

Meeting Minutes

Salisbury/Wicomico Metropolitan Planning Organization
Technical Advisory Committee (TAC)
May 13th, 2009

City of Salisbury/Wicomico County Government Building
125 North Division Street, Salisbury, MD
Room 301

Attendees:

TAC Members:

John Redden, Wicomico County Public Works, Chair
Ray Birch, City of Salisbury Public Works, Vice Chair
Mike Nixon, Maryland Department of Transportation
Keith Lackie, Maryland Department of Planning
John McDonnell, City of Fruitland
Jeff Downes, Salisbury University
Mike Pennington, Tri-County Council
Gary Pusey, S/W MPO staff, City of Salisbury/Wicomico County Planning

Others:

Ian Beam, Maryland Department of Transportation

Introduction

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

Minutes

Chairman Redden introduced the first item on the agenda, which were the minutes of the Committee's January 14, 2009 meeting. Mr. Nixon moved to approve the meeting minutes, and Mr. Pusey seconded the motion. All Committee members voted aye, with none opposed, and the motion to approve the minutes was passed.

FY 2010 Unified Planning Work Program – Recommendation to MPO Council

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

Mr. Pusey reviewed the document provided to all members. He referenced the last page, which was the proposed budget for FY 2010. He stated that the MPO is experiencing a decrease in funds from 2009, as the proposed FY 2010 budget will be about \$7,000 less. Not including the County's local match, and comparing just the federal and state funds, the FY 2010 budget will be about \$6,400 less than FY 2009.

Mr. Pusey briefly went through each of the items in the Work Plan. He noted that the MPO's Long-Range Transportation Plan is required to be updated every four years, with the next update due by October 2010. Although October 2010 is in FY 2011, most of the work will need to be done in FY 2010, so funds have been allocated to help accomplish this task. He also pointed out that Mr. Nixon has offered to fund this project with consultants MDOT has on retainer, resulting in minimal cost to the MPO, which will be a great assistance to the MPO since the budget has been reduced and there are a number of other projects the MPO would like to undertake.

Mr. Pusey noted that the MPO is cooperating with DeIDOT to prepare a Freight Plan for all of Delmarva. Funds have been allocated for a consultant to assist with the preparation of a study and data collection for waterborne freight movement on the Wicomico and Nanticoke Rivers. This data would be incorporated into DeIDOT's Delmarva Freight Plan, and could also be used by the MPO for a Freight Plan on a regional basis.

Mr. Oliver stated that DeIDOT is approaching the Freight Plan from an economic development standpoint and has been meeting with economic development officials from the three Delaware counties. They have also been in contact with the other two MPOs in the State. He anticipates holding various public stakeholder meetings throughout the area, and plans to have one in Salisbury in September.

Mr. Pennington pointed out that rail will be an important issue in the regions, particularly with the Wallops Island facility that is becoming more active with NASA rocket launches. He pointed out that rocket fuel is currently being barged in, and also that approximately 40-50% of Wallops' employees live in Maryland and Delaware. He stated the study should consider the impact that the increased usage of Wallops will have on freight issues and the economy of the region.

Mr. Pusey concluded by saying funds are included in the work program for Public Participation, which essentially is for the continued updating of the MPO's Website, and additional funding for the U.S. Route 13 North Corridor Study, the fifth corridor study that has been identified.

After additional discussion, Mr. McDonnell made a motion to forward a favorable recommendation to the MPO Council, and Mr. Pennington seconded. All members voted in favor and the motion passed.

FY 2008-2011 Transportation Improvement Program – Administrative Modification and Recommendation to MPO Council

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

Mr. Nixon stated that the Federal Stimulus Bill, otherwise known as the "American Recovery and Reinvestment Act" (ARRA) is providing additional funds to the area, and these are summarized in the handouts provided to Committee members. A total of \$100,000 is being provided for "Sign Lighting Systems;" \$500,000 for "Traffic Signal

Upgrades;" and \$30,000 for tree planting. Specific locations for these projects have not yet been identified, but they would be along State roadways in the MPO Area. Also, \$1.4 million is being provided to Shore Transit for capital funding for buses, facility upgrade and for shop equipment.

In addition to funding provided for State highways, funding is also being provided to the County for paving of various roadways in the County and in the MPO area. Almost \$1.8 million is being provided to the County, and a number of roadways have been selected for paving and improvements. It was pointed out that not all of the roads scheduled for improvements would be in the MPO area. Of the almost 15 miles that the County plans to pave with this funding, about 11 miles are within the MPO area. A map was displayed that showed the roads that would be improved. Of the 18 roads, 14 were in the MPO area. It was pointed out that no County match was required for this funding – all funding is federal.

Upon a motion by Mr. McDonnell, seconded by Mr. Pennington, the Committee unanimously recommended that the FY 2008-2011 Transportation Improvement Program be amended by the Council to include the referenced stimulus projects.

Other Business

Mr. Pusey noted that Ric Kautz, Technical Committee member and a Planner for Sussex County, is retiring and will no longer be attending the Committee's meetings. Mr. Pusey added that Mr. Kautz brought a wealth of knowledge and experience to the Committee and his contributions will be missed.

There was no other business to report, and no action was necessary for this item.

Next Meeting Date/Adjourn

The next meeting date is scheduled for July 8, 2009 at 1 p.m. Mr. Pusey stated he will send out reminders and all relevant meeting materials prior to the meeting. [Note – The July 8, 2009 meeting was cancelled, with the next meeting scheduled for September 9, 2009.]

There being no further business, upon a motion by Mr. McDonnell, seconded by Mr. Pennington, with all members voting in favor, the meeting adjourned at 1:45 p.m.