



THIS MAP shows the two alternative routes being considered for a Wilmington bypass that will link U.S. 17 in Brunswick County with I-40. Selection of a preferred route is approximately a year off.

DOT Trims Northern Bypass Routes To Two

BY TERRY POPE

Both routes chosen as possible corridors for a Wilmington bypass will travel north of Leland and Navassa, it was announced by the N.C. Department of Transportation Tuesday.

Officials of those two towns had been concerned because of the 26 possible routes for the Northern Outer Loop project, several would have divided the communities virtually in half.

Rick Morse of Greiner Inc. of Raleigh, the consulting firm hired by DOT to study the project, said some DOT board members unveiled the two routes at a Wilmington Chamber of Commerce meeting Tuesday.

The estimated \$111 million four-lane highway will exit Interstate 40 near Castle Hayne and take one of the two proposed routes into Brunswick County. It is designed to route I-40 traffic heading south around Wilmington.

The decision to choose two routes was delayed by about 30 days because an additional public hearing was held in Wilmington after residents of the Wrightsboro community complained that the road would disrupt their neighborhood.

A route that would use the existing U.S. 421 and U.S. 17-74-76 highways through northern Brunswick County was one of the routes eliminated.

The two routes chosen for further study apparently would have the greatest impact on residents of the Phoenix community in northern Brunswick County and on the county's Leland Industrial Park.

One alternative would travel south of the Phoenix community while the other route would

travel north of Phoenix.

Southern Alternative

One of the routes chosen does travel through the Wrightsboro community before heading into Brunswick County.

Termed the "Southern Alternative," the route follows the original path proposed by the Brunswick County Major Thoroughfare Plan adopted by DOT in February 1988. That plan was also endorsed by Wilmington and New Hanover County at that time.

The route would exit I-40 at Castle Hayne, cross the Northeast Cape Fear River north of the New Hanover County Refuse Fired Steam Plant on U.S. 421 and then cross the Cape Fear River and its associated wetlands in northern Brunswick County.

"At this point, the corridor angles north to avoid the town of Navassa and the CSX Davis Rail Yard," said Morse.

The southern route would then turn south and cross U.S. 74-76 west of the Leland Industrial Park at Malmo and connect with U.S. 17 just north of Bishop.

It is a route the Brunswick County Resources Development Commission endorsed in a resolution adopted Jan. 14 of this year, stating that the bypass would be valuable to operations of the industrial park.

However, when other alternatives were made available in March, county officials endorsed a more northern route to keep the bypass right of way from eating away at valuable park property.

Northern Alternative

The "Northern Alternative" would exit I-40 at the same spot at Castle Hayne and take a

more northern turn through New Hanover County, thus avoiding the Wrightsboro community.

It would then travel northeast of the General Electric plant and southwest of the Castle Hayne Industrial Park and cross U.S. 421 north of the New Hanover County landfill.

However, the route would then cross the Cape Fear River north of Sutton Lake before passing through Du Pont company property south of the existing plant. It would then cross U.S. 74-76 west of the Leland Industrial Park and take the same route from there to the Bishop community on U.S. 17. The park property would be avoided.

Greiner's two routes will now undergo a more detailed study to be included in a Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) scheduled for completion in March 1992, said Morse.

The two routes were chosen after the firm studied public comments, business and residential relocations, wetland and protected species impacts, compatibility with local land use and transportation plans and impacts to churches, schools and cemeteries.

The detail analysis of the two routes will include surveys of wetlands, estimation of right of way costs, identification of interchange locations, examination of existing and future traffic volumes and air and noise impacts of the highway.

After the DEIS goes to a public hearing in April 1992, DOT will choose one route for the bypass.

Greiner will then draft, by November 1992, a final environmental impact statement on the recommended route.

Brown Water Looked Ugly But No Threat To Humans

It looked brown, but it tasted fine. Sediment in Brunswick County water lines had residents taking a second look at their water glasses over the weekend.

The brown water continued to flow in the South Brunswick Islands Monday as the Brunswick County Water Department worked to flush lines to help remove the loosened sediment.

Residents, upset by the discoloration, were assured that the water was of no threat to their health—it just didn't look very appetizing.

Brunswick County Manager David Clegg told county commissioners Monday that routine flushing of the lines and annual drainage of the Bell Swamp storage tank at Winnabow caused particles to loosen from the bottom of the tank and to flow south.

"We've had a lot of people concerned about the water," said Clegg.

Public Utilities Director Jerry Webb, in a memo to Clegg, stated that the discolored water had been tested and contained no particles harmful to humans.

By Monday evening, flushing of the lines along U.S. 17 to Shallotte had been completed. Flushing of lines along N.C. 179 to Sunset Beach was to continue Tuesday, Clegg said.

People wondering why the water was brown called town halls at Shallotte, Holden Beach, Ocean Isle Beach and Sunset Beach starting

late Friday. "Right before I left Friday one of the restaurants called me and said their water was brown," said Ocean Isle Beach Secretary Peggy Pelasara. Phoebe McLean, secretary at Shallotte Town Hall, said she received between 25 and 30 calls about the water.

A number of people also called the Holden Beach Town Hall when they noticed their water had turned brown. Joyce Shore, a secretary there, said she was told Saturday the water would be cleared up in two or three hours.

"Everybody's kind of wondering what's happening," said Ms. Shore.

She said county water system officials said the water was fine to drink. "They said there was nothing in it that would hurt anybody," she added.

Calabash Town Clerk Janet Thomas said Monday nobody called town hall to complain. One person told her the water was discolored at the Village at Calabash, located just outside town.

Water at Sunset Beach ranged from yellow to a muddy brown, said Town Administrator Linda Fluegel.

"It started Thursday and all it did was get worse," she said. "The farther down the line you go the more yellow the water. That's probably why ours is more yellow than anybody else's."

Drop In Sales Tax Revenues Puts Pinch On School Funds

BY SUSAN USHER

A decline in sales tax revenues is putting plans to replace the Southport Elementary School cafeteria on hold at least until January.

The delay is part of an overall belt-tightening by state and county agencies resulting in part from a sluggish economy. Based on current revenue projections, money isn't available now for the project, Finance Officer Rudi Fallon told the Brunswick County Board of Education Monday night in a budget update.

The school board will hold a special meeting June 24 at 6:30 p.m. at its offices in Southport to adopt a revised budget for the coming year.

Plans for the \$746,000 Southport project called for renovating the existing cafeteria space into classrooms to eliminate use of several mobile units, and construction of a new cafeteria.

At a meeting of school and county officials last week, Ms. Fallon said a plan was worked out to insure funds are available in a timely fashion for the new elementary school being built at Supply. Counting architectural design fees still outstanding and a special reserve contingency fund requested by the county, \$6.1 million is budgeted for the project.

But the county asked that the other project be put on hold, she said, to be reviewed in January as part of a possible "expansion" budget.

The school board had asked the county to increase its budget by 6.7 percent, or \$497,457, to a total of \$7.5 million.

Commissioners are proposing only a 1.3 percent increase of \$98,057, which will effect both the general operating and capital outlay budgets of the school system.

Mrs. Fallon said the increase will not be enough to offset even an expected cut of \$150,000 in state funding of school energy costs. The budget also doesn't reflect funding for a drug testing program proposed for certain vehicle operators.

Schools To Wait And See

Before recommending where other cuts should be made or how much of the system's reserves should be tapped, however, Mrs. Fallon said she wants to see how the state handles salaries. The budget includes 2 percent for salary increases. If the state gives no increases or gives lower increases, that will free money in the budget to be used in maintaining programs.

While the school system is in good financial condition, cuts in state funding could squeeze next year's budget even tighter.

It may take a cash advance from the county, but money will be available as needed to build the new Supply Elementary School. The project is budgeted at \$6.1 million counting \$5.3 million for construction, outstanding architectural fees and an \$800,000 reserve contingency fund requested by the county to cover any unforeseen needs.

Monday's meeting momentarily turned into a math class on addition, subtraction and probabilities as Mrs. Fallon explained the project budget.

Funds available for the project include \$2.5 million in sales tax revenues on hand as of June 30, 1990, plus \$693,000 in state construction money Assistant Superintendent William Turner applied for and received prior to a freeze on those

funds. In contrast to the previous year, the school system expects to receive sales tax revenues of only \$1.4 million this year.

So far they've earned \$1,118,381 earned this fiscal year, with additional anticipated income with interest conservatively projected at \$340,000.

Another \$383,296 returned to the county from fiscal year 1990 is available, since county commissioners agreed then to apply the money to the new school.

Of the \$5.1 million total available now, the system expects to have spent \$400,000 by June 30. That leaves \$4.72 million.

County Offers Advance

To make up the balance needed, the county is willing to advance to the schools, as needed, up to \$1.4 million in the half-cent sales tax revenues it expects the schools to receive for the 1991-92 business year, said Mrs. Fallon. In turn, as the tax revenues come in, the school system will repay the county.

"They're willing to work with us on it," she said.

Other capital expenditures intact in the budget are upgrades of several school sewer plants, site improvements, carpeting, matching funds for stadium bleachers at North Brunswick High School and new fire hydrants at the two South Brunswick schools.

In addition to the cafeteria, projects to be delayed include new gym floors at several schools and gym bleachers at the high schools.

Other Business

In other action, the board:

■ Approved a tentative Chapter 1 remedial reading program proposal for the coming year. With a proposed federal budget of \$1.43 million, the project would serve 850 or more students in eight schools.

■ Authorized Assistant Superintendent William Turner to sell some surplus equipment or otherwise dispose of it as allowed under state law. While it cannot give away publicly owned property, the board is interested in letting non-profit groups and churches know when such items are going to be sold.

■ Learned from Assistant Superintendent William Turner that the school system had a net property loss of \$6,400 this year as the result of theft or vandalism, excluding repairs made by system employees.

Thieves stole or damaged property valued at \$21,000, of which \$2,550 was recovered and another \$12,000 will be covered by insurance.

Sinking Of Boat Remains A Mystery

(Continued From Page 1-A)

the two sailors saw something bobbing in the ocean and heard a strange sound around 5 p.m. As they got closer, they saw Richardson waving his arms and yelling for help.

"Right before we got to him, Mike looked over at me and said, 'He's got a dead man with him'," Carter said.

Richardson had one of his companions in a choke hold. When he grabbed the sailboat, he let go of the other man, who quickly drifted out of reach in the strong current.

The sailors had a decision to make. They had a choice of going after the dead man, or bringing Richardson to shore immediately for medical attention.

Efremov, a resident of Reston,

Va., who frequently visits Holden Beach, said they decided to do what they could for the survivor, who was shivering and blue when he climbed aboard the sailboat.

"When he got on the boat he didn't look good," Carter said. "It was evident he was in shock and exhausted."

Carter guided the sailboat onto the beach in front of their rental house at 917 Ocean Blvd. West about 10 minutes after picking up the survivor.

Anita Efremov, an emergency room nurse, looked after Richardson while her husband called the rescue squad and sheriff's department.

Coastline Volunteer Rescue Squad transported Richardson to The Brunswick Hospital in Supply, where he was treated and released

the same night.

Local rescue volunteers had recovered the bodies of the three drowning victims by 6:30 p.m. They were pulled from the ocean just west of the Holden Beach Fishing Pier.

Brunswick County Emergency Management Coordinator Cecil Logan said this week that the ocean was rough at the time of the accident, but nobody really knows why the boat sank so quickly.

Logan said the survivor told authorities that all four men rushed to the back of the boat to bail it out when it started taking on water. Three of the men weighed around 200 pounds each.

"The boat probably stood straight up on its end and went straight down," Logan said. "You put that much poundage in the back of a boat, and something's got to happen."

Logan said he went out Shallotte

Inlet Saturday to the area where the boating accident occurred and saw no signs of the sunken boat.

The U.S. Coast Guard had not recovered the boat as of Tuesday, according to a spokesman at the Oak Island station who refused to give his name.

Correction

The Brunswick Beacon erred last week when it reported that Brunswick County Public Utilities Director Jerry Webb had been accused in a study of the county water system of delivering criticism to his employees in a public forum.

Those comments were instead leveled against Water System Director Kenneth Hewett in the operations review issued by David M. Griffith and Associates.

The Beacon regrets the error.

Budget Causes Little Talk

(Continued From Page 1-A)

ing Tuesday were Brunswick County Board of Education members Bob Slockett and Donna Baxter, along with Schools Superintendent P.R. Hankins and Assistant Superintendent Bill Turner. However, they did not address the board.

District 3 Commissioner Gene Pinkerton said Monday he wants the board to give more money to the N.C. Marine Crescent and Brunswick Community College.

Pinkerton wants to move \$5,400 from the Resources Development Commission budget to the Marine Crescent to boost its allocation. The county has it budgeted at \$3,000.

Pinkerton also wants to move \$25,300 to the BCC budget to give it a 5 percent increase, the same as the Brunswick County Schools.

However, school system finance officer Rudi Fallon told Brunswick County Board of Education members Monday night that the schools would receive only a 1.3 percent, or \$98,057, over the \$7.4 million re-

ceived last year. The county is also willing to obligate itself to a cash advance, if needed, on projected sales tax revenues of \$1.4 million. The money would be applied to construction of the new Supply Elementary School.

Of that \$25,300 increase Pinkerton proposed, \$9,150 would come from the RDC, \$2,300 from the governing body budget, and \$13,700 from the county capital reserve fund.

"This leaves the county capital reserves with \$211,300, which I believe will build the warehouse planned for the complex and the additions to the drivers' license department," said Pinkerton.

Under the changes, RDC would still receive a 5 percent increase in funding, he said.

"I believe all three of these departments share in the growth, industrial and community development (of Brunswick County) and this provides a fair distribution of funds available," said Pinkerton.

The board took no action on his request.

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