

**Minutes**  
for the  
**October 9, 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  
Ken Gillie, City of Danville  
Brian Dunevant, City of Danville  
Ron Searce, Pittsylvania County  
Greg Sides, Pittsylvania County  
Joe Davis, Pittsylvania County  
Will Cockrell, EPR Consultants  
Phil White, EPR Consultants  
David Cook, VDOT  
Grant Sparks, DRPT (via conference call)  
Dave Hoback, Danville MPO Administrator  
Joseph Bonanno, Danville MPO Staff

**1. Call to Order**

Chairman Searce called the meeting to order at 6:32 p.m.

**2. Approval of minutes from July 18, 2019 MPO Meeting**

Mr. Searce asked for a motion to approve the minutes from the July 18, 2019 MPO Policy Board meeting. Mr. Shanks made a motion to approve the minutes, which was seconded by Mr. Davis. The motion was voted upon and was approved unanimously.

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

Mr. Hoback introduced Mr. Grant Sparks, of DRPT, who was contacted the MPO via conference call. He stated that Mr. Sparks would be assisting the MPO to update the Long-Range Transportation Plan, and that he would be the replacement for Ms. Becca Sial, who moved on to another position. Mr. Sparks thanked the MPO for accommodating his request for a conference call, and noted that he was temporarily taking over as the lead DRPT staff member as part of the Long-Range Transportation Plan update. He added that Emily DelRoss was leading the Virginia Breeze implementation, which would serve Danville, and he invited anyone with questions to contact him and Ms. DelRoss.

Mr. Cockrell thanked the MPO for accommodating the EPR team, and introduced his colleague, Mr. Phil White. He briefly discussed some of the items he and Mr. White would be discussing. According to Mr. Cockrell, an open house took place in June, and 72 stakeholder groups were contacted, but attendance was very low. He stated that Mr. White completed revisions to Chapter 3 of the Long-Range Transportation Plan, and added that the document would be sent back to the MPO for review.

Mr. Cockrell stated that he would discuss goals and performance measures at this meeting. He noted several public events in the Danville area at which EPR would solicit public input for the plan. These events, Mr. Cockrell added, would be the Monster Mash on October 31<sup>st</sup>, the Bridge Street Food Rodeo on November 2<sup>nd</sup>, and opportunities at the farmers' market; he added that similar efforts in Lynchburg resulted in 330 participants.

Mr. Cockrell stated that the EPR team was digitizing every recommendation in the Danville area, and would be evaluating each. He reiterated that rather than providing the MPO the entire planning document to review in August, EPR would provide one chapter at a time to spread out the workload. He added that Chapter 4 would be sent to the MPO soon for review. Mr. Cockrell stated that with regard to performance measures, the FAST Act put forth requirements for MPOs; he noted that there were also state factors in place for Smart Scale. He added that the MPO approved regional goals and targets at a previous meeting, and that EPR was aware of funding sources

and how projects were evaluated. Mr. Cockrell stated that the Smart Scale process was new when the current version of the Long-Range Plan was adopted. He also noted that, on the federal side, there was a new focus on intercity bus and private transportation providers; he added that two new considerations included environmental mitigation and resiliency. He also stated that ten factors the MPO would need to address included economic vitality, connectivity, safety, efficiency, security, maintenance, accessibility, resiliency, sustainability, and tourism. He discussed best practices for MPOs with regard to addressing new federal performance standards. He briefly noted the tourism factor, stating that it would be a good idea to include area tourism destinations, and he alluded to the region's hazard mitigation plan. He added that the intent was to generate a document based on a dashboard approach, which would be concise and readable.

Mr. Cockrell explained that most project proposals would be applied for via the Smart Scale process, and he added that proposals would need to be doable, fundable, and practical. He explained that the Danville MPO was within Category D of the Smart Scale factor weighting typology categorization, and he added that economic development was the greatest weight, followed by safety, accessibility, congestion mitigation, and environmental impact; he noted that economic development would therefore be an important factor in project selection. He also noted that VTrans – the state's transportation plan – was in the process of being updated, and he proceeded to present needs within VTrans 2040, and emphasized that a project needed to meet a need to be eligible for Smart Scale funding. He stated that one of the strategies the EPR team wanted to adopt was to tie project recommendations to feasible funding sources, and he added that if the MPO had a particular project it wanted to pursue, EPR could design that project so as to maximize Smart Scale points.

Mr. Cockrell stated that five goals had been identified via a transportation scoring matrix, which would be included in the Long-Range Plan; he added that these five goals were also being used as part of the Lynchburg MPO's Long-Range Transportation Plan update process. He added that the five goals included Mobility and Accessibility, Safety, Economy, Community and Nature, and Operational Efficiency. Mr. Cook stated that an important factor not mentioned was distressed areas.

Mr. Cockrell discussed next steps, which included the October MPO meeting currently being held, and a survey which would be sent to MPO staff. He added that the project team would like to hold a formal meeting to approve the goals and performance measures in December. Mr. Shanks asked about the meaning of needs expressed in the Danville Regional Network component of VTrans 2040, and his questions were addressed. Mr. Cook stated that the goals advanced by EPR were consistent with the VTrans statewide recommendations; some additional discussion took place. Mr. Winstead stated that the MPO was setting itself up for continued success in future Smart Scale rounds, and Mr. Hoback added that Smart Scale had been leveraged off of the previous MPO studies. Some discussion ensued regarding declining funds during future Smart Scale rounds, and Mr. Winstead stated that the funding mechanism moved to a two-year cycle, but that it was likely funding would continue to decrease.

#### **4. Update on Riverside Drive STARS Study, VDOT Staff**

Mr. Cook began to discuss public outreach mechanisms, and stated that VDOT had recently contracted with MetroQuest, which he described as America's number one outreach tool in use, which included social media blasts, as well as a very interactive platform. Mr. Cook stated that, with regard to the Riverside Drive STARS Study, a public input meeting took place at Bonner Middle School in Danville, which twelve members of the public attended. He added that comments received were very supportive of the recommendations put forth. The corridor had been identified as having many pedestrian deficiencies, according to Mr. Cook, including lack of sidewalks, and he added that many bus stops lacked ADA accessibility. He commended Ms. Dimmick, of EPR, for effectively articulating the pedestrian needs along the corridor. Mr. Cook stated that recommendations included pedestrian hybrid beacons, sidewalks and crosswalks, consolidation of median openings, bus bays, off-ramp realignments, and intersection improvements at various locations; he added that several R-CUTS were recommended. Mr. Cook passed around a handout articulating the recommendations. He added that the City developed a project website, and he noted that comments would be accepted until October 15<sup>th</sup>. It was then noted that the recommendations would go to a City Council work session in December. Mr. Cook stated that the final recommendations would be published in late December or early January. He added that many PSI locations

were being addressed via this study, and that these projects would likely be very competitive for Smart Scale funding. He asked Mr. Dunevant if the City had already submitted a Revenue Share application, to which Mr. Dunevant replied that one had been submitted to fund a crosswalk at Mount Cross Road. Mr. Davis asked what a pedestrian hybrid beacon was, and Mr. Cook explained the feature to him. Mr. Davis expressed his approval of the pedestrian initiatives, and some discussion took place.

**5. Update on FHWA Technical Assistance Program, Joe Bonanno, Regional Planner**

Mr. Bonanno stated that he learned of free technical assistance offered by FHWA for the purpose of integrating emerging mobility innovations into transportation management, while he attended the ACT International Conference in August. He added that this assistance would provide training regarding the integration of innovative forms of transportation, such as bike-share, scooters, transit, rideshare, etc., into the management of the transportation system so as to facilitate mobility on-demand. According to Mr. Bonanno, a conference speaker articulated that MPOs and the MPO long-range plan would serve as ideal avenues by which to advance these transportation innovations, and Mr. Bonanno added that he expressed interest since the Danville MPO was in the early stages of updating its long-range transportation plan. Mr. Bonanno stated that he followed up to learn more about the technical assistance, and that he and Mr. Hoback had recently participated in a conference call which included FHWA staff and the agency's consultant, all of whom wanted to learn more about the Danville area. According to Mr. Bonanno, those on the conference call appeared interested in such a technical assistance initiative, and he stated that they would follow up with the MPO.

**6. Comments/Updates from VDOT/DRPT/FHWA**

Mr. Winstead stated that the September Commonwealth Transportation Board (CTB) meeting was successful for our MPO, as the Board approved the location of the Berry Hill connector road. He stated that the CTB would hold a public hearing on November 4<sup>th</sup> to receive comments on the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). He added that this year's focus in terms of agency information sharing would be adjustments to Smart Scale, changes to the Highway Safety Improvement Program, and the opportunity would be provided to interact with Secretary Valentine and Burt Dodson in the Ramey Auditorium. He stressed importance of MPO representation at this meeting, noted that the meeting would begin at 4 p.m., and added that this would be a good opportunity in advance of future Smart Scale application submissions. Mr. Hoback stated that either he or Mr. Bonanno would attend. Mr. Winstead added that information about the VTrans update would also be provided.

Mr. Sparks, of DRPT, stated that he had two updates. The first update he noted was that there would not be any substantive changes to the capital or operating assistance program as part of the FY 2021 transit grant, but he did note changes to the agency's special grant programs which included the demonstration grant program, technical assistance, intern, and 5310 programs. He stated that grant workshops would take place in the near future to promote awareness of the changes, and he added that a webinar relevant to MPOs would take place on November 13<sup>th</sup>, and the other engagement which would be more relevant to transit agencies would take place on November 14<sup>th</sup>. He asked that anyone interested in participating should contact him.

Mr. Sparks stated that the other update pertained to the Virginia Breeze intercity bus service. He stated that the Breeze's new routes would begin during summer 2020, and that both would travel through Danville. He added that at present, DRPT was in the process of procuring an operator for the routes, and that operator was anticipated to be under contract later this year or early next. He added that Ms. Emily DeRoss would be taking the lead on implementation, and that she would reach out to the MPO and Danville Transit to discuss locations for a bus stop; he encouraged staff to begin thinking about stop locations. He noted that an ideal location would be close to an interstate highway, an area which would tie in well with Danville Transit, a location that would offer overnight parking, and an ADA-compliant location with pedestrian amenities.

Mr. Cook passed around preliminary information pertaining to Smart Scale updates. He stated that the pre-application period would begin on March 5<sup>th</sup>. He added that one difference for the next round of Smart Scale would be that four applications, plus one, would be accepted; he noted that four would be primary, they would then become final, and the fifth would serve as an extra in the event that one of the four were screened out. He

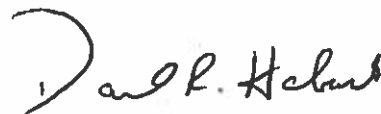
stated that the pre-application period would end on April 2<sup>nd</sup>, and that point until June would constitute a pre-application review period. Mr. Cook added that the pre-application process would now include a funding pearl, which would require monetary information to be included during this application phase; he further added that current dollars, rather than future dollars, would be utilized. He stated that economic development data would be included as part of the final application process. According to Mr. Cook, the final submission date would be August 3<sup>rd</sup>, project prioritization and the base allocation scenario would be presented to the CTB in January 2021, and the Six-Year Improvement Program would be adopted in June 2021. He stated that applicants should not assume funding would be available until 2026 or 2027. He added that screening would be more stringent in this next round, and that projects which scored well during the last round but were not funded should be strengthened and re-submitted; examples he provided included the roundabout on Mount Cross Road, Kentuck Road intersection, Phase II of Mount Cross Road improvements, and the Route 58 Business STARS Study, and Route 40 and McBride Lane. He added that another change would be that for the economic development factor, a Floor Area Ratio limit of 0.3 would apply for zoned-only properties. Mr. Sides stated that the Southern Virginia Mega Site at Berry Hill was shown to a very large prospect, and the fact that all of the required infrastructure was either in place or programmed carried a great deal of weight.

7. Other Business

Mr. Shanks spoke of the presence of an at-grade railroad crossing at West Main Street, and expressed concern about the potential increased frequency of freight trains utilizing that crossing if a tenant of the industrial park utilized rail-intensive freight. He asked about potential funding for a solution in advance of such a scenario, and whether DRPT could bring anything to the table. Mr. Sparks replied that DRPT had a rail planning team, and that the best person to speak regarding that matter would be Emily Stock. He stated that he would send Ms. Stock's contact information to Mr. Hoback who, in turn, would forward it to Danville.

8. Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 7:56 p.m.



David R. Hoback  
Danville MPO Administrator