an inquiry by Mr. McGarry, Mr. Kozlosky said that he would be the contact for the MPO.

Ms. Rhonda Bellamy, Executive Director of the Arts Council of Wilmington and New Hanover County, spoke to the MPO Board in-person regarding the city's request for Coronavirus Response & Recovery Supplemental Appropriations Act (CRRSAA) funding. She said that several years ago, she and a colleague were scouting locations for public art and appealed to then City Councilmember Paul Lawler to revitalize the unused railbed that extends through the heart of the northside. The Friends of the Wilmington Rail Trail convened, composed of NCDOT Rail Division, MPO staff, northside neighbors, nonprofits, for profits, artists, and recreational enthusiasts. She expressed appreciation to the MPO Board for supporting the master plan last November, for which the Friends group provided the local match. She added that City Council signed off on the master plan early this year.

Ms. Bellamy expressed gratitude for the City of Wilmington's partnership and the current request to fund design and engineering study of, not just six city blocks from Third Street to McRae Street as originally intended, but to extend it to the Archie Blue Park in the Love Grove community. She pointed out that the Rail Trail is a critical link to the Cross City Trail and will provide greater connection and access for northside residents, and that the benefits are numerous.

**6) Presentation**

**a. Independence Boulevard Extension Update- Chad Kimes, NCDOT**

NCDOT Division Engineer Chad Kimes gave an update on the Independence Boulevard Extension project from Randall Parkway to Martin Luther King Jr. Parkway. He said that planning studies are underway, the draft environmental impact statement (DEIS) will be ready in early 2022, the public hearing will be held in summer of 2022, followed by the Least Environmental Damaging Practicable Alternative (LEDPA) by the end 2022, the record of decision in 2023, right-of-way acquisition in 2024, and construction in 2028.

Mr. Kimes said that two options are being considered for the intersection at Market Street and Independence Boulevard: Single Point Urban Interchange (SPUI) or Tight Urban Diamond Interchange (TUDI). He pointed out that less right-of-way is needed for a SPUI, which would have one signal, and the TUDI would have two signals. He commented that the SPUI would have less impacts, and the TUDI would have better pedestrian accommodations. He displayed renderings showing the Randall Parkway at grade crossing, the bridge over the

first CSX railroad crossing, and, instead of an earth embankment, the structure will continue past Hurst Drive, which will have connectivity, as will Princess Place Drive. He said that for the entire extension, the SPUI would displace 58 residences (39 of which are minority-owned), and 29 businesses (seven of which are minority-owned). The impacts of the TUDI are greater, displacing 69 residences (47 of which are minority-owned), and 37 businesses (nine of which are minority-owned).

Mr. Kimes continued the presentation by saying the costs are increasing, as they are with all projects. He attributed the increase to utility and right-of-way costs. He estimated the project to cost \$193 million.

In response to an inquiry by Mr. Rivenbark, Mr. Kimes said the berm would be cheaper, although the Department would incur additional right-of-way costs. Mr. Rivenbark pointed out the structure would provide better connectivity for the neighborhoods.

Mr. Kimes gave an overview of the funding tiers. He said that the Statewide Tier of committed and noncommitted projects is about \$3 billion overprogrammed, and the Regional category is \$540 million overprogrammed (which includes the Hampstead Bypass project). He noted that the Independence Boulevard project is in the Division Tier, which is \$230 million overprogrammed. He speculated that the NC Board of Transportation would vote to remove noncommitted projects to lower overprogramming, and that the project would continue.

Chairman Piepmeyer commented that this project has been a priority since 1972, and is important to the region, especially to the city and New Hanover County. Mr. Rivenbark pointed out that the city needs another north-south route, and congestion is not likely to diminish without it. Mr. Barfield expressed concerns about residents on Montgomery Avenue and their ability to afford comparable housing. He commented that he wants to avoid harming the residents.

In response to an inquiry by Mr. Ellen, Mr. Kimes said that cost estimates are calculated for current day with an inflation rate added to the program. He noted that the new process will update the cost estimates every two years, and any challenges would be brought to the attention of the MPO Board.

Mr. Barfield asked for as much lead time as possible for residents to understand the impacts and make informed decisions.

Chairman Piepmeyer expressed appreciation to Mr. Kimes.

#### 7) Consent Agenda

- a. Approval of Board Meeting Minutes from September 29, 2021
- b. 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 21-22 Section 5303 Funding
- c. Resolution approving the Donations for the 2021 Commuter Challenge

Mr. Ellen made a motion to approve the Consent Agenda, Items 7a through 7c. Mr. Rivenbark seconded the motion, and it carried unanimously by roll call as follows:

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

#### 8) Regular Agenda

- a. Opening of the 30-day public comment period for 2020-2029 STIP/MPO TIP Amendments #21-8

Mr. Kozlosky acknowledged deletions to the STIP, which include Middle Sound Loop Connector project (to provide a new TIP# for the project), and the Cape Fear Crossing Project. He reminded the Board that in 2019 NCDOT decided to stop work on the Cape Fear Crossing Project. He noted that this deletion is a clean-

up of that decision, since NCDOT is neither working on the project currently nor anticipates working on it in future. He added that this item is the opening of a 30-day public comment period.

Chairman Piepmeyer said he requested that Mr. Kozlosky place this item in the regular agenda instead of the consent agenda for further discussion. He commented that removing the Cape Fear Crossing from the STIP might be a negative thing since the project has been identified as a top priority for the MPO. He spoke in opposition to removing it from the STIP.

A question/answer and discussion period was held. Mr. Kimes said that there is no funding identified for this project although he can appreciate the importance of the project to the region.

In response to an inquiry by Mr. Rivenbark, Mr. Kozlosky said that the only benefit to removing the project would be to release the remaining funds (\$400,000) that the MPO provided for the environmental document from its Direct Attributable (DA) program. However, removing it reduces its importance.

Due to the need for an additional bridge, Ms. Bozeman, Mr. Barfield, Ms. Pierce, Mr. Forte, Mr. Allen, and Mr. Ellen concurred with Chairman Piepmeyer, who expressed a desire to keep the project visible to the public. In response to an inquiry by Mr. Rivenbark, Mr. Kimes said that removing the project might be like starting over. He added that it is just a matter of finding funding.

Mr. Forte made a motion to keep the Cape Fear Crossing in the STIP, seconded by Ms. Bozeman, and the motion carried unanimously by roll call as follows:

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

- b. **Resolution approving the Coronavirus Response & Recovery Supplemental Appropriations Act Funding**  
MPO Transportation Planning Engineer Scott A. James said that of the seven applications received by the deadline, five of which were ranked by the adopted criteria. He expressed appreciation to the MPO Board for suggesting that tiebreaking be included in the process for ranking the projects. He noted that two applications were excluded from the ranking. He explained that the application from the Town of Leland proposed a project that is not supported by NCDOT at this time, and that Pender County identified alternative funding for its project.

Mr. James said that the MPO staff recommends that CRRSAA funds be awarded in order of priority to the Town of Navassa, Cape Fear Public Transportation Authority, the City of Wilmington, and Town of Kure Beach, which would exhaust the funds and leave none for the fifth-place project from the Town of Belville.

In response to an inquiry by Chairman Piepmeyer, Mr. James said that the recommendations have been communicated and endorsed by the Technical Coordinating Committee.

Chairman Piepmeyer expressed appreciation to staff for the process to rank the submitted projects. He noted that the MPO was able to allocate all the funds, although a few of the projects went unallocated.

Mr. Ellen made a motion to approve awarding the CRRSAA funds. Ms. Rivenbark seconded the motion, and it carried unanimously by roll call as follows:

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

9) **Discussion**

- a. **2020-2029 STIP/MPO Transportation Improvement Program Administrative Modifications #21-9**

Mr. Kozlosky stated that Administrative Modification #21-9 is for informational purposes only and will be brought back for consideration at the Board's next meeting.

**b. FY 23 Transportation Planning Study Requests**

MPO Deputy Director Abby Lorenzo said that MPO staff has started discussing the FY23 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP), which identifies the organization's planning priorities and activities for the next budget year. As part of the development of this program, the MPO requests its members submit their anticipated transportation planning needs for consideration for funding. Additionally, the MPO will consider its planning needs as well. Member submittals must include the name of the project and study, estimated cost, and other funding sources. All requests should be submitted in writing to herself no later than 5:00 p.m. on December 10th. All submittals will be reviewed for incorporation into a draft UPWP to be presented to the Board for consideration. The final UPWP is required to be filed with NCDOT by March 15, 2022.

**c. Special Meeting for a Tour of the Military Cutoff Road Extension Project**

Mr. Kozlosky reminded the Board that several months ago Mr. Kimes offered to take the members on a Tour of Military Cutoff Extension, which would require a special meeting. He asked the Board to check their calendars.

Chairman Piepmeyer requested that the members be polled by e-mail. In response to some concerns about the scope of dates, Mr. Kozlosky responded that staff will work with Mr. Kimes to propose some dates and bring back a recommendation at the next meeting. Mr. Kimes commented that the Board will be pleasantly surprised with the project.

Ms. Pierce expressed concerns about the impact of the November 2nd Municipal Elections and the possibility of missing the tour. Mr. Kozlosky said that some members may have to serve out their elected term until another representative is appointed. Mr. Kimes added that another big celebration is coming in January (Hampstead Bypass). Mr. Ellen noted that the Town of Kure Beach would have its swearing-in the second week of December.

**10) 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.

**11) Announcements**

**a. Go Coast Commuter Challenge- October 16th-31st**

Mr. Kozlosky said that the Commuter Challenge is currently underway through October 31st and that the preliminary results will be provided at the next regular Board meeting.

**b. Brunswick Heritage Riverside Ride- October 23rd**

Mr. Kozlosky reported that the Brunswick Heritage Riverside Ride was a success thanks to Towns of Navassa, Leland and Belville. He noted that participants are looking forward to next year.

Mr. Ellen said that riders were impressed with the Mayor greeting them at the halfway point, distributing water and power bars, and chatting with participants. Mr. Allen expressed appreciation to participants. Chairman Piepmeyer pointed out that this will be an annual event.

Mr. Barfield acknowledged that Mr. Kozlosky has a birthday within the next few days. The MPO Board wished Mr. Kozlosky a happy birthday.

Mr. Rivenbark commented that Leland has opened its trail and it's beautiful. Ms. Bozeman thanked everyone for their participation.

**12) Adjournment**

**Next meeting – November 17, 2021**

Mr. Ellen made a motion to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Ms. Bozeman.

The motion to adjourn carried unanimously by roll call as follows:

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

The meeting adjourned at 4:00 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.**