

RIDE II Committee Meeting
Monday, October 20, 2003 @ 8:30 a.m.
Horry County Administrator's Conference Room

In Attendance: Chairman Mike Wooten, Edsel "Coupe" DeVille, Mitchell Flannery, James R. Frazier, Jim Hulen, John Kost, Gary Loftus, David Norris, Darrell Ricketts, Mark Hoeweler, Waccamaw Regional Planning, Brad Dean, Myrtle Beach Chamber of Commerce, Joe Woodle, PARTNERS Economic Development Group, Katherine Jenerette, Congressional Field Representative, Representative Henry Brown's Office.

Absent: Donald Helms, Steve Gosnell, Thad Viers and Tee Hooper.

Chairman Wooten called the meeting to order.

Approval of Minutes from September 22, 2003. A motion was made by Mitchell Flannery to approve the minutes, seconded by Gary Loftus and approved by the Committee.

GSATS Traffic Model/Mark Hoeweler, Waccamaw Regional Planning. Mr. Hoeweler informed the committee that at the last meeting he had presented a 2000 Network with a 2000 Land Use model and a 2000 Network with a 2015 Land Use model. Today, at the committee's request, he has brought updated maps for their review.

Chairman Wooten updated the committee that their request to Mr. Hoeweler for this meeting was to prepare a new model showing all the roads that are funded with RIDE I, RIDE II or Burroughs & Chapin Multi County Business Park funds even though the individual projects may not be complete at this time. This would include such projects as the North Myrtle Beach Connector, the improvements in front of the Mall, the Fantasy Harbour Bridge, as well as the Hwy. 501 and Hwy. 544 improvements.

Mr. Hoeweler passed out a list showing the roadways that were added to the network for 2005 and the impacts they provided. The new map that Mr. Hoeweler presented shows the 2005 Network with the 2005 Land Use model with all road improvements in place. The second map utilized the same 2005 network with 2015 land use. The land uses have been moved up from 2000 to 2005 and then 2015. This is very general however and does not include the in-depth detail that will be available in the updated long range plan. A 3% growth figure per year was utilized across the board for these projections. This is a conservative number when projecting growth.

When comparing the 2000 Network with the 2005 Network, which includes all the new roads either completed or projected for completion, the following changes were noted:

- Singleton Ridge Road – shows all in red. It's hoped that the improvements on Switch Road will help this congestion.
- Hwy. 501 – several hotspots remain, but generally the traffic pattern is improved.
- Hwy. 544 – There is a marked improvement with the four-lane construction.
- Hwy. 17 Bypass – Increased congestion noted with improvements

- Hwy. 17 – It is improving due to the Main Street Connector

The 2005 network takes into account an estimated 18% growth factor as well. Mr. Hoeweler stressed that these maps are a product of what could be produced on short notice. Waccamaw Regional Planning is working with Wilbur Smith & Associates to update their long range plan and a contract should be signed shortly. This network only shows the major roads and does not show minor collectors. Additionally, there are approximately 260 areas currently coded as “traffic zones” where growth will be allocated. Waccamaw Regional will distribute the population growth over these areas. He commended Horry County’s Planning staff since they have been instrumental in helping Waccamaw Regional attain this information.

Chairman Wooten recommended that County Council require a traffic impact analysis for each large project – he stated that this was the beauty of the PUD plan versus straight zoning which doesn’t require this information. If this information was required, based on some prescribed database that Waccamaw Regional required, then the model could be constantly updated.

Mr. Kost stated that there is a traffic analysis but that no one pays attention to it. Mr. Flannery stated that the real problem is that it is not based on land use codes.

Mr. DeVille stated that the Emergency Evacuation Study will show the benefit of I-73 when complete. Mr. Kost felt it would be difficult for the group to come up with a direction until I-73’s actual corridor is determined. The environmental groups are fighting the proposed corridors at this time. Chairman Wooten informed the committee that RIDE I proved that roads can be built that are environmentally sound – the Carolina Bays Parkway is an example.

Katherine Jenerette, Congressional Field Representative, stated that the SCDOT is doing a wonderful job going around to various locations and speaking to the public about their environmental concerns. She commended Berry Still and Rob Hamzy for the job they’re doing in speaking with the public and calming their fears.

Mr. DeVille stated that the Emergency Evacuation Study will show the benefit of I-73 when complete and the lives that can be saved by adding this critical evacuation route. The study should be completed shortly.

Mr. Kost again stressed that it would be difficult for the committee at this point to propose any long time solutions until we have some answers on I-73. Short term answers we can come up with, but long term answers are more difficult. There are currently three locations that this highway could come through. We don’t want to start allocating dollars to a specific location and then have the road go in another direction.

Chairman Wooten stressed there are some local roads that could be addressed now that would address several of the red areas on Mr. Hoeweler’s map. Such roads as Hwy. 707, Highway 90 (from International Drive to Conway) Switch Road and Gardener Lacy Road just to name a few.

Chairman Wooten directed the committee to think through the local roads that need improvement in the next 5 years – Committee members are asked to bring a list to the next meeting so that it can be reviewed with Mark Hoeweler, as well as Berry Still and/or Rob Hamzy. While we know that I-73 will have a enormous impact, what if it is never constructed because we don't get the Federal dollars to build it – we will continue to have traffic problems. Let's see what we can do to come up with a list of roads that we know are going to have to be improved.

Mr. Flannery recommended that we bring a list of 5-10 road improvements that could be incorporated into the 2015 traffic model to see how that affects the future flow.

Chairman Wooten reminded the committee of their charge – Bringing in all these new roads is wonderful, but our charge is to improve existing roads for local traffic – keep this in mind when you're preparing your list. Keep in mind that intersections being changed into interchanges will improve traffic flow, as well as safety. These are locations that should be added to your lists as well.

The committee returned to their review of Mr. Hoeweler's maps that highlighted the differences between the 2000 network with the 2015 land use and 2005 network with 2015 land use. It was noted that there was some improvement noted on Hwy. 501, Hwy. 544, Forestbrook Road, Hwy. 701 S of Conway and SC 22 between the Carolina Bays Parkway and the Main Street Connector has improved US 17.

Mr. Hoeweler's map shows a peak season model with tourists. Would there be much change if only the normal traffic was reviewed? Probably not – Mr. DeVille feels that in order to complete the committee's charge they should look at maps with normal local traffic so that priorities could be properly identified. Mr. Loftus stated that we may be able to get real time counter information from the SCDOT to identify this information.

Mr. Kost recommended that the committee return with their recommendations and then we'll have Mr. Hoeweler put them into his maps – then we'll be able to determine if any of the red goes away. Our recommendations will be easy –funding is the major issue and the hold up on whatever we recommend.

Mr. Frazier stressed that we cannot tax our citizens for these improvements – some people have annual incomes of only \$8,000 and cannot afford more taxes. Mr. DeVille suggested that we look at a sales tax for our list of priorities – we may be able to find our funding there. Mr. Kost reminded the committee that we failed miserably when we tried to add to the sales tax before – he can't see how we could do any better in the future. Funding is our biggest problem if we can't use increased property taxes or sales tax funding.

Discussion Regarding Additional Improvement Locations –

Chairman Wooten reminded the committee that, based on the their local knowledge, he wants a list of 10 top priorities for improvements for the next meeting. Once these recommendations are put into the maps from Waccamaw Regional Planning we'll be able to see if there is any impact on the red areas.

Visioning Process – Where will we grow? Goals and Objectives Discussion -
To be discussed at the November 10, 2003 meeting.

Update on Transportation Summit: Mr. Loftus informed the Committee that the Transportation Summit is scheduled for Thursday, November 6, 2003 from 2:00 – 4:00 p.m. at the Wall Auditorium. Contact Sandee Garigen for parking passes.
No action required.

The meeting was adjourned by Chairman Wooten.

NEXT MEETING: MONDAY, NOVEMBER 10th AT 1:00 P.M.
HORRY COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR'S
CONFERENCE ROOM