

NORTH CAROLINA

WAYNE COUNTY

The Highway 70 Corridor Commission met on Thursday, May 17, 2012 at 2:00 p.m. at the Goldsboro City Hall in Room 206, 200 N. Center Street, Goldsboro, North Carolina.

County members present:

Carteret County – None

Craven County – Michael Avery, Tom Mark and Jack B. Veit, III

Johnston County – Fleta A. Byrd

Jones County – None

Lenoir County – J. Mac Daughety, Brian Lucas and Mark Pope

Wayne County – Chuck Allen, Jack Best and Sandra R. McCullen

Other persons present:

North Carolina Board of Transportation – Leigh McNairy (At Large) and Gus Tulloss (Division 4)

North Carolina Department of Transportation – Dwayne Alligood, Tom Bradshaw, Haywood Daughtry, Neil Lassiter and John Rouse

Highway 70 Corridor Commission Director – M. Durwood Stephenson

North Carolina Global TransPark – Charlie Diehl

Craven County – Commissioner Theron McCabe and Planning Director Don Baumgardner

Duplin County – Planner Randall G. Tyndall

Eastern Carolina RPO – Alex Rickard and Patrick Flanagan

Goldsboro News Argus – Steve Herring

Highway 17 Association – Marc Finlayson

Town of Mount Olive – Manager Charles Brown

News and Observer – Colin Campbell

Wayne County – Commissioner Steve Keen, Commissioner E. Ray Mayo and Planning Director Connie Price

Wayne County Clerk to the Board – Marcia R. Wilson

Citizens – Don Black, Ophelia Davis and Jeff Ruggieri

Welcome

Highway 70 Corridor Commission Chairman Chuck Allen welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Approval of Agenda

Upon motion of Lenoir County Commissioner J. Mac Daughety and seconded by City of Kinston Streets Superintendent Brian Lucas, the members of the Highway 70 Corridor Commission unanimously approved the agenda as presented.

Approval of Minutes

Upon motion of City of New Bern Planning Director Michael Avery and seconded by Lenoir County Commissioner J. Mac Daughety, the members of the Highway 70 Corridor Commission unanimously approved the minutes of the Highway 70 Corridor Commission meeting on April 5, 2012.

Financial Report

Wayne County Clerk to the Board Marcia R. Wilson reported as of May 15, 2012 there was a total cash balance of \$121,216.07 in the Highway 70 Corridor Commission account. The proposed 2012-2013 Highway 70 Corridor Commission budget totals \$125,000. Invoices have been sent out for fiscal year 2012-2013.

Feasibility Studies Update

North Carolina Department of Transportation Division 2 Engineer Neil Lassiter updated the Highway 70 Corridor Commission members on feasibility studies. A feasibility study is underway for the NC Highway 11/NC Highway 241/NC Highway 24 project and is expected to take 12-18 months to complete. A feasibility study by Derrick Lewis is underway at James City to explore a bypass. A feasibility study for Part C of the Harvey Parkway will take 18 months. The Slocum Gate feasibility study has been completed and work continues on the planning and environmental documents.

Board of Transportation/Intergovernmental Committee

North Carolina Board of Transportation At Large Member Leigh McNairy stated the focus of the Intergovernmental Committees is to ensure all roads leading to the military installations are at military standards. The interest is to realign NC Highway 258 over to NC Highway 11/NC Highway 241/NC Highway 24 as a strategic highway corridor. She commended Eastern Carolina RPO Planner Alex Rickard for interpreting the policy and coordinating suggested changes in the strategic highway corridor policy. She hoped the change would be completed by the June 1, 2012 meeting. She also commended Lenoir County Commissioner J. Mac Daughety for reaching out to several RPOs, MPOs, the military and ports to transfer the strategic highway corridor to NC Highway 11/NC Highway 241/NC Highway 24. Changing the strategic highway corridor would represent a substantial cost savings and less of an environmental impact. The recommended change in the strategic highway corridor policy will be formally made to North Carolina Board of Transportation subcommittees and later presented to the North Carolina Board of Transportation for consideration in mid-summer.

Eastern Carolina RPO Planner Alex Rickard stated the Eastern Carolina RPO adopted a resolution earlier today requesting the North Carolina Department of Transportation amend the Strategic Highway Corridors Vision Plan by modifying the route of Strategic Highway Corridor #53 from Wilmington, North Carolina to Norfolk, Virginia and Strategic Highway Corridor #54 from Jacksonville, North Carolina to Kinston, North Carolina (US Highway 258) to include NC

Highway 11/NC Highway 241/NC Highway 24. The resolution will be sent to neighboring RPOs and MPOs for consideration. The anticipated cost savings is approximately \$171 million.

North Carolina Board of Transportation At Large Member Leigh McNairy stated North Carolina Department of Transportation Chief Operating Officer Jim Trogdon stated when one asks for a request, one must perform due diligence and offer a solution, which is being done on the request to modify Strategic Highway Corridors #53 and #54. She requested the Highway 70 Corridor Commission members contact her for any requests. She invited everyone to attend the next quarterly Intergovernmental Committee meeting on June 6, 2012 at 12 noon. North Carolina Department of Transportation Chief Operating Officer Jim Trogdon and North Carolina Department of Transportation and North Carolina Statewide Logistics Coordinator Thomas Bradshaw will be present at the meeting for the presentation on how far the committee has come and what needs to be done in the future.

Board of Transportation/2040 Long Range Plan

North Carolina Board of Transportation Division 4 Member Gus Tulloss stated the public has commented on the 2040 Long Range Plan. Public comments and suggested changes have been incorporated into the plan. The subcommittee will meet in June to review the plan and present the full 2040 Long Range Plan to the entire North Carolina Board of Transportation in July 2012 for consideration.

Transportation Improvement Program Status (Five Year Work Plan)

Highway 70 Corridor Commission Director M. Durwood Stephenson stated the five-year Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) is scheduled to be approved by the North Carolina Board of Transportation in July 2012.

US 17 Association Update

US 17 Association Director Marc Finlayson updated the Highway 70 Corridor Commission members on the status of US 17 Corridor Study in New Hanover and Pender Counties and Onslow and Jones Counties. The projects have been prioritized by the RPOs and MPOs in eastern North Carolina.

US Highway 17 Hampstead Bypass (R-3300)

Total cost - \$220 million (North Carolina Trust Fund) Unfunded - \$199 million

- Federal draft Environmental Impact Statement – July 2011
- Federal final Environmental Impact Statement – August 2012
- State Record of Decision – November 2012
- Begin right-of-way acquisition – \$20 million in North Carolina fiscal year 2017 budget
- Finish right-of-way acquisition – partially funded
- Construction – unfunded \$199 million

January-March 2012 action items accomplished:

- Study conducted in response to a citizen request to consider a change to the study corridor for Alternative E-H. Based on the study, it appears the suggested corridor would have more impacts to wetlands and might affect red-cockaded woodpecker foraging habitat.
- Response submitted to EPA concerns regarding the project. EPA provided additional comments on responses. Currently working to address EPA concerns.
- Work is continuing on options for providing access at the north end of the bypass that would safely accommodate traffic and minimize impacts to red-cockaded woodpecker foraging habitat. This is in response to citizen comments from the October 2011 hearings.
- Biological assessment for endangered species impacts will be prepared prior to the completion of the US Army Corps of Engineers Record of Decision for the 404 permit

April-June 2012 action items:

- Options for northern access developed through engineering study will be examined in more detail.
- Additional EPA comments will be addressed and a second meeting will be held in May 2012 to discuss selection of LEDPA (concurrence point 3).

A map of U-4751 and R-3300 in New Hanover and Pender counties is attached hereto as Attachment A. The merger team selected Alternative E-H. This project falls under the jurisdiction of the Wilmington MPO.

US Highway 17 Belgrade to New Bern Bypass (R-2514 B, C and D)

Total cost - \$233.4 million (North Carolina Trust Fund) Unfunded - \$18.7 million

- State draft Environmental Impact Statement – Approved August 31, 2004
- Corridor public hearing – August 16, 2005
- State Final Impact Statement – June 23, 2011
- Record of Decision – Mid 2012
- Design public hearing – Mid 2012
- Right-of-way acquisition
 - Segment B – North Carolina fiscal year 2014
 - Segment C – North Carolina fiscal year 2013
 - Segment D – North Carolina fiscal year 2013
- Construction
 - Segment B – budgeted \$37.3 million beginning North Carolina fiscal year 2019
 - Segment B – partially unfunded (\$18.7 million)
 - Segment C – budgeted \$24 million beginning North Carolina fiscal year 2015
 - Segment D – budgeted \$101 million beginning North Carolina fiscal year 2015

January-March 2012 action items accomplished:

- Completion of updated noise analysis (January 2012)

April-June 2012 action items:

- In-house review of State Record of Decision – April 2012
- Approval of State Record of Decision
- Design public hearing – Mid 2012

A map of R-2514 US Highway 17 in Onslow and Jones counties is attached hereto as Attachment B.

RPO/MPO Activities and Coalition

Wayne County Commissioner Jack Best stated several months ago seven MPOs (Jacksonville, Greenville and Goldsboro) and RPOs (Eastern Carolina RPO, Down East RPO, Mid East RPO and Upper Coastal Plain) submitted their transportation priority projects. It was significant all seven MPOs and RPOs agreed on six transportation projects. The priorities interconnect the Global TransPark, military bases, ports and the medical center in Greenville. The other RPOs and MPOs in eastern North Carolina wanted to join the coalition. Last Friday the eastern North Carolina RPOs and MPOs met with the legislators. The legislators need to form a caucus to secure funding for eastern North Carolina's transportation projects. An organizational meeting will be held in the near future of the 14 North Carolina MPOs and RPOs located east of Interstate 795. The coalition will meet with the legislators to maintain the equity formula for transportation funding in eastern North Carolina. Eastern North Carolina needs roads for the military, industry and jobs.

Eastern Carolina RPO Planner Alex Rickard stated the general focus of the eastern North Carolina RPO and MPO coalition is the same as the Highway 70 Corridor Commission, which is to promote transportation needs in eastern North Carolina. He and Upper Coastal Plain RPO Planner Daniel Van Liere have organized conference calls for next week between staff to determine possible meeting dates between now and June 30, 2012.

Highway 70 Corridor Commission Director M. Durwood Stephenson commended the special efforts of Wayne County Commissioner Jack Best, Eastern Carolina RPO Planner Patrick Flanagan, Eastern Carolina RPO Planner Alex Rickard, Upper Coastal Plain RPO Planner Daniel Van Liere and Down East RPO Planner Rob Will to organize the eastern North Carolina RPOs and MPOs.

Town of Mount Olive Manager Charles Brown commended everyone who worked on the eastern North Carolina RPO and MPO coalition. When a plan is submitted to the North Carolina Department of Transportation, which makes sense and saves money, it gets attention.

Wayne County Commissioner Jack Best stated the RPO staff made the meeting a success. The RPOs and MPOs gave the North Carolina Department of Transportation prioritized regional projects, which interconnect and are reasonable. The region must stick together.

Amtrak Passenger Rail Service

Highway 70 Corridor Commission Director M. Durwood Stephenson stated Jeff Mann was working to bring Amtrak bus and passenger rail service to Greenville, Kinston, New Bern, Havelock and Morehead City and later to Wilmington, Wilson and Jacksonville. Jeff Mann is no longer with Amtrak. In later discussions Highway 70 Corridor Commission Director M. Durwood Stephenson learned the concept of bus and rail passenger service in eastern North Carolina was dropped. Military officials notified Amtrak of the importance of bus and rail passenger service in eastern North Carolina. Last week an Amtrak official began looking for locations for bus stations in New Bern and Jacksonville, which should be operational by this fall. Later plans include bus and passenger rail service throughout eastern North Carolina. There will be upcoming announcements about passenger rail service in eastern North Carolina within the next three months. Amtrak projects a start-up of 50,000 passengers annually in eastern North Carolina.

North Carolina Department of Transportation 3.0 Prioritization

North Carolina Department of Transportation Division 2 Engineer Neil Lassiter stated Prioritization 3.0 was successfully launched. Feedback from the RPOs and MPOs was incorporated in 3.0 Prioritization. The biggest technological change is to move to a GIS based environment. Added ways to improve priority scoring will be explored.

North Carolina Department of Transportation and Global TransPark Consultant Charlie Diehl stated 3.0 Prioritization will have an increased focus on economic development. Numerous groups and stakeholders have been asked for input on the prioritization process.

North Carolina Board of Transportation At Large Member Leigh McNairy requested assistance in monitoring increased prioritization for roads serving a military base, not just roads physically abutting a military base.

North Carolina Department of Transportation Division 2 Engineer Neil Lassiter and Highway 70 Corridor Commission Director M. Durwood Stephenson stated a road servicing a military base, not just abutting a military base, should receive a higher priority.

Eastern Carolina RPO Planner Alex Rickard stated RPOs and MPOs in eastern North Carolina have more SPOT points than legitimate projects. The organizations need a way to assign more than 100 points to a project. He requested bonus points for regionalism, as well as for the Global TransPark and the military.

North Carolina Department of Transportation Division 2 Engineer Neil Lassiter stated awarding bonus points to projects in more than one RPO and MPO is being studied.

Highway 70 Corridor Commission Website

Wayne County Clerk to the Board Marcia R. Wilson related information from Wayne County Manager W. Lee Smith, III concerning the Highway 70 Corridor Commission website.

Information is being pulled by the old site next week and migrated to the new site. The new website will be updated and have a fresh new look. The new website will also be user friendly and will cost about \$600 less per month after the initial setup. Wayne County staff will be responsible for the new website. Anyone with suggested changes was requested to notify Wayne County.

Don Black requested the US 17 Association website be linked on the Highway 70 Corridor Commission website.

Strategic Corridor Resolution

Upon motion of J. Mac Daughety and seconded by Jack B. Veit, III, the members of the Highway 70 Corridor Commission approved and authorized the Resolution for Amending the North Carolina Department of Transportation Strategic Highway Corridors Vision Plan, attached hereto as Attachment C.

Havelock Bypass Project Update

North Carolina Department of Transportation Division 2 Engineer Neil Lassiter stated the Havelock Bypass project has been reaffirmed. There should be an official release within one month. Right-of-way is expected in March 2014.

Gallants Channel Project Update

North Carolina Department of Transportation Division 2 Engineer Neil Lassiter stated the Gallants Channel project is still on schedule for a July 2012 let date. CAMA and the Division of Water Quality permits have been received. The North Carolina Department of Transportation is still waiting on permits from the United States Coast Guard and the United States Army Corps of Engineers. Proposals are being sent out while waiting for the two permits.

Kinston Bypass Update

North Carolina Department of Transportation Division 2 Engineer Neil Lassiter stated citizens informational workshops are being held on the Kinston Bypass. Originally, there were 3,000 alternates and now there are 16 alternates. The public has provided good feedback.

Harvey Parkway, Part B Update

North Carolina Department of Transportation Division 2 Engineer Neil Lassiter stated paving of the Part B of the Harvey Parkway project has been accelerated to a June 2012 let date.

Goldsboro Bypass Project Update

North Carolina Department of Transportation Division 4 Engineer John Rouse stated the eastern most 12.5 mile section of the US Highway 70 Goldsboro Bypass was let in January 2012 at a cost of \$105 million to Barnhill Construction as a design-build project. Completion on this

section is scheduled for July 1, 2015. The center section from Interstate 795 to Wayne Memorial Drive is completed. The western most section of the Goldsboro Bypass from NC 581 to Interstate 795 will be let in June 2012 and completed in July 2015. The entire Goldsboro Bypass is scheduled to be completed in late 2015 with a construction cost estimate of \$253 million.

Princeton Safety Improvements Update

North Carolina Department of Transportation Division 4 Engineer John Rouse stated main line leftovers are being installed at US Highway 70 and Ebenezer Church Road and Capps Bridge Road. Bids have been received and utility work is taking place now prior to construction. The completion date for the projects is scheduled for next summer.

Pine Level Project Update

North Carolina Department of Transportation Division 4 Engineer John Rouse stated the Pine Level project consists of construction of interchanges at US Highway 70 and US Highway 70 Business. The plans are 25% completed. The staff is reviewing right-of-way preparation now. The project is scheduled to be completed in late 2015 – about the same time as the Goldsboro Bypass.

Wilson's Mills Project Update

North Carolina Department of Transportation Division 4 Engineer John Rouse stated \$2 million has been secured for the planning and design of the Wilson's Mills project, which consists of construction of interchanges at Wilson's Mill Road and Swift Creek Road. The median at Sadisco will be closed. A median barrier will be installed to close the gap with cable and post guard rail at US Highway 70 Bypass and another part of US Highway 70. ARCADIS has been selected as the consultant and a scoping meeting has been scheduled for later this month. Funding has not been secured for the project.

Lenoir County/Kinston Bypass Projects Update

Lenoir County Commissioner J. Mac Daughety stated paving of the Part B of the Harvey Parkway project will be let in June 2012. A second public input meeting will be held tonight on the proposed Kinston Bypass. A feasibility study for Part C of the Harvey Parkway has been started. A feasibility study for the NC Highway 11/NC Highway 241/NC Highway 24 project has started.

Craven County Projects Update

City of New Bern Planning Director Michael Avery stated New Bern will have an MPO beginning in July 2013. Organizational meetings with North Carolina Department of Transportation staff and other Craven County municipalities have begun.

Carteret County Projects Update

There was no further update on Carteret County projects at this time.

Group Discussion Projects

There was no further group discussion on projects at this time.

Logistics and Ports Status

North Carolina Statewide Logistics Coordinator Thomas Bradshaw stated he is heading up the North Carolina Ports and Global TransPark on an interim basis. He stated he was excited about the opportunities of our ports and the Global TransPark and looked forward to working with the Highway 70 Corridor Commission. US Highway 70 is an important lifeline. The strategic plan kickoff was held on Tuesday. He anticipates an announcement within 45 days of a new business at the Morehead City port. North Carolina is blessed with ports at Morehead City and Wilmington and inland ports at Greensboro and Charlotte. He encouraged the members of the Highway 70 Corridor Commission to keep up with their good work. We must continue to work together to improve our economy. He will try to attend the Highway 70 Corridor Commission meetings.

In response to a question from North Carolina Board of Transportation At Large Member Leigh McNairy, North Carolina Statewide Logistics Coordinator Thomas Bradshaw stated the North Carolina legislature has not invested in the ports in the past or in the Global TransPark as promised initially. Budget hearings for this legislative session have already been held. He was optimistic about receiving funding for improving business. The legislature must be willing to help.

North Carolina Board of Transportation At Large Member Leigh McNairy stated all Departments of Transportation align and collaborate through the Southeastern Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (SASHTO). SASHTO will meet in Charleston, South Carolina in August and the agenda covers logistics and the Port of Charleston. When SASHTO meets in Charlotte next year, it will be an opportune time for the North Carolina Department of Transportation to showcase its logistics plan.

North Carolina Statewide Logistics Coordinator Thomas Bradshaw stated funding is in place to dredge the port at Wilmington up towards Bald Head Island. Everyone is trying to build a deeper port. The port at Charleston already has state funds to match federal dollars for deeper dredging. Georgia has committed funding for deeper dredging. North Carolina needs to be competitive with its ports in order to do business with larger ships going through the expanded Panama Canal in 2014. North Carolina needs the larger ships in order to export its grain, pork and poultry products to feed the world and especially to deliver food to Asia. Currently North Carolina ports can accommodate ships with 5,000 boxes, while the port at Long Beach, California can accommodate ships with 12,000 boxes. North Carolina has four carriers at its ports; Norfolk, Savannah and Charleston have eighteen carriers. North Carolina needs to

determine the steps it needs to take to get additional carriers. This is a challenge we can meet working together.

Highway 70 Corridor Commission Director M. Durwood Stephenson stated South Carolina, Georgia and Virginia are ahead of North Carolina concerning ports. The Virginia General Assembly just funded \$244 million for an interstate highway to its port in Norfolk. The roads leading to and from a port are critical.

Public Comments

No member of the public spoke.

Other Comments

Highway 70 Corridor Commission Director M. Durwood Stephenson stated the recent RPO and MPO meeting addressed the equity formula. Speaker Thom Tillis has pledged to change the equity formula in the next long session of the North Carolina General Assembly. We need to be diligent. Change to the equity formula is inevitable. Therefore, we must devise an alternate plan, which is not 100% population based. He challenged the members to come up with a plan prior to the 2013 session of the General Assembly.

North Carolina Statewide Logistics Coordinator Thomas Bradshaw stated we need to recognize the difference in the interstate road system, the US routes and local street projects. He cautioned not to mess up the main truck routes, which are crucial to our economic viability. North Carolina must maintain its major transportation routes in order to serve its economic network. He stressed the importance of funding major road projects over local street projects. We must ask what the road is doing and determine the responsibility of the road.

Highway 70 Corridor Commission Director M. Durwood Stephenson stated the Senate Finance Committee did not discuss the gasoline tax at its meeting yesterday. The House passed the gasoline tax during the last session of the North Carolina General Assembly. The Governor proposed to cap the gasoline tax at 37.5 cents. North Carolina is down \$88 million due to lack of consumption. For every cent we lose in gasoline tax, transportation funding decreases by \$50 million.

US 17 Association Director Marc Finlayson stated he understood transportation funding in North Carolina was down \$140 million due to driving habits and lack of consumption. If the federal government restricts the US Highway Program and raises the federal gasoline tax, it would impact North Carolina by \$300-350 million. There are serious issues in Washington, DC, as well as in Raleigh.

Eastern Carolina RPO Planner Alex Rickard questioned the time frame for the suggested alternative to the equity formula. After discussion, it was decided the alternative was needed by early fall.

Highway 70 Corridor Commission Director M. Durwood Stephenson stated WRAL and the *News and Observer* had positive stories about the importance of US Highway 70 improvements at Princeton and Pine Level.

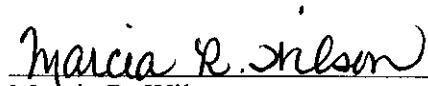
Highway 70 Corridor Commission Chairman Chuck Allen introduced Goldsboro City Manager Scott Stevens.

Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Highway 70 Corridor Commission will be held in Johnston County. The members will be notified of the date and location.

Adjournment

There being no further business, Highway 70 Corridor Commission Chairman Chuck Allen adjourned the meeting at 3:30 p.m.



Marcia R. Wilson