

Minutes
for the
July 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

Lee Vogler, City of Danville
Fred Shanks, City of Danville
Ron Searce, Pittsylvania County
Greg Sides, Pittsylvania County
Marc Adelman, Danville Transit
Will Cockrell, EPR Consultants
Phil White, EPR Consultants
Rick Youngblood, VDOT
David Cook, VDOT
Becca Sial, DRPT
Dave Hoback, Danville MPO Administrator
Joseph Bonanno, Danville MPO Staff

1. Call to Order

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

2. Approval of minutes from April 17, 2019 MPO Meeting

Mr. Searce asked for a motion to approve the minutes from the April 17, 2019 MPO Policy Board meeting. Mr. Vogler made a motion to approve the minutes, which was seconded by Mr. Sides. The motion was voted upon and was approved unanimously.

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

Following introductions, initiated by Mr. Hoback, Mr. Cockrell stated that the first open house event as part of the 2045 Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) update took place on June 27th. As part of this process, he noted that display boards and a PowerPoint presentation were created, and that Mr. White uploaded information on the project website. Mr. Cockrell then presented an overview of the existing conditions, articulated within a *2020 State of the System* report. He noted that this report constituted one chapter of the LRTP, and that EPR would be developing each chapter separately so as to provide the MPO ample time to review them. He introduced Mr. White, whom he stated would assist him during the presentation. He stated that this meeting would wrap up Task 1 of the process.

Mr. Cockrell stated that, as part of the State of the System report, multiple aspects of the Danville MPO transportation system were analyzed. He noted that traffic volumes remained generally steady, with Route 29 Business and Route 58 Business, respectively, exhibiting the highest traffic volumes. He added that data indicated a significant amount of travel from North Carolina north into Danville and then proceeding eastward. He noted that Piedmont Drive, Mount Cross Road, and the downtown areas were traffic hot spots.

With regard to volume-to-capacity (V/C) ratio, Mr. Cockrell stated that every road was under capacity, and that an abundance of roadway capacity remained; he added that the only roads approaching capacity were the Route 29 Business corridor and Mount Cross Road. He noted that because of the ample capacity, multimodal road configurations could potentially be explored.

With regard to the topic of safety, Mr. White stated that Potential for Safety Improvements (PSI) was explored, and he briefly described this metric utilized by VDOT to determine where the greatest potential for safety improvements would likely be. He stated that the team selected the top five PSI intersections and segments, and he noted that only one PSI area coincided with a project in the existing LRTP. Mr. Cockrell stated that many safety hot spots were concentrated along the U.S Route 29 Business corridor, along with one on U.S. Route 58 Business near Danville Regional Airport; Mr. White stated he believed a Smart Scale application had been funded on this latter segment. Mr. Cook referred to a study which was taking place along U.S. Route 58 Business, and he added that a draft report would be completed in approximately October and that the final report would

likely be complete around Thanksgiving. Mr. Cockrell stated that the PSI locations analyzed were high on the list for District PSI.

Mr. White stated that crashes involving bicyclists and pedestrians were concentrated along Route 29 Business and in the downtown area. He added that the city had plans to add approximately 24 miles of bike lanes and sharrows, but he cautioned against applying sharrows, as they had been demonstrated to neither increase bicycling nor safety to a significant degree. He further added that the eastern end of the Danville Riverwalk Trail ended just short of Danville Regional Airport, and it was inquired as to the reason for this. Mr. Adelman replied that the trail expansion project was under consideration, but that it required the airport layout plan to be updated; he added that a conference call with the FAA and the city's public works department was scheduled for the following week. He added that it would need to begin in August so as to be incorporated into the airport layout plan, and he referred the team to Mr. Dunevant, the city's engineer.

Mr. Cockrell stated that an attendee of the open house noted that clients she worked with had positive input regarding Danville Transit, and he provided statistics about transit ridership, and noted that on-demand services had seen increased utilization. Mr. Adelman stated that fixed-route transit service demand correlated with gas prices, but demand-response services exhibited the opposite effect – namely, that demand for them increased when gas prices decreased. He added that a cap had to be put on demand-response service due to lack of drivers. He further added that the limited taxi service in Danville may have contributed to greater demand-response service demand. Mr. Cockrell acknowledged that the MPO lost its urban designation, and asked Mr. Adelman if transitioning to the rural funding source had been a challenge, to which Mr. Adelman replied that the change actually made it easier because Danville Transit now dealt directly with the state rather than the Federal Transit Administration. Some discussion ensued. Mr. Cockrell stated that the team would be working on the demographics chapter, which would include land use, among other things; he noted that it appeared demand for the demand-response service would be increasing significantly.

Regarding intercity travel, Mr. Cockrell stated that Amtrak departure times were inconvenient, and that was a likely factor driving declining ridership on that service. Mr. Shanks remarked that he believed it was unfair that Danville would not be included in the Lynchburg Amtrak expansion. Mr. Cockrell stated that he asked a DRPT representative if anything could be done to improve Amtrak departure times, but was told that nothing in the rail plan suggested increased funding; he added that the updated Long-Range Transportation Plan would be an appropriate document in which to address that need. Ms. Sial stated that the Long Bridge, a railroad bridge connecting Virginia to Washington, D.C., needed to be expanded and was a factor in creating bottlenecks. Some discussion subsequently took place. Mr. Cook stated that the North Carolina DOT's rail plan contained a recommendation for future service from Charlotte to Lynchburg which would include Danville, but there was currently no funding for it. Mr. Adelman stated that Norfolk Southern owned the tracks and had priority, which contributed to Amtrak's lack of reliability. Mr. Vogler asked if there was a way for the MPO to voice its support with regard to the rail service, and whether some entity could assist with that. Ms. Sial replied that a DRPT rail planner, Randy Selleck, was always looking for support for improvements to the Long Bridge, and that the MPO and City Council could be a good avenue by which to voice support. She added that she would see if Mr. Selleck could contact Mr. Hoback, and Mr. Hoback replied that he believed everyone around the table would be willing to support a resolution or language within the updated Long-Range Transportation Plan which promoted capacity expansion of the Long Bridge. Mr. Cockrell asked when the rail plan would be updated, to which Ms. Sial replied that this plan was now under the umbrella of VTrans, and she suggested that Emily Stock be contacted. Mr. Cockrell asked whether a joint statement within multiple MPO Long-Range Transportation Plans supporting capacity expansion of the Long Bridge would carry more weight, and Ms. Sial replied that it may help; she added that Charlottesville's MPO passed a similar resolution. Some discussion took place.

Ms. Sial stated that DRPT completed an intercity bus study to recommend new intercity bus routes, and the finding had been presented to the Commonwealth Transportation Board (CTB), which recommended two routes. She noted that one route would begin in Martinsville, proceed east to Danville, and then travel east along the Route 360 corridor, before terminating in Richmond. She stated that the second route would begin in Danville and travel to Washington, D.C., via the Route 29 corridor. She added that the service would likely begin in spring 2020, and that some next steps would involve requests for proposals and procurement. She further added that staff were in the process of identifying locations for stops, and that she would likely be in Danville in the near future for

that purpose. Mr. Bonanno asked Ms. Sial to repeat the route the bus service would take to Richmond, and she stated that it would operate from Martinsville to Danville, to Crewe, Farmville, and terminate in Richmond. Some discussion ensued. Mr. Bonanno stated that the Martinsville city manager was interested in looking for a stop for the new service, and asked who he could contact, and Ms. Sial replied that Emily Delross would be the contact, and that she would provide the information to him. Mr. Vogler asked if DRPT would be reaching out to the Martinsville City Council members, and Ms. Sial replied that DRPT was working on that, and that the agency would be working with the localities to identify stops.

Mr. Cockrell asked about Danville Transit's regional service, and Mr. Adelman replied that Danville Transit received multiple grants and buses through federal and state transit funding for expanded service to Hurt, with connecting service to Altavista, as well as to South Boston including the hospital. He added that everything was in place except for the drivers; some discussion took place. Mr. Adelman added that major employers along the route were eagerly awaiting the service, and were willing to adjust their shifts to coincide with the bus schedules. Discussion took place regarding autonomous vehicles, and Mr. Cook added that a series of autonomous vehicle workshops were taking place around the state, and he mentioned some developments with regard to relevant research initiatives.

With regard to airport use, Mr. Cockrell stated that anecdotal evidence suggested that most people in the MPO area traveled to Greensboro or Roanoke to access air travel. He stated that most bridges and culverts in the MPO area were in good shape, and he added that the Main Street Bridge was in poorer condition but that the City was monitoring it. He added that by 2045, some bridges would reach the end of their life cycle. Some discussion took place regarding the Main Street Bridge. Mr. Cook stated that the FHWA had formulated new posted weights for bridges, and this would heavily impact bridges in Pittsylvania County, which numbered 255; he added that 28 bridges in the county would experience weight limit decreases and seven which currently had no weight limits would be assigned limits. He stated that VDOT was involved in the mapping process pertaining to the changes, and added that he would distribute the maps. Some discussion took place. Mr. Cockrell added that a survey would be conducted over the next month to determine where people were flying to. Some discussion took place. Mr. Adelman added that the Danville Airport had some potential prospects, and the layout plan was being updated; he added that the update of the airport's layout plan was relevant to the MPO LRTP update.

Mr. Cockrell stated that the LRTP update process was on schedule, that the goals and performance measures phase was being undertaken, and he would wait for additional comments relating to Task 1 and then send it out to everyone. He added that the MPO should meet again in September to discuss goals and objectives. He noted that the attendance was poor at the public open house, and as a result, one of the future open house events would be eliminated in favor of pop-up events such as festivals. Mr. Vogler described a number of upcoming festivals that would take place in Danville over the coming months. Mr. Adelman stressed that he hoped the LRTP would address public transit with regard to the Southern Virginia Mega Site at Berry Hill, particularly if companies that paid relatively low wages chose to locate there. Mr. Cockrell stated that VTrans emphasized economic development. He asked MPO staff to look through Chapter 3 and provide comments by the end of the month. He asked if there was anything else that needed to be looked at, and Ms. Sial noted the intercity bus should be included; it was also noted that Averett University's flight school was growing due to the pilot shortage. Mr. Hoback asked if EPR included Averett University in the plan, to which Mr. Cockrell acknowledged in the affirmative.

4. Consideration of revision to the FY 2018 – 2021 Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP) to incorporate state performance measures

Mr. Hoback referenced updates to the FY 2018 – 2021 TIP as Appendices H and I, which incorporated performance measures required by MAP-21 and the FAST Act. He added that the purpose of the performance measures was to quantify how investment dollars were making a difference in improving safety and other components, as well as establishing goals and improving the system. He noted that, while the MPO had the option of adopting its own performance measures, the state's approach seemed straightforward. He stated that Appendix H addressed reliability on interstate highways and non-interstate highways as well as truck travel time. He noted that Appendix I addressed pavement and bridge performance measures. Mr. Hoback asked for a motion to approve the TIP amendments, and Mr. Shanks made a motion, which was seconded by Mr. Sides. The motion was voted upon and was approved unanimously.

5. Comments/Updates from VDOT and DRPT

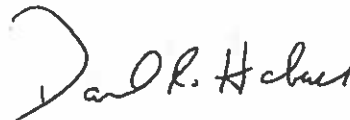
Mr. Cook updated the Board regarding the Riverside Drive STARS study, noting that two meetings were held in June to consider initial concepts. He added that the final list of concepts had been developed, and that the preferred alternatives had been listed. He further added that once VDOT was provided the list, the alternatives would be tested, a meeting would be held in September, and a draft report would be completed in October. Mr. Cook stated that a meeting would be held in Danville on August 1st at 9:30 a.m., pertaining to the update of VTrans, the state's transportation plan, to solicit feedback from regional stakeholders. He stated that the CTB met earlier in the week to analyze lessons learned from round 3 of Smart Scale, and to look ahead to round 4. He added that the VTrans PSI list was expected to be updated in late August. With regard to round 4 of Smart Scale, Mr. Cook stated that projects that scored well but did not get funded during the last Smart Scale round should be considered again. He stated that nothing had been finalized regarding economic development factors; he added that with regard to economic development, the biggest factor would be floor-area ratio (FAR). With regard to safety, he stated that the state would begin looking at crash modification factors (CMF), which was a similar metric to the PSI list; he briefly explained CMF to the Board. He added that some training regarding CMF would be upcoming. Ms. Sial stated that she and DRPT were committed to working with PDCs and MPOs with regard to selecting the best stops for the new intercity bus routes. She added that stops would have to be ADA-compliant and provide an adequate amount of parking. Mr. Cook asked what type of facility DRPT was considering, and Ms. Sial replied that it could be anything from a shopping center to a VDOT-owned facility to a university-owned facility; she added that it would preferably be served by transit. Mr. Cook stated that VDOT was updating its park and ride lot investment strategy, and found that many lot owners were not amenable to having an official park & ride lot sign erected on the property. Mr. Adelman asked if the Virginia Breeze stops had signage, to which Ms. Sial replied that signs usually were present. Mr. Adelman asked if the Danville transfer center could contain a ticketing kiosk for the buses, to which Ms. Sial replied that DRPT could look into that. She added that if anyone had ideas for Smart Scale projects, they should let DRPT know prior to September 1st.

6. Other Business

Mr. Hoback stated that it was good to have EPR present at the meeting, and he added that the MPO would soon begin to hear from the consultant regarding the updated Route 58 West access management update. He also stated that, in addition to the Berry Hill connector road and the Shula Drive intersection, the third lane of U.S. Route 58 in Danville had been approved for Smart Scale funding. Mr. Cockrell stated that the project team was ahead of schedule with regard to the Long-range transportation plan update, and a Safe Routes to School audit had been done to assess the presence of sidewalks, bike lanes, crosswalks, and posted travel speeds in proximity to schools within the MPO area; he added that this data would be included as an additional report in the appendix of the plan. He added that this information could be used for a future Safe Routes to School application.

7. Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 8:02 p.m.



David R. Hoback
Danville MPO Administrator