

NORTH CAROLINA

LENOIR COUNTY

The Highway 70 Corridor Commission met on Thursday, April 5, 2012 at 2:00 p.m. at the Spirit Aerosystems Composite Center of Excellence in Room 148-C, 3800 Highway 58 North, Kinston, North Carolina.

County members present:

Carteret County – Robin Comer

Craven County – Tom Mark, Jack Veit and Danny Walsh

Johnston County – Fleta A. Byrd and Frank Price

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, Roberto Canales, Neil Lassiter, Bobby Lewis, Tim Little, Corey D. McLamb, David Morton, Christopher Pendergraft and John Rouse

North Carolina Department of Transportation Consultant – Charlie Diehl

Highway 70 Corridor Commission Director – M. Durwood Stephenson

Craven County – Assistant Planning Director Chad Strawn

Down East RPO – Rob Will

Eastern Carolina RPO – Alex Rickard and Patrick Flanagan

Havelock – Planning Director Scott Chase

Morehead City – Interim Town Manager Pete Connet

North Carolina's Eastern Region – John Chaffee

North Carolina Railroad – Richard Wiley

Upper Coastal Plain RPO – Daniel Van Liere

Wayne County Board of Commissioners – E. Ray Mayo

Wayne County Clerk to the Board – Marcia R. Wilson

Citizens – Ophelia Davis and Bob Griffin

Welcome and Introductions

North Carolina's Eastern Region President John Chafee welcomed everyone to the meeting. He congratulated the members of the Highway 70 Corridor Commission on their achievements.

Everyone present introduced themselves.

Opening Remarks

Highway 70 Corridor Commission Chairman Chuck Allen welcomed everyone to the meeting. He thanked North Carolina's Eastern Region President John Chafee for hosting the meeting.

Approval of Agenda

Upon motion of North Carolina Board of Transportation Division 4 Member Gus Tulloss, the members of the Highway 70 Corridor Commission unanimously approved the agenda as presented.

Approval of Minutes

Upon motion of Wayne County Commissioner Jack Best, the members of the Highway 70 Corridor Commission unanimously approved the minutes of the Highway 70 Corridor Commission meeting on January 12, 2012.

Financial Report

Wayne County Clerk to the Board Marcia R. Wilson reported as of April 2, 2012 there was a total cash balance of \$138,275.00 in the Highway 70 Corridor Commission account. Invoices will be sent out for fiscal year 2012-2013.

Feasibility Studies Update

North Carolina Department of Transportation Chief of Staff for the Chief Operating Officer Bobby Lewis stated negotiations with the consultant for the NC Highway 11/NC Highway 241/NC Highway 24 project and the James City project are just beginning and should last for six weeks. The normal time frame for an in-depth feasibility studies is 18-24 months; however, the NC Highway 11/NC Highway 241/NC Highway 24 project feasibility study is scheduled to only take 12 months. It is anticipated the James City feasibility study will determine good alternatives for proposed corridors and options at a good preliminary cost by the end of the year.

Harvey Parkway Update

North Carolina Department of Transportation Chief of Staff for the Chief Operating Officer Bobby Lewis stated the paving for the Harvey Parkway will be let in June 2012. The findings for the Part C section of the Harvey Parkway are scheduled for early June 2012.

Gasoline Tax Update

North Carolina Department of Transportation Chief of Staff for the Chief Operating Officer Bobby Lewis stated it is anticipated the North Carolina House of Representatives will propose a bill decreasing the gasoline tax to 35 cents from the current rate of 38.9 cents.

Recently an article in the *News and Observer* showed the price of gasoline in North Carolina and Virginia was \$3.85 per gallon, with the gasoline tax in Virginia at 17.5 cents and 38.9 cents in North Carolina. The price at the pump does not affect the gasoline tax. A recent Elon University survey showed citizens blame the petroleum industry and commerce for the high price of gasoline at the pump. He requested the members of the Highway 70 Corridor Commission support the current gasoline tax in North Carolina because lowering the gasoline tax equates to a \$200 million loss of revenue for the North Carolina Department of Transportation.

Board of Transportation/Intergovernmental Committee and U.S. 70 Committee

North Carolina Board of Transportation At Large Member Leigh McNairy stated the focus of the committees is to ensure all roads leading to the military installations are at military standards. This sets up conversation between military officials and the North Carolina Department of Transportation. She requested communities and counties with military installations contact her or North Carolina Board of Transportation Division 2 Member Hugh Overholt for information to share with senior military officers. The Intergovernmental Committee is tying the requests from the military to the performance of the North Carolina Department of Transportation. The Intergovernmental Committee was successful in asking for encouragement from the point system. Presently roads touching the military installations receive extra points; however, this is being changed to extra points for roads serving military installations. She commended the Highway 70 Corridor Commission and the RPOs for their amazing results in sharing support for major projects in eastern North Carolina. The internal report for Highway 70, segment by segment, was beneficial.

Board of Transportation/2040 Long Range Plan

North Carolina Board of Transportation Division 4 Member Gus Tulloss stated the Long Range Plan makes projections to 2040. Yesterday at the North Carolina Board of Transportation meeting, the 2040 Plan made its recommendations. The recommendations will be put out for a 45 days review and comments by the public and shareholders. The projected costs of transportation needs will be \$159 billion over the next 30-years. One-third of the \$159 billion is for current needs and the balance is needed for future needs. The existing and new revenue sources need to be expanded for the increased transportation costs. Some of the new sources being considered includes tolls for the interstate highway system, fee based on mileage a vehicle travels and an automobile insurance surtax. Existing revenue enhancements include increasing motor fuel tax, increasing wholesale motor fuel tax, increasing existing vehicle sales tax, increasing registration fees and increasing insurance fees. The transportation needs are real and revenues are needed. It is anticipated the 2040 Long Range Plan will presented to the North Carolina Board of Transportation in July 2012. He encouraged the public give input on the plan.

Logistics and Ports Status

North Carolina Statewide Logistics Coordinator Thomas Bradshaw stated he will head up the North Carolina Ports and Global TransPark on an interim basis. He stated he was excited about the opportunities of our ports. He anticipates a change on Radio Island. The Governor, along with the leadership of North Carolina Secretary of Transportation Gene Conti and North

Carolina Secretary of Commerce J. Keith Crisco and others, began a Logistics Study two years ago to determine if North Carolina is ready for economic development and build our economy. The North Carolina Maritime Strategy determines how North Carolina is using its ports. The Logistics Study should be completed in May 2012. The North Carolina Maritime Strategy study will be the nucleus of the development of a strategic plan for the ports. The nucleus membership for the maritime strategic plan will consist of four members from the Global TransPark, four members from the North Carolina Board of Transportation and four members from the North Carolina State Ports Authority. The maritime strategic plan will have a relationship with the North Carolina Department of Transportation and the seven economic ports. The maritime strategic plan will outline North Carolina's economic plan. He commended the Highway 70 Corridor Commission and the Highway 17 Commission for partnering for the future of eastern North Carolina in attracting jobs and opportunities.

RPO/MPO Activities and Project Priorities

Upper Coastal Plain RPO Planner Daniel Van Liere stated the RPOs and MPOs forged a giant step ahead in determining the list of the top six transportation projects, which are important to the entire eastern North Carolina region. The RPOs have found their purpose. The collaboration of a few RPOs and MPOs started small and has grown to include most of the RPOs east of Interstate 95. When Governor Beverly Perdue spoke at the recent Transportation Summit in Greenville, the other RPOs and MPOs wanted to know when the next meeting would be held. He stated the motivation of the region needs to continue.

Highway 70 Corridor Commission Director M. Durwood Stephenson stated North Carolina Department of Transportation Chief Operating Officer Jim Trogdon told eastern North Carolina if it got its act together, the North Carolina Department of Transportation would fund its transportation projects.

Eastern Carolina RPO Planner Alex Rickard stated initially 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. Afterwards, other MPOs and RPOs east of Interstate 95 wanted to join the eastern collaboration. There is a tentative meeting scheduled on May 8, 2012. Plans are to keep all of the MPOs and RPOs meeting together at least twice a year. Other topics to discuss include funding issues and the equity formula.

Upper Coastal Plain RPO Planner Daniel Van Liere stated North Carolina Department of Transportation Chief Operating Officer Jim Trogdon wanted to see the transportation collaboration in eastern North Carolina continued in the piedmont and mountain regions of the state. At the recent quarterly NCARPO meeting, the consensus was the representatives from the piedmont and mountain regions would never be able to agree upon anything. Eastern North Carolina is ahead of the rest of the state by getting seven MPOs and RPOs to work together with others in putting regional transportation needs ahead of individual municipality and/or county needs.

Eastern Carolina RPO Planner Alex Rickard stated everyone concerned about transportation in eastern North Carolina needs to form a relationship with the legislators to let them know about our transportation needs.

Wayne County Commissioner Jack Best commended Eastern Carolina RPO Planner Patrick Flanagan, Eastern Carolina RPO Planner Alex Rickard, Upper Coastal Plain RPO Planner Daniel Van Liere, Down East RPO Planner Rob Will and their fellow planners for coming together to make this happen. North Carolina Department of Transportation Chief Operating Officer Jim Trogdon and all eastern North Carolina legislators have been invited to the May 8, 2012 meeting to inform them about the prioritized transportation projects. The projects were prioritized by interconnectivity to the military installations in eastern North Carolina, Global TransPark and Eastern Carolina Medical Center. There are six highways, which connect to the priorities. North Carolina Department of Transportation Chief Operating Officer Jim Trogdon has already started feasibility studies on Section C of the Harvey Parkway, NC Highway 11/NC Highway 241/NC Highway 24 and James City options. The North Carolina Department of Transportation is working on the Havelock Bypass and the Gallants Channel bridge project.

Down East RPO Planner Rob Will stated work is being completed on the Carteret County Comprehensive Transportation Plan. Carteret County has made the Highway 70 projects high priorities. The plan supports the Gallants Channel Bridge and the future Northern Carteret County Bypass.

Amtrak Passenger Service

Highway 70 Corridor Commission Director M. Durwood Stephenson stated Jeff Mann is no longer with Amtrak and the Amtrak Assistant Vice President of Policy and Development-South will not be filled. Jeff Mann was working to bring bus and passenger rail service to Greenville, Kinston, New Bern, Havelock and Morehead City and later to Wilmington, Wilson, Greenville and Jacksonville.

North Carolina Board of Transportation At Large Board of Transportation Member Leigh McNairy stated she would follow up with Highway 70 Corridor Commission Director M. Durwood Stephenson on a letter to Mark Tyler concerning the bus and passenger rail service. North Carolina Railroad President Scott Saylor thought if Governor Beverly Purdue contacted the President of Amtrak, the Amtrak Assistant Vice President of Policy and Development-South position would be filled.

Highway 70 Corridor Commission Director M. Durwood Stephenson stated Governor Beverly Purdue needs evidence of local interest in order to negotiate a plan with Amtrak President Joe Boardman. He requested evidence from as many sources as possible.

Down East RPO Transportation Planner Rob Will stated he would forward a suggested resolution to bring bus and passenger rail service to eastern North Carolina.

Logistics Study/Seven Portals Study

North Carolina Department of Transportation and Global TransPark Consultant Charlie Diehl stated even though the Governor's Logistics Task Force timeframe has expired, there is a strong commitment to work to enhance North Carolina's economy through logistics development. The Logistics Coordinating Council was created to continue the work of the Governor's Logistics Task Force. The Logistics Coordinating Council is chaired by North Carolina Secretary of Transportation Gene Conti. The studies of the Logistics Task Force are being wrapped up.

Highway 70 Corridor Commission Director M. Durwood Stephenson stated the members are indebted to North Carolina Department of Transportation and Global TransPark Consultant Charlie Diehl for following the situation very closely and including eastern North Carolina favorably in the study.

Transportation Summit

Highway 70 Corridor Commission Director M. Durwood Stephenson stated many people attended the recent transportation summit. There has been a lot of follow-up calls and conversation concerning the summit. The summit had lots of good ideas and pertinent information for the future. He was surprised industry leaders on the transportation summit panel stated they were unable to fill job vacancies.

Havelock Bypass Project Update

North Carolina Department of Transportation Division 2 Engineer Neil Lassiter stated a reaffirmation of Havelock Bypass project is scheduled for next week. The project is looking good at this time.

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. The United States Coast Guard has requested a 30-day extension on the public comment period. The extension could affect the let date.

Highway 70 Corridor Commission Director M. Durwood Stephenson stated the 30-day extension is due to the fact the United States Coast Guard did not get its mailings out in a timely manner.

Slocum Gate Project Update

North Carolina Department of Transportation Division 2 Engineer Neil Lassiter stated a public meeting would be scheduled later this spring on the Slocum Gate project. A traffic forecast will be completed. Work is beginning on the environmental survey.

Havelock Median Project

North Carolina Department of Transportation Division 2 Division Operations Engineer Dwayne Alligood stated paving work is continuing on the Havelock median project. Work continues on a signalization system based on traffic counts.

Havelock Commissioner Danny Walsh stated the Havelock Board of Commissioners approved a bicycle path along the side of the highway.

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 \$104 million. 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.

North Carolina Department of Transportation Chief of Staff for the Chief Operating Officer Bobby Lewis and the members of the Highway 70 Corridor Commission commended North Carolina Department of Transportation District 3 Engineer Chris Pendergraft and North Carolina Department of Transportation Smithfield Resident Engineer Corey D. McLamb for their for work on the Goldsboro Bypass.

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. Right-of-way acquisition begins in June 2012 and the project is scheduled to be let in June 2013.

North Carolina Department of Transportation Division 4 Operations Engineer Tim Little stated there was a lot of resistance to the Pine Level project initially. The North Carolina Department of Transportation will construct 1,000-1,200 feet of sidewalks and curb and gutters on the main thoroughfare going into Pine Level.

Wilson's Mills Project Update

North Carolina Department of Transportation Division 4 Operations Engineer Tim Little stated the Wilson's Mills project 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 at US Highway 70 Bypass and another part of US Highway 70 with cable and post guard rail. It is anticipated the Transportation Improvement Program will be assigned to the project and the planning and design work can begin.

Website Status and Updates

Highway 70 Corridor Commission Director M. Durwood Stephenson stated the Highway 70 Corridor Commission website needs to be updated. He, North Carolina Department of Transportation Division 2 Division Operations Engineer Dwayne Alligood, North Carolina Division 4 Program and Schedule Support Manager Jimmy Eatmon met with the webmaster for Kimley-Horn and Associates, Inc. to discuss updating the website. He requested to be notified of any needed changes to the website.

North Carolina Department of Transportation Division 4 Engineer John Rouse stated updated information concerning the Goldsboro Bypass, Pine Level project, Wilson's Mills project, Community Drive and Capps Bridge Road was given to Kimley-Horn and Associates, Inc. for the website.

North Carolina's Eastern Region Director John Chaffee requested the website be updated to incorporate the acceleration of paving for the Harvey Parkway. The website is crucial for economic developers.

Election of New Officers

Wayne County Commissioner Jack Best stated the Nominating Committee consisted of himself, Danny Walsh and Tom Steepy. The recommended slate of officers is as follows:
Chairman – Chuck Allen
Vice-Chairman – Robin Comer
Secretary/Treasurer – W. Lee Smith, III

There were no other nominations from the floor.

Upon motion of Lenoir County Commissioner J. Mac Daughtery and seconded by North Carolina Board of Transportation At Large Member Leigh McNairy, the members of the Highway 70 Corridor Commission unanimously elected Chuck Allen as Chairman, Robin Comer as Vice-Chairman and W. Lee Smith, III as Secretary/Treasurer of the Highway 70 Corridor Commission.

Public Comments

No member of the public spoke.

Other Comments

Lenoir County Commissioner J. Mac Daughtery stated it is extremely important for the legislators to attend the May 8, 2012 meeting. He encouraged everyone to personally invite their local legislators. The equity formula will impact eastern North Carolina. The gasoline tax will impact the ability of funding. It is important for all of eastern North Carolina to come together.

Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Highway 70 Corridor Commission will be held in Wayne 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 3:05 p.m.

Marcia R. Wilson