

Meeting Minutes

Salisbury/Wicomico Metropolitan Planning Organization (S/WMPO)
Technical Advisory Committee
February 19, 2015

Government Office Building
City of Salisbury Conference Room #306
125 N. Division Street
Salisbury, MD

Attendees:

S/WMPO Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) members:

John Redden, Chair, Wicomico County Public Works
Amanda Pollack, Vice Chair, City of Salisbury Public Works
Mike Nixon, Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT)
Tracey Gordy, Maryland Department of Planning
Brad Bellacicco, Shore Transit
Jeffrey Downes, Salisbury University
Keith Hall, S/W MPO staff

Ex-Officio members:

Bobbie Geier, Delaware Department of Transportation (DelDOT)
Josh Thomas, Delaware Department of Transportation (DelDOT)
Peter Sotherland, Maryland State Highway Administration (SHA)

Others:

Andy Estrain, Intern, Maryland Department of Planning

Introduction

Mr. Redden opened the meeting at 10:30 A.M. and welcomed everyone.

Minutes

The first item of business was the approval of minutes from the June 10, 2014, meeting. Ms. Amanda Pollack made a motion to approve the minutes as submitted, with the motion seconded by Mr. Brad Bellacicco. With all Board members voting in favor, and none opposed, the motion passed.

Update – City of Salisbury’s Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee

Amanda Pollack (City of Salisbury Public Works Department)

Ms. Pollack presented an overview of the City’s Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee. She noted the Committee was established by resolution of the City Council in May 2014. The Committee consists of five (5) members, a City Council (Jack Heath) liaison to the Committee,

and staffed by the City Public Works Department. The mission statement of the Committee is to serve as the community's connection to City and County government and planning agencies concerning bicycling and walking activities in Salisbury. The group meets at the City Center on the second Tuesday of each month beginning at 7:30 PM.

Over the past five (5) months, the Committee has reviewed the designs for the Main Street Master Plan project, identified potential projects to apply for Maryland Bikeways Program grant funding, as well as reviewed the Capital Improvement Plans to identify opportunities for bicycling and / or pedestrian improvements. The Committee is a technical resource complementing the work of the City's Traffic and Advisory Committee.

Ms. Tracey Gordy inquired if their meetings are open to the public and where the meeting notifications are advertised. Ms. Pollack noted the meetings are open to the public and notifications are advertised on the City bulletin board in the Government Office Building, as well as submitted to the City Clerk to be posted as part of the Mayor's monthly meeting schedule. Being no further questions of the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) members, Mr. Redden thanked Ms. Pollack for the update.

Update – S/WMPO Expansion

Bobbie Geier (DelDOT), Mike Nixon (MDOT), and Keith Hall (S/WMPO)

Mr. Keith Hall presented a historical overview about the creation of the Salisbury/Wicomico Metropolitan Planning Organization (S/WMPO). He noted a metropolitan planning organization is a federal requirement resulting from the U.S. Census Bureau's designation of an urbanized area. An urbanized area is a densely developed region consisting of a center city and containing a population of at least 50,000 persons and a density of 1,000 persons per square mile.

As part of the 2000 Census, the greater Salisbury region met the criteria for establishing an urbanized area. The urbanized area included the Cities of Salisbury and Fruitland, the Towns of Delmar (MD and DE), and portions of unincorporated Wicomico and Sussex counties. The population within the newly established urbanized area was 59,426 persons.

Prior to the official designation of the S/WMPO by Maryland Governor Robert L. Ehrlich on February 19, 2004, several operational and administrative aspects creating the organizational framework were completed. In 2003, the Maryland and Delaware Departments of Transportation entered into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), which defined the roles and responsibilities for each agency. In 2004, a Memorandum of Understanding was executed among the member jurisdictions and agencies. This MOU designated a MPO Council consisting of 11 members, as well as required developing bylaws and a prospectus for the Organization. Also, this MOU established the voting protocol for the S/WMPO, which is comprised of nine (9) voting and two (2) non-voting members. DelDOT and the Town of Delmar, DE, were designated as non-voting because of the small presence of the S/WMPO in Delaware. Since the completion of the organization components, the S/WMPO has been meeting regularly since November 2004.

As a result of the 2010 Census, the Delaware portion of the urbanized area for the S/WMPO expanded 17 miles north along alternate U.S. Route 13. The population within the Delaware portion of the urbanized area increased from approximately 1,440 to 24,588 persons. Also, a

small portion of Somerset County was included in the urbanized area. Overall, between the 2000 and 2010 Census, the population and size of the S/WMPO increased by 38,655 persons and 30 sq. miles, respectively. Mr. Hall emphasized the expansion of the urbanized area in Delaware was not a result of a significant population increase. Instead, the change resulted from a modification to the methodology used by the U.S. Census Bureau to delineate an urbanized area.

Given the significant increases in population and size of the Delaware portion of the urbanized area, changes to the organizational structure of the S/WMPO are necessary. Therefore, the MOU between the Maryland and Delaware Departments of Transportation and the Bylaws and Prospectus will be amended accordingly to incorporate increased representation of member jurisdictions and agencies in Delaware on the S/WMPO TAC and Council. During this expansion phase, DelDOT is the lead agency coordinating with the Delaware jurisdictions and member agencies to provide information about being a part of a metropolitan planning organization.

Mr. Mike Nixon, MDOT, gave a brief update about the differences and status of the amended MOU between the two State DOTs. He noted this expansion does not necessitate a full re-designation of the S/WMPO, which significantly reduces the time and effort to implement the operational changes. Changes to the voting composition of the MPO Council will be achieved through amendments to the Bylaws and Prospectus. At the time of this meeting, he stated the MOU has been reviewed by the Attorney General and submitted to the appropriate DelDOT representative for legal review and signature of DelDOT's Secretary of Transportation. Ms. Geier stated the recommended changes have been made and is being processed. Mr. Nixon noted upon receipt, MDOT's Secretary of Transportation will fully execute the MOU.

Ms. Geier stated conversations have occurred between DelDOT and the Towns of Seaford and Laurel to identify the benefits of being part of a MPO, including, additional transportation planning studies and voting on items affecting the Delaware portion of the S/WMPO. In March, DelDOT will meet with elected officials from Sussex County, Delaware, to discuss the operations and benefits of participating on the S/WMPO TAC and Council.

Mr. Hall noted upon completion of the organizational changes to the S/WMPO in response of the expansion of the urbanized area, the S/WMPO will function as one entity representing two states, three counties, and numerous incorporated jurisdictions. The Bylaws and Prospectus will be amended to include representation of jurisdictions in Delaware. In addition, the Unified Planning Work Program and the Transportation Improvement Program will contain separate sections for Maryland and Delaware; however, they will be processed as unified documents.

Ms. Gordy inquired if consideration has been given to changing the name of the Organization to better represent the multi-state presence resulting from the new urbanized area. Mr. Hall noted changing the name of the Organization is an option; however, it has not been discussed to date. Any recommendations to change the name of the S/WMPO will need to be vetted by the MPO Council.

Ms. Geier noted the Sussex County portion of the urbanized area is in non-attainment; whereas, the Maryland portion is in attainment. Mr. Hall summarized the differences between the two and stated their relationship to the Clean Air Act. Ms. Geier stated any significant transportation improvement projects within the non-attainment area will have to mitigate any increases to the

air pollutant levels resulting from the project. Mr. Hall noted as part of the MOU between the two states, DeIDOT will be responsible for the air quality conformity analysis consistent with the expectations of the Environmental Protection Agency.

Mr. Hall briefly presented the draft planning study area for the Maryland portion of the S/WMPO. The methodology for delineating the planning study area was derived by including census blocks within designated growth areas of locally adopted comprehensive plans. DeIDOT will coordinate with Delaware member jurisdictions to delineate a planning study area for the Delaware portion of the urbanized area for the S/WMPO. Mr. Jeffrey Downes inquired if there is potential for the S/WMPO urbanized area to expand into Pittsville sometime in the future. Mr. Hall noted if the population density criteria was met, there is potential for the S/WMPO to expand easterly along U.S. Route 50. However, growth limitations (poor soils) on the east side of the County it will be a major challenge to meeting the criteria for an urbanized area.

Mr. Downes asked about the funding of the S/WMPO as a result of the significant expansion into Delaware. Mr. Hall responded the MOU between the two states will require DeIDOT to annually contribute the appropriate level of federal and State transportation planning funds to the S/WMPO. He noted with exception of Wicomico County, none of the member jurisdictions or entities provide funding to the S/WMPO. Moreover, the Maryland portion of the budget will be used exclusively for projects in Maryland and the same approach will be applied to Delaware funding contributed to the S/WMPO.

Update – Long Range Transportation Plan

Keith Hall (S/WMPO)

Mr. Hall provided an overview of the progress towards updating the S/WMPO Long Range Transportation Plan. In accordance with federal regulations, the update must be adopted by the MPO Council prior to December 1, 2015. At the time of this meeting, STV and Jacobs Engineering have been retained to prepare the update. He noted, the Maryland Department of Transportation funded the Plan update.

The first series of public meetings for this planning effort are scheduled for February 24th at Salisbury University and February 25th at City Hall in Seaford, Delaware. The purpose of these kick-off meetings is to introduce the public to the metropolitan planning process, as well as gather input about their vision and goals to maintain and enhance the regional transportation network over the next 25 years. According to the project schedule, a preliminary draft will be presented to the TAC and MPO Council in June of 2015. Updates on this planning initiative will be available on the S/WMPO website.

Mr. John Redden asked about the structure of the meeting. Mr. Hall responded the meeting will be held in a town hall format. The informal meeting will have informational stations with background about the purpose of a MPO and the Long Range Transportation Plan, as well as interactive stations asking the public what is important to them about the transportation system. Also, comment forms will be available at future public meetings and the S/WMPO website.

Discussion – Potential Work Program Items for FY 16

Keith Hall (S/WMPO)

Mr. Hall noted the Unified Planning Work Program is the S/WMPO budget consisting of core functions and planning initiatives for the upcoming fiscal year. In accordance with federal requirements, a UPWP must be adopted by the governing body of a metropolitan planning organization prior to the beginning of an upcoming fiscal year.

Consistent with previous UPWPs, the proposed budget will contain allocations for core planning functions including Transportation Improvement Program, Unified Planning Work Program, Long Range Transportation Plan, Transportation Development Plan, and Administration of the daily operations of the S/WMPO. In addition to the core planning, the proposed budget for fiscal year 2016 will continue to fund enhancements to our GIS operations and the ongoing Scenic Byways Planning Initiative. New projects for consideration include funding a study to prepare marking and signing applications for bike paths and lanes in the S/WMPO region. Upon completion of this proposed comprehensive and regional study, the member jurisdictions will have a road map for programming improvements designed to enhance the network and promote cyclist safety. Another consideration for a potential work program item for FY 16, is obtaining planning level cost estimates (planning, design and engineering, and construction) for recommendations contained in existing corridor studies prepared for the S/WMPO.

Discussion – Establish Quarterly Meeting Dates for 2015

Mr. Hall recommended meeting within the next eight (8) weeks because of the volume of ongoing work. He will coordinate with TAC members, via e-mail, to establish a quarterly meeting schedule.

Member Updates / Other Business

Ms. Pollack gave a brief presentation and progress report about the Main Street Master Plan. AMT has been retained by the City to provide professional engineering services for the project. Currently, 65 percent design drawings have been provided for the City's review.

Mr. Sotherland provided an update about the status of improvements at railroad crossings within Wicomico County. Norfolk Southern will coordinate with the State Highway Administration and local jurisdictions to develop a schedule for improving six (6) crossings during this calendar year. More information will be presented at the next meeting.

Public Comments

There were no public comments.

Next Meeting Date/Adjourn

Mr. Hall will contact members to establish an appropriate date and time for the next meeting.

There being no other business before the Committee, upon a motion by Ms. Gordy, seconded by Mr. Bellacicco, with all members voting in favor, with none opposed, the meeting was adjourned.