

**MINUTES
HAGERSTOWN EASTERN PANHANDLE
METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION**

March 15, 2006

The HEPMPO held its regular meeting on Wednesday, March 15, 2006 at 7:00 p.m. at the Washington County Administrative Annex, 80 West Baltimore Street, Hagerstown, Maryland.

The following members were present: Chairman Greg Snook, Washington County Board of County Commissioners, Vice Chairman Howard Strauss, Berkeley County Commission; Jim Kercheval, Washington County Board of County Commissioners; Mike Nixon, MD DOT; Don Bailey, WV DOT; Robert Gordon, Eastern Panhandle Region 9 Planning & Development Council; Mark Baldwin, City Manager, City of Martinsburg; P. David Mills, City of Ranson; Bob Bruchey, Mayor, City of Hagerstown; Mike Thompson, MPO Coordinator, and Jill Baker, Senior Planner, Washington County Planning Department; and Kathleen Maher, City of Hagerstown. Also present was: Debra Eckard, Administrative Assistant, Washington County Planning Department and Carol Crabtree, Executive Director, Region 9 Planning & Development Council.

CALL TO ORDER

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

MINUTES

Mr. Strauss made a motion to approve the minutes of the January 18, 2006 meeting as presented. Seconded by Mr. Baldwin. Mr. Kercheval abstained. Unanimously approved.

Mr. Strauss made a motion to approve the minutes of the February 8, 2006 meeting as presented. Seconded by Mr. Baldwin. Unanimously approved.

NEW BUSINESS

FY 2007 Unified Planning Work Program Draft Review

Ms. Baker presented for review the draft of the FY 2007 Unified Planning Work Program. The estimated revenue for FY 2007 is approximately \$500,000. The West Virginia Federal Transit Administration carry over funds for this year are \$30,000. The State of West Virginia will contribute one-half of the 20% local match for 2007 only. The carry-over funding must be expended first. West Virginia has adopted a consolidated fund program that will combine the Federal Highway planning funds with the Federal Transit Administration funds.

Ms. Baker stated that a large portion of the proposed expenditures would be spent in salaries that would include the hiring of an MPO Coordinator and two transportation planners, one full-time planner each for West Virginia and Maryland. For the purpose of preparing the budget, Ms. Baker estimated the salary for the Coordinator at \$70,000 and \$35,000 for each planner that includes benefits and fringe rates. The Washington County Engineering Department has requested money for summer interns to perform traffic counts for areas throughout the County. The traffic counts are entered into a data base format to create a pavement management system. A similar program might be started during the next fiscal year for West Virginia.

The anticipated operating costs portion of the budget has been significantly increased especially in the travel and training categories. Currently the adopted funding responsibilities are split at a 65/35 ratio. However, based on the 1990 Urbanized Areas Boundary, population growth within

the Eastern Panhandle vs. Washington County's growth rate, a recommendation of a 50/50 ratio should be considered.

Capital costs are estimated for the start-up costs of new staffing. The majority of the capital costs would be the purchase of computer equipment and traffic counters.

Special studies relates to the Transit Coordination Plan needed in West Virginia. Washington County currently has a Coordination Plan with its Public Transportation rider and the non-emergency/non-profit organization and was completed by the Maryland Transit Administration. The two coordination plans should be integrated as a regional plan. There is currently \$45,000 available; however, \$15,000 would lapse as of June 30, 2006 if it were not used. Ms. Baker recommended preparing an RFP (Request for Proposal) to hire a consultant as soon as possible to use the \$15,000 that is due to lapse.

Ms. Baker addressed the following specific tasks designated in the work program.

- Short Range Planning – There are no specific projects currently proposed. However, the MPO will continue to work with the local and regional issues dealing with the short-range transportation problems. Budget amount: \$20,676
- Transportation Improvement Program – Budget amount: \$11,486
- Traffic Data – The budget increase is due to the proposed purchase of traffic counters and the hiring of interns to perform traffic counts. Budget amount: \$38,880
- GIS & Traffic Modeling – Budget amount: \$16,080
- Long Range Transportation Plan – To begin preparation for the next update and to implement recommendations in the current LRTP. Budget amount: \$27,566
- Scenic Byways – Budget amount: 0
- Service – To provide on-going services to local governments and municipalities. Budget amount: \$25,272
- Air Quality & Conformity – Budget amount: \$13,782
- Mass Transit Planning – The majority of the Maryland funds would be spent on the Transit Clerk that assists in planning activities for the County Commuter. Budget amount: \$29,269
- Special Studies – There are currently no specific projects for this item. Budget amount: \$5,974
- Program Administration – This would include preparing memorandums of understanding with State DOT's, Air Quality agencies, etc., review and of public involvement process, review and update By-laws, continuation of work on the UPWP throughout the fiscal year, compilation of reports to Federal Highway and Federal Transit agencies to update progress of the Work Program, and other administrative work necessary. Budget amount: \$81,754

The total estimated revenue is \$524,000 and total estimated expenditures are \$300,000. All carry-over funds would be used first.

Discussion: There was a brief discussion regarding the amount of money in the budget for audits. The MPO, in the past, has not paid for an audit because it was done as part of Washington County's audit process.

A second draft would be presented at the April meeting and the proposed adoption of the UPWP would be during the May meeting.

MPO Coordinator Position

Ms. Baker presented a proposal for the appointment/hiring of an MPO Coordinator. She recommended eliminating the short-term interim MPO Coordinator position.

Discussion: There was a brief discussion regarding the MPO Coordinator job description presented by Ms. Baker. MPO members requested the following changes: the last sentence in **Physical Requirements** should be eliminated and add EOE; in **Essential Tasks** section, the wording should be "Prepares and administers the MPO budget and related financial documents."; and in **Education and Experience** section, "Ten (10) years experience" should be changed to "Five (5) years experience" and the last sentence should read "Prior working experience with another MPO, Regional Development Council or other transportation related organization desired". Mr. Snook recommended that the items listed under **Knowledge, Skills and Abilities** should be reviewed and coordinated with the Washington County Human Resources Director.

Mr. Strauss made a motion to advertise the job description for the MPO Coordinator, as amended, during a three week advertising time period. Seconded by Mr. Bruchey. Unanimously approved.

Ms. Baker also discussed the work hours and salary and benefits related to the MPO Coordinator position. The coordinator would work a minimum of 40 hours per week splitting time between the Maryland and West Virginia offices. Time should be flexible and overall time expenditures should be equal. The proposed base salary should be \$65,000 to \$70,000 per year.

Discussion: There was a brief discussion regarding the proposed salary. Members recommended that Staff should contact the Human Resources department in Washington County and Berkeley County to verify the salary is competitive with other MPO's in Maryland and West Virginia.

Mr. Strauss made a motion to include the base salary of \$65,000 to \$70,000 per year in the advertisement. Seconded by Mr. Bruchey. Unanimously approved.

Ms. Baker stated that there are two feasible options for a benefits package. One option is to piggyback on Washington County's policies for employment. The Coordinator would be paid through Washington County (with 80% federal, 5% State of Maryland, and 5% West Virginia local match and 5% West Virginia DOT match reimbursement to Washington County and 5% general funds from Washington County as in-kind services). The second option is to piggyback on Region 9's policies for employment with the Coordinator being paid through Region 9.

Comment: Mr. Gordon expressed his opinion that it would be more feasible to use Washington County because it is the lead state of the MPO and because in-kind service funds could be used.

Ms. Baker stated that the advertisement would state that a competitive benefits package is available. A decision does not need to be made at this time.

Ms. Baker recommended that a subcommittee should be organized to proceed through the interview process. Members suggested that one elected official from each state, one member from each DOT and the current MPO Coordinator should be appointed to the interview subcommittee.

West Virginia T.I.P. Amendments

Ms. Baker presented for review West Virginia T.I.P. Amendments to determine the amendments that are administrative and an action that is contingent upon a public participation process. Each project must also be evaluated for Air Quality conformity.

Projects Exempt from Air Quality Conformity

- Federal Project STP-2007(008)E, Berkeley County roadway striping
- Federal Project STP-2008(008)E, Berkeley County roadway striping
- Federal Project CMAQ-0045(052)E, WV 45/WV 09/US 11 Renovate signs
- Federal Project #CMAQ-0009(182)E, WV 9 & US 11 traffic signal renovation

- Federal Project #CMAQ-0009(181)E, WV 9 & Warm Springs Road, traffic signal renovation
- Federal Project #NH-0009(183)E, Meridian Parkway traffic signal installation
- Federal Project #STP-0045(052)E & STP-0045(053)E, WV 45 & Woodbury Avenue traffic signal installation
- Federal Project #NHG-0340(055)E, US 340 traffic signal installation
- Federal Project #TEA-0H22(001)E, WV 51 Charles Town Gateway, construct sidewalk, crossover, lighting and landscaping
- Federal Project #STP-0011(104)E, US 11 Rocky Lane Road, add left turn lane and drainage. This project was in a TIP and then removed by the State and is now added in again. The MPO needs to acknowledge that this project is not regionally significant and should not have an impact on our Air Quality Analysis.

No action required at this time.

Ms. Baker presented for review several projects that are included in our current TIP but some change has been made to the project. A determination of administrative or non-administrative changes is required.

- Federal Project #BR-0045(041)E, WV 45 Jones & Laughlin Overpass, moving \$1.1 million from FY '08 to post FY '08 **Administrative**
- Federal Project #STP-0011(107)E, US 11 Wheatland Area, **No changes**
- Federal Project #BR-0044 (047)E & BR-0045(048)E, Roy P. Tut Parsons Bridge, moving \$60,000 from FY '06 out of the TIP to post FY '08 and moving \$20,000 from FY '06 out of the TIP to post FY '08 **Administrative**
- Federal Project #BR-0001(223)E, BR-0001(224)E, BR-0001(225)E, Grade Road Overpass Bridge, change in funds and moving out of TIP **Advertise**
- Federal Project ESTP-0818(002)E & STP-0818(003)E, 81/8 Tabler Station Connector, moving \$9.6 million from FY'08 to post FY '08 **Non-Administrative**
- Federal Project #HUBT-0009(165)C, WV 9 Regional Jail to Opequon Creek, **Administrative**
- Federal Project #EBST-0009(169)C, WV 9 Opequon Creek to CR 9/19 **Administrative**
- Federal Project #NH-0009(179)E, WV 9 Berkeley 9/19 to Jefferson Co. 1, Cost increase, **Advertise**
- Federal Project #STP-0011(026)E, US 11 Virginia State line to Bunker Hill **No Changes**
- Federal Project #IM-0811(098)C, I-81 South Martinsburg – North Martinsburg **Administrative**
- Federal Project #STPG-0011(028)E, US 11 Inwood traffic signal system, Moved from FY '07 to FY '08 **Administrative**
- Federal Project #ACNC-0009(167)C, WV 9 – WV 115 – CR 1 **No Change**
- Federal Project #STPG-0027(001)E, CR 27 Bloomery Road railroad crossing **No Change**
- Federal Project #STP-0017(073)E & STP-0017(074)E, Charles Town Racetrack, Increase in funding from \$1.6 million to \$2 million and moving construction to FY '08 **Administrative**
- Federal Project #STP-0009(158)E, WV 9 Bloomery – VA State line, increase in funding **Administrative**
- Federal Project #NRT-2004(056)E, Appalachian Trail, increase in funding **Administrative**
- Federal Project #NH-0340(051)E, US 340 Harpers Ferry – Virginia line **No Change**
- Federal Project #MG-0009(178)C, WV 9 – CR 9/3 to CR 27 Bridge, **Administrative**

- Federal Project #MG-0009(177)T, WV 9 – Shenandoah River Bridge to Virginia State line, change in funding type **Administrative**
- Federal Project #NH-0009(168)T, WV 9 – US 340 Frontage Roads, decrease in funding **Administrative**
- Federal Project #NH-0340(048)CP & NH-0340(039)ROW, US 340 Virginia line – Charles Town, moving from FY '07 to FY '08 **Administrative**
- Federal Project #NHG-0009(176)E, WV 9 – Leetown Road traffic signal, moving from FY '07 to FY '08 **Administrative**
- Federal Project #TEA-CH22(001)E, WV 230 German Street streetscape **No Change**

OTHER BUSINESS

The next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, April 19, 2006 in Martinsburg.

ADJOURNMENT

Chairman Snook adjourned the meeting at 8:50 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Gregory I. Snook, Chairman