

Minutes
for the
December 7, 2020 Meeting
of the
Danville Metropolitan Planning Organization
Virtual (Online) Meeting
at 5:30 p.m.

Attendees

Lee Vogler, City of Danville
Doug Plachcinski, City of Danville
Brian Dunevant, City of Danville
Ken Gillie, City of Danville
Ron Searce, Pittsylvania County
Joe Davis, Pittsylvania County
Emily Ragsdale, Pittsylvania County
Holly Stanfield, Pittsylvania County
Rick Youngblood, VDOT
David Cook, VDOT
Chris Winstead, VDOT
Taylor Jenkins, DRPT
Dave Hoback, Danville MPO Administrator
Michael Armbrister, Danville MPO Staff
Joseph Bonanno, Danville MPO Staff

1. Call to Order

Mr. Vogler called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m.

2. Approval of minutes from the September 28, 2020 meeting

Mr. Vogler asked for a motion to approve the minutes from the September 28, 2020 MPO meeting, to which Mr. Gillie made a motion, which seconded by Mr. Dunevant. The motion was voted upon and approved unanimously.

3. Presentation of proposal for Piney Forest Road Corridor Study, Bill Wuensch, Principal/Transportation Engineer, EPR, PC

Mr. Wuensch stated that the purpose of this presentation was to provide an overview of the Piney Forest Road corridor scope of work. He stated that Piney Forest Road was a principal arterial roadway which was included on the National Highway System. He added that the segment to be studied was 2.6 miles in length, extending from Holt Garrison Parkway on the south to Franklin Turnpike on the north. He noted that the corridor exhibited some challenges, particularly with regard to general lack of access management, high traffic volume, crashes, numerous intersections classified by VDOT as having a high Potential for Safety Improvement (PSI), and several fatalities in the past five years. Mr. Wuensch added that the traffic volume was relatively high along the corridor, approaching 30,000 vehicles per day on the southern end, and the mid-teens on the northern end. He added that the pedestrian environment was not ideal, as sidewalks were in place, but crosswalks were lacking. He presented crash and fatal crash locations, indicating that crashes occurred throughout. He added that the corridor stood out as having among the highest volume to capacity ratios in the region, meaning that much of the roadway's capacity was occupied by traffic. He further added that the corridor was not indicated as a priority in the Regional Bicycle Plan.

Mr. Wuensch stated that the scope of the study involved a two-phase approach as a result of COVID. He stated that Phase 1 would not include traffic data collection, and was scheduled through late summer. He added that he was hopeful that things would be returning to normal by late summer, traffic data collection could begin then as part of Phase 2, and he added that not a lot of prior data existed to this point. With regard to the crash analysis, he noted that 550 crashes took place over the previous five years, and that a recent fatality occurred near the corridor's intersection with Ash Street. He then presented a heat map which showed the concentration of crashes along the corridor. Mr. Wuensch noted that transit and bicycle improvements would be looked at, and he reiterated that it was difficult for pedestrians to access crosswalks. He noted that twelve locations had been identified for traffic counts, and that the horizon year would be 2045. He added that the future no-build scenario would be analyzed, that congestion, safety, and access management needs would be compiled, and recommendations would be developed. Following these steps, Mr. Wuensch stated that his team would bring all of this information to the Policy Board for consideration and allow the Board to weigh in regarding concerns. Following this, he stated that the team would develop future graphics and costs with the goal of using the study as the basis for future grant applications.

Mr. Wuensch stated that the first public meeting was proposed to be virtual, whereas the second was proposed to be in-person or hybrid; he added that the virtual component was drawing participants that strictly in-person meetings had not. He added that the team was working with VDOT to develop a MetroQuest survey and would be providing information to the MPO to post on

its website to help drive traffic to MetroQuest's survey. Mr. Wuensch further added that the MPO meetings would also serve as an informational venue with respect to the study.

Mr. Wuensch welcomed discussion. Mr. Bonanno stated that when the regional bike plan was developed, he believed the Piney Forest Road corridor was not included as a recommendation due to the high traffic volumes, which may discourage bicycling. However, he encouraged Mr. Wuensch and his team to identify bicycle infrastructure opportunities along the corridor. Mr. Vogler stated that the Danville-Pittsylvania County Chamber of Commerce should be considered as a means of public engagement, as the organization had been holding a number of virtual events recently. Mr. Wuensch added that the MetroQuest survey was a great public engagement tool, and that the Chamber could be a great means to generate awareness of that tool. Mr. Hoback stated that the WPPDC has had a strong relationship with the Chamber as of late which, he noted, should work flawlessly with regard to this study. He further added that the business community, via the Chamber, had a greater reach in terms of getting the word out, than the MPO alone.

4. Consideration of EPR proposal by MPO Policy Board

Mr. Vogler asked if an approval action was needed by the MPO Policy Board to move forward with the study, to which Mr. Hoback replied in the affirmative. Mr. Hoback presented a resolution to the Board and stated that the resolution, if approved, would give the MPO staff permission to enter into negotiations with EPR PC with regard to the Piney Forest Road corridor study up to a maximum of \$130,470. He added that he and Mr. Wuensch had not yet finalized all of the financial details, but he noted that the cost of the study could be defrayed if the City and/or the WPPDC took on responsibility for some work elements. Mr. Hoback stated that this would be a two-year study, and if some funding could be saved by some work being accomplished in-house, then perhaps a smaller study could take place in Pittsylvania County in 2022. Mr. Hoback concluded by stating that the staff recommendation was for the Policy Board to approve the resolution. Mr. Davis made a motion to approve the resolution, which was seconded by Mr. Dunevant. The motion was voted upon and approved unanimously.

5. Comments/Updates from VDOT/DRPT/FHWA

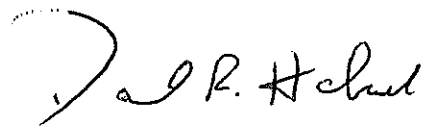
Mr. Vogler opened discussion of this item. Ms. Taylor stated that she did not have any updates. Mr. Winstead asked if Mr. Cook or Mr. Youngblood had anything to share, to which Mr. Cook stated that Smart Scale was in the process of District and Central Office Validation, but those processes were rapidly coming to a close. He added that the project scoring process was taking place as well. Mr. Cook concluded by noting the initial scores were scheduled to be released in January. Mr. Youngblood thanked all of the applicants for their diligence with respect to responding to concurrency requests. Mr. Winstead stated that the Martinsville Highway/Berry Hill Road intersection improvement project, applied for by the MPO, would be completed in a few days. He added that the project would accommodate 3,200 employees at the Southern Virginia Mega Site at Berry Hill.

6. Other Business

Mr. Vogler stated that this would be his final meeting as Chairman of the MPO Board. He articulated his appreciation for all members willing to adapt to the circumstances presented by COVID to enable the MPO meetings to take place.

7. Adjourn

Mr. Vogler adjourned the meeting at 5:56 p.m.



David R. Hoback
Danville MPO Administrator