

**Wilmington Urban Area MPO
Technical Coordinating Committee
Wednesday, July 12, 2023
Remote Meeting Minutes**

Members Present

Stephanie Ayers, NC State Ports Authority
Sam Boswell, Cape Fear Council of Governments
Justin Brantly, Pender County
Carolyn Caggia, WMPO
Granseur Dick, Wilmington International Airport
Jon Dodson, Cape Fear Public Transit Authority
Marissa Ernst, Town of Leland
Adrienne Harrington, Town of Belville
Michelle Howes, NCDOT
Paula Kempton, Town of Carolina Beach
Mike Kozlosky, TCC Chairman, WMPO
Rachel LaCoe, New Hanover County
Robert O'Quinn, Town of Wrightsville Beach
Mandy Sanders, Town of Kure Beach
Nazia Sarder, TCC Vice Chair, NCDOT
Denys Vielkanowitz, City of Wilmington

Others Present

Abie Bonevac, City of Wilmington
Karlene Ellis-Vitalis, New Hanover County
Jerry Haire, Town of Carolina Beach
Cheryl Hannah, HDR
Regina Hopkins, WMPO
Jamar Johnson, WMPO
J. Scott Lane, J. Scott Lane Co.
Abby Lorenzo, WMPO
Vanessa Lacer, WMPO
Bill Marley, FHWA
Rachel McIntyre, City of Wilmington
Adam Moran, Pender County
Amy Passaretti, Port City Daily
Greer Shivers, WMPO
Emma Stogner, WMPO

Members Absent

Helen Bunch, Brunswick County
Michelyn Alston, Town of Navassa

1) Call to Order

TCC Chairman Mike Kozlosky called the meeting to order at 10:01 a.m. and called the roll, as follows:

Present: Stephanie Ayers, Sam Boswell, Justin Brantly, Carolyn Caggia, Jon Dodson, Marissa Ernst, Adrienne Harrington, Paula Kempton, Mike Kozlosky, Rachel LaCoe, Robert O'Quinn, Mandy Sanders, Nazia Sarder and Denys Vielkanowitz. **Nays:** None. **Absent:** Michelyn Alston, Helen Bunch, Granseur Dick and Michelle Howes.

A quorum was present. Mr. Brantly acknowledged that Adam Moran is the new long-range planner for Pender County and will be the representative on the TCC for future meetings.

2) Approval of the Agenda

Mr. Kozlosky requested to pull Agenda Items 4c and 7a. He made a motion to approve the agenda as amended. Ms. LaCoe seconded the motion, and it carried unanimously by roll call vote, as follows:

Ayes: Stephanie Ayers, Sam Boswell, Justin Brantly, Carolyn Caggia, Granseur Dick, Jon Dodson, Marissa Ernst, Adrienne Harrington, Michelle Howes, Paula Kempton, Mike Kozlosky, Rachel LaCoe, Robert O'Quinn, Mandy Sanders, Nazia Sarder and Denys Vielkanowitz. **Nays:** None. **Absent:** Michelyn Alston and Helen Bunch.

3) Presentations

- a. Wilmington Urban Area Metropolitan Planning Organization's 2023 Organizational Assessment**
J. Scott Lane, J. Scott Lane Company, gave an overview of the WMPO 2023 Organizational Assessment. He said that recommendations from the assessment included strengthening internal

communications, cross training, focusing resources on multi-modal, adding an active mode planner, a funding specialist to identify adjunct funding mechanisms, a community engagement specialist to provide more consistent messaging, and hiring or contracting staff to advance traffic congestion projects. Recommendations also included seeking partnerships with universities, nonprofits, and others to expand resources. Additionally, he recommended Board member training, an annual Board retreat, and a joint TCC and MPO Board work session to raise awareness and better communicate the MPO mission. He emphasized the importance of participation, of getting people talking and interacting, both internally and externally.

b. Walk Wilmington Pedestrian Plan Update

WMPO Deputy Director Abby Lorenzo gave an overview of the Walk Wilmington Pedestrian Plan Update. She said that in 2021, the City of Wilmington sought a planning grant to update the 2009 Walk Wilmington Plan. When the grant was awarded in early 2022, the city worked with the consultant, Alta, to address changing needs due to population growth, and safety concerns by continuing to guide the city on prioritizing pedestrian project infrastructure investments as well as policies and programs. She said that the vision of the plan is a pedestrian-friendly environment where walking is a safe and comfortable mobility choice for residents and visitors of all ages and abilities.

Ms. Lorenzo noted that the update included intensive public engagement featuring a survey, and analysis of existing conditions with the goals of safety, equity, and connectivity. She noted that recommendations focused on high-injury networks and areas with transportation-disadvantaged populations. She said that 10 focus areas were identified for specific improvements, and citywide recommendations were also made, which included continuing ongoing efforts and incorporating others such as the Safe Streets for All Plan, membership as a walk-friendly community, and changes to the Land Development Code. She added that the plan includes an implementation guide that identifies actions, responsible parties, timeframes, performance measures, and funding strategies for the projects. She encouraged committee members to visit the plan online at www.wmpo.org/plans/bike-ped-plans/.

Mr. Kozlosky reminded committee members that this item is included in today's Consent Agenda for consideration.

c. Wilmington Urban Area MPO's Direct Attributable Program Update

WMPO Senior Transportation Planning Engineer Scott A. James gave a brief update on the WMPO's Direct Attributable Program. He reminded committee members that the annual call for projects was issued on July 7th via email. He noted that the official call can also be requested or accessed on the WMPO website (www.wmpo.org/stp-datap-da/#callforprojects). He encouraged interested member jurisdictions to explore this opportunity for transportation improvement projects to receive up to 80% reimbursement from the federal government. He noted that this is the second year of a 5-year funding cycle. He added that a preliminary review of draft applications will take place on August 11th, after which assistance will be available until the final deadline of September 15th. For inquiries regarding available data and resources, he recommended that he be contacted via email.

d. 2050 Metropolitan Transportation Plan

WMPO Senior Transportation Planner Vanessa Lacer gave an overview of the 2050 Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP). She reminded TCC members that federal law mandates the creation of the MTP by the WMPO and other MPOs to identify long-range transportation needs. She added that the current plan, "Cape Fear Moving Forward 2045" was adopted in 2020 and requires an update in 2025.

She noted that the MTP must encompass all transportation modes and be fiscally constrained with a minimum of a 20-year planning horizon. She added that the plan guides regional transportation planning efforts and helps projects secure funding.

Ms. Lacer said that this year there are two committees involved: the Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) for public engagement advice and the Metropolitan Transportation Planning Technical Steering Committee (MTPC) for plan development details. She noted that public engagement will include a survey, interviews, public meetings, and an interactive map with the first phase of the plan update running from August to November. She invited TCC members to attend the kickoff public meeting on August 3rd.

4) **Consent Agenda**

- a. **Approval of TCC Meeting Minutes- June 14, 2023**
- b. **Resolution approving 2020-2029 STIP/MPO Amendments #23-3**
- d. **Resolution supporting the award of Section 5310 Community Grant Project Funds**
- e. **Resolution authorizing the Chairman to enter into an agreement with the City of Wilmington and Cape Fear Public Transportation Authority for FY 23 and FY 24 Section 5303 Funding**
- f. **Resolution adopting the Wilmington Urban Area Metropolitan Planning Organization's 2023 Organizational Assessment**
- g. **Resolution adopting the 2023 Walk Wilmington Pedestrian Plan Update**
- h. **Resolution supporting the Wilmington Urban Area Metropolitan Planning Organization's efforts to secure a Promoting Resilient Operations for Transformative, Efficient, and Cost-Saving Transportation (PROTECT) Program grant to complete a Resiliency Improvement Plan for the Wilmington Urban Area**

Ms. Ayers made a motion to approve the Consent Agenda as amended to exclude Item 4c, and to forward the items to the MPO Board for consideration. Mr. Dick seconded the motion, which carried unanimously by roll call vote as follows:

Ayes: Stephanie Ayers, Sam Boswell, Justin Brantly, Carolyn Caggia, Granseur Dick, Jon Dodson, Marissa Ernst, Adrienne Harrington, Paula Kempton, Mike Kozlosky, Rachel LaCoe, Robert O'Quinn, Mandy Sanders and Nazia Sarder. **Nays:** None. **Absent:** Michelyn Alston, Helen Bunch, Michelle Howes and Denys Vielkanowitz.

5) **Public Hearing**

- a. **2024-2033 State/Metropolitan Planning Organization Transportation Improvement Program**

Mr. Kozlosky said that 2024-2033 State/Metropolitan Planning Organization Transportation Improvement Program (STIP/MTIP) was approved by the Board of Transportation on June 6th. He noted that the WMPO's Public Participation Plan requires a 30-day public comment period, which opened in June, and a Public Hearing that will be conducted today and at the Board's meeting in July. He added that the Board will be asked to consider the item in August. He commented that the STIP/MTIP is the culmination of much work and the start of Prioritization 7.0 will be discussed for consideration later in today's agenda.

Ms. LaCoe made a motion to open the public hearing, seconded by Mr. Dick, and the motion carried unanimously by roll call vote as follows:

Ayes: Stephanie Ayers, Sam Boswell, Justin Brantly, Carolyn Caggia, Granseur Dick, Jon Dodson, Marissa Ernst, Adrienne Harrington, Michelle Howes, Paula Kempton, Mike Kozlosky, Rachel LaCoe,

Robert O'Quinn, Mandy Sanders and Nazia Sarder. **Nays:** None. **Absent:** Michelyn Alston, Helen Bunch and Denys Vielkanowitz.

No member of the public spoke during the public hearing.

Ms. LaCoe made a motion to close the public hearing, seconded by Mr. Brantly, and the motion carried unanimously by roll call vote as follows:

Ayes: Stephanie Ayers, Sam Boswell, Justin Brantly, Carolyn Caggia, Granseur Dick, Jon Dodson, Marissa Ernst, Adrienne Harrington, Paula Kempton, Mike Kozlosky, Rachel LaCoe, Robert O'Quinn, Mandy Sanders and Nazia Sarder. **Nays:** None. **Absent:** Michelyn Alston, Helen Bunch, Michelle Howes and Denys Vielkanowitz.

6) **Regular Agenda**

a. **Opening of a 14-day public comment period for the Prioritization 7.0 Project Submittals**

Ms. Lorenzo said that the agenda packet contains the current draft modal project lists and a staff memo detailing changes since the last presentation in June. She gave an overview of the modifications to the rail and roadway projects lists as follows:

For draft rail projects, staff engaged with NCDOT's Rail Division and suggested additional project recommendations for the draft list. These include a freight rail link from Cape Fear Memorial Bridge to the North Carolina State Ports Authority on tracks at Surrey Street, reinstating the Wallace to Castle Haynes passenger rail service from Wilmington to Raleigh, supporting NCDOT Rail Division's FRA Corridor ID program application for the corridor, establishing a passenger rail station for this future service, and a freight rail connection extending from the current CSX line's end at Malmo to Whiteville to re-establish freight rail service west to east.

For roadway draft projects, there was one minor modification to project RW-99, which is the Murrayville Road extension. Through discussions with NCDOT Division 3, the project will be split and only the extension of Murrayville Road from the Military Cut Off Extension to Market Street will be submitted.

Ms. Lorenzo said that this opening of a 14-day public comment period will allow for the public to review and comment on these draft lists. She noted that staff continues to work with our planning partners and additional modifications may occur.

Ms. Ayers made a motion to open the 14-day public comment period, seconded by Mr. Dodson, and the motion carried unanimously by roll call vote as follows:

Ayes: Stephanie Ayers, Sam Boswell, Justin Brantly, Carolyn Caggia, Granseur Dick, Jon Dodson, Marissa Ernst, Adrienne Harrington, Paula Kempton, Mike Kozlosky, Rachel LaCoe, Robert O'Quinn, Mandy Sanders and Nazia Sarder. **Nays:** None. **Absent:** Michelyn Alston, Helen Bunch, Michelle Howes and Denys Vielkanowitz.

b. **Resolution supporting the allocation of additional Wilmington Urban Area Metropolitan Planning Organization Direct Attributable Funds to the City of Wilmington for the Hooker Road Multi-use Path, Hinton Avenue Multi-use Path, and Wrightsville/Greenville intersection improvements**

Mr. Kozlosky said that the City has requested additional Direct Attributable (DA) funding in the amount of \$960,000 for four projects that were originally funded in the 2013 and 2014 calls for which

additional funding was subsequently provided. He noted that working through the property acquisition process for each of the projects advancing to construction, the city identified the need for additional funding. He added that these funds come from the reserve account and staff recommends approval of the allocation.

Ms. LaCoe made a motion to approve the allocation of additional DA funds, seconded by Mr. Dick, and the motion carried unanimously by roll call as follows:

Ayes: Stephanie Ayers, Sam Boswell, Justin Brantly, Carolyn Caggia, Granseur Dick, Jon Dodson, Marissa Ernst, Adrienne Harrington, Michelle Howes, Paula Kempton, Mike Kozlosky, Rachel LaCoe, Robert O'Quinn, Mandy Sanders and Nazia Sarder. **Nays:** None. **Absent:** Michelyn Alston, Helen Bunch and Denys Vielkanowitz.

7) **Discussion**

a. **Return to in-person TCC meetings**

Mr. Kozlosky said that based on the organizational assessment this item has been added to discuss returning to in-person meetings, which was the practice prior to the pandemic. Although the MPO has identified the ability to meet remotely and the MPO Board has adopted its Remote Participation Policy, this discussion has not occurred with the TCC. He pointed out that any change would not be made next month, but if there is a desire to return to in-person meetings, these could be arranged. He requested feedback.

Ms. Ayers commented that she is in favor of in-person meetings but values a dial-in option. Mr. Dick concurred and added that he often experiences pop-up meetings that make a remote option convenient. Ms. Sarder said that she is experiencing more back-to-back meetings post-pandemic and that hybrid meetings are convenient for her as well. Ms. LaCoe commented that she and Karlene Ellis-Vitalis attended today's meeting in-person to be more engaged, since this has been a missing tendency of remote meetings.

Mr. Kozlosky agreed that some discussion and input has been lost with remote meetings post-pandemic. He pointed out that although he appreciates the remote option for members, there is a benefit to in-person meetings, and that the conversations of the TCC are important to the Board. He added that it will be necessary to identify a venue for larger hybrid meetings.

Ms. LaCoe added that since there are a lot of new names and faces, in-person is important for making connections. She offered to help arrange the use of New Hanover County's conference room facilities as a potential venue for hybrid meetings.

Ms. Ayer requested that parking be considered when identifying a venue.

Mr. Marley said that he has been advised to attend meetings in-person wherever possible. He noted that many MPOs are doing so as well. He added that Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) is down one planner, which makes in-person attendance challenging.

Mr. Moran expressed a desire to attend in-person.

Mr. Kozlosky expressed appreciation for the feedback.

8) 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.

Ms. Sarder added that for the Wilmington model, she submitted the SE data for verification to the MPO. She noted that she has been working closely with MPO staff to collect certification of occupancy data throughout the MPO. So far, she's received feedback from New Hanover County and is awaiting feedback from Pender County and Brunswick County.

Ms. Sarder said that for the Brunswick County CTP, public engagement was completed in May, and the last steering committee meeting was in June. Going forward, modifications from public engagement will be added, after which the CTP will be reviewed internally, and presented to the adopting agencies, as well as to the TCC and the MPO Board at the request of Ms. Lorenzo.

i. Announcements

- a. 2050 MTP Citizen Advisory Committee- July 19, 2023
- b. 2050 WMPO MTP Technical Steering Committee Meeting- July 27, 2023
- c. Wilmington MPO Bike/Pedestrian Committee Meeting- August 8, 2023

j. Next meeting- August 16, 2023

There being no further business, Ms. LaCoe made a motion to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Mr. Dick and the meeting adjourned at 10:28 a.m.

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