



WILMINGTON URBAN AREA
METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION

WMPO Board Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, May 1, 2024

6th Floor Training Conference Room
320 Chestnut Street, Wilmington, NC 28401

Members Present

Mike Allen, Town of Belville (Remote)
Bill Saffo, City of Wilmington
Lynn Barbee, Town of Carolina Beach
Jonathan Barfield, Jr., New Hanover County
Brenda Bozeman, Town of Leland
John Ellen, Town of Kure Beach
Hank Miller, Chairman
Luke Waddell, Vice-Chairman
Frank Williams, Brunswick County
Eulis Willis, Town of Navassa
Landon Zimmer, NC Board of Transportation

Others Present

Chad Kimes, NCDOT
Veronica Carter, Town of Leland (Remote)
Mike Kozlosky, WMPO
Abby Lorenzo, WMPO
Scott James, WMPO (Remote)
Tera Cline, WMPO
Regina Hopkins, WMPO (Remote)
Vanessa Lacer, WMPO
Michelle Howes, NCDOT
Carolyn Caggia, WMPO
Greer Shiver, WMPO
Mike Forte, Brunswick County (Remote)
Mark Haire, Wave Transit
Jeff Bourk, Wilmington International
Airport
Granseur Dick, Wilmington International
Airport

Members Absent

Brad George, Pender County
Bill Rivenbark, Cape Fear Public Transportation
Authority

1. Call to Order

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

Present: Lynn Barbee, Brenda Bozeman, Jonathan Barfield, Jr., Frank Williams, Luke Waddell, John Ellen, Hank Miller, Eulis Willis, Landon Zimmer, and Bill Saffo.

Present Remotely: Mike Allen **Absent:** Brad George, and Bill Rivenbark.

2. Conflict of Interest Statement

Chairman Miller read the conflict-of-interest statement and asked if any Board member has a conflict of interest. Landon Zimmer indicated he would like to abstain from the voting on approval of consent agenda.

3. Approval of Board Member Excused Absences

Brad George and Bill Rivenbark requested excused absences, motion to approve by Vice-Chairman Waddell and seconded by Ms. Bozeman. Motion passed unanimously.

4. Approval of the Agenda

Vice-Chairman Waddell made a motion to approve the agenda as presented, seconded by Ms. Bozeman and the motion carried unanimously.

5. Public Comment Period

No sign ups.

6. Presentations

a) **Cape Fear Navigating Change 2050 Vision and Goals- Vanessa Lacer, WMPO**

Vanessa Lacer, WMPO, provided an update on the planning process for the Metropolitan Transportation Plan Cape Fear Navigating Change 2050. She stated the technical steering committee has been working hard and recently adopted goals for the plan.

Ms. Lacer stated that the planning effort began in August of 2022. The steering committee kicked off in June and July of 2023. The first phase of public outreach occurred in August through November of 2023. The steering committee then met in March of 2024 to define what is meant by vision and receive consensus at the committee level. The committee defined it with two bullets, first being, the aspiration for the plan for our region. Then, the second bullet point is to form the basis for goal setting.

She then explained the vision statement development. This included public input, WMPO mission and vision and MTPC SPOT analysis. The committee looked at strengths, problems, opportunities, and threats for the region and how this plan could address those items. The vision statement adopted by our technical steering committee is that “our region will thrive and prosper through an equitable and resilient transportation network that supports regional economic vitality while improving quality of life for residents.”

The committee then met to define goals. Ms. Lacer explained that they are the basis for defining success through modal objectives. These goals are intended to be broad enough to apply to all six transportation modes, and these goals will be the basis for the next stage of plan development which would be the local objectives. The committee used the vision statement, WMPO strategic plan, and federal planning factors to create the goals.

The five goals are as follows: Safe, Equitable, Connected, Resilient and Proactive. The first goal Safe has three parts. The first part is the elimination of transportation related injuries and fatalities through implementation of injury prevention initiatives and strategies in the beginning and increasing safety in that way. The second part is to increase safety through context-sensitive design. and third, increasing or ensuring the security of a technology infrastructure and logistics.

The second goal Equitable has four parts. The first part is to prioritize environmentally and socially responsible transportation projects and their distribution. The second part is to increase quality of life and avoid, minimize, or mitigate adverse effects for minority and low-income populations. The third is to increase accessible mobility options and reduce or remove barriers to mobility. Finally ensure meaningful public involvement opportunities and the instructive incorporation of public feedback in the transportation planning and decision- making process. Ms. Lacer stated that much of this goal was related to the definition of environmental justice at the Federal level.

The third goal of Connected has 3 parts, first, to expand efficiency and capacity of the transportation network through increased and connected multilateral transportation options. Second, to support multi-modal transportation facilities and policies that contribute to quality of place and are integrated with land use planning. Third is to develop resources and technology that support intermodal travel so there is a big focus on multi-modal transportation and intermodal travel in this goal.

The fourth goal is Resilient and has 4 parts. The first is to support transportation infrastructure that withstands and recovers from natural or man-made hazards. The second part is to provide redundant transportation options that support the movement of people, goods, and emergency responders. The third part is to ensure long term viability through a realistic, sustainable, and responsible approach to project development. The fourth part is to increase the reliability of transportation options and travel times.

She explains the final goal Proactive has five parts. The first is to anticipate changing needs and technologies and project design and implementation. The second is to integrate transportation and future land use planning. The third is to provide timely communication and education around important transportation activities, initiatives, and campaigns. The fourth is to increase opportunities for regional funding by looking at economic development. Finally, explore new or innovative partnerships, funding, and technology.

Ms. Lacer stated the committee has this vision statement and their final goals that have been adopted. Now the committee is going to continue working on this plan through modal objectives. So again, how success is defined per transportation mode. Once those model objectives have been identified, they will be used in two different ways. First, a policy will be created for each of the transportation modes. And second, those objectives will be used for project scores and developing scoring matrices. The highest scoring projects are intended to be those that most closely relate to our vision and enhancing quality of place for neighborhoods.

She then went on to explain the next steps for project development. The committee is currently at the mission and goals development stage and modal project development. Once that is completed and projects move forward, they can move into project cost estimates. From there will move into public outreach phase 2 for community response. The final step of adoption will be in November of 2025.

Mr. Ellen asked for clarification on what is considered a man-made hazard. Ms. Lacer explained that it could be anything that is not caused by weather or acts of God, for instance, a chemical spill or even Covid could influence traffic in some way.

Mr. Zimmer stated the presentation was very nice and recommended adding some information to the Equitable goal regarding efficiencies of spending or efficiency of dollars.

Mr. Kozlosky stated that this item will be brought back to the Board at the next meeting for consideration. He explained that the staff presented today to allow time for the Board to give feedback and a draft project list will also be presented.

b) May is Bike Month Presentation and Proclamation-Carolyn Caggia, WMPO

Carolyn Caggia, WMPO Transportation Planner and Go Coast program coordinator explained that the Go Coast program supports and encourages alternative transportation in our region.

She gave a brief background stating that National Bike Month is promoted by the League of American Bicyclists in May. National Bike and Roll to School Day, is hosted by the National Center for Safe Routes to School and will take place on May 8, 2024. Bike month has been celebrated across the country since 1956.

Go Coast is going to observe and celebrate bike month by hosting a challenge. Bicyclists are encouraged to log their miles traveled by bike during the month of May.

Ms. Caggia stated that there are two forms located in the link on the gocoastnc.org website. The first one is a registration form, where email is collected along with other information. This information is used to keep in contact with the participants throughout the month and to collect optional demographic data to better understand who the participants are and what region they are from. The second form is the actual tracking form. Participants can log their miles and acknowledge what type of ride they are taking. They are also asked if they wore a helmet. In May of last year, the challenge had 30 participants, who logged almost 4,000 miles.

Go Coast has also reached out to member jurisdictions, staff and community members and requested proclamations to recognize bike month. The Go Coast team will be presenting press releases, and social media and email blasts.

Ms. Caggia stated the local bike to school day is an effort being led by the Terry Benji Bicycling Foundation. This group is our local advocacy group for bicycling. The coordination of this challenge is being led by the Terry Benji foundation, volunteers, and local schools. Carolina Beach Elementary School and Pine Valley Elementary School will be participating in the challenge. Four bike routes per school with multiple stops have been established and routes will be led by volunteers with police support.

WMPO staff worked with Terry Benji Bicycling Foundation to identify routes and biking the routes themselves. Staff members will also be leading rides at both locations and will provide aerial drone photography.

c) Wilmington Urban Area Travel Demand Model, Nazia Sarder, NCDOT

Nazia Sarder, NCDOT, gave a brief background on the socio-economic data for the 2050 WMPO Travel Demand Model (TDM). She stated every five years before the MPO starts working on their next Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) the process is started by updating or creating a new TDM to facilitate the MPO testing MTP projects.

She stated that a model is a representation of something in the real world that accounts for its relevant properties. In transportation, the model used is called the travel demand model, (TDM). The TDM is a systematic process for translating land use and transportation supply into projections of travel demand. Local land use plans, the road network, and other socioeconomic data is used to project what the model demand will be in the future. A TDM requires several types of information to be placed as what is called input to achieve useful results.

The data that is gathered includes the number of households, jobs, school enrollment, vehicle ownership and road network. Just to name a few components. The accuracy of the TDM relies heavily on having good, verified input data to understand what is needed for future transportation solutions.

Ms. Sarder presented the model area for the TDM includes all New Hanover County, all of Pender County, and parts of Brunswick County. She explained the reason all of Pender County was being included even though most of the county is part of the Cape Fear RPO is because Pender County is developing a Comprehensive Transportation Plan (CTP), and that data is included. Brunswick County was also extended due to possible new urban areas based on the Census that was completed when the model started in 2022.

Collaboration with WMPO and county staffs to provide the socio-economic data were population and employment and it was provided with low medium and high growth rates on a census block level. She stated that the modeler at the Transportation Planning Division took the data to estimate growth rates based on the Office of State and Budget Management (OSBM) predictions and info U.S.A. data. The base year for the model is 2021, because that is the information we had available when we started in 2022, and the future year of the model is 2050 for the MTP.

Ms. Sarder stated that 2021 population and 2050 populations and growth rate maps are shown on an annual level from base year to future year. She explained that even though New Hanover and Pender are fully included in the model, Brunswick is only partially there. She noted that the populations in the model are household populations, which means they do not include group corridors, such as prisons, nursing homes, etc. Certificate of occupancy data was provided by the WMPO, and seasonal population was included into the model as well. Over 600 Traffic Analysis Zones were included.

She shared some total population numbers based on 2021 information according to the Office of State Budget and Management, Brunswick County in 2021 population is approximately 138,000.00, Pender was approximately 63,000 and New Hanover County was approximately 230,000. She then gave a brief presentation of the maps associated with this information and the keys attached.

Ms. Sarder then shared the total population numbers based on 2050 growth rate maps. Brunswick County as a whole is projected to be 268,000. This model population is lower because the entire county is not included, it's about 157,000. Pender County is projected to be about 96,000 and New Hanover County is projected to be 320,000.

She then touched on the employment maps; these were created the same way as the population maps. The locals provided the input on low, medium, and high growth. U.S.A. data was used instead of OSBM to estimate the employee totals and distributed certain percentages based on those growth rates. Employment numbers in 2021 for Brunswick County are 21,000, New Hanover was about 109,000, and Pender County 16,000. She explained that the ranges vary a little from the population maps. The employment maps go from 0 to 250 all the way down to 2,000 to 100,000.

Ms. Sarder presented the growth maps for employment for 2050 and Brunswick County is predicted to be about 36,000, New Hanover at 231,000 and Pender would be about 18,000.

In closing, Ms. Sarder stated the anticipated model completion date will be the end of June. It can then be utilized by the WMPO for project testing and will provide support in testing the projects for the MTP. The model will become official when the MTP is adopted.

7. Consent Agenda

Mr. Barbee made a motion to recuse Mr. Zimmer from voting on the consent agenda and Ms. Bozeman seconded, motion carried unanimously.

- a) Approval of Board Regular Meeting Minutes- February 28, 2024
- b) Resolution approving 2024-2033 STIP/MPO Amendment #24-1
- c) Resolution approving 2024-2033 STIP/MPO Administrative Modifications #24-2

Mr. Ellen made a motion to approve the consent agenda and Mr. Barbee seconded, motion carried unanimously.

8. Discussion

- a) 2024-2033 STIP/MPO Transportation Improvement Program Administrative Modifications #24-4

Mr. Kozlosky stated this was for informational purposes only and will be brought back to the Board at the next meeting for approval.

- b) 23rd Street Widening

Mr. Kozlosky stated that the Wilmington International Airport has requested economic development funds through the NCDOT be used to widen 23rd street between Martin Luther King Jr. Parkway, and Aviation Drive.

He also noted that ILM is committing one million dollars \$1,000,000.00 towards the effort. The MPO's long range transportation plan identifies the cross section of 23rd street from NC 133 down to the Martin Luther King Jr. Parkway as a four (4) lane facility with bike lanes and sidewalks. He explained after discussion with NC DOT that the cost without sidewalks and bike lanes would be approximately \$2.8 million dollars instead of \$2.4 million dollars. In these same discussions DOT indicated that there are not sufficient funds in FY 24 or 25. They have anticipated funding opening in FY 26 to fund the \$2.8 option. Mr. Kozlosky noted that the memo included in the packet outlines various options to accommodate the request for both a four (4) lane facility and an option for reduced cost.

He also said it was important to point out that if the Board did support funding the \$ 2.8 option that it would not require us to delay any of the projects listed in the memo.

Mr. Kozlosky asked the Board to consider support for moving forward with the 2.8- million -dollar option to use economic development funds.

Mr. Barfield asked Mr. Kozlosky if the \$2.8 option would accomplish the airport's goals. Mr. Kozlosky noted that Jeff Bourk and Granseur Dicks from ILM were present in the audience to answer questions. They both replied yes that option would accomplish the goal.

Mr. Kozlosky stated that this is a discussion item, but the Board can vote in support of the item. He stated if there was support there could be a separate larger project for the whole length of the corridor from NC 133 to Martin Luther King Jr. Parkway to come back later to add sidewalks.

Mr. Saffo noted that there are train crossings located there and there would be a need to work with CSX because of the corridor in that area.

Vice-Chairman Waddell noted that the \$2.8 option is removing sidewalks and bike lanes, and expedites the project getting done for ILM, which is important and then later down the road , a larger project can be brought to the table that does not push any other projects down the road, they all stay on schedule.

Mr. Kozlosky noted that the College and MLK project is expected to be delayed because DOT's updating their traffic forecast.

Mr. Barfield made a motion to approve the \$2.8-million-dollar option. Vice-Chairman Waddell seconded. Mr. Zimmer thanked ILM for their contribution and Chad Kimes for getting together a lot of discretionary funds. Motion passed unanimously.

c) May 7th Special Meeting-Cape Fear Memorial Bridge Tour

Mr. Koslosky stated that the DOT will be holding a press conference at 10:30 am to discuss the Cape Fear Memorial Bridge and then at 11:00 am will take the Board for a tour of the bridge.

9. Updates

Mr. Koslosky stated that updates are included in the agenda packet.

a) Wilmington Urban Area MPO

Mr. Kozlosky stated that WMPO is residing down at 929 N. Front Street.

b) Cape Fear Public Transportation Authority

Updates included in the packet.

c) NCDOT Division

Chad Kimes, NCDOT, expressed his appreciation to all on the Cape Fear Memorial Bridge Preservation project.

d) NCDOT Transportation Planning Division

Nazia Sarder, NCDOT, indicated that the Brunswick County CTP went through local adoptions in February, March, and April and just this morning the NC DOT Board of Transportation adopted the CTP. She thanked Mr. Zimmer and Commissioner Williams for the special mentions during that meeting. She then stated that Pender CTP had their 5th meeting last week and will be releasing a survey to the public on June 1st. It will close on September 1st. Vice-Chairman Waddell asked Ms. Sarder to send out her presentation.

10. Announcements

11. Next meeting – May 29, 2024

The meeting adjourned at 3:48 p.m. Motion made by Mr. Williams and seconded by Mr. Zimmer.

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.**