

Transportation Board Gets First Look At TIP Update

Members of the State Board of Transportation get their first look today and Friday at the revised Transportation Improvement Program, or TIP.

Updated annually, the program sets highway construction priorities for the next seven years. This latest revision, for the years 1994-2000, is expected to be adopted formally by the board next month.

Odell Williamson of Ocean Isle Beach, who represents Division 3 on the board, could not be reached for comment Tuesday, having already left for Raleigh.

It is uncertain what changes, if any, are in store for Brunswick County projects included in the current TIP. These include:

- a \$3.5 million interchange at the Shallotte bypass of U.S. 17, with construction scheduled to begin in the last quarter of 1994. The interchange was sought by area residents following a November 1991 accident in which two persons were killed.

- a second bridge to Oak Island, a project that has been delayed in part because of differences over right-of-way acquisition;

- and a high-rise bridge over the Intracoastal Waterway to Sunset Beach, replacing the existing swing bridge. In the current TIP that project was scheduled for an environmental impact study only, which is under way.

- widening N.C. 179 from the South Carolina state line through Calabash to a three-lane roadway with curbs and gutters, with construction to begin in federal fiscal year 1995. The 2.4-mile project is expected to cost \$550,000.

Along with its first look at the newest TIP, the transportation board is expected to approve a number of routine agenda items relating to Brunswick County, including spot safety improvement projects at three locations.

Plans call for installing a traffic signal at the intersection of U.S. 17 and Benton Road (S.R. 1502), the access road to Supply Elementary School, at an estimated cost of \$50,000.

At the intersection of N.C. 87, N.C. 133 and the Sunny Point Military Terminal access road near Southport and Boiling Spring Lakes, the DOT plans to make the beacon "vehicle responsive" instead of constantly flashing, and to build a southbound acceleration lane for the right turns from N.C. 87. The anticipated cost is \$50,000.

At the intersection of N.C. 133 and S.R. 1472, the signal controller would be upgraded, at a cost of \$10,000, so that the signal phasing can be revised.

The board is also expected to approve a request from Brunswick Interagency Transportation System Inc. (BITS) for \$115,200 to replace three standard vans and two lift-equipped vans, all with high mileage, and equip them with radios.

With its fleet of 16 vans and three lift-equipped vans, BITS helps the Brunswick Interagency Program, Brunswick Older Adults, Brunswick Parks and Recreation, Town of Long Beach and the Department of Social Services meet the special transportation needs of elderly persons and persons with disabilities.

Also on the state board's agenda Friday is approval of the "protective" purchase of a parcel of land at the U.S. 17 bypass of Shallotte at N.C. 130 at a cost of \$450,000. The owner had planned to build a fast-food restaurant on the site. However, those plans have been skewed with the proposed addition of an interchange at the bypass. The parcel now lies in the middle of a proposed loop in a ramp, said DOT spokesman Bill Jones, and application for a driveway permit has been denied.

Sign Language Course Offered

An American Sign Language course will be offered by Brunswick Community College starting Thursday, July 8, at the main campus near Supply.

The class will meet Thursdays from 6:30 p.m. to 9:30 p.m. for eight weeks in Room 204 of the Classroom Building.

The goal is for students to be able to communicate with the hearing-impaired using American Sign Language hand symbols.

Jean Kaczynski, a certified master-level teacher, is the instructor for the course, which is offered through BCC's Department of Continuing Education. Cost is \$48, payable at the first class meeting.



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