



MPO Board Regular Meeting Minutes

Monday, March 29, 2023

6th Floor Training Conference Room, 320 Chestnut Street, Wilmington, North Carolina

Members Present in Person

Mike Allen, Town of Belville
Neil Anderson, City of Wilmington
Lynn Barbee, Town of Carolina Beach
Jonathan Barfield, New Hanover County
Brenda Bozeman, Town of Leland
John Ellen, Town of Kure Beach
Mike Forte, Brunswick County
Hank Miller, Town of Wrightsville Beach
Luke Waddell, City of Wilmington
Eulis Willis, Town of Navassa
Landon Zimmer, NC Board of Transportation

Others Present Remotely

Veronica Carter, Town of Leland
Kim Crouch
Jamar Johnson, WMPO
Vanessa Lacer, Town of Leland
Scott Lane
Bill Marley, FHWA
Bill McDow, WMPO
Karen McIntyre
Marie Parker, Wave Transit
Nazia Sarder, NCDOT

Others Present in Person

Carolyn Caggia, WMPO
Nikki Cooper, Law Office of
Matt Nichols
Adrienne Cox, NCDOT
Regina Hopkins, WMPO
Scott James, WMPO
Chad Kimes, NCDOT
Mike Kozlosky, WMPO
Rebekah Roth, New Hanover County
Abby Lorenzo, WMPO
Caitlin Marks, NCDOT
Rachel McIntyre, WMPO
Matthew Nichols, WMPO Attorney
Greer Shivers, WMPO
Emma Stogner, WMPO

1) Call to Order

Chairman Hank Miller called the meeting to order at 3:00 PM. A quorum was present, all in-person. No roll call was necessary.

2) Conflict of Interest Statement

Chairman Miller read the conflict-of-interest statement and asked if any Board member had a conflict of interest. No Board member reported having a conflict of interest.

3) Approval of Board Member Excused Absences

Mr. Kozlosky said that Wendy Fletcher Hardee and Landon Zimmer have requested to be excused from today's meeting. Mr. Ellen made a motion to excuse Ms. Hardee and Mr. Zimmer, seconded by Mr. Anderson, and the motion carried unanimously.

4) Approval of the Agenda

Mr. Barbee requested to amend the agenda. He said that the Town of Carolina Beach is in the process of developing a grant application for a bicycle and pedestrian plan and needs a resolution of support from the MPO, which was distributed to Board members, but not in time to be placed on the agenda.

Mr. Barbee made a motion to approve the agenda as amended, seconded by Mr. Anderson, and the motion carried unanimously.

Chairman Miller acknowledged the unexpected passing of Vice Chair Hays. A moment of silence was observed in honor of Ms. Hays.

5) Public Comment Period

Mr. Kozlosky said that no public comments were received and no one from the public signed up to speak.

6) Closed Session

Chairman Miller made a motion to hold a closed session pursuant to North Carolina General Statute (NCGS) Sections 143-318.11(a)(5) and (a)(6) to consider the qualifications, competence, performance, character, fitness, or conditions of appointment of individual public officers or employees, and to establish or instruct staff or agents concerning the negotiations of the amount of compensation or other material terms of an employment contract. Ms. Bozeman seconded the motion and it carried unanimously.

The meeting recessed for a closed session.

The meeting reconvened open session with all MPO Board members present as before. No action was taken.

7) Presentations

a. NC Alliance for Safe Transportation- Kim Crouch, NCAST

Kim Crouch, Executive Director, NC Alliance for Safe Transportation (NCAST), gave a presentation on the recently established non-profit to draw attention to traffic safety through marketing and educational communications. She noted that NCAST has received corporate and start-up grant funding through the Governor's Highway Safety Program. She added that the alliance's goal is to reduce the number of transportation related crashes, injuries and fatalities in North Carolina starting with soliciting feedback from communities across the state regarding traffic safety needs. She invited MPO member jurisdictions to participate in an informal discussion about traffic safety at a date yet to be determined.

Ms. Crouch said that NCAST is guided by a small board of seven members and has a robust advisory council that will meet once or twice a year. She encouraged membership in the advisory council. She noted that NCAST will begin by targeting seven counties including New Hanover County. She provided her contact information, telephone number (919) 349-9476 and email (kim@ncallianceforsafetransportation.org).

In response to an inquiry by Mr. Barbee, Ms. Crouch said that the traffic safety topic is very broad, which is why NCAST is seeking feedback to help focus its messages.

Mr. Kozlosky said that since New Hanover County is one of NCAST's focus areas, staff will arrange a small group meeting to facilitate conversations to discuss safety concerns in New Hanover County. Ms. Crouch offered to expand the focus to include the other MPO jurisdictions. Mr. Forte asked about including the RPO and Mr. Kozlosky responded that staff would investigate it.

b. 2022 Congestion Management Process- Rachel McIntyre, WMPO

Mr. Kozlosky acknowledged that this would be Ms. McIntyre's final presentation as she will be transitioning from the WMPO to the City of Wilmington's Engineering Department.

Ms. McIntyre gave an update on the 2022 Congestion Management Process (CMP). She provided brief background information and noted that changes to the CMP since 2020 include analyzing corridors from two perspectives (travel time reliability and multimodal) and the addition of three corridors, bringing the total number of corridors to 33. She added that regional goals and objectives, performance measures and metrics were carried over from the 2020 report to serve as a baseline for comparison. She reported that

Volume/Capacity decreased for 18 corridors and increased for 12 corridors. Other trends include decreases in AM and PM delay rates, transit (stops and ridership), and bicycle and pedestrian crashes, and increases in travel time reliability, vehicular crashes, and truck volumes.

Ms. McIntyre said that since congestion management strategies help inform the next Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP), staff determined that it would be beneficial to prepare CMP Biennial Data Reports every five years in between MTP updates, rather than biennially, because changes over two years are minimal, and the nature of roadway improvement projects is long-term.

A brief question answer and discussion period was held regarding the data and the impacts of the COVID pandemic. Ms. Lorenzo noted that the completion of the report has been delayed until data from 2021 was available. Mr. Ellen suggested that the final report be made available to NCAST.

Mr. Barfield expressed concerns regarding speeding in the College Road corridor from Wilshire Boulevard to Pinecliff Drive. He suggested some signage. Mr. Kimes said NCDOT would consider it.

Ms. Bozeman expressed concerns regarding the lack of rating on corridors in northern Brunswick County. Ms. McIntyre responded that only the top and bottom rated corridors were reported in the presentation.

c. Cape Fear Public Transportation Authority Ridership- Marie Parker, CFPTA

Wave Transit Deputy Director Jon Dodson gave an update on ridership comparing Wave Transit's routes year-over-year, from July through December. He said that system changes made last July for some routes increased frequency, redistributed others, altered weekend hours of service, and added seasonal schedules, have improved service. He provided an overview of the impact of the changes for the last six months of FY23 compared to the last six months of FY22 for each route type. Mr. Dodson summarized that the changes have contributed to incremental increases, and speculated that ridership would continue to grow, especially with changes toward increased efficiency and with the implementation of Wave Transit's short-range plan.

d. 2023 "Be A Looker" Campaign- Carolyn Caggia, WMPO

WMPO Associate Transportation Planner Carolyn Caggia gave a brief presentation on the 2023 "Be A Looker" Campaign, a biennial safety campaign for all road users -- drivers, bicyclists, and pedestrians. She noted that according to NCDOT data within a five-year period in the three-county area, there was an average of 90 pedestrian crashes with 12 deaths, and 59 bicycle crashes with four deaths. She added that fatal and suspected serious injury pedestrian crashes doubled over a 10-year period.

Mr. Forte noted that the population has doubled in the last 10 years, and that the population in Brunswick County has increased by 42,000 in the last six years. Ms. Caggia responded that more people are also driving larger vehicles. She offered to share the research in a memo and emphasized that more serious crashes are occurring rather than more crashes.

Mr. Ellen pointed out that other crashes are occurring than those reported, such as one that he experienced.

Mr. Barfield commented that NCDOT needs to "Be A Looker" too.

Ms. Caggia gave some brief background on the campaign. She noted that this year marketing and outreach will run from April to October. She gave an overview of safety messaging for different road user categories.

Mr. Ellen said that bicyclists should also be encouraged to be visible.

Ms. Caggia encouraged members to visit the www.GoCoastNC.org website for more information and a pledge form to participate in the campaign.

Mr. Barbee said that many elementary school students ride their bikes to school in Carolina Beach. He requested staff to reach out to Carolina Beach schools.

Ms. Caggia noted that the MPO has applied to receive 100 helmets through NCDOT's bicycle helmet initiative for low-income children, which could be tied to "Be A Looker" Campaign outreach. Mr. Barbee added that the helmets could also be tied to improved visibility.

e. FHWA/FTA 2023 Certification Review- Bill Marley, FHWA

Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) Transportation Planner Bill Marley gave an overview of the FHWA/FTA 2023 Certification Review of the MPO. He said that FHWA recertified the Wilmington MPO planning process, and that the certification is good for four years from the date of the report (February 23, 2023). He gave some background on the certification review process. He commented that the MPO review was a successful one with no corrective actions.

Mr. Marley reported that the MPO was given two commendations, one for its Citizens Advisory Committee to assist with the MTP update, and the other for providing a Title VI impact analysis map for scoring projects in environmental justice communities of concern. He noted that the MPO also received two recommendations for quantifiable measurables, one for Title VI, and the other for strategic deployable of Intelligent Transportation Systems/ITS architecture. He added that all MPOs self-certify, only the larger ones are subject to the FHWA/FTA certification review.

8) Consent Agenda

- a. **Approval of Board Meeting Minutes from February 20, 2023**
- b. **Resolution adopting the 2022 Congestion Management Process Biennial Data Report**
- c. **Resolution adopting the Town of Navassa Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan**
- d. **Resolution supporting the North Carolina Department of Transportation's submission of the rail corridor between Wilmington and Raleigh for the Federal Railroad Administration's Corridor Identification and Development Program**
- e. **Resolution approving 2020-2029 STIP/MPO Amendment #23-1**
- f. **Resolution approving 2020-2029 STIP/MPO Administrative Modification #23-2**
- g. **Opening of the 30-day Public Comment Period for 2020-2029 STIP/MPO Amendment #23-2**

Mr. Ellen made a motion to approve the Consent Agenda as presented, seconded by Mr. Waddell, and the motion carried unanimously.

9) Regular Agenda

- a. **Resolution approving Amendment #3 to the FY 23 Unified Planning Work Program**

MPO Deputy Director Abby Lorenzo said that this item would amend the current Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP). She noted that the proposed changes allocate funds to accommodate anticipated planning activities for the remainder of FY23.

Mr. Waddell asked about the IJA consultant. Mr. Kozlosky responded that the consultant is included in the agenda item following this one.

Mr. Barfield made a motion to approve Amendment #3 to the FY23 UPWP, seconded by Mr. Ellen, and the motion carried unanimously.

- b. **Resolution approving the FY 24 Unified Planning Work Program for the Wilmington Urban Area Metropolitan Planning Organization**

Ms. Lorenzo said that a memo detailing changes to the FY24 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) has been included in the agenda packet to reflect some additional information received regarding funding. She noted that no public comments were received.

Mr. Waddell requested that the Board be reflected in the recommended organizational chart. Mr. Kozlosky responded that the revision would be made.

Mr. Ellen made a motion to approve the FY24 UPWP as amended, seconded Vice Ms. Bozeman, and the motion carried unanimously.

c. Resolution certifying the Wilmington Urban Area Metropolitan Planning Organization's Transportation Planning Process

Mr. Kozlosky said that as part of the UPWP, the MPO is required to recertify its Transportation Planning Process.

Mr. Ellen made a motion to certify the WMPO's Transportation Planning Process, seconded by Mr. Forte, and the motion carried unanimously.

d. Resolution requesting the North Carolina Department of Transportation explore alternative design options for the College Road and Oleander Drive Improvements

Mr. Kozlosky said that based on discussion at the Board's last meeting regarding potential project swaps, staff heard the Board's desire for NCDOT to re-investigate the preferred alternative at the intersection of College Road and Oleander Drive. He noted that this resolution would request the Department to explore alternative design options for improvements at this intersection.

Mr. Anderson made a motion to request NCDOT explore alternative design options for the College Road and Oleander Drive intersection improvements, seconded by Mr. Waddell.

Chairman Miller noted that the last text message he received from Vice Chair Hays asked to reopen consideration about the design options for this intersection.

The motion carried unanimously.

e. Resolution supporting the Town of Carolina Beach's submission for a Bicycle and Pedestrian Planning grant from the North Carolina Department of Transportation

Mr. Forte made a motion to approve supporting the submission, seconded by Mr. Anderson, and the motion carried unanimously.

10) Discussion

a. 2020 Urbanized Area (UA) Census Data- Organizational Boundaries, Structure, and Governance

Mr. Kozlosky reminded Board members that additional discussion was held at the last Board meeting regarding a potential boundary expansion, which resulted in this item returning for discussion. Although no additional information is being provided, he requested guidance and permission to see if there is interest in either northeastern Pender County, Surf City, or Topsail Beach, as well as portions of Brunswick County joining the MPO, and asked the Board members if there is any desire to expand. He added that the second part of the request is to establish a subcommittee of this Board to continue to evaluate the boundary, the governance, and the structure, and identify appointees.

Mr. Forte said that the RPO has some serious concerns about boundary expansion.

Chairman Miller agreed that it will be necessary to gauge interest. Mr. Kozlosky said that ultimately it comes down to an agreement of the MPO and the prospective jurisdictions. Based on some independent conversations, he noted that Mr. Waddell, Ms. Fletcher-Hardee, Mr. Williams, Mr. Barbee, and Mr. Barfield have expressed an interest in serving on the subcommittee, which will bring back recommendations to the Board for consideration. The subcommittee was established.

b. **April MPO Board Meeting**

Mr. Kozlosky said that based on anticipated absences, staff proposes to cancel the Board meeting scheduled for April. Mr. Ellen made a motion to cancel the April Board meeting, seconded by Mr. Anderson, and the motion carried unanimously.

11) **Updates**

a. **Wilmington Urban Area MPO**

b. **Cape Fear Public Transportation Authority**

c. **NCDOT Division**

d. **NCDOT Transportation Planning Division**

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

Mr. Kozlosky added that staff sent out an email earlier in the week asking for volunteers to participate in a survey from the consultant conducting an organizational assessment of the MPO, and to respond by 5:00 p.m. tomorrow. He requested two or three volunteers in addition to Mr. Ellen to participate in the survey sometime next week.

Additionally, Mr. Kozlosky said that staff asked for appointments to the Citizens' Advisory Committee (CAC) to help develop the Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP). He expressed the importance of the appointments in advancing the MTP. He reminded Board members that the MPO received a commendation for having a CAC to develop the plan. He added that the deadline for appointments, one per member, is April 30th. Mr. Kozlosky noted that he would send a reminder to Board members.

Mr. Kimes said that an exciting event regarding the Military Cutoff Extension is anticipated on August 1st.

Regarding the Brunswick County CTP, Ms. Sarder said that NCDOT is preparing for three public involvement sessions in May throughout the county. She noted that a virtual session will also be offered.

12) **Announcements**

a. **NC State Ethics Forms due by April 17, 2023**

In response to an inquiry by Ms. Bozeman, Mr. Kozlosky said that he would send out a reminder to those who have not filed state ethics forms yet.

b. **River to Sea Ride- May 6, 2023**

Mr. Kozlosky announced that pre-registration for the River to Sea Ride reached its cap of 450 within several days of opening. He noted that day-of registration will be also available.

13) **Next meeting – May 31, 2023**

The meeting adjourned at 4:57 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.**