



Board of Directors – Operations Committee

Meeting Details

Date: January 26, 2023

Time: 9:30 AM

Location: Webinar & NCDOT Board Room –
Room 150
1 S. Wilmington St.
Raleigh, NC 27601

Attendance

Members Present

Montell Irvin

Members Present Virtually

Mary Clayton, Charles Travis, Sam Hunt (joined at 9:44 AM)

Members Absent

Welcome/Introductions, Call to Order & Declaration of Quorum

Montell Irvin, Chair

Discussion Summary

Chairman Montell Irvin called the January 26, 2023, North Carolina Turnpike Authority Operations Committee meeting to order and welcomed those in attendance. Mr. Irvin called roll and declared a quorum.

Chairman Irvin thanked everyone for attending and the staff for all of the good work that continues at Turnpike.

Actions Taken

Information only/no action required.

Approval of October 20, 2022, Meeting Minutes

Montell Irvin, Chair

Discussion Summary

Mr. Irvin noted everyone received a copy of the meeting minutes prior to the meeting and announced he would accept a motion to approve the October 20, 2022, meeting minutes as written.

Actions Taken

The October 20, 2022, Operations Committee meeting minutes were unanimously approved upon a motion by Ms. Mary Clayton and second by Mayor Chuck Travis.

Opening Comments

J.J. Eden, NCTA Executive Director

Discussion Summary

Mr. J.J. Eden started his opening comments by welcoming everyone to the meeting. He talked about how busy everyone had been and mentioned that there were plans to expand staffing accordingly.

Mr. Eden told the Board Members that Kathryn Lorbacher had left NCTA to pursue another opportunity. He shared that he was glad that she had taken on a Project Management position within HNTB. Staying at the same firm means she will be available as needed by Turnpike.

Mr. Eden told the Board that Mr. Manish Chourey would be working to replace Ms. Rachel Ruiz in Roadway Technology. In Charlotte there would be another person hired to work with Mr. Dennis Jernigan to assist with the multiple projects currently being constructed in that area.

Mr. Eden discussed the current and future renovation plans for the NCDOT Highway Building. He spoke of plans to use the other NCTA Office space in the Morrisville Call Center Building, when construction warranted relocation. There were current restroom renovations and desktop adjustments ongoing at the Morrisville location as well.

Mr. Eden reported that the toll system cutover was scheduled for Mid-February and all plans were structured to anticipate and avoid potential problems. Today's presentations were designed to address these issues.

In addition, he said that RFP's (Requests for Proposals) had been issued for Roadside Equipment for 540 Phases 1 & 2. Mr. Eden updated the Board Members regarding the appeal of the lawsuit involving the

Mid-Currituck Bridge. A judgment was not expected for five or six months, according to Mr. Eden. Regardless, the department was evaluating financial and construction aspects of the project in order to rebaseline the project.

Mr. Eden talked about how the Marketing & Communications Department had been working very closely with the call center to assist with social media outreach for the cutover and to maximize utilization of transponder use as well. In addition, the Finance Department has been working on budget analysis.

The happy news that January 10th was the 10th anniversary of NC Quick Pass and EZ-Pass interoperability was announced by Mr. Eden.

He reminded the Board Members that Mobility Partners would be attending the February 16th Board meeting to introduce their new CEO and discuss upcoming changes in software and data collection.

Mr. Eden announced that the May 18th Board Meeting had been rescheduled to take place on May 24th 2023, in order to accommodate a change in Secretary Boyette's schedule.

Mr. Eden finished his remarks by talking about the general workload of the department for this year and for 2024.

Actions Taken

Information only/no action required.

Complete 540 Construction Update

Dennis Jernigan, P.E., Interim Chief Engineer

Discussion Summary

Mr. Dennis Jernigan provided the committee with an update on Complete 540 construction and public outreach. He showed photos and videos of key portions of the project work and gave the Committee Members detailed descriptions of the progress shown. Mr. Jernigan presented current details about Complete 540 Outreach and total numbers for 2022.

Actions Taken

Information only/no action required.

Complete 540 Phase 2 Update

Dennis Jernigan, P.E., Interim Chief Engineer

Discussion Summary

Mr. Dennis Jernigan shared the current status of preliminary work on Phase 2 of the Complete 540 Project. Included in the presentation was a detailed map of the planned locations and interchanges for STIP R-2829A and STIP R-2829B. He provided information regarding an FAA Communications Tower Relocation, the schedules for each STIP, and Contract Administration.

Ms. Mary Clayton asked Mr. Jernigan why there was a change in contract administration. Mr. J. J. Eden answered her question by sharing that there were several reasons including the fact that Turnpike products are branded to NCTA and the finance protocols are different than those usually utilized by NCDOT. He stressed that Turnpike is still working with NCDOT. Mr. Eden added that with control of this project NCTA will maintain better insight into the contracts and better control of the finances and construction. Mr. Jernigan added that with such a large project there were always decisions that had to be made. He added that sometimes in the fast pace of construction implementation, Turnpike was not always involved in every decision (with NCDOT Management). He noted that this change would allow for better decision-making down the line regarding the time schedule and quality. Ms. Clayton mentioned her past concern for the projects has mirrored those mentioned by Mr. Eden and that the Committee Members would be supportive of this change. She continued to state that these were excellent steps to take to improve coordination of efforts going forward. Mr. Eden closed the topic by mentioning how much Turnpike relies on DOT as a prime partner for all projects.

Mr. Irvin supported the change and asked if there were any questions. Mr. Chuck Travis complimented Mr. Jernigan on the success of moving the FAA tower so quickly. Mr. Jernigan thanked the other entities involved for their successful coordination strategies.

Mr. Irvin asked about Phase I. He had been concerned about one of the contractors' struggles. He asked if there would be delays or issues regarding supply chain or staffing issues. Mr. Jernigan shared that currently, the anticipated project opening date was at the back end of the project schedule. It was hoped by all that time could be gained back in order to open as originally planned. The inclusion of the contractor in meetings early on would help to make improvements more possible. Mr. Jernigan also shared that one contractor in particular was facing multiple challenges in regard to keeping the current schedule. It was the goal of the department to deal with these issues directly and periodically on an ongoing basis in the future. Mr. Irvin stated that if the delays were not caused by common supply and staffing shortages, that the contractors needed to be put on notice about what the expectations of the department were. There were deadlines, he added. Mr. Jernigan shared that a meeting had taken place with high level contractor associates, and the expectations had been communicated directly. The company was aware of the needs of the department and the importance of meeting deadlines. Mr. Irvin stated that these expectations applied to all projects undertaken by the Turnpike Authority.

Actions Taken

Information only/no action required.

I-485 Express Lanes Update

Mr. Brian Davis, P.E., Resident Engineer

Discussion Summary

Mr. Brian Davis, P.E., Division 10 Resident Engineer, provided an update on the construction of the I-485 Express Lanes project and showed pictures of toll sites under construction.

Mayor Chuck Travis asked Mr. Davis about how the project was tracking in regard to the schedule. Mr. Davis explained how a summary is produced each month by the contractor before the periodic estimates were paid out. The current report showed that the project was tracking well, and that the late 2024 substantial completion date was likely. Mayor Travis asked if Mr. Davis agreed with these reports, after his own analysis of this issue. Was the contractor truly on track to meet the stated completion date? Mr. Davis said that scheduling software was used by the contractor, and that some tweaking might make it more accurate. Mayor Travis stated how critical this issue was and that the same question would be asked repeatedly after each presentation given by Mr. Davis. He emphasized the importance of being diligent in regard to this issue.

Actions Taken

Information only/no action required.

Toll Technology Update

Manish Chourey, Chief Technology Officer

Discussion Summary

Mr. Manish Chourey provided the Committee Members updates and information regarding the Toll Technology Project Timeline, Roadside Updates, SRTCS Toll System Procurement, Backoffice System Upgrades, and Monroe Expressway & Triangle Expressway Traffic Counts.

Mr. Chourey clarified for Mr. Montell Irvin that Kapsch was the company preparing the OAT (Operational Acceptance Testing) audit package. Mr. Irvin later shared his thoughts about what a 'huge lift' this new Back Office System undertaking was for the Turnpike. He continued by stating that, in his experience in the business world, technology was often taken for granted until it wasn't working. Any upgrade of systems he had experienced had never been an easy transition. He shared that he had always told his staff the following: It is how one addresses the things that do not go well that proves to be the key to success. The choice of vendor and technology, and the adjustments to the schedule, bode well for the success of the new system, according to Mr. Irvin.

Actions Taken

Information only/no action required.

Customer Service Operational Readiness Update

Angela Queenland, Manager of Customer Service
Suzie Wiley, Quality & Training Manager

Discussion Summary

Ms. Angela Queenland provided the Committee Members with statistics and trends data for the Call Center. The charts she presented illustrated the number of customers helped per day at the Walk-In and Call Centers. Ms. Queenland also showed data regarding the Average Speed to Answer Calls and Average Call Handle Time.

Ms. Angela Queenland introduced Ms. Suzie Wiley. They presented information regarding CSC (Customer Service Center) Operational Readiness in regard to the upcoming Backoffice System Transition. Topics discussed included Operational Preparation elements such as Staffing, Projections, and SOP (Standard Operating Procedure) Development. Agent Training would focus on Employee Wellness, Training Materials, Measurement of progress and the planned schedule.

Mr. Irvin added that the team had been successful in engaging the CSR's that came in for training, and agreed with Ms. Wiley, that change can be fearful, but it is not always bad. Mr. Irvin repeated some of the statistics regarding the anticipated increase in customer contacts and call time, directly after the conversion period. He repeated the motto "Be Prepared."

Actions Taken

Information only/no action required.

Communications Update

Logen Hodges, Marketing & Communications Manager

Discussion Summary

Mr. Logen Hodges outlined the Communications Schedule planned for use during the Backoffice Systems Transition (Summary of Campaign Goals, Anticipated Dates, Platforms, and the topics covered by Messaging). Mr. Hodges detailed each of the planned System and Website Campaign Rollout steps.

Actions Taken

Information only/no action required.

Adjourn

Montell Irvin, Chair

Discussion Summary

Mr. Montell Irvin opened the floor for questions or comments. Mr. Sam Hunt stated that even though many things were going on within the department at the same time, the management of it all was superb. Mr. Irvin agreed with Mr. Hunt.

Mr. J. J. Eden said that it was a great team to work with at Turnpike. Mr. Eden shared the thoughts of a presenter at a session at the Summit (NCDOT) about generational differences and technology. The purpose of the story was to illustrate that younger people deal with digital payments exclusively, not cash. Mr. Eden shared that there was an RFI (Request for Information) regarding the Digital Payment Gateway. He had

previously mentioned to the Committee Members that NCTA, along with nineteen other agencies (in 14 states), had issued an RFI and had hoped for 8-12 respondents. There were thirty-four respondents. Also of interest, per Mr. Eden, was the presentation NCTA organized at the NCDOT Summit. There were representatives from Microsoft, Google, and Slack presenting informational sessions about digital payment. Mr. Eden stressed that Turnpike is always moving forward in terms of technology.

Mayor Travis wanted to know if in-car technologies would eliminate the need for transponders in cars. Mr. Eden said yes that the technology already existed which would remove the need for transponders and gantries. Thus, reducing the costs to the Turnpike Authority, and toll road users. Mayor Travis also discussed the fact that many people are not aware of the HOV attributes of the roadways in the Charlotte area. He asked Mr. Eden if the number of vehicle occupants could be data collected with in-car technology or would participants have to register and notify the agency ahead of time. Mr. Eden said yes, it was already being developed and applied. Most cars have the ability to identify occupants in the front seats, and in the future back seats and whether or not car seats for infants and children are being utilized. This information can be invaluable in regard to vehicle accidents and occupant status.

Mr. Eden continued to share that the transactions would still need to be verified, but the cash transactions would be handled by companies such as MasterCard, Sirius XM, and Visa. These vendors would pay NC Quick Pass the amounts collected. There is a great deal of data accumulated by modern vehicles. This group RFI would work to establish standards within the industry and begin by using a pilot project to test the applications. Mr. Eden mentioned the video he had previously shared with the Committee Members. It was related to connected car technology and the fact that 90% of the 250 million cars on the road in the U.S. are connected through in-vehicle technology. Taking advantage of an embedded payment system and vehicle data can be beneficial for use with tolling, parking, and fast-food payments. Focus on the future would be in the Charlotte area, according to Mr. Eden. Mayor Travis thanked Mr. Eden for the information.

Mr. Montell Irvin called for a motion to adjourn the January 26, 2023, North Carolina Turnpike Authority Operations Committee meeting.

Actions Taken

A motion to adjourn the January 26, 2023, Operations Committee meeting was approved upon a call for motion from Mr. Sam Hunt and Ms. Mary Clayton seconded the motion.