

Minutes
Lenoir County Transportation Committee
Lenoir Economic Development Board Room
Scheduled Meeting
May 13, 2015 – 8:30 a.m.

Attendance:

Voting	Non-Voting	Absent
Gordon Vermillion, Lenoir County at Large, Chair	John Rouse, Division Engineer, NCDOT	Adrian King, PRIDE of Kinston
BJ Murphy, Mayor, City of Kinston (Tony Sears, Kinston City Manager)	Chris Harper, County Transport	John Craft, Manager, Town of LaGrange
Bill Whaley, Lenoir County Economic Development Board	Mark Pope, Executive Director, Lenoir County Economic Development	Patrick Flanagan, RPO
Mary Jane Westphal, NC GTP Authority	Adam Short, City of Kinston	Joe Albright, Town of Grifton, Manager
Dan Sale, Lenoir County, Member-At-Large	Aaron Bullard, District Engineer, NC DOT	Barry Seay, Lenoir County Planning Board
Eric Rouse, Lenoir County Commissioner		Brian Lucas, City of Kinston
		Jeff Cabaniss, NC DOT
		Mike Jarman, Manager, Lenoir County
		Rob Will, RPO Planner
		John Marshall, Kinston-Lenoir County Chamber of Commerce
		Donald King, Town of Pink Hill

Chair Vermillion called the meeting to order at 8:30 a.m. Quorum was present.

Update:

TIP Projects – John Rouse, NC DOT

- **B-4565:** Bridges #42 and #43 over Neuse River on US 70 Business (Queen St.), Awarded to Thalle Construction Co., Inc., utility work starting, road closure tentatively set for July 6th. A barricade will be established south of Mills International. Lenoir County Transportation has implemented transportation assistance for people living in town that walk or ride a bike to work/school. Interested citizens should contact Lenoir County Transit to utilize this service.
- **W-5202K:** NC 11- Construct 21 left turn lanes at existing median openings from Highland Ave to North of Odham Rd, Scheduled Let date June 2015.
- **EB-3314D:** Kinston Riverwalk, multi-use path from downtown through Pearson Park to the Power plant, design is complete, R/R approval for ROW in place, anticipated Let date June 2015.

Non-TIP Projects – John Rouse, NC DOT

- **Smithfield Way** (49005) - extend road from SR 1548 Hill Farm Rd to US 258, state forces to complete box culvert and grade work, paving to be done by Barnhill Contracting Co.
- **Hill Farm Rd** (48102) - extend existing turn lane on SR 1548 (Hill Farm Rd) past Kinston FD Station 3 to 465 ft north of SR 2021 (Smithfield Way), awarded to Barnhill Contracting Co., available March 16, 2015, completion date of December 31, 2015. A connector road is being built by a local developer to the theatre and hotel.

Resurfacing - John Rouse, NC DOT

- **NC 55** from NC 11 to the Craven Co line, contract awarded to Barnhill Contracting Co., paving is complete, shoulder work to start soon.
- **Castle Oaks Subdivision** resurface roads and reconstruct shoulders, contract awarded to Barnhill Contracting Co., available March 15, 2015 with a completion date of November 15, 2015.

- **Secondary Roads** awarded to Barnhill Contracting Co., available July 1st with a completion by November 13, 2015.
 - SR 1116 Jonestown Rd from NC 11 to US 258, widen from 18' to 24' and resurface
 - SR 1578 Airport Rd from 2 lane section to NC 58, mill and resurface
 - SR 1569 Carey Rd from US 70 Bus. (Vernon Ave) to SR 1571 (Plaza Blvd), mill and resurface

Mr. Dan Sale asked if the median on Hill Farm Road would be altered or if land would be acquired to help with the traffic. Mr. Mark Pope stated that conversations have been had with NC DOT and property owner Mr. Ely Perry to work on this issue.

Old Business:

Approval of Minutes – Gordon Vermillion, Chair

- A quorum was present. The minutes were reviewed by the committee for April 8, 2015. Mr. Bill Whaley made a motion to approve the minutes. Mr. Dan Sale seconded the motion. All voting members were in favor of this motion. The minutes were approved by the committee.

RPO Report – Amanda Conner for Rob Will, Eastern RPO Planner (emailed update)

- Mr. Rob Will said that he could not come to the meeting due to a conflict in his schedule. He said to report that the STIP 4.0 will be due in October due to NC DOT pushing back the schedule. Mr. Rob Will stated that Mr. John Rouse is on the committee and can give more information if needed. He also stated that he would have a schedule to the committee before the next meeting.
- Mr. John Rouse stated that the STIP will be updated to make sure there is a more equal distribution of rural and urban projects in the process. The committee is looking to include a distribution for tourism destinations affected by seasonal traffic.

Queen Street Redesign Project – Tony Sears, Manager, and Adam Short, Planner, City of Kinston

- Mr. Tony Sears stated that NC DOT provided the City of Kinston with a window of opportunity to redesign Queen Street due to repaving scheduled after replacement of the Queen Street bridges. The City of Kinston will need to have a plan in place for implementation shortly after the bridges are complete for NC DOT to implement when repaving Queen Street. Mr. John Rouse has stated that NC DOT will pave Queen Street to where it meets Airport Road.
- Mr. Tony Sears stated that the City of Kinston does not have the funding to give Queen Street a facelift. He also stated that the decision to update parking, trees, etc., will need to be made by the residents and business leaders of Kinston. Several ideas have been submitted for consideration. Mr. Tony Sears stated that a design consensus would need to be made now while the opportunity is available.
- Mr. Gordon Vermillion stated that he thinks this is a great idea. Mr. Mark Pope asked Mr. Tony Sears if the Lenoir County Transportation Committee needed to make a recommendation for what they would like to see happen with this project. Mr. Tony Sears stated that he would like the Transportation Committee, County Commissioners, PRIDE, Kinston-Lenoir County Chamber of Commerce, Queen Street business leaders, Lenoir Committee of 100, Inc., and other organizations that will be affected by this decision to provide their inputs and recommendations for the project.
- Mr. Tony Sears stated that the NC DOT will be funding the paving and striping of Queen Street. Any upgrade selected will need to be paid for by the City of Kinston, through Legislation, or other economic development support organizations. He then stated that specifics for the project and funding of these additions need to be decided upon prior to completion of the Queen Street bridge project.
- Mr. Aaron Bullard stated that aesthetics have already been added to the bridge to help provide a nice gateway into the City of Kinston. He said that continuing this same idea through Queen Street would provide continuity.
- Mr. Gordon Vermillion asked when a response from the Lenoir County Transportation Committee would need to be submitted. Mr. Tony Sears stated that the timeline would be up to NC DOT. Mr. John Rouse stated that he would need a detailed, formal plan submitted from the City of Kinston by the next

paving season. Mr. Gordon Vermillion asked if Mr. Adam Short could present to the committee at the next meeting, in June. Commissioner Eric Rouse stated that he would prefer to have the selection already determined for the Queen Street design and seek support. Mr. Gordon Vermillion asked that Mr. Randy Brown, Lenoir County Manufacturers Association President, and Mr. Tom Vermillion, Lenoir Committee of 100, Inc. President be present for this meeting to weigh in on what would be of benefit for their organizations.

- Mr. Dan Sale asked who the lead for this project should be. Mr. Tony Sears stated that the City should be the lead on this project. He also stated that NC DOT would only want to work with one organization for this project.

TIGER Grants Update – Adam Short, Planner, City of Kinston

- Mr. Adam Short stated that the TIGER grant program requires a very detailed plan to be in place. The grant also requires multi-modal transportation means. Mr. Adam Short stated that Kinston does not have a project meeting these requirements. He also stated that the grant process takes years to complete.

Division Pairing Information – Eric Rouse, Commissioner, Lenoir County Board of Commissioners

- Commissioner Eric Rouse stated that he has had conversations with Representative John Bell about changing the pairing partners for Division 1,2 and Division 3,4. He stated that it would be a difficult change to make, but would be beneficial for Lenoir County if accomplished.
- Mr. John Rouse stated that currently under STI, Division 1 (Northeast) is paired with Division 4 (Wilson, Rocky Mount area) and Division 2 (Lenoir County) is paired with Division 3 (Wilmington, Jacksonville area). The pairing was brought forth from 1989 and how areas were funded then. Money was divided in 7 ways instead of 14 so that it would maintain an ebb and flow of money for projects. Divisions 1 and 2 do not have the development that Divisions 3 and 4 have. Mr. John Rouse stated that Division 2 received 20% of funds and Division 3 receives 80% of the funds, for their pairing. He then stated that Division 1 receives 0% of funds and Division 4 receives 100% of the funds for their pairing. If the pairing was changed, we would be more comparable to Division 1 than we are with Division 3. This would assist us with project funding for our area. Even though you have some areas that the funding is balanced, there are areas where the funding is unbalanced. For example, the Raleigh area is paired with the Fayetteville area. Obviously Raleigh is a little bigger, but the money was more of an even split. However, Charlotte is paired with a rural division to the east of it, and the funding is unbalanced here as well. If Division 2 was re-paired with Division 1, we would fare better for the funding of our projects.
- Commissioner Eric Rouse stated that the Governor's plan calls for an open corridor from Hampton Roads to the NC Coast. This plan would open up opportunities if we were paired with Division 1. At this time, it is not possible. We have to be proactive in getting this process started. We have to work together to figure out how to swing this balance for our coastal region area. Commissioner Eric Rouse stated that he feels Representative John Bell is for this change. The obvious issue will be the backlash from current powerhouses in the Divisions.
- Commissioner Eric Rouse stated that we would not attempt to make this change statewide. Mr. Gordon Vermillion asked how projects are affected. Mr. John Rouse stated that this would affect the regional tier scores. The scores were highly favored to congestion. The vast majority of the money went to largest areas. New Bern, in our area, would be the most congested (highest volume of traffic). Greenville, in Division 4, would be the most congested (highest volume of traffic).
- Mr. Gordon Vermillion asked that Commissioner Eric Rouse keep the Lenoir County Transportation Committee updated. He also asked that if coordination of County officials or representatives be needed to help build a consensus that the committee be involved.

New Business:

- Mr. Tony Sears asked Mr. John Rouse if there was an attempt to have Highway 70 be Interstate quality all the way from 40 to Goldsboro. Mr. John Rouse stated that there was an initiative to make Highway

70, Interstate quality, all the way to the port. He said that a bill is in place set to designate Highway 70 from I-40 to the Morehead City port. We as a state have 25 years to bring it up to date. This also opens us up to federal funding to assist with filling in the needed gaps. Mr. Tony Sears stated that a future shield will assist Lenoir County Economic Development.

- Mr. Mark Pope asked when the final four options for the Kinston Bypass would be ready for review. Mr. John Rouse stated that at this time it was not funded in the upcoming STIP. It will keep coming up, however without funding there are no future plans established for the project.
- Mr. Mark Pope stated that Lenoir County needed to support the Kinston Bypass. Commissioner Eric Rouse stated why. Mr. Mark Pope stated that the shallow bypass needs to be our focus to help move the industries to the port. Commissioner Eric Rouse stated that it should be held off for as long as possible. Mr. Mark Pope stated that it is imperative to be able to move people and product as safely and quickly as possible for businesses in the Highway 70 West Industrial Park and North Carolina Global TransPark. Commissioner Eric Rouse stated that he felt the Kinston Bypass would be devastating for Kinston. Mr. Mark Pope stated that there are many destinations on Highway 70 and destinations within our community that will pull traffic to them without being affected by the Shallow Bypass. Commissioner Eric Rouse stated that Kinston would be the only area between Raleigh and the coast that would allow for the slowing down of traffic. He said this would be good for Kinston because slowing down the traffic would make people want to stop. Mr. Mark Pope stated that it is important to attract business and that this development calls for the safe movement of people and product, and that calls for the Bypass. Mr. Gordon Vermillion stated that the committee could bandy this item over and over, however, it is going to come whether we like it or not. He stated that he agrees with Mr. Pope in the statement that Kinston has destinations people specifically travel to.
- Mr. Mark Pope stated that the Poole Industrial Park has several businesses filling it up. He also stated that more business is looking to move there within the year. He asked, what if any, assistance can be given by either the City of Kinston or NC DOT to update these roads and make them nice to travel? Mr. John Rouse stated that the roads in that Industrial Park either belong to the City or Mr. Walter Poole. Mr. Tony Sears stated that he would look into who the roads belong to and get back with Mr. Mark Pope.
- Mr. Gordon Vermillion asked when the Herritage improvements would be complete. Mr. Tony Sears stated that the underground improvements posed some problems not anticipated and so did the weather. He stated that with good weather and no other underground issues, the project could be complete within a week.

The next transportation meeting will be Wednesday, June 10, at 8:30 a.m.

Much discussion followed

The meeting was adjourned at 9:45 a.m.