

## **NORTH CAROLINA**

### **LENOIR COUNTY**

The Highway 70 Corridor Commission met on Thursday, May 12, 2011 at 2:00 p.m. at the City of Kinston Public Service Complex, 2360 Highway 258 South, Kinston, North Carolina.

County members present:

Carteret County – Randy Martin and Tom Steepy  
Craven County – Michael Avery, Steve Tyson and Danny Walsh  
Johnston County – Fleeta Byrd and Don Rains  
Jones County – None  
Lenoir County – J. Mac Daughety and Brian Lucas  
Wayne County – Chuck Allen, Jack Best and Sandra R. McCullen

Other persons present:

North Carolina Board of Transportation – Leigh McNairy (At Large)  
North Carolina Department of Transportation – Haywood Daughtry, Neil Lassiter, Bobby Lewis and John Rouse  
Highway 70 Corridor Commission Director – M. Durwood Stephenson  
Craven County Planning Director – Donald Baumgardner  
Down East RPO – Robert Will  
Duplin County Planner – Randall G. Tyndall  
Eastern Carolina RPO – Patrick Flanagan and Alex Rickard  
Havelock Planning Director – Scott Chase  
Lenoir County Transportation Committee – Dan Sale  
North Carolina Global TransPark – Charlie Diehl  
North Carolina State Ports Authority – Stephanie Ayers  
USMC MCIEAST – Colonel Frank Bottorff  
Upper Coastal Plains RPO – Daniel Van Liere  
Wayne County Clerk to the Board – Marcia R. Wilson  
Wayne County Planning Director – Connie Price

### **Welcome and Introductions**

Highway 70 Corridor Commission Chairman Chuck Allen welcomed everyone to the meeting. Members and guests present introduced themselves.

### **Approval of Agenda**

Upon motion of Steve Tyson and seconded by J. Mac Daughety, the members of the Highway 70 Corridor Commission unanimously approved the agenda as presented.

### **Approval of Minutes**

Upon motion of Sandra R. McCullen and seconded by J. Mac Daughety , the members of the Highway 70 Corridor Commission unanimously approved the minutes on March 17, 2011.

### **Havelock Bypass Update**

North Carolina Department of Transportation Division 2 Engineer Neil Lassiter stated a July 2011 approval of the draft Environmental Impact Statement is contingent upon favorable legal review from the Federal Highway Administration in Atlanta. The draft Environmental Impact Statement will include a preferred alternative and the latter parts of the project schedule are contingent upon maintaining the preferred alternative. A public hearing is being planned for October 2011.

### **Gallants Channel Bridge Replacement Project Update**

North Carolina Department of Transportation Division 2 Engineer Neil Lassiter stated the North Carolina Department of Transportation is proceeding with the design of a 65-foot bridge at Gallants Channel based on the preliminary approval given by the United States Coast Guard. The design should be completed in 2012. The North Carolina Department of Transportation will need a formal permit. Landfall for the bridge is expected to be south of the Beaufort airport.

Highway 70 Corridor Commission Vice-Chairman Tom Steepy stated input from the public is crucial to the Gallants Channel bridge replacement project. The public needs water access once the current Grayden Paul Bridge is replaced.

North Carolina Department of Transportation Division 2 Engineer Neil Lassiter stated there would be a Memorandum of Understanding, which would keep the water access open to the public. A form of pedestrian access would be designed. In response to traffic pattern concerns raised by Vice-Chairman Tom Steepy, he requested the Town of Beaufort put its traffic pattern concerns in writing and submit to the North Carolina Department of Transportation.

Highway 70 Corridor Commission Director Durwood Stephenson stated the letter from the United States Coast Guard did not state 100% approval had been given for the 65-foot bridge span at Gallants Channel. The North Carolina Department of Transportation felt comfortable with the preliminary approval by the United States Coast Guard. Power lines and the airport are height restraints for the bridge replacement.

### **Slocum Gate Project Update**

Colonel Frank Bottorff with USMC MCIEAST stated he appreciated the support and assistance from the Highway 70 Corridor Commission to move the Slocum Gate project up on the priority list.

Currently, the Slocum Gate is not an established project and is not on the work plan or Down East Rural Planning Organization (RPO) priority list.

Rob Will with the Down East Rural Planning Organization (RPO) stated the Slocum Gate project should move up on the priority list this year. The point ranking can be done differently this year. Most Highway 70 projects have moved up in ranking. He will try to increase the Strategic Planning Office of Transportation (SPOT) scores in order to escalate the project priority.

Highway 70 Corridor Commission Director Durwood Stephenson stated \$350,000 is available for an environmental study of the Slocum Gate project. The project needs to be moved up on the priority list.

Highway 70 Corridor Commission member Danny Walsh stated there were four options for the Slocum Gate project. Originally, the flyover was the preferred plan because it was cheaper and more easily attained. Since time has passed, we now believe a full-fledged overpass would be better for the long term because a traffic signal would be removed on US Highway 70. The Slocum Road project must be moved up in priority. Cherry Point needs all our help in the next BRAC process. A long-term plan is to establish an industrial park with rail and spurs at the back gate to Cherry Point. A developer in the area wants to sell his property. Mr. Walsh stated a commitment needs to be made purchase this property and set it aside as protection for the Slocum Gate improvements. He made several suggestions for improvements at the Slocum Gate.

Colonel Frank Bottorff with USMC MCIEAST stated other options have not been explored. Cherry Point usually receives funding for encroachment issues. Cherry Point officials have worked with Town of Havelock officials on the Slocum Gate improvements. The Slocum Gate improvements would be a safety and traffic flow project. There is a possibility funds would be allocated in 2014 as a Marine project.

North Carolina Department of Transportation Division 2 Engineer Neil Lassiter stated the Down East RPO needs to prioritize the Slocum Gate project. The Department of Defense sponsored a feasibility study on three options from improving Slocum Gate, but the improvements could not be implemented until the base makes some other interior infrastructure improvements. A National Environmental Policy Act study would be the next step, but is not underway at this time. He requested Havelock officials submit in writing their recommended option for the Slocum Gate improvements.

Highway 70 Corridor Commission Chairman Chuck Allen requested the Down East RPO move the Slocum Gate project up on its priority list. He has discussed this project with Governor Beverly Perdue, Senator Kay Hagan and Representative G. K. Butterfield.

North Carolina Board of Transportation Member Leigh McNairy asked if it was enough to prioritize the Slocum Gate improvements or if a small group needed to discuss the project and bring structure to the improvements. She requested to know the long-term and short-term steps to move the project forward.

Highway 70 Corridor Commission Director M. Durwood Stephenson stated the Slocum Gate project needs to move up on the priority list in order to spend the money for the environmental study.

Upon motion of J. Mac Daughety and seconded by Steve Tyson, the members of the Highway 70 Corridor Commission unanimously requested the Down East RPO move the Slocum Gate improvements along US Highway 70 up on the Down East RPO priority list and put on the State Transportation Improvement Program priority list.

### **Pine Level Project Update**

The US Highway 70 improvements near Pine Level include median crossover closures and upgrades of two intersections to partial interchanges.

North Carolina Department of Transportation Division 4 Engineer Bobby Lewis stated the bids for the Pine Level project are scheduled to be let in September 2012. The documentation is finished. The public will be involved in the project to consider homes and the cemetery as they relate to the right-of-way for the project.

Highway 70 Corridor Commission Director M. Durwood Stephenson stated North Carolina Department of Transportation Division 4 Engineer Bobby Lewis requested ARCADIS to explore every possible option for the right-of-way issue.

Highway 70 Corridor Commission member Don Rains stated the citizens of Pine Level need to be involved in their own destiny.

### **James City/Williams Road Project Update**

Highway 70 Corridor Commission Director M. Durwood Stephenson stated McDonalds at the Williams Road location in James City is discussing expansion. The Getty Oil station will move. He questioned if McDonalds really wanted to expand. The North Carolina Department of Transportation has developed a plan to tie Williams Road into Old Cherry Point Road with a flyover, but the flyover has been deleted. North Carolina Department of Transportation Chief Operating Officer Jim Trogdon informed him the pedestrian bridge at James City over US Highway 70 will be removed since it is no longer wanted.

Highway 70 Corridor Commission member Danny Walsh stated Havelock is interested in obtaining the pedestrian bridge.

### **Logistics: Seven Portals Study Update**

Session Law 2007-551 instructed the North Carolina Office and State Budget and Management to develop a statewide logistics plan that addressed the state's long-term economic, mobility and infrastructure needs. Executive Order 32 established the North Carolina Logistics Task Force, which will develop a statewide logistics plan for North Carolina. The plan is called the Seven Portals Study. The study assesses possible locations for transport-driven logistics portals statewide based on seven economic regions and local efforts. The study examines modal connections, land availability economic growth impact potential, feasibility, benefits and costs. The mission of the task force is to strategically create jobs and recruit industry by developing an

efficient and cost effective vision plan for the seamless movement of people, goods and information throughout the State of North Carolina.

Upper Coastal Plain RPO Planner Daniel Van Liere stated there are seven studies across the state. Johnston County is located in the Triangle study area. The remaining Highway 70 corridor is located in the Eastern study area. Areas of study along the Highway 70 corridor include the following: Morehead City port, Global TransPark, Jacksonville airport and Rocky Mount airport.

North Carolina Department of Transportation Division 4 Engineer Bobby Lewis questioned if the site near the Goldsboro-Wayne Airport had been submitted for study.

Highway 70 Corridor Commission member Jack Best stated the site near the Goldsboro-Wayne Airport was less than one mile to rail and tied into an industrial park.

Upper Coastal Plain RPO Planner Daniel Van Liere stated the Goldsboro airport site had not been included in the study.

### **Lenoir County Projects Update**

Highway 70 Corridor Commission Member J. Mac Daughety stated the Kinston median project is on hold until 2013 due to pending legislation in the North Carolina General Assembly. The bill was introduced to stop the median project. The proposed legislation prohibits construction of the Kinston median project as presently designed. The North Carolina Department of Transportation will have an independent consultant review the data concerning this project.

Highway 70 Corridor Commission Director M. Durwood Stephenson stated the bill was pulled off the calendar and sent to the Rules Committee. The Senate did not vote on the bill.

Highway 70 Corridor Commission Member J. Mac Daughety stated a public hearing will be held to receive public comments on the closure of a side of the bridge on Highway 258 during construction of the Queen Street bridges. It is anticipated Highway 258 traffic will be funneled to Skinner's Bypass during the Highway 258 bridge construction. The North Carolina Department of Transportation will analyze traffic flow and safety data to determine if safety improvements need to be made to Skinner's Bypass prior to the Queen Street bridges project commencing.

The Kinston Bypass project is currently in the alternatives development and assessment phase. The North Carolina Department of Transportation staff and their consultants are exploring numerous options to the north and south of existing US Highway 70 as well as options along existing US Highway 70. The options will be reviewed based on the GIS data, which should be completed at the end of May. The Kinston Bypass project is part of a pilot program, which utilized enhanced GIS data to speed up the Project Development process. It is anticipated a local officials meeting will be held this summer to receive input on the preferred option.

Highway 70 Corridor Commission Member J. Mac Daughety stated the Lenoir County Transportation Committee identified the following as top priorities:

- Kinston Bypass
- Part C, Harvey Parkway (approximately 4 miles)
- Highway 11 to 241 South-link to Interstate 40 (approximately 11 miles) This project would promote regionalism through the connectivity of Kinston to Interstate 40. Plans are being made for a bypass around Pink Hill. A bypass is being planned also around downtown Beulaville, which would be used as a strategic corridor by the military.

North Carolina Department of Transportation Division 2 Engineer Neil Lassiter stated there is no funding for the Kinston Bypass. The project is in the second part of the work plan, which would be 2018 at the earliest. There are no construction monies.

Stephanie Ayers with the North Carolina State Port Authority stated upgrading NC 24 and US Highway 70 to expressways would benefit the military at Fort Bragg and Camp Lejeune. The time frame will be determined once the route has been chosen. The port transportation plan is being updated and the staff is working closely with Carteret County.

North Carolina Board of Transportation Member Leigh McNairy stated every shovel ready project puts us ahead.

Eastern Carolina RPO Planner Alex Richard stated the Kinston Bypass will move up in priority. The right-of-way acquisition is scheduled for 2020.

### **Wayne County Projects Update**

Highway 70 Corridor Commission Member Jack Best stated the BA section (Interstate 795 to Wayne Memorial Drive) of the Goldsboro Bypass is under construction and should be completed in November 2011. The Wayne Memorial Drive to Lenoir County section will be bid out in November 2011 and completed in 2015-2016. The section west of Goldsboro to Interstate 795 will be bid out in September 2012 and completed in 2015-2016. The Goldsboro Bypass should be completed in 2015-2016. The North Carolina Department of Transportation worked for eastern North Carolina to move the Goldsboro Bypass up from earlier projected time frame of 2035.

### **Craven County Projects Update**

Highway 70 Corridor Commission Member Steve Tyson stated discussion has taken place to connect Williams Road and Airport Road. This would be an inexpensive way to channel local traffic off US Highway 70.

North Carolina Department of Transportation Division 2 Engineer Neil Lassiter stated there are no preliminary plans to connect Williams Road and Airport Road. Improvements would need to be made to Airport Road. This would need to be a Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) project.

Highway 70 Corridor Commission Chairman Chuck Allen requested the North Carolina Department of Transportation examine the feasibility of this project.

### **Johnston County Projects Update**

Upper Coastal Plain RPO Planner Daniel Van Liere stated the RPO discussed the US Highway 70 improvements at Pine Level. This project includes median crossover closures and upgrades of two intersections to partial interchanges. Public comments will be received on the proposed improvements. The proposed project will then go to Pine Level, Johnston County and the Upper Coastal Plain RPO.

### **Morehead City Median Project Update**

Highway 70 Corridor Commission Member Randy Martin updated the members on the Morehead City median project. The staff met with North Carolina Department of Transportation staff Dwayne Alligood and Haywood Daughtry. The Carteret County Transportation Committee and Morehead City Council have endorsed the concept of the median project, but have not approved the specifics of the project. The public is being informed of the proposed changes and alternatives. Public sentiment at this time favors limitation of movement, but not closing the median. He thanked the North Carolina Department of Transportation staff for their help and cooperation. The US Highway 70 Corridor Commission will be kept abreast of the median project.

### **Carteret County Projects Update**

Highway 70 Corridor Commission Vice-Chairman Tom Steepy stated he is a member of the Outer Banks Scenic Byway Committee. The 135 mile long Outer Banks Scenic Byway begins in the north at Whalebone Junction, the joining of US 64-264, US 158 and NC 12, in Nags Head in Dare County. The byway continues south on NC 12 through Bodie and Hatteras islands in Dare County, Ocracoke Island in Hyde County and Down East in Carteret county to end on the west side of the North River at the intersection of US Highway 70 and Merrimon Road (SR 1300). The Federal Highway Authority has been asked for national status. Grants have been requested to market the byway. It is hoped the Outer Banks Scenic Byway will be equal in status to the Blue Ridge Parkway. He stated there was concern the cost to ride the ferries on the byway has increased and will hurt the ridership on the byway.

Highway 70 Corridor Commission Director M. Durwood Stephenson congratulated Highway 70 Corridor Commission Vice-Chairman Tom Steepy for receiving the 2011 Dr. Joseph T. Barwick Civic Award, which was given by the Carteret Community College Board of Trustees.

## **Equity Formula Legislation – HB 635**

Highway 70 Corridor Commission Director M. Durwood Stephenson stated House Bill 635 entitled *An Act to Adjust the Distribution Formula for Funds Expended on the Intrastate System and Transportation Improvement Program* has been re-referred to the Committee on Transportation. The bill has not been endorsed by the Metropolitan Mayors Association. Hopefully, the bill will die.

## **Other Business**

North Carolina Department of Transportation Division 4 Engineer Bobby Lewis stated the North Carolina General Assembly created the North Carolina Mobility Fund to help relieve congestion and enhance mobility across the state. The Mobility Fund is not subject to the equity formula. The Mobility Fund project criteria include the following:

- Mobility/Congestion – measured on the estimated travel time savings the project will provide for 30 years
- Multimodal – measured by whether the project provides an improvement to more than one mode of transportation and this improved the efficiency of the transportation system
- Intermodal and Congestion Relief Fund – measured by whether the project meets the requirements of that fund.

North Carolina Board of Transportation Member Leigh McNairy stated the North Carolina Board of Transportation US 70 Corridor Committee met on April 6, 2011. The meetings are open to the public. The North Carolina Department of Transportation staff provided updates. The meeting structure is in place and very beneficial. The Highway 70 Corridor Commission needs to continue to build support and lay the groundwork for its projects. The North Carolina Department of Transportation will move forward when there is no controversy. The Highway 70 Corridor Commission members need to provide proof why roads and improvements are needed. The military must be a key component in our message.

Highway 70 Corridor Commission Director M. Durwood Stephenson stated the North Carolina Board of Transportation US 70 Corridor Committee meeting allowed locals to work with the North Carolina Department of Transportation staff. He thanked the North Carolina Board of Transportation Board Members for acting as Highway 70 Corridor advocates. Communication is now faster and smarter. The North Carolina's Eastern Region is discussing reactivation of the legislative committee to discuss a super corridor. North Carolina Board of Transportation Board Member Hugh Overholt is trying to move military projects forward through creative thinking. Highway 70 Corridor Commission Director M. Durwood Stephenson stated Scott Saylor with the North Carolina Railroad has become a team player with the Highway 70 Corridor Commission by promoting the Highway 70 Corridor Commission objectives.

Highway 70 Corridor Commission Member Jack Best thanked North Carolina Board of Transportation Member Leigh McNairy for her assistance to the Highway 70 Corridor Commission. He also thanked Highway 70 Corridor Commission Director M. Durwood Stephenson for all of his accomplishments in the past year. The military is very important to

eastern North Carolina. The Base Realignment and Closure Commission (BRACC) will be checking to see if our previous commitments have been honored.

Highway 70 Corridor Commission Director M. Durwood Stephenson thanked the North Carolina Board of Transportation Members for their efforts to move the Highway 70 Corridor forward. Eastern North Carolina needs a road system in order to grow. Officials are paying attention to the Highway 70 Corridor Commission. He stated he was fortunate to have the support of the entire group and North Carolina Department of Transportation Division 2 staff, Division 4 staff and the administration. He also thanked North Carolina Department of Transportation Chief Operating Officer Jim Trogdon for his cooperation.

Highway 70 Corridor Commission Board Member Randy Martin stated he believed there would be time travel savings on US Highway 70 if the speed limit could be increased on some sections of the highway. He requested feedback from the North Carolina Department of Transportation.

Eastern Carolina RPO Planner Alex Rickard stated it generally takes 3-5 months to prioritize MPO and RPO projects. MPOs and RPOs can give points to projects outside their jurisdiction. In order to donate points to another MPOs and RPOs, there needs to be written documentation giving and accepting the points. The MPOs, RPOs and North Carolina Department of Transportation engineers score projects. There is a lot of work, which needs to happen this summer.

North Carolina Department of Transportation Division 4 Engineer Bobby Lewis stated the strategic planning department supplies rankings based on crash data, traffic volume and economic prosperity. He will have the US Highway 70 project data made available.

Stephanie Ayers with the North Carolina State Ports Authority requested Highway 70 Corridor Commission Director M. Durwood Stephenson make a presentation to the MPOs and RPOs on the importance of the Highway 70 Corridor Commission projects.

Highway 70 Corridor Commission Director M. Durwood Stephenson stated the Highway 70 Corridor Commission needs to prioritize its major (2) and secondary (5) projects. The Highway 70 Corridor Commission needs to consult with North Carolina Department of Transportation Division 2 and 4 Engineers on projects, which are attainable.

Highway 70 Corridor Commission Member Jack Best stated the Highway 70 Corridor Commission projects must agree with the North Carolina Department of Transportation projects.

The Highway 70 Corridor Commission members discussed the need to meet prior to the next meeting to discuss its priorities.

The Highway 70 Corridor Commission members thanked the City of Kinston for hosting the meeting at the Kinston Public Service Complex.

**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, time and location.

**Adjournment**

There being no further business, Highway 70 Corridor Commission Chairman Chuck Allen adjourned the meeting at 3:45 p.m.

---

Marcia R. Wilson

DRAFT