

**MINUTES
HAGERSTOWN EASTERN PANHANDLE
METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION**

January 18, 2006

The HEPMPO held its regular meeting on Wednesday, January 18, 2006 at 7:00 p.m. at the Washington County Administrative Annex, 80 West Baltimore Street, Hagerstown, Maryland.

The following members were present: Chairman Gregory I. 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; P. David Mills, City of Ranson; Mike Thompson, MPO Coordinator, and Jill Baker, Senior Planner, Washington County Planning Department; Kathleen A. Maher, City of Hagerstown; and Jeff Blanton, FHWA-WV Division. Also present were: Debra Eckard, Administrative Assistant, Washington County Planning Department; Howard Simons, MD DOT; and Jim Frazier, Michael Baker Corporation.

MINUTES

Mr. Strauss made a motion to approve the minutes of the September 21, 2005 meeting as presented. Seconded by Mr. Nixon. Unanimously approved.

NEW BUSINESS

Appointment to Vacant Position – Jefferson County, West Virginia

Ms. Baker presented a letter from the County Commission of Jefferson County, West Virginia to appoint Mayor Hamill, Town of Ranson, as their representative to the HEPMPO. Mayor Hamill has requested Mr. Dave Mills, City Manager of Ranson, to be recognized as his proxy.

Mr. Strauss made a motion to approve the appointment of Mayor Hamill as the Jefferson County representative and Mr. Mills to act as his proxy. Seconded by Mr. Corliss. Unanimously approved.

T.I.P. Amendments – West Virginia

Mr. Bailey presented the following amendments to the T.I.P. for West Virginia projects:

- Charles Town Gateway Center enhancement project – construction of sidewalks, crossover and lighting in April 2008
- Charles Town, Jefferson County Route 230 German Street streetscape enhancement project – construction of sidewalks, lights, and pedestrian amenities
- Cancellation of Coast Guard Drive Extension to upgrade two-lane connector
- Cost Change for paving of 4-lane road, .11 mile south of WV 115 to .38 mile west of County Road 1
- Shepherdstown Streetscape enhancement project – construction of sidewalks, resetting curbs and the installation of street lights and pedestrian amenities along German Street between King Street and Church Street

Comments: Ms. Baker noted when there is an amendment to a T.I.P. or a T.I.P. is added or deleted, the Air Quality Conformity model must be evaluated and updated to make sure the HEPMPO is in conformity with the criteria set forth by the EPA. The T.I.P. Amendments presented would not have a negative impact on the analysis that is being done and we can proceed as recommended.

Mr. Gordon stated that the projects currently in the Long Range Transportation Plan are undergoing a conformity determination. Once the determination has been made on those projects, new projects may impact the conformity.

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

Air Quality Conformity Analysis Update

Mr. Jim Frazier, Project Manager of the Michael Baker, Jr. Corporation presented an update of the Air Quality Conformity Analysis. Berkeley County, West Virginia and Washington County, Maryland comprise the non-attainment area for PM 2.5 particulates as designated by the EPA. Jefferson County, West Virginia is in attainment and is exempt from conformity issues. Direct sources of PM2.5 particulates include exhaust, brake and tire wear, and road and construction dust and indirect sources include VOX. All direct and indirect sources must be analyzed. State Implementation Programs (SIP) would be the responsibility of the MDE and WVDEP. The SIP's must be submitted to the EPA by April 2008 and would establish conforming budgets for each County for required pollutants. Once that occurs, Berkeley and Washington counties can perform their own analysis. The attainment date is 2010. The FHWA approval is required by April 5, 2006. Interagency consultation groups would be required and would review SIP's as they are developed. Based on SAFETEA-LU requirements, updates and amendments to TIPs and the Long Range Transportation Plan could trigger new conformity determinations.

Federal Planning Review

Mr. Jeff Blanton, FHWA – WV Division, presented an update of the Federal Planning Review process that included a desk audit and a site visit on October 19 and 20, 2005. The Federal review team has formulated recommendations, required improvements, and resources for technical assistance that will enhance the effectiveness of the MPO planning process. The review team indicated that the MPO organizational structure must be changed to address current operations and a technical committee must be established with a regular meeting schedule. Mr. Blanton briefly reviewed the Executive Summary provided to the MPO and stated that a report of the required improvements should be sent to the FTA/FHWA by June 15, 2006.

Comment: Mr. Thompson noted there are several deadlines within the Federal Review that must be met prior to the June 15, 2006 deadline. He expressed his opinion that the MPO should appoint a full-time Coordinator that is more versed in the transportation area as soon as possible. Funding for this position would be available through the MPO budget.

Discussion: There was a brief discussion regarding the preparation of a job description and advertising that position both internally and externally through the governmental agencies involved. A benefit package was discussed and how it would be provided. There was also a discussion regarding hiring someone on a contractual basis until appropriate guidelines are reviewed and the process completed to hire a full-time Coordinator. A brief summary of the budget was given to determine the amount of funds available for personnel salaries.

Mr. Strauss made a motion to have a job description prepared and e-mailed to all members as soon as possible prior to the February 8, 2006 meeting and to hire, in accordance with the Federal Planning review report, either by salary or on a contractual basis, a full-time Coordinator. The motion includes further discussion regarding the hiring of the full-time Coordinator position during the February 8, 2006 MPO meeting. Seconded by Ms. Maher. Unanimously approved.

OTHER BUSINESS

Future Meetings

The next meeting of the MPO is scheduled for Wednesday, February 8, 2006 at 7:00 p.m. in Martinsburg, West Virginia, 2nd floor, Dunn Building.

ADJOURNMENT

Chairman Snook ordered the meeting adjourned at 8:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Gregory Snook, Chairman