

**Minutes**  
for the  
**March 18, 2020 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

Lee Vogler, City of Danville  
Fred Shanks, City of Danville  
Ron Searce, Pittsylvania County  
Joe Davis, Pittsylvania County  
Brian Dunevant, City of Danville  
Bill Wuensch, EPR Planning Consultants (via conference call)  
Phil White, EPR Planning Consultants  
Will Cockrell, EPR Planning Consultants (via conference call)  
Rick Youngblood, VDOT (via conference call)  
Chris Winstead, VDOT (via conference call)  
Taylor Jenkins, DRPT (via conference call)  
Dave Hoback, Danville MPO Administrator  
Joseph Bonanno, Danville MPO Staff (via conference call)

**1. Call to Order**

Mr. Searce called the meeting to order.

**2. Election of MPO Chairman & Vice-Chairman for 2020**

Mr. Searce opened the floor to nominations for Chairman of the Danville MPO Policy Board for 2020. Mr. Davis nominated Mr. Shanks as Chairman of the Board. Mr. Vogler made a motion, which was seconded by Mr. Searce. The motion was voted upon and approved unanimously. Mr. Shanks nominated Mr. Davis to be Vice-Chairman for 2020, and Mr. Searce made a motion to support, which was seconded by Mr. Vogler. The motion was voted upon and approved unanimously.

**3. Approval of minutes from December 18, 2019 MPO Meeting**

Mr. Searce made a motion to approve the December 18, 2019 Meeting minutes, which was seconded by Mr. Davis. The motion was voted upon and approved unanimously.

**4. Presentation: Long Range Transportation Plan Update, Will Cockrell, EPR**

Mr. Cockrell opened with discussion of the presentation regarding updating the MPO Long Range Transportation Plan, and added that Mr. White had been responsible for compiling much of the data. Mr. Cockrell noted that the next three months would be important for this update process, as the team would score potential projects and present them to the Board, utilizing a project ranking tool. He added that a candidate list of projects would be scored, which would consist of project recommendations within the 2040 Long Range Transportation Plan that did not get funded, as well as those within plans and studies adopted since the 2020 Long Range Transportation Plan went into effect. Mr. Cockrell noted that performance measures had been updated, and added that the MPO Board had approved those. He stated that over the next three months, three rounds of project evaluations would take place. He added that the scoring tool would mirror the Smart Scale scoring process as much as possible, and further noted that once the projects were scored, the EPR team would present the project recommendations to the MPO Board. He emphasized that if certain projects did not score well but were priorities for the Board, the EPR team could make adjustments to them to enable them to score higher. Mr. Cockrell added that the team would screen out any projects that did not meet certain criteria, and that recommendations would be evaluated individually and as a set. He further elaborated on the scoring process, noting that projects would be broken out by different lists based on whether they were highway projects, bike/ped, and transit recommendations. He reiterated from the previous meeting the goals put forth, which included Performance and accessibility, Safety, Economy, Community and Nature, and Operational Efficiency.

Mr. Cockrell explained that the next steps in the process would be affirmation of the candidate list of projects, the screening phase (which he noted was taking place at the current time), the constrained budget, the project evaluation, the final vetting process, and finalizing the Constrained and Vision lists. There would not be a significant difference between the current Plan and the updated Plan, with respect to budgeting, according to Mr. Cockrell. He stated that the final vetting of the projects was scheduled to take place in June, and he emphasized that the Constrained list of projects would be the heart of the plan. He added that March through June would comprise the critical time for compiling the projects together. The major steps of the project screening process, according to Mr. Cockrell, would be project investments of a regional nature, environmental justice, no identified need, and project concepts (which would serve as a "ripeness test"). He added that the candidate list of projects would get smaller as the process entered the third round, at which time more viable, reasonable projects would be selected. Mr. Cockrell noted that the first round would take place in March and early April, the second round would take place at the end of April into early May, and the third round would occur during late May into June. He then summarized steps that would take place for all three rounds of the process.

Mr. Cockrell transitioned to a discussion of deficiencies that were identified. The first slide in this section he presented articulated safety deficiencies at intersections and on segments, as well as congestion issues. He then presented a candidate list of projects in map and tabular format and indicated which originated from the current 2040 Long Range Transportation Plan, and which were derived from other studies; he then presented a map showing intersection and segment deficiencies as well as other potential projects in concert. He noted that a total of 66 projects were under consideration, with 45 of those comprising segments and the remaining 21 consisting of intersections.

Mr. Cockrell stated that the Board's input was desired at the end of each round of project screening. With regard to a slide showing safety and congestion deficiencies, Mr. Shanks asked Mr. Cockrell whether he was considering population and employment change as a result of the Southern Virginia Mega Site at Berry Hill, to which Mr. Cockrell replied that he had discussions with VDOT regarding whether this industrial park had been accounted for in the traffic demand model. Mr. Youngblood stated that the TIA that was originally created was attributable to last iteration of the plan as well as the current update. He stated that the value that was agreed upon for the industrial park was 11,500 employees. Mr. Youngblood indicated that the model showed how traffic would likely travel based on staggered shifts throughout the network, but did not necessarily indicate any deficiencies. Mr. Shanks asked whether the model would consider housing needs based on 11,500 employees, to which Mr. Youngblood replied that areas of potential population growth were identified, and he added that he thought a thorough job had been done identifying such areas.

Mr. Shanks stated that he believed there was potential for growth along Memorial Drive and West Main Street in the city limits from the US 29 bypass interchange in North Carolina continuing north, and he asked Mr. Youngblood whether that had been factored in. Mr. Youngblood replied that he couldn't determine whether that area was identified for growth, but noted that the area had been historically identified for higher growth based on its industrial character. Mr. Shanks stated that a significant development in that area was currently on the table, and that the potential growth of the area should be mentioned in the updated Long Range Transportation Plan. Mr. Youngblood replied that the riverfront area, as well as condo and brownfield redevelopment, had been taken into account with regard to development. Mr. Shanks stated that there might be an additional area that may need to be included in the plan, to which Mr. Youngblood replied that the Riverside Drive study and other studies have looked at network connections in and around Danville over a 20-year horizon, so if there was development through there, most all traffic volumes were looked at, and those calculated volumes were part of the safety improvements that were identified on Riverside Drive. Mr. Vogler stated that the City was in the process of creating a master plan for the Schoolfield site, and he articulated that he wanted to ensure that the site was included in the plan. Mr. Youngblood stated that Dewberry had conducted a study of that area several years ago, and Mr. Bonanno added that he believed the study determined that the road network surrounding the Schoolfield site had had an abundance of capacity for development. Mr. Shanks stressed that in the next 60 days, there may be something that changes the corridor substantially, to the tune of 5,000 daily vehicles at peak travel time. Mr. Youngblood suggested that the information be gathered quickly, and Mr. Hoback added that the MPO would get the information on that study to EPR. Some discussion took place, and Mr. Hoback stated that this could be included in the plan, since the document was not scheduled to be complete until August. Mr. Wuensch added that

EPR was about to complete a study on the White Mill, and information was available on that; he also noted that there had been interest in looking at the Schoolfield site with more focused effort. He further added that he believed the Long Range Plan could be amended prior to the next five-year update. Mr. Hoback added that though development was speculative, cursory mention of projects could be addressed, since the plan was in the process of being updated. Mr. Youngblood stated that the 2014 scope of the plan took into consideration buildout of the 93-acre Schoolfield site, which had been included in the Transportation Analysis Zone (TAZ) update in the transportation model as a mixed-use development concept. Mr. Wuensch added that EPR could make mention of a special planning area in the plan and show where improvements would be needed. Mr. Davis stated that the Southern Virginia Mega Site at Berry Hill was based on 11,500 employees, and he questioned the measurements regarding traffic and other aspects. Mr. Youngblood replied that 11,500 was the agreed-upon figure. Some discussion took place.

Mr. Shanks brought up discussion regarding an active railroad crossing on West Main Street, and said he had mentioned it several times in the past; he noted that this line would be critical for development of the industrial park. He added that, if not in this Long-Range Plan, it would need to be mentioned somewhere. Mr. Youngblood replied that if it was a specific study area, it could be added to the vision portion of the plan, particularly if it was indicative of future issues. Mr. Shanks added that the tracks could present a safety issue as well as a traffic issue, particularly if development occurred along the Main Street corridor. Mr. Youngblood replied that he believed it was a viable discussion, and something DRPT would need to be a partner with. Mr. Hoback then introduced Ms. Jenkins, of DRPT, who was participating via conference call; he asked Ms. Jenkins if she had any input regarding the rail line. Ms. Jenkins replied that the initiative sounded viable; she noted that her focus area was transit, but that she would be able to get the rail team involved. Mr. Hoback added that this would be a collaborative effort, but the first step would be to get the project included in the vision list. Mr. Dunevant stated that he spoke to Jeremy with DRPT in late fall or early winter, and it was mentioned there was a certain grant out there, but it was just a preliminary discussion, and a locality would need to experience "growing pains" to qualify. Some subsequent discussion took place.

Mr. Cockrell stated that if there were any projects coming up, the team could flag certain areas that received growth, and that could be part of the decision making process as the scoring process took place. He noted that if there were any projects that could be set aside for the visioning list, that would be helpful as the list of projects was narrowed down. Mr. Hoback asked whether there were 46 projects between the constrained and visioning plan, to which Mr. Cockrell replied that 45 road segment projects and 21 intersection projects were being considered. Mr. Cockrell added that the team could discuss this with Mr. Hoback as an attempt to narrow the list. Mr. Hoback suggested that MPO and VDOT staff would collaborate with Mr. Cockrell and his team to work through the plan, but also welcomed the MPO members of City and County staff to review the list and send any feedback to him. Mr. Davis stated that he agreed with Mr. Shanks regarding the issues pertaining to the at-grade railroad tracks at West Main Street. Mr. Hoback concluded by summarizing that based on what he was hearing from the Board discussion attention should be given to the Schoolfield area, the White Mill area, and the railroad crossing in the LRPT document.

#### **5. Consideration of 2020 MPO Smart Scale Applications**

Mr. Hoback stated that the Smart Scale portal opened on March 1<sup>st</sup>, and he added that due dates for the pre-applications would be April 3<sup>rd</sup>. He added that MPO staff wanted input from the Board regarding various applications staff planned to submit. He noted that the MPO was considering three applications for which to submit, and he directed the Board's attention to a packet containing two of the three. Mr. Hoback began with discussion of the roundabout project at the intersection of Mt. Cross Road and Dimon Drive, adding that the MPO exerted quite a bit of effort and resources on that study. Mr. Vogler questioned whether the public was on board, and he asked whether that was the location where the work was currently underway. Some discussion took place on this potential project. Mr. Hoback added that project had ultimately been supported by City Council, so staff was seeking the Board's approval to move forward. Mr. Youngblood added that this project had a great deal of support from Averett University and the City, and not a lot of opposition from the public; he further added that it would be very compatible with additional transit service, and additional discussion took place. Mr. Hoback asked for a Board vote for this application, to which Mr. Searce made a motion to approve, which was seconded by Mr.

Vogler. The motion was voted upon and approved unanimously. Mr. Davis expressed his support for this application.

Mr. Hoback stated that the second Smart Scale application the MPO was proposing to submit was the Kentuck Road improvement project submitted by Pittsylvania County during Round 3, and he directed the Board's attention to a handout with respect to the details of this project. He summarized the aspects of the project, and asked Mr. Bonanno to elaborate further, to which Mr. Bonanno added that the project scored the highest of the potential applications he ranked in the VDOT matrix, and added that it had a high degree of economic development potential due to the presence of a nearby industrial park. He noted the number of crashes that took place on the corridor, and stated that part of the road had been recommended as a portion of the Beaches to Bluegrass Priority Route in the updated *West Piedmont Regional Bicycle Plan*, adding that the widened shoulders would help to facilitate bicycling. Mr. Youngblood stated that this project had been derived from Pittsylvania County Economic Development based on freight movement, and he added that a second project was under consideration to maximize the economic development and safety scores. Mr. Bonanno added that Dewberry consultants conducted a study on this corridor in 2013. A motion to approve this application was made by Mr. Davis, which was seconded by Mr. Vogler. The motion was voted upon and approved unanimously.

Mr. Hoback stated that the third project would be a partner to the Smart Scale application the MPO successfully applied for during Round 3 of Smart Scale. Mr. Youngblood added that VDOT was tasked with an analysis regarding the connector road, with knowledge that the largest developable section of the Southern Virginia Mega Site at Berry Hill would be at Oak Hill. He added that the concept VDOT came up with, in conjunction with Dewberry, involved a two-lane extension of the connector road to extend just beyond Oak Hill. He noted that, based on the potential for a large investment in the industrial park, a decision would need to be made with respect to how the connector road would be extended based on the transportation need. He stated that the project was not cheap and would involve out-year funds, and he added that the project scope would include repaving existing lanes of Berry Hill Road and adding two lanes. He noted that the connector road extension would support the largest pad site and the rest of the industrial park as well. Mr. Youngblood added that discussions with Pittsylvania County economic development and MPO staff resulted in a favorable opinion toward the project. He further noted that the \$45 million initiative would be a long-term prospect, and would be phased. Mr. Bonanno asked for Mr. Youngblood to send him information for the Smart Scale pre-application, to which Mr. Youngblood replied that he had sent some information to Mr. Hoback, and that the project sketch would be forthcoming. Mr. Shanks asked if that needed to be confidential, to which Mr. Youngblood replied in the negative, noting that this recommendation was from the vision component of a study. Mr. Shanks asked Mr. Youngblood what the cost of the connector road was, to which Mr. Youngblood replied that it was \$32 or \$33 million, but that there was not yet a firm grasp on the cost of the interchange upgrade. He added that the Berry Hill Road and Martinsville Highway intersection project would cost \$3.5 to \$3.7 million and that construction would be underway soon if it wasn't already, and he stated that the connector road was already in advanced design to expedite that process. Mr. Shanks asked if a vote was needed for the MPO to move ahead with the connector road (Segment C) Smart Scale application, to which Mr. Hoback answered in the affirmative. Mr. Scarce made a motion to support the Smart Scale application for Segment C of the Berry Hill Connector Road, and this was seconded by Mr. Vogler. The motion was voted upon and approved unanimously.

**6. FY 2021 – 2024 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) Update**

Mr. Hoback stated that the TIP was a mandatory transportation planning document required by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) for MPOs to update every three years, and which covered a period of four fiscal years. He added that if an MPO received federal funding, it would need a TIP. He noted that the TIP document included anticipated federal funding for highway construction, bridges, trails, and other components of the transportation network. Appendix A is the heart of the document constituting \$115 million in projects. Mr. Hoback stated that some of the projects included the Berry Hill Road intersection project, the third lane of U.S. Route 58 in Danville, the Riverwalk Trail extension, and the intersection improvement project at Mt. Cross and Whitmell School roads. He noted that the public involvement process was of paramount importance to the MPO, and that following the Board's approval of the TIP, the MPO would initiate a 30-day review period, the notice of which would be included in two local newspapers, as well as on the MPO's website; he added that the FHWA emphasized the need for the MPO to reach out to disadvantaged

groups. Mr. Hoback stated that this update process would culminate in April with the 30-day review period. He concluded by stating that another MPO meeting would need to be scheduled in April pertaining to approval of the TIP. Mr. Hoback mentioned several dates to the Board, and April 29<sup>th</sup> was selected. Mr. Vogler made a motion to approve the draft of the 2021 – 2024 TIP document, which was seconded by Mr. Davis. The motion was voted upon and approved unanimously.

**7. Consideration of FY 21 MPO Work Plan New Studies**

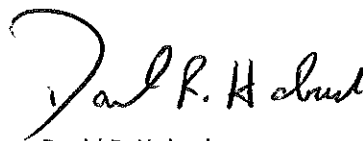
Mr. Hoback informed the Board that it was time to begin discussing possibilities for consultant-led studies for Fiscal Year 2021, as the MPO was approaching the time of year during which the Unified Work Plan (UWP) would be updated. Mr. Hoback noted two project ideas, with one being U.S. Route 58 East – including the City and the County – and the other potential study being Piedmont Drive, with particular emphasis on its intersection with Mount Cross Road. He asked Mr. Youngblood if he had anything else in mind, to which Mr. Youngblood replied that with the present discussion, an at-grade rail crossing project on West Main Street may present itself sooner, but perhaps it would be something that could be done on the front end. He then asked about Mr. Rick Drazenovich's opinion of a potential project off of Riverside Drive, to which Mr. Hoback replied that the idea was for a more direct connection from the Bypass to the River District. Mr. Hoback added that all of these potential projects could be listed in the UWP, and then a decision could be made early in the next fiscal year. Some discussion subsequently took place.

**8. Other Comments/Updates from VDOT and DRPT Staff**

Mr. Shanks asked if VDOT or DRPT staff had any items of discussion, to which Mr. Winstead stated that the Commonwealth Transportation Board (CTB) website presented the agenda from the previous day. He added that the last agenda item was a presentation on the legislative update, and during the presentation Deputy Transportation Secretary Nick Donohue provided an overview of transportation that was not addressed during the General Assembly session. He added that the governor signed one of the bills, which involved unlawfully holding a wireless communication device while driving, and would be signing others into law. He added that one piece of proposed legislation involved a gas tax increase of five cents over two years, as well as a regional gas tax. Mr. Winstead noted that these gas tax increases would be tied to the Consumer Price Index. He stated that slide 19 showed a projection regarding Round 4 of Smart Scale, which indicated \$860 million for the Statewide High Priority Program, and that substantial increases could be available for the District Grant program, to the tune of about \$131 million in the Lynchburg District. He did note, however, that this was dependent upon the economy and the amount of driving the public engaged in. Mr. Hoback added that between these two pots of money, about \$1 billion could be available for this round of Smart Scale. Mr. Winstead concurred, and added that Lynchburg District staff continued to work very hard with the City and County on Berry Hill; he noted that it would get challenging when certain development schedules came about that required more funds. Ms. Jenkins noted that the DRPT was wrapping up the application period, adding that she hoped that high level results of the applications would be released in April.

**9. Adjourn**

Mr. Shanks adjourned the meeting at 8:21 p.m.



David R. Hoback  
Danville MPO Administrator