

ACEC-NC Transportation Committee – August 19, 2020

Meeting Minutes taken by Greg Purvis, PE – Wetherill Engineering, Inc.

➤ Welcome and Introductions

- Lisa Samples welcomed everyone to the online meeting. Lisa pointed that Davis Diggs and Greg Purvis will serve as Vice Chairs for CEI and Design respectively. Jason Peterson is the liaison from the Board to the Transportation Committee

➤ Martha Paige, Morrisville Town Manager and President of the North Carolina City-County Management Association was the featured speaker for the meeting. Items covered included:

- She provided background on her experience in local government and the importance of advocating for engineering/transportation and forming relationships with engineering partners.
- Morrisville sits in an important location in the Triangle bounded by the Town of Cary, RTP, and RDU.
- The Town has a balanced mix of commercial and residential development which is a heavy influence on the rush hour traffic. Most of the Town's road system are State roads.
- The Town's growth has been a huge factor in transportation decisions.
- The Town's budget for 2021 is \$38 million with 50% of that going to public safety. There are no CIP appropriations this year however there is some funding for their Smart Shuttle and Intersection improvement projects. In recent years the Town has developed a Roadway/Transportation Reserve based on a \$.01 incremental tax to assist with funding current and future projects.
- The Town's CIP has been developed over the last years to account for priorities and changing needs. Due to COVID-19 there were no appropriations this year. A bond referendum slated for this year has been pushed to 2021.
- Most of the Town's undeveloped property is in the airport overlay.
- The Town has a small staff for planning and engineering. Because of this they rely on outside resources to assist in delivering their transportation program.
- Among the road network challenges for the Town are: all the major roads in the Town are NCDOT roads, the railroad bisects the town, no east/west connectivity, no public transportation and costs are prohibitive. With these challenges the Town relies on its partnerships in the area including NCDOT, CAMPO and Go Triangle.
- The Town relies on consultant engineers for the following: On-Call services, TIA support, CEI, Major project design, Ad hoc technical assistance, Monthly Capital Project Meetings, Project Coordination, Troubleshooting, and Problem Solving.
- A Major project for the Town is typically initiated by a funding request in the CIP. The Town will send out an RFQ for design services to be managed by the Engineering Department. The Town has recently developed a Capital Projects Management Policy.
- The Town relies on the consultant to have an understanding of the moving parts on a major project and provide guidance. Some of the most important information they need from consultants are reasonable/realistic cost estimates and timelines. When there is an issue they want the consultant to provide options/solutions to consider.

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- Martha pointed out the local governments across the state are all different and unique. They have different staff levels/capacity, budgets/resources, and knowledge/experience. This means their needs for consultants are different.
- Among the helpful hints for consultants are: invest in the relationship. Get to know the staff and the projects for the local government. When submitting a LOI match references/ work examples with the needs for the local government. References from other local governments are beneficial.
- Be part of the team- be proactive and help.
- Questions for Martha
 - How has the experience been with NCDOT and STI?
 - The Town has a Planning Department with a Long-Range Planner. They have been coordinating through CAMPO. It has been a challenge for the Town to learn the process and how to leverage dollars.
 - How is Transportation/Reserve fund used?
 - The Town utilizes this to set aside money for future projects.

Subcommittee reports were given for Project Delivery, Construction & Materials Testing, Design Build and the Joint Conference.

Jason Peterson provided an update from the latest TAB meeting.

- The cash balance sits at \$488 million. The forecast is for slow but steady growth.
- Hurricanes or other natural disasters will impact any decisions made going forward.
- The goal is to be fiscally conservative until the cash balance gets to a sustained \$600 million.
- From HB 77 –
 - Garvee Bond reserves are allowed to be part of cash balance.
 - \$300 million from CARES act – still waiting on Congress to act to allow this to be spent. This would go towards the General Maintenance Reserve.
 - \$700 million Build NC Bonds – will be used on active construction projects. The sale is anticipated in September. The Department is working with the Treasurer's office.
 - Cash floor lowered to \$267 million.
- FHWA update – request submitted for August redistribution for \$160 million.
- STIP update –
 - Being updated due to revenue changes.
 - Final approval expected in October by the Board.
- PE update –
 - PE expenditures for the year are at \$365 million.
 - Projects will be restarted incrementally with a focus on 2021 – 2023.
 - FY 2021 - \$250- \$260 million in PE – subject to Bond sale.
 - If the Bonds sale they will look at reinitiating projects in October and they will be released incrementally.
 - The 12 month Let list is being modified based on the updated STIP.
 - LAP – These projects are slowly restarting and NCDOT is in the process of notifying municipalities.

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- I-95 Procurement process – Paul Meehan provided some background from the Department on the procurement process for the conversion of one of the I-95 projects to Design Bid Build.
 - The Department utilized the existing Limited Services Contract to award this project and they like this was the best way to move forward. They may use this process with other projects going forward. Anyone with questions on this procurement should contact ACEC.
- NCDOT was asked what ACEC can do to help the Department. They asked ACEC to continue coordination with industry partners like the NC Chamber, AGC, CAPA, etc.
- The Department was asked about why more firms were included on the latest CEI selection. The response was to create more competition.
- NCDOT is developing a plan to utilize consultant evaluations.
- The Preconstruction conference has been canceled.
- The next TAB meeting is November 17.

David Ferrell gave a Legislative update. This included the following:

- The Legislature will return on September 2nd for a two-day session.
- They might take up additional CARES act funding.
- \$300 million from CARES act – Again this is contingent on a Congressional revision. It is possible NCDOT might request to extend the September deadline.
- This is obviously an important election year so they won't be in town long.

Everyone was allowed to ask questions in the chat box.

- There was a question about the updated monthly truck rates for CEI and if they could be used on current contracts. This was initially denied by the Construction unit but Boyd Tharrington has agreed to give this some more thought.
- Question about status of HB 1225 (Bond package) – This is not technically dead. If the House and Senate leadership were to come together then something could happen but it is probably not practical at this point with the election so close. The Senate has been against the Bonds as a funding mechanism.
- Question about timeline for the next Build NC Bonds – The timeline for the Year 3 sale is unknown at this time.
- Question about the reauthorization of the FAST act – David was not aware of the status at this time.

The next meeting is scheduled for November 9th but it may move until after the TAB meeting.

Paul Meehan noted that there will be a request sent out to Senior Leadership about PAC support for the upcoming elections. He also encouraged anyone with questions about a LAP project to reach out to Patrick Norman with NCDOT.

Meeting was adjourned.