

US 70 Corridor Committee  
North Carolina Board of Transportation  
Wednesday, September 5, 2012  
Meeting Summary

The scheduled meeting of the US 70 Corridor Committee of the North Carolina Board of Transportation was held on Wednesday, September 5, 2012 in the Emergency Information Center (EIC) of the Transportation Building in Raleigh, North Carolina.

**Call to Order**

Chair Leigh McNairy called the meeting to order at 12:00 p.m with the following members present: Gus Tullous, Hugh Overholt, and DOT Staff Contact Rob Hanson. Other guests and staff in attendance included:

M. Durwood Stephenson	US 70 Corridor Commission – Executive Director
Jack Best	Wayne County Commissioner/US 70 Corridor Commission
J. Mac Daughety	Lenoir County Commissioner/US 70 Corridor Commission
Chuck Allen	City of Goldsboro/ US 70 Corridor Commission Chairman
Daniel Van Liere	Eastern North Carolina MPO/RPO Coalition – Executive Director
Clarence Coleman	FHWA – Preconstruction and Environment Director
Amy Simes	NCDENR – Transportation Liaison
Stephanie Ayers	North Carolina Ports – Director of Ports Planning and Development
Ted Vaden	NCDOT – Deputy Secretary for Internal and External Affairs
Bobby Lewis	NCDOT – Chief of Staff
Jamie Shern	NCDOT – Environmental Program Manager

Charlie Diehl	NCDOT - NC Global Transpark
Debbie Barbour	NCDOT – Director of Preconstruction
Greg Thorpe	NCDOT – Manager of Project Development and Environmental Analysis Unit
Mike Bruff	NCDOT – Manager of Transportation Planning Branch
Neil Lassiter	NCDOT – Division 2 Engineer
John Rouse	NCDOT – Division 4 Engineer
Derrick Lewis	NCDOT – Feasibility Studies Unit Head
James Speer	NCDOT – Roadway Design Unit
Mark Pierce	NCDOT – Project Development and Environmental Analysis Unit
Kristin Webb	NCDOT – Engineering Associate
Brian Yamamoto	NCDOT – Project Development and Environmental Analysis Unit

## **Introduction**

Ms. McNairy thanked the meeting attendees for their participation with the US 70 Committee. She reflected on the coalescence of the vision for eastern North Carolina transportation and infrastructure since the initial meeting of the US 70 Subcommittee in April, 2011.

Ms. McNairy indicated that summaries of the previous meeting in June, and future meetings of the US 70 Subcommittee are intended to document “working” sessions and would be informal, not requiring formal adoption by the members of the subcommittee.

Ms. McNairy proceeded to introduce Mr. Daniel Van Liere, who has been instrumental in developing and leading the Eastern North Carolina MPO/RPO Coalition through their first meeting on August 30, 2012 in New Bern.

## **Eastern North Carolina MPO/RPO Coalition – Bringing Eastern North Carolina Together**

Mr. Van Liere recounted the genesis of the Eastern NC MPO/RPO Coalition from its underlying need, genesis, identification of priorities, and first Coalition meeting. He also offered perspective on the next steps for the coalition.

### **Need for Eastern NC MPO/RPO Coalition**

- Priorities in eastern NC – Mr. Van Liere indicated that each subarea had its own priorities that were not necessarily shared by other subareas. The result has been that eastern NC has received the benefits of a more unified approach.
- There was shared recognition that to move forward, RPOs and MPOs must work cooperatively and promote key projects in the region.

### **Early Meetings and Identification of Regional Priority Projects**

- Meetings were held in October, 2011 between 7 MPOs and RPOs to discuss regional cooperation in project prioritization based on 5 “key assets” in eastern North Carolina including the military, agriculture, health care, tourism, and education.
- 7 projects identified as regional needs with each adopted by 7 MPOs and RPOs at their individual board meetings:
  - R-2250 Greenville Southwest Bypass connecting US 264 to NC 11;
  - R-5516 Slocum Gate improvements on US 70 at the Marine Corps Air Station Cherry Point gate in Havelock;
  - R-2553 Kinston Bypass of US 70 between LaGrange and Dover;
  - Future NC 11/241/24 Connector consisting of Pink Hill bypass, upgrading NC 241 to a freeway, and a northern NC 24 bypass of Beaulaville;
  - R-2514 B, C, D improvements to US 17 between Maysville and the New Bern Bypass;
  - R-2303 upgrade of NC 24 between I-40 and I-95 in Cumberland, Sampson, and Duplin Counties;
  - R-3300 US 17 Hampstead Bypass in Pender and New Hanover Counties.

### **Formation of Eastern NC MPO/RPO Coalition**

- March 2012 Governor's Summit – The summit was held on the East Carolina University campus with Governor Perdue advocating a strong transportation system in eastern North Carolina.
- Post Governor's Summit, other eastern MPOs and RPOs became interested in forming a coalition to discuss transportation in Eastern North Carolina. Staff from MPOs and RPOs met four times to discuss structure, staff level leadership, meeting locations and preliminary agenda.
- First formal meeting held on August 30, 2012 in New Bern with representatives from 14 MPOs and RPOs covering 41 counties. Topics included coalition structure, equity formula, ferry tolling, and general project updates.

### **Next Steps for Eastern NC MPO/RPO Coalition**

- Next meeting to be held October 10, 2012 in Goldsboro. Items for discussion include the equity formula, ferry tolling, and new projects for consideration.
- Longer term goals for the coalition include:
  - Strategically addressing the collective transportation needs of eastern North Carolina through cooperative dialogue and regional support;
  - Educating stakeholders on transportation issues and their impact on communities;
  - Developing transportation policy recommendations that will enhance long-term economic prosperity of eastern North Carolina.

Ms. McNairy complemented Mr. Van Liere on his work developing the Eastern NC MPO/RPO Coalition to date and asked her US 70 Subcommittee members to think about how the US 70 message could be carried to that coalition.

### **US 70 Commission Perspective**

Mr. Durwood Stephenson indicated that the US 70 Commission has been involved with the ongoing efforts of the Eastern North Carolina MPO/RPO Coalition formation. Mr. Stephenson offered:

- The US 70 Commission agrees that moving transportation issues forward take cooperation, identification of key assets, and promoting transportation projects of regional importance;

- The MPO/RPO Coalition has an expanded agenda, but US 70 Commission goals fit within that regional concept;
- The perspective of the US 70 Commission has grown along with the MPO/RPO Coalition initiative.

### **US 70 improvements in the Town of Beaufort (Carteret County) including Gallants Channel Bridge Replacement (R-3307)**

Jamie Shern updated the US 70 Subcommittee regarding ongoing efforts to obtain necessary US Coast Guard permit to construct the new Gallants Channel bridge. Mr. Shern reported that the US Coast Guard has required NCDOT to gather data regarding the mast heights of watercraft that traverse the area where the bridge is proposed. He indicated the mast height survey report is underway and discussions with the Coast Guard regarding adequate representative sample will continue.

Ms. McNairy asked if there was any way to speed up the process. Bobbie Lewis replied that the survey is on the critical path and proceeding as quickly as possible.

The project is currently scheduled to be let in January 2013.

### **Funded US 70 Bypasses**

#### **Goldsboro Bypass (R-2554)**

- Mr. Hanson reported that section A of the Goldsboro Bypass (from US 70 west of Goldsboro to I-795) was let to construction in June 2012.
- All sections of the Goldsboro Bypass are under contract.
- Permits for Section BB and C (design-build process) are expected in late 2012 and construction is expected to start in early 2013.

#### **Kinston Bypass (R-2553)**

- The traffic forecast based on the updated Lenoir County traffic model was completed in July 2012. Analysis of the traffic forecast is underway and will be followed by capacity calculations.
- Environmental studies for historic resources, natural resources, and community impacts are underway and will be ongoing through 2013.

#### **Havelock Bypass (R-1015)**

- Mr. Hanson told the committee that Alternative 3 was announced as NCDOT's Preferred Alternative via a press release on August 3, 2012.

- Ms. McNairy introduced the project team members and relayed a note of thanks from the US 70 Subcommittee for advancing the project to a Preferred Alternative.
- Mr. Clarence Coleman offered encouragement to continue proceeding with this important bypass of US 70 in the Havelock area.
- Mr. Hanson relayed that protected species updates are ongoing and expected to be complete later in 2012.

### **Other US 70 Corridor Upgrades**

#### **US 70 Improvements near Wilson's Mill in Johnston County (W-5600)**

- Mr. Hanson indicated that a project scoping meeting was held in July 2012. Tim Little (Division 4) provided the project team with guidance regarding the past efforts conducted by Division 4 and discussed the project scope envisioned by the local community.
- Environmental surveys are expected to begin this fall and conclude in 2013.

#### **US 70 Improvements near Pine Level in Johnston County (W-5107)**

- A Categorical Exclusion document was approved by Federal Highway Administration in February 2012.
- Right of Way acquisition is scheduled to begin in December 2012.

#### **US 70 improvements at Slocum Gate in Havelock, Craven County (R-5516)**

- The NEPA process is underway with the expectation the project can be processed with a Categorical Exclusion.
- A Citizens Informational Workshop was held on June 26, 2012.
- A traffic forecast is expected to be completed this month followed by highway capacity calculations this fall.

### **Feasibility Studies**

- Derrick Lewis indicated that a detailed feasibility study is underway for a possible new location section of US 70 extending around James City to the Havelock area. The study is expected to be complete in 2014.

- Possible NC 11/NC 241 improvements – a feasibility study to provide long-range planning guidance is underway. Preliminary results are targeted for December 2012.

The US 70 Committee meeting was adjourned at 12:50 p.m