

North Carolina

Johnston County

The Highway 70 Corridor Commission of North Carolina, Inc. met on Thursday, February 22, 2018 at 1:30pm at the Johnston County Agriculture Center, 2736 NC Highway 210, Smithfield, North Carolina.

County members present:

Carteret County – Jesse Vinson

Craven County – Danny Walsh, Jack Veit and Bobby Darden

Johnston County – Donald Rains, Frank Price, Ted Godwin and Berry Gray

Lenoir County – Mark Pope

Wayne County – Chris Boyette, Joe Gurley, Wayne Aycock and Jack Best

Other persons present:

North Carolina Board of Transportation – Gus Tulloss

Highway 70 Corridor Commission Director – M. Durwood Stephenson

North Carolina Department of Transportation – Tim Little, John Rouse, Ronnie Keeter, Jeff Cabaniss, Jiles Harrell, Haywood Daughtry, Bailey Harden, Jimmy Eatmon and Dominique Boyd

Down East RPO – Patrick Flanagan

Eastern Carolina RPO – Chris York

Greenville MPO – Ryan Purtle

New Bern MPO – Kimberly Maxey

Upper Coastal Plains RPO – James Salmons

City of Goldsboro/Goldsboro MPO – Jennifer Collins

Capital Area MPO – Alex Rickard

Carteret County – Don Kirkman

Craven County – Chad Strawn

Johnston County – Junior Deese

JCATS – Neal Davis

Jones County – Franky Howard and Mike Haddock

Lenoir County – Woody Gurley

Wilson's Mills – Mayor Jim Uzzle and Johnny Eason

USDA – Bob Chandler

Call to Order and Welcome

Highway 70 Corridor Commission Chairman Tom Mark called the meeting to order and Johnston County Member Ted Godwin welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Approval of the Agenda

Highway 70 Corridor Commission Director, M. Durwood Stephenson indicated a revision to the agenda was necessary. Mr. John Chaffee, President & CEO of the NC East Alliance, was unable to attend meeting and needed to be removed from the agenda. He will present an update on the Eastern NC Food Commercialization Center at a later date. New State Director of Rural Development, Bob Chandler, needed to be advanced on the agenda and present to the Commission prior to Director comments and Mr. Stephenson indicated Mr. Jeff Cabaniss would report on Division 2 in Mr. Preston Hunter's absence.

Upon motion of the Johnston County Member Ted Godwin and seconded by Craven County Member Jack Veit, the members of the Highway 70 Corridor Commission unanimously approved the revised agenda.

Approval of Minutes

Upon motion of Craven County Member Jack Veit and seconded by Johnston County Member Ted Godwin, the members of the Highway 70 Corridor Commission unanimously approve the minutes of the meeting on November 15, 2017.

USDA Rural Development

State Director for USDA Rural Development in North Carolina, Bob Chandler, Jr., introduced himself to the Commission and provided an overview of USDA Rural Development and its programs that help improve the economy and quality of life in rural America.

Rural Development offers loans, grants and loan guarantees to help create jobs and support economic development and essential services such as housing, health care, first responder services and equipment, and water, electric and communications infrastructure. Mr. Chandler indicated 1.6 Billion Dollars had been spent in NC through key programs offered by USDA Rural Development.

He stated he looked forward to learning more about the Highway 70 Corridor Commission and hopes to continue bringing enhanced economic opportunities to rural communities in North Carolina.

Remarks – Tim Little, Chief Engineer

Mr. Tim Little, NCDOT Chief Engineer, provided the Commission with an overview of NCDOT's I-95/US 70 Infa Grant application and requested support from the Commission by asking counties to send letters of support via mail/email to their respective Congress members. Mr. Little indicated the project will improve safety, reduce travel times, enhance freight movement, support military operations, expand access to employment opportunities, and improve the network's resiliency to non-recurring delay and natural disasters. He also stated the installation of fiber optic cable and microcell towers in both the US 70 (future I-42) and I-95 portions of the project not only allows the two corridors to be managed jointly, but it also maximized the innovative contracting opportunities that arise from allowing the private sectors to have access to the trunk line. Joint implementation also makes the greatest improvement in closing the internet service gap between urban and rural households in eastern North Carolina. He concluded with, time is of the essence, as DOT contingency will be in Washington next week and it would be helpful if counties could provide letters of support to their respective representatives by Monday, February 26, 2018.

ENC Freight Mobility Plan

Greenville MPO Transportation Planner, Ryan Purtle, addressed the Commission on the proposed Regional Freight Mobility Plan which is a coordinated regional planning effort to identify, develop, and support the multimodal freight network within the identified eastern North Carolina planning area. The plan is aimed at accomplishing the following: Development of strategies to continuously address freight movement, congestion, and mobility issues while identifying potential multimodal connectivity strategies across freight modes; Identification of economically significant links to/from communities State and regional transportation hubs to leverage regional and local economic competitiveness; Creation of a regional multimodal freight vision identifying State, regional, and division level projects for

regional prioritization to create efficiencies to leverage Federal and State funding; Development of strategies to support adoption and implementation of new and innovative freight technologies that promote efficiency, safety, and continued environmental sustainability; and Establishment of a collaborative regional partnership to support freight and other regional planning opportunities.

Mr. Purtle stressed why the plan was needed, reviewed the planning area, indicated planning partners and key considerations. Proposed schedule was discussed and Mr. Purtle stated initial project coordination began in November/December of 2017 and he has been presenting the proposed planning effort to planning partners (MPOs, RPOs, NCDOT, Highway 70 Corridor Commission, Highway 17/64 Corridor Commission and NCEast Alliance) since the beginning of 2018. He anticipates selection of Consultant to assist in planning effort in March 2018 with the planning process beginning late spring 2018 with a draft plan distribution for public review and comment in Spring 2019. Final Plan adoption by participating organizations is anticipated May/June of 2019.

In conclusion, Mr. Purtle indicated a member of NCDOT's transportation planning division will handle the day-to-day project management with assistance from the various planning organizations. The project will be submitted to NCDOT for possible State Planning Research (SPR) funding and the cost of the proposed plan, estimated at \$250,000, will be shared amongst the MPOs, RPOs and additional planning partners involved. It has been recommended that partnering MPOs contribute \$50,000 each, RPOs contribute \$5,000 each and additional partners would help bridge the gap (\$5,000 to \$10,000) if additional monies is needed towards the planning effort. The members of the Highway 70 Corridor Commission unanimously approved the support of the planning effort of the ENC Freight Mobility Plan going forward without financial commitment at this time.

Rural Initiatives (Hometown Strong)

Pryor Gibson, Director of Rural Initiatives, addressed the Commission on the Hometown Strong Rural Initiative and provided the Commission with an overview of the planned strategy to energize and support rural plans and programs. Hometown Strong is a new initiative to partner with local governments to support local economics, improve infrastructure, and strengthen rural communities.

In 2017 a rural action plan was created which consisted of compiling data from published, ongoing sources for baseline and analysis on progress; addressed flood recovery; attraction of companies to rural areas through existing programs; and identification of additional or underutilized state resources for rural areas. In 2018 initiation and publication of the plan is anticipated which would identify initial counties and roadmap for adding more counties over time; engage local leadership and partners; customize action plans for specific local needs; and leverage state resources with cross-agency activity. It is anticipated in 2019 to publicize the rural asset mapping tool and publish success models and templates from initial counties with hopes of engaging additional counties for templates expansion. The general 3-year timeline would conclude with sustaining the plan in 2020 and publicize progress on best-in-nation goals and execution, share additional success models and templates and continue to engage additional counties. Over the next 6 months a website launch and local events will be planned to engage local leadership and partner development.

Mr. Gibson indicated Hometown Strong will work with local leaders to stimulate economies and help businesses thrive in North Carolina's rural communities by focusing on projects such as infrastructure improvements, broadband access and workforce training. Through existing and new partnerships with local leaders from government, business, non-profit organizations, the community and others,

Hometown Strong will seek to leverage state and local resources to help complete local development projects, convene conversations between state and local agencies, and identify long-term projects that can encourage prosperity in rural communities.

Global Transpark Report

Wayne County Member Jack Best indicated he had been to one Global Transpark meeting since the hiring of the new director, Allen Thomas (former Mayor of Greenville, NC). With the new director on board he indicated a new marketing plan was anticipated to launch next month and expected exciting things for the park in its near future.

Division 2 Update

North Carolina Department of Transportation Division 2 Planning Engineer, Jeff Cabaniss, updated the members of the Highway 70 Corridor Commission on the following projects:

- “Little Baltimore” – Grade separated interchange at US 70 and Willie Measley Road. Public meetings are scheduled for next month. Construction let date of FY 2023.
- Kinston Bypass – Project is on schedule and draft EIS is scheduled to be completed May 2018.. Right-of-way is slated for 2020.
- US 70 Resurfacing Project – US 70 at 258 east to Dover Exit. Resurfacing contract awarded to Barnhill Construction. Dover to New Bern is scheduled for resurfacing and bids will be released next month.
- James City – Project is on schedule and will include two additional interchanges at Taberna Way and Thurman Road as part of the overall project. Environmental Documents are scheduled for completion in May 2018 with another round of public meetings scheduled for the summer of 2018.
- Slocum Road Interchange – Project is on schedule and under construction. ST Wooten has completed clearing and utility work has started.
- Havelock Bypass – Currently working with Duke Energy on right of entry access to start utility work. Project is scheduled to let September 2019.
- Newport River Port Bridge Replacement – Meetings scheduled next week with Core Engineers to discuss Concept Designs.
- Gallants Channel Bridge – Two lanes of traffic have been opened to traffic with all lanes being open on bridge mid-summer 2018.

Division 4 Update

North Carolina Department of Transportation Division 4 Assistant Division Maintenance Engineer, Jiles Harrell, updated the members of the Highway 70 Corridor Commission on the following projects:

- Clayton Bypass – Resurfacing estimated to begin May/June 2018.
- Wilson’s Mills – Working on Right-of-way Plans and will be completed this month. Construction let date scheduled for Fall 2019.
- R-5829 A/B (US 70 – Johnston/Wayne County line to Goldsboro Bypass) – Public Meeting this past December. Environmental assessment completed in June 2018. Surveys have started and

the A portion (Goldsboro Bypass to just east of Princeton) is funded for construction with a let date of 2023. B portion of the project is unfunded.

Financial Report

Highway 70 Corridor Commission Director M. Durwood Stephenson reported, as of January 31, 2018, there was an account balance of \$290,284.48.

Comments from Executive Director M. Durwood Stephenson

Highway 70 Corridor Commission Director M. Durwood Stephenson indicated his disappointment with the progress of the Neuse River Flood Mitigation Study. He stated he would be attending the first official meeting on February 27, 2018 at the State Emergency Operations Center and he would not release any of the Highway 70 Corridor Commission money (\$25,000) towards the project until he felt comfortable with the progress of the study effort.

Mr. Stephenson stated he continues to be involved in the Ayden Food Processing Study as well as the efforts to move the Atlantic Coast Pipeline forward.

Public Comments

No member of the public spoke.

Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Highway 70 Corridor Commission will be held on May 17, 2018 at 1:30pm in Lenoir County. The meeting location will be determined later.

Adjournment

At 3:15 p.m., Highway 70 Corridor Commission Chairman Tom Mark adjourned the meeting.

Jennifer K. Collins