

Meeting Minutes

**Salisbury/Wicomico Metropolitan Planning Organization (S/WMPO)
MPO Council
April 9, 2015**

**Government Office Building
Council Chambers Room #301
125 N. Division Street
Salisbury, MD**

Attendees:

S/WMPO Council members:

Matthew Creamer, Chair, Wicomico County Council Administrator
Rick Konrad, Wicomico County Executive's Office
John Hall, Wicomico County Council
Tom Stevenson, City of Salisbury Administrator
Laura Mitchell, Alternate, City of Salisbury Council Vice-President
Mike Pennington, TCCLES
Mike Nixon, Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT)

Ex-Officio members:

Drew Boyce, Delaware Department of Transportation (DelDOT)
Peter Sotherland, Maryland State Highway Administration (SHA)

Others:

Bobbie Geier, DelDOT
Josh Thomas, DelDOT
Mike DuRoss, DelDOT
Todd Lawson, Sussex County Administrator
Hal Godwin, Sussex County Deputy Administrator
Dolores Slatcher, City of Seaford Administrator
Berley Mears, City of Seaford Public Works Director
Jay Parker, Lower Eastern Shore Heritage Council (LESHC)
Lisa Ludwig, Lower Eastern Shore Heritage Council (LESHC)
Frank Rowe, Eastern Shore Regional GIS Cooperative (ESRGC)
Keith Hall, S/WMPO Staff

Introduction

Mr. Creamer opened the meeting at 1:00 P.M. and welcomed everyone, which was followed by introductions of the S/WMPO Council members, Staff, and members of the audience.

Minutes

The first item of business was the approval of minutes from the February 19, 2015, Council meeting. At the request of Mr. Keith Hall, Mr. Creamer tabled a vote on the minutes until the next MPO Council meeting.

Moment of Observation

Mr. Creamer observed the passing of Michael Kirkpatrick. He noted Mr. Kirkpatrick served as DelDOT's representative on the S/WMPO's Technical Advisory Committee, which his years of service and input was tremendously appreciated. On behalf of the Organization, Mr. Creamer sends his respects to Mr. Kirkpatrick's family.

Presentation – Scenic Byways Planning Initiative

Jay Parker (LESHC), Lisa Ludwig (LESHC), and Frank Rowe (ESRGC)

Mr. Parker gave an overview of the Maryland Heritage Areas Program and their mission to preserve, promote and protect the heritage and historic properties in the Somerset, Wicomico, and Worcester counties. He noted the LESHC is a business development organization with a goal of encouraging heritage tourism and ensure a visitor friendly environment for the region. LESHC is the manager of the Chesapeake Country, Blue Crab, and Cape to Cape Scenic Byways. To assist with achieving LESHC's goals for increasing heritage tourism along the three (3) scenic byways in the region, a partnership amongst SHA, LESHC, ESRGC, and the S/WMPO has been established to prepare a web and mobile based scenic byways mapping application. Upon completion, the application will provide the end-user with the ability to quickly identify historically significant heritage and cultural sites along and in proximity to a scenic byway. Moreover, information regarding recreational amenities, including, but not limited to pedestrian and cyclist paths / trails, public access site to waterways, and greenways will be available.

Mr. Rowe, ESRGC, demonstrated a prototype example of the proposed web and mobile based applications. The focus of the presentation was to demonstrate the functionality of the site. Ms. Ludwig mentioned each site or amenity located along the scenic byway will be populated with a variety of attribute data. As designed, LESHC will have the capability to update the web and mobile based applications. Mr. Creamer emphasized the importance and role of planning to achieve a comprehensive and connected network of scenic byways extending through multiple jurisdictions and / or states. Mr. Drew Boyce will provide contact information for the Scenic Byways Coordinator for Delaware, Andy Nicol.

Presentation – Delmarva Freight Plan

Michael DuRoss and Bobbie Geier (DelDOT)

Ms. Geier provided an introduction for the Delmarva Freight Plan. She noted the Plan was recently completed by DelDOT. Through extensive data collection and modeling efforts, the Plan affords transportation planners the ability to conduct "what if" scenarios. The regional planning steering committee for this initiative included: representatives from the Maryland, Delaware, and Virginia Departments of Transportation; WILMAPCO; Dover/Kent County MPO; and the S/WMPO.

Mr. DuRoss gave an overview of the major highlights of the Delmarva Freight Plan, which included evaluation and analysis of the economics of freight, commodity flows, regional transportation system, planning resources, trends and needs, scenario planning, and preparation of the freight action plan. An extensive public participation program including: public workshops; conferences; freight summits; web-based surveys; and meetings with shippers, farmers, and the freight industry were implemented to promote stakeholder participation. The stakeholder comments were distilled into areas of opportunity (parts of system or programs and policies) to help systems or areas of existing or projected concern.

The study revealed five (5) commodity groups constitute over 70 percent of the region's truck traffic. To better understand current trends and develop models for future demand, commodity flow data was analyzed at varying geographic scales for all modes of transport. Cube Cargo software was utilized to develop estimates about future freight commodity flow (2020, 2030, and 2040), and how commodity flow may be effected by implementing improvements to any of the four modes of freight transport.

The Delmarva Freight Plan uses a scenario planning process rather than a trend analysis. The areas of concern were used to develop a constraint scenario. The analysis identified the freight carrying capacity of a barge is equivalent to 100 to 150 tractor trailer trucks; whereas, a rail car is approximately 30 to 50 tractor trailer loads. Therefore, a mode shift from waterborne freight to truck transport will result in a significant increase of truck traffic on the local and regional road network. The increase in truck traffic will degrade the level of service along roadways, which translates to increased congestion especially in major metropolitan areas. Mr. DuRoss presented a few "what-if" scenarios to understand the effects on the four modes of transportation if all currently planned projects were implemented. The results from modeling and "what-if" scenarios assist with development of performance measures designed to improve freight movements, maintain an acceptable level of service of the regional transportation network, and prioritization of planned improvements.

In an effort to spatially group and create linkages over 300 planned roadway improvements within the area, seven (7) key freight corridors were identified. Mr. DuRoss highlighted the MD 301 Corridor, which is undergoing access management improvements. Depending on the day, between 20 to 30 percent of total traffic by volume is from trucks transporting freight. When factoring by tons and dollars, this type of information provides an important connection for regional freight mobility. Access management controls and minor capacity improvements for the U.S. Route 50 Corridor are in the planning stages. The modeling has the ability to analyze the effects of projected delays on freight flows over time. The U.S. Routes 1, 13, and 113 Corridor serves as major north-south alignments for freight movements. This Corridor serves the poultry and agricultural industries and ranks highly in terms of importance of regional freight movements. Lastly, the U.S. Route 9, Delaware 16, and Maryland 404, referred to as the oil / petroleum road, provides essential east-west connections especially during the summer months.

DelDOT representatives presented the Delmarva Freight Plan to the Federal Highway Administration's (FHWA) Office of Freight Management on April 8, 2015, which received positive comments from FHWA about the extensive data efforts and scenario planning approach. A primary objective of DelDOT was to produce a MAP-21 compliant regional freight plan for Delaware. In the near future, DelDOT will be asking the S/WMPO to endorse the Plan. This

dynamic Plan will be kept current and used to support project prioritization and quantify the economic value transportation projects provide to the overall economy. Ms. Mitchell inquired about the level of public outreach in Maryland and Virginia counties. Mr. DuRoss, responded DeIDOT worked closely with MDOT and VDOT, and the Economic Development Director at Wallops Flight Facility. Ms. Geier stated the Delmarva Freight Plan was presented at the public workshops for the S/WMPO's Long Range Transportation Plan update. In addition, continuous outreach during this planning process occurred with the Delmarva Water Transport Committee and the Maryland Truckers Association. Mr. Stevenson noted the Upper Wicomico River will be dredged beginning in June and the Lower Wicomico River is scheduled tentatively for September 2016.

Presentation – MDOT Pedestrian and Cyclist

Peter Sotherland (SHA)

Mr. Sotherland provided a handout outlining different Federal and State funding programs used for funding bicycle and pedestrian improvements. The packet contained contact information for the program coordinator for each of the programs. Each grant has a local match, which the level of match varies based on the specific grant program. Mr. Sotherland proceeded with a brief description (purpose, funding, match requirements, etc.) of each of the following programs:

- ADA Retrofit;
- Sidewalk Retrofit;
- Urban Construction Fund;
- Bicycle Retrofit;
- Transportation Alternatives Program;
- Safe Routes to Schools;
- National Recreational Trails Program; and
- Federal Highway Administration's grants.

Mr. Sotherland stated SHA's Regional Planning Division seeks to work with local governments and MPOs to get local projects funded using the various State programs.

Presentation – Proposed Amendments to the S/WMPO's Prospectus and Bylaws

Keith Hall (S/WMPO Administrator)

Mr. Keith Hall stated the ongoing discussion about proposed amendments to the Bylaws are in response to the expansion of the Salisbury Urbanized Area by the U.S. Census Bureau. He emphasized, the Organization is not under any deadline to adopt the proposed amendments. The proposed amendments have been vetted by the Maryland and Delaware Departments of Transportation prior to being presented to the S/WMPO's Technical Advisory Committee and Council. As presented, the amendments have not been finalized and are only for discussion purposes.

The amendments can be categorized as grammatical (housekeeping), process related, and proposed changes to the organizational structure, including, but not limited to changes to composition and membership of the TAC and Council, quorums, and voting procedures. Mr. Keith Hall presented the significant proposed amendments for each section of the Bylaws.

Major proposed amendments to the Prospectus and Bylaws include:

- Increase Delaware representation on the S/WMPO Council proportion to their percentage of the overall population of the Urbanized Area. As proposed for consideration, the Delaware Department of Transportation, Sussex County, and the City of Seaford have been recommended to become full voting members, which would expand the S/WMPO Council to 12 voting members;
- Add language regarding the new Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) between the Maryland and Delaware Departments of Transportation;
- Delaware Department of Transportation maintains responsibility for the Air Quality Conformity Analysis requirements;
- Revise boundary descriptions of the 2010 Urbanized Area;
- Create a quorum as seven (7) voting members consisting of a majority of Maryland and Delaware Council members, five (5) and two (2), respectively;
- Include a provision for S/WMPO Council members to participate and vote via remotely (Skype, conference call, etc.) during a Council meeting. This provision is recommended to be limited to no more than one time per member in a fiscal year;
- Establish a process for electronic voting procedures for the S/WMPO Council;
- Expand Delaware representation, set limit on the number of members, and establish a quorum of nine (9) voting members of the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC). TAC recommended adding DelDOT as a voting member of TAC and Delaware Office of State Planning and Coordination as ex-officio TAC member. As proposed for discussion, the City of Seaford, Town of Laurel, DelDOT, and Sussex County will become voting members on the TAC;
- Modify date of annual work program being presented to MPO Council from May 1st to June 30th; and
- Establish protocol requiring Maryland funds to be used for Maryland projects and Delaware funds used exclusively for Delaware based projects, unless otherwise approved by the S/WMPO Council.

FY 2014 – FY 2017 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) Amendments

Mike Nixon (MDOT)

Mr. Nixon stated MDOT is requesting an amendment increasing funds to the capital assistance for Shore Transit line item contained in the S/WMPO's FY 2014 – FY 2017 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). The reason for this amendment is because the inconsistency between the schedules of TIP development compared to the Maryland Transit Administration's schedule for receiving grants from the Federal Transit Administration. As a result of the difference in schedules, MTA provides an estimate for a TIP. This estimate is adjusted when MTA receives the FTA grants. The proposed amendment is to add \$3.5 million dollars to the capital assistance for Shore Transit line item beginning in FY 2015 through FY 2017. The additional funding will be used to cover expenses associated with preventive maintenance, miscellaneous equipment and supplies, purchase of vans and small buses, construction of maintenance facility, and operational items. The additional funds increase the overall allocation for capital assistance to Shore Transit from \$6.2 to approximately \$9.7 million dollars.

Mr. Keith Hall noted the proposed amendments were reviewed by the TAC, which made a favorable recommendation to forward the proposed amendments to the S/WMPO Council for their review and consideration.

Upon a motion by Mr. John Hall, seconded by Ms. Laura Mitchell, with all members voting in favor, and none opposed, the amendments to the FY 2014 – FY 2017 TIP were unanimously approved by the S/WMPO Council contingent upon not receiving any adverse public comments through the expiration of the public review and comment period.

Member Updates / Other Business

As part of the update to the S/WMPO's Long Range Transportation Plan, public kick-off meetings were held in the City of Salisbury and City of Seaford on February 24th and 25th, respectively. Next steps for the Plan update include: presentations at combined meetings of the TAC and Council, conducting public meetings to receive comments on the draft Plan, and a public hearing prior to an action of the S/WMPO Council. Mr. Creamer expressed his gratitude to the meeting participants.

Mr. John Hall discussed the rails to trails project along the abandoned railroad extending approximately 6 miles from the Town of Hebron to the City of Salisbury. The estimated cost to construct the pedestrian and cyclist improvement is \$3.5 million.

Public Comments

There were no public comments.

Next Meeting Date/Adjourn

The next meeting of the MPO Council is scheduled for Thursday, June 11, 2015, commencing at 1:00 P.M.

There being no other business before the MPO Council, upon a motion by Mr. Rick Konrad, seconded by Mr. Mike Pennington, with all members voting in favor, with none opposed, the meeting was adjourned.