



WILMINGTON URBAN AREA
METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION

WMPO Board Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, September 25, 2024
929 N Front Street
Wilmington, NC 28401

Members Present

Mike Allen, Town of Belville
Lynn Barbee, Town of Carolina Beach
Jonathan Barfield, Jr., New Hanover County (Remote)
Brenda Bozeman, Town of Leland
Brad George, Pender County
Mike Forte, Brunswick County
Luke Waddell, City of Wilmington
Eulis Willis, Town of Navassa
Bill Saffo, City of Wilmington
John Ellen, Town of Kure Beach
Landon Zimmer, NC Board of Transportation

Others Present

Chad Kimes, Transsystems
Trevor Carroll, NCDOT
Abby Lorenzo, WMPO
Michelle Howes, NCDOT
Tera Cline, WMPO
Regina Hopkins, WMPO
Adrianna Cox, NCDOT
Tessa Jones, WMPO
Carolyn Caggia, WMPO

Members Absent

Hank Miller, Chairman
Bill Rivenbark, Cape Fear Public Transportation Authority

1) Call to Order

Vice Chairman Waddell called the meeting to order at 3:00 PM. Abby Lorenzo, WMPO then called roll.

Present: Mike Allen, Bill Saffo, Lynn Barbee, Brenda Bozeman, John Ellen, Brad George, Mike Forte, Luke Waddell, Eulis Willis and Landon Zimmer. **Remote:** Jonathan Barfield Jr. **Absent:** Bill Rivenbark and Hank Miller.

2) Conflict of Interest Statement

Vice Chairman Waddell read the conflict-of-interest statement and asked if any Board member has a conflict of interest. Landon Zimmer requested to be recused from voting on Consent Agenda item 7D.

3) Approval of Board Member Excused Absences

Bill Rivenbark and Chairman Miller were excused by a motion by John Ellen and seconded by Mike Forte. Motion carried unanimously.

4) Approval of the Agenda

Brenda Bozeman made a motion to approve the agenda adding Administrative Modifications #24-10 to agenda item 10A, seconded by John Ellen and the motion carried unanimously.

5) Public Comment Period

No sign-ups for public comment

6) Presentations**1) NCDOT's Advance NC Transportation-Amna Cameron, NCDOT**

Amna Cameron, NCDOT, stated she is the Deputy Director of Strategic Initiatives at DOT and leads all the efforts that deal with new funding sources and is leading campaigns to educate the public. She stated a couple of years ago a grant was used to conduct a pilot for mileage-based user fees, and she is sharing the next steps in that program.

She stated that NCDOT works very closely with a coalition of 19 Eastern states through the Eastern transportation coalition, who leads efforts in 8 states this year to identify new revenue options for state governments.

She noted that NCDOT has developed 2 videos with this campaign. She showed the short presentation on the gas tax that is located on the website. There is also a survey for citizens on the website to complete telling NCDOT what you think they can do to improve funding for the transportation network.

She stated that North Carolina is the second largest road system in the country and that one of her jobs is to set a revenue forecast. The 6% has been tremendously beneficial to DOT to help secure the STIP and through that they have been able to reduce federal reliance from about 75% state funding to 80% state funding.

Ms. Cameron stated that four state revenue sources make up 80% of state transportation funds. State motor fuel tax, highway use tax, sales tax, and DMV fees and the other 20% comes from federal funds.

She noted that there is less funding available right now because of inflation. That miles traveled is going up as is gallons of fuel but noted that vehicles are getting better gas mileage as well. The increase on the transportation system is due to population growth and vehicle miles traveled.

Ms. Cameron stated that DOT is studying several options listed below:

- A mileage base fee, drivers are charged based on how many miles they travel instead of how much fuel they purchase.
- Raising the highway-use tax, meaning North Carolina collects on vehicles whenever a title is transferred.
- Increase the motor fuel tax, meaning North Carolina charges drivers a flat rate for each gallon of fuel purchased.
- Increase registration fees or charge fees based on vehicle characteristics such as weight, fuel economy, or vehicle model type.
- Raise the sales tax rate and dedicate the revenue to transportation.
- Charge a monthly state transportation utility fee, like how local governments charge water use fees.
- Introduce managed lanes, or express lanes, to congested expressways that drivers could pay a toll to use.

She then went on and gave a demonstration of the calculator located on NCDOT's website that can show citizens what they could initially pay based on the different option listed above.

Ms. Cameron continued by sharing how North Carolinians benefit from more funding. She stated that better safety conditions and a stronger economy are two big ones, as well as improved roads, cleaner air, and more transportation options.

She noted that she gave each member of the Board present a flyer promoting the website and the survey.

Landon Zimmer, NCDOT asked Ms. Cameron why Wilmington rated higher in worse roads than other parts of North Carolina. Ms. Cameron stated that the grid scores were high in comparison and the scores were equal but holding the divisions equitably is not always possible. She noted that one other thing that can make a difference is the type of roads you have.

2) Get there Greener and Bike to Work Day, Carolyn Caggia, WMPO

Ms. Caggia stated Get There Greener is the Go Coast program's annual sustainable transportation challenge. It has been rebranded from the Commuter Challenge, as it was previously known in 2023 with the intent of streamlining the messaging and focus on the challenge. Participants are encouraged during the challenge to track their trips that they take by sustainable transportation. This includes carpooling, public transit, biking, walking, or teleworking.

She then gave a brief history on the challenge. She stated it had been going on since 2016 and has used various platforms over the years the My Open Road application and Share The Ride NC. Google form is now used for the challenge. Last year, in 2023, there were 26 participants that logged 3,857 miles using sustainable transportation for a total of 1,542 kg of Co2 savings.

She noted the challenge takes place from October 1-31, 2024. People can participate by going to gocoastnc.org/get-there-greener to register. Information collected on the registration form helps with marketing efforts for the future and what alternative transportation is being used.

Ms. Caggia then stated that once the challenge is active there will be a trip tracking form on the website where participants can report their miles. She noted all the generous sponsors that have donated thus far and is hoping for more.

She then presented information on Bike To Work Day. Its happening on Friday, October 11th. This day is to encourage people to bike to and from work. Local businesses have volunteered and organized pit stops where they will provide water, coffee, or snacks. There is a map of the pit stops on the GoCoastnc.org/bike-to-work-day-2024.

3) Wrightsville Beach Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan-Katie Ryan

Katie Ryan stated that the bicycle/ pedestrian plan that was just adopted by the Board of Alderman in June had the most public involvement and enthusiasm of any plan she has worked on before.

She noted that following the award of the NCDOT bike/pedestrian planning grant in August 2022, the NCDOT selected Kimley Horn as the consultant. The Board in February 2023 appointed the Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee to serve on the steering committee as well as WMPO staff and NCDOT staff. There were four steering committee meetings and two public workshops. She stated the workshops were well attended with 64 residents at the first meeting and 27 at the second. She noted that non-residents participated as well and they had over 600 survey responses, and 81% of those were full-time or part-time Wrightsville Beach residents.

The steering committee developed a vision statement which was to create a safe, accessible, and connected bicycle and pedestrian network in and around Wrightsville Beach for people of all ages and abilities. The Wrightsville Beach Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan will considered unique environment and geographic challenges and focus on safe connections in the Town and broader region.

Ms. Ryan noted that the committee also had to consider the environment and accessibility, public health, economic development, and equity. All this information as well as public input were included in the draft as well as the prioritized improvements. The committee developed a prioritization tool based and weighted on safety, accessibility and connectivity, public input, cost effectiveness, and demand and density.

She mentioned that some of the improvements are currently being worked on, for example, the section of sidewalk on old Causeway Drive. In addition, Causeway Drive is about to be resurfaced with added bicycle lanes.

7) Consent Agenda

- a. Approval of Board Regular Meeting Minutes- August 28, 2024
- b. Resolution approving 2024-2033 STIP/MPO Amendment #24-4
- c. Opening of the 30-day public comment period for 2024-2033 STIP/MPO Amendment #24-5
- d. Resolution approving 2024-2033 STIP/MPO Administrative Modifications #24-8
- e. Resolution authorizing the Chairman to enter into agreement with the City of Wilmington and the Cape Fear Public Transportation Authority for FY 25 Section 5303 Funding
- f. Resolution adopting the Wrightsville Beach Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan

Mike Forte made a motion to approve the consent agenda with the removal of item D. and Mr. Barfield, seconded, the motion carried unanimously. Mr. Zimmer was recused from Item D- Resolution approving 2024-2033 STIP/MPO Administrative Modifications #24-8. Motion made by Mr. Barbee and seconded by Mr. Ellen the motion was carried unanimously.

8) Regular Agenda

a. Resolution approving Amendment #2 to the FY 25 Unified Planning Work Program

Abby Lorenzo, WMPO stated this amendment is to move \$6,300 from the management and operations line-item Ashli Barefoot, Town of Leland to the special studies line item, to allow the MPO to complete a compensation study for the organization. This is supported by the organizational assessment and strategic plan.

Motion to approve amendment #2 to the FY 25 Unified Planning Work Program was made by Mr. Zimmer and seconded by Mr. Barbee. Motion passes unanimously.

b. Resolution supporting the City of Wilmington's application for the USDOT's Small Bridge Grant Program

Abby Lorenzo WMPO stated the city plans to apply for funding through the USDOT's Small Bridge Grant program to replace the 4th Street Bridge, and the Pine Grove Bridge. Applications are due November 1st.

Motion to approve the resolution supporting the City of Wilmington's applying for the USDOT's Small Bridge Grant made by Mr. Barfield and seconded by Mr. Zimmer Motion passes unanimously.

9) Discussion

a. 2024-2033 STIP/MPO Transportation Improvement Program Administrative Modifications #24-9 and #24-10

Abby Lorenzo said this item is for information purposes only and will be brought back for consideration at the Board's next meeting.

b. Electric Assist Bicycles

Mr. Barbee stated that he requested to have this item added to the agenda. He stated that in our Legislative Agenda an item was added requesting the state to clarify the definitions of e-bikes, such that they can be distinguished in any rulemaking the jurisdictions wants to make and is requesting an update on this item.

Abby Lorenzo stated it was included in our Legislative Agenda and one of the initiatives that was adopted for FY 25 was to bring on a lobbyist. We have received a letter of interest, and it was sent to the Board to see if anyone had any questions. Vice Chairman Waddell requested it be added to the October meeting agenda as well for discussion. Mr. Barbee stated he had reached out to his legislator regarding this item and encouraged other members of the Board to do the same.

c. December WMPO Board Work Session

Abby Lorenzo, WMPO stated that since we have no Board meeting scheduled for December, Mike Kozlosky is recommending December for the work session. It was requested that a poll be sent out with dates of recommendation.

10) Updates are all included in the Agenda Packet

a. Wilmington Urban Area MPO

Ms. Lorenzo noted that the updates are included in the packet, and in addition to those updates she stated that the annual reports will be distributed to all member jurisdictions and presentation on the report scheduled as well.

b. Cape Fear Public Transportation Authority

Updates included in the packet.

c. NCDOT Division

Trevor Carroll, NCDOT announced that he is officially the new Division 3 engineer.

d. NCDOT Transportation Planning Division

Nazia Sadar NCDOT, stated the Pender County CTP survey closed on September 1st. Those results will be compiled and submitted to the CTP committee. The WMPO travel demand model is ready for testing. The transportation planning division just received the first request from WMPO to start testing and that will continue until closer to the end of the MTP.

11) Announcements

a. Brunswick Heritage Riverside Ride-September 28, 2024

b. WMPO Bike and Pedestrian Committee Meeting-October 8, 2024

Mr. Ellen announce that the weekend after the Brunswick Heritage ride they will be having the inaugural Tour De Island bike ride and Walktober incentive in Kure Beach.

Abby Lorenzo introduced Tessa Jones.

Next meeting – October 30, 2024

The meeting adjourned at 4:00 p.m. by a motion by Mr. Forte and seconded by Mr. Ellen.

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.