



To: Transportation Advisory Committee  
From: Deanna Trebil, MPO Administrator  
Subject: December 9, 2021 Meeting Minutes

3/10/2022

Recommended Action: Approval of meeting minutes

Attachment: December 9, 2021 Meeting Minutes

**TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE**  
**December 9, 2021**

**Onslow County Government Building**  
**234 NW Corridor Blvd, Jacksonville, NC**

Present: Mr. Paul Buchanan, Mr. Royce Bennett, Mr. Randy Thomas, Ms. Kandy Koonce, Mr. Ron Massey, Mr. Chad Kimes, Mr. Patrick Riddle, Mr. Anthony Prinz, Ms. Deanna Trebil, and Ms. Stephanie Kutz

Via Phone: Lt. Sean Magill, Ms. Caitlin Marks, Mr. Behshad Norowzi, Mr. B.J. Eversole, Ms. Jennifer Ansell, Ms. Deb Hill, Mr. Laurent Meilleur, Mr. Nathan Rhue, Mr. Scott Franko, Mr. William Kincannon, Ms. Paula Webb, and Ms. Saman Jeffers

I. Call to Order

Vice Chairman Paul Buchanan called the Jacksonville Urban Area MPO Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC) Meeting to order at 3:30 pm on Thursday, December 9, 2021, at the Onslow County Government Building – 234 NW Corridor Blvd and via Teleconference.

II. Welcome and Introductions

Vice Chairman Buchanan welcomed everyone to the TAC meeting, and thanked everyone on the teleconference for calling in. Each person introduced themselves.

III. Adoption of the Agenda

Vice Chairman Buchanan asked for a motion to adopt the agenda as written.

Mr. Royce Bennett made a motion to accept the agenda as written. Mr. Randy Thomas seconded the motion to accept the agenda as written.

The agenda was accepted unanimously by the committee members present.

IV. Public Comment

There were no public comments in person, audio or virtual.

**Action Items**

V. October 14, 2021 Meeting Minutes

Vice Chairman Buchanan asked for a motion to approve the October 14, 2021 Meeting Minutes.

A motion was made by Mr. Randy Thomas, seconded by Mr. Royce Bennett, and unanimously approved the October 14th minutes as written.

#### VI. Annual Self-Certification

The Jacksonville Metropolitan Planning Organization is responsible for performing a continuous, cooperative and comprehensive, "3-C," transportation planning process for the Jacksonville Urbanized Area. The MPO must annually certify that our transportation planning process is being conducted in accordance with federal regulations.

Vice Chairman Buchanan asked for a motion to approve the Annual Self-Certification.

A motion was made by Mr. Randy Thomas, seconded by Mr. Royce Bennett, and unanimously approved the Annual Self-Certification as presented.

#### VII. 2022 NCDOT Safety Performance Targets

Current federal transportation legislation (FAST Act) requires states and MPOs adopt performance measures and targets to monitor their progress over time toward achieving USDOT transportation goals. Safety was the first area of emphasis for FHWA and guidance reflects that the following should be considered by states and MPOs when developing performance measures/targets: (1) number of fatalities, (2) rates of fatalities, (3) number of serious injuries, (4) rate of serious injuries, and (5) number of non-motorized fatalities and serious injuries.

NCDOT submitted the 2022 state safety performance targets to FHWA on August 31st. As such, the Jacksonville MPO is now required to adopt safety measures by the end of February 2022. While the FAST Act allows MPOs to adopt measures and targets independently of their state, NCDOT has encouraged MPOs to follow their lead by adopting the established statewide performance measures.

MPOs are required to add new or revised information on performance measures, targets, and system performance reports only when the Metropolitan Transportation Plan (MTP) is updated. As such, the 2022 Safety Performance Targets will be included in the next update of the MTP.

Mr. Anthony Prinz reminded members that when NCDOT implemented the performance standards several years ago that the targets were unrealistic. JUMPO decided at that time to follow NCDOT's lead by adopting the same standards.

After much discussion, it was decided that staff would present additional information at an upcoming meeting to consider whether or not JUMPO should adopt different thresholds from that of NCDOT.

Vice Chairman Buchanan asked for a motion to approve the 2022 NCDOT Safety Performance Targets.

A motion was made by Mr. Randy Thomas, seconded by Mr. Royce Bennett, and unanimously approved the 2022 NCDOT Safety Performance Targets as presented.

#### VIII. 2022-2029 MTIP Amendment 5

The Transportation Advisory Committee adopted the 2020-2029 Metropolitan Transportation Improvement Program (MTIP) on December 12, 2019. Since then, four other Amendments have been approved as a result of changes to either project budgets or schedules.

Amendment 5 is being requested as a result of changes to the Gum Branch Widening Project (U5791A). The scope of this project is to widen Gum Branch from Western Blvd to Ramsey Road. NCDOT is adjusting the schedule to allow for additional planning and design by delaying right of way from FY 22 to FY 24 and construction from FY 24 and FY 26.

When NCDOT modifies the State Transportation Improvement Plan (STIP), JUMPO is also required to update the MTIP to reflect those changes.

Vice Chairman Buchanan asked for a motion to approve the 2022-2029 MTIP Amendment 5.

A motion was made by Mr. Randy Thomas, seconded by Mr. Royce Bennett, and unanimously approved Amendment 5 to the MTIP as presented.

### **Discussion Items**

#### IX. P6.0

Mr. Prinz reminded members that Prioritization 6.0 is essentially dead. The Workgroup has been working on developing a path to move forward with the development of the 2024-2033 STIP, which has to be adopted by FHWA by September 2023.

The Workgroup is working towards reaching concurrence on three decision points and then approval by the Board of Transportation (BOT). The first decision point is regarding the overall method of how the STIP is to be organized. Consensus has been achieved from both the workgroup and the BOT that it will remain as the traditional STIP Development method.

The second decision point is regarding which projects are selected for the "Delivery Projects" (formerly known as Held Harmless Projects). It was decided that projects with a let date before FY 2026 or if right-of-way is already underway met this definition. The Workgroup has reached consensus and it will be presented to the BOT for consensus.

The third decision point is how to evaluate the remaining projects. Taking inflation into consideration, the STIP is over programmed by \$11B. Mr. Prinz mentioned that there has been much discussion on how to effectively and fairly work through the criteria on how to evaluate projects. The good news is that the consensus is that each Division will work with their partners to select projects that remain on the STIP. More work is needed before a finalized approach has been selected. More information to come in the coming months.

#### X. Jacksonville Parkway Extension Project

Several months ago, NCDOT was seeking public comment on the various alternative routes that had been identified for the Jacksonville Parkway Extension Project. The purpose of this Project is to extend Jacksonville Parkway from Western Blvd to Ramsey Road to US 17. This road extension would allow for a better connection to US 17 without traveling through an already heavily congested area. This connection also allows more direct access from housing along Carolina Forest Blvd and other subdivisions along Ramsey Road back to Western Blvd and the Parkway.

The alternatives presented included extending the Parkway on new alignment, improving existing roadways and/or a combination of both. This project is currently going through the NEPA process which requires that at least two alternatives be considered.

Alternative 1 is the alignment that JUMPO submitted during Prioritization and is what is described in the STIP. Alternative 2 extends the Parkway south of Ramsey to Drummer Kellum Road (near Jennifer Drive) and then turning and connecting to US 17 (south of Key Lane). This alignment was proposed as a result of feedback from the public. After these two projects received concurrence from the group, JUMPO found out that there is a proposed subdivision along Drummer Kellum Road that would be essentially cut in half by this road. Additionally, Mr. Prinz stated that if Alternative 2 was selected, it most likely would have to be re-submitted for prioritization since it varied significantly from what was initially submitted.

After some discussion, the TAC members requested that this project continue forward and to wait to see if NCDOT's consultants could modify the alignment of Alternative 2 by shifting it north or south of the proposed subdivision. Mr. Prinz stated that more information should be known in February regarding options with the final alternative to be selected the fall of 2022 and construction in 2024.

#### XI. Queens Creek Road Widening Project

Submitted by DERPO, the Queens Creek Road Widening Project consists of converting this road to a three lane cross section from Jones Road to Smallwood Road. This project also identified the installation of sidewalks or a multi-use path (MUP). NCDOT is

currently evaluating a fast track feasibility study of this project to ascertain a cost estimate.

Adding a sidewalk or MUP does require additional right-of-way as well as the installation of curb and gutter. These factors have substantially increased the cost of the project. Furthermore, Mr. Prinz commented that installing a sidewalk and/or a MUP does require someone to maintain them. Since the limits of this project are within the County, adding these pedestrian accommodations to the project can be problematic since the County historically is not interested in maintaining them.

There was some discussion regarding why this project was identified and not Queens Creek closer to NC 24. With the NC 24 Superstreet project, there might be an opportunity to extend the project limits down Queens Creek. Another item of concern is the efficient operation of the new signal at Queens Creek Elementary/Swansboro with that of the NC 24 corridor to reduce congestion in this area.

It was the consensus of the TAC to remove the sidewalk and MUP options from this project and to notify NCDOT.

#### XII. New Signal at Queens Creek Elementary/Swansboro HS

Mr. Prinz stated that a new signal at Queens Creek Elementary/Swansboro High School has been approved for funding. This has been a high priority safety project from not only JUMPO, but Onslow County and the School System. NCDOT's Municipal School Transportation Assistance (MSTA) was able to evaluate the need for a signal, which is now warranted in large part due to the increase in traffic along Queens Creek Road. Improvements include the installation of a new signal, extension of a right turn lane into the school, and interior improvements to allow for two-lanes of traffic.

### **Reports/Comments**

#### XIII. Report from TAC Secretary

Ms. Trebil provided an update on the Gateway Signs that are currently under construction at Empire Blvd / US 17 and Piney Green Road / Country Club Road. These signs were funded from NCDOT's Piney Green Road Project. Both signs should be complete in the coming weeks.

Updated pictures of Jacksonville Station were shown to TAC Members. Ms. Trebil stated that there are several items that have been delayed, but the finishing details of the building is underway. The Contractor expects to pave the remaining site next week along with the two turn lanes.

Staff is working towards finalizing the consultant's contract for the Marine Boulevard Feasibility Study. The scope of work includes evaluating a potential road diet within the

existing road between Richlands Highway and Old Bridge Street. Once under contract, the work should be complete within three weeks.

The Request for Qualifications for the Douglass Gate Feasibility Project was advertised and six proposals received. The Selection Committee meets next week to select a firm. A scoping meeting will be held in January to then move towards executing a contract. Funding for this project is from a grant through Office of Local Defense Community Cooperation (OLDCC).

#### XIV. Report from NCDOT Division 3

Ms. Marks reviewed the projects in development. She stated that the NC 24/Butler Drive Superstreet contract has been awarded to ST Wooten. A pre-construction meeting is scheduled next week and work should commence early January. She further stated that Jessi's group should have a kick-off meeting very soon for the new signal at Queens Creek Elementary/Swansboro High School Project.

#### XV. Report from NCDOT Transportation Planning Division

Ms. Jeffers stated that NCDOT recently won a National Safety Award as a result of their pilot program to install thermoplastic lane markings on more than 400 miles of rural, two-lane roads between 2014 and 2017.

She also highlighted upcoming dates for the draft UPWPs for FY23 are due by January 28, 2022.

#### XVI. Report from FHWA Field Officer

No report was given as Mr. Marley was not in attendance.

#### XVII. Closing Comments

The next TAC meeting will be held March 10, 2022.

Vice Chairman Buchanan asked for further comments. Mr. Behshad Norowzi stated that NCDOT adopted an official resilience policy in September 2021. He also mentioned that NCAMPO's annual conference will be held in Wilmington this year. The deadline to submit abstracts is Monday, December 13<sup>th</sup>.

Vice Chairman Buchanan thanked everyone for their participation in today's meeting. A motion was made by Mr. Royce Bennett, seconded by Mr. Randy Thomas to adjourn the meeting. The meeting was adjourned at 4:42pm.