

Minutes
for the
December 19, 2018 Meeting
of the

Danville Metropolitan Planning Organization

Danville Regional Airport Terminal Building, Eastern Conference Room
Airport Drive, Danville, VA
at 6:00 p.m.

Attendees

Lee Vogler, City of Danville
Ken Gillie, City of Danville
Fred Shanks, City of Danville
Marc Adelman, City of Danville
Ron Searce, Pittsylvania County
Brian Dunevant, City of Danville
Greg Sides, Pittsylvania County
Brian Bradner, Dewberry
Bert Dodson, Commonwealth Transportation Board
Rick Youngblood, VDOT
Chris Winstead, VDOT
Dave Hoback, Danville MPO Administrator
Joseph Bonanno, Danville MPO Staff

1. Call to Order

Mr. Vogler called the meeting to order.

2. Approval of minutes from June 27, 2018 MPO Meeting

Mr. Vogler asked for a motion to approve the June 27, 2018 MPO Policy Board Meeting minutes. Mr. Searce made a motion to approve the minutes, which was seconded by Mr. Shanks. The motion was voted upon and approved unanimously.

3. Meet & Conversation with Mr. Bert Dodson, Lynchburg District Representative, Commonwealth Transportation Board (CTB)

Mr. Dodson introduced himself and thanked the MPO Board for inviting him. He told the Board a little about himself, including his service on the Lynchburg City Council for 12 years. He stated that he was serving the final year of Transportation Secretary Shannon Valentine's former position as Commonwealth Transportation Board member for VDOT's Lynchburg District, and he stated that he hoped to remain on the CTB for the following four-year period, and noted that his desire was to get things done. He added that he was fully briefed on the Berry Hill project. Following Mr. Dodson's introduction, Mr. Vogler initiated a round of introductions among those present. Mr. Sides added that staff from the City of Danville, Pittsylvania County, and the MPO met with Mr. Dodson and briefed him about the Berry Hill connector road project. Mr. Searce stated that he had met with North Carolina Department of Transportation staff, and noted that this agency was very supportive of the Berry Hill Industrial Park.

4. Consideration of new MPO corridor studies

Mr. Hoback stated that the MPO had identified two potential corridor studies in the spring when the MPO work plan was developed. He stated that one corridor was Piedmont Drive, where congestion, reliability, and safety issues had been identified. He added that the other possibility was the consideration of a link between Danville's River District and the Danville Expressway. He noted that discussion of potential corridor studies in the near future was temporarily put on hold, however, while a determination was made regarding the proposed cost of the MPO's upcoming Long Range Plan update. He added that once this cost was estimated, a determination was made that adequate funding remained for the MPO to conduct a corridor study. He stated that he, City of Danville and VDOT staff discussed this, and he added that of those potential corridors he mentioned, it appeared that the Piedmont Drive corridor would hold the most promise in terms of a study because of the greatest potential for benefits, and such a study may result in a competitive Smart Scale application.

Mr. Hoback stated that during the discussion regarding potential corridor studies, the possibility of taking another look at the Route 58 West corridor emerged in conversation, as it would tie in well with the Riverside Drive STARS Study currently under development. He added that Mr. Cook, of VDOT, compiled valuable information for the Board to review pertaining to the selection of a corridor for study. He also noted that this discussion was intended to result in the recommendation that a study be brought before the MPO Policy Board after the New Year. Mr. Shanks asked which section of U.S. Route 58 the study would comprise, to which some discussion ensued and it was noted that the former 58 West Access Management Study included Route 58 west of the city limit extending into the county. Mr. Shanks also asked about the latest proposed alignment of Interstate 73 in the vicinity of Martinsville, as Route 58 would serve as a connection into that new interstate, to which Mr. Youngblood replied that there had not been much activity going on recently with respect to I-73. Mr. Youngblood added that Route 58 West would be worth looking at again, since a STARS study was taking place along Riverside Drive; U.S. Route 58 was a Corridor of Statewide Significance; that there were safety issues; and that many more alternatives were available now compared to 2012, when the original study took place. He recommended bringing the Route 58 study up once again, since there was a significant amount of activity taking place with regard to that corridor. Mr. Hoback added that even if the MPO received funding for the Berry Hill connector road, U.S. Route 58 would remain an important feeder road for the Berry Hill Industrial Park. Mr. Youngblood added that U.S. Route 58 would continue to be an important corridor with respect to the Berry Hill Industrial Park, commutation between Danville and Martinsville, and the emerging commercial development near Danville. Mr. Dodson asked what the travel volume was between Martinsville and Danville, to which Mr. Winstead stated he would look into it. Mr. Sides added that if the Route 58 study was looked at again, it should be planned to extend to the western MPO boundary, to which other Board members agreed. Mr. Hoback concluded the discussion by noting that Mr. Bradner and Mr. Gillie would discuss this with the Danville City Manager and the public works director, so that a decision could be reached by the MPO Policy Board regarding the selection of a corridor study by January or February.

5. Update on Riverside Drive STARS Study

Mr. Hoback stated that VDOT had enlisted the services of EPR and Kimley Horn consultants to conduct a STARS study along Riverside Drive in Danville. He stated that the study, which kicked off in November, was evaluating safety and congestion-related issues along the corridor from Main Street to just west of Piedmont Drive. He added that consultants were in the process of gathering data so as to formulate recommendations. He further added that a public input meeting would take place at a local conference center or possibly a church. Mr. Youngblood added that everything was going well with regard to the study, that data collection was accomplished during the first week of December, and the analysis had begun. Some additional discussion took place. He further added that VDOT had planned to begin this study the prior year, but had simply reinstated that year's application this year.

6. Update on upcoming 2045 Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP)

Mr. Hoback introduced the discussion of the MPO's 2045 Long Range Transportation Plan update as an informational item. He stated that updating and maintaining this plan was one of the core elements the MPO engaged in. He stated that the current Long Range Plan had a horizon year of 2040, and the updated plan would have a horizon year of 2045. He added that the current Long Range Plan was adopted in October 2015, and the updated plan was proposed to be adopted during the summer of 2020. He noted that the update process would likely begin during spring 2019, that it would likely be the MPO's exclusive project for 2020, and that it would likely have a budget impact into 2021. He added that funds would need to be leveraged over three fiscal years for the update of this plan.

Mr. Youngblood stated that in conjunction with the MPO Long Range Plan update, a conversation would simultaneously be taking place with regard to a VTrans update, so that discussion of content would likely be similar. He added that one thing he shared with other MPOs and PDCs was that involvement by those organizations would be key in the VTrans update process. He noted that he believed one of the failures of the current iteration of VTrans was that it was very urban-centric, and he emphasized that the involvement of the MPO in this process, as well as in the VTrans update process, would be key to defining policies. Mr. Youngblood

added that he would be available to answer questions raised by the PDC and MPO. He added that several years ago, the Lynchburg region conducted a connectivity study, that some of the elements of that study would be incorporated into the VTrans update, and that some of these components could be incorporated into the Danville Long Range Plan update.

Mr. Hoback stated that development of the current iteration of VTrans was largely consultant-driven, but that the next update would be led by the Office of Intermodal Planning and Investment, and MPOs/PDCs would be instrumental in outreach to localities for this process. Mr. Shanks noted Mr. Hoback's statement that the funding cycle for the Long Range Plan update would span three years, and he asked if additional funds would be provided to the MPO for that purpose, to which Mr. Hoback replied that the MPO would not receive an additional appropriation. Mr. Hoback stated that the Long Range Plan was required to be updated every five years and added that, with the advent of Smart Scale, it would be important that key projects made their way into the Long Range Plan. Mr. Youngblood stated that the projects listed in the Constrained and Vision sections of the Long Range Plan would be listed as tiers in Vtrans, with Tier 1 projects being the greatest priorities. He added that Smart Scale would eventually recognize that tiering effect, and he further added that the Berry Hill connector road was listed as a Tier 1 project in the Smart Scale application. He concluded by stating that the Constrained Long Range Plan would feed the VTrans process.

7. VDOT Comments/Updates

Mr. Winstead stated that he very much appreciated being invited to and participating in the November 8th meeting, that Delegate Marshall was part of that, and they were joined by Secretary Valentine to brainstorm solutions to fund the Berry Hill connector road project. He added that it was very well received.

Mr. Winstead noted the copious rainfall amounts which had been experienced this year had been responsible for various detours on the regional transportation system. He noted he would provide an update for projects taking place on U.S. Routes 29 and 58. He acknowledged a great deal of support from City of Danville staff regarding work to repair a failing pipe beneath U.S. Route 29 (Danville Expressway). He noted that the decision was made to close the Danville Expressway due to safety concerns associated with the pipe, and that it was estimated that the repairs would take about two weeks to complete; he added that the hope was to temporarily reroute the northbound traffic into one of the southbound lanes to eliminate the need for the detour. Some discussion took place, and Mr. Winstead stated that the Lynchburg District currently had 30 detours in place due to roadway issues resulting from the excessive rains. He added that bridge work on U.S. Route 58 over Sandy Creek was progressing well, and that it was anticipated that this work would be completed by the end of February. He noted that five feet of rain had fallen in Danville, prior to the snowstorm. He then directed attention back to a previous item of discussion and stated that traffic volume on U.S. Route 58 in Henry County was approximately 11,000 vehicles per day, and the volume was about 14,000 vehicles per day near the Danville Expressway.

Mr. Youngblood stated that 30 Smart Scale applications were submitted within the Lynchburg District. Of those, he stated that two had been screened out, one of those being on Route 40 at McBride Lane in Gretna, and the other in Altavista. He added that the project in Gretna would be worth pursuing in the future, as VDOT believed the project was still viable. He added that the applications were in the process of being scored, and that all of the Lynchburg District's applications had been completed and validated for some time. He noted that statewide, a total of \$800 million was available via Smart Scale, and that \$26 million was available for the Lynchburg District Grant, which represented a slight decline from years past. He added that scores would be released in mid-January, along with a possible funding scenario. Mr. Dodson added that because of increased fuel efficiency, fewer funds resulting from fuel taxes were available to the Commonwealth. It was mentioned that the Commonwealth Transportation Board approved a \$16.3 million expenditure to replace a 90-year old bridge linking Hurt with Altavista. Mr. Youngblood stated that the U.S. Route 29 and Shula Drive Smart Scale application had not been screened out.

8. **Other Business**

Mr. Bonanno asked Mr. Adelman whether the expansion of Danville Transit north to Hurt and east to Halifax County was still on schedule for late summer or fall 2019. Mr. Adelman first explained the nature of the transit expansion to the Board, noting that a Tobacco Commission grant in the amount of \$314,000 had been received to provide local match for operating and capital assistance. He added that three buses were received, with one serving as a spare, which would provide a total of our round-trips per day. Mr. Adelman further elaborated on the new service, and stated that it would begin once staffing resources were adequate. Mr. Hoback stated that, through RIDE Solutions, the WPPDC would have funds to help Danville Transit to advertise the new service, and asked Mr. Adelman when advertising would take place. Mr. Adelman replied that marketing would take place after sometime after July 2019. Mr. Shanks acknowledged that the match for the operating assistance would be covered by the Tobacco Commission for the first three years of the service, but asked where match would come from thereafter. Mr. Sides replied that the first three years would constitute the demonstration period, but after that the counties would have to provide the match.

Mr. Adelman announced that an airport day event would take place at Danville Regional Airport on June 15th, with a rain date of June 22nd. He noted that part of the event would involve children getting free rides in airplanes, and he added that during the 2018 event, 200 children got airplane rides.

9. **Adjourn**

Mr. Vogler adjourned the meeting at 7:14 p.m.

David R. Hoback
Danville MPO Administrator