

Meeting Minutes

Salisbury/Wicomico Metropolitan Planning Organization (“S/WMPO”) Technical Advisory Committee (“TAC”)

November 01, 2022 @ 10:30 AM

ZOOM meeting

Attendees:

S/WMPO TAC members:

Tracey Gordy, Chair, Maryland Department of Planning (“MDP”)
Dorothy Morris, Vice-Chair, Delaware Office of State Planning Coordination (“DOSPC”)
Eric Berkheimer, Salisbury University (“SU”)
Marvina Cephas, Delaware Natural Resources and Environmental Control (“DNREC”)
Tremica Cherry-Wall, Delaware Transit Corporation (“DTC”)
Jenn Cinelli-Miller, Delaware Department of Transportation (“DelDOT”)
Chris Davidson, SBY Airport
Dan Janousek, Maryland Department of Planning (Proxy)
Berley Mears, City of Seaford
Melinda Stafford, Town of Hebron
Jim Thomas, Salisbury-Wicomico County Planning and Zoning Commission
Andy Wile, Shore Transit
Will White, City of Salisbury, Department of Infrastructure and Development

Staff:

Keith Hall, S/WMPO Executive Director
Ben Zito, Wicomico County Department of Planning

Introduction

Chairperson Gordy opened the meeting at approximately 10:30 A.M. and welcomed attendees. She noted since this is a Zoom meeting, attendance will be confirmed by Mr. Hall as members sign on. Chairperson Gordy asked Mr. Hall to confirm if a quorum has been achieved, which Mr. Hall confirmed.

Chairperson Gordy introduced Andy Wile, Executive Director of Shore Transit, as a new member, and welcomed him to the TAC.

Minutes

The first item of business was approval of the minutes from the April 12, 2022 meeting. Ms. Morris made a motion to approve the minutes as submitted; seconded by Mr. White. With all participating members voting in favor, none opposed, the motion passed.

Capital Transportation Program (“CTP”) Project Prioritization Process Presentation

Anson Gock (DeIDOT)

Chairperson Gordy welcomed Mr. Anson Gock from DeIDOT.

Mr. Gock provided an overview of the CTP Process and how projects go from the development stage to prioritization for inclusion in the CTP. He noted projects are requested from MPOs, local jurisdictions and the general public in the Spring of each year, and information is included in a Draft CTP that is completed by August. A Public Hearing is held in September and comments from the Hearing are provided to the Council on Transportation (“COT”) in December for review and a vote, which will be completed by March of the following year. The next step is a Bond Bill Approval that will provide funding for proposed projects, including design, right-of-way acquisition and construction.

Mr. Gock summarized the CTP Prioritization Criteria used to evaluate projects and noted the criteria were revised and updated just prior to COVID. He highlighted a few of the added changes, including those relating to Environmental Justice. He pointed out the website address in case anyone wanted more detail on these criteria.

Chairperson Gordy asked if any members had any questions, and there being none, she thanked Mr. Gock for presenting.

Glen Avenue Road Diet Analysis Presentation

Ms. Betty Tustin (The Traffic Group) & Mr. Kevin Parsons (Becker Morgan Group)

Chairperson Gordy welcomed Betty Tustin with The Traffic Group and Kevin Parsons with Becker Morgan Group. Ms. Tustin began by noting that Civic Center Staff also participated in this Study as her firm was working with them on another project and their input was helpful as the Civic Center has a major impact on traffic in this area.

Ms. Tustin began the presentation with an overview of the Study Area, which includes two primary intersections, at (1) Glen Avenue/Civic Avenue and (2) Glen Avenue/Beaglin Park Drive, and three (3) road segments on Glen Avenue from (1) Beaglin Park Drive to Civic Avenue; (2) Civic Avenue to Memorial Plaza; and (3) Memorial Plaza to Long Avenue. She summarized traffic volume data, vehicle speeds and accidents along Glen Avenue, and noted the data shows excessive speed is an issue in the Study Area, as well as the number of accidents at Glen Avenue’s intersections with Civic Avenue and Beaglin Park Drive.

Ms. Tustin noted the analyses included traffic from the proposed Village at Salisbury Lake development at the site of the old Salisbury Mall. She explained the term road diet stating in this case it includes reducing the number of existing traffic lanes, and adding features such as bike lanes and medians with landscaping.

Ms. Tustin then summarized the existing and future traffic conditions on Glen Avenue at the two (2) intersections and along the three (3) road segments, based on several scenarios including (1) no road improvements; (2) implementing a road diet; and (3) future traffic with a road diet and also employing either a roundabout or a traffic signal at the Glen Avenue/Civic Avenue intersection. The analysis shows current traffic is acceptable with no worse than a Level of Service (“LOS”) D, but that future traffic will reach a LOS E and F at the Glen Avenue/Civic Center intersection under current road conditions and also if a road diet is constructed. However, a roundabout at this location will improve the LOS A and LOS B if a traffic signal is installed.

Ms. Tustin displayed several illustrations for road diet options along Glen Avenue, which included closing access to the Wicomico High School parking lot and options to improve safety at the drop off area on Glen Avenue at the Civic Center.

Ms. Tustin closed by referencing a 2010 study for Beaglin Park Drive that included recommendations to improve safety between North Park Drive and Hannibal Street. She noted the improvements implemented to date have significantly decreased the number of accidents, from an average of more than five (5) accidents per year to slightly more than one (1) per year.

Chairperson Gordy stated the data showing a decrease in accidents on Beaglin Park Drive as a result of the improvements that were made was impressive. She also complimented Becker Morgan and The Traffic Group on the illustrations contained in the Glen Avenue Study. Finally, she asked Ms. Tustin if, in her professional opinion, a traffic signal or a roundabout would be more effective on Glen Avenue at the Civic Center’s entrance during major events. Ms. Tustin responded that she believed a roundabout would work better as it would allow traffic to move more smoothly, and a traffic signal would probably require traffic control to prevent significant backups.

Chairperson Gordy thanked Ms. Tustin and Mr. Parsons for the presentation.

U.S. Route 13 Pedestrian and Cyclist Safety and Connectivity Study Presentation

Marc Coté & Savannah Edwards (The Rossi Group)

Chairperson Gordy welcomed Marc Coté & Savannah Edwards with The Rossi Group. Mr. Coté started the presentation with an overview of the project. He pointed out the Study Area, which extends along U.S. Route 13 from College Avenue to Kay Avenue, and also included Wesley Drive extending from U.S. Route 13 via Dogwood Drive and Pine Bluff Road. He stated the purpose of the Study was to analyze pedestrian and cyclist needs in this area and identify improvements addressing safety concerns and opportunities to improve non-motorized connectivity.

Ms. Edwards then summarized the existing conditions analysis. She noted 12-hour traffic counts were conducted between 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. between April 28 – May 20, 2022, and

they also conducted a count on Sept. 1, 2022. The counts generally indicated mid-day peaks with high volumes along U.S. Route 13, and high pedestrian activity at the Bateman Street Tunnel and at Dogwood Drive.

Ms. Edwards noted crash data and local land use plans were reviewed, as well as conducting a student survey. The survey generated good feedback that assisted with the development of recommendations contained in the Study.

Mr. Coté summarized the nine (9) concept plans developed within the Study Area. Short-term and long-term options were developed for both Dogwood Drive and College Avenue at U.S. Route 13, with the short-term options having a much lower cost and consisting of pedestrian signals and crosswalk enhancements. The long-term option for Dogwood Drive included an underground tunnel under U.S. Route 13, and proposed a pedestrian bridge for College Avenue. Mr. Coté continued to present concept plans for the other intersections with U.S. Route 13, including Bateman Street; Pine Bluff Road; and Kay Avenue; as well as concept plans for Wesley Drive bike and turn lane improvements along the length of U.S. Route 13 within the Study Area.

Ms. Edwards presented the prioritization schedule and cost estimates for the concept plans. The prioritization schedule was broken down into short-term projects (0-3 years); mid-term projects (3-7 years); and long-term projects (7+ years).

Chairperson Gordy asked Mr. Hall to summarize the next steps for the Committee, and Mr. Hall stated that comments provided by the TAC would be incorporated into the Study by The Rossi Group and presented to the MPO Council at a future meeting. The Study would then be provided to the City of Salisbury, Wicomico County, Salisbury University and State Highway Administration for their consideration when developing future projects and budgets.

Chairperson Gordy thanked Ms. Edwards and Mr. Coté for the presentation.

Transit Development Plan (“TDP”) for Shore Transit Presentation

Mr. Dan Dalton & Mr. Will Sutton (KFH Group)

Chairperson Gordy welcomed Dan Dalton and Will Sutton with KFH Group.

Mr. Dalton stated the development of this Plan was a nine (9) month process that concluded in June. He noted a TDP is required by the Maryland Transit Administration and is a 5-year Plan evaluates existing transit services and recommends potential improvements. Shore Transit uses it as a guide for future projects, and these projects need to be in the TDP when Shore Transit seeks funding for them. He stated the Shore Transit Advisory Board endorsed the Plan in June.

He presented the needs assessment that helped formulate the Plan, which included input from the Shore Transit Advisory Board and Staff, Rider Survey, and a Community Survey of non-riders, in addition to stakeholder interviews and a review of recent plans and studies.

Mr. Dalton summarized the results from a rider survey, which included desired service improvements such as additional weekend service, more frequent service, earlier service in the morning and later service in the evening, and more direct services. He then shared the community survey results that identified factors to encourage public transit use, which included improved access to transit information, expanded evening and weekend service, earlier service in the mornings, and on-demand service using smartphone apps.

Mr. Sutton discussed Microtransit and explained this is an on-demand, real-time service that results in dynamic routing and scheduling and requires less resources than what is used for a traditional bus line. Trips can be requested via a smartphone app and can be more efficient since smaller vehicles are used with automated scheduling. An assessment was conducted to determine where this option may be most effective and a pilot project in Salisbury, including the northern part of the City, is being recommended, and depending on the success of that project additional routes could be added in other areas of Salisbury or perhaps in Princess Anne and/or Snow Hill.

Mr. Dalton presented potential phasing of projects, with phases consisting of Short-term (1-2 years); Mid-term (3-4 years); and Long-term (year 5 and beyond). Short-term projects included expanded weekend service and the Salisbury Microtransit Pilot Program; Mid-term projects included increased service frequency and expanded Microtransit services; and Long-term projects included additional Microtransit services and route structure reassessment.

Chairperson Gordy asked if any of the smaller municipalities in Wicomico County were evaluated for possible Microtransit services, specifically Hebron, Mardela Springs and Sharptown on the County's west side and Pittsville and Willards along U.S. Route 50 on the County's east side. Mr. Sutton responded they didn't look specifically at those towns as the primary focus was the City of Salisbury, but they did look at the entire region and found, at least at this time, the demand didn't appear to support this type of service.

There were no further questions, and Chairperson Gordy thanked Mr. Dalton and Mr. Sutton for presenting.

Proposed Amendments – 2019 Long Range Transportation Plan – Connect 2050, Appendix F

Keith Hall (S/WMPO)

Chairperson Gordy asked Mr. Hall to present the proposed amendments to the 2019 Long Range Transportation Plan ("LRTP").

Mr. Hall stated annual amendments to the LRTP are necessary to ensure consistency between the Maryland and Delaware capital plans, the States' Transportation Improvements Programs ("STIP") and the MPO's TIP. Projects included in the TIP have to also be included in the LRTP in order to be funded.

Mr. Hall explained the Highway Needs Inventory ("HNI") for Maryland and noted these projects generally don't change in the LRTP, but when the LRTP is revisited next year the TAC and Council will review these to see if they are still priority projects.

He presented the System Preservation projects for roads, bridges, and bicycle/pedestrian facilities for both Maryland and Delaware. The total estimated cost of the System Preservation projects increased from \$24.2 million to \$29.1 million with the addition of the new projects.

He shared the System Preservation transit-related projects for both states and highlighted the proposed changes. The total estimated cost for these projects decreased from \$55.3 million to \$44.7 million, but he noted these figures fluctuate from year to year and should not be considered an indication of a trend or reduction in long-term funding, but instead should be considered as an evaluation of only this year.

Mr. Hall concluded by stating these proposed amendments were available for public review for 15 days and no comments were received. He stated that Staff endorses forwarding a favorable review to the MPO Council for its consideration at a future meeting.

Chairperson Gordy asked if there were any questions, and seeing none, asked for a motion. Mr. Thomas made a motion to forward a favorable recommendation to the MPO Council on the amendments to the LRTP, Mr. White seconded the motion, and the motion passed unanimously.

Draft FY 2023 – FY 2026 Transportation Improvement Program

Keith Hall (S/WMPO)

Chairperson Gordy asked Mr. Hall to present the draft of the FY 2023 – FY 2026 Transportation Improvement Program ("TIP").

Mr. Hall stated the draft FY 2023 – FY 2026 TIP is a planning-level budget which is a companion document to the State's TIPs and Capital Programs (6-year budgets), and the MPO's Long-Range Transportation Plan. The TIP includes transportation projects within the Urbanized Area that will be funded using federal and/or state monies. As proposed, the Draft FY 2023 - FY 2026 TIP totals \$101.4 million for roadway, bridges, dams, bike and pedestrian, freight design, right-of-way and implementation projects and an additional

\$41.2 million for transit. He noted that the overall anticipated spend over the (4) year planning period is \$142.6 million.

Mr. Hall concluded by stating these proposed amendments were available for public review for 15 days and no comments were received. He stated that Staff endorses forwarding a favorable review to the MPO Council for its consideration at a future meeting.

Chairperson Gordy inquired if there were any questions from the TAC members, and there were none.

A motion was made by Ms. Cinelli-Miller to forward a favorable recommendation on the draft FY 2023 – FY 2026 TIP to the S/WMPO Council for review and action; seconded by Ms. Morris. With all participating members voting in favor and none opposed, the motion passed unanimously.

Member Updates / Other Business

Ms. Cinelli-Miller shared DelDOT is awaiting the results of the 2020 Census to determine what impacts that it may have on future planning efforts.

Ms. Morris stated the Office of State Planning Coordination's Annual Report for 2022 has been published on their Website (stateplanning.delaware.gov) and it contains a wealth of information on development and growth trends, and invited anyone interested to take a look at it.

Ms. Cephas shared there will be three (3) workshops in November pertaining to proposed amendments to Delaware's Low Emission Vehicle Program. The amendments would adopt California's standards by reference and add requirements for zero emitting vehicles for model year 2026 and beyond.

Chairperson Gordy shared that after two (2) years of COVID-19 related delays, Walk Wicomico was finally able to partner with the Wicomico County Health Department and Wor-Wic Community College to hold a walk entitled Shatter the Stigma to bring awareness to opioid addiction, as well as other addictions. She noted the MPO supports WalkWicomico.

S/WMPO Updates

Chairperson Gordy asked if there were any MPO updates that Mr. Hall would like to share.

Mr. Hall stated the Sussex County Bike Network Master Plan is underway with Century Engineering as the consultant. In addition, an RFP for the Brown Street Corridor Study will

be going out shortly with a bid award anticipated approximately 30 days later. The LRTP will be updated in 2023, and unlike the last two (2) updates done in-house, a consultant will be retained for this update as Staff will be focused on managing various MPO studies occurring concurrently with the LRTP update.

Mr. Hall shared MPO Staff is available to provide technical assistance to member jurisdictions and noted the MPO has recently purchased a drone, and staff member Ben Zito has become a FAA certified drone pilot. In addition, the MPO purchased a MioVision video collection unit that can be used for intersection studies or other traffic analyses that don't require a full traffic impact study. Mr. Hall encouraged the member jurisdictions to send him an email explaining the request and the MPO will assist.

Chairperson Gordy stated the information Mr. Hall provided was very interesting, and she asked Mr. Hall if a demonstration of the new technology could be provided at a future meeting, which Mr. Hall agreed.

Public Comments

There were no public comments.

Next Meeting Date/Adjourn

There being no other business before the TAC, upon a motion by Mr. Thomas, seconded by Ms. Cinelli-Miller, with all participating TAC members voting in favor and none opposed, the meeting was adjourned at approximately 12:45 P.M.