

## **NORTH CAROLINA**

### **WAYNE COUNTY**

The Highway 70 Corridor Commission of North Carolina, Inc. met on Thursday, September 18, 2014 at 2:00 p.m. at Lane Tree Conference Center, 2317 Salem Church Road, Goldsboro, North Carolina.

#### County members present:

Carteret County – Robin Comer  
Craven County – Bobby Darden, Tom Mark and Danny Walsh  
Johnston County – Tony Braswell and Frank Price  
Jones County – None  
Lenoir County – John Craft, Russell Rhodes and Linda Rouse Sutton  
Wayne County – Chris Boyette, Edward E. Cromartie, Joe Daughtery and Bill Pate

#### Other persons present:

Senator Kay Hagan’s Office – Lee Slade  
Representative G. K. Butterfield’s Office – Ray Rogers  
Representative George Holding’s Office – Alice McCall  
Representative Mike McIntyre’s Office – Tara Spencer  
North Carolina Board of Transportation – Division 4 Member Gus H. Tulloss  
North Carolina Department of Transportation – Jeff Cabaniss, Haywood Daughtry, Rob Hanson, Jiles Harrell, Tim Little, Christopher L. Pendergraph and John Rouse  
Highway 70 Corridor Commission Director – M. Durwood Stephenson  
Capital Area MPO – Chris Lukasina and Alex Rickard  
Craven County – Donald Baumgardner  
Eastern Carolina RPO – Rob Will  
Down East RPO – Lauren Tuttle  
Goldsboro MPO – Jennifer Collins  
Havelock – Katrina Marshall  
Johnston County – Chris Johnson  
New Bern Area MPO – Maurizia Chapman and Kim Maxey  
Rocky Mount RPO – Bob League  
Upper Coastal Plain RPO – James Salmons  
Wayne County – George Wayne Aycock, Jr.; E. Ray Mayo and Marcia R. Wilson  
Citizens – Chuck Allen; C. Munroe Best, Jr.; Ophelia Davis; Sandy Korschun and Scott Stevens

### **Call to Order**

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

## **Approval of Agenda**

Upon motion of Highway 70 Corridor Commission Secretary-Treasurer Frank Price and seconded by Lenoir County Member John Craft, the members of the Highway 70 Corridor Commission unanimously approved the agenda as presented with the addition of the video presentation of Governor Pat McCrory's 25 Year Vision for North Carolina entitled *Mapping Our Future*.

## **Approval of Minutes**

Upon motion of Wayne County Member Joe Daughtery and seconded by Wayne County Member Chris Boyette, the members of the Highway 70 Corridor Commission unanimously approved the minutes of the meeting on June 19, 2014.

## **Mapping Our Future Video Presentation – Governor Pat McCrory's 25-Year Vision for North Carolina**

Members of the Highway 70 Corridor Commission watched a video presentation entitled *Mapping Our Future*, which is Governor Pat McCrory's 25-year vision for North Carolina.

Transportation impacts nearly every aspect of North Carolina, playing a central role in the overall well-being of our state and our efforts to maintain a high quality of life for our communities. In particular, transportation infrastructure is a powerful economic engine supporting job creation, helping us attract new business and industry and ultimately creating better lives from the mountains to the coast.

North Carolina is one of the fastest growing states in the nation, bringing both new challenges and opportunities as we work to keep pace with increasing demand on our new infrastructure. The state's transportation needs are diverse. Our traditional revenue sources are falling short of projected levels, causing us to think and act strategically.

In focusing on the eastern region of North Carolina, there are 540,000 military-related jobs at seven military communities. The region supports an overall military-related economic impact of \$48 billion. Agriculture is a \$6.7 billion industry. The region also features a number of healthcare and education centers, and is well positioned to connect with other economic centers across state lines, particularly in the southeastern and northeastern corners of the United States. In addition, the northern portion of the region is strategically located near Hampton Roads, Virginia and the Port of Norfolk, which boasts an annual gross domestic product of \$85 billion. The area is also home to the 2,500-acre Global TransPark, which features a foreign trade zone and an 11,500 foot runway and is strategically located along the US Highway 70 corridor between the Port of Morehead City and Raleigh.

Sounds, wetlands, rivers and streams are just a few of the prominent environmental features of the eastern region that create challenges in designing a safe, efficient, environmentally sound and well-connected transportation network in this region. Lack of interstate-quality access to and from the Global TransPark limits the number and type of

businesses we can attract to this facility. Even with the foreign trade zone, commercial runways and onsite facilities prepared to serve growing businesses, the lack of investment in the “last-mile infrastructure” prohibits the Global TransPark from successfully recruiting new companies and expanding existing ones.

As its transitions from a center of manufacturing and agriculture, the eastern region has struggled to complete several significant infrastructure projects, such as improvements to US Highway 17 and US Highway 70, which would help the area recruit new businesses to better meet its changing needs.

Population rates continue to decline in the region, as trends indicate people are moving away from rural areas and into high-growth urban centers. Without the infrastructure to support new industries and provide efficient connections to job centers, this trend will not change.

Without appropriate infrastructure investments in the eastern region, this area will miss opportunities to reclaim manufacturing jobs that are returning to the United States and will not be able to respond to the changing agriculture demands. Lack of timely investment along the US Highway 70 corridor will limit the region’s ability to leverage its position to enhance the economy on local and state levels.

If we do not invest in highway and rail connections that support military freight and deployment needs, military readiness may be impacted. Likewise, if we do not provide better access for service members and their families to healthcare and education, we risk failing those who have sacrificed so much. Additionally, we risk not keeping highly trained and talented veterans and civilians in our state.

Solutions for investing in the eastern region are:

- Improve Highway to Hampton Roads – Request future interstate designation for the section of US Highway 64/US Highway 17 connecting to Hampton Roads, Virginia and complete improvements that bring this section of roadway to interstate standards.
- Strengthen Military Connections – Improve highway and rail connections between bases and to ports of embarkation and debarkation. Improve highway connections between bases and regional healthcare and education centers.
- Enhance Freight Movement – Improve US Highway 70 to interstate standards to enhance freight movement and reduce travel time through the region. Support economically competitive rail access to the Global TransPark and the Port of Morehead City.
- Improve Interstate 95 Connections – Improve connections to the Interstate 95 corridor from rail and seaports to serve markets throughout the eastern United States.

Alternative funding solutions include:

- Optimize Public-Private Partnerships – Optimize the use of public-private partnerships, innovative managed lanes and other fee-for-service projects.
- Reduce Dependency on Federal Dollars – Reduce our dependency on federal dollars in preparation for a potential reduction in the federal transportation budget.
- Take Advantage of Low Interest Rates – Take advantage of historically low interest rates to enhance our ability to fund projects with just-in-time bond strategies.

- Present Revenue Recommendations – Present targeted revenue recommendations to the North Carolina General Assembly for its action during the 2015 legislative session.

With new data-driven law and strategic focus through this 25-year vision, North Carolina is poised to be a global economic leader by using our transportation network to create jobs, grow the economy and improve the quality of life for all of our citizens.

Chuck Allen thanked Steve P. Keen with the Eastern North Carolina Office of the Governor for providing the video to the Highway 70 Corridor Commission. He also thanked the Wayne County Office of Public Affairs staff, the Wayne County Information Technology Department staff and the Wayne County Clerk to the Board for their responsiveness in preparing the video and related materials on a short notice.

Highway 70 Corridor Commission Director M. Durwood Stephenson stated the North Carolina Department of Transportation currently has approximately \$850 million of bond authority that could be utilized for shovel-ready rural projects. The North Carolina General Assembly must support revenue recommendations in 2015 in order for the 25-year vision to be viable. The infrastructure projects must be shovel-ready with environmental permits in-hand. Citizens usually support bond issues for transportation projects and education. Eastern and western North Carolina did not fare well in the new Strategic Transportation Investments Bill as funding went for infrastructure projects in congested urban areas. The legislators in rural areas of eastern and western North Carolina voted for the new Strategic Transportation Investments Bill, which they did not understand the implications of project funding. Future transportation bonds must include projects beyond the Strategic Transportation Investments projects. We must keep our eastern North Carolina legislators informed of our infrastructure projects, which will help our economy. Yesterday, Governor Pat McCrory stated US Highway 70 should be improved to interstate standards in the eastern region.

Other discussion included:

- Where will the money come from for the transportation infrastructure projects?
- How will the counties east of Interstate 95 fare in the plan?
- Rural transportation projects connecting with metropolitan areas is a goal
- Wayne County supported a North Carolina Association of County Commissioners legislative goal to restructure the transportation formula
- North Carolina State Treasurer is aware of proposed \$1 billion bond for transportation infrastructure projects
- Secretary Tony Tata's proposal to address the fuel tax shortage is due in early 2015

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

North Carolina Board of Transportation Division 4 Member Gus Tulloss stated the legislators in eastern and western North Carolina now realize what the new Strategic Transportation Investments Bill did to transportation funding allocations in the east and west. We need to be more engaged. Governor Pat McCrory and North Carolina Department of Transportation Secretary Tony Tata are very optimistic about the 25-year vision for North Carolina. It is an exciting time to be involved in the North Carolina Department of

Transportation and the Highway 70 Corridor Commission. We need to stay involved and be optimistic.

### **Financial Report**

Highway 70 Corridor Commission Director M. Durwood Stephenson reported as of September 18, 2014 there was an account balance of \$250,265.09.

### **General Remarks**

Highway 70 Corridor Commission Director M. Durwood Stephenson stated the Southern Environmental Law Center letter opposing the Havelock Bypass was forwarded to the New Bern MPO, which did not address the matter. Build NC has been asked to address the letter. The members of the Highway 70 Corridor Commission will be kept abreast of the matter.

Highway 70 Corridor Commission Director M. Durwood Stephenson stated it would not be necessary for the Executive Committee to meet.

The North Carolina Board of Transportation Highway 17 work group will meet on October 1, 2014 and everyone is invited to attend. The members will be notified of the date of the North Carolina Board of Transportation Highway 70 work group meeting in early 2015.

### **RPO/MPO Strategic Transportation Investments Project Scoring**

Alex Rickard, a transportation planner with the Capital Area MPO, reviewed the following projects affecting Highway 70 in eastern North Carolina:

1. Interstate 540 from Holly Springs to Interstate 40 – orange route tying into the Clayton Bypass
2. Interstate 40 widening to 6-8 lanes from Clayton Bypass north to Interstate 440
3. NC Highway 42 to be widened from Clayton to Interstate 40 beyond NC Highway 50 to improve congestion mobility issues in western Johnston County

James Salmons with the Upper Coastal Plain RPO reviewed the following projects affecting Highway 70 in eastern North Carolina:

1. US Highway 70 – Upgrade to freeway improving SR 1501 (Swift Creek Road) US Highway 70 and SR 1913 (Wilson's Mills) US Highway 70 at grade intersections to interchange
2. US Highway 70 Business Smithfield – pavement rehabilitation on US Highway 70 Business from Interstate 95 to US Highway 301 Smithfield

Jennifer Collins with the Goldsboro MPO reviewed the following projects affecting Highway 70 in eastern North Carolina:

1. Realignment of Central Heights Road at the intersection of Berkeley Blvd. and Royall Avenue to improve intersection
2. Widen road and/or make safety improvements from SR 1306 Fedelon Trail to proposed US Highway 70 Bypass (widening existing roadway)

3. Improve existing US Highway 70 to freeway standards from the west end of the US Highway 70 Bypass to the Wayne/Johnston County line (upgrade arterial to freeway/expressway)
4. NC Highway 55 to US Highway 117 relocation south of US Highway 70. Upgrade roadway to freeway standards, part on new location (widen existing roadway and construct part on new location)
5. Widen to multi-lanes from SR 1003 New Hope Road to US Highway 70 Bypass (widen existing roadway)
6. SR 1579 Berkeley Blvd. to US Highway 70 Bypass widen to multi-lanes (widen existing roadway)

Rob Will with the Eastern Carolina RPO reviewed the following projects affecting Highway 70 in eastern North Carolina:

1. US Highway 70 new route for Kinston Bypass from NC Highway 148 Harvey Parkway to US Highway 70 east of NC Highway 58 – construct freeway on new location
2. US Highway 70 Skinner's Bypass from NC Highway 11 – construct overpass with square loop design

Mauriza Chapman with the New Bern Area MPO reviewed the following projects affecting Highway 70 in eastern North Carolina:

1. US Highway 70 new route Havelock Bypass north of Pine Grove to north of Carteret County line – construct freeway on new location
2. US Highway 70 from Grantham Road to Havelock Bypass – upgrade roadway to freeway and construct service roads
3. US Highway 17 new route New Bern Bypass from US Highway 70 to US Highway 17 north – construct freeway on new location

Lauren Tuttle with the Down East RPO reviewed the following projects affecting Highway 70 in eastern North Carolina:

1. US Highway 70 Havelock Bypass from north of Pine Grove to north of Carteret County line – construct freeway on new location
2. US Highway 70 from Morehead City to Beaufort Causeway – widening and improvement of the Newport River Bridge from Morehead City to the Beaufort Causeway
3. US Highway 70 from 4<sup>th</sup> Street to SR 1175 Radio Island Road – convert the existing 2-4 lane facility to a 4-lane boulevard with a new 4-lane bridge over the Newport River and a compressed diamond interchange at the intersection of US Highway 70 and SR 1175 Radio Island Road
4. US Highway 70 from NC Highway 101 to SR 1429 Olga Road – eliminate some driveways, eliminate left turns in some areas, install a median in some locations and improve some of the intersections
5. NC Highway 101 from US Highway 70 to SR 1163 Laurel Road – widen roadway from 24-feet to 28-feet and resurface
6. US Highway 70 from SR 1175 Radio Island Road – compressed diamond intersection located at the US Highway 70 entrance to Radio Island

7. US Highway 70 from US Highway 70 East of NC Highway 58 – existing freeway near Dover – upgrade roadway to freeway
8. US Highway 70 from NC Highway 101 in Beaufort to Cedar Island – upgrade existing roadway

Highway 70 Corridor Commission Chairman Robin Comer stated the MPOs and RPOs along the Highway 70 Corridor worked together and shared points to try to move projects forward. He thanked all of the participating counties and municipalities.

### **Designation of US Highway 117 as Future Interstate 795 Legislation**

Highway 70 Corridor Commission Director M. Durwood Stephenson stated our federal legislators are in agreement to sponsor legislation to designate US Highway 117 as future Interstate 795. The Federal Transportation Administration has drafted the legislation. He thanked Alice McCall with Congressman George Holding's office for changing her plans to attend the Highway 70 Corridor Commission meeting.

Ray Rogers with Congressman G. K. Butterfield's office had to leave the meeting due to a prior commitment.

Highway 70 Corridor Commission Director M. Durwood Stephenson stated Congressman G. K. Butterfield was supportive of the legislation and willing to be a co-sponsor.

Lee Slade with Senator Kay Hagan's office stated Senator Hagan's office has been in close contact with Congressman George Holding's office concerning the language for the legislation. Senator Kay Hagan wants to support the project and be a resource.

Highway 70 Corridor Commission Director M. Durwood Stephenson stated Janet Bradbury with Senator Richard Burr's office had a prior commitment. Senator Richard Burr supported the legislation.

Alice McCall with Congressman George Holding's office read a letter from him. The Federal Highway Administration drafted the legislation designating US Highway 117 South from Goldsboro as a future interstate highway. His office will confer with other stakeholders to get their input and will seek out co-sponsors. Congressman Holding wants to make sure there is a strong showing in both the House and Senate supporting the legislation.

Tara Spencer with Congressman Mike McIntyre office stated he would support the efforts for legislation until he retires. Congressman Mike McIntyre is willing to be a co-sponsor of the legislation.

Highway 70 Corridor Commission Director M. Durwood Stephenson stated the Highway 70 Corridor Commission appreciated the support of our Senators and Representatives and the assistance of their staff.

Wayne County Member Joe Daughtery thanked Highway 70 Corridor Commission Director M. Durwood Stephenson for taking on this issue and getting the responses in such a short period of time.

### **Division 2 Update**

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

- Kinston Bypass workshops for the public and local officials were held last month. Northern alternatives were eliminated. Southern alternatives are proposed. Draft environmental impact statement on schedule for early next year.
- US Highway 70 and James City Strategic Transportation Investments Division 2 project to improve to a freeway. Three Oaks Engineering from Durham, North Carolina will prepare the environmental studies and preliminary designs for the proposed five-mile upgrade of US Highway 70 from the Neuse River Bridge to Grantham Road. The project scoping meeting will be held this fall. The construction date is scheduled for 2023. This is not the bypass around James City, but is an improvement through James City. There is adequate right-of-way to do the project.
- Slocum Road interchange – Right-of-way acquisition is scheduled to begin in March 2015. Construction is scheduled to begin in March 2017. This project is not subject to the new funding formula.
- Havelock Bypass – Final environmental impact statement is scheduled to be completed this fall. The ruling was the bypass would not likely to have an effect on the habitat of the red cockaded woodpecker. A record of decision is scheduled for mid-2015. Right-of-way is scheduled for 2015. Construction is scheduled for 2017. This project is subject to the new funding formula.
- Gallants Channel Bridge – Project was awarded earlier this year. Roadway work has been going on. Foundation load test has been completed. Production pile driving began last week. Rain has hampered roadway work. Contract completion is July 2018, which includes removal of the old bridge. The contractor, Conti Enterprises, anticipates traffic on the new bridge in September 2017.

### **Division 4 Update**

North Carolina Department of Transportation Division 4 Engineer Tim Little updated the members of the Highway 70 Corridor Commission on the following projects:

- Goldsboro Bypass western section – anticipated completion mid-2015
- Goldsboro Bypass eastern section – anticipated completion early-2016
- Pine Level – The let date is February 2015 with completion scheduled within two years. The Davis Mill portion will be the last portion to be completed unless changed or accelerated by the contractor.
- Wilsons Mills project is going well and hopefully project will receive funding. Three projects combined – interchange at Wilson’s Mills Road, interchange at Swift Creek Road and combination and upgrading to freeway standard. Hopefully by combining the projects, the projects will score well enough to be funded.



**Other Business**

Highway 70 Corridor Commission Chairman Robin Comer stated the Highway 70 Corridor Commission officers hold office through December 31<sup>st</sup> of the year they are elected. He suggested electing officers at the November 2014 meeting and the elected President, Vice-President and Secretary-Treasurer taking office in January 2015.

**Public Comments**

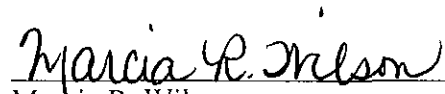
No member of the public spoke.

**Next Meeting**

The next meeting of the Highway 70 Corridor Commission will take place in Johnston County with the date and location to be determined. The members will be notified as soon as this has been determined.

**Adjournment**

At 3:35 p.m., Highway 70 Corridor Commission Chairman Robin Comer adjourned the meeting.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Marcia R. Wilson