

**Minutes**  
for the  
**June 23, 2022 Meeting**  
of the  
**Danville Metropolitan Planning Organization**  
2<sup>nd</sup> Floor Conference Room, Danville Municipal Building  
427 Patton Street, Danville  
Virtual and in-person  
5:30 p.m.

Attendees

Lee Vogler, City of Danville, Chairman  
Jessie Barksdale, Pittsylvania County, Vice-Chairman  
Vic Ingram, Pittsylvania County  
Brian Dunevant, City of Danville  
Ken Gillie, City of Danville  
Rick Youngblood, VDOT  
David Cook, VDOT  
Bill Wuensch, EPR, PC  
Jeanie Alexander, EPR, PC  
Michael Armbrister, Danville MPO Administrator  
Joseph Bonanno, Danville MPO Staff

**1. Call to Order**

Mr. Vogler called the meeting to order.

**2. Approval of Minutes from the May 25, 2022 Meeting**

Mr. Vogler asked for a motion to approve the minutes of the May 25, 2022 MPO Policy Board Meeting. Mr. Youngblood made a motion to approve, which was seconded by Mr. Barksdale. The motion was voted upon and approved unanimously.

**3. Final Presentation on Piney Forest Road Corridor Study: Bill Wuensch, P.E., PTOE, and Jeanie Alexander, P.E., EPR, PC**

Ms. Alexander noted that one of the topics she would discuss would be the second round of public input for the Piney Forest Road study. She presented the limits of the study area, and noted that the second public input meeting took place on May 2<sup>nd</sup>, which had been attended by nearly 20 individuals not associated with the City. She added that a MetroQuest survey was a component of the public outreach process, and it garnered nearly 100 responses. She further added that the content of the meeting and the survey included intersection and segment recommendations for the full length of the study area, and noted that survey comments were consistent with those received at the meeting. She added that survey comments could be added to the study, however, participants were simply asked to rate and rank design proposals.

Ms. Alexander stated that the first part of the survey's focus pertained to intersection improvements. She stated that five stars represented that the participant viewed a particular recommendation very favorably, while one star indicated an unfavorable rating; she added that this section of the survey included a no-change option. Ms. Alexander then discussed the various improvement alternatives for the corridor's intersection with Franklin Turnpike; she added that the participants preferred improvements to each intersection along the corridor, in contrast to taking no action, which, she added was the most significant takeaway. She added that the 4.3 rating for the intersection with Arnett Boulevard was the highest rank of any of the intersections.

The "star" ranking format was also used for the segment recommendations, according to Ms. Alexander. She noted that one of the major proposed improvements was a landscaped median, which would serve the primary functions of safety and corridor beautification. Other segment proposals she noted included a parallel bicycle route as well as a transit stop improvement. She added that pedestrian improvements were proposed at all three intersections, and that these ranked highly.

Ms. Alexander stated that another part of the survey asked respondents to rank the concepts. For the Franklin Turnpike intersection, she noted that the flyover concept ranked highest of all three improvement proposals, and she added that the landscaped median was accepted favorably; she further added that improvements to the Franklin Turnpike intersection ranked high, in general. Along with the popularity of the pedestrian improvements, according to Ms. Alexander, the bicycle and transit proposals were also popular.

Ms. Alexander stated that public input would be used to develop recommendations, after which she presented a map that displayed an overview of the corridor that depicted various improvements. She added that pedestrian improvements constituted the main improvement type for the southern end of the corridor, noting that operational improvements in that area would likely not

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result in significant benefits. In addition to intersection improvements, she stated that the median was recommended due to proven safety impacts and crash reduction rates, as was signal timing optimization.

Ms. Alexander presented an image of the flyover, the preferred alternative for the Franklin Turnpike intersection. She described how the flyover would function, noting that additional right-of-way would be required for this project. She added that a pedestrian component was included with this recommendation, as well as short-term pedestrian enhancements. She noted that the benefits of the flyover would be safety and operational improvements, adding that, in the absence of any improvements, the northbound queue was projected to extend 1,500 feet, but addition of the flyover would reduce this queue length to 540 feet. Ms. Alexander then noted that the Franklin Turnpike intersection was a PSI intersection, and she described PSI.

The next intersection Ms. Alexander discussed was Piney Forest Road at Nor-Dan Drive and Nelson Avenue. She stated that the recommendations included modifying markings on Nor-Dan Drive and changing left-turn lanes, which would enable signal phasing improvements. Another improvement she noted for this intersection would be the elimination of a current right-turn slip lane by extending the sidewalk to the traffic island on the west side of the corridor, improving safety and comfort of pedestrians; she added that this change would consolidate access, thereby improving vehicular safety in the area. She further added that crosswalks would aid with pedestrian movement and safety.

Ms. Alexander transitioned to discussion of the Arnett Boulevard intersection, noting that the recommendations mainly addressed safety. She stated that the City had applied for a grant for certain improvements to that intersection. According to Ms. Alexander, this grant would fund pedestrian signals, crosswalks, and a section of sidewalk. She noted that a nearby shopping center was served by five driveways, but that this study recommended that most of them be closed, with the exception of one that would be realigned with the traffic signal at the intersection. She further noted that this reconfiguration would promote pedestrian safety, and that a new median would extend to the south and to the north of the intersection.

Ms. Alexander stated that Piney Forest Road at Beavers Mill Road was the final intersection analyzed as part of this study, and that both safety and operational deficiencies were present. She stated that one of the recommendations involved widening an approach to the intersection so that the existing left-turn lane could be extended, which, she noted, was a public comment that had been received by the team. She noted that a sidewalk would also be added as part of the widened approach, and that the only improvement on the other side of the intersection would be restriping. Other improvements that were being proposed, according to Ms. Alexander, included pedestrian infrastructure such as pedestrian crosswalks and signals.

Ms. Alexander transitioned the discussion to corridor-wide recommendations, with the most significant of those proposed to be landscaping; she indicated the locations along the corridor that these improvements were proposed. She added that the most significant points of discussion were the locations at which U-turns and left-turn movements would be permitted; she noted that loons would be a component of the infrastructure to accommodate U-turns. Ms. Alexander then indicated the presence of several proposed left-turn lanes along the corridor.

The next step in the study process, according to Ms. Alexander, would be to wrap up the report with all the findings from the public, in addition to the EPR team's recommendations. Mr. Dunevant stated that a new Starbucks was being constructed at the location of a proposed loon, to which Ms. Alexander replied that the loon could be shifted. Mr. Vogler acknowledged that the flyover concept at Piney Forest Road and Franklin Turnpike was anticipated to impact a McDonald's, and he asked whether it would completely eliminate the establishment. Ms. Alexander replied that the plan was conceptual, but the engineering study would likely shift the alignment somewhat. She added that a residential home would be displaced by the flyover, that the McDonald's property would be encroached upon, but that a detailed design would clarify individual property impacts. Mr. Wuensch added that the exact location of the flyover was to be determined, but the restaurant's access point, in relation to the flyover, would likely indicate that the property would be a total take. Mr. Vogler stated that he was happy with the presentation and the concept, and that there would be happy and unhappy parties regardless of the chosen concept. Mr. Cook stated that the other concepts proposed for the intersection would result in significant right-of-way impacts as well. Ms. Alexander affirmed Mr. Cook's statement, adding that a potential third left-turn lane would have impacts, and the Displaced Left-Turn concept would have the greatest right-of-way impact of all three concepts. Mr. Barksdale asked whether the traffic approaching the intersection from the southern approach of Franklin Turnpike would still be able to transition to the northern leg of Franklin Turnpike, to which Ms. Alexander stated that it would, as it would travel under the flyover. Mr. Vogler stated that something needed to be done at the intersection, and Mr. Bonanno added that the number of apartments and commercial establishments in the area lent themselves to walkability.

**4. Consideration of Resolutions of Support for Smart Scale Round 5 Projects**

Mr. Bonanno noted that Smart Scale applications for projects along Corridors of Statewide Significance and Regional Networks required resolutions of support from regional entities having jurisdiction over a particular areas, and he noted a number of pending project applications on such corridors. After asking if there were any questions, Mr. Vogler asked for motions for the resolutions of support. Mr. Barksdale made a motion to approve the resolutions of support, which was seconded by Mr. Dunevant. The motion was voted upon and approved unanimously.

**5. Consideration of Updated Traffic Analysis Zones (TAZ) Boundaries**

Mr. Bonanno stated that about every five years, Transportation Analysis Zones (TAZs) needed to be updated with recent demographic and traffic data by MPO staff. He described TAZs as a series of zones each comprised of a number of census blocks, utilized as the basic input data for transportation modeling. He added that the update process would involve projecting base-year population, household, employment, and vehicle ownership data to the year 2050. He noted that the most consequential TAZs for this update would be those encompassing the River District, the White Mill, the new casino, and the Mega Park. He added that Mr. David Rakes had been working closely with Mr. Cook to realign some of the TAZ boundaries to be consistent with new 2020 Census Block boundaries. Mr. Bonanno added that the process would begin in earnest in early 2023, requiring six months to one year to complete. Mr. Armbrister added that the MPO Board would have to approve the boundary revisions, which included the addition of a TAZ to ensure the entirety of the Mega Park was encompassed. At the request of Mr. Vogler, a motion to approve the new TAZ boundaries was made by Mr. Barksdale, and was seconded by Mr. Gillie.

**6. Consideration of a Joint Procurement Agreement with West Piedmont PDC**

Mr. Armbrister stated that the MPO had traditionally utilized the WPPDC's on-call consultants for its studies, after which he noted that the bench was about to expire, and the procurement would have to be renewed. He recommended a joint procurement between the Danville MPO and the WPPDC. Upon a request for a motion, Mr. Youngblood made a motion to approve this joint procurement, and this was seconded by Mr. Barksdale. The motion was voted upon and approved unanimously.

**7. Comments/Updates from VDOT/DRPT/FHWA**

Ms. Dubinsky mentioned that DRPT recently executed its general planning consultant contract, noting that MPOs, localities, and transit agencies were eligible to make use of its consultant bench contracts. She noted that DRPT would be hosting its grant recipient workshops, adding that the webinar for MPOs and public transit recipients was scheduled for July 28 at 10 a.m.; she encouraged participation in these workshops for greater understanding of the agency's grant programs. She stated that the DRPT's Transit Service and Delivery Advisory Committee was meeting to review internal administrative activities, and that the Committee's next meeting, July 15<sup>th</sup> would be livestreamed. Ms. Dubinsky added that Smart Scale was underway, and for any questions about transit-related applications, she encouraged outreach to herself or any designated DRPT contacts. Ms. Dubinsky further added that the Transit Equity and Modernization Study draft action plan was concluding, and had gone out for public comment in May. She added that the executive summary and action plan were anticipated to be completed over the next couple of months, with scheduled presentation at the September CTB meeting; she noted the website at which the study could be found. Ms. Dubinsky mentioned the Safe Streets and Roads For All grant program, and that MPOs may be interested in applying for grants to develop either an Action Plan or an Implementation Plan; she noted the deadline as September 15<sup>th</sup>.

Mr. Cook stated that the Safe Streets and Roads For All program was a Vision Zero initiative, that the first application intake period would emphasize Safety Action Plans, and that localities and MPOs could apply utilizing an 80 percent federal and 20 percent local match. Mr. Cook also introduced the Board to the Reconnecting Communities pilot program, the goal of which was to reconnect communities divided by interstate highways and arterial roads; he noted that information about this program was available on the DOT website. Mr. Cook transitioned to discussion of Round 5 of Smart Scale, noting that application readiness comments were available, and that applicants could find them by scrolling to the bottom of the applications; he added that all Lynchburg District project applications were screened in. He added that a TIP/STIP meeting would be held from 11 a.m. to 12 p.m. on June 28<sup>th</sup> to kick off the 2024 – 2027 TIP/STIP update process. Mr. Youngblood stated that VDOT may be able to secure some funding for the MPO for the development of a Safety Action Plan if all of the performance measures had not been satisfied.

Mr. Vogler brought up a question about initiating the process of installing rumble strips on Mount Cross Road. To this, Mr. Youngblood replied that he would check with a VDOT colleague. He added that he would check to see if that project had been included on the list already, and if it had not been he noted that he would see if he could have it included.

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8. **Other Business**

No other business was put forth.

9. **Adjourn**

The meeting was adjourned at 6:25 p.m.



Michael Armbrister  
Danville MPO Administrator