

Minutes
for the
August 30, 2023 Meeting
of the
Danville Metropolitan Planning Organization
Virtual Meeting at 3:00 p.m.

Attendees

Lee Vogler, City of Danville, Chairman
Brian Dunevant, City of Danville
Ken Gillie, City of Danville
Renee Burton, City of Danville
Emily Ragsdale, Pittsylvania County
Rick Youngblood, VDOT
Carson Eckhardt, VDOT
Chris Winstead, VDOT
Paige Lazar, DRPT
Tiffany Dubinsky, DRPT
Kristie Eberly, Danville MPO Administrator
Joseph Bonanno, Danville MPO Staff

1. Call to Order

Mr. Vogler called the meeting to order at 3:02 p.m.

2. Approval of Minutes from the April 19, 2023 meeting

Mr. Vogler asked for a motion to approve the minutes from the April 19, 2023 meeting. Mr. Winstead made a motion to approve the minutes, which was seconded by Mr. Dunevant. The motion was voted upon and was approved unanimously.

3. Approval of Danville MPO Transportation Analysis Zone (TAZ) preliminary Land Use data. Joe Bonanno, Senior Planner

Mr. Bonanno briefly summarized transportation analysis zones (TAZ), stating that they consisted of geographic units comprised of census blocks, and that data requiring updates included population, households, vehicles, and employment. He stated that the TAZ consisted of a base year and a horizon year, which, for this update, consisted of 2022 and 2050, respectively. Mr. Bonanno added that he had worked with WPPDC staff member David Rakes, as well as a VDOT transportation modeler, to develop the generic base-year and horizon-year estimates as a major starting point of the TAZ update. He noted that the information he had sent out to the Board members in advance of the meeting included generic rates, and that the developments that were planned or underway would be added to the generic rates. He stated, however, that it was necessary for the MPO Board to approve the generic estimates prior to moving forward with the addition of the new developments in the MPO.

Mr. Vogler stated that a great deal had developed with regard to population growth in the MPO area recently, and he stressed that the TAZ update would need to capture that development. Mr. Youngblood reassured Mr. Vogler that the TAZ was a "living document" that could be updated with new information as needed.

Upon Mr. Vogler asking for a motion to approve the TAZ preliminary land use data, Mr. Dunevant made a motion to approve, which was seconded by Mr. Gillie. The motion was voted upon and was approved unanimously.

4. FHWA Safe Streets and Roads for All (SS4A) grant-funded Safety Action Plan draft scope review. Joe Bonanno, Senior Planner

Mr. Bonanno opened the discussion by noting that MPO staff had recently been on a call with EPR staff, who provided the MPO with a draft of scope items for the Safe Streets and Roads for All (SS4A) grant-funded project involving the development of an Action Plan for the MPO area. He added that he had provided the Board with the draft scope for its review, and he subsequently asked if there were any comments or input, to which there were none. Mr. Youngblood added that the VDOT Lynchburg District was in a unique situation, as VDOT Lynchburg staff would be assisting both the Danville MPO and the Central Virginia TPO with SS4A grant-funded Action Plan development; he further added that local government participation was important, as it would inform the MPO modeling aspect in the MPO Constrained Long-Range Plan, and would help the team to identify problematic areas as well as outcomes from a short, mid, and long-term perspective. He concluded by stating that VDOT's Lynchburg office was excited to support the MPO through this process. Mr. Bonanno stated that he would send this draft scope out to the Board for review once again as a stand-alone document to continue to gather relevant feedback.

5. Smart Scale Round 6 proposed changes. Joe Bonanno, Senior Planner

Mr. Bonanno stated that he was recently on a conference call with VAMPO, where he learned about a series of proposed changes to the Smart Scale program for Round 6. He read through a list of proposed changes that the Commonwealth Transportation Board (CTB) had proposed for the upcoming Smart Scale round. Mr. Bonanno noted that one of the proposed **Danville MPO Policy Board Meeting Minutes**

changes was incorporation of consensus decisions to entity performance and project delivery, and Mr. Youngblood clarified by adding that if a local government was not performing as it should with regard to project development and seeing projects to fruition, the CTB would take that into consideration, and rather than the locality serving as the administrative agent, VDOT would serve as the administrative agent. With regard to the proposed change to the Land Use factor of Smart Scale, Mr. Bonanno articulated his belief that many of the projects that were funded in Danville during Smart Scale Round 5 owed their success to the incorporated Land Use factor, and he expressed his concern that the proposal would dilute this factor by incorporating it into the Safety and Congestion Mitigation factors. Mr. Youngblood stated that the decisions would be made based on the relative MPOs and jurisdictions, and that the Land Use factor could perhaps be incorporated into other factors such as Economic Development and Accessibility, which, he noted, would make sense. Mr. Youngblood then explained to the Board that the State typically went through a review of Smart Scale at the end of every round, during which a "lessons learned" process took place, to promote quality projects. He added that the other discussed changes could be considered "tweaks" to maximize where the funding would be allocated. He further added that the changes may not affect the MPO to a great extent, since many high-dollar applications had been funded, and he noted that there would be a great deal of consistency on the part of the MPOs submitting regionally-significant projects. He added that the CTB would still have a couple more work sessions, and that if there was any concern with these proposals, he encouraged the Board members to reach out to him. Mr. Bonanno noted that there was a link which would enable Board members to directly submit comments, which could be found following the list of proposed changes that he had provided. Mr. Youngblood stated that it would be most effective if the MPO submitted comments to VAMPO or VACO, as part of a "unified voice," rather than submitting comments on its own, to which Mr. Bonanno replied that he had completed a survey, which VAMPO had used to inform a comment letter it developed.

6. Comments/Updates from VDOT/DRPT/FHWA

Mr. Youngblood stated that, with regard to Smart Scale, VDOT Lynchburg was in the process of reviewing unfunded priority applications from last round for consideration of resubmission, in addition to working with applicants for potential new application ideas. He added that VDOT would be administering two project pipeline studies in the MPO, and he expressed optimism that the study along Route 41 could potentially result in a Smart Scale application. He added that VDOT would be available to provide assistance to the MPO.

Mr. Winstead stated that he had enjoyed working with CTB member Linda Green recently, and that she had a strong knowledge of local issues. He added that her first meeting would be in September, as the CTB did not typically hold August meetings. He concluded by stating that VDOT was ready to assist with getting concert-goers in and out of the Blue Ridge Rock Festival, scheduled to take place at Virginia International Raceway. Mr. Youngblood introduced Carson Eckhardt, who replaced David Cook at VDOT's Lynchburg office, after David accepted a position as a state bike and pedestrian coordinator.

Ms. Dubinsky, representing DRPT, stated that the agency's post-grant award workshop took place on August 11th, and that the recording and presentation were available on DRPT's website. She also briefly described a federal grant opportunity that was available to plan for transit-oriented development. Ms. Dubinsky then introduced Ms. Paige Lazar, as the MPO's DRPT representative for at least the next several months.

7. Other Business

Mr. Bonanno mentioned that he was contacted by Mr. Dunevant, who noted that the City's public works director was interested in revisiting the South Ridge Street study, and he noted that the director was wondering whether it was still an option to revisit that study through the MPO. Mr. Youngblood stated that it could still be a possibility, but he added that he would need information regarding what had changed since this study was first considered. Mr. Bonanno stated that another potential study to look at could be a corridor study for West Main Street, but he added that Mr. David Cook suggested that it may be better to hold off on that until more traffic was generated by the Casino. Mr. Vogler stated that he would like to see the South Ridge Street connector work, but he acknowledged that there were a number of challenges with respect to developing a connection, to which Mr. Bonanno added that EPR developed a roundabout concept in the vicinity of Industrial Avenue as a potential solution. Mr. Youngblood added that it would be a good idea for himself, Mr. Bonanno, and City staff to sit down to discuss details of revisiting the study. Mr. Gillie added that a different route was now under consideration, which had not been considered earlier. Mr. Youngblood asked the City to provide a write-up to Mr. Bonanno and himself, at which time he would contact EPR to discuss further.

8. Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 3:35 p.m.


Kristina Eberly
Danville MPO Administrator