



Chowan County Board of Commissioners

Special Meeting

Tuesday, July 28, 2020

Chowan County Public Safety Center

305 West Freemason Street

4:00pm

AGENDA

The meeting room will be open to the public and public seating will be set up to adhere to social distancing guidelines.

*If the room reaches maximum capacity, a call-in number is provided below for anyone who wishes to call in to listen to the meeting remotely. Those participating remotely who wish to submit public comment, please see instructions in the agenda below.

To listen remotely call: 1-408-418-9388

Meeting ID Number: 132-753-8255

Passcode: 246926

Special Meeting

Call to Order

1. North Carolina Container on Barge Shuttle, Marine Highway Designation

The Board will consider a request for sponsorship of the Marine Highway Project Designation application and accompanying MOU between Chowan County, Stevens Towing Co. of NC, SEACOR Inland River and SEACOR AMH LLC to obtain a Marine Highway Designation for the North Carolina Container on Barge Shuttle Operation originating from the Riverbulk Terminal in Chowan County NC to the Port of Virginia in Hampton Roads.

2. Resolution of Support for EDA CARES Grant Application

The Harbor Town Group also known as the North East North Carolina Innerbanks Regional Collaboration plans to request an EDA CARES Grant to support tourism-based pandemic and recovery efforts. The Town of Edenton has pledged \$5,000 and the Chowan County Tourism Development Authority has pledged \$3,000 for the required \$8,000 matching funds. The TDA has requested that the Board of Commissioners adopt a resolution of support for the Harbor Town CARES Grant application.

3. Adjourn

**Chowan County
SEACOR AMH, LLC
Stevens Towing Co.
Riverbulk Terminal**

**Marine Highway Project Designation
Memorandum of Understanding**

July 14, 2020

To: Kevin Howard, County Manager
Chowan County, NC

With Copy: Simon Rich, General Manager
Stevens Towing Co. of North Carolina

Tim Power, President
SEACOR Inland River

Richard Teubner, Vice President
SEACOR AMH LLC

This memorandum of understanding is made as of July 14, 2020 between the above-mentioned entities with the purpose to obtain a Marine Highway Designation for the North Carolina Container on Barge Shuttle Operation originating from the Riverbulk Terminal in Chowan County North Carolina to the Port of Virginia in Hampton Roads/Virginia Beach Area.

This document is designed to identify project parties, roles and goals with the aim to move forward with a USDOT Maritime Administration Americas Marine Highway Project Designation application by the July 31, 2020 deadline.

America's Marine Highway Program Overview

The America's Marine Highway System consists of our Nation's navigable waterways including rivers, bays, channels, the Great Lakes, the Saint Lawrence Seaway System, coastal, and open-ocean routes. The Marine Highway Program works to further incorporate these waterways into the greater U.S. transportation system, especially where marine transportation services are the most efficient, effective, and sustainable transportation option.

The mission of this program is to lead the development and expansion of Marine Highway services and to facilitate their integration into the U.S. surface transportation system.

The vision of this program is the full integration of reliable, regularly scheduled, competitive, and sustainable Marine Highway services into the surface transportation system that are a routine choice for shippers.

The America's Marine Highway Program was established by Section 1121 of the Energy Independence and Security Act of 2007 to reduce landside congestion through the designation of Marine Highway Routes. Section 405 of the Coast Guard and Maritime Transportation Act of

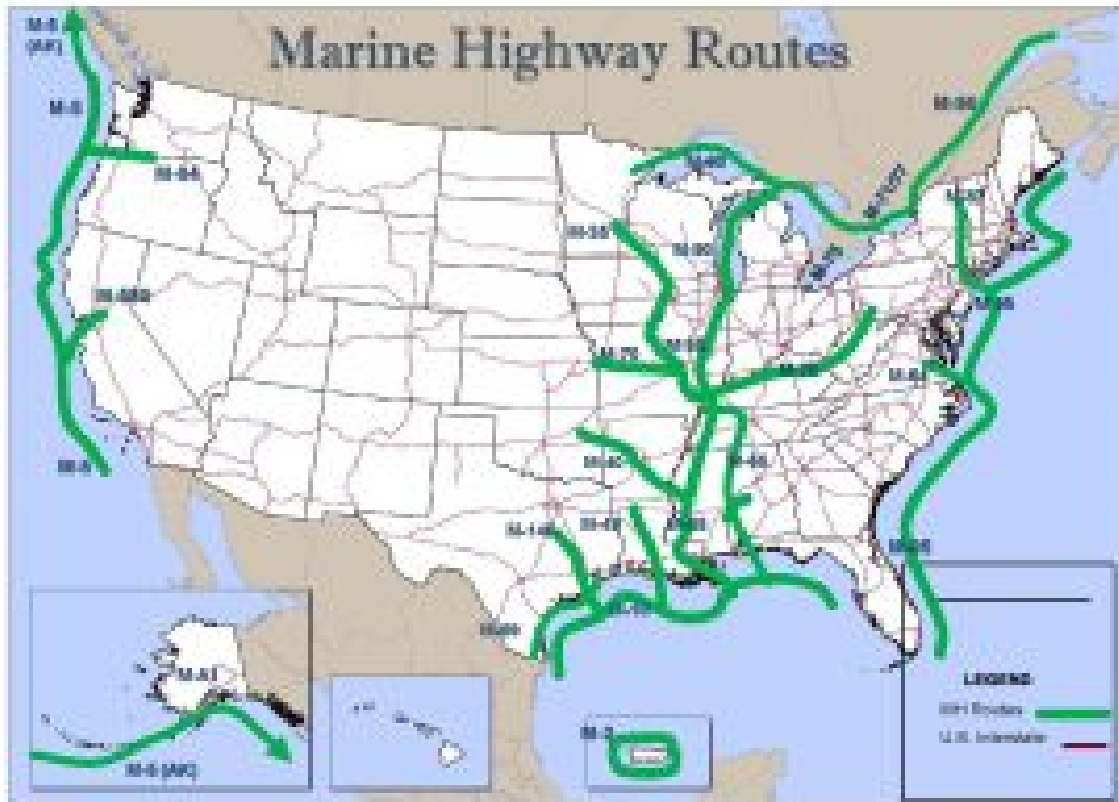
2012 further expanded the scope of the program beyond reducing landside congestion to efforts that generate public benefits by increasing the utilization or efficiency of domestic freight or passenger transportation on Marine Highway Routes between U.S. ports. The National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2016 added to the definition of short sea shipping to include cargo shipped in discrete units or packages that are handled individually, palletized or unitized for purposes of transportation; or freight vehicles carried aboard commuter ferry boats.

The America's Marine Highway Program is a Department of Transportation-led program to expand the use of our Nation's navigable waterways to relieve landside congestion, reduce air emissions, provide new transportation options, and generate other public benefits by increasing the efficiency of the surface transportation system. The program works with public and private stakeholders to achieve these goals.

The Marine Highway Program does not directly operate Marine Highway services.

The efficiency, flexibility, and system resiliency provided by our navigable waterways can benefit the United States public as a whole, however they are currently underutilized within the U.S. surface transportation system. One reason for that underutilization is that many of the benefits generated by Marine Highway services cannot be captured by individuals, such as reducing landside congestion or reduced system wear and tear. By acting to increase the use of the United States' underutilized marine transportation assets, the America's Marine Highways Program helps to generate these "public benefits" that are not normally considered by shippers. These public benefits include:

- Creating and sustaining jobs in U.S. vessels and in U.S. ports and shipyards;
- Increasing the state of good repair of the U.S. transportation system by reducing maintenance costs from wear and tear on roads and bridges;
- Increasing our nation's economic competitiveness by adding new, cost-effective freight and passenger transportation capacity;
- Increasing the environmental sustainability of the U.S. transportation system by using less energy and reducing air emissions (such as greenhouse gases) per passenger or ton-mile of freight moved. Further environmental sustainability benefits come from the mandatory use of modern engine technology on designated projects;
- Increasing public safety and security by providing alternatives for the movement of hazardous materials outside heavily populated areas;
- Increasing transportation system resiliency and redundancy by providing transportation alternatives during times of disaster or national emergency;
- Increasing national security by adding to the nation's strategic sealift resources.



The Marine Highway system currently includes 24 all-water Marine Highway Routes that serve as extensions of the surface transportation system. These Routes are designated by the Secretary because they can offer relief to landside corridors that suffer from traffic congestion, excessive air emissions or other environmental concerns and challenges or provide new transportation options. Marine Highway Routes can be made to the Department of Transportation at any time and they are designated by the Secretary after a review. Route recommendation information can be found in the Final Rule in the Federal Register. Designation of these Marine Highway Routes is the first step towards reducing landside congestion by focusing public and private efforts on increasing the amount of cargoes and passengers transported on commercially navigable waterways. Please click on this link to view information on the individual Marine Highway

The Marine Highway Open Season “Call for Projects” is currently open. The Office of Marine Highways will review applications after the deadline on July 31, 2020.

These projects represent concepts for new services or expansion of existing Marine Highway services that have the potential to offer public benefits and long-term sustainability without long-term Federal support. These projects receive preferential treatment for any future federal assistance from the Department of Transportation and MARAD. The projects will help start new businesses or expand existing ones to move more freight or passengers along America’s coastlines and waterways.

Purpose of Designation for the North Carolina Container on Barge Shuttle

The COB operation will directly benefit from a Marine Highway Designation by becoming eligible for grant funding from the Marine Highway Grant Program. Funds from this program are used for capital items, such as pier repairs, equipment purchases and leasing, etc.

It is the intention of the above mentioned parties to request with the sponsorship of Chowan County a Marine Highway Designation in order to obtain funding for the discussed Container on Barge/short sea shipping service to initially connect Riverbulk Terminal in Chowan County to the Port of Virginia by a scheduled towed hopper barge service.

As discussed, the above-mentioned parties will be responsible for the following:

Chowan County:

1. Sponsor the Marine Highway Project Designation application by being the submitting authority.
2. Help identify potential customers with origin or destinations in and around Chowan County NC.
3. Sponsor the Marine Highway Grant funding application once available.

Stevens Towing and Riverbulk Terminal:

1. Provide marine terminal, barges, and boats needed for the operation and
2. Assist with Project Designation.

SEACOR Inland River & SEACOR AMH LLC:

3. Provide the Container on Barge service management structure and the business development/commercial oversight as well as the day to day operations management for the service once designated as a Marine Highway project.
4. Coordinate with MARAD any additional information needed for the application, if applicable.
5. Submit application for Marine Highway Grant funds once available.

All of the above-mentioned parties will provide additional assistance as needed in order for this project to be successful.

TDA Bullets CARES EDA Grant 7_2020

- The Chowan County TDA has been and continues to collaborate with the other Tourism Directors in Perquimans, Pasquotank, Tyrrell and Washington Counties , called the Harbor Town Project
- We have been meeting regularly to discuss and implement regional tourism marketing initiatives
- With support from UNC and Visit NC, this ongoing collaboration affords the opportunity to leverage the intertwined north eastern NC rural economy by collectively sharing information
- Marketing of our collective group of small towns under the umbrella or theme of water – we are all “harbor towns”
- In collaboration with the Albemarle Commission, our group has agreed to work together on a regional grant proposal available through the U.S. Economic Development Administration (EDA) component of the CARES Act
- The Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act, also known as the CARES Act, has an economic development grant fund that can be used for tourism marketing efforts to help offset economic losses from the pandemic
- If we are successful, the federal EDA Cares grant will help with local tourism and small business recovery post- COVID-19 through the development of a regional tourism brand; creating and promoting a regional website with tourism and visitor information about waterfront towns, attractions, and businesses; and implementing a significant marketing communication and advertising program in 2021 to help businesses recover from the devastating impact COVID-19 has had in our rural communities
- All of us are working on pieces of the grant application, all have equal voice in using received money, and all will equally own any finished product, including items such as a logo, website, etc.
- This grant is incredibly competitive and we have two items that help our proposal stand out
 - 1. Our grant is multi-county, regional application providing broad coverage
 - 2. Submitting both letters and resolutions of support from the region, local and state government, elected officials and more
- This highly competitive grant is looked on more favorably if we have the 40% unencumbered cash match which will be \$8,000 per town/county/TDA in place of in-kind
- Nick Didow, Kenan-Flagler Business School, Marketing Department has been lead with an Advisory Committee of Phil McMullan – Perquimans, Peter Tomson – Pasquotank and Bunny Sanders – Washington
- Representative Ed Goodwin and Senator Bob Steinburg have also attended meetings and Senator Steinburg has been appointed to the NC Tourism Board beginning September 1st – June 2021
- Resolutions of Support have been received from the Edenton Chowan Chamber, Edenton Chowan Partnership, and the Town of Edenton
- Our process of collecting all the impact data from all of our hospitality industry businesses and attractions is taking place now with a short-time frame for completion because of the competitiveness



CHOWAN COUNTY, NORTH CAROLINA

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Chowan County Board of Commissioners Resolution In Support of the Harbor Town EDA CARES Grant

Whereas, The Chowan County Tourism Development Authority is a member of the Harbor Town Group, (Hertford, Plymouth, Edenton, Columbia, and Elizabeth City, NC) as these five towns are all located on rivers that flow into the Albemarle Sound which connects them as a collective tourist destination and regional economy; And

Whereas, The economy of each town is impacted by business and tourism related activities in the other towns; And

Whereas, Because of the proximity of the towns to each other, events that impact businesses in one town can result in employment loss or gain of residents in all of the towns; And

Whereas, Marketing is essential to the success of the combined economies of all five towns; And

Whereas, the Corona Virus Pandemic has had a significant negative effect on tourism and therefore on the public sector and the private sector in each of the Harbor Towns and across the region, including a loss in tourism-related tax revenues and businesses that have suffered lost or reduced business, reduced revenues, reduced hours, and had to lay off employees; And

Whereas, the Chowan County Tourism Development Authority has pledged \$3,000 and the Town of Edenton, NC has pledged \$5,000 towards the funds required by the EDA CARES Grant; And

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT: The Chowan County Board of Commissioners supports the current proposal of the Harbor Town Project to request an EDA CARES grant to support tourism-based pandemic recovery and resilience efforts to benefit public and private sector economic recovery through a regional marketing and promotion initiative.

Signature and Seal Affixed Date July 28, 2020

Patti F. Kersey, Chair

Susanne Stallings, Clerk