

Meeting Minutes

**Salisbury/Wicomico Metropolitan Planning Organization
October 1, 2008**

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

Attendees:

S/W MPO officials:

Matt Creamer, Chair, Wicomico County Council Administrator
Luther Hitchens, Vice Chair, Deputy Mayor, Delmar, MD
Stevie Prettyman, Wicomico County Council
Louise Smith, City Council President, City of Salisbury
Mike Nixon, Maryland Department of Transportation
John McDonnell, City of Fruitland
Barrie P. Tilghman, Mayor, City of Salisbury

Others:

Gary Pusey, S/W MPO staff, City of Salisbury/Wicomico County Planning
Riggin Johnson, Shore Transit
Mike Pennington, Tri-County Council
Greg Oliver, Delaware Dept. of Transportation
Sue Knapp, KFH Group

Introduction

Chairman Creamer opened the meeting at 1 p.m. and welcomed everyone.

Minutes

The first item of business was the minutes from the Council's June 18, 2008 meeting. Chairman Creamer asked if anyone had any additions or corrections, and there were none. Ms. Smith made a motion to approve the minutes, with the motion seconded by Mr. McDonnell. All Board members voted aye, with none opposed, and the motion to approve the minutes was passed.

Presentation – Sue Knapp of KFH Group – Shore Transit Service Analysis

Chairman Creamer introduced this item. Mr. Nixon introduced Ms. Sue Knapp of the KFH Group, which through funding provided by MDOT with Mr. Nixon's assistance, has been retained to analyze the services provided by Shore Transit.

Ms. Knapp provided the members with a handout entitled "Shore Transit Service Analysis." She explained that the purpose of the study was to identify ways to address

budget gaps that had occurred with Shore Transit for FY 2009. She noted that Shore Transit had addressed shortages in various ways for FY 2008, and that for FY 2009 increased fares, increased MTA funding and cost saving measures were being investigated. She noted that increased costs were caused primarily by increasing fuel and insurance costs, and an increase in the demand responsive services.

Ms. Knapp provided a background of Shore Transit's current service, including a discussion of the fixed routes and the demand responsive services. Maps were shown that indicated the locations of the fixed routes for both Salisbury and the Lower Shore. She explained that based on MTA performance measures, Shore Transit's overall performance was good as to cost-effectiveness, with the demand responsive service productivity excellent and the fixed route productivity good on some routes but not on others. The regional routes all meet MTA standards. Of the Salisbury routes, the Pink and Orange routes (South Salisbury/Fruitland and Central Salisbury) were "good," the Blue route (West Salisbury) was "marginal," and the Purple (East Salisbury), Airport, and the Green (South Salisbury) and Yellow (North Salisbury/Delmar) routes were "poor."

Ms. Knapp also summarized the cost-cutting measures that have been implemented to date, and discussed the revenue-increasing measures implemented, which included increased fares, the re-negotiation of Medical Assistance contracts and an agreement with Salisbury University and UMES to serve students for a fee.

She next discussed proposed service cuts. These included reducing Saturday evening hours on the Salisbury routes; reducing weekday evening hours on the Salisbury routes; eliminating the Yellow route; and consolidating and realigning other routes, as explained in the handout. Other possible service cuts were also discussed, to include realigning routes and eliminating certain stops with low ridership.

A public hearing will be held by Shore Transit on Oct. 14 to present these options and to hear the public's opinions. The final decisions as to any changes will be made by the Tri-County Council at a later date.

A discussion of the availability of the rest room facilities at the downtown transfer station on Calvert Street ensued. Mayor Tilghman noted this had been a contentious issue in the past and she would like to see consideration given to allowing these facilities to remain open. She stated that the closing of these facilities were counterproductive to the ongoing revitalization efforts that the City was undertaking in the Downtown area. Ms. Prettyman agreed.

On a motion by Mayor Tilghman, seconded by Ms. Prettyman, Staff was directed to draft a letter for Chairman Creamer's signature addressed to the Tri-County Council prior to the Oct. 14 Public Hearing recommending that the rest room facilities remain available to riders. All members of the MPO Council voted in favor of the motion, with Mr. Nixon abstaining. (NOTE: This letter was prepared and sent on Oct. 9, 2008.)

FY 2009-2012 Transportation Improvement Program – Adoption

Chairman Creamer introduced this item.

Mr. Nixon went through each of the nine total project categories and explained that these categories cover projects planned to be completed within the MPO Area during the next four fiscal years. The categories included Environmental Projects; Safety and Spot Improvements; Resurface and Rehabilitate; Bridge Replacement and Rehabilitation; Urban Street Reconstruction and Revitalization; Congestion Management; Northeast Collector Road Phase II Bikepath; Small Urban Transit System (capital assistance for Shore Transit); and Small Urban Transit System (operating and maintenance assistance for Shore Transit).

Mr. Nixon highlighted some of the projects in each category and the costs associated with each one. He clarified that for the Environmental Projects, the aesthetic improvements along highways included the wildflower plantings; under Resurface and Rehabilitate, the U.S. 13 Business project at Bridgeview Street was for drainage improvements; under Urban Street Reconstruction and Revitalization, the MD 513 sidewalks referred to Cedar Lane in Fruitland; and that for the Northeast Collector Road Phase II Bikepath, this covered the area between MD 346 (Old Ocean City Road) to U.S. Route 50.

It was pointed out that funding was provided for land acquisition for Shore Transit's new facility for FY 2009 under the Small Urban Transit System – Capital assistance for transit services provided by Shore Transit. The decrease in funding by \$1 million from FY 2009 to FY 2010 reflected the purchase costs in FY 2009.

Upon a motion by Mr. McDonnell, seconded by Mayor Tilghman, the Council unanimously approved the adoption of the FY 2009-2012 Transportation Improvement Program.

Other Business

Chairman Creamer asked Mr. Pusey if there was any further business to be discussed.

Mr. Pusey stated that the Annual Tour by the Transportation Secretary will occur in late October. Last year, the Council requested that Staff prepare a letter listing transportation projects that the Council would like the Secretary to consider. Ideally, the letter would mirror those projects endorsed by the County Executive in his letter to the Secretary, but would be focused on the MPO Area. Mr. Pusey asked if the Council would like him to prepare a similar letter this year for Chairman Creamer's signature. The Council agreed that this should be done. (NOTE: The letter was prepared and sent to the Secretary on Oct. 15, 2008.) There was no other business to discuss.

Public Comments

There were no public comments.

Next Meeting Date/Adjourn

Mr. Pusey will contact members when a meeting needs to be scheduled and an appropriate date and time will then be determined.

A motion was made by Mr. McDonnell, seconded by Ms. Prettyman, and unanimously approved to adjourn. The meeting adjourned at 2 p.m.