

Meeting Minutes

**Salisbury/Wicomico Metropolitan Planning Organization
August 22, 2005**

**City of Salisbury/Wicomico County Government Building
125 North Division Street, Salisbury, MD
Room 302**

Attendees:

SW/MPO officials:

Marvin Long, Chair, Wicomico County Council
Mike Dunn, City of Salisbury, City Council
Mayor Barrie Tilghman, City of Salisbury
Stevie Prettyman, Wicomico County Council
Mike Thompson, Wicomico County
Mike Nixon, Maryland Department of Transportation

Others:

Gary Pusey, S/W MPO staff, City of Salisbury/Wicomico County Planning
Rob Hart, Shore Transit
Riggin Johnson, Shore Transit
Stewart Davis, Interested Party
Members of the Media

Introduction

Chairman Long opened the meeting at 1:10 p.m. and welcomed everyone.

Minutes

The first item of business was the minutes from the Council's June 20, 2005 meeting. Chairman Long asked if anyone had any additions or corrections, and there being none, Mr. Nixon made a motion to approve the minutes as submitted. Ms. Prettyman seconded the motion. All Board members voted aye, with none opposed, and the motion to approve the minutes was passed.

Agenda Revision

At this time, Chairman Long requested that the agenda be revised to move "Other Business" after the "Minutes" approval to recognize Mr. Stewart Davis from Flannery's Restaurant in Salisbury. No one objected to the re-ordering of the agenda, and Mr. Davis came forward.

Other Business

Mr. Davis explained to the Council the situation that has occurred at his restaurant in downtown Salisbury recently. With the recent cutbacks in service imposed by Shore Transit, the rest room facilities at the downtown location, next to Mr. Davis' restaurant, have reduced hours. As a result, Mr. Davis stated that persons waiting for rides have been using the back of his property to go to the bathroom. He recently installed signs discouraging such behavior, but was cited by the City for having illegal signs. He has had discussions with various agencies, but has been unable at this point to obtain what he considers to be an acceptable resolution of the problem. He is appealing to the MPO Council for whatever relief it may be able to provide to him.

Mayor Tilghman stated that she is meeting with Mike Pennington of the Tri-County Council in early September to discuss this situation. The Mayor stated she believes the bathrooms should be open when the bus stop is open, and the Tri-County Council should provide the funding to accomplish this, or the bus routes should be diminished to coincide with the hours of the rest room facilities.

Councilwoman Prettyman asked what level of funding is needed to ensure that the rest rooms are open during the same hours as the transit service. Mr. Hart responded that it would take \$26-30,000 to keep the rest rooms open the entire time that the transit system is operating.

Chairman Long stated that the operation of Shore Transit is overseen by the Tri-County Council and that this issue appears to be better-suited to be addressed by that organization.

Mr. Nixon agreed with Chairman Long, and added that he spoke with Lenny Howard of the Maryland Transit Administration who also expressed a similar opinion. In his and Mr. Howard's opinion, the MPO Council does not make decisions on operational issues and at best should only be advisory.

A general discussion ensued concerning the possibility of additional funding being provided to Shore Transit through such means as partnering with local businesses and other organizations. Mr. Hart responded that a number of businesses and organizations have been contacted, and partnerships with Salisbury University and Wor-Wic Community College have been established, and favorable discussions have been ongoing with Wal-Mart, MaTech and the Centre at Salisbury.

As a "quick fix" Mr. Stewart suggested that perhaps arrangements could be made to add another "port-a-potty" in the area similar to what the Flea Market has. Although members of the Council were sympathetic to Mr. Stewart's situation, several members stated they did not think port-a-potties for downtown Salisbury were a viable solution.

Chairman Long closed by stating that discussions will be held with the Tri-County Council about this issue, and Mayor Tilghman was hopeful that a satisfactory resolution could be reached during her meeting with Mr. Pennington in September. The Council thanked Mr. Davis for attending and bringing this issue to its attention.

Amendment to the FY 2005-07 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)

Chairman Long asked Mr. Nixon if he had information on this item.

Mr. Nixon referred to a letter that was sent to Jack Lenox, Planning Director summarizing this request, and copies of the letter were provided to the Council members. Mr. Nixon stated that the Council approved the FY 2005-07 TIP on January 24, 2005. One of the projects listed in the approved TIP was entitled "Congestion Management" and consisted of projects such as access management for U.S. Route 50, signing, lighting, marking and utility relocation, among other things, for various roadways in the area that are maintained by SHA. The request before the Council now is the same project, with the only difference being that additional funding is now available. The current TIP lists funding for this activity at \$2,270,000 and the proposed change adds \$775,000 so that the new total is \$3,045,000.

Upon a motion by Councilman Dunn and seconded by Mr. Thompson, the Council unanimously approved the amendment to the FY 2005-07 TIP as submitted.

Update on Status of the Long-Range Transportation Plan

Chairman Long asked Mr. Pusey to report on this item.

Mr. Pusey stated that on June 29, 2005, Mr. Pusey, Mr. Lenox, Mr. Nixon and Mr. Carl Wilson from The Traffic Group consulting firm met with representatives from the Federal Transit Administration and the Federal Highway Administration to discuss the status of the Plan in relation to the deadline that had been imposed. The deadline to submit the Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) is October 1, 2005, which is one year earlier than what the deadline was initially thought to be. After discussing this issue with the federal representatives, it was agreed that the MPO could submit an Interim Plan that would be specific for a five-year period and more general for the remaining 20 years of the Plan. The Interim Plan would be due October 1, 2005, with the understanding that the LRTP would be required to be submitted by October 1, 2006.

Mr. Pusey distributed hard copies of the draft Interim Plan that had previously been sent to the Council members electronically. He explained that projects included in the Interim Plan were obtained from the various jurisdictions' Capital Improvements Plans and are also contained in the jurisdictions' Comprehensive Plans. With the exception of a future permanent facility for Shore Transit that is anticipated to be located within the MPO Study Area, there are no other projects proposed within the next five years that have not already been considered by the appropriate local jurisdiction. A specific location for the Shore Transit facility has not been selected at this point. The Interim Plan also contains a listing of longer-range projects that are proposed beyond the initial five year period. It is expected that this list will be further refined with specific costs during the preparation of the Plan due next October.

Mr. Pusey stated that it is a federal requirement that the Interim Plan be released for public comment for a minimum of 30 days prior to it being considered for adoption by the Council. He is asking for the Council to authorize its release for the 30-day comment period in order to stay on track with the federal agencies' requirement that the Plan be adopted locally by October 1, 2005. If the Council authorizes this release, the Plan will be available online at the County's Website and an ad will be placed in the Daily Times stating that the Plan is available for public review at both the Planning Department and the Regional Library. A future meeting toward the end of September of the Council can then be held to consider any comments received and to address any concerns Council members may have.

In addition, Mr. Pusey stated there was one "housekeeping" measure that needed to be addressed. The MPO boundary for the portion in Maryland was previously adopted by the Council; however, the boundary for that portion within Delaware has not been formally adopted. This issue was considered by the Technical Committee at its August 17, 2005, meeting and the Committee recommended that the boundary be the same as the "Area of Study" proposed in the Town of Delmar's Comprehensive Plan. Mr. Pusey stated that this rationale conformed with the method by which the boundary was adopted for the Maryland portion – in each case, the boundary is determined to be the growth area as identified in the local jurisdictions' comprehensive plans.

Mr. Hart stated he had a concern with the boundary as it related to service provided by Shore Transit. He noted that the boundary covers a larger metropolitan area than where Shore Transit is currently providing services, and in order to adequately serve this area, the current routes would need to be extended.

Discussion followed concerning the extent of the Census-designated urbanized area, the location of Shore Transit's routes and the designation of the MPO boundary. Mr. Nixon volunteered to contact the Maryland Transit Administration to determine the impacts of the MPO boundary on transit services offered, and Mr. Pusey and Mr. Hart agreed to meet to discuss the location of the boundary in relation to the federal-required MPO boundary and the current location of Shore Transit's routes. The Council agreed to defer this item until the next meeting.

Chairman Long asked if the Council had any further questions about the draft Plan. There was none, and upon a motion by Councilman Dunn, seconded by Councilwoman Prettyman, the Council agreed to authorize Staff to advertise the Draft Interim Plan and release it for public comment, as required by federal regulations. The motion passed unanimously.

Other Business

The Council returned to "Other Business" items and Chairman Long recognized Mr. Hart, who stated he had data pertaining to a ridership survey of Shore Transit customers that was taken on August 18 and 19, 2005. (A copy of the survey results is attached to

the official copy of the minutes.) He distributed handouts to the Council members and summarized the data.

No action was required by the Council for this item.

Next Meeting Date/Adjourn

Discussion ensued concerning the next meeting date. Mr. Pusey stated that, in order to meet the deadlines for the adoption of the LRTP, Staff has proposed the next meeting to be held on Monday, September 26, 2005. This date will allow the LRTP to have been advertised for 30 days, and if the Council adopts the Plan on that date, provides for adequate time for the LRTP to be sent to and received by the federal agencies. The Council agreed that the next meeting would be held on September 26, 2005.

Upon a request from Chairman Long for a motion to adjourn, a motion was made by Councilman Dunn, seconded by Mr. Nixon, and unanimously approved. The meeting adjourned at 2:45 PM.