

Minutes
for the
January 10, 2024 Meeting
of the
Danville Metropolitan Planning Organization

Attendees

Lee Vogler, City of Danville, Chairman
Vic Ingram, Pittsylvania County, Vice-Chairman
Mitch Huber, VDRPT
Brian Dunevant, City of Danville
Emily Ragsdale, Pittsylvania County
Rick Youngblood, VDOT
Carson Eckhardt, VDOT
Chris Winstead, VDOT
Palge Lazar, DRPT
Kristie Eberly, Danville MPO Administrator
Joseph Bonanno, Danville MPO Staff
Linda Green, Guest
Amanda Poncy, AICP
Bill Wuensch, EPR, PC

1. Call to Order

Mr. Vogler called the meeting to order at 5:38 p.m.

2. Election of MPO Chairman for 2024

The Vice Chairman opened the floor for motions to elect a new Chairman. Mr. Ingram made a motion for Mr. Vogler. Mr. Dunevant seconded the nomination. The motion was voted upon and was approved unanimously.

3. Election of MPO Vice-Chairman for 2024

The Chairman opened the floor for motions to elect a new Vice-Chairman. The Chairman nominates Mr. Ingram. Mr. Winstead seconded the nomination. The motion was voted upon and was approved unanimously.

4. Approval of Minutes from the August 30, 2023 meeting

Mr. Vogler asked for a motion to approve the minutes from the August 30, 2023 meeting. Mr. Ingram made a motion to approve the minutes, which was seconded by Mr. Dunevant. The motion was voted upon and was approved unanimously.

5. Safe Streets and Roads for all (SS4A Action Plan kick-off- Amanda Poncy, AICP; Will Cockrell, AICP; Bill Wuensch-EPR, PC

The Chairman introduces and welcomes Amanda Poncy and Bill Wuensch. A slide presentation was shown for Safe Streets program which was established through the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law with \$5 billion from 2022-2026 with the goal to prevent death and serious injury on roads and streets involving all roadway users. The slideshow presented the Safe Systems Approach covering safe-road users, safe vehicles, safe speeds, safe roads and post-crash care. The second strategy comprised components of a Safety Action Plan consisting of Leadership Commitment and Goal Setting, Planning Structure, Safety Analysis, Engagement and Collaboration, Equity Considerations, Policy and Process Changes, Strategy and Project Selections and Progress and Transparency. Ms. Poncy described the Project Scope for Danville and Pittsylvania County MPO area, and discussed efforts to engage with the public. Ms. Poncy noted that this process was on a 10-month schedule beginning in January and projected adoption in October of 2024. Ms. Poncy asked for each attendee to identify themselves and propose any questions or concerns they may have:

- Lee Vogler, Chairman of MPO; Been on Danville City Council since 2012. One concern is Piney Forest work continues. I reached out to Joe Bonanno and others on bike lanes – getting more bike traffic in city – look at ways for bike lanes to stand out more. Piney Forest continues to be an issue.
- Joe Bonanno- Senior Planner WPPDC & MPO: West Main Street Corridor with Casino that is under construction and future high growth corridor.
- Emily Ragsdale: Director of Community Development. Most of our roads are rural, not safe for all users. Especially as we see growth along corridors near Danville – user friendly for all types for all types of transportation.
- Brian Dunevant, City of Danville: Distracted driving

- Chris Winstead, VDOT District Engineer Lynchburg; Safety: Lynchburg District -- most roads are rural. Over past 10 years or so, we averaged 75 to 80 fatalities per year and they're road departures. Road departures and education focus needed.
- Linda Green, IALR: Number one concern is changing congestion patterns as we expand with Caesars. With growth of the Mega Park, we're going to see congestion in other areas. Mentioning schools and school buses in the pick-up spots.
- Vic Ingram, MPO Vice-Chairman: A lot of experience in vehicle enforcement and investigation. Education and enforcement. Route 41 -- wide highway -- obstruction free, but fatalities. Distracted driving will always be a problem, and one additional thing is that education is something that people don't adequately receive; maybe more education programs. If you don't have the courts working effectively with law enforcement, it's a moot point. People need to know there are repercussions. People going slow in left lane. Why not write tickets? Judges will not enforce it. The mega park is going to be a huge issue, as well as a major housing development in Axton.
- Kristie Eberly, WPPDC Executive Director: I would say senior drivers and young drivers. Reaction time for both of them is slower. Make things safer, especially for senior adults.
- Lee Vogler, Chairman: Entryway corridors -- particularly West Main. A lot of little intersections and stretches that don't make a lot of sense. Signage improvements and closing turning spots as traffic increases. Linda's point about growth is we will vote on a housing project next week, so areas that are busy might not be, and vice-versa.
- Paige Lazar, VDRPT: Not one specific concern -- more of a plug for public transportation and to include public transportation in the discussion.
- Rick Youngblood, VDOT: Holistic standpoint, VDOT looks at it from a multimodal standpoint, personally as a motorcycle rider, better consciousness for drivers and education and safety training.
- Carson Eckhardt, VDOT: A focus would be multimodal hotspots for present and future and to improve infrastructure in those hotspots to reduce pedestrian crashes.

Ms. Poncy transitioned to the end of the presentation, which involved finalizing the project working group. Those who can help with action and implementation and mentioning setting up project website and working on project boundaries.

6. Danville MPO Base Funding Increase

Mr. Bonanno stated that in 2023 VAMPO discussed increasing the base funding of the MPOs across the Commonwealth from \$50,000 to either \$75,000 or \$100,000. After some discussion, the VAMPO Board voted to increase to \$75,000. This will increase our base from \$50,000 to \$75,000, which would, in turn, increase the local share by approximately \$2,500, with Danville and Pittsylvania County each contributing an additional \$1,250 each. He added the administration of each locality was supportive of providing the increase. This will take place in FY 2025. No action required, as this was for informational purposes and there were no questions or comments.

7. Danville MPO Safety Targets

Mr. Bonanno stated that as part of a shift to a performance-based transportation paradigm, VDOT is requiring the MPOs to update their safety performance targets, which include fatalities, serious injuries, and Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT). The MPO must adopt safety performance measures by February 29, 2024, and we have the option to develop our own performance targets or adopt the State's performance targets. If we adopt the State's performance targets, we will have access to VDOT's data, as well as support from VDOT staff. It is the MPO staff recommendation, as well as VDOT's recommendation, that Danville MPO adopt the State's safety performance targets. Mr. Bonanno noted a discussion he had with Rick Youngblood, of VDOT, that if the MPO were to adopt the state's performance targets, it would have access to VDOT's data as well as have VDOT's staff support. Mr. Bonanno referred to the handout in the package for statistical breakdown. It is the MPO staff recommendation that we adopt the state's performance targets.

A motion was made by Mr. Ingram and seconded by Mr. Dunevant to recommend that the Danville MPO vote to adopt the State's Performance Targets. Upon the vote, the motion was carried unanimously.

8. Transportation Analysis Zone (TAZ) Update

Mr. Bonanno stated that the Danville MPO Transportation Analysis Zone (TAZ) update is well underway and should be completed this year. Mr. Bonanno explained that the TAZ served as the basis for traffic demand modeling, raw data that goes into transportation modeling to determine future vehicle travel estimates considering future developments such as the Mega Park and Caesars. VDOT compiled the base-year (2022) employment using third-party software. TAZs, again, serve as the basis for the transportation modeling process, and the updates involve projecting a base-year (2022) population to a horizon year (2050, for this process), as well as projecting the number of vehicles, households, and jobs to the horizon year.

What sets this TAZ update apart from previous TAZ updates is the sheer number of developments proposed or underway in the City of Danville.

- Caesar's Virginia
- Dan River Falls (formerly known as the White Mill)
- Danville firehouse residential conversion project
- Danville Register & Bee residential conversion project
- South Main Street mixed-use development
- Stewart Street residential development
- Townhomes at Hermitage
- Monument-Berryman Neighborhood redevelopment
- The View at Franklin residential development
- The Holbrook Hotel
- Jenny Lane residential development

There were no questions or comments.

9. Smart Scale Round 6 Changes

Mr. Bonanno stated that the Commonwealth Transportation Board (CTB) had adopted changes to the Smart Scale process for Round 6. Some of these are significant, and included the following:

- He noted that the CTB chose to eliminate the Land Use factor for consideration beginning during Round 6. He elaborated on Land Use in the context of all Smart Scale factors including Safety, Economic Development, Accessibility, Congestion, the Environment, and Land Use. After extensive discussion, the CTB voted to remove the Land Use factor entirely.
- Past Smart Scale rounds considered how a project would impact the Congestion factor for the present day. For Round 6, by contrast, a project's impact on the Congestion factor will be considered for seven years into the future.
- Refine the High-Priority Projects Program (HPPP) in two main ways:

1) Projects funded by HPPP must be of statewide or regional significance. This means that for highway improvements, only new lanes, roadways on new alignments, managed HOT/HOV lanes, and new bridges will be eligible for funding. Smaller projects that were funded through the HPPP in the past, such as intersection improvements, multi-use trails, bike lanes, and sidewalks will no longer be eligible in Round 6.

2) For Round 6, all HPPP funding will be distributed based on statewide rankings, rather than district-wide rankings.

There will be no further limitations to the number of applications that can be submitted by an MPO, as application limits will remain as follows, based on population:

<200,000 population: 4 pre-applications, 3 full applications (Danville MPO)

<200,000 population: 500,000 – 5 pre-application, 4 full applications

<500,000 population: 7 pre-applications, 6 full applications

- A significant change to the Economic Development factor, which previously increased a project's score by considering site plan status and project distance from the site. For Round 6, by contrast, economic development will rely upon impact assessments utilized by the VEDP which involves integrating major economic priorities in the state. This means that only economic development sites within VEDP's database will be considered when awarding economic development points to project applications.

Advantage: Greatly reduces MPO/PDC staff time when preparing applications, and no longer a need to worry about whether economic development sites were properly captured in the application.

Disadvantage: May miss out on some economic development points, especially for smaller economic development projects.

There were no questions or comments.

10. Danville MPO Round 6 Smart Scale submission Discussion

Mr. Youngblood noted that VDOT had conducted some correlated review of Round 5 unfunded projects, and had looked at studies underway, such as the Project Pipeline studies. He added that if a project had not gone through a study effort and an alternative had not been developed, or if a project was not in a current study to be prioritized, such a project would not be able to be submitted because the state was requiring a much greater level of vetting on the front-end and due diligence. Mr. Winstead noted such projects could be considered for Round 7.

There were no questions or comments.

11. Danville MPO Long-Range Transportation Plan Update

Mr. Bonanno noted that the process to update the Danville MPO 2045 Long Range Transportation Plan, adopted August 2020, needs to begin, as federal law requires that these be updated every five years. The horizon year of the current LRTP is 2045, so the horizon year of the updated plan will be 2050. This is a 20-year planning document and includes a constrained element that governs the projects to be funded over the period based on available funding. Mr. Bonanno then noted that a Vision element, or a "wish list" of desired projects, was also included. The Plan serves as the basis of the Transportation Improvement program which basically funds the MPO. Mr. Youngblood stated that the benefit of the Danville MPO is that they already have consultants through the procurement process, and there are a number of consultants that can participate in joint ventures. As far as the model update and process that supports the CLRP, a new model is already being developed. There is a lot of pre-work already happening with moving and stock piling money to pay for the update costing typically in the hundreds of thousands of dollars. It is very community-driven with public participation and on-line surveys that will be a part of the process that will be used as part of the studies.

There were no other questions or comments.

12. Comments/Updates from VDOT/DRPT/FHWA

Ms. Lazar commented that DRPT is in the middle of an FY25 grant application cycle that must be submitted by February 1, 2024. DRPT has launched a new grants management cycle named Web Grants. Resources include step by step written guides with live office hours. All DRPT grant applications are due February 1, 2024. Please go check out the website for resources.

Mr. Winstead noted that he was very pleased to have Linda Green, with the Commonwealth Transportation Board (CTB). Ms. Green expressed her appreciation and gratitude for the work done by all parties represented at the meeting.

13. Other Business

There was no other business.

14. Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 6:34 p.m.


Kristina Eberly
Danville MPO Administrator