

**HAGERSTOWN/EASTERN PANHANDLE
METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION
INTERSTATE COUNCIL
May 18, 2022**

The Hagerstown/Eastern Panhandle Metropolitan Planning Organization Interstate Council held a meeting on Wednesday, May 18, 2022 at 1:30 p.m. both in person [at the Eastern Panhandle Regional Airport in Martinsburg, WV] and via tele-conference call. MD and WV Open Governmental Meetings Acts and HEPMPO Bylaws permit virtual only meetings of our committees and boards provided members can hear and be heard by each other and by any media or members of the public.

CALL TO ORDER

The Chairman called the meeting to order at 1:30 p.m.

ROLL CALL

The following were in attendance: Kevin Cerrone, Chairman, Washington County Transit; Elaine Bartoldson, Vice-Chair, EPTA; Matt Mullenax, HEPMPO Executive Director; Tyson Byrne, MDOT; Rachel Snavelly, Region IX; Jim Bender, City of Hagerstown; Jill Baker, Washington County Dept. of Planning & Zoning; Brian Carr, WV DOH; Jim Barnhart, Berkeley County Council; Pam Mohn, Washington County Division of Engineering; and Steve Stolipher, Jefferson County Commission.

Also present were: Kevin Sullivan, Evan Snyder and Perry Su, WV DOH; Elizabeth Ricketts, Charles Town Council; Chris Strovel; and Emily Keffer, The Journal.

MINUTES

Motion and Vote: Mr. Barnhart made a motion to approve the minutes of the March 16, 2022 meeting as presented. The motion was seconded by Mr. Stolipher and unanimously approved.

NEW BUSINESS

-TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM

Draft FY 2023-2026 Transportation Improvement Program [Resolution 2022-13]

Mr. Mullenax announced that staff has completed the draft FY 2023-2026 Transportation Improvement Program. The draft was advertised for public comment from April 16 to May 17. Physical copies of the draft were placed in the libraries in each of the County seats. FHWA-MD submitted one comment seeking to have federal aid functional class for projects identified in the appendix, which staff has addressed and FHWA has approved. No other public comments were received. The Technical Advisory Committee and Staff recommend approval of the TIP as presented.

Motion and Vote: Mr. Stolipher made a motion to approve the FY 2023-2026 TIP [Resolution 2022-13] as presented. The motion was seconded by Ms. Bartoldson and unanimously approved.

-LONG RANGE TRANSPORTATION PLAN

Long Range Transportation Plan Update [Resolution 2022-14]

Mr. Mullenax reported that staff and the consultants have completed the draft Direction 2050 Long Range Transportation Plan. The draft Plan was placed in the libraries in each of the County seats and advertised for public comment from April 16 to May 17. Three public meetings were held in May (Ranson, Martinsburg and Hagerstown) to review the draft Plan and project lists. A letter was sent to all resource

agencies and a project StoryMap was developed. Staff has been tracking comments and the consultants will address these comments in the Plan's final version.

Mr. Jim Frazier of Michael Baker International provided a brief presentation of the Plan's highlights. The Plan meets all Federal guidelines, is based on the Transportation Performance Measure principles, and meets all BIL funding and investment strategies. The Plan identifies goals and supporting objectives to meet these goals.

Mr. Frazier noted there were 650 participants that completed our surveys; 500 on-line responses and 150 responses from the Intercept surveys. Priorities cited were roadway congestion, safety, environmental issues, land use and economic prosperity. He briefly reviewed other responses that were received during the survey. Transportation needs including asset management, transit and freight, active transportation, etc. were also discussed in the Plan. Mr. Frazier discussed employment opportunities and projected populations. He discussed funding and which projects could be funded for both Maryland and West Virginia.

The Technical Advisory Committee as well as staff recommend approval of the LRTP as presented.

Motion and Vote: Ms. Snively made a motion to approve the Long Range Transportation Plan [Resolution 2022-14] as presented. The motion was seconded by Ms. Mohn and unanimously approved.

Dual Highway Speed Management Study

Mr. Mullenax announced that the draft Study is currently out for public comment, which will conclude on May 30th. A public meeting is scheduled for May 26 at the Washington County Free Library in Hagerstown. The Study includes options to improve traffic safety for all road users along the Dual Highway between Cannon Avenue and Cleveland Avenue. Improvements such as additional lighting and sidewalk extensions and a new signalized mid-block crossing have been proposed. Staff and the consultants have worked closely with MDOT SHA and the City of Hagerstown to develop this draft. Public comment will be incorporated into the final version of the Study.

EPTA Commuter Bus Service Implementation Plan

Mr. Mullenax stated that the draft Plan is out for public comment and will conclude on May 30th. A public meeting will be held on May 19th at EPTA offices. The Plan includes proposed times, operational procedures and stops for a proposed commuter bus service from the Eastern Panhandle to Ashburn, VA. There is a draft MOU for EPTA's bus bay location with Loudoun County at the Ashburn Metro Station South Pavilion. Staff and the consultants have worked closely with both the public and private partners to develop this Plan. All public comment will be incorporated into the Plan's final version.

Mr. Mullenax also noted that the Loudoun County Board of Supervisors are moving forward with a study to investigate including commuter options from north and west of Loudoun County, which would include Berkeley and Jefferson Counties.

Regional Freight Plan

Mr. Mullenax explained that one of the top future study priorities of the 2050 LRTP is to develop the area's first Regional Freight Plan. With the passage of the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, travel patterns associated with e-purchasing and the on-going development of new warehouses/distribution centers, this Plan is of the utmost importance. A scope of work has been presented by our consultants who will develop a regional freight profile, regional freight economic analysis and an action plan. The proposed Plan will especially aid the MPO in future Critical Urban Freight Corridor designations. The Technical Advisory

Committee and staff have reviewed the scope of work, which meets the proposed FY 2023 budget, and recommend approval.

Motion and Vote: Ms. Bartoldson made a motion to approve the Regional Freight Plan scope of work as presented contingent upon approval of the FY 2023 UPWP. The motion was seconded by Ms. Baker and unanimously approved.

Regional Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan

Mr. Mullenax stated that another top priority of the 2050 LRTP is to update the 2016 Regional Bicycle Plan. This update will incorporate key trends and potential strategies for enhancing biking and walking in our region. The Plan itself will focus on bicycle/pedestrian demand and facilities, safety concerns, equity, education, policies and funding opportunities. Development of this Plan will also fulfill the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law's requirement that MPO's expend 2.5% of their annual budget on "Complete Streets" planning activities. The Technical Advisory Committee and staff have reviewed the scope of work, which meets the proposed FY 2023 budget, and recommend approval.

Motion and Vote: Mr. Bender made a motion to approve the Regional Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan scope of work as presented contingent upon approval of the FY 2023 UPWP. The motion was seconded by Mr. Byrne and unanimously approved.

HEPMPO Website Upgrade

Mr. Mullenax explained that during the development of our Title VI Plan last year, it became apparent that our current website needs to be upgraded to meet all ADA and Web Content Accessibility Guidelines. The site search needs upgraded and current website experience on mobile/tablet needs improved. The consultant will setup Google analytics and configure all 301 redirects for the website. The Technical Advisory Committee and staff have reviewed the scope of work, which meets the proposed FY 2023 budget, and recommend approval.

Motion and Vote: Ms. Baker made a motion to approve the HEPMPO Website Upgrade scope of work as presented contingent upon approval of the FY 2023 UPWP. The motion was seconded by Ms. Mohn and unanimously approved.

-ORGANIZATIONAL ADMINISTRATION

Draft FY 2023 UPWP [Resolution 2022-15]

Mr. Mullenax stated that the Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) contains the proposed budget and work program for the next fiscal year. There will be three major plans we will be focusing on in FY 2023: the Regional Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan, the Regional Freight Plan, and an upgrade to the HEPMPO's website. The draft UPWP was presented at our March 16th meeting and was advertised for public comment from April 16th to May 17th. No public comments were received. The Technical Advisory Committee and Staff recommend approval of the FY 2023 UPWP as presented.

Motion and Vote: Mr. Byrne made a motion to approve the FY 2023 Unified Planning Work Program [Resolution 2022-15] as presented. The motion was seconded by Ms. Bartoldson and unanimously approved.

Public Participation Plan Update [Resolution 2022-16]

Mr. Mullenax noted that our current PPP was updated and approved in May 2019. The Plan recommends a review of our procedures every three years. Staff presented an updated draft of the Plan at the March 16th meeting. Updates were made to photos, websites, dates and federal legislation references as well as adding housing authorities to our resource agency list per the BIL. The draft PPP was advertised for public comment from April 1st to May 15th; no public comments were received. The Technical Advisory Committee and Staff recommend approval of the Public Participation Plan as presented.

Motion and Vote: Mr. Bender made a motion to approve the Public Participation Plan [Resolution 2022-16] as presented. The motion was seconded by Ms. Mohn and unanimously approved.

Interstate Council Alternate Designation

Mr. Mullenax explained that the MPO's Bylaws, Article II, Section 8, provide the ability and process for an Interstate Council member to appoint an alternate to serve on the Council in their stead. Mayor Duke Pierson (City of Ranson) has requested, in writing, that Mr. Bob Anderson, serve as his alternate. As stated in the By-laws, a vote of the Interstate Council is required to accept this request.

Motion and Vote: Mr. Stolipher made a motion to accept Mr. Bob Anderson as Mayor Duke Pierson's alternate on the Interstate Council. The motion was seconded by Ms. Baker and unanimously approved.

Financial Status Update

Ms. Baker reported that we have expended approximately 80% of our current budget. The majority of expenses were for the Long Range Transportation Plan, special studies and administrative costs. We are currently on task and on budget.

Director's Report

Mr. Mullenax gave a brief update on the following:

- The 2022 WVDOT Planning Conference was held on April 26 – 28 at Cacapon State Park and was very successful.
- The MPO has been partnering with MDOT and Washington County to submit an INFRA grant as well as a Rural grant for the Phase II, I-81 widening project. Staff has been providing supporting information from the TISMO study and previous safety analyses. The grant application is due on May 23rd.
- A RAISE grant was submitted by the WVDOT for improvements along WV 51 on the west end of Charles Town.
- The MPO continues to support EPTA with its Transit Center Project. A project kick-off meeting was recently held and a detailed facilities meeting will be held on Monday, May 23rd.
- The US 340/Augustine Avenue interchange in Jefferson County is being examined for possible major geometric improvements and upgrades. The WVDOH Design Division is looking at alternatives as they develop a preliminary engineering study.
- The MPO is working with the City of Ranson to develop safety improvements at some of the city intersections. A safety analysis shows the crash rate at WV 9 and Flowing Springs connector road is higher than the State average. WVDOT is programming improvements on site, securing new lighting and adding a new acceleration lane.
- A hiring timeline for a new transportation planner has been set. The position will be advertised for 30 days, interviews will be conducted at the end of June, references will be checked, an offer will be made and we are hoping to have a new planner by August 1st.

-EXECUTIVE SESSION

To discuss personnel matters that concern one or more specific individuals.

-OTHER BUSINESS

Staff Evaluations

Following the Executive Session, Mr. Cerrone stated that the Interstate Council is very pleased with Mr. Mullenax's continued outstanding performance and is recommending a 3.5% pay increase starting July 1, 2022.

Motion and Vote: Ms. Snively made a motion to grant Mr. Mullenax a 3.5% salary increase beginning July 1, 2022. The motion was seconded by Ms. Bartoldson and unanimously approved.

Public Comment

There were no citizens present.

Future Meetings

The next scheduled meeting of the Interstate Council is Wednesday, August 17, 2022 at 1:30 p.m. This meeting will be held in person, with a call-in option, at the Eastern West Virginia Regional Airport in Martinsburg, WV.

-ADJOURNMENT

Ms. Baker made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 3:05 p.m. and was so ordered by the Chairman.

Respectfully submitted,



Kevin Cerrone, Chairman

