

**MINUTES
HAGERSTOWN EASTERN PANHANDLE
METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION**

September 21, 2005

The HEPMPO held its regular meeting on Wednesday, September 21, 2005 at 7:00 p.m. at the Washington County Administrative Annex, 80 West Baltimore Street, Hagerstown, Maryland.

The following members were present: Chairman, Gregory Snook, Washington County Board of County Commissioners; Vice Chairman, Howard Strauss, Berkeley County Commission; Commissioner Jim Kercheval, Washington County Board of County Commissioners; Mike Nixon, MD DOT; Robert Gordon, Eastern Panhandle Region 9 Planning & Development Council; Greg Corliss, Jefferson County Commissioner; Donald C. Bailey, WV DOT; Mark Baldwin, City Manager, City of Martinsburg; Mike Thompson, MPO Coordinator and Jill Baker, Senior Planner, Washington County Planning Department; Kathleen A. Maher, City of Hagerstown; and Richard L. Warner, WV DOT/DOH. Also present was Delegate Craig Blair, West Virginia House of Delegates and Jerry Mays, West Virginia EPTA.

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Snook called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

MINUTES

Mr. Strauss made a motion to approve the minutes of the April 20, 2005 meeting as presented. Seconded by Mr. Nixon. Unanimously approved.

Mr. Strauss made a motion to approve the minutes of the June 15, 2005 meeting as presented. Seconded by Mr. Nixon. Unanimously approved.

OLD BUSINESS

T.I.P. Amendments – West Virginia

Mr. Bailey presented for review and approval several changes to the FY 2006-09 Transportation Improvement Program. The following projects have been removed from the TIP:

Berkeley County

- State Project S302-36-2.22 (Federal Project BR-0036(028)E)
- State Project U302-11-12-41 (Federal Project STP-00011(104)E)
- State Project S302-81-23.43 (Federal Project IM-0811(091)E)
- State Project S302-22-209 (Federal Project BR-0022(050)E)
- State Project U302-6-0.96 (Federal Project BR-0006(030)E)
- State Project S302-11-3.13 (Federal Project BR-0011(106)E)

The following projects have been added to the TIP:

Jefferson County

- State Project U319-16/4-0.02 01 (Federal Project STPG-0037(001)E)
- State Project U319-16/4-0.02 02 (Federal Project STPG-0027(001)E)
- State Project U319-16/4-0.02 00 (Federal Project STPG-0011(026)E)

Discussion: Mr. Gordon provided clarification for the projects that are on the Fiscal Constraint Six Year Plan. A project being on the Six Year Plan does not mean it is on the STIP and does not mean it is part of the funded portion of the Six Year Plan. Mr. Warner stated that the State recognizes the need for projects shown in the Six Year Plan and the need to find funding for these particular projects. He also stated that the existing STIP expires the end of September and believes the new STIP will meet the requirements for being a fiscally constrained STIP that will present more confidence in the program.

Mr. Baldwin began a brief discussion regarding the Raleigh Street Extension project. This discussion is made a part of the Raleigh Street Extension later in the minutes.

Comment regarding Transit Projects: Mr. Warner stated that there was an oversight that will probably have an effect on the Hagerstown Eastern Panhandle MPO. He explained that when the draft STIP was produced and sent out for public review, the WVDOT/DOH neglected to include the transit projects that are already a part of the areas seven MPO TIP's. Six of the MPO's, the exception being the HEPMPO, are represented by one FTA representative, Tony Tarone. Mr. Tarone was contacted regarding the oversight and will recognize that the projects fulfill the STIP requirements. Mr. Warner stated that the TIP can be made part of the STIP by reference. The FHWA has done this with highway projects and only requires that there is absolute consistency at the time the draft STIP goes out for public review. The oversight will require an interpretation by the HEPMPO's FTA representative. The worst-case scenario, the STIP will need to be amended as quickly as possible.

Mr. Gordon made a motion to approve the T.I.P. Amendments. Seconded by Mr. Nixon. Unanimously approved.

T.I.P. Amendments – Maryland

Mr. Nixon presented for review and approval an amendment for the current T.I.P. and submission of a new T.I.P for FY 2006. The amendment for FY 2005 T.I.P. includes cost increases, bridge replacement rehabilitation and congestion management.

Mr. Nixon made a motion to approve the amendment for the FY 2005 T.I.P. Seconded by Mr. Bailey. Unanimously approved.

The new submission includes the completion of the Maryland 34 bridge and a study to examine widening and interchange improvements to I-81.

Mr. Nixon made a motion to approve the Draft T.I.P for FY 2006. Seconded by Mr. Strauss. Unanimously approved.

NEW BUSINESS

UPWP Revisions

Ms. Baker stated that Maryland distributed increased revenues for planning funds. She also stated that over the past two years, the WV FTA has appropriated \$15,000 that has not been spent and will be included as part of the revisions to the UPWP. Mr. Gordon stated that total allocations for this year are \$45,000. He is preparing a budget for West Virginia that will include funds to hire a staff person to help with the transportation planning and GIS work and funds to purchase software and other pertinent equipment. Ms. Baker stated that action by the MPO is needed to acknowledge the \$30,000 appropriated by the WV FTA for the past two years and the 2% increase in the work program budget. Mr. Nixon stated that the additional funds are derived from monies that were overlooked from previous allocations and does not reflect the increase from the new Transportation Act that will provide additional funds.

Mr. Nixon made a motion to amend the FY 2006 funding allocations of the Federal Transit Administration to include the two-year, \$30,000 carryover and to increase the planning funds by approximately \$16,000 (or 2%) for the HEPMPO Work Program. Seconded by Mr. Kercheval. Unanimously approved.

MPO Structure/Bylaws

Mr. Gordon stated that in the near future, a significant increase in funding will be available through the planning process to the West Virginia governments. Several municipalities are asked to pay dues for the MPO, but they do not have the representation they desire. Mr. Gordon suggested that the MPO review their structure to include representation for these municipalities on the MPO Board. An amendment would be necessary to change the by-laws set forth by the MPO. Ms. Baker stated that the MPO is currently structured so Washington County is the cognizant agency and holds the majority of the votes. Mr. Snook suggested that staff from both entities present recommendations for restructuring the MPO Board.

Update on Federal Planning Review

Ms. Baker stated that a date is needed for the FHA/FTA Planning Review. October 19th and 20th are the tentative dates chosen by the participating members of the MPO. Ms. Baker will confirm these dates with the Federal agencies.

Air Quality Conformity Analysis Update

Mr. Nixon stated that Washington and Berkeley counties are in a non-attainment status for Fine Particles (PM 2.5). Maryland has begun preliminary work to provide data to the EPA to avoid a lapse in conformity. Mr. Nixon requested funding in the amount of \$20,000 through the MPO's UPWP to continue this effort. The work would involve running the vehicle miles traveled model, the emissions model and provide documentation to the EPA and FHWA to meet all requirements by April, 2006.

Mr. Gordon made a motion to approve the request for \$20,000, based upon the current 65/35 split for local funding, from the MPO's UPWP. Seconded by Mr. Strauss. Unanimously approved.

Raleigh Street Extension

Mr. Gordon stated that this project is listed in the current Long Range Transportation Plan; however, it is not listed in the funded category. An amendment is needed to the Plan to move this project into the funded category. Mr. Baldwin requested clarification on the process to move projects to the funded category. Mr. Warner stated that the MPO needs to provide written correspondence to the DOH confirming their support of the project and their desire to have the project move forward. The DOH must internally program the project. Once the project is programmed, the DOH will request an amendment to the TIP. The MPO needs to approve a resolution requesting the change and forward to the Governor for his approval. The Federal Highway Administration will then be requested to recognize that project as part of the STIP.

Mr. Baldwin made a motion to amend the Long Range Transportation Plan to move the Raleigh Street Extension project into the funded category, to be included in the Air Quality Conformity Analysis, and that the MPO submit a letter to the WV DOT expressing their support of the project.

Discussion: Mr. Snook stated that a resolution should be drafted instead of a letter. Mr. Gordon suggested amending the motion to state that the process for public involvement notification will be initiated and final action will be taken at a later date. This project was not included in any TIP's.

Mr. Baldwin amended his motion that the MPO would initiate the process of amending the Transportation Plan to include the Raleigh Street Extension in the funded category and to do the conforming determination and that the MPO will draft, by approval of this amendment, a resolution of support for the project. Seconded by Mr. Gordon. Unanimously approved.

Martinsburg Bypass

Mr. Gordon stated that this project is listed in the current Long Range Transportation Plan; however, it is not listed in the funded category. An amendment is needed to the Plan to move this project into the funded category.

Mr. Strauss made a motion to move this project into the funded category, with the following stipulations. An alternate route to mile marker 18 on Interstate 81 has been unanimously requested by the Berkeley County Commission.

Comments: Mr. Warner stated that the Transportation Study did not settle that issue and left it open recognizing that the issue would be settled in subsequent development. Mr. Strauss noted that since the Transportation Study did leave it open, the ability to have the alternate route at that location still exists and it is the County Commission's recommendation to put the route at that location.

Continuance of Motion: Mr. Strauss added to his motion that a public hearing be advertised by the MPO regarding the amendment to the Long Range Transportation Plan.

Comment: Mr. Gordon stated that clarification of the MPO's adopted public process is needed.

Continuation of Motion: Mr. Strauss requested the MPO to draft a resolution expressing their support of the amendment, based on the outcome of the public hearing.

Comment: Mr. Warner noted that the MPO should only be moving the projects from an unfunded category to a funded category in the Transportation Plan. They are not responsible, at this point in time, for making recommendations to the final design. The State will be responsible for the final design.

Mr. Strauss amended his motion to omit the recommendation of the Berkeley County Commission.

Clarification of Motion: Mr. Strauss made a motion to amend the Transportation Long Range Plan to include the Martinsburg Bypass project in the funded category. Seconded by Mr. Corliss. Unanimously approved.

OTHER BUSINESS

Staff Reports

Mr. Gordon noted that in the spring of 2005, a request was made by Sharon Disque, CDC, for the MPO to consider a study to determine the most appropriate location for a MARC train station in Jefferson County. A follow-up letter was also sent to the MPO to address this issue. Mr. Gordon has contacted the West Virginia State Rail Authority, CSX and MARC. He has been told that there is a proposal in Jefferson County with a letter of recommendation of support for the West Virginia Rail Authority through the Commissioner of Transportation for a MARC train station at the Jefferson County/Berkeley County line. Few details are available at this time. MARC authorities have commented that they do not want two train stations in this area. The Rail Authority stated they are proposing additional parking at the Duffields station. Members of HEPMPO feel that a letter drafted to the Secretary of Transportation for West Virginia to determine the MPO's position would be appropriate.

Future Meetings

A tentative date of Wednesday, October 19th, 7:00 p.m. in Martinsburg has been scheduled.

ADJOURNMENT

Chairman Snook adjourned the meeting at 8:25 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Gregory I. Snook, Chairman