

Minutes
for the
March 23, 2022 Meeting
of the
Danville Metropolitan Planning Organization
2nd Floor Conference Room, Danville Municipal Building and Virtual
at 6:00 p.m.

Attendees

Lee Vogler, City of Danville, Chairman
Jessie Barksdale, Pittsylvania County, Vice-Chairman
Emily Ragsdale, Pittsylvania County
Vic Ingram, Pittsylvania County
Rick Youngblood, VDOT
David Cook, VDOT
Chris Winstead, VDOT
Tiffany Dubinsky, DRPT
Bill Wuensch, EPR, PC
Jeanie Alexander, EPR, PC
Michael Armbrister, Danville MPO Administrator
Joseph Bonanno, Danville MPO Staff

1. Call to Order

Mr. Armbrister called the meeting to order at 6:02 p.m.

2. Election of MPO Chairman for 2022

Mr. Armbrister stated that this year, a representative to serve as MPO Chairman would need to be nominated and elected from the City of Danville, and he opened the floor to nominations. Mr. Vogler nominated himself, and Mr. Winstead made a motion for the election of Mr. Vogler, which was seconded by Mr. Youngblood. The motion was voted upon and approved unanimously.

3. Election of MPO Vice-Chairman for 2022

Chairman-elect Lee Vogler opened the meeting, and opened the nomination process for MPO Vice-Chairman, which would be from Pittsylvania County. Mr. Vogler nominated Mr. Barksdale as Vice-Chairman, and Mr. Winstead seconded this motion. The motion was voted upon and approved unanimously.

4. Approval of Minutes from the November 17, 2021 Meeting

Mr. Vogler asked for a motion to approve the minutes from the November 17, 2021 MPO Policy Board Meeting. Mr. Winstead made a motion to approve the minutes, which was seconded by Mr. Youngblood. The motion was voted upon and approved unanimously.

5. Adoption of Resolution to Carry Over PL Funds from FY 22 to FY 23. Michael Armbrister, MPO Administrator

Mr. Armbrister stated that when the work program was developed for FY 22, funds were set aside for a small study, but, he added, the MPO did not have an upcoming study to fund. He noted that he would like the FY 22 work program to be amended to enable the carryover of \$21,590 into the FY 23 work program, to which he added MPO staff had recommended. A motion to adopt the resolution was put forth by Mr. Winstead, which was seconded by Mr. Ingram. The motion was voted upon and approved unanimously.

6. Adoption of FY 23 MPO Unified Work Program (UWP). Michael Armbrister, MPO Administrator

Mr. Armbrister stated that each year, the MPO developed a Unified Work Program (UWP) that planned out the MPO's budget and activities for the upcoming year. He added that the FY 23 UWP was funded in the amount of \$154,747, consisting of 80 percent federal funds, 10 percent from the State, and 10 percent split between the City of Danville and Pittsylvania County. He added that \$133,158 of that consisted of new funding, which included the \$21,590 carryover funding discussed within Item 5. He noted that the bulk of the funding would go toward developing consultant-led studies. He stated that the GAP tool development should be completed about the same time as the Piney Forest Road study wrapped up, and noted that the MPO planned to select its next transportation study over the next fiscal year. Mr. Armbrister concluded by stating that MPO staff recommended adoption of the UWP. Mr. Ingram made a motion to adopt the UWP, which was seconded by Mr. Winstead. The motion was voted upon and approved unanimously.

7. Adoption of 2022 MPO Self-Certification. Michael Armbrister, MPO Administrator

Mr. Armbrister stated that self-certification was a periodic process to ensure MPO compliance with Title VI and other state and federal laws that ensured non-discrimination by the MPO. He noted that MPO staff recommended adoption of the resolution of self-certification. Mr. Winstead made a motion to approve, which was seconded by Mr. Ingram. The motion was voted upon and approved unanimously.

8. Update on Piney Forest Road Corridor Study: Jeanie Alexander, P.E., EPR, PC

Ms. Alexander opened the discussion by noting the Piney Forest Road study had been divided into two phases, largely due to the COVID pandemic. She noted that the first phase focused on safety, access management, and spacing of intersections and the interrelationship to the corridor's crash history. She added that multimodal recommendations including pedestrian, bicycle, and transit stop improvements, were also examined. Ms. Alexander stated that the first study phase included a virtual public meeting as well as a survey to gather additional input, after which a draft report had been developed; she added that all recommendations developed during that initial phase would be incorporated into the second, and final, phase.

Ms. Alexander stated that the second phase involved traffic counts, and that reliable data had been received because following COVID, drivers returned to more typical travel patterns. She added that the team projected roadway function to 2045, which was the year established as the recommendation base year. She added that public input would be solicited with regard to the concepts, after which a final report would be developed.

Ms. Alexander described the study area limits, and she noted that three emphasis areas were identified which included traffic congestion, safety, and entrance corridor aesthetics, the latter of which she described as a physical entrance into the City, serving as a source of local pride. She noted that traffic congestion had been identified as the top concern, followed by safety. She then presented information regarding measures of congestion and safety, specifically levels of service (LOS) and Potential for Safety Improvement (PSI) data and discussed those findings. She added that recommended improvements fell into two categories, which were either intersection or corridor-specific; she noted that the only intersection that exhibited major problems was the corridor's intersection with Franklin Turnpike. She further added that recommended operational improvements at other intersections were smaller in scope and included turn lane improvements, restriping of side streets, pedestrian improvements, and traffic signal optimization at the signalized intersections.

Ms. Alexander transitioned to discussion of recommended improvements for the corridor's intersection with Franklin Turnpike. She stated that this intersection had now been included on VDOT's PSI list, and that traffic queuing and level of service were identified as two potential problems for 2045, with vehicle queuing projected to extend more than 1,500 feet to the south of the intersection at that time; she identified the afternoon peak as the most troublesome time period. She noted that the intersection skew was a challenge, which affected pedestrians and safety, and required additional time for vehicles to clear the intersection.

Ms. Alexander stated that the three concepts the team developed included a triple left-turn lane concept, a northbound left-turn flyover, and northbound and southbound displaced left-turn lanes (DLT). She described the triple left-turn lane concept as the addition of a third northbound left-turn lane, and added that this concept would impact one home and would have lesser impacts on a McDonald's and a gas station. She stated that this concept would result in a northbound PM peak traffic queue of more than 700 feet, an LOS of D, and a southbound left-turn LOS of F.

Ms. Alexander stated that the northbound left-turn flyover would have significant impacts to one home and to a McDonald's, and a lesser impact to an existing gas station. She added that, with the flyover, the PM northbound peak was projected to be greater than 500 feet, the LOS would be C, and there were no anticipated movements have an F LOS. She added that with this concept, the roadway would shift to the left, and that the design would function well.

According to Ms. Alexander, the Displaced Left Turn (DLT) would be the most complex of the three concepts, incorporating three coordinated traffic signals, but that it would improve efficiency and safety. She added that left-turning traffic would transition to the opposite side of the road where it would flow to the left of the oncoming traffic. She noted that this configuration would have impacts farther south of the intersection, and outside of the roadway area to the north of the intersection. She added that the impacts to the McDonald's and the gas station would be significant, with lesser impacts to a home. She noted that the intersection would function best with this configuration, with a queue of less than 500 feet, an overall LOS of C or better, and no F LOS.

Ms. Alexander explained that minor operational changes were recommended for the corridor's intersection with Arnett Boulevard, which exhibited access management challenges as well as a crash history. She noted that recommendations included driveway closures, placement of a vehicular entrance opposite Arnett Boulevard at a shopping center, a reconfigured turn lane, a median in the area, and inter-parcel connectivity opportunities. She added that the City applied for a TAP application for a section of sidewalk along Arnett Boulevard.

Ms. Alexander added that the landscaped median would serve as a corridor-wide recommendation that would control traffic, improve safety, provide minor stormwater mitigation, improve traffic flow, and provide an aesthetic touch to the corridor. She presented a series of graphs illustrating the safety impact of various roadway configurations. She noted that the greatest challenge imposed by the median would be limited vehicle access, and that U-turns would be challenging; she added that loons would be required in various places along the corridor to facilitate U-turns.

Ms. Alexander described the major tasks that occurred during each of the two phases, and mentioned that the improvement concepts would be refined in March and April, that a public meeting and a MetroQuest survey were scheduled for May, and that a final report would be published in May or June.

Ms. Alexander asked if there were any questions, to which Mr. Vogler asked about the Displaced Left Turn, and what the cost differences of the various concepts would be, to which she replied that the team had not yet developed cost estimates. Mr.

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Wuensch added that structures were very expensive, and that a right-of-way analysis would be necessary to determine the cost of private land that would be required to be purchased to implement any one of the three alternatives. He noted that the triple left-turn lane configuration would be least expensive. Mr. Vogler followed up by asking if the Displaced Left Turn configuration would effectively require the demolition of the McDonald's, to which Mr. Wuensch replied that it was a reasonable assumption. Mr. Vogler concluded by stating that the improvements at the intersection would be impactful regardless of which design was chosen; he added that the entire corridor needed improvements.

9. Update on Route 29 Business (Piedmont Drive) Project Pipeline – Boxwood Drive to Park Ave: Joe Bonanno, Senior Planner

Mr. Bonanno stated that this Project Pipeline study was a logical extension of the Piney Forest Road corridor study because it began where that study had left off, and he briefly described the limits of the Piedmont Drive study. He stated that the study's main points of emphasis included road safety and pedestrian access. He added that preliminary recommendations along the Piedmont Drive corridor included thru-cuts at Piedmont Drive, Executive Drive/Sandy Court, and Old Mount Cross Road; he added that a thru-cut was an innovative intersection and briefly described how it functioned. He added that another recommendation included the installation of sidewalks along Piedmont Drive, Mount Cross Road, and other intersecting roadways. He concluded by stating that several study-related tasks were still in progress, and that a final report was scheduled to be released in June, in time for final Smart Scale submission.

10. Smart Scale Round 5 Information and Discussion

Mr. Cook reminded all attendees that April 1st was the Smart Scale pre-application deadline. He noted that there were six pre-applications in the Danville MPO area, and that many of these were resubmissions. He noted that some of the Riverside Drive improvement projects would be resubmitted, and stated that he believed they would score higher than Round 4 because of strong pedestrian components and the land use policy change for Round 5. Mr. Cook added that Pittsylvania County was planning to resubmit an application for a roundabout at U.S. 29 Business and Malmaison Road, as well as another application for a roundabout at U.S. 29 Business at Lawless Creek Road. He further added that Mr. Bonanno would discuss the application for pedestrian improvements at Piedmont Drive, and explained that a significant number of individuals who participated in a survey indicated support for pedestrian improvements in this area, and that a narrowed-down scope should be more cost-effective.

Mr. Bonanno stated that the pedestrian improvement project along Piedmont Drive would be a resubmission, consisting of approximately one mile of sidewalk installed along Piedmont Drive, Mount Cross Road, Enterprise Drive, Old Mount Cross Road, and Collins Drive. He echoed Mr. Cook's words, noting that the narrowing of the project scope, by the consultant RK&K, would reduce the project's cost. Mr. Bonanno added that he believed the application would now score higher due to the land use factor policy change. Mr. Bonanno transitioned to discussion of the Berry Hill Connector Road application, noting that this application for Round 5 would involve a widening of the first phase of the connector road, which would extend from the Oak Ridge Farms Road interchange at the Danville Expressway to Berry Hill Road. He added that this Round 5 application would double the width of the connector road from two lanes to four. He noted that, in addition to these two applications, he was resubmitting two applications via the WPPDC, in the Salem District.

With regard to the connector road expansion application, Mr. Winstead stated that the interchange itself remained a two-lane facility. Mr. Youngblood stated that an operations safety report had been completed by RK&K consultants for the interchange improvements, which determined that the divergent diamond configuration would be ideal, but that various alternatives needed to be explored in order to justify this alternative. He added that this was one of the requirements from the state's perspective, that VDOT was able to secure some funding for that effort, and an update to that original study was currently underway and was anticipated to be completed in April. Mr. Ingram asked what would happen at the intersection of the connector road and Berry Hill Road once the connector road was built, to which Mr. Winstead replied that the connector road would form a T-intersection with Berry Hill Road, the new connection would become the main road and Berry Hill Road to the north would still exist, but drivers would be encouraged to utilize the new segment.

11. Update on OIPI GAP Project: Joe Bonanno, Senior Planner

Mr. Bonanno stated that the GAP project began in June 2021, and he described the initiative as a tool to aid the MPO with selecting the most effective projects for the MPO area. He stated that Task 1, which he described as the project kickoff, was complete. He stated that Task 2 involved development of a technical document that provided the MPO with instructions for locating and downloading data to update the project selection tool, thereby enabling the most timely data to be used in the process. He stated that since the MPO Board last met, the planning team made appropriate revisions to the document to the MPO's satisfaction. He added that the MPO was provided with Task 3 documentation, which consisted of the current methodology by which the MPO selected transportation studies, rationale for adopting a framework for study selection, stakeholder roles and responsibilities, and the steps that would be involved in selecting candidate studies. Mr. Bonanno stated that MPO staff reviewed

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the Task 3 document and provided the planning team with suggestions for minor edits. For next steps, Mr. Bonanno noted that a quarterly meeting was planned for March 30th, and that the entire process should conclude by June.

12. Comments/Updates from VDOT/DRPT/FHWA

Ms. Dubinsky stated that she had been appointed to serve as the new DRPT representative for the MPO, succeeding Ms. Taylor Jenkins, who took on a new position with the agency. She stated that, along with VDOT, DRPT staff would be available to assist with the Smart Scale application process, and that Ms. Jenkins would be DRPT's Smart Scale contact. Ms. Dubinsky stated that DRPT launched a statewide campaign named Rediscover your Ride, which was intended to encourage people to return to transit. She added that the agency had spearheaded a statewide marketing campaign consisting of radio and TV ads, as well as marketing material that could be customized to certain areas upon request. She added that transitva.org provided additional information. Ms. Dubinsky stated that the other component of the campaign included funding which was available for the transit recovery marketing initiative for the marketing of projects or expenses with the intent of drawing people back to public transportation in their communities. Ms. Dubinsky noted that MPOs, PDCs, transit agencies, and local governments were all eligible applicants for this funding, and that any potential applicants should reach out to Miriam Foster, who represented DRPT's communications team.

Mr. Winstead stated that the Spring Lynchburg CTB hearing had been scheduled for May 3rd at the Virginian Hotel, and he encouraged attendance and advocacy. He added that over \$75 million had already been invested in the Berry Hill area, and he encouraged attendees to express gratitude to the Transportation Secretary.

13. Other Business

No other business was discussed.

14. Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 6:59 p.m.



Michael Armbrister
Danville MPO Administrator