



**TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE (TAC)
Friday, August 18, 2023
10:30 AM Hybrid Meeting**

Members Present

Hon. Walt Eccard
Ms. Pat Sykes
Mr. John Corbett
Hon. Alan Holden
Rep. Frank Iler
Hon. Debbie Smith
Mr. Haynes Brigman

Other Attendees

Mark Hoeweler, GSATS
Elizabeth Tucker, GSATS
Jason Werner, GSATS
Tom Dobrydney, GSATS
Michelle Howes, NCDOT
Behshad Norowzi, NCDOT
Adrienne Cox, NCDOT
Helen Bunch, Brunswick County
Caitlin Melvin, NCDOT
Justin Whiteside, Ocean Isle Beach
Savanna Tenenoff, Brunswick Beacon
SamBoswell

Vice Chair Debbie Smith noted that a quorum was present and brought the meeting to order at 10:30 AM. (Chairman Walt Eccard was unable to attend in-person but was present virtually.)

Mr. Mark Hoeweler read the ethics statement and asked the members present if they had any conflicts. There were none stated.

Mr. Hoeweler then asked the attendees if they could introduce themselves and state their affiliation.

Vice Chair Smith reviewed the meeting minutes from June 30, 2023. Hon. Alan Holden commented that the sentence about him becoming mayor of Holden Beach in 1976 was incorrect and should be removed entirely. **Hon. Holden made a motion to approve the amended minutes. Mr. John Corbett seconded. All voted in favor.**

Vice Chair Smith then invited Ms. Adrienne Cox to provide an update on the status of current projects in the area. Ms. Cox described the transportation project information that was provided in the packets. Her remarks are listed below.

- Construction of intersection improvements at US 17 and Pea Landing Road/Thomasboro Road and Hickman Road was delayed but has resumed and is expected to be completed by the end of September.
- The Calabash Bridge replacement project is about to begin. Preparations for its closure are underway, which includes the installation of a temporary traffic signal to accommodate truck and equipment movement.
- The Holden Beach resurfacing and bike lane project is expected to start construction after Labor Day.
- Fall roadway maintenance has started and a map of locations is publicly available online.

Rep. Frank Iler asked when the Calabash Bridge replacement project will be completed. Ms. Cox replied that it is scheduled to be completed in the spring of 2025.

Vice Chair Smith invited Mr. Hoeweler to present the Conversion of Covid and Carbon Reduction Funds to Every Area Funds. Mr. Hoeweler described the situation with the Covid and Carbon Reduction funding sources. Due to being a TMA, GSATS is entitled to Carbon Reduction funding. The program will last 5 years and \$40,000 per year will be received. NCDOT has enabled GSATS to allocate all 5 years of funds to a project. The COVID-19 relief funds were rescinded and replaced by Every Area funds. The previous funding did not require a 20% local funding match but Every Area funds do. The plan is to use both funds for the Shallotte signal system improvement project, which will almost completely pay for it. Mr. Hoeweler concluded by noting that the TCC has recommended this course of action.

Rep. Iler asked who was paying for the match. Mr. Hoeweler replied that the Town of Shallotte was aware of the match requirement and is willing to pay it. **Ms. Pat Sykes made a motion to allow the conversion of Covid and Carbon Reduction funds to Every Area funds. Mayor Holden seconded. All attendees voted in favor.**

Vice Chair Smith invited Mr. Hoeweler to present the Study Area Boundary Update. Mr. Hoeweler stated that he recently had a productive meeting with the leaders of Saint James and is planning to meet with the leaders of Southport on September 8.

Mr. Corbett asked if there was a deadline to meet with the leaders of the municipalities within the proposed expansion area. Mr. Hoeweler replied that the end of the calendar year is the deadline to submit the boundary expansion. Ms. Sykes inquired what time the meeting with Southport was. Mr. Hoeweler answered that it is a town council workshop that starts at 9:00 AM but GSATS staff won't be presenting until 10:30 AM. Vice Chair Smith stated that according to an article in the Port City Daily, Wilmington MPO officials have decided not to expand their study area boundary due to a lack of interest from the municipalities within their proposed expansion area.

Vice Chair Smith invited Mr. Hoeweler to present the MTP Update. Mr. Hoeweler stated that there were some late submissions for projects and as a result, the steering committee meeting was postponed to next week. He added that the delay will not impact the overall

schedule.

Vice Chair Smith invited Mr. Behshad Norowzi to present the CTP Update. Mr. Norowzi indicated that the CTP steering committee met on June 27 and approved the incorporation of public input. The draft is now in its final public comment period and can be found online. The plan adoption process is about to start, and it should be fully adopted in the beginning of 2024.


Vice Chair Smith invited Mr. Tom Dobrydney to present the Draft P 7.0 Project List. Mr. Dobrydney provided a series of maps and a list of carry-over and holding tank projects to each of the members. He stated that the members could draw their proposals onto the maps without labels, submit those to GSATS, and then GSATS staff will analyze the data associated with them and determine ways to maximize their score. Mr. Hoeweler explained some details regarding project proposals. There are 6 types of projects but a few of those types aren't applicable such as transit, ferry, and railroad. Bicycle and pedestrian related projects require a local match. It is also possible to adjust holding tank projects to improve their score. Mr. Hoeweler concluded by noting that the goal is for each of the members to determine if any project is missing, if a past project needs adjusted, or if any new issues have appeared since P 6.0 that need to be addressed with a new project.

Ms. Sykes asked how carry-over projects will be addressed. Ms. Michelle Howes responded that they will be automatically scored so they do not need to be resubmitted. There are 15 highway project slots but there are more than 15 highway projects in the holding tank so between those projects and new ones, the top 15 should be submitted. Vice Chair Smith inquired what is meant by "installing a median" in NC 179 between NC 904 and Ocean Isle Beach Road access management project. Ms. Howes replied that a concrete median would be placed in the road to prevent left turns and a study will determine where those medians would go. Vice Chair Smith noted that the roundabout at NC 179 and Ocean Isle Beach Road needs slip lanes and NC 179 as a whole needs to be widened along the coast due to tourism related traffic congestion and the growing population in the area. Ms. Howes stated that it is on NCDOT Division 3's priority list, which means that GSATS does not need to submit that as a project. Mr. Hoeweler asked Ms. Howes to clarify what the difference was between a carry-over project and a project in the holding tank. Ms. Howes stated that a carry-over project was a project that scored during P 6.0 but was not funded and a holding tank project was a project that was submitted but did not score high enough to be funded and must be modified. Mr. Corbett noted that an NC 904 widening project to aid in hurricane evacuation is in the holding tank because it didn't score very well. He then asked how he could make it score better. Mr. Hoeweler replied that he should divide the project into phases. Ms. Howes commented that the projects will be funded between FY2025 and FY2033 and that phasing it could help. Mr. Dobrydney stated that he would need to know why it wasn't scoring high and that perhaps placing it in a different category would be helpful. Ms. Cox reminded members that information about P 7.0 is in their packets. Vice Chair Smith inquired when the project submission deadline was. Mr. Hoeweler responded that September 29 was the deadline and if necessary, another TAC meeting could be held prior to the Policy Committee meeting on September 22 at 10:30 AM. Perhaps the TAC could meet at 9:00 AM. That Policy Committee meeting is very

important because the South Carolina members would be able to experience driving on Carolina Bays Parkway and Hickman Road to bolster their support for the extension of the Carolina Bays Parkway and that it will provide an in-depth discussion about that project. Vice Chair Smith supported the idea of holding another TAC meeting prior to the Policy Committee meeting and added that she would like to see the Old Georgetown Road bike lanes extended to Calabash. Mr. Corbett asked if there were any bicycle and pedestrian projects in the carry-over list or holding tank list. Mr. Dobrydney replied that there weren't any. Mr. Hoeweler indicated that some bicycle and pedestrian projects were funded in the past, but the communities couldn't afford to provide a match for them. Mr. Chad Hicks from Carolina Shores is already submitting a bicycle and pedestrian project for P 7.0. Ms. Sykes checked her calendar and asked if the TAC meeting would be at 9:00 AM on September 22. Mr. Hoeweler replied that the meeting will occur at 9:30 AM.

With no further discussion, Chairman Walt Eccard made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Ms. Sykes seconded. The meeting adjourned at 11:45 AM.

Respectfully Submitted,


Mark Hoeweler, MPO Director


Mayor Walt Eccard, Chair

10/16/23
Date