

**MINUTES
HAGERSTOWN EASTERN PANHANDLE
METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION**

September 13, 2006

The HEPMPO held its regular meeting on Wednesday, September 13, 2006 at 7:00 p.m. at the offices of the Washington County Administrative Annex, 80 West Baltimore Street, Hagerstown, Maryland.

The following members were present: Vice Chairman Howard Strauss, Berkeley County Commission; Robert Gordon, HEPMPO Director; Jim Kercheval, Washington County Board of County Commissioners; Bob Bruchey, Mayor, City of Hagerstown; Mike Nixon, MD DOT; Don Bailey, WV DOT; Carol Crabtree, Eastern Panhandle Region 9 Planning & Development Council; Greg Corliss, Jefferson County Commissioner; Lynn Walker, Eastern Panhandle Transit Authority; Dave Mills, City of Ranson; Derek Meyers, Town of Boonsboro; Mike Thompson, Director of Planning and Jill Baker, Senior Planner, Washington County Planning Department; Kevin Cerrone, Washington County Public Transportation. Also present was: Debra Eckard, Administrative Assistant, Washington County Planning Department, Gary Rohrer, Director, Washington County Public Works Department; and Jeff Blanton, Federal Highway Administration.

CALL TO ORDER

Vice Chairman Howard Strauss called the meeting to order at 7:05 p.m. and verified that a quorum was present.

MINUTES

Ms. Walker made a motion to approve the minutes of the regular meeting of May 31, 2006 and the Executive Session meeting of May 31, 2006. Seconded by Mr. Kercheval. Unanimously approved.

NEW BUSINESS

I. Appointment of Technical Advisory Committee

Mr. Gordon presented for review and approval a Proposed Technical Advisory Committee member list. The intent of the Technical Advisory Committee is to make recommendations to the MPO Board. There are specific individuals that are required for this committee and other individuals who are appointed based on their fields of expertise. The TAC will review TIP amendments and other projects and will act as a liaison between the policy makers and the technical people.

Discussion: There was a brief discussion regarding the way the list was compiled and how members were chosen. If a listed member is unable to attend a TAC meeting, they may send a representative in their place. Mr. Strauss recommended approving the Council Member list; however, not the particular named representative.

Mayor Bruchey made a motion to approve as the Technical Advisory Committee the Interstate Council member governments including the non-voting members and their designee and the other required members. Seconded by Mr. Kercheval. Unanimously approved.

II. UPWP Revisions

Mr. Gordon presented for review and approval revisions from the FTA – Maryland Division comments. Ms. Baker stated that included in the packet is a new Table of Contents to address the deletion of the Scenic By-ways task. She also stated another major change is Maryland's portion of funding monies. Some of the funds will be used to conduct a traffic study for the Washington County Commuter. The Transportation Study would be used to locate a transfer station and the required amenities for the County Commuter.

Mr. Nixon requested a formal resolution to be signed by the MPO Chairman to forward a request to the FTA.

Mr. Nixon made a motion to request the formal resolution. Seconded by Mr. Kercheval. Unanimously approved.

III. TIP Amendments

- West Virginia

Mr. Bailey presented one revised project and six new projects to add to the West Virginia TIP Amendments.

- **Revised** – Woodbury Avenue signal – change in funding for plans from \$24,000 to \$300,000 for construction plans and \$30,000 to \$375,000 for construction costs
- Washington Heritage Trail Interpretive Signs – Funding level \$90,000
- Washington Heritage Trail Seed Funds – Funding level \$20,000
- WV 51-I-81 Inwood Traffic signal – construction in 2007 at a cost of \$250,000
- WV 51 Inwood Right Turn lanes - \$16,000 of Federal money for contract plans and \$400,000 for construction in 2007
- Martinsburg WV 45 Signal – Contract plans to be prepared in 2008 for \$75,000 and Post FY 2008 construction of \$500,000
- WV 9 – Kearneysville – Add turning lanes – Contract plans for FY 2007 \$84,000 and FY 2008 construction of \$216,000

Discussion: Mr. Gordon presented an inquiry from Mr. Mark Baldwin, City of Martinsburg, who could not attend the meeting. Mr. Baldwin made an inquiry regarding a change of the Woodbury Avenue project, the WV 45 signal project, and the Rocky Lane project. Mr. Gordon reported that the Woodbury Avenue project has an increase in funding costs and is an administrative change, the WV 45 signal is a new project, and Rocky Lane project is scheduled to go to contract in June 2007.

Ms. Walker made a motion to approve the West Virginia TIP Amendments as presented. Seconded by Mr. Corliss. Unanimously approved.

- Maryland

Mr. Nixon presented the following TIP Amendments for Maryland.

- US Route 40 at Edgewood Drive – intersection improvements, FY 2008 estimated costs of \$5.8 million – Funding Ratio: 50% State and 50% City of Hagerstown and Washington County
- I-81 – Study to examine widening and interchange improvements
- Congestion Management – Provides traffic control, monitoring and management of State facilities; FY 2007-2009 Total Funds \$4.5 million
- Urban Street Reconstruction and Revitalization – Provides roadway rehabilitation and streetscape improvements on State roads in towns; FY 2007-2009 Total Funds \$1.5 million

- Bridge Replacement and Rehabilitation – Provide major upgrade and maintenance of structures on State highways – Projects identified: Maryland 63 at CSX, bridge and small structure inspections, invert paving and repairs; FY 2007-2009 Total Funds \$2,505,000
- Resurface and Rehabilitation – Provides periodic resurfacing and upgrade of auxiliary features on State roads; FY 2007-2009 Total Funds \$5,450,000
- Safety and Spot Improvements – Provides localized improvements to address safety issues on State roads – Projects identified: US 11 at Englewood Road, MD 65 from Taylor's Landing to north of Maryland 68, Wilson Boulevard at CSX, I-81 at I-70, various geometric improvements; FY 2007-2009 Total Funds \$5,650,000
- Environmental Projects – provides aesthetic improvements along state roads; FY 2007-2009 Total Funds \$750,000
- I-70 – Replace concrete ditch lining with vegetation to reduce thermal impact; FY 2007-2009 Total Funds \$440,000
- Antietam Battlefield – Acquire 8 properties (828) acres of scenic easements; FY 2007-2009 Total Funds \$3,310,000
- Western Maryland Rail Trail – Phase IV – construct bike/pedestrian trail from Big Poole to Pearre Station; FY 2007-2009 Total Funds \$4.9 million

There was a brief discussion regarding this item. Ms. Baker stated that this project from Big Pool to Pearre Station has been constructed. Mr. Nixon will check on the status of this project.

- Small Urban Transit System-Washington County Commuter – Capital assistance for vehicles and equipment; FY 2007-2009 Total Funding \$1,423,000
- Small Urban Transit System-Washington County Commuter – Operating funds; FY 2007-2009 Total Funding \$5,100,168

Mayor Bruchey made a motion to approve the Maryland TIP Amendments as presented. Seconded by Mr. Kercheval. Unanimously approved.

- Pan Tran Public Transit Funds

Mr. Gordon commented that the Weirton Transit funding was not expended and in an effort to keep the money from lapsing the State has re-allocated these funds across the urbanized areas. Therefore, Pan Tran will receive a one-time increase of \$42,290 and must be included in TIP.

Mayor Bruchey made a motion to include the additional funds of \$42,290 in the West Virginia TIP Amendment. Seconded by Mr. Nixon. Unanimously approved.

IV. Review of Amendments to the Public Involvement Process

Mr. Gordon distributed copies of the Participation Plan for Transportation Planning for member's review and comment. As part of the Federal Review process, the MPO was required to evaluate and update the public involvement process. During the process, SAFETEA-LU, the new transportation authorization, was passed and language was included to address the new legislation. The public comment is open for 45 days before the Plan can be approved by the MPO.

The new SAFETEA-LU legislation has been expanded to include other organizations and agencies that may be or may not be traditional transportation partners (i.e. National Park Service, anyone that may be impacted by a transportation project). This will require a lot more outreach and partnerships to be developed by the MPO.

There was a brief discussion regarding advertising and the update of the MPO website as part of the public involvement process.

V. Coordinated Transit Plan for Berkeley, Jefferson and Morgan Counties Update

Mr. Gordon stated that there is a new requirement for a Coordinated Public Transit-Human Services Transportation Plan for Berkeley, Jefferson and Morgan Counties in West Virginia. The Plan will serve as a guide for coordinating the transportation services and implementing service improvements over the next four years. The Plan will also document the potential applicants for funding under the Federal Transit Administration Elderly Individuals and Individuals with Disabilities, Job Access and Reverse Commute, and New Freedom Initiative grant programs.

VI. Local Government Projects - Update

- Tabler Station Connector – Berkeley County, West Virginia

Mr. Gordon stated that in March 2006, the West Virginia DOT recommended moving the Tabler Station project from 2008 to 2010 or 2011. The MPO voted to table the TIP amendment for Tabler Station pending future discussions to move the project forward. The State continues to show this project in an out-year. Mr. Gordon stated that the MPO needs to address the tabled resolution by amending the TIP or request a meeting with the DOT to find a solution to the problem. After a brief discussion, members agreed that a meeting with the DOT to try to move the project forward as soon as possible would be in everyone's best interest.

Ms. Walker made a motion to request a meeting with the State DOT regarding the Tabler Station project. Seconded by Mr. Corliss. Unanimously approved.

VII. Director's Report

- Report of Local Government Meetings

Mr. Gordon stated that he has started meeting with the local governments in West Virginia and to date has met with the Berkeley County Planning and Engineering Departments, the City of Ranson, and the Jefferson County Planning and Engineering Departments. He hopes to begin meetings with the local governments in Washington County very soon to discuss the Technical Advisory Committee, the importance of the MPO and Air Quality issues. He will also be making a presentation to the Greater Hagerstown Committee.

- Discussion of Staffing Needs

Mr. Gordon stated that, as part of the adopted Work Program, the MPO has given authorization to advertise for two transportation planning positions. Mr. Gordon would like to begin the process to hire one person at this time. Workspace is needed for the additional staff. Ms. Baker recommended that this person should be paid through Washington County and not Region 9. Mr. Gordon stated that a job description needs to be prepared. The person should be familiar with GIS and transportation planning and the overall MPO process.

Mayor Bruchey made a motion to begin the advertising process for a transportation planner. Seconded by Mr. Corliss. Unanimously approved.

- Public Comments

Mr. James Francomano of the Eastern Panhandle Home Builders Association reported on the EPHBA Road Infrastructure Finance Workshop held on August 24, 2006 with West Virginia State Senator John Unger. The Workshop focused on discussions regarding ways to produce local revenue for local infrastructure.

- Meeting Schedule for 2007

Mr. Gordon noted that a 2007 Meeting Schedule was included in the Agenda packets. He stated that a meeting prior to the January meeting will be needed to discuss candidates for the transportation planning position and the adoption of the Participation Plan for Transportation Planning. By consensus, members agreed that the next meeting should be held the last week of November in Hagerstown. Additional information will be forthcoming.

There was a brief discussion regarding the 2007 Schedule.

Mayor Bruchey made a motion to approve the 2007 Meeting Schedule. Seconded by Mr. Corliss. Unanimously approved.

VIII. Adjournment

Vice Chairman Strauss adjourned the meeting at 8:15 p.m.

Respectfully submitted

Howard Strauss, Vice Chairman