

UPPER COASTAL PLAIN RURAL PLANNING ORGANIZATION

May 12, 2021 – Zoom Virtual Meeting

RPO Transportation Advisory Committee Minutes

Attendance

TAC

C.B. Brown, Tarboro
Jerry Medlin, Benson
Andy Moore, Smithfield
Oscar Mabry, Pinetops
Derrick Creech, City of Wilson
Cheryl Oliver, Selma
Miranda Boykin, Sims
Lu Harvey Lewis, Middlesex
Brenda Lucas, Spring Hope
Melvin Mitchell, NCDOT BOT

NCDOT

Kevin Bowen, NCDOT
Carlos Moya, NCDOT TPD
Jimmy Eatmon, Division 4
Gray Keeter, NCDOT

UCPRPO

James Salmons

Introduction

- Welcome & Introductions – Lu Harvey Lewis – TAC Chair*
TAC Chair Mr. Lu Harvey Lewis (Middlesex) called the meeting to order. Mr. Harvey welcomed and thanked everyone for attending the meeting.
- Ethics Reminder*
Mr. Lu Harvey Lewis asked if any members have a conflict of interest on any of the items on the agenda. There being none.
- Additions or Corrections to Agenda*
There were no corrections or additions to the agenda. **UPON A MOTION** by Cheryl Oliver (Selma), second by Oscar Mabry (Pinetops) the agenda for May 12, 2021 was unanimously approved.
- Minutes – March 10, 2021*
After reviewing the Minutes for the March 10, 2021 meeting and **UPON A MOTION** by Oscar Mabry (Pinetops), second by Derrick Creech (City of Wilson) the March 10, 2021 minutes were unanimously approved.

Decision Items

- Letter of Support for NCDOT INFRA Grant Application to Upgrade US 64 to I-87*
Members were provided with a proposed letter of support for the NCDOT INFRA Grant application to Upgrade US 64 to I-87. After a brief discussion and **UPON A MOTION** by Cheryl Oliver (Selma), second by Derrick Creech (City of Wilson) the resolution of support was unanimously adopted.

Discussion Items

- STI P6 Updated Schedule*
Members were provided with the most recent STI P6 schedule provided by the NCDOT SPOT office. It was noted that the schedule is subject to change depending on the results of cost estimate reviews and potential re-programming of projects. More information is anticipated to be available in July.
- STI P6 UCPRPO Local Methodology*
Members were provided with the draft UCPRPO STI P6 Local Methodology. Members were asked to review the draft and provide input. The Local Methodology was review only at this time. The plan is to bring the Methodology back to the TCC at their July office for adoption for recommendation for approval by the TAC.

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8. *Future in Person Meetings*

With the COVID-19 Pandemic restrictions beginning to loosen, members discussed meeting in person at the next TAC meeting scheduled for July. After a brief discussion it was agreed that the next TAC meeting will be held in person.

9. *Report a Litterbug App*

A brief report was provided on NCDOT's efforts to clean up litter along North Carolina highways. As part of that effort NCDOT developed the Litterbug Reporting App (<https://www.ncdot.gov/initiatives-policies/environmental/litter-management/Pages/swat-a-litter-bug.aspx>). It was reported that as of April 29, 2021, NCDOT crews and contractors had collected 5.3 million pounds of litter since January 1, 2021, more than both years to date 2019 and 2020. Our Division 4 Board of Transportation member Melvin Mitchell even volunteered to help out picking up litter. In addition, members were provided information on HB 100 – The Cleanup North Carolina Act currently making its way through the General Assembly. “According to state court records, law enforcement agencies of all kinds issued 1,689 citations for littering in 2020, down about 18% from the year before and 29% since 2016. In those five years, nearly two-thirds of settled littering cases were dismissed” (source: N&O)

10. *North Carolina: The State of Aviation*

Members were provided a brief presentation on the State of Aviation report published by NCDOT in February of 2021. As part of the report, members were provided with the economic impacts our general aviation airports provide our communities.

Reports

11. *US 70 Commission*

The US 70 Commission last met on March 18, 2021 virtually.

- A presentation was provided by Paxton Ramsdell, Principal of Ecosystem Planning & Restoration on flood resiliency plans and studies ongoing within eastern North Carolina.
- NCDOT Board members General Hugh Overhold and Melvin Mitchell provided updates.
- Reports were provided by:
 - a. Chief Operating Officer, Beau Memory
 - b. Chief Engineer, Ronnie Keeter
 - c. Eastern Region Deputy Chief Engineer, Greg Burns
- Division 2 and 4 project reports were provided by Division 2 and Division 4 Engineers.
- The US 70/i-42 Wilson's Mills project was Let in March 2021

12. *Hwy 17/64 Association*

The Hwy 17/64 Association last met on April 28, 2021 virtually.

- Chief Engineer Ronnie Keeter introduced Greg Burns the new Deputy Chief Engineer for Eastern NC.
- Updates were provided for projects along both the Hwy 17 and US 64 corridors.
- Dana Magliola from NCDOT's Logistics and Freight reported Commercial congestion on the NC Priority Freight Highway Network cost the NC economy nearly **\$240M** in 2020.
- New NCDOT Chief Operating Office, Beau Memory key remarks:
 - 1) NCDOT's financially stable with an approximate cash balance of **\$1.5B. (Now at \$1.83B as of May 7, 2021)**
 - 2) Litter programs are back up and running including using social media and other volunteer programs.
 - 3) Project costs are rising due to increase in materials and other issues – NCDOT is currently reviewing cost on projects and exploring ways to find savings on projects.
 - 4) NCDOT continues to look for revenue sources.
 - 5) NCDOT submitted INFRA Grant to upgrade US 64 to Interstate Standards (I-87).

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- 6) Potentially some funding in the CARES Act for transportation.
- 7) Expect that any federal funding will be some time from now.
- 8) Sales tax on short term auto leases and automobile parts and services is expected to be the General Assembly's lowest "hanging fruit" for potential future transportation funding. Applying Sales taxes from short term leases and auto parts and services would generate and additional **\$500M** per year.
 - The work on the cranes at the CCX project have resumed after a delay due to the COVID-19 Pandemic and VISA issues. The project and final certification is now scheduled to be complete in September 2021.
13. *Legislative Update*

Members were provided an update on the Governor's proposed budget and various legislative bills working through the General Assembly.
14. *NCDOT Division 4*

Mr. Jimmy Eatmon reported that NCDOT is in the process of reviewing all cost estimates for all the projects within the STIP. The results of the review may affect project schedules within the STIP and the STI P6 process. In addition, everyone congratulated Jimmy on his upcoming retirement and thanked him for all his hard work over the years!
15. *NCD of Planning Division (TPD)*

Mr. Moya reported that the TPD is now able to travel.

Public Comment

1. *Public Comment*

There was no public comment.

Other Business

2. *TAC Member Comment*

There were no TAC member comments.

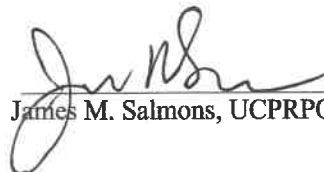
Upcoming meeting:

It was noted that the next meeting was pushed back one week to July 21, 2021.

UPON A MOTION from C.B. Brown (Tarboro) was made to adjourn with a second motion was made by Oscar Mabry (Pinetops) and the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,


Lu Harvey Lewis, TAC Chair


James M. Salmons, UCPRPO Transportation Planner