

Minutes
for the
April 17, 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

Lee Vogler, City of Danville
Brian Dunevant, City of Danville
Fred Shanks, City of Danville
Ron Scearce, Pittsylvania County
Joe Davis, Pittsylvania County
Greg Sides, Pittsylvania County
Marc Adelman, Danville Transit
Bill Wuensch, EPR Consultants
Will Cockrell, EPR Consultants
Brian Bradner, Dewberry Consultants
Chris Winstead, VDOT
Rick Youngblood, VDOT
David Cook, VDOT
Becca Sial, DRPT
Dave Hoback, Danville MPO Administrator
Joseph Bonanno, Danville MPO Staff

1. Call to Order

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

2. Approval of minutes from March 4, 2019 MPO Meeting

Mr. Scearce asked for a motion to approve the minutes from the March 4, 2019 MPO Policy Board meeting. Mr. Shanks made a motion to approve the minutes, which was seconded by Mr. Dunevant. The motion was voted upon and was approved unanimously.

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

Mr. Wuensch introduced himself, introduced his associate Mr. Cockrell, and described some of his professional history. He stated that the process to update the Long-Range Plan would take place over the next 18 months, and that his firm would solicit input from the MPO Policy Board over that period, which would be followed up by completion of the document in August 2020. Mr. Hoback asked Chairman Scearce if attendees could introduce themselves, and introductions were made.

Mr. Cockrell introduced the MPO Long-Range Plan update process via a PowerPoint presentation, and discussed some of his professional history. He followed by noting the goals and objectives pertaining to the update process, and stated that the MPO contract began on March 8th, adding that good progress had been made since that point. He added that EPR would like to potentially promote the update of the plan at certain community events, and discussed the relevance of the Long-Range Plan as it pertained to the MPO. He described some of the successful MPO Smart Scale applications which had come out of the plan, and some of the studies produced by the MPO. He noted that tasks EPR would engage in would include data collection, public involvement, goals, performance measures and targets, constrained and vision plan development, the plan adoption process, document production, and project management. He added that during the month of April, the kickoff call with staff took place, as well as the first MPO meeting; he noted that the first public open house would take place in a couple of months. He discussed tasks in detail; milestones; and three documents to manage the process, which would include the scope of work, project management plan, and public involvement plan.

Mr. Cockrell discussed elements of the public involvement plan, and noted the public comment period, a project website, newsletter and notices, surveys, social media and online tools, interviews, existing community events, and public open house events; he added that a project website was planned to be launched in April. He

asked the MPO to provide EPR with a list of stakeholders. He noted that Task 1 updates included an inventory of local, state, and regional plans; facilitation of MPO meetings; the initial coordination phone call; and representation from educational institutions and community groups. He inquired as to who the stakeholders, underrepresented groups, and private and nonprofit organizations were. He then asked board members to indicate on index cards potential community events which the update process could be presented at. He also asked attendees to indicate which projects EPR may have overlooked, which projects the board members were most proud of, and whether the process was successful.

4. Update on Oak Hill Road Planning

Mr. Hoback stated that at the March MPO meeting, a discussion ensued regarding the relocation or abandonment of Oak Hill Road to accommodate expansion of the Berry Hill Industrial Park, and he added that he, along with Mr. Sides and Mr. Youngblood, of VDOT, spoke with Dewberry and the Regional Industrial Facilities Authority (RIFA). He noted that, according to Mr. Bradner, the data needed to make the decision was already available.

Mr. Bradner passed around copies of a map illustrating various aspects of the transportation system, as well as one illustrating fire district boundaries for the purpose of discussing how emergency response times could be altered, should Oak Hill Road be abandoned or relocated. He added that a study Dewberry conducted for the MPO in 2018 revealed relatively small amounts of traffic on Oak Hill Road, but he cautioned that even small numbers could be perceived by the public as resulting in significant impacts. Mr. Bradner stated that, from a fire/rescue standpoint, the industrial park was right in the center between Cascade, Brosville, and Bachelor Hall fire districts, so that there would be a significant mutual-aid response in the event of a large incident at the industrial park.

The second discussion point Mr. Bradner made related to transportation-related impacts of a possible road relocation. He noted the presence of a nearby road network which could potentially be upgraded. He added that the possible abandonment of Oak Hill Road would begin near an existing church along that road southward, so an inventory of existing alternate routes would need to be identified, and he referenced a number of alternate route numbers that could be utilized in lieu of Oak Hill Road. He added that some residences along Oak Hill Road would be affected if the road were to be abandoned. Mr. Shanks noted that the Harmon church would be heavily impacted, as much of its congregation utilized Oak Hill Road. Mr. Scarce added that any change would likely need to involve a relocation, not an abandonment, and it was added that a member of the Pittsylvania County Board of Supervisors who resided in the area was opposed to abandonment. Mr. Bradner stated that it was his opinion that, with the information available, there was no need to conduct a full study. Mr. Sides stated that a concept plan existed for the industrial park, which would eliminate Oak Hill Road, and added that this plan would help to identify sensitive environmental features alongside a potential development pad, which would aid with cost estimating. Mr. Vogler made the point that part of Oak Hill Road was known as Gravity Hill, and that losing it would be unpopular; some discussion took place.

Mr. Shanks stated that he would be more comfortable studying relocation, even if it was deemed not feasible, to which Mr. Vogler agreed. Mr. Youngblood stated that the MPO had limited funding resources, and that he would not be comfortable expending monetary resources for a local option economic development site decision; he added that previous studies had as their bases capacity and safety concerns. He further noted that MPO funds would be tied up for the next two years in the MPO Long-Range Plan update, and added that RIFA funding would be a logical source. Some discussion took place, and Mr. Youngblood added that this project would not be eligible for Smart Scale, but that there were other funding streams such as Revenue Sharing, and that a road upgrade similar to Climax Road could be a possibility. Mr. Sides concluded by stating that the effort could be continued, some cost estimates could be generated, and he could update this board again, and then go back to RIFA. Mr. Bradner agreed with this.

5. Consideration and approval of proposed FY 20 Unified Transportation Work Program (UWP)

Mr. Hoback stated that updating the Unified Transportation Work Program (UWP) was an annual requirement of the MPO in order to receive federal funding. He stated that for Fiscal Year 2020, the UWP included \$148,410, of which 80 percent would be federal funding, 10 percent would be from the State, and 10 percent would be provided jointly by the City of Danville and Pittsylvania County. He added that the FY 2020 budget would comprise \$138,410 in new funding, as well as \$10,000 carried forth from the FY 2019 UWP. He noted that, as a point of

comparison, funding this year would be approximately \$7,500 less, primarily because \$20,000 was carried over from FY 18 to FY 19 approximately half of that carryover funding is being used to support going MPO studies. He added that, in terms of actual funding, however, the MPO would be receiving a surplus of about \$3,000 in PL funding. He noted that the bulk of the funding would be allocated to consulting services, as well as staff time in support of the Long-Range Plan update and corridor studies.

Mr. Hoback further stated that it was easy to fall into the mindset of seeing these efforts as being just "another study," but added that in the time he has been working with the MPO, \$40 million in project funding had been secured, including what would likely be \$32 million for a connector road. He noted other projects which received Smart Scale funding in past years, as well as other potential initiatives which could be funded in the future. He stated that study money is being leveraged to support successful project funding applications. Mr. Hoback briefly noted the Long-Range Plan update and the 58 West corridor study would take place within the upcoming year. He concluded by stating that the upcoming 2020 update of the MPO's Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) would occur in conjunction with the Statewide transportation plan as well as the next Smart Scale round.

6. Resolution 2019-1 to Amend FY 19 Unified Transportation Work Program (UWP)

Mr. Hoback introduced Resolution 2019-1 as a means of approval from the Policy Board to carry over \$10,000 from FY 19 to FY 20. Mr. Vogler made a motion to adopt this Resolution, which was seconded by Mr. Shanks. The motion was voted upon and approved unanimously.

7. Resolution 2019-2 to Adopt FY 20 Unified Transportation Planning Work Program (UWP)

Mr. Hoback stated that Resolution 2019-2 would approve the FY 2020 Unified Transportation Work Program (UWP). Mr. Shanks made a motion to approve this resolution, which was seconded by Mr. Vogler. The motion was voted upon and approved unanimously.

8. Resolution 2019-3 Statement of Certification for 2019

Mr. Hoback introduced Resolution 2019-3 as a statement of certification which articulated that activities of the MPO and studies administered by the MPO were in compliance with Title VI requirements; he added that to his knowledge, the MPO was in compliance. Mr. Shanks made a motion to approve this resolution, which was seconded by Mr. Vogler. The motion was voted upon and approved unanimously.

9. CTB Spring Six Year Plan Meeting, Lynchburg District

Mr. Hoback stated that the CTB public hearing in Lynchburg the previous week had strong representation to advocate for the Berry Hill project as well as for improvements at Shula Drive, and noted some of the attendees at the meeting. He added that he thought teamwork was well-exhibited, was well-received, and made an effective statement of regional support at the hearing. Mr. Shanks also provided positive feedback regarding the hearing, and added that VDOT had been tremendous on behalf of RIFA, and he stated he was very pleased with the agency's efforts.

Mr. Winstead stated that the representation was well thought out, and he noted the presence of an attendee from Eden, NC, who made comments which left a positive impression with Secretary Valentine. He added that it was the localities and the MPO which were responsible for writing and submitting the application, and he commended his staff for the hard work they had done as part of this process. He added that sometimes, Smart Scale scores were a function of what other entities across the state applied for, and he added, referring to the connector road application, that it garnered the highest economic development score in the state. He added that the applications had not yet been finalized in terms of funding, but that if the actual Smart Scale schedule applied, funding would likely be available in 2024, and construction completion would be December 2030. However, Mr. Winstead noted that the money would be available four years early, which would result in a completion date of spring 2025. He mentioned the Berry Hill intersection improvement project, which was funded via a round 1 Smart Scale application, noting that project would be advertised in March 2020, with completion in a timely manner for potential industrial park clients. He emphasized that complete applications were the key to success in terms of Smart Scale funding.

Mr. Youngblood added that a very capable team was responsible for the connector road application's draft funding status. He added that VDOT was conducting a STARS study on Riverside Drive in Danville, which would involve identification of safety issues within the study area along that route, and that MPO staff were supportive of that VDOT-funded initiative. Mr. Hoback added that this STARS study would complement the US 58 West study well.

Mr. Hoback introduced Ms. Becca Sial, who represented the Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation (DRPT), and added that she would attend future MPO meetings. Ms. Sial stated that DRPT was becoming more engaged in the Smart Scale process, and she stated that staff had met recently to discuss future coordination efforts. She encouraged localities to contact her with regard to questions about any transit element, emphasizing that nothing would be too small. Mr. Shanks asked Ms. Sial about an issue with existing railroad tracks along West Main Street in Danville, about condition of rail at the Berry Hill Industrial Park, and whether there were any rail-related issues that would need to be resolved. Ms. Sial replied that she was a transit planner, but she added that she could get in touch with the appropriate person, and send that information to Mr. Hoback. Some discussion took place, and Mr. Youngblood noted that Mr. Cook worked closely with localities regarding data share from DRPT for transit as a means to more effectively assist each other.

10. Comments/Updates from VDOT

Discussion of topics related to this agenda item took place under Agenda Item 9.

11. Other Business

No other business was discussed.

12. Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at approximately 7:43 p.m.



David R. Hoback
Danville MPO Administrator