

## **NORTH CAROLINA**

### **CRAVEN COUNTY**

The Highway 70 Corridor Commission of North Carolina, Inc. met on Thursday, March 20, 2014 at 2:00 p.m. in the Tryon Room in the New Bern Riverfront Convention Center, 203 S. Front Street, New Bern, North Carolina.

#### County members present:

Carteret County – Robin Comer, Jimmy Farrington, Myles Stempin and David Whitlow  
Craven County – Bobby Darden; Tom Mark; Jack B. Veit, III and Danny Walsh  
Johnston County – Ted G. Godwin and Tom Hogg  
Jones County – None  
Lenoir County – John Craft, Mark Pope and Russell Rhodes  
Wayne County – Chris Boyette, Joe Daughtery, Steve Keen and Bill Pate

#### Other persons present:

North Carolina Board of Transportation – Hugh Overholt and Gus H. Tulloss  
North Carolina Department of Transportation – Dwayne Alligood, Jeff Cabaniss, Haywood Daughtry, Christopher L. Pendergraph, John Rouse and Paul Worley  
Highway 70 Corridor Commission Director – M. Durwood Stephenson  
Down East RPO – Patrick Flanagan  
Eastern Carolina RPO – Rob Will  
Havelock – Katrina Marshall  
Lenoir Community College – Grady E. Bethel, Dr. Brantley Bricey, Bobby Daughety and Jim MacNeill  
Mid-Carolina RPO/Eastern North Carolina MPO/RPO Coalition – Joel Strickland  
New Bern MPO – Maurizia Chapman  
Newport – Angela Christian  
North Carolina Ports Authority – Stephanie Ayers  
Upper Coastal Plains RPO – James Salmons  
Wayne County – E. Ray Mayo and Marcia R. Wilson  
Media – Sue Book and Mark Hibbs  
Citizens – Ophelia Davis, Josh Humphreys, and Margaret Metts

### **Call to Order**

Highway 70 Corridor Commission Chairman Robin Comer called the meeting to order.

### **Self-introductions**

Everyone present introduced himself or herself. The new members of the Highway 70 Corridor Commission were welcomed to the meeting.

## Highway 70 Corridor Commission Overview

Highway 70 Corridor Commission Chairman Robin Comer stated the Highway 70 Corridor Commission has eligible members from six counties – Carteret, Craven, Johnston, Jones, Lenoir and Wayne. Jones County chose not to participate. The Articles of Incorporation of U.S. 70 Corridor Commission of North Carolina, Inc. were filed on September 16, 2013 with the North Carolina Secretary of State. The Bylaws of U.S. Corridor Commission of North Carolina, Inc. have been approved. The specific purposes for which the Corporation is formed are to plan and advocate for the maintenance, improvement and commercial development of the US Highway 70 corridor within Johnston, Wayne, Lenoir, Jones, Craven and Carteret Counties in the State of North Carolina and to engage in any and all lawful activities incidental thereto. The Commission has a strong rapport with North Carolina Department of Transportation and the North Carolina Board of Transportation.

Currently, the five dues paying counties are Carteret, Craven, Johnston, Lenoir and Wayne. Each of these counties has five appointments to the Commission. Municipalities along the corridor in these counties can pay to have an appointment on the Commission. According to the Bylaws, the county members would pay annual membership dues of \$25,000 and municipalities would pay annual membership dues of \$10,000. Participation by the municipalities will add additional funds for advocacy and improve the vitality of our purpose with the ports, military, agriculture, manufacturing and business oriented entities and tourism. The more members the Highway 70 Corridor Commission has, the better representation the Commission has when asking for money at the state level for projects along the corridor. The general consensus was perhaps we are too stringent concerning the municipal members. When a municipality pays to become a member it wants to appoint its own member rather than submitting three names to the Board of Commissioners for appointment of a member. These issues in the Bylaws can be addressed every December. However, there has been discussion about these issues in the past several days.

Highway 70 Corridor Commission Chairman Robin Comer moved to invite the municipalities along the Highway 70 Corridor Commission to join the Highway 70 Corridor Commission for a municipal membership fee of \$5,000 and allow the municipal members to appoint their own member. The motion was seconded by Carteret County Member Dave Whitlow.

Craven County Member Tom Mark stated if the municipality does not pay the \$5,000 membership fee, it would be up to the county to make the fifth appointment.

Highway 70 Corridor Commission Chairman Robin Comer stated each county can appoint a municipal member as one of its five appointments. If a municipality pays to be a member, it has one of the five county appointments.

Wayne County Member Steve Keen stated the committee working on the Bylaws discussed the affordability of small municipalities paying the membership fee of \$10,000. The committee also discussed the municipality submitting three names for appointment consideration by the Board of Commissioners. The City of Goldsboro has suggested it would be willing to pay

\$6,000 to be a member. He understood the more players at the table shows the governance in Raleigh better collaboration with one another. We need to show we can work things out. He had no objection to changing the Bylaws so everyone wins.

Highway 70 Corridor Commission Chairman Robin Comer recommended setting a flat municipal membership fee of \$5,000. Small municipalities will reap the benefits of improvements to US Highway 70.

In response to a question from Wayne County Member Chris Boyette, Highway 70 Corridor Commission Chairman Robin Comer and Craven County Member Tom Marks stated up to two of the five members per county can be municipality members.

Wayne County Member Joe Daughtery stated he was concerned a precedent was set if a county appointed a municipal member without the municipality paying the membership fee. For instance, when the City of Goldsboro found out other counties had appointed municipal members and no fee was assessed, Goldsboro questioned why it should pay a membership fee. We need to determine if we are going to access the municipal membership fees or not.

Craven County Member Tom Marks stated Craven County has a municipal member, which was grandfathered in. Any future municipal member would pay the membership fee.

Highway 70 Corridor Commission Chairman Robin Comer stated it is up to the individual county as to the manner in which it treats its municipal appointment(s). We want our municipalities to know they are needed as a partner. Municipalities need to be involved and see the validity of the Highway 70 Corridor Commission.

Wayne County Member Joe Daughtery stated Wayne County can appointment two municipal members with no municipal fees or the City of Goldsboro can pay the membership fee and appoint their own representative.

Johnston County Member Ted Godwin moved to amend the previous motion by Highway 70 Corridor Commission Chairman Robin Comer by reducing the municipal membership fee to \$5,000 and having each municipal member present to the county member within which municipal members is located a slate of three individuals nominated by the municipal member for the appointments. Johnston County Member Tom Hogg seconded the motion to amend the motion.

Lenoir County Member Russell Rhodes stated he was concerned the membership was being diluted. There are five members per county with possibility of two municipal members.

Craven County Member Tom Mark stated there is a maximum of five members per county. Municipal members are not added to the five members per county.

Highway 70 Corridor Commission Chairman Robin Comer stated our goal is to encourage new members from the municipalities.

Craven County Member Jack B. Veit, III stated the county would pay a membership fee of \$25,000 and two potential municipal members would pay \$5,000 each for a total of \$35,000. He questioned if the county membership fee would be reduced.

Highway 70 Corridor Commission Chairman Robin Comer stated the county membership fee would not be reduced. The municipal membership fee would be an additional revenue source.

In response to question from Lenoir County Member John Craft, Highway 70 Corridor Commission Chairman Robin Comer stated if the county had appointed five members and a municipality chose to be a member, one of the county appointments would be replaced with the municipality appointment.

Craven County Member Danny Walsh recommended keeping the current membership as denoted in the Bylaws for one year.

Voting for the amendment by Johnston County Member Ted Godwin and seconded by Johnston County Member Tom Hogg to amend the previous motion by Highway 70 Corridor Commission Chairman Robin Comer by reducing the municipal membership fee to \$5,000 and having each municipal member present to the county member within which municipal members is located a slate of three individuals nominated by the municipal member for the appointments.

Voting "Aye": Nine members

Voting "Nay": Eight members

The amendment to the motion passed.

Upon motion of Commission Chairman Robin Comer and seconded by Carteret County Member Dave Whitlow, the members of the Highway 70 Corridor Commission unanimously reduced the municipal membership fee from \$10,000 to \$5,000.

### **Approval of Agenda**

Upon motion of Craven County Member Tom Mark and seconded by Lenoir County Member Brian Lucas, the members of the Highway 70 Corridor Commission unanimously approved the agenda as presented.

### **Approval of Minutes**

Upon motion of Craven County Member Tom Mark and seconded by Johnston County Member Tom Hogg, the members of the Highway 70 Corridor Commission unanimously approved the minutes of the meeting on January 16, 2014.

### **North Carolina Board of Transportation Report**

North Carolina Board of Transportation District 2 Member Hugh Overholt stated the initial scoring of projects should be out in six weeks. The projects are very competitive. There are no more monies for transportation projects than before. The State of North Carolina needs

\$60 billion for transportation projects over the next 10 years. The North Carolina Department of Transportation is examining options to add revenue for transportation projects. The Gallants Channel Bridge project has been let. The US Highway 17 project from New Bern to Jacksonville is on schedule and is in the right-of-way process currently. He wanted to see how the Havelock Bypass would be scored statewide. He commended the MPOs and RPOs for their hard work in the scoring process.

North Carolina Board of Transportation District 4 Member Gus H. Tulloss stated Division 4 consists of six counties, including Johnston and Wayne counties. Tim Little is the new Division 4 Engineer. Chris Pendergraph is the new Division 4 Operations Engineer. North Carolina Department of Transportation Secretary Tony Tata has visited all 14 divisions at least once. Secretary Tony Tata recently spoke at the Wayne County Chamber of Commerce transportation hot topic luncheon and was well received. The new mobility formula has a statewide, regional and division ranking. He was very proud of the response of the North Carolina Department of Transportation personnel during the recent inclement weather. All division engineers did a great job coordinating division resources during the winter weather. The North Carolina Board of Transportation has 12 new members.

### **Financial Report**

Highway 70 Corridor Commission Executive Director M. Durwood Stephenson reported as of February 28, 2014 there was an account balance of \$184,191.04.

### **Spot Scoring**

Patrick Flanagan with the Down East RPO updated the members on the Spot Safety projects. The North Carolina Department of Transportation created an online site for all MPOs, RPOs and Division Engineers to submit projects for all modes of transportation. This will give an online snapshot of all projects. All new projects submitted in January and February 2014 will have scores available in May. All highway projects already in the system will be available in March 2014. We will be able to understand the data and have discussions about our regional formulas and how the projects are scored.

Highway 70 Corridor Commission Executive Director M. Durwood Stephenson stated the MPOs and RPOs did an outstanding job in formulating the scoring methodology in a short time frame.

### **Interim Update on Senate Bill 402 Infrastructure Improvement Assessment**

North Carolina Department of Transportation Rail Division Director Paul C. Worley provided the members with an interim update on Senate Bill 402 Infrastructure Improvement Assessment. Senate Bill 402, Section 34.23 directed the North Carolina Department of Transportation, in collaboration with the North Carolina Department of Commerce and the North Carolina Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, to study the feasibility of infrastructure improvements for the Global TransPark and the North Carolina State Port Authority. The completed study will investigate the financial viability and return-on-investment

of these infrastructure improvements. It was determined three major study components result from the legislation: the Global TransPark infrastructure improvements, the Port of Morehead City infrastructure improvements and the Wallace to Castle Hayne rail line restoration. North Carolina has the ability to build what it needs and wants. There are tax credits available for intermodal facilities over \$30 million.

The Global TransPark study component is assessing the economic feasibility of infrastructure, facility and access improvements for the Global TransPark and is also assessing linkages to the Port of Morehead City. The study will evaluate the financial viability of improvements, develop marketing strategies, and assess the return-on-investment and the overall benefit of the project.

The Port of Morehead City study component is assessing the economic feasibility of infrastructure and access improvements for the Global TransPark and the North Carolina State Port Authority. The study will evaluate alternatives to improve rail and highway capacity and access. The study will also coordinate closely with the Global TransPark study.

A 27-mile section of track between Wallace and Castle Hayne was abandoned by CSX in 1986 and the tracks removed. Reactivation of the Wallace to Castle Hayne rail line would shorten north/south rail traffic distance to Wilmington by approximately 60 miles. CSX owns the rail on either side of the abandoned tracks. The North Carolina Department of Transportation owns the Wallace to Castle Hayne right-of-way. Markets drive costs and CSX wants to know why its pattern would be changed. The railroads are very competitive. Reactivation would also reopen rail access to Pender County industrial sites. The Wallace to Castle Hayne rail line reactivation study is assessing the economic feasibility of restoring rail service along a section of track right-of-way located in Pender County, generally parallel to Interstate 40 and US Highway 117. The study will consider the potential demand for use of the corridor, the cost of restoring the connection, market potential of surrounding sites, potential upgrades, return-on-investment and the overall benefits of the project. This project will also evaluate improved infrastructure access to the Port of Wilmington.

### **Global TransPark Connections: An Overview and Update**

North Carolina Department of Transportation Rail Division Director Paul C. Worley provided the members with an overview and update on the Global TransPark rail connections.

Rail access to the Global TransPark was recommended in 1994 in the Global TransPark master plan. The first rail component of the Global TransPark rail access project was built as part of North Carolina's commitments to Spirit AeroSystems. The North Carolina Department of Transportation planned, designed, permitted and bought right-of-way; and designed and built rail access in four years and three months. The project was ready for service in January 2012. The project was funded by state funds.

The 5.7 mile track from a triangular junction at North Carolina Railroad (NCR) to the Spirit AeroSystems facility had a 250 foot bridge, passing siding and a yard track at Spirit AeroSystems. The total cost was \$23.9 million.

The Harvey Parkway feasibility study provides two alternatives for connection to CSXT near Elmer, resulting in Global TransPark access to both Norfolk (NCR) and CSX. Alternative #1 is a 5.5-mile rail spur at a cost of \$27.4 million. Alternative #2 is an 8-mile rail spur at a cost of \$36.8 million. Dual railway access provides potential advantage for the shippers and terminal operators through stimulating competition and multiple market availability. Providing for dual access to a new development like the Global TransPark is more easily achieved than through established port or intermodal rail facilities (where the existing railroad is protective of its franchise and the capital investments made to achieve its exclusive access).

The North Carolina General Assembly mandated the following eastern infrastructure improvement studies in Senate Bill 402: Global TransPark connections and infrastructure improvements, Port at Morehead City infrastructure improvements and the Wallace to Castle Hayne rail line restoration for the Port at Wilmington. Studies began in October 2013 to evaluate markets and the feasibility of infrastructure and access improvements to North Carolina ports and Global TransPark and the restoration of the Wallace to Castle Hayne corridor.

As its part of the Global TransPark infrastructure and access study, the North Carolina Department of Transportation will evaluate infrastructure improvements which will promote job creation and commerce and advance development of the Global TransPark as an inland terminal with specialized trans-loading equipment, refrigerated and dry storage facilities and site improvements in support of co-located manufacturing facilities on the Global TransPark property.

The North Carolina Department of Transportation will perform financial feasibility analyses for each infrastructure identified, including the following components:

1. Project scope and development time line
2. Assessment of technical feasibility
3. Estimates of preconstruction, construction, maintenance and operating costs
4. Market scenarios, including identification of target industries and commodities and assessments of market demand, impacts on cargo throughput, utilization of North Carolina State Ports Authority facilities and other associated outputs.
5. Return on investment, including direct financial return to the North Carolina State Ports Authority or state as well as local and regional economic impact attributable to each project.
6. Alternatives for project financing.

The Global TransPark Rail infrastructure and access study will assess highway and rail infrastructure improvements or service scenarios that improve access and throughput to the Global TransPark and North Carolina State Ports Authority at the Morehead City terminal by addressing:

- Benefits and cost of each highway or rail project
- Impacts on freight movements for the highway system and connecting rail corridors
- Alternate routes to improve rail capacity and access to the Morehead City terminal and Radio Island site (in collaboration with the North Carolina Railroad)

The Global TransPark Rail infrastructure and access study tasks include:

- Kick-off meeting
- Validate and incorporate prior studies
- Data collection, workshops and forecasting model inputs
- Market scenarios
- Identify infrastructure improvements and estimate costs
- Economic impact and benefit cost assessment
- Draft and final report

The interim report was due to the Joint Legislative Transportation Oversight Committee on March 1, 2014. The final report is due January 1, 2015.

The North Carolina Department of Transportation has:

- Met with Norfolk Southern to discuss and talks continue
- Met with Norfolk Southern, NCR, CSX, North Carolina Department of Commerce and North Carolina Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services
- Discussed potential leases with Norfolk Southern or other terminal operators
- Discussions are on hold pending Senate Bill 402 study results
- Rail Division collaborated with North Carolina State Ports and Logistics to develop sites for typical development on the rail line, as well as potential facility and access improvements to benefit the Global TransPark

Options when the study is complete include:

- Develop further engineering for proposed alignments
- Score project for STI
- Clear environmentally
- Preserve right-of-way
- Up to build

North Carolina Department of Transportation Rail Division Director Paul C. Worley stated it is easier to add additional cars to trains than add special trains as production along the rail corridor increases. Railroads push for deregulation. Railroads want to protect their fiscal investment. Railroad lines may cross each other, but do not block each other.

### **Scoring Methodologies and Priorities**

Highway 70 Corridor Commission Executive Director M. Durwood Stephenson stated the members of the Highway 70 Corridor Commission last adopted six priorities in 2011.

Patrick Flanagan with the Down East RPO stated the new Strategic Transportation Investment (STI) legislation requires how the local input is calculated and applied to each project. Therefore, the Division Engineers, MPOs and RPOs are developing a methodology for how the local points are assigned to specific projects. The methodologies must be clearly defined with quantified and qualified aspects. The methodology must be open and understandable to the public. The local methodologies are due to North Carolina Department of



Transportation by May 1, 2014. Our methodologies in eastern North Carolina need to take into account our projects affecting jobs, the military and connectivity. Divisions 2 and 3 are meeting in April to look at regional priorities. A meeting needs to be set for Divisions 1 and 4. The Eastern North Carolina MPO/RPO Coalition has added members representing the entire east coast of North Carolina needs set priorities. There will be more data available at the next meeting of the Highway 70 Corridor Commission.

### **Economic Impact Studies**

Highway 70 Corridor Commission Executive Director M. Durwood Stephenson stated the Highway 70 Corridor economic impact study should be finalized soon.

Highway 70 Corridor Commission Executive Director M. Durwood Stephenson stated the Interstate 795 economic impact preliminary draft should be ready for review in May.

### **North Carolina Department of Transportation Division 2 Update**

North Carolina Department of Transportation Division 2 Engineer John Rouse updated the Highway 70 Corridor Commission on the following:

- Gallants Channel Bridge (R-3307) – The bid has been awarded to Conti Enterprises, Inc. in the amount of \$66.4 million. A preconstruction meeting is scheduled. Construction will begin in April-May. Initially, a working bridge will be built. The completion date is scheduled for September 2017. There is no incentive to complete the bridge earlier.
- US 70/Havelock Bypass – The final environmental impact statement is scheduled to be released this fall. The record of decision is scheduled for December 2015. This project will need to go through the new scoring prioritization process.
- Slocum Road Interchange at Havelock – The environmental document on this project was approved December 2013. Right-of-way acquisition has been delayed until March 2015 due to power line relocations. The right-of-way process will take 22 months to complete. Right-of-way will need to be coordinated for a small portion of the Croatan National Forest. Construction is now scheduled for March 2017. This project has been grandfathered in concerning the prioritization process.
- Kinston Bypass – In January 2014 the northern alternate was eliminated and a shallow bypass option was added. It is a hybrid option with upgrades to the existing US Highway 70 on the existing alignment for approximately 2/3 of the project with the center 1/3 being a shallow bypass to the south from the Lowe's shopping center to east of Lenoir Community College and thereby crossing the Neuse River and NC Highways 11, 58 and 258. Several benefits of the proposal would be environmental aspects and be more cost effective. There are four alternatives. The draft environmental impact study is due for completion in late 2014. A public hearing will be held in late 2014. A record of decision is scheduled for 2016. The project is unfunded. Since the project is subject to the new prioritization process, the schedule is expected to change.

## **Division 4 Review and Project Updates**

North Carolina Department of Transportation Division 4 Operations Engineer Chris Pendergraph updated the Highway 70 Corridor Commission on the following:

- Wilson's Mills – This project on US Highway 70 is west of Sadisco Road to west of Turnage Road near Wilson's Mills. The project is only funded for design by Arcadis. A public hearing will be held later this year with options for each of the two intersections. The project falls under the Strategic Transportation Investment (STI) law.
- Pine Level – Existing US Highway 70 will be upgraded from Firetower Road to Davis Mill Road/Stevens Chapel Road. Right-of-way is currently being acquired. The contract is scheduled to be let in February 2015. The project is a federal high hazard elimination project and is fully funded.
- Feasibility study on US Highway 70 at the edge of Princeton at the Johnston-Wayne County line to the edge of the Goldsboro Bypass. A draft of the study is due late summer 2014. The final report is due late fall 2014. The study is looking at different alternatives.
- Goldsboro Bypass – Western end section (US Highway 70 from west of NC Highway 581 to Salem Church Road) is slated for completion in April 2016 and is slightly ahead of schedule.
- Goldsboro Bypass – Eastern section (Wayne Memorial Drive to LaGrange) is design build. This section is scheduled to open late summer/early fall in 2015.

## **Other Business**

Craven County Member Danny Walsh asked what happened to the military representatives on the Highway 70 Corridor Commission.

Highway 70 Corridor Commission Executive Director M. Durwood Stephenson stated due to transfers it has been difficult to have continued military representation.

Wayne County Member Steve Keen stated the Highway 70 Corridor Commission could be a springboard for the Eastern North Carolina MPO/RPO Coalition to develop transportation plans for the ports, rail, roads and airports east of Interstate 95. The military needs to be a part of the Highway 70 Corridor Commission. We need to be informed in order to make the North Carolina General Assembly and Governor understand the regional infrastructure needs of eastern North Carolina.

Joel Strickland with the Eastern Carolina MPO/RPO Coalition stated the staff had been working on the ports, rail, roads and airports east of Interstate 95 behind the scenes. The staff is willing to share information. He requested anyone contact their planning organization for any needed information.

Highway 70 Corridor Commission Chairman Robin Comer stated it is very important for municipalities to be a part of our discussions. He requested municipalities include the Highway 70 Corridor Commission membership fee in their 2014-2015 budget.

Craven County Member Danny Walsh requested a letter be sent to the municipalities inviting them to be a municipal member of the Highway 70 Corridor Commission.

### **Public Comments**

Dr. Brantley Briley, President of Lenoir Community College, stated the Kinston Bypass shallow option could affect the college. A press release from the North Carolina Department of Transportation has an error of fact, which he has tried to get corrected. The part with the error says "The corridor then passes south of Lenoir Community College." Actually, the corridor passes through Lenoir Community College. He requested the press release be corrected.

Highway 70 Corridor Commission Chairman Robin Comer stated he would contact the North Carolina Department of Transportation concerning the press release.

Ray Hayes stated the proposed New Bern Bypass would intersect a railroad crossing. He questioned if a limited access highway should not cross over a railroad crossing. There have been numerous accidents at this accident prone junction because there are two blind curves and the speed limit decreases. People are not using the elevated walkway.

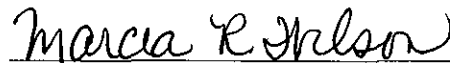
North Carolina Department of Transportation Division 2 Engineer John Rouse stated a project has been submitted under the Strategic Transportation Investment scoring for the controlled access portion of US Highway 70 south of the bridge. The controlled access portion of Highway 70 stops just before the railroad and James City; therefore, the junction is not included in the submitted project. The junction would be addressed as the next part of the project.

### **Next Meeting**

The next meeting of the Highway 70 Corridor Commission will be held on Thursday, May 15, 2014 at 2:00 p.m. in the Woodmen Community Center, 2602 W. Vernon Avenue, Kinston, North Carolina.

### **Adjournment**

At 3:40 p.m., Highway 70 Corridor Commission Chairman Robin Comer adjourned the meeting.

  
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Marcia R. Wilson