

MINUTES
LENOIR COUNTY TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE
July 11, 2007

The Lenoir County Transportation Committee met on Wednesday, July 11, 2007 at 8:30 a.m. in the Lenoir County Administration Conference Room at 101 N. Queen Street, Kinston, NC 28502.

Voting members present included: Mr. Russell Rhodes, Chairman; Mr. Chris Humphrey, County Commissioner; Mr. Anthony Mitchell, Mayor of Pink Hill; Mr. Buddy Ritch, Mayor of Kinston, Mr. John Craft, Town Manager of LaGrange; Mr. Joe Bower, Kinston-Lenoir County Chamber of Commerce; Mr. Bruce Parson, GTP Authority Staff and Mr. Bill Whaley, Economic Development Director.

Non-Voting members present included: Mr. Scott Stevens, City Manager; Mr. Mark Pope, Economic Development; Mr. Tommy Lee, City of Kinston Planning Board, Mr. Joey Bryan, Lenoir County Manager's Office and Mr. Preston Hunter, NCDOT.

Also Present: Ms. Lashanda Aytch, Administrative Secretary

Members absent included: Mr. Wayland Humphrey, Lenoir County Planning, Mr. Adrian King, Pride of Kinston, Mr. Cam McRae, DOT Board Member; Mr. Van Braxton, State Representative, and Senator Charles Albertson.

Mr. Rhodes called the meeting to order at approximately 8:30 a.m.

Upon a motion by Mr. Parson and a second by Mr. Mitchell the minutes of June 13, 2007 were unanimously approved.

Mr. Rhodes addressed "Old Business," regarding the US 70 Corridor Commission. The next US 70 Corridor Commission meeting will be held on July 21, 2007 at 2:00 p.m. in Clayton, NC. Four pilot projects will be discussed.

Industrial Access at Friendly Grocery – Mr. Hunter stated NCDOT is requesting funding for the project.

An applicant has applied for the position of at-large member for the transportation committee.

TIP Priorities for Lenoir County – Mr. Rhodes stated Mr. Parson has sent a recommendation from Mr. McRae to add a tenth item to the priority list. The tenth item had not been considered by the transportation committee and is up for consideration. The tenth project is entitled "Kinston Waterfront NOW Bike/Pedestrian Initiatives." Mr. Lee stated the project is tying into the Kinston Pedestrian Plan, which is part of the Kinston Comprehensive Transportation Plan. A pedestrian bridge connecting downtown Kinston to the Neuseway Nature Center is the goal of the project. Supporters of the project state it will become more than a bridge, but a work of art of the entire city to appreciate and enjoy. This plan is becoming a multi-agency, state project that has a lot of attention. It could be a signature project of Kinston-Lenoir County. There will be a public hearing on July 26, 2007 for public input on the project at the Kinston Enterprise Center, Room 111.

This bridge could improve the quality of life for citizens of Kinston-Lenoir County and would be able to tie in with several other projects throughout the county. NCDOT will be partially funding a feasibility study for the project. Mr. Parson stated funding is available for the project, but funding is limited. Mr. McRae is adamant that Lenoir County receives this funding. Mr. Rhodes asked if there were any objections about adding this project to the TIP listing. There were no objections to the project addition.

Mr. Rhodes stated, last month the committee addressed the nine items that were on the listing for approval. The committee ranked the nine items and voted unanimously for approval and submission to the Lenoir County Board of Commissioners. The County Commissioners were concerned about the ranking of the US 70 Corridor at its current position of project six on the listing. Mr. Parson stated NCDOT has stated the US 70 Corridor project should not be lower than project four on the county's TIP listing. Mr. Rhodes stated the committee was unified in making the Carey Road Extension project one; the US 70 West Industrial Park additional Access to Harvey Parkway is very important to the committee and was ranked as project two. The deadliest intersection in Lenoir County, US 70 Intersection with NC 11/55 was ranked as project three; the NC 11 Connector North of Kinston to US 70 was ranked as project four due to the Greenville Bypass coming into play. The fifth project is the Eastern Section of Crescent Road from NC 58 to NC 11 is an enhancement to project four.

Mr. Bower asked if the current ranking of US 70 Corridor really hurt the project, or will it take away the importance of other projects? Mr. Stevens stated the current ranking of the US 70 Corridor shows that it is really not important to Kinston, but there is so much money required to construct the project that it really does not matter where it ranks in the TIP listing. NCDOT is not giving the county \$400 million and saying spend it were you want, but the county is saying these are the projects that are important to the county right now stated Mr. Stevens.

Mr. Whaley stated the US 70 Corridor is coming no matter if the project is placed first or tenth. The top three projects are the most important to Kinston right now stated Mr. Whaley. Board members discussed alternates routes to get from Raleigh to the coast without having to travel US 70. Mr. Craft stated the Town of LaGrange is very concerned about the access corridor improvements all the way down US 70. These improvements could be very isolating for the Town stated Mr. Craft. Mr. Craft stated he ultimately feels it will hurt Kinston when it is bypassed in the future; the whole southern bypass will be bad for the entire county. To accelerate the US Corridor project would not be good stated Mr. Craft. Mr. Craft stated he supports the listing as presented and approved by the committee. Upon a motion by Mr. Whaley and a second by Mr. Craft the committee unanimously approved the addition of project ten to the listing and approved keeping the TIP listing as is.

Adjourned at 9:00 a.m.

Respectfully Submitted by
Lashanda Aytch
Clerk to the Board