



WILMINGTON URBAN AREA
METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION

WMPO Board Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, November 20, 2024

525 N 4th Street

Wilmington, NC 28401

Members Present

Hank Miller, Chairman
Lynn Barbee, Town of Carolina Beach
Jonathan Barfield, Jr., New Hanover County
Brenda Bozeman, Town of Leland
Brad George, Pender County
Frank Williams, Brunswick County
Luke Waddell, City of Wilmington
Eulis Willis, Town of Navassa
Bill Rivenbark, Cape Fear Public Transportation Authority
John Ellen, Town of Kure Beach

Others Present In-Person

Chad Kimes, Transsystems
Trevor Carroll, NCDOT
Mike Kozlosky, WMPO
Michelle Howes, NCDOT
Tera Cline, WMPO
Mike Forte, Brunswick County
Adrianna Cox, NCDOT
Beth King, WMPO
Tessa Jones, WMPO
Greer Templer, WMPO
Mark Hairr, WAVE
Regina Hopkins, WMPO
Mike Kozlosky, WMPO
Carolyn Caggia, WMPO

Members Absent

Landon Zimmer, NC Board of Transportation
Bill Saffo, City of Wilmington
Mike Allen, Town of Belville

Others Present Remote

Veronica Carter
Kristina Whitfield, Kimley Horn
Katie Hite

1) Call to Order

Chairman Hank Miller called the meeting to order at 3:00 PM. Mike Kozlosky, WMPO then called roll.

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

2) Conflict of Interest Statement

Chairman Miller read the conflict-of-interest statement and asked if any Board member had a conflict of interest. There were none.

3) Approval of Board Member Excused Absences

Bill Saffo and Landon Zimmer were excused on a motion by Lynn Barbee, seconded by John Ellen. The motion carried unanimously.

4) Approval of the Agenda

Chairman Miller requested that the agenda be amended by adding a special presentation to agenda item 12. Frank Williams motioned to amend the agenda, adding a special presentation to item 12 and second by Luke Waddell. The motion was carried unanimously.

5) Public Comment Period

No sign-ups for public comment

6) Presentations**a. Cape Fear Public Transportation Authority Update-Mark Hairr, WAVE**

Mr. Hairr thanked the Board for their continued support over the past year. He then stated that about a dozen regular fixed routes currently cover this community. These routes are concentrated in the downtown area and the historic residential area adjacent to downtown. The other routes are located south of Monkey Junction and east towards Mayfair town center.

Mr. Hairr then said that in addition to the fixed routes they offer a university shuttle service for UNCW. There are about half a dozen shuttle routes. He stated they average about 120,000 shuttle trips annually.

He then presented to the Board information about the Ride Micro service. This service has been operating for about three years in peripheral areas outside the fixed route system. He said it has become popular and convenient for people. This service has about 20,000 trips annually.

Mr. Hairr stated that WAVE also provides ADA service. This service area is within 3/4th of a mile on both sides of all fixed routes. This service ran 55,907 trips in FY 24.

He gave a brief overview of all the facilities including, Padgett Station also noting the Northeast station has Greyhound and Amtrak buses at that facility.

He noted that ridership for FY23 and FY24 has flattened out to just under 700,000 trips. WAVE has implemented several things to increase ridership in the future. He highlighted that Transit celebrated its 50th anniversary in July 2024. Wilmington Transit Authority (WTA) was founded in 1974, a predecessor to Cape Fear Public Transportation Authority (CFPTA) which was created in 2004 and continued doing business as Wave Transit in 2002. WAVE's service plan was approved by their board in the spring, and it will be implemented in January 2025. Part of this plan allows 15-minute service in certain areas between Padgett Station and New Hanover Medical Center. He noted that there will be a new 30-minute service on some high-traffic corridors and the Port City trolley's schedule will be improved.

Mr. Hairr stated that WAVE has added new buses this year as well. One 35-foot bus and five 30-foot buses have been well received by bus operators and passengers.

He touched on the special mitigation project, working with the MPO and with the State providing funding for Ride Micro the service was increased over to Northern Brunswick County during the bridge closure and ridership went up 65% during that time. He also noted that WAVE has started a new renewable natural gas program. This program will generate revenue from the sale of renewable natural gas commodities. It involves a partnership with STX Commodities, an energy commodities company. The program is expected to generate at least \$100,000 in its first full year.

Mr. Hairr also mentioned that the Greyhound bus company is funding security at the Forden Station, and the new buses were funded by a special grant from the Federal Transit Administration, and the city and county provided a local match in funds.

In closing, he stated that Middle Metro Magazine awarded WAVE the Transit Innovative Solutions award for the Ride Micro service. He then noted several outreach programs that they are participating in.

7) Consent Agenda

- a. Approval of Board Regular Meeting Minutes- October 30, 2024
- b. Resolution approving the Gullah Geechee Heritage Trail Feasibility Study

John Ellen made a motion to approve the consent agenda Brenda Bozeman seconded. The motion carried unanimously.

8) Regular Agenda

a. Resolution adopting the 2025 meeting schedule

Motion to approve the resolution adopting the 2025 meeting schedule of the MPO Board made by Vice Chairman Waddell and seconded by Mr. Barbee. The motion passes unanimously.

b. Resolution approving the WMPO's Prioritization 7.0 Division Needs Local Input Point Assignment

Mike Kozlosky, WMPO stated at the last MPO Board meeting that the 14-day public comment period was opened on the proposed point assignments. No comments were received related to the point assignments. The comments that were received were related to the replacement of the Heidi Trask Bridge. The point assignment is required to be submitted to NCDOT by November 29, 2024, and staff is requesting your approval on this item.

Vice-Chairman Waddell made a motion to approve the resolution for the WMPO's P 7.0 Division Needs Local Input Point Assignment. John Ellen seconded the motion, and the motion passed unanimously.

c. Resolution endorsing the Fiscally Constrained Roadway Project List for inclusion in the Cape Fear Navigating Change 2050

Greer Templer, WMPO, stated that last month, three project scenarios for the fiscally constrained roadway projects for the Cape Fear Navigating Change 2050 plan were presented to the MPO Board. She then introduced Kristina Whitfield with Kimley Horn to overview the rationale behind recommending approval of scenario number 3.

Kristina Whitfield with Kimley-Horn stated that she wanted to do a quick overview of the alternative revenue forecast for each revenue stream and each county. She said that with a quarter-cent local option sales tax, New Hanover County would be at \$1,181 million, Brunswick County \$535 million, and Pender County \$215 million.

Ms. Whitfield then explained that an additional \$7.00 on a registration fee for each county would generate \$67.78 million in revenue for New Hanover County, \$26.41 million for Brunswick County, and \$14.52 million for Pender County.

She then stated that municipalities levy the motor vehicle license tax. Currently, there are no incorporated municipalities with the portion of Pender County located with the WMPO. Wilmington and Leland already levy the

motor vehicle license tax, which is not included in the estimates. New Hanover County estimates \$7.80 million in revenue, and Brunswick County estimates \$4.48 million.

Ms. Whitfield continued, stating that a short-term vehicle rental tax can only be estimated for New Hanover County because it is the only county with rental companies. That estimate is \$59.43 million in revenue.

She stated that based on looking across the three counties, New Hanover County has the biggest opportunity for alternative revenue. She then tailored down from them based on the size of the jurisdiction, Brunswick County, and then Pender County. Portions are weighted based on the percentage of the population expected to be within the WMPO's boundaries between now and 2050.

Ms. Whitfield noted that bonds are particularly specific to each jurisdiction. She stated that detailed estimates are not attainable without knowing each jurisdiction's individual bond rating and debt capacity. Kimley-Horn did look back over the last 5 to 8 years at some jurisdictions across North Carolina that have levied bonds for transportation projects. She noted that when the population is normalized with their successful referenda, the average per capita ask for the bond is typically about \$505, and the average tax rate increase is about 3 cents per \$100 evaluation. Based on the information found, the most common type of bond initiative to be partnered with is Parks and Recreation.

In conclusion, she stated that the staff recommends approval of scenario 3 for the fiscally constrained projects list to be included in the 2050 MTP. The projects were looked at in several different ways. The project variation wasn't great enough to show vast differences in the Travel Demand Modal. The scenarios were compared to see how well they met the merit criteria in the prioritization. Safety was the greatest need for prioritizing projects, and the scenario grouping in number 3 had the highest safety scores. It is also the one that the grouping of projects is as close to zero as possible, with a fiscal balance of just \$873,000.00 remaining. She noted that the member jurisdictions submitted eight plus projects, and most of their top-ranked projects are in the fiscally constrained project list.

Jonathan Barfield made a motion to approve the resolution endorsing the Fiscally Constrained Roadway Project list for inclusion in the Cape Fear Navigating Change 2050. Brenda Bozeman seconded the motion, and the motion passed unanimously.

9) Discussion

a. 2024-2033 STIP/MPO Transportation Improvement Program Administrative Modifications #24-11

Mike Kozlosky stated this item was for informational purposes only and would be brought back for a decision at the next meeting.

10) Updates are all included in the Agenda Packet

a. Wilmington Urban Area MPO

Mike Kozlosky that the updates are included in the packet.

b. Cape Fear Public Transportation Authority

Updates are included in the packet.

c. NCDOT Division

Michelle Howes, NCDOT stated the updates are included in the packet The Gordan Road project bids came in very high, that project will go back for bid and the Board will have an update once bids are complete.

11) Announcements

a. WMPO Bike and Pedestrian Committee Meeting-December 10, 2024

Chairman Miller acknowledged Commissioner Barfield with a plaque and kind words and thanked him for his service to the WMPO Board and the community.

Next meeting – December 17, 2024

The meeting adjourned at 3:34 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.**