

Meeting Minutes

**Salisbury Wicomico Metropolitan Planning Organization
Technical Advisory Committee (TAC)
June 12th, 2006**

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

Attendees:

TAC Members:

John Redden, Wicomico County Public Works, Chair
Ray Birch, City of Salisbury Public Works, Vice Chair
Sara Bynum-King, Delmar, Md. & Del.
Tracey Gordy, Maryland Department of Planning
Riggin Johnson, Shore Transit
Mike Nixon, Maryland Department of Transportation
Paul Weber, City of Salisbury Transportation & Safety Advisory Committee

Others:

Gary Pusey, SW/MPO staff, City of Salisbury/Wicomico County Planning
Jim Dooley, Maryland State Highway Administration
Jacqui Kamp, City of Salisbury/Wicomico County Planning
Richard Kautz, Sussex Co. (Del.) Planning Dept.
Jim Magill, Salisbury/Wicomico Planning Commission
Gregory Oliver, Delaware Dept. of Transportation
Jim Thompson, Maryland State Highway Administration
Glenn Cook, The Traffic Group, Inc.
Betty Tustin, The Traffic Group, Inc.

Introduction

Mr. Birch opened the meeting at 1:10 p.m. and welcomed everyone. (Note: Mr. Redden joined the meeting during the presentation by The Traffic Group, Inc., and conducted the meeting at that point.)

Minutes

Mr. Birch introduced the first item on the agenda, which were the minutes of the Committee's January 25, 2006 meeting.

Mr. Nixon moved to approve the January 25, 2006 meeting minutes, and Mr. Weber seconded the motion. All Committee members voted aye, with none opposed, and the motion to approve the minutes was passed.

Consultant Presentation of Corridor Studies

Mr. Birch introduced Mr. Cook and Ms. Tustin from The Traffic Group, Inc., who were present to discuss the submittals they made to prepare traffic studies for four corridors identified by the MPO.

At the suggestion of Mr. Pusey, it was determined that The Traffic Group could focus its presentation on the highest-priority corridor, the South Division Street area, since it appeared the methodology proposed for each of the four corridors was similar, but the Committee could direct its questions to any of the corridors being discussed.

Mr. Cook provided the Committee with an overview of their firm and discussed the types of projects they have worked on in the past, as well as projects they have been involved with on the Lower Eastern Shore, including in Salisbury and Wicomico County. He stated that their firm specializes in traffic engineering and transportation planning.

Ms. Tustin presented the process that will be followed to conduct each of the corridor studies. She described some of the existing roadways in the South Division Street corridor and stated that the first step, after meeting with the MPO's representatives to discuss in detail available data and the work process, would involve data collection, including traffic counts, number of lanes and lane widths, and an analysis of the intersections within the study area. Some of this data The Traffic Group already has as a result of the work they have done with the MPO's Interim Plan. They have identified 19 key intersections within the study area, and each intersection and roadway segment will be diagrammed in detail. Information will also be obtained from the appropriate agencies concerning rights-of-way and signal timing, and all data will be incorporated into a computer simulation model. Suggested models include SYNCHRO and SimTraffic, although The Traffic Group is willing to use whatever model is preferred by the MPO. Subsequent steps in the studies include conducting capacity analyses for the intersections and determining the current Level of Service; obtaining accident data; and making traffic projections based on anticipated development for the years 2010, 2020 and 2030. Suggested roadway improvements will also be made, dependent on the findings of the studies. A final report will be prepared summarizing the findings and a presentation will be made to the MPO Council.

Mr. Magill asked if infill development would be considered when determining the level of future development. Ms. Tustin responded that it would be, based on maps and figures provided by the Planning Department that The Traffic Group is currently using in developing future traffic projections for the Long Range Plan.

Mr. Weber asked if the data and simulation model that The Traffic Group uses will be turned over to the MPO for its future use. Mr. Cook responded that it could be, and could be used by the MPO to constantly update traffic conditions.

Mr. Weber also asked about the type of modeling software to be used. Mr. Cook responded that SYNCHRO is recognized and preferred by the Maryland State Highway

Administration, but that The Traffic Group is willing to use whatever model the MPO prefers. Mr. Thompson also pointed out that MDOT uses the Critical Lane analysis, and Mr. Cook responded that this type of analysis could also be accomplished if requested.

Mr. Redden questioned if pedestrian accessway recommendations would be included in the study. Mr. Cook responded that during the meetings with various staff members to determine the scope of work, if this is requested it would also be provided. He further stated that pedestrian and bicycle counts will definitely be included for those intersections in the vicinity of the college.

There being no further questions for Mr. Cook and Ms. Tustin, the presentation was concluded and they thanked the Committee for the opportunity to present their proposals.

At this point, Mr. Cook and Ms. Tustin left and the Committee discussed the presentation so that a recommendation could be made to the Council.

Mr. Weber discussed the various traffic simulation software packages that were discussed today, and that the MPO should specify which package that the consultant should use. He suggested that perhaps the Technical Committee could analyze the various packages that are available and make a recommendation as to which should be used.

Mr. Redden suggested that a group of the Committee members consisting of himself, Mr. Birch and Mr. Pusey meet with Mike Scott from Salisbury University to discuss the various packages available.

After further discussion, the Committee determined that its role in this process was to make a recommendation to the MPO Council as to the suitability of the consultant to perform the studies, and that the costs proposed by the consultant were issues to be addressed by the Council. Mr. Pusey responded that the Staff is recommending to the Technical Committee that the first two corridors be studied at this time. There is not enough funding in the FY 06 and FY 07 budgets to complete all four studies based on the costs submitted by the consultant. Completing the first two studies would utilize all the remaining funds in the FY 06 Work Program and some additional funds from FY 07. After the completion of the first two studies, the MPO can reassess the status of the remaining two corridor studies.

Upon a motion by Mr. Nixon, seconded by Mr. Birch, the Committee forwarded a favorable recommendation to the Council to utilize the services of The Traffic Group, Inc., to conduct corridor studies for the South Division St./College Ave./Beaglin Park Dr. corridor and the Pemberton Drive corridor, with the stipulation that the traffic simulation software package to be employed shall be determined by the Technical Committee. The motion was approved by a unanimous vote.

FY 2006-2008 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) Amendments

Mr. Redden asked Mr. Nixon to report on this item, who deferred to Mr. Thompson.

Mr. Thompson stated that two projects – the Safety and Spot Improvements; and the Resurface and Rehabilitate project were funded at a certain level in the approved TIP, and now it is being proposed that additional funding be provided for each of these items. Since the approved TIP was for a specific amount of funding, the increased level of funding requires MPO Council approval, after a recommendation is made by the Technical Committee.

Mr. Thompson stated that Safety and Spot Improvements was being increased by almost \$900,000 with the increase due primarily to additional drainage improvements being made along U.S. Route 13. Resurface and Rehabilitate is being increased by almost \$800,000 with additional work being done on Md. Route 12, and areawide milling, patching and resurfacing being proposed at various locations.

Upon a motion by Ms. Gordy, seconded by Mr. Birch, with all members voting in favor, the Committee forwarded a favorable recommendation to the MPO Council to approve the revisions to the FY 2006-08 TIP as presented by Mr. Thompson.

FY 2007 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) - Recommendation

Mr. Redden asked Mr. Nixon to report on this item.

Mr. Nixon stated that the Federal Highway Administration (FHA) had reviewed the draft FY 2007 UPWP and had made several comments. Mr. Nixon shared the letter dated May 16, 2006, from the FHA with the Committee members and briefly reviewed its contents. Mr. Nixon has been in contact with Kwame Arhin of FHA and it was agreed that the Committee would hold a conference call with Mr. Arhin to discuss the letter in greater detail. At this point a conference call was held with Mr. Arhin.

The letter contained six items at issue. The first item stated that tasks should be included in the UPWP to ensure that the Long-Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) is compliant with federal regulations. After discussing this item with Mr. Arhin, it was agreed that instead of including this as a task in the UPWP, that the consultants working on the LRTP would incorporate these items in the Plan. The Committee felt this could be accomplished more effectively since the LRTP is in the process of being prepared.

The second issue concerned the level of funding devoted to the Corridor Studies, with the FHA concerned that this amount may be excessive in relation to funds devoted to other UPWP activities. Mr. Nixon pointed out that other funds in the amount of \$45,000 are being provided to develop the LRTP, and this amount is not shown in the UPWP. Including the additional \$45,000 would reveal that a much smaller percentage of funds were being devoted to the Corridor Studies. It was agreed that the narrative section of the

UPWP would more clearly identify the importance of the Corridor Studies and would also reference the additional \$45,000 that was being provided for planning activities in the MPO Area.

The third item concerned the inclusion of tasks in the UPWP that address bicycle and pedestrian walkways; public involvement; and freight planning. It was agreed that the LRTP would include a section on bicycle and pedestrian walkways and freight planning. However, the UPWP would also include the development of a document on freight planning, as well as a task outlining the development of a Public Participation process.

It was agreed that the fourth item, specifying the amount of federal, state and local funds for each task, would be clearly stated in the UPWP.

It was also agreed that the UPWP would clearly note the inclusion of State funds in the amount of \$45,000 that were being devoted to the LRTP.

The sixth item, concerning the development of "Planning and Funding Agreements" was not an item to be included in the UPWP but it was agreed that these documents would be prepared during the upcoming fiscal year. At this point, the Committee ended the conference call with Mr. Arhin.

After further discussion, upon a motion by Ms. Gordy, seconded by Mr. Birch, with all members voting in favor, the Committee voted to forward a favorable recommendation to the MPO Council for the adoption of the FY 2007 UPWP, contingent on the inclusion of the additions agreed to and discussed with Mr. Arhin during the conference call.

Other Business

No members had any other business to discuss.

Next Meeting Date

The Committee discussed the next meeting date, and agreed to meet on Wednesday, July 12, 2006, and to meet thereafter on an every-other month basis on the second Wednesday of the month. Future scheduled meetings would be held on September 13 and November 8 beginning at 1 p.m., with other dates as needed.

There being no further business, upon a motion by Ms. Gordy, seconded by Mr. Nixon, with all members voting in favor, the meeting adjourned at 2:45 p.m.