

Minutes
for the
December 18, 2019 Meeting
of the
Danville Metropolitan Planning Organization
Danville Regional Airport Terminal Building, Eastern Conference Room
Airport Drive, Danville, VA
at 6:30 p.m.

Attendees

Fred Shanks, City of Danville
Lee Vogler, City of Danville
Brian Dunevant, City of Danville
Ron Scearce, Pittsylvania County
Greg Sides, Pittsylvania County
Joe Davis, Pittsylvania County
Will Cockrell, EPR Consultants
David Cook, VDOT
Chris Winstead, VDOT
Taylor Jenkins, DRPT (call-in)
Dave Hoback, Danville MPO Administrator
Joseph Bonanno, Danville MPO Staff

1. Call to Order

Chairman Scearce called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

2. Approval of minutes from October 9, 2019 MPO Meeting

Mr. Scearce asked for a motion to approve the minutes from the October 9, 2019 MPO Policy Board meeting. Mr. Vogler made a motion to approve the minutes, which was seconded by Mr. Dunevant. The motion was voted upon and was approved unanimously.

3. Update on 2045 MPO Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP), Will Cockrell, EPR

Mr. Cockrell, representing EPR consultants, summarized the October 9 MPO meeting, stating that goals and performance measures were put forth, and that the team made some adjustments to those since then; he added that he would like input as to whether the Board was comfortable with the changes. He also noted that the bicycle/pedestrian element would need to be looked at. He continued to review material discussed at the previous meeting.

Mr. Cockrell stated that draft goals and performance measures were created, and he added that the intent of these was to determine whether potential projects would be viable as Smart Scale projects. He added that the team looked at projects that scored well and projects that did not necessarily score the highest, but which were recommended by Board members. He stated that in such situations, projects could be redesigned to have a better chance of being funded.

Mr. Cockrell stated five regional goals as follows: mobility and accessibility, safety, economy, community and nature, and operational efficiency. He stated that revisions had been made to some sub-items of these goals. Items of note included breaking out congestion into existing congestion and future congestion, changing tourism to place-making and changing community and nature to social resources and environmental resources. He briefly discussed details of the goals, and noted that he was hoping that formal approval or consensus could be reached regarding these goals. He added that bike/pedestrian scoring methodology, provided by Mr. Cook, was mentioned, but that it would be done separately because it did not fit the context of the main scoring tool. Mr. Cockrell then described some of the aspects of the bike/pedestrian scoring tool.

As part of the next phase of the study, Mr. Cockrell stated that the team reviewed the MPO 2040 Long-Range Plan, comprehensive plans, and transit or corridor studies, and that these were digitized to a map; he added that intersection and spot improvements were digitized as well. Mr. Shanks asked if the team was considering transportation projects or strictly road projects, to which Mr. Cockrell replied that transportation projects, in

general, were being considered. Mr. Shanks stated his concern about an at-grade rail crossing at West Main Street which he noted was in disrepair, and was concerned that potential increased rail activity resulting from development of the Southern Virginia Mega Site at Berry Hill would lead to safety issues at that location; he inquired as to whether that would be taken into consideration. Mr. Cockrell replied that it would be effective to note this in the plan, and that other statewide plans could also identify the need from the Long-Range Plan. He noted that documentation was important, particularly for funding sources that may be available. Mr. Hoback added that this potential project should at least be listed in the vision project list. Mr. Shanks added that a second location which may need attention was West Main Street from Memorial Drive to at least Park Avenue. Mr. Winstead stated that, from his experience, the railroad could be very difficult to work with, and he suggested the City work directly with Norfolk Southern. Mr. Dunevant stated that, in a conversation with the Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation, he learned a grant was available for such endeavors, but that a requirement for the grant was that a locality would need to experience growth to be eligible. Mr. Shanks reiterated the potential development area along West Main Street to Park Avenue, and he added that the corridor in that location was nearly wide enough to accommodate four lanes. He added that in six months' time, there could be issues there, especially if a casino development were to become reality.

Mr. Cockrell stated that the Riverside Drive STARS Study was about to conclude. Mr. Hoback added that the U.S. Route 29 arterial study was wrapping up as well and that between these two studies, more potential projects could be included in the MPO Long-Range Plan. Mr. Vogler brought up a brief discussion about Memorial Boulevard, and noted that, with the riverfront park about to be constructed and the possible redevelopment of the White Mill, he was no longer comfortable with the prospect for a road diet being implemented along that boulevard. Mr. Shanks mentioned that the road diet was mentioned in a study, and Mr. Bonanno added that it was recommended in the River District Bike and Pedestrian Study, conducted by EPR. Mr. Dunevant stated that the City was in the process of conducting a study on Memorial Boulevard from the Union Street Bridge to Patton Street, based on possible White Mill redevelopment. He added that the City was applying for Revenue Sharing funds for improvements along that corridor.

Mr. Scarce asked for a motion to take action on the revised goals and performance measures for the MPO Long-Range Plan, as articulated by Mr. Cockrell. Mr. Shanks made a motion, which was seconded by Mr. Vogler. The motion was voted upon and was approved unanimously. Mr. Hoback asked if Ms. Jenkins, of DRPT, had anything to add, but she stated she did not. She added that she would be happy to reach out to her rail colleagues if the Board any questions on that topic.

4. Update on 58 West Access Management Study, Dave Hoback, MPO Administrator

Mr. Hoback stated that EPR consultants was studying an 11-mile segment of the U.S. Route 58 corridor from Piedmont Drive in Danville to Long Circle in Pittsylvania County. He stated that the team had conducted traffic counts, data analysis, and had reviewed previous iterations of the study from 2008 and 2012. He added that draft recommendations were anticipated in January, with the final product likely available in February, and that a formal presentation to the MPO would likely take place in February or early March. He stated that many of the crashes along the corridor involved rear-end and angle collisions, with several fatalities, as well as a number of accidents involving pedestrians. He added that deficiencies were identified at three intersections or road sections, and a number of median openings and access driveways along the corridor were not in compliance with VDOT policy. Mr. Shanks noted the locations of several median openings which posed safety deficiencies, one being in the vicinity of Harrison Grocery, one near Brosville, and another between Harris Nursery and Brosville Station. Mr. Sides asked Mr. Hoback if recommendations would be provided, to which Mr. Hoback replied in the affirmative and added that a staff-level meeting would subsequently take place.

5. Adopt VDOT/FHWA Required 2020 Safety Targets

Mr. Hoback called the Board's attention to the back page of a handout, and noted that it was a requirement that MPOs adopt safety targets on an annual basis. He added that the MPO had the options to adopt specific targets or state-defined targets, but he noted that most MPOs in Virginia adopted the state targets. Mr. Hoback explained to the Board the details noted in the handout. He asked Mr. Cook if data were based on 100 million

miles traveled, to which Mr. Cook replied that 1.50 represented 1.5 fatalities per 100 million miles traveled. Mr. Hoback added that the staff recommendation was for the MPO to adopt the state targets. Mr. Searce asked for a motion for the Danville MPO to adopt the state targets, to which Mr. Shanks made a motion, which was seconded by Mr. Vogler. The motion was voted upon and was approved unanimously.

6. Preliminary Consideration of Potential MPO Applications for 2020 Smart Scale Round

Mr. Hoback stated he wanted to get some preliminary feedback regarding potential Smart Scale applications for 2020, and added that the portal would open in March. He stated that the MPO staff and VDOT would be looking at potential projects explored earlier, from EPR's analysis of the Long-Range Plan update, the U.S. Route 58 West Access Management Study update, the U.S. Route 29 Corridor Preservation Study, and past applications that did not get funded. He emphasized that MPO staff also wanted to hear the Board's preferences. He added that the County and City would likely submit Smart Scale applications, and the entity submitting an application was an important consideration. Mr. Cook stated that he had developed a spreadsheet for the Lynchburg VDOT District to aid in this process. He added that he had seven recommendations from the Riverside Drive Study and five recommendations from the U.S. Route 29 Arterial Corridor Study. He noted that he would provide parcel data to enable staff to identify commercial and industrial sites so as to maximize the economic development factor. He stated he was also adding an overlap with PSI data, which, he noted, would be especially valuable for the Riverside Drive corridor. He concluded by stating that he should have all of that information available after Christmas.

7. Comments/Updates from VDOT/DRPT/FHWA

Mr. Winstead stated that the U.S. Route 29 bridge over the Banister River had been reduced to one travel lane because VDOT staff concluded that would be a better option than restricting weight due to the condition of the bridge. Mr. Shanks asked if that configuration was permanent, to which Mr. Winstead replied that it would be short term, as the plan was to advertise for construction in early 2021 to make improvements to the structure. He added that the bridge superstructure needed work, and that the project would take longer than one season, and perhaps two. Mr. Sides thanked Mr. Winstead for clarifying the plan to repair the bridge.

Mr. Winstead stated that rumble strips had been cut into shoulders and centerlines of some primary roads in the District. He stated that a 20 percent crash reduction could be expected with shoulder rumble strips and a 45 percent crash reduction could be anticipated from centerline rumble strips. He added that rumble strips had been applied to Route 40, Route 41, the Gretna Bypass, the Chatham Bypass, and U.S. Route 58 East from Brosville to the county line. He added that shoulder rumble strips were planned to be added from Campbell County to Blairs, as well as on Route 57 from Chatham west.

Mr. Winstead stated that Governor Northam made remarks regarding transportation funding, which included a 4-cent increase in the gas tax each year for three years, adjustments regarding vehicle registration, and an elimination of the vehicle inspection requirement. He encouraged Board members to read his remarks. Mr. Searce asked whether one would be able to drive without safety checks if the inspection requirement was eliminated, to which Mr. Winstead replied he was unsure. Mr. Vogler asked if rumble strips had been considered for Mount Cross Road, to which Mr. Winstead replied that he would have to check, but he added that the primary roads were being targeted first for this safety feature; he further added that a road must have a structure in order for rumble strips to be installed.

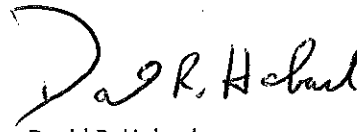
Ms. Jenkins stated that the DRPT application period had opened and would close in February. Mr. Cook stated that VDOT held its U.S. Route 29 Corridor Preservation Plan public input meeting, and he added that he would distribute the recommendations developed as part of that effort. Mr. Cook added that the recommendations were projected to reduce crash rates between 20 and 60 percent for various projects as well as improve roadway levels of service. He stated that VDOT's Lynchburg District was anticipating the MPO or Pittsylvania County to submit Smart Scale applications. He added that the Riverside Drive STARS study was about to conclude, and that final comments were being accepted until Friday, December 20th.

8. Other Business

Mr. Bonanno discussed a food truck rodeo event he, along with EPR staff, attended in November in Danville, as a means to solicit public input into the MPO Long-Range Plan update. He described robust public participation, as well as a variety of comments which likely would not have been received otherwise. Mr. Hoback stated that Mr. Sides would be retiring at the end of the year, that he had been an alternate member of the MPO Board who always contributed enthusiastically with regard to technical aspects of projects, and that he had been great to work with. Mr. Sides thanked Mr. Hoback for his comments, and added that he enjoyed transportation planning and working with VDOT. Mr. Hoback recommended to Chairman Scearce that the Board consider recognition of Mr. Sides for his contributions to the MPO, and added that he could introduce a resolution to pass along to him at a later date. Mr. Shanks made a motion that the Board prepare a resolution in recognition of Mr. Sides' work on the part of the MPO Board, and this was seconded by Mr. Vogler. The motion was voted upon and was approved unanimously. Some discussion took place commending and recognizing Mr. Sides for his contributions to the MPO and Pittsylvania County.

9. Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 7:35 p.m.



David R. Hoback

Danville MPO Administrator