

HAGERSTOWN/EASTERN PANHANDLE MPO REGULAR MEETING – MARCH 16, 2005

The Hagerstown/Eastern Panhandle MPO held its regular meeting on Wednesday, March 16, 2005 at 7:00 p.m. in Charles Town, West Virginia.

Present were: Chairman, Gregory Snook, President of the Washington County Board of County Commissioners; Commissioner Jim Kercheval, Washington County Board of County Commissioners; Mark Baldwin, City Manager, City of Martinsburg; Jeff Blanton, Federal Highway Administration; Donald Bailey and Richard Warner, WV DOT; Lynn Weiger, Pan Tran; Greg Corliss, Jefferson County Commissioner; Randolph Hilton, City of Charles Town; Vice-Chairman, Howard Strauss, Berkeley County Commission; Kathleen Maher, City of Hagerstown Planning Department; Robert Gordon, Eastern Panhandle Region 9 Planning and Development Council; Ron Spalding and Mike Nixon, MD DOT; Michael C. Thompson, MPO Coordinator; and Jill Baker, Associate Planner, Washington County Planning Commission. Also present were Gail McFadden-Roberts of the Federal Transit Administration and Lewis Grimm and Ryan Harris of Cambridge Systematics, Inc.

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order by Chairman, Gregory Snook, at 7:05 p.m.

MINUTES

Mr. Strauss made a motion to approve the minutes, as amended. Seconded by Mr. Spalding. Unanimously approved.

OLD BUSINESS

1) Appointment to Vacancy – Jefferson County

The appointment for this position will be discussed by the Jefferson County Commissioners on Thursday, March 17th. Mr. Hilton, candidate for the nomination was present. Mr. Snook requested that once action is taken on this nomination, the issue should be brought back before the Interstate Council for confirmation.

2) TIP Amendments (West Virginia)

- **WV9 – Bardane to Kearneysville paving**

Mr. Bailey stated that West Virginia has three projects currently under construction. One contractor will be responsible for the paving on all three projects at a cost of \$10 million.

- **I-81 – Falling Waters Bridge to Marlowe – upgrade to 6 lanes**

Mr. Bailey stated that this project has been delayed until 2009 due to the lack of funding. Mr. Bailey would like to request that this project be added to the 2006 TIP. This project contains 1.35 miles from the Falling Waters overpass to the Marlowe interchange.

- **Harpers Ferry – Potomac Street Beautification**

Mr. Bailey stated that this is an enhancement project.

- **Eastern Panhandle Transit – Increase in purchase of buses**

Ms. Weiger, Pan Tran, stated that the State of West Virginia would like to replace three buses in 2005 and also in 2006.

Mr. Strauss made a motion to approve the West Virginia TIP Amendments as outlined and amended. Seconded by Mr. Kercheval. Unanimously approved.

NEW BUSINESS

1) Adoption of FY 2006 Unified Planning Work Program

Ms. Baker presented a *draft* of the Unified Planning Work Program. Revenue allocations will be apportioned for West Virginia and finalized in the near future. Ms. Baker requested adoption of the Fiscal Year 2006 UPWP contingent on final resolution because of commitment time constraints set by the Federal Transit Administration. An adopted UPWP is required by April 15, 2005 in order to receive funding for the fiscal year.

Mr. Spalding made a motion to adopt the Fiscal Year 2006 Unified Planning Work Program contingent on final resolution. Seconded by Mr. Kercheval. Unanimously approved.

2) Presentation by Federal Transit Administration – Planning Status Review

Ms. McFadden-Roberts discussed the planning review process for the metropolitan area. A letter will be sent to the MPO addressing the timeframe for preparation of documentation needed for the review and a time will be arranged for the on-site review. A summary report will then be issued addressing the strengths and weaknesses within the planning review process.

3) Presentation by Federal Transit Administration - "United We Ride" Program

Ms. McFadden-Roberts also presented information on a new FTA initiative program started in 2004 called "United We Ride". This program coordinates human service transportation systems. One component of this program is a self-assessment of urban and rural areas of coordination efforts that are occurring. The program encourages communities to evaluate their services and policies and develop plans to operate more efficiently. The FTA is encouraging MPO's to complete the assessment and develop a plan detailing the services to be incorporated into your area. Ms. McFadden distributed a brochure for the "United We Ride" program detailing technical assistance that is available to implement and coordinate assessments. She also distributed a brochure explaining transportation brokerage programs. Ms. McFadden stated that the State of Maryland received an award for the innovative work performed on their "United We Ride" program and a state coordination grant in the amount of \$35,000. There are currently no funds available through the "United We Ride" program.

OTHER BUSINESS

1) Long Range Transportation Plan Summary Recommendations

Mr. Grimm presented a summary of the Long Range Transportation Plan prepared by Cambridge Systematics, Inc. to be adopted by the MPO. A copy of this summary is attached and made a part of these minutes.

Following Mr. Grimm's presentation, several members of the MPO had questions and concerns regarding the adoption of the plan as presented. One concern for the City of Martinsburg's members was the listing of projects for their area. Mr. Grimm stated that no major changes have been made to the drafted Plan since November, 2004. He also stated that once the Plan is adopted, the MPO can update and change the plan as needed. Mr. Grimm stated that most MPO's amend their long range plans on an annual basis to remove projects that have been completed and review plans that are ready to move into another phase. The Plan could also be amended more often for short range plans.

Ms. McFadden-Roberts stated that the MPO is required to have a constrained Long Range Transportation Plan in effect and once adopted, the Plan is effective for five years as long as progress is being made in the yearly action compact. If the MPO is not effective in obtaining their air quality conformity, the plan must be updated in three years. Any amendments made to the Plan must be submitted to the FTA. Ms. McFadden also stated that a Plan must be adopted as soon as possible. At this point in time, the State of Maryland does not have an adopted plan and therefore TIP projects cannot be approved to be funded. There is approximately \$900,000 in funds waiting to be released to the State of Maryland. If the Plan is adopted by the MPO at this meeting, contingent on final comments and revisions, the funds could be released for Maryland to begin work on several projects.

Mr. Kercheval made a motion to adopt the Long Range Transportation Plan as presented contingent on final comments from the various jurisdictions within the MPO. Seconded by Mr. Spalding.

Discussion continued by some members expressing concern regarding the adoption of the Plan as presented. The Plan has been a work in progress for approximately two or three years with no major changes made in the Plan since November 2004.

This Plan is the basic foundation on which the MPO will adopt their annual work plan for each jurisdiction and will help to establish a network to reach those goals. After the initial Plan is adopted, there is nothing to prevent the MPO from adopting an amended Plan at any time.

The motion passed with Mr. Strauss and Mr. Corliss voting "no".

- 2)** Ms. Baker stated that there is some question at the Federal level whether or not the TIP now in place is consistent with the Long Range Transportation Plan due to the lapsed status of the Plan. Mr. Spalding confirmed that the Maryland portion of the TIP is consistent with the Long Range Transportation Plan. Mr. Bailey also confirmed that the West Virginia portion of the TIP is consistent with the Long Range Transportation Plan.

Mr. Spalding made a motion to acknowledge that the current TIP is consistent with the Long Range Transportation Plan. Seconded by Mr. Bailey. Unanimously approved.

- 3)** Ms. Baker stated that a new cost/time extension for the consultant, Cambridge Systematics, Inc., needs to be discussed. The cost-time contract lapsed on February 28,

2005. A sixty (60) day no cost/time extension, which will expire on April 28, 2005, would allow the MPO to retain the consultant while final comments are received from all jurisdictions and any revisions are incorporated in the Plan.

Mr. Strauss made a motion to allow the consultant a 60 day no cost extension for completion of the Long Range Transportation Plan. Seconded by Mr. Greg Corliss.

Discussion: Any comments or revisions that the jurisdictions would like incorporated in the Plan should be forwarded to the consultant as soon as possible to allow the consultant sufficient time to finalize the Plan.

Unanimously approved.

ADJOURNMENT

With no further business before the MPO, Mr. Greg Snook adjourned the meeting at 9:05 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Gregory I. Snook, Chairman