

**MINUTES
HAGERSTOWN EASTERN PANHANDLE
METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION**

March 21, 2007

The HEPMPO held its regular meeting on Wednesday, March 21, 2007 at 1:30 p.m. in the offices of the Washington County Planning Department, Washington County Administrative Annex, 80 West Baltimore Street, Hagerstown, Maryland.

The following members were present:

- Bob Gordon, HEPMPO Director
- Jim Kercheval, Washington County Board of County Commissioners
- Mike Nixon, Maryland Dept. of Transportation
- Don Bailey, West Virginia Dept. of Transportation
- Martin E. Brubaker, City of Hagerstown
- Kevin Cerrone, Washington County Commuter
- Bill Stubblefield, Berkeley County Commission
- Kathy Maher, City of Hagerstown Planning Dept.
- Mike Thompson, Director of Planning, Washington County Planning Dept.
- Jill Baker, Washington County Planning Dept.
- Larry Smith, WV Dept. of Transportation, EEO Division
- Debra Eckard, Washington County Planning Dept.

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Kercheval called the meeting to order at 1:40 p.m.

MINUTES

Mr. Bailey made a motion to approve the minutes of the January 24, 2007 meeting as amended. Seconded by Mr. Cerrone. Unanimously approved.

NEW BUSINESS

- Review of Draft FY 2008 Unified Planning Work Program

Mr. Gordon presented the **Draft** FY 2008 Unified Planning Work Program for review and comment. The UPWP has not been formally submitted to the Federal agencies for their review. The UPWP has been developed to incorporate the planning requirements of SAFETEA-LU. Mr. Gordon provided a brief summary of items and costs included in the UPWP as follows:

- Short Range Planning – short-range projects that will occur in the next 5-year period are identified; Budget Amount: \$20,126.
- Transportation Improvement Program – consists of the development and maintenance of the current Transportation Improvement Program; Budget Amount: \$10,662
- Traffic Data – collecting and maintaining the data that goes into the Travel Demand Model, traffic counts, census demographics, land use data, etc.; Budget Amount: \$28,304
Clarification: Mr. Gordon stated that there is a slight difference in funding between Maryland and West Virginia due to additional money for traffic counting activities for Washington County through interns.
- GIS and Traffic Modeling – Implementation of GIS specifically for the MPO; Budget Amount: \$49,454

Comment: Currently, there is no GIS database for West Virginia. The proposed budget amount includes an additional staff person for GIS development. The data sources available would be incorporated into the database and then updated for the MPO's purposes.

- Long Range Transportation Planning – Implementation of adopted Long Range Transportation Plan; Budget Amount: \$31,116
- Service – Provide data and information to other governmental agencies, private operations and general public concerning transportation related planning; Budget Amount: \$24,860
- Air Quality/Conformity – Review TIP amendments and determine if an air quality analysis is necessary; Budget Amount: \$12,140

Comment: This item may require consultant services from time to time because the MPO does not have the in-house expertise or technology to address the modeling required for this activity.

- Mass Transit Planning – Work with Federal transit programs and local transit providers to provide transit planning activities to assist Pan Tran in West Virginia and the Washington County Commuter in Maryland; Budget Amount: \$49,431

Comment: The MPO is currently in the process of developing an RFP to help the Washington County Commuter system to prepare a site location study for a transfer point location.

- Special Studies – Addresses specific transportation issues that need further study and analysis. However, no specific study has been planned at this time. Budget Amount: \$6,232
- Program Administration – Manage the transportation planning process and coordinate transportation planning activities with Federal, State and local government representatives. Budget Amount: \$106,754

Mr. Gordon noted that *Table B – Estimated Person Hours by Task* represents three full-time staff members that we do not have currently. Estimated salaries are used and include \$45,000 for the transportation planner and \$35,000 for the GIS Technician. The MPO coordinator salary includes a 3-percent increase in the current salary; however, the MPO would need to make the decision regarding any increases in salary. Mr. Gordon recommended a performance review process should be established.

The Program is currently going through the public review process and Mr. Gordon anticipates formal adoption of the UPWP document in May or June. Any changes or comments should be forwarded to Mr. Gordon as soon as possible.

Comments: Mr. Brubaker noted that Table C does not correlate with Appendix C and should be re-evaluated for accuracy. Mr. Stubblefield concurred with Mr. Brubaker's comment. Mr. Gordon stated that these items would be checked.

- Review of Draft FY 2008-2010 Transportation Improvement Program

Mr. Gordon presented the **Draft** FY 2008-2010 Transportation Improvements Program for review and comment. Comments from the Federal and State agencies will be incorporated into the document as they are received. He stated that the TIP's are segregated by County. Page 10 lists the Washington County projects and a map will be included. The Washington County projects, as listed, are in the current TIP for 2008. Mr. Nixon stated that a list of projects for Maryland would not be available until August or September because the compilation of the six-year capital document is not started until that time for presentation to the State legislature. An amendment would be required for the Maryland section when the Capital Improvement Program is provided. Funding amounts for the Washington County Transit projects are needed. Specific project names for West Virginia projects are also needed.

- FY 2006-2008 TIP Amendment - Maryland

Mr. Nixon presented for review and approval a TIP Amendment for Project Code W2000-6, Safety & Spot Improvements for the following identified projects: US 11 @ Englewood Road (CO FY 07), MD 65 from Taylor's Landing to north of MD 68 (CO FY 07), Wilson Boulevard @ CSX (CO FY 07), I-81 @ I-70 (PE FY 07), and various geometric improvements (CO FY 07). The Biennial Element FY 07 construction costs have increased from \$3,400,000 to \$3,800,000. An SRTS (Safe Routes to School) funding category has been added.

Mr. Gordon stated that the Technical Advisory Committee reviewed the Amendment at their meeting and recommended approval.

Mr. Brubaker made a motion to amend the TIP Amendment for FY 07. Seconded by Mr. Stubblefield. Unanimously approved.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

- Update of Coordinated Transit Plan for Eastern Panhandle

Mr. Gordon stated that a Coordinated Human Transportation Services Plan has been developed for Berkeley, Jefferson and Morgan Counties utilizing Federal Transit Planning funds for Berkeley and Jefferson Counties and Region 9 grant funding for Morgan County. Copies are available for public review and comment at this time. Resolution No. 07-08 must be adopted after the public comment period has ended on March 28, 2007. Mr. Gordon requested the MPO to authorize a telephone vote to adopt and sign the Resolution after the public review period has closed.

Mr. Stubblefield noted that specific tasks were not defined in the Plan. Mr. Gordon stated that the new SAFETEA-LU law requires that anyone receiving Section 5310 (elderly individuals or individuals with disabilities), 5316 (job access and reverse commute funding) or 5317 (New Creative Freedom Initiative) funding must meet specific requirements and must be part of a regional coordinated transportation planning process. Also, in urbanized areas where Metropolitan Planning Organizations exist, a Coordinated Human Services Transportation Plan must be developed as part of the MPO planning process. If an MPO does not exist, a Regional Plan must be developed. In the State of West Virginia, the Department of Transportation, Division of Public Transit decided to provide a \$5,000 per county allotment to each Regional Planning and Development Council to conduct the planning process for that particular county in the rural areas outside the MPO boundaries. Berkeley and Jefferson Counties were covered under MPO requirement for this Plan and Morgan County received \$5,000 from Region 9 to develop their Plan; however, the funding was not enough to develop the Plan. Therefore, the MPO consolidated the funds and developed a Plan that met the deadline of December 31, 2006. A consultant was hired to meet the deadline so agencies could apply for funding.

Mr. Gordon expressed his concern that once the Plan was finished, there is no one to implement it. He recommended organizing a committee from the eligible organizational agencies to implement the Plan with the oversight of the MPO and Region 9. There was a brief discussion regarding this recommendation.

Mr. Stubblefield made a motion to postpone official approval of the Resolution until the public comment period has ended and to authorize Mr. Gordon to conduct a telephone or e-mail vote with members of the MPO to adopt and sign the Resolution prior to March 29, 2007. Seconded by Mr. Cerrone. Unanimously approved.

- Appointment of Air Quality Conformity Review Committee

Mr. Gordon stated that a review committee is required to review each new TIP project on any new Long Range Transportation project to make a determination if it is a regionally significant project

and would impact air quality and to what level. He presented for review and recommendation for membership on the Air Quality Conformity Review Committee the following list of candidates: Howard Simons, MDOT; Don Bailey, WVDOT; Brian Hug, MD Dept. of the Environment; Fred Durham, WV Dept. of the Environment; Mike Ball, Region 9; Jill Baker, Washington County; Martin Koch, Region 3 EPA Committee; a member of the Federal Highway Agency; and a member of the Federal Transit Authority. This committee will review all transportation projects and amendments to the TIP's for air quality conformity determination.

There was a brief discussion regarding issues that would be discussed and approved by the Air Quality Conformity Review Committee. The discussion focused on the types of projects that would add capacity or would improve current air quality issues in specific areas. Mr. Kercheval made an inquiry regarding credits from projects that would improve air quality.

Mr. Nixon made a motion to approve the Air Quality Conformity Review Committee as presented. Seconded by Mr. Bailey. Unanimously approved.

- Hiring of Staff

Mr. Gordon stated that the MPO has advertised for a transportation planner on three separate occasions. To date, no one has been hired. He asked for approval to advertise again in April and May. Mr. Gordon believes if staff is not hired in the near future, the MPO needs to consider hiring a consultant early in the next fiscal year. By consensus, the MPO approved Mr. Gordon's request to re-advertise for a transportation planner and a GIS technician.

OTHER BUSINESS

- Citizen Comments

None.

Mr. Kercheval stated that he received a letter from a County Commissioner in Cumberland County, Pennsylvania regarding the establishment of a planning group to review the I-81 project. Five or six counties in Pennsylvania have contacted the Pennsylvania Governor and the Secretary of Transportation indicating their interest in being a part of the planning process for improvements to I-81. Washington County is the only county in Maryland that I-81 runs through. Mr. Kercheval stated that the BOCC is preparing a letter supporting the establishment of a planning group. Mr. Stubblefield stated that West Virginia received the same letter.

Mr. Gordon noted that there is a similar project proposed for I-70 and I-270 and he would be attending a meeting regarding that project. Mr. Kercheval asked him to keep the BOCC informed of the status of that meeting.

- Future Meeting Schedule

The next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, May 16, 2007 at 1:30 p.m. in Martinsburg.

ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Nixon made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 2:55 p.m. So ordered.

Respectfully submitted,

Robert S. Gordon, Director

RSG/dse