

Minutes
for the
March 1, 2023 Meeting
of the
Danville Metropolitan Planning Organization
2nd Floor Conference Room, Danville Municipal Building and Virtual
at 5:30 p.m.

Attendees

Lee Vogler, City of Danville, Chairman
Ken Gillie, City of Danville
Brian Dunevant, City of Danville
Emily Ragsdale, Pittsylvania County
Vic Ingram, Pittsylvania County
Rick Youngblood, VDOT
David Cook, VDOT
Chris Winstead, VDOT
Tiffany Dubinsky, DRPT
Bill Wuensch, EPR, PC
Michael Armbrister, Danville MPO Administrator
Joseph Bonanno, Danville MPO Staff

1. Call to Order

Mr. Vogler called the meeting to order at 5:31 p.m.

2. Election of MPO Chairman for 2023

Mr. Vogler stated that MPO the Chairman for 2023 would be from Pittsylvania County, and he nominated Mr. Bob Warren as Chairman. Mr. Dunevant voted to second that nomination, and the motion was voted upon and approved unanimously.

3. Election of MPO Vice-Chairman for 2023

Mr. Vogler stated that the nomination process for MPO Vice-Chairman for 2023 would be from the City of Danville. He opened the floor to nominations, and Mr. Gillie nominated Mr. Vogler. Mr. Dunevant voted to second that nomination, and the motion was voted upon and approved unanimously.

4. Approval of Minutes from the August 24, 2022 and November 9, 2022 meetings

Mr. Vogler asked for a motion to approve the minutes from the August 24, 2022 and November 9, 2022 MPO Policy Board meetings. Mr. Gillie made a motion to approve the minutes, which was seconded by Mr. Dunevant. The motion was voted upon and approved unanimously.

5. Update on South Ridge Street Study, Bill Wuensch, EPR, PC

Mr. Wuensch stated that the topic of his presentation would be to identify a new or improved connection between Goodyear Boulevard and downtown, which he noted his team initiated at the end of 2022. He added that the intent of the new connector was to relieve traffic along the Craghead Street corridor, improve travel capacity between Goodyear Boulevard and downtown, and enhance multimodal mobility. He further added that the team proposed creating a road typical section that would contextually adhere to abutting development.

Mr. Wuensch discussed various considerations that would be looked at in terms of providing a new connector. At the end of the study, he noted, his team would provide documents on methodology, improvements that would be recommended, and bridge limits and type, among other information. Mr. Wuensch added that his team had been working on the mapping aspect, and that a link to a GIS storyboard was contained in a handout, which would also be useful for possible future public outreach.

Mr. Wuensch stated that a study work group took place on February 2nd, at which a new alignment that was anticipated to heavily impact the Monument-Berryman neighborhood was discussed. Since then, he noted, attention had shifted from the construction of a new alignment to focusing more on Monument Avenue and potentially other alignments. He added that travel demand forecasts considering the new alignment had been prepared, and that a new alignment would accommodate approximately 2,500 vehicles per day on a two-lane rather than a four-lane configuration; this, he added, would help to relieve Craghead Street traffic.

Mr. Wuensch stated that next steps would include finalizing travel demand forecasts and exploring alternative alignments to accommodate additional travel throughput. He added that the project timeline would extend through the end of September. Mr. Vogler asked at which point during the study visual renderings would be developed, to which Mr. Wuensch replied that these should be available by the end of April or May.

6. Adoption of Remote Electronic Participation and All-Virtual meeting Policy, Michael Armbrister, MPO Administrator

Mr. Armbrister stated that this policy would be very similar to that which had been adopted by the WPPDC Board the previous week. To facilitate the MPO's compliance with the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), he added, it was desirable to enable Board members to participate virtually, or for the MPO to hold an all-virtual meeting. He added that the MPO policy would incorporate language from the Code of Virginia to guide Policy Board members regarding virtual attendance. For individual members who needed to meet for a personal reason, he stated, each member would be limited to two meetings per year or 25 percent of meetings – whichever was greater. For the MPO as a full body, fully virtual meetings would be limited to two meetings per year or 25 percent of meetings, whichever was greater. Mr. Vogler asked for a motion to approve this policy, and Mr. Gillie made a motion to approve, which was seconded by Mr. Dunevant. The motion was voted upon and approved unanimously.

7. Adoption of 2023 MPO Self-Certification, Michael Armbrister

Mr. Armbrister stated that the MPO adopted self-certification provisions annually, which certified that the MPO was adhering to Title VI and other non-discrimination laws. Mr. Dunevant made a motion to approve the 2023 MPO Self-Certification, which was seconded by Mr. Gillie. The motion was voted upon and approved unanimously.

8. Approval of Draft FY2024 – 2027 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)

Mr. Armbrister noted that MPO staff developed the FY 2024 – 2027 TIP, which would be in effect for the following four fiscal years. He stated that the TIP was federally mandated and encompassed all federally-funded projects within the MPO footprint. He added that Fiscal Year 2024 projects within the FY 2021 – 2024 TIP would overlap with the FY 2024 – 2027 TIP, so that any revisions for FY 24 would need to apply to both documents. He further added that staff reviewed the FY 2024 – 2027 TIP but did not have any comments. Mr. Armbrister noted that the Board's approval was needed to enable the public input process to begin, which had been scheduled from March 12th through April 12th and followed by an April 12th public hearing. He concluded by stating that MPO staff recommended approval of the document. A motion to approve the FY 2024 – 2027 TIP was made by Mr. Gillie, and was seconded by Mr. Winstead. The motion was voted upon and approved unanimously.

9. Update on Safe Streets and Roads for All Grant, Joe Bonanno, Senior Planner

Mr. Bonanno stated that the MPO had been awarded Safe Streets for All grant funding, for which the MPO had applied in 2022 to improve safety and reduce fatalities throughout the MPO area. He noted that the total amount of the grant would be \$200,000, though the federal portion would be \$160,000, and the remaining 20 percent would comprise \$30,000 from the City of Danville and \$10,000 from Pittsylvania County. He added that funding would be used to develop a safety Action Plan, and he described the components the plan would include. Mr. Armbrister added that he and Mr. Bonanno participated in a webinar pertaining to this grant, that it may be 45 days before a draft agreement could be developed, and that there may be a period of time before the agreement would be finalized. He concluded by noting that, as the applicant, the WPPDC would administer this grant, and that it would be several months before the WPPDC was under contract.

10. Update on TAZ Process, Joe Bonanno

Mr. Bonanno stated that the MPO was in the process of beginning to update the MPO area's Transportation Analysis Zones (TAZ). He described what TAZs were, noting that they served as the basis for transportation modeling. He stated that a TAZ would be added as part of this update to account for part of the Southern Virginia Mega Site at Berry Hill that was not included in past update iterations. Mr. Bonanno stated that Mr. Cook recommended that the MPO make a case for the Weldon Cooper Center for Public Service to maintain the current MPO population to the year 2050 to account for population growth that was taking place and was expected to occur in the City of Danville. Mr. Bonanno stated that he had contacted the City of Danville regarding this, and he asked Mr. Gillie about growth rates in various areas of the City. Mr. Gillie replied that he had discussed this with City staff, and that he and City staff would like to obtain accurate figures on growth, after which they would contact the MPO with feedback.

11. Comments/Updates from VDOT/DRPT/FHWA

Mr. Winstead asked Mr. Youngblood or Mr. Cook if either of them had any updates. Mr. Youngblood stated that the Smart Scale draft funding scenario had been released and was currently in review, and that public hearings were approaching. He added that Danville did well in terms of initial project selection, noting that the STARS studies contributed to Danville's success. Mr. Cook thanked Mr. Bonanno and Mr. David Rakes for their work on the TAZ update, and he noted that he was interested to see whether the conversation with the Weldon Cooper Center would be fruitful. He added that there was a case to be made for growth, or at least less of a decline than was projected. Mr. Bonanno added that he was happy to see that the sidewalk project in the Piedmont Drive area was recommended for Smart Scale funding, and he referenced an article that suggested potential future mixed-use development at the site of Danville Mall. Mr. Cook added that the sidewalk application resulted from the recent VDOT Project Pipeline, and that this was the first Smart Scale round for which the land use factor was included in the scoring. Mr. Winstead stated that of the projects within the Lynchburg District that were recommended for funding, six of them were in Danville, accounting for \$80 million of \$120 million allocated to projects within the Lynchburg District. He added that a CTB public

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hearing was anticipated during the spring, which would serve as an opportunity for the MPO and the City to advocate on behalf of these recommended projects.

Ms. Dubinsky, of DRPT, mentioned a grant workshop that took place on February 15th which focused on upcoming grant opportunities. She added that DRPT offered planning grants throughout the year, noting that the agency provided a technical assistance grant that required a 50 percent match. She added that FY 24 grant funding announcements should be made in late April.

12. Other Business

Mr. Vogler followed up with VDOT staff about the possibility of adding rumble strips to Mount Cross Road, to which Mr. Youngblood replied that Mount Cross Road did not currently adhere to prioritization for rumble strips, according to a conversation he had with a traffic engineer. Mr. Vogler asked whether the need for rumble strips was based on accidents or head-on collisions, to which Mr. Youngblood replied that he would send additional information to him, via Mr. Armbrister. Mr. Vogler then asked about the possibility of rumble strips on Berry Hill Road, to which Mr. Youngblood replied that this road would qualify for that retrofit.

13. Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 6:07 p.m.



Michael Armbrister
Danville MPO Administrator