

**MINUTES  
HAGERSTOWN EASTERN PANHANDLE  
METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION**

**September 19, 2007**

The HEPMPO held its regular meeting on Wednesday, September 19, 2007 at 1:30 p.m. in the Library of the West Virginia University Health Sciences Building, 2500 Foundation Way, Martinsburg, West Virginia.

**CALL TO ORDER**

Chairman Kercheval called the meeting to order at 1:30 p.m. The following members and Staff were present:

- Jim Kercheval, Washington County Board of County Commissioners
- Bob Gordon, HEPMPO Director
- Mike Nixon, Maryland Dept. of Transportation
- Don Bailey, West Virginia Dept. of Transportation
- Martin E. Brubaker, City of Hagerstown
- Bill Stubblefield, Berkeley County Commission
- Mark Baldwin, City of Hagerstown
- Lynn Walker, Pan Tran
- Kevin Cerrone, Washington County Commuter
- Larry Smith, West Virginia Dept. of Transportation/DOH
- Carol Crabtree, Region 9
- Greg Corliss, Jefferson County Commissioners
- Brien Poffenberger, Washington County Chamber of Commerce
- Jill Baker, Washington County Planning Department
- Mike Thompson, Washington County Planning Department
- Debra Eckard, Washington County Planning Department

**MINUTES**

Mr. Brubaker made a motion to approve the minutes of the May 16, 2007 and June 6, 2007 meetings as presented. Seconded by Mr. Stubblefield. Unanimously approved.

**NEW BUSINESS**

**- Election of Officers**

Mr. Stubblefield made a motion to keep the present officers, Mr. Jim Kercheval as Chairman and Mr. Greg Corliss as Vice-Chairman. Seconded by Mr. Brubaker. Unanimously approved.

**- TIP Amendments - Maryland**

Mr. Gordon presented for review and approval the Maryland Department of Transportation's TIP Amendments to the FY 2008-2011 TIP. Mr. Nixon presented the following TIP projects:

- Project #W2006-5 – Safety and Spot Improvements Areawide – Provides localized improvement to address safety issues on state roads – Increase from \$1 million to \$3,550,000. Mr. Nixon identified the following specific project:
  - US Route 11 from Bower Avenue to Noland Drive (safety improvements and resurfacing)

**Discussion:** Mr. Kercheval asked if the project included lane changes (extra turning lanes) or design changes. Mr. Nixon said he would verify what is included in the project. Mr. Kercheval asked Mr. Nixon to provide more details on projects that are important to Washington County.

- Project #W-2006-04 – Resurface and Rehabilitation Areawide – Provides periodic resurfacing and upgrade of auxiliary features on state roads – Increase from \$1.5 million to \$8.850,000. Specific projects include:
  - Maryland 65 from I-70 north of Fourth Street - \$1.4 million
  - I-81 from West Virginia to Halfway Boulevard - \$5.1 million
  - County-wide mill and patch – routine small sections that have not been identified at this point - \$2.1 million
- Project #W2007-01 – US 40 and Edgewood Drive Intersection Improvements – Upgrade intersection – Increase from \$5.8 million to \$7.8 million in FY 2008; Funded 50% State funds and 50% County funds

**Discussion:** Mr. Kercheval noted that the County has had discussions with the State regarding reductions in overhead as part of the program costs for this project. He asked if those figures are reflected in the project costs. Mr. Nixon stated he would check on this issue.

- Project #2007-02 – Western MD Rail to Trail Phase IV – Construct bicycle/pedestrian trail from Big Pool to Pearre Station – Move construction phase of \$4.9 million from FY 2008 to FY 2009
- New Project - I-70 – Eisenhower Memorial Highway – Replace Bridges 213403 and 213404 over Black Road Road - \$6.5 million in FY 2008

**Discussion:** Mr. Brubaker asked if the bridges are being built as two lanes with the potential for additional lanes in the future. Mr. Nixon stated the bridges are being reconstructed as they currently exist; however, he believes they will be constructed so an additional lane may be added in the future. He stated he would provide additional information at a later time. Mr. Kercheval stated that the County would be very interested in having the option for an additional lane.

- New Project – I-70 Thermal Impact Reduction - Replacement of 1.9 miles of concrete lining of highway ditches along I-70 beginning at MD 66 interchange - \$875,000 FY 2008

Mr. Nixon recommended tabling a vote on these Amendments until further information can be obtained to answer the questions asked today.

Mr. Gordon stated that the projects presented by Mr. Nixon have been advertised and a resolution has been adopted to make the amendment to the TIP. Approval from the Air Quality Conformity Committee will be required.

**Motion and Vote:** Mr. Brubaker made a motion to table the Amendments until the requested information has been obtained by the MPO. Seconded by Mr. Nixon. Unanimously approved.

#### **- TIP Amendments - West Virginia**

Mr. Gordon stated that West Virginia's State Transportation Improvement Program is not in compliance and must be addressed. As a result, the program that was submitted and is part of the MPO's current TIP must be adjusted. Mr. Gordon noted that the construction of the Tabler Station project has been moved from 2010 to 2011. This change will ultimately require an air quality conformity determination for the Tabler Station project. Mr. Gordon noted the following projects for Berkeley County have been removed from the TIP:

- West Virginia 45/Woodberry Avenue signal – obligated
- Beddington Railroad Crossing – obligated
- Martinsburg Mall entrance road resurfacing
- West Virginia 51 from Inwood to Middleway resurfacing

Mr. Gordon listed the following projects that will be removed from the TIP for Jefferson County:

- Opequon Creek Middleway – resurfacing and installation of guardrail
- Charles Town/Harpers Ferry (County Route 26 to south of County Route 340 over 17) – resurfacing project

Mr. Gordon noted that the Raleigh Street project has not changed except for a funding increase from \$2 million to \$2.5 million for design.

There was a brief discussion regarding the Tabler Station project. Mr. Gordon noted there are several phases for the Tabler Station project. The connector right-of-way is being moved from FY 2010 to FY 2008. The Tabler Station connector construction is proposed to be moved from FY 2010 at an estimated cost of \$9 million to FY 2011 at an estimated cost of \$10.4 million. The Tabler Station access road is currently shown in FY 2011 at an estimated cost of \$3.8 million and will stay in the same year.

Mr. Gordon stated that all changes to the TIP must be advertised and open for public comment for a period of 30 days.

Mr. Baldwin asked why the STIP was not in compliance with the State. Mr. Bailey stated that the Federal Highway Administration did not consider the costs in the program realistic. The current administration is taking a more fiscally constrained approach to projects. Many MPOs in the State of West Virginia were asked to revise their State Highway programs. Mr. Gordon and Ms. Baker stated they would compile a complete list of the projects that are being removed and projects that are being added to the TIP.

Mr. Stubblefield asked how to file an appeal with regard to the Tabler Station project being moved from FY 2010 to FY 2011. Mr. Gordon recommended that the MPO could write a letter to the State of West Virginia to endorse keeping the Tabler Station project in FY 2010. Mr. Kercheval stated that he would support the recommendation if the West Virginia partners in the MPO feel very strongly about this project being moved. Mr. Stubblefield noted they would not be asking to have the project moved up but to keep it in FY 2010. Mr. Gordon stated that if the State DOT would approve the request, it would alleviate the need for the air quality conformity determination and would save the MPO money. Mr. Stubblefield stated that the Berkeley County Commissioners could also write a letter to the State.

**Motion and Vote:** Mr. Stubblefield made a motion to request the MPO to write a letter to the West Virginia Department of Transportation stressing the importance of keeping the Tabler Station project in FY 2010 and alleviating the need for an air quality conformity determination that would save the MPO a considerable amount of money. Seconded by Ms. Walker. Unanimously approved.

#### **- Adoption of the Long Range Transportation Plan Amendment**

Mr. Gordon presented for approval the Long Range Transportation Plan Amendment. The consultant provided a Draft of the LRTP in June. Revisions were needed and Mr. Gordon contacted the consultant to make the changes. The revisions have been made and the Plan has been advertised and made available for public comment for 30 days. The document provides the GAP Analysis that reflects the changes from SAFETEA-LU transportation administration to TEA-21 and identifies the differences. The issues addressed in the Plan are as follows:

- Safety
- Security
- Environmental Mitigation
- Bicycle and Pedestrian Walkways
- Transportation Operations
- Goods Movement

The document must be adopted by resolution to serve as a formal addendum to the Long Range Transportation Plan, which meets the current Federal requirements and brings the MPO into compliance so the Plan will not lapse. These issues will be re-evaluated in two years when the Plan is updated.

Mr. Nixon made a motion to approve the Resolution to adopt the addendum to the Long Range Transportation Plan. Seconded by Mr. Brubaker. Unanimously approved.

#### **- Transfer Point Relocation Study**

Mr. Gordon presented for review and approval the Transfer Point Relocation Study for the Washington County Commuter. Mr. Nixon stated that a study to move the transfer point from the downtown area of Hagerstown has been funded through State funds using a consultant on retainer with the Maryland DOT. The total cost of the study will be \$56,205. Mr. Cerrone stated that a final document should be ready by the end of the calendar year. He suggested that the consultant could attend the next meeting of the MPO to provide an update on the study.

#### **- Adoption of FY 2008 UPWP Amendments**

Mr. Nixon stated he has asked Mr. Gordon to write the Transfer Point Relocation project as a "Task" in the Unified Planning Work Program even though it is not funded through the usual channels. He believes the project needs to be in the UPWP because the Federal Transit Administration looks favorably on transit issues.

Mr. Brubaker made a motion to approve the adoption of the resolution to amend the UPWP Task No. 6500 to add narrative as presented and add a 6501 subcategory to address the Washington County Commuter Study. Seconded by Mr. Cerrone. Unanimously approved.

### **DIRECTOR'S REPORT**

#### **- Announcements**

Mr. Gordon announced that the MPO will be moving its offices to 33 West Washington Street, 4<sup>th</sup> Floor, Hagerstown. The new space could accommodate 5 staff members.

Mr. Gordon stated that he attended the I-81 Coalition meeting held in Carlisle, Pennsylvania last week. Mr. Rich Ravino of Cumberland County, Penna. organized the conference, which was well attended by representatives from six states ranging from Tennessee to New York. Representatives from several MPOs, regional councils, the rail industry, trucking industry, the environmental profession, and special interest groups were in attendance. The Executive Director from the I-95 Coalition in Washington, DC was in attendance and made two presentations with regard to their successes and funding issues. There was a unanimous consensus to establish a formal coalition and a committee was established that was comprised of a representative from each state, two MPOs, the rail industry and the freight industry. Common problems and concerns along the I-81 corridor will be discussed. Mr. Gordon noted that the MD DOT is withholding any commitments to the coalition pending the decision of the Secretary of Transportation. Mr. Gordon stated that he has been asked to serve on the committee.

Mr. Kercheval expressed his opinion that the coalition is a good idea and helps to move funding for projects forward.

#### **- RFP – Conformity and Planning Services**

Mr. Gordon stated that an RFP will be developed for advertisement to hire a consultant on retainer to help with air quality conformity issues. He also discussed the potential to hire a consultant to help other planning services such as the Long Range Transportation Plan since attempts to hire personnel has been unsuccessful.

Mr. Baldwin made a motion to authorize Mr. Gordon to develop an RFP to hire a consultant to address air quality conformity issues and planning services. Seconded by Ms. Walker. Unanimously approved.

**- RFP – PanTran Planning Services**

Mr. Gordon stated that work has begun on the RFP for PanTran Planning Services that will be advertised in the near future. There is currently \$45,000 in Section 5307 funds for West Virginia Transit planning. The funds will lapse at the end of this fiscal year. A consultant is needed to help establish the GIS database that will ultimately provide a geographic file format and hardcopy maps. PanTran will publish them on the web page and prepare route maps for their service areas.

Mr. Cerrone made a motion to authorize Mr. Gordon to develop an RFP to hire a consultant for the PanTran Planning services. Seconded by Ms. Walker. Unanimously approved.

**- Quarterly Progress Report**

Mr. Gordon noted that the 4<sup>th</sup> Quarter Progress Report was sent to each member. The Report describes the work performed during the fourth quarter of FY 2007.

**- Personnel Issues**

Mr. Gordon reported that both candidates that were interviewed in June and offered positions declined the offers presented to them. Mr. Gordon believes that the salary being offered is not adequate. He suggested that the money allocated for two positions should be combined and used for one employee. Mr. Gordon stated that an organizational change might be necessary since the MPO is moving to a separate office. There was a brief discussion with regard to effectively combining the positions and the funds available for personnel. Mr. Gordon noted that there could be an internal problem if the MPO hires a planner for a higher starting salary than Washington County can hire a planner since technically this person would be a Washington County employee. Mr. Kercheval stated there has been some concern with the Washington County Human Resources Department with regard to benefits for MPO personnel. He noted there are other agencies that closely work with the County that have expressed an interest in setting up a benefits program through the County and have been unable to do so. Further discussions with the Human Resources Department and the Board of County Commissioners will be required to settle these issues. Mr. Gordon stated these issues need to be resolved prior to re-advertisement for personnel.

There was a brief discussion about the MPO being a stand-alone organizational structure. The cost of health benefits would be very costly. There was also some discussion that the MPO's salary and benefits could be run through Region IX.

**OTHER BUSINESS**

**- Future Meetings**

The next meeting was tentatively scheduled for Wednesday, October 24, 2007 at 1:30 p.m. at the Health Sciences Building, depending upon availability of the room.

**ADJOURNMENT**

Ms. Walker made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 3:05 p.m. Seconded by Mr. Baldwin. So ordered.

Respectfully submitted,

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Robert S. Gordon, Director