



**MPO Board Meeting Minutes**  
**6<sup>th</sup> Floor Training Conference Room, 320 Chestnut Street, Wilmington, N.C.**  
**Wednesday, August 31, 2022**

**Members Present (in-person)**

Mike Allen, Town of Belville  
Neil Anderson, City of Wilmington  
Jonathan Barfield, Jr., New Hanover County  
Brenda Bozeman, Town of Leland  
Deb Hays, Cape Fear Public Transportation Authority  
Hank Miller, Vice Chair, Town of Wrightsville Beach  
Luke Waddell, City of Wilmington  
Frank Williams, Brunswick County

Anthony Law, NCDOT  
Abby Lorenzo, WMPO  
Rachel McIntyre, WMPO  
Marie Parker, Wave Transit  
Aubrey Parsley, City of Wilmington  
Rebekah Roth, New Hanover County  
Greer Shivers, WMPO  
Emma Stogner, WMPO  
Suzan Westberry, AECOM  
Lisa Wurtzbacher, New Hanover County

**Members Present (remotely)**

Deb LeCompte, Town of Carolina Beach

**Others Present (in-person)**

Chuck Bost, Town of Belville  
Trevor Carroll, NCDOT  
Adrienne Cox, NCDOT  
Tara Duckworth, New Hanover County  
Scott A. James, WMPO  
Andy Koeppel  
Mike Kozlosky, WMPO

**Others Present (remotely)**

Veronica Carter, Town of Leland  
Mike Forte, Brunswick County  
Historic Wilmington Foundation  
Jamar Johnson, WMPO  
Caitlin Marks, NCDOT  
Celia Miars  
Amy Passaretti  
Nazia Sarder, NCDOT

**1. Call to Order**

Vice Chairman Hank Miller called the meeting to order at 3:00 p.m.

Based on the MPO Board's adopted Remote Participation Policy, Mr. Kozlosky called the roll, and a quorum was present as follows:

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

**2. Conflict of Interest Statement**

Vice Chairman Miller read the conflict-of-interest statement. He asked if any member had 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 David Piepmeyer, John Ellen and Landon Zimmer have asked to be excused.

Mr. Barfield made a motion to excuse Chairman Piepmeyer, Mr. Ellen and Mr. Zimmer. Ms. Hays seconded the motion and it carried unanimously by roll call in anticipation of remote participants as follows:

**Ayes:** Mike Allen, Jonathan Barfield, Brenda Bozeman, Deb Hays, Hank Miller, Luke Waddell and Frank Williams. **Nays:** None. **Absent:** Neil Anderson, Deb LeCompte and Eulis Willis. **Excused:** John Ellen, David Piepmeyer and Landon Zimmer.

**4. Approval of the Agenda**

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

**Ayes:** Mike Allen, Jonathan Barfield, Brenda Bozeman, Deb Hays, Hank Miller, Luke Waddell and Frank Williams. **Nays:** None. **Absent:** Neil Anderson, Deb LeCompte and Eulis Willis. **Excused:** John Ellen, David Piepmeyer and Landon Zimmer.

**5. Public Comment Period**

Mr. Andy Koeppel spoke to the MPO Board about “Tolls” and expressed concerns regarding setting a precedent of tolling existing free structures. He pointed out that the Ravenel Bridge was financed without tolls. He added that there’s a difference between tolling a highway that has alternate routes and a bridge.

Ms. LeCompte joined the meeting remotely and noted that the link in the agenda is incorrect.

**6. Presentation**

**a. New Hanover County Proposed ¼ cent Sales Tax- Lisa Wurtzbacher, NHC**

Assistant New Hanover County Manager Lisa Wurtzbacher distributed some documents regarding the proposed ¼-cent sales tax.

Mr. Barfield commented that the City of Wilmington and New Hanover County will benefit greatly from a ¼-cent sales tax, which will also help support Wave Transit. He pointed out that an increase in route frequency will help capture choice ridership. He added that biking and walking paths, and the rail realignment would benefit as well. He noted that it was announced yesterday that Congresswoman Debra Ross got nearly \$30 million for Wake County for a BRT lane. He commented that it would be beneficial to capture something similar in addition to the \$144 million that the proposed ¼-cent sales tax is anticipated to raise over the next 10 years. He noted that the Parks Bond, was anticipated to raise \$7 million, but has raised \$14 million.

Ms. Wurtzbacher said that the proposed ¼-cent or Article 43 sales tax must be dedicated to public transportation but is not exclusive to the bus system. She noted that if it wins the vote on the November 8<sup>th</sup> ballot, the Board of Commissioners will consider a resolution to levy the tax. She added that the current sales tax rate is 7%, and this would increase it to 7.25%. Essentially, for every \$100 spent, \$7.25 would be raised on current sales tax items (excluding the usual groceries, fuel, and prescriptions). She estimated that the proposed ¼-cent sales tax would raise about \$14 million a year or about \$144 million in 10 years, which can be used to leverage grant funds for a larger impact. She noted that in addition to citizens, the sales tax is also paid by visitors.

Mr. Anderson pointed out that it would be important to emphasize that this would not impact the cost of groceries.

Ms. Wurtzbacher said that the Committee identified a breakdown on how the proposed ¼-cent sales tax would be used to benefit the community, as follows:

Wave Transit	45%	~\$65 million
Bike and pedestrian path improvements	39%	~\$56 million
Rail realignment project	16%	~\$23 million

WMPO Deputy Director Abby Lorenzo pointed out that having a walkable, bikeable, livable community is important to everyone in New Hanover County. She noted that design, right-of-way acquisition, and construction of bicycle and pedestrian improvements can be costly. She added that the proposed ¼-cent sales tax could provide a dedicated funding source for these types of improvements as well as for connections to access transit for which there is currently no dedicated funding source.

New Hanover County Parks and Gardens Director Tara Duckworth gave a brief overview of bicycle and pedestrian facilities, sidewalks, crosswalks, and intersection improvements that would benefit from the ¼-cent sales tax.

Executive Director Marie Parker said that in the first five years, this funding would support expanded hours of operation for Wave Transit to help students and commuters traveling after hours. Another improvement would be service frequency, which is currently 60 minutes, causing a trip with a transfer to take up to two hours in one direction. She noted that in July, 30-minute service was implemented on some routes, which has resulted in an increase in usage already. She added that currently only 7% of Wave Transit’s amenities have covered shelters and another improvement would be to add 17 new benches and 10 new shelters.

Ms. Parker said that enhanced technologies would add free passenger Wi-Fi on buses as well as wayside technology to show real time arrivals. She added that micro-transit would also be expanded to include additional vehicles and coverage areas. Lastly, free youth passes would be provided for citizens of New Hanover County, ages 18 years and younger, which would help families save up to \$1,000 a year on fares for children.

City of Wilmington Director of Economic Development and Rail Realignment Aubrey Parsley reminded the Board that the majority of funding that goes toward transportation is spent on highway and roadway projects. All the other modes of transportation receive substantially less funding. One of the tools that the state offers is to enable local funding sources for a growing metropolitan area to diversify the types of transportation project investments is the Article 43G sales tax. Mecklenburg County was the first to put it in place at a ½-cent level and, during the last 20 years, three other counties have put it in place (Wake, Durham, and Orange) as well.

Mr. Parsley said that once a local funding source is identified for transportation projects, it is more likely to leverage state and federal funds from discretionary grant programs. One example is a piece of the rail realignment project that overlaps the NCDOT’s South Front Street widening project, the Port’s freight railroad tracks, and a Wave Transit route. He noted that this is an example of how complex transportation systems are becoming. Not only does the Article 43 sales tax allow leveraging of state and federal funds, but also allows investment in a diverse set of transportation options in the area.

Ms. Loeper said that further information can be found at [www.trailstransitnhc.com](http://www.trailstransitnhc.com).

Mr. Barfield pointed out that four counties have implemented a sales tax at a ½-cent. He added that the proposed ¼-cent sales tax would be spread throughout the region and to visitors. He noted that some communities are finding ways to move people throughout their communities.

Ms. Hays asked about a sunset on the proposed sales tax. Ms. Loeper said that there is no sunset and that revenues were projected for 10 years.

In response to an inquiry by Ms. Hays, Ms. Parker said that there is also an app for micro transit.

**b. NCDOT Project Update- Anthony Law, NCDOT**

NCDOT Division 3 Engineer Chad Kimes acknowledged the presence of Division Construction Engineer Anthony Law and Assistant Division Construction Engineer Trevor Carroll to give a project update.

Mr. Law gave said that 57 projects are ongoing currently in Division 3, in the six southeastern counties in the state, totaling about \$721.5 million with 16 bridge projects at \$35.5 million, and 18 resurfacing contracts at \$60.3 million. Within the MPO Boundary, there are 16 highway projects at \$354 million, three bridge projects at \$10.5 million, and eight resurfacing contracts at \$30.1 million. He pointed out that half of the resurfacing contracts are within the MPO Boundary. He gave an update on some of the larger projects in-progress including the Military Cutoff Road Extension, which has a completion date of spring of next year, Market Street Widening (U-4902D), which is scheduled to be completed late next year despite utility conflicts, and the Hampstead Bypass, which was let earlier this year at about \$185 million.

Mr. Carroll gave an overview of the bridge projects. He said that two are rehabilitation projects of I-40 bridges over the northeast Cape Fear River, one is a rehabilitation of a Wrightsville Beach bridge, and another is the replacement of the Smith Creek Bridge. He noted that a trash truck damaged the truss system of the Smith Creek Bridge, which necessitated its closure. Fortunately, the bridge was programmed for replacement and was at 25% to 50% design, which was expedited.

Mr. Barfield asked about the liability of the trash truck. Mr. Carroll responded that NCDOT has standardized procedures to address that.

Mr. Carroll gave an overview of the resurfacing projects in the area, such as US 74/76 and US 17, and said that the Highway Improvements Map is public information. He noted that the map is reviewed yearly to plan the resurfacing program, and contractors coordinate to stagger lane closures and plan ahead for traffic control devices and stage moving traffic through the work zone in a safe manner to protect the workers as well as motorists. He requested that drivers stay focused through work zones, putting cell phones down, with awareness of workers, and maintaining a safe speed. He asked the Board members to spread the word.

Mr. Carroll said that Highway 210 was recently completed. He added that there are nighttime plans for resurfacing downtown, but nighttime resurfacing is not planned for high residential areas such as Monkey Junction. He noted that these parameters are considered in the contract.

Mr. Anderson inquired about the resurfacing of Independence Boulevard. Mr. Carroll said that it's an active contract and the contractor is allowed to work at its own schedule. He explained that there is a date of availability, and the contractor is allowed 18 months to complete the contract. He added that some constraints make it difficult to be more specific.

Ms. Hays commented that people don't know any of this.

In response to a request from Ms. LeCompte, Mr. Kozlosky said that each of today's presentations will be sent to the Board members.

Mr. Kimes said that regarding the 18-month contract; southeastern North Carolina has only four paving/asphalt plants. He noted there are not enough paving companies to bid out 12 months. He added that the paving program is about \$50 million a year and it's difficult to meet it with the contracted time.

In response to an inquiry by Mr. Anderson, Mr. Kimes said that if the dollar amount can be sustained over time, other contractors would come in state.

Vice Chairman Miller asked for a clarification of an early and a late spring completion date for Military Cutoff Road Extension. Mr. Law explained that its difficult to predict as there tends to be some details to tie up at the end of a project.

**c. Navassa Collector Street Plan- Susan Westberry, AECOM**

Mr. Kozlosky said that there is an item on the Consent Agenda to consider adopting the Navassa Collector Street Plan, which the Town of Navassa adopted.

AECOM Consultant Susan Westberry gave a presentation on the Navassa Collector Street Plan, which was an update of a previous plan completed in 2004. She noted that the plan was a collaborative effort between town staff and the MPO. She added that the purpose of the plan was to look at existing conditions, predict future transportation needs, and recommend a collector street network.

Ms. Westberry said that some of the goals of the plan include the following:

- Working with the community
- Improving mobility and safety
- Encouraging economic growth
- Improving access
- Considering future school transportation, transit, and other multi-modal transportation
- Developing policies and awareness of environmental constraints and natural resources

She noted that existing conditions that were reviewed included:

- Existing conditions
- Demographics
- Socio-economic factors
- Land use and development
- The natural environment
- Existing local and regional plans and projects
- Community features
- Existing transportation network and infrastructure

Ms. Westberry said that the plan proposes 12 collector streets, accounts for known constraints, and was separated into existing needs and future needs. She noted that existing collectors are highlighted in yellow on the map, most of which are below I-140 and serve existing issues in the town. She pointed out that future collector streets were proposed to serve anticipated traffic generated by the future housing developments of Indian Creek, Cedar Lakes Resort, and River Ridge at Cedar Hill.

Ms. Westberry said that six typical sections were outlined and are not tied to particular collectors, three without curb and gutter that would occur in sections of the town without closed storm water drains. She added that typical sections for each are as follows:

1. Multi-use path on one side and sidewalk on the other
2. Sidewalks on both sides of the road
3. Sidewalks and bicycle lanes

Ms. Westberry said that the plan also considered existing policies and guidelines and outlined some proposed modifications to match the intent of the plan, proposed new policy topics, and actions to implement the plan.

**d. Wilmington Urban Area MPO's Direct Attributable Funding Call for Projects- Scott A. James, WMPO**

WMPO Transportation Planning Engineer Scott A. James reminded Board members that there is a call for projects for about \$5 million in Direct Attributable federal funds. He noted that this is a competitive process for qualified projects and gave a brief overview of those. He noted that the pre-submittal deadline was August 8<sup>th</sup>, and that two submittals have been received. A few questions have been received for a total of five potential projects. He added that the formal deadline is the September 15<sup>th</sup>, that review of submittals will follow for three weeks, and recommendations for awards will be made in October. He added that after the award, training will be provided, potentially in November.

Mr. Kozlosky encouraged members to work with their respective jurisdictions if there is a desire to apply for these funds.

**7. Consent Agenda**

- a. **Approval of Board Meeting Minutes from July 27, 2022**
- b. **Resolution approving 2020-2029 STIP/MPO Amendment #22-5**
- c. **Opening of the 30-day public comment period for 2020-2029 STIP/MPO Amendment #22-6**
- d. **Resolution approving 2020-2029 STIP/MPO Administrative Modification #22-7**
- e. **Resolution authorizing the Chairman to enter into an agreement with the City of Wilmington and Cape Fear Public Transportation Authority for the FY 23 and FY 24 Section 5303 Funding**
- f. **Resolution adopting the 2022 Navassa Collector Street Plan**

Mr. Williams made a motion to approve the Consent Agenda, Items 7a through 7f. Ms. Hays seconded the motion, and it carried unanimously by roll call as follows:

**Ayes:** Mike Allen, Neil Anderson, Jonathan Barfield, Brenda Bozeman, Deb Hays, Deb LeCompte, Hank Miller, Luke Waddell and Frank Williams. **Nays:** None. **Absent:** Eulis Willis. **Excused:** John Ellen, David Piepmeyer and Landon Zimmer.

**8. Discussion**

- a. **2020-2029 STIP/MPO Transportation Improvement Program Administrative Modifications #22-8**

Mr. Kozlosky stated that this item is for informational purposes only and will be brought back at the Board's next meeting for consideration.

- b. **Revised Draft 2024-2033 State Transportation Improvement Program**

Mr. Kozlosky reminded Board members that in April, NCDOT released the initial draft of the 2024-2033 State/MPO Transportation Improvement Program (STIP/MTIP). He noted that with the passing of the budget, the Legislature included a transfer of sales tax revenue to the Department.

He added that NCDOT reviewed its revenue projections and released a revised draft in August. Currently, staff is reviewing the revised draft and will make a presentation with details about the changes to the MPO Board at its next meeting. He noted that the Department continues to allow projects swaps, which must be completed by March 17, 2023 and be agreed upon by the MPO and the Division. At the Board's request, staff will also bring forward the review and recommendations for project swaps for discussion in the upcoming months.

Mr. Waddell expressed concern regarding the MPO being consistent with what NCDOT will approve. Mr. Kozlosky said that MPO has sent some initial thoughts to Mr. Kimes and his team and expects some thoughts in return.

Mr. Kimes pointed out that the swaps are a huge change for NCDOT.

Ms. Hays reminded the Board that it has had discussions before regarding the Military Cutoff Road-Eastwood Road Corridor and the Drysdale Drive Extension. She suggested that the Drysdale Drive Extension be given some time to see if it alleviates traffic before going forward with the full overpass project (the interchange project at Military Cutoff Road and Eastwood Road).

Mr. Kozlosky reminded the Board that it identified its top funded priorities: the Hampstead Bypass, Independence Boulevard Extension and the three (3) interchange projects including the one at Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard/Kerr Avenue, one at Market Street, Eastwood Road and MLK Parkway, and one at Military Cutoff Road and Eastwood Road. He noted that the MPO has made efforts to accelerate those projects and not move those projects. He added that if it is a desire of the Board to look at them for a project swap, staff would want action from the Board to direct staff to look at it.

Mr. Kimes commented that this is an excellent point for what NCDOT is getting ready to do. He reminded Board members that the Military Cutoff interchange is coming up soon, and that it moved up one year. He pointed out that it is a funded project, somewhere around \$30 million. He added that if there is a decision to wait it is an option to discuss.

In response to an inquiry by Vice-Chairman Miller, Mr. Kimes confirmed that \$30 million is just for the interchange portion. He reminded the Board members that much effort went into getting the project funded. However, swaps have never been done before in the STIP and this is an opportunity to re-evaluate. He expressed concerns that Drysdale Drive could show some solid numbers and that it could last for 20 years. He cautioned that it may not be perfect when it opens.

Ms. Hays agreed that it will help. Mr. Kimes said that it should be evaluated when it opens.

Ms. Cox said that the bridge is programmed for 2025. Mr. Kimes reiterated that if it is to be paused, this is the window to do it.

Mr. Anderson expressed concerns regarding delaying a project that has been discussed for years and commented that the consideration causes him to doubt the numbers. Mr. Kimes said that Drysdale Drive and the interchange will improve the numbers. He added that Drysdale Drive alone will improve the numbers. However, it's uncertain whether it will do so for 20 years. According to the model, the bridge is still needed in 20 years.

Mr. Anderson questioned how much traffic can be expected from I-40 and the Avenue. Ms. Hays responded that it's not a matter of for or against. She clarified that it was a comment made.

Vice-Chairman Miller said it's a discussion about switching projects.

Mr. Kozlosky said the MPO Board will be having these discussions over the course of the next few months. At the next meeting, staff will bring back the changes from April until August and then a recommendation for project swaps. He noted that the project has been left in the untouchable category. He reiterated that if there is a desire to change it, staff will need some direction from the Board.

Mr. Barfield concurred with Mr. Anderson's logic. He commented that the MLK Parkway should have had flyovers to begin with; however, there was resistance to acquiring the right-of-way then. In retrospect, they are needed and now bridges are being considered, and the cost of right-of-way is even greater. He suggested moving forward with the project now without delay if the money is available.

Vice-Chairman Miller commented that he doesn't know what's on the project swap list yet. He pointed out that if Oleander Road and College Road could jump ahead of Eastwood Road, he'd choose that option. He commented that it should have been done 40 years ago.

Mr. Kimes said that this is an exercise and reminded the Board members that the project would not come off the program. Ms. Hays agreed that this is a discussion item that was brought up and commented that it was surprising to learn that Drysdale Drive would make great improvement immediately if not long term.

In response to an inquiry by Mr. Anderson, Mr. Kozlosky reiterated that the Military Cutoff Road and Eastwood Road Interchange was one of the Board's top five funded priorities. Vice Chairman Miller added that the Drysdale Drive Extension and the interchange were not considered separately before. He commented that it's impossible to talk about one without the other.

Mr. Anderson said that they were never separate. Vice Chairman Miller pointed out that there are many people in favor of the Drysdale Drive Extension and not the interchange.

Mr. Anderson questioned how that would help when getting to Bradley Creek and being stopped.

Ms. Hays responded that this is only a discussion.

Vice Chairman Miller pointed out that if traffic can't get past Oleander it won't matter.

Mr. Waddell pointed out that no matter what the MPO Board decides it will have to be approved by NCDOT. So, staff and NCDOT should work together.

Vice Chairman Miller said the conversation is coming up next month. He asked if College and Oleander are a possibility. Mr. Kozlosky responded that it is.

Mr. Kimes said that the bridge can be kept, delayed two years, while advancing College and Oleander. He commented that he wouldn't want a project in the first five years to fall out. But schedules can be shifted to bring something else in because the intersection has been treated for a few years.

Ms. Hays pointed out that there is an option to address the intersection for a few years, and move up Oleander and College Road, which is in dire need, and not take away Military Cutoff and Eastwood, just delay it two years.



Mr. Kimes reminded the MPO Board that Eastwood Road is part of a larger plan involving Market Street, Eastwood at College, MLK and Kerr Avenue, which has moved back up in the STIP. He added that this cannot be done all at once and it will be necessary to shift so as not to have College Road and MLK under construction at the same time as Kerr and MLK.

Ms. Hays clarified that the discussion is to have Drysdale Drive to offload current traffic, while College and Oleander is done, Kerr and MLK or Market and MLK are started, and then College and MLK and Kerr and MLK, followed by Eastwood and Military Cutoff just a couple of years down the road.

Mr. Anderson said that he would like to look at Oleander and College because it has never reached the point where it's up for consideration. He added that he would like to see how long it would last. Because there is discussion about doing Kerr instead. He questioned how finalized the plans are at Oleander and College. Mr. Kimes responded that an alternative was chosen, and it was in design, but it's been on hold.

Mr. Kozlosky said that staff submitted a potential swap that would bring College and Oleander into the funded category. Discussions with NCDOT are needed, and those will be brought forward to the MPO Board at a future meeting.

Mr. Anderson expressed concerns that this is just a bunch of band-aids until NCDOT is out of money again. Vice Chairman Miller responded that this is more of a reason to bring it up because they may be out of money soon. He requested that staff bring forward these options at the next meeting.

Vice Chairman Miller expressed appreciation to Ms. Hays for bringing up the discussion.

## 9. Updates

- a. Wilmington Urban Area MPO
- b. Cape Fear Public Transportation Authority
- c. NCDOT Division
- d. NCDOT Transportation Planning Division

Mr. Kozlosky said the updates are included in the agenda packet.

## 10. Announcements

- a. Direct Attributable Project Submittals Due- September 15th
- b. Brunswick Heritage Riverside Ride- September 24th (more than 60 registrants, capped at 200)
- c. Wilmington MPO Bike/Pedestrian Committee- October 11th
- d. Next MPO Board Meeting – September 28th

Mr. Kozlosky said that copies of the Bicycle Suitability Map and the MPO's Annual Report were distributed to MPO Board members today.

## 11. Adjournment

Mr. Barfield made a motion to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Mr. Williams, and the motion carried unanimously by roll call as follows:

**Ayes:** Mike Allen, Neil Anderson, Jonathan Barfield, Brenda Bozeman, Deb Hays, Deb LeCompte, Hank Miller, Luke Waddell and Frank Williams. **Nays:** None. **Absent:** Eulis Willis. **Excused:** John Ellen, David Piepmeyer and Landon Zimmer.

The meeting adjourned at 4:26 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.**