

Meeting Minutes

Salisbury Wicomico Metropolitan Planning Organization
March 21, 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
Stevie Prettyman, Wicomico County Council
Ted Shea, Wicomico County
Ron Spalding, Maryland Department of Transportation

Others:

Jack Lenox, Director, City of Salisbury/Wicomico County Planning
Gary Pusey, SW/MPO staff, City of Salisbury/Wicomico County Planning
Frank McKenzie, City of Salisbury/Wicomico County Planning
Tracey Gordy, Maryland Department of Planning
Rob Hart, Shore Transit
Karen Berrier, Shore Transit
Mike Nixon, Maryland Department of Transportation
Mike Pennington, Tri-County Council

Discussion

Chairman Long opened the meeting at 1:05 p.m. and welcomed everyone. Members and other attendees introduced themselves. Chairman Long stated that it would be helpful to have name placards for all Council members for future meetings.

Mr. Lenox noted that Mary Ellen Gray had left her position as the MPO staff person and that Gary Pusey of the Planning Office was serving in her position on a temporary basis.

Chairman Long reviewed the agenda and asked whether anyone had any suggestions for deletions/additions to the meeting agenda. No changes were proposed.

Councilman Dunn moved to approve the February 28, 2005 meeting minutes. Mr. Spalding seconded the motion. All Board members voted aye, with none opposed, and the motion to approve the minutes was passed.

Discussion of Recommendations for FY '06 Shore Transit Operations and Funding

Mr. Lenox summarized the Technical Committee's meeting held on March 9, 2005, at which this topic was discussed. The Tech Committee heard a presentation from Shore Transit representatives and made several recommendations for consideration by both the

Board and Shore Transit. These recommendations were included in the Committee's minutes from that meeting that were provided to the Board members.

Mr. Rob Hart, Director of Shore Transit, made a presentation to the Board that included proposed actions to be taken for FY 2006 in order to ensure a balanced budget for Shore Transit. Handouts were provided to the Board that summarized ridership data for the six routes contained in the Metro Core. As explained by Mr. Hart, Shore Transit is proposing three actions that will affect service in FY 2006. They are: (1) a reduction in service hours; (2) a reduction in Customer Service Center hours; and (3) elimination of Saturday service. The service hour reduction action would reduce the number of daily service hours from 16 to 13. The reduction of three hours would be accomplished by three methods. The hours of operation for bus service would stop at 9:30 p.m. instead of 10:30 p.m. In addition, one hour for a "meal break" for all drivers would be provided between 11:30 a.m. and 12:30 p.m. when no runs would be made. Another one hour period when no service would be provided would be between 2:30 p.m. and 3:30 p.m., which coincides with a shift change. This action would save approximately \$37,000. Under Shore Transit's proposal, the Customer Service Center would close four hours earlier, at 6 p.m. instead of the current 10 p.m., and would not be open on weekends. This proposal would save \$26,000. The third action would eliminate Saturday service. This action will be considered after the first quarter budget period has been reviewed, and would be implemented with the fall schedule if needed. Savings from this proposal would be approximately \$34,000. Combined, these three actions would result in an estimated cost savings of almost \$100,000. A fourth option concerned ways to increase revenues, and Mr. Hart stated Shore Transit would investigate new revenue sources as recommended by the Technical Committee, to include increased funding from municipalities and partnering with local businesses. These proposed cost savings, along with anticipated revenues, would result in a balanced budget for FY 2006. A summary of Mr. Hart's presentation is attached to these minutes.

Councilman Dunn expressed concern about the expected future funding levels from the different governmental sources, with a special concern that local government would not be in a position to cover any shortfalls from state or federal sources. Under this scenario, Councilman Dunn stated that some decrease in service would appear inevitable.

Councilwoman Prettyman asked what would be the effect on Shore Transit if Wicomico County doesn't provide the \$200,000 that Shore Transit anticipates, and instead provides an amount similar to the \$190,000 that Wicomico gave last year.

In response to Councilman Dunn's concern, Mr. Hart responded that under the 5307 Grant, which covers the Metro Core, the more local money that is provided, then the more federal money that can be obtained. This is the one source of funding that Shore Transit has that is not based on a formula. In response to Councilwoman Prettyman, Mr. Hart stated that Shore Transit would re-evaluate its financial situation in the Fall and make adjustments where necessary. He also stated that it is his hope that insurance costs would be less than budgeted due to Shore Transit's driver history.

Mr. Spalding noted that the presentation by Mr. Hart today addressed the recommendations made by the Technical Committee, especially those that concerned partnering with businesses and organizations, pursuing new revenue sources, and proposing reductions that did not result in the elimination of established routes.

Upon a motion by Councilman Dunn, seconded by Mr. Spalding, the Board unanimously approved a recommendation of support by the MPO Council to the Tri-County Council. MPO Staff will prepare a resolution for submission to the Tri-County Council that expresses the MPO support.

MPO Map Boundaries

Chairman Long asked Mr. Lenox for background information on this item. Mr. Lenox briefed the Board on the process that resulted in the creation of the Salisbury-Wicomico MPO. As a result of the 2000 Census figures, an area from Delmar, Delaware, south along U.S. Route 13 to the Somerset County boundary qualified as being designated an MPO and is called an "urbanized area." Federal legislation requires that an MPO boundary be designated for planning purposes, which includes at a minimum the entire urbanized area.

Mr. McKenzie indicated on a map where the boundaries for the urbanized area are located. This area is based on criteria for total population (50,000 minimum) and population density (1,000 per sq. mi.) from the 2000 Census. Superimposed on this map was another boundary indicating the "Metro Core," which is an area including and surrounding Salisbury, Fruitland and Delmar and has been designated for future growth by the Wicomico County Council in its adopted plans. The Staff's recommendation is that the Board adopt as its MPO boundary the outermost limits of both the urbanized area and the Metro Core.

Upon a motion by Mr. Shea, seconded by Councilman Dunn, the Board unanimously approved the establishment of the MPO boundary for planning purposes as the outermost limits of both the urbanized area and the Metro Core. Staff will prepare a map indicating the MPO boundary for the Board's future reference.

Long Range Transportation Plan

At Chairman Long's request, Mr. Lenox briefed the Board on this item. Mr. Lenox stated that the MPO has to have a Long Range Transportation Plan adopted by October 1, 2005, in order to be eligible for future federal funding. The Plan is required to cover a minimum period of 20 years, and is to be updated every five years. The Staff is in the process of reviewing the existing adopted plans that cover jurisdictions within the MPO's boundaries and identifying what information can be updated by Staff and what parts may need to be completed with the help of a consultant. These plans include those for Wicomico County, the City of Salisbury, the Town of Fruitland, and the Town of Delmar, Md. and De. Staff is also comparing what information is available from these plans and other sources in comparison with what is required to be included in the Long Range Transportation Plan. Much of the work on this item will be accomplished through

the Technical Committee meetings, with status reports given to the Board when appropriate.

Next Meeting Agenda Items

Agenda items for the next meeting include the following:

- Approval of the FY 2006 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP)
- Update on the Long Range Plan

Chairman Long questioned the number and frequency of future meetings, and Mr. Lenox responded that they would not be as frequent as in the past. Although the Board has been meeting monthly, a more appropriate time frame would be on a quarterly basis.

Next meeting is scheduled for April 18, 2005 from 1:00 PM to 3:00 PM at the same location. [NOTE: The April 18, 2005 meeting was cancelled, and the next meeting of the MPO Council was held on June 20, 2005.]

Upon a request from Chairman Long for a motion to adjourn, a motion was made by Councilman Dunn, seconded by Mr. Spalding, and unanimously approved. The meeting adjourned at 1:55 PM.