



Dover/Kent County Metropolitan Planning Organization

P.O. Box 383, Dover, Delaware 19903

(302) 387-6030 FAX: (302) 387-6032

<http://doverkentmpo.org>

DOVER/KENT MPO COUNCIL MINUTES OF MARCH 5, 2014

Dover/Kent MPO Council Members and /or Representatives thereof attending:

Scott Koenig for Carleton E. Carey, Sr., Mayor, City of Dover, Chairman

Don Tinari, Mayor, Town of Cheswold, for Kent County Municipalities

Mary Ellen Gray for Brad Eaby/Brooks Banta, President, Kent County Levy Court

Stephanie Burris for Delaware Transit Corporation

Drew Boyce, for Shailen Bhatt, Secretary, Delaware Dept. of Transportation

Members not attending:

Terry Pepper, Dep. Dir., Safety & Homeland Security, for Governor Jack Markell, State of Delaware

Brigid Hynes-Cherin, Regional Administrator, Region III, Federal Transit Admin. (FTA)

Marc Dixon for Mary Ridgeway, Division Administrator, Federal Highway Admin. (FHWA)

Non-members attending:

Adam Weiser, DelDOT

Kate Layton, MPO Staff

Catherine Samardza, MPO Staff

Rich Vetter, MPO Staff

James Galvin, MPO Staff

Chris Kirby, MPO Staff

1. Introduction of Members & Guests

2. Public Comments

3. ACTION ITEM: Approval of Agenda

MOTION By Ms. Gray to approve the agenda. Seconded by Mr. Boyce. Motion carried.

4. ACTION ITEM: Approval of Minutes / January 8, 2014

MOTION By Mr. Boyce to approve the minutes. Seconded by Ms. Gray. Motion carried.

5. ACTION ITEM: MPO Staff Job Descriptions & Salary Ranges – R. Vetter

Mr. Vetter noted that the MPO job descriptions and salaries had not been reviewed since 2008. He then presented updated job descriptions and proposed salary ranges for the MPO based on a survey of other MPOs and the MPO member agencies (Kent County, DelDOT, City of Dover).

Council members generally approved of the job descriptions, but there was further discussion regarding the salary ranges. Mr. Vetter noted that these were proposed salary ranges, not salaries. Staff salaries would be addressed in the FY15 Unified Planning Work Program. Materials presented illustrated each MPO position with comparison to similar positions with member agencies. Mr. Vetter was asked if he would want to include increased salaries into the budget; he said he would, if there was enough funding. He was asked if DelDOT had to approve the salaries; it was noted that DelDOT did not have any separate authority outside of its position on the Council. Mr. Boyce expressed concerns over increasing salaries. He said that there would be a new MPO agreement for federal funding due to the Salisbury-Delmar urban area which would redistribute the monies available. Ms. Gray asked if that would decrease the MPOs funding; Mr. Vetter said he thought most of the Salisbury-Delmar funding would come from WILMAPCO's portion. Mr. Boyce said that was not yet determined.

Mr. Koenig asked if the action needed was to adopt the job descriptions; Mr. Vetter said that adopting the job descriptions was the first step, discussing salary ranges could be separate. He noted that the information presented was just a comparison to establish a range.

MOTION By Ms. Gray to adopt the employee position descriptions as presented by staff. Seconded by Ms. Burris.



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Motion carried.

There was further discussion concerning the salary ranges. Mr. Boyce asked how this would fit into the budget; Mr. Vetter said it would be part of the draft UPWP. Mr. Boyce objected to moving MPO salaries to the mid-point range, stating that most employees at DelDOT don't reach midpoint, even highly qualified people were only at 85% of mid-point. Mr. Koenig said a better label would be below-market and market. He said that people progress up, and at the City of Dover most of the 80-85 employees are in the mid-range of approved salaries; the rest are unionized. He said that he was surprised that Mr. Boyce said that few people of DelDOT get to mid-range. Mr. Boyce said there was a cost of living increase but no mechanism to advance salary-wise. He felt that a mid-point comparison with the State was not good. Mr. Vetter suggested using the County's mid and max points. Ms. Gray noted that there are steps in between ranges, based on performance evaluations. Mr. Boyce asked what the goal was for these changes. Mr. Vetter said that the MPO needs to be competitive to attract and keep qualified staff. Mr. Koenig felt the salaries had to gravitate to mid-point "market" but felt that the market was illusive. Ms. Gray said that she felt it would be appropriate to adopt a range of salaries, and then individual salaries could be based on budget, that adopting a salary range was not necessarily attached to the budget process.

Mr. Boyce said it was just data, an average utilized to come up with a proposal based on budget. He said he understood that the MPO was trying to be competitive. Mr. Koenig said he had no objections to an average salary range, but salaries would have to be part of a complete package with the budget. Mr. Boyce asked if there were criteria and a career ladder. Mr. Vetter noted that this was spelled out in the materials. The UPWP would be brought to Council in May. Mr. Koenig said he should bring back a formal proposal then. There were some further questions, and Mr. Vetter noted that the information presented demonstrated where the MPO salaries are in comparison to other agencies.

There was no formal action taken on the salary ranges, but consensus was that this should come back to Council in May with the draft UPWP proposal.

6. Presentation: Highway Safety Improvement Program (HSIP) – US13 Widening **A. Weiser, DelDOT (enclosure)**

Mr. Weiser gave a power point presentation detailing the history of this proposed project coming out of DelDOT's HSIP program. The project area is from Puncheon Run south to the Woodside traffic signal. He reported that there are no more "small" projects or improvements that can fix this stretch of US13. Crashes per mile, time of day and traffic volume were reviewed; these accidents are higher than both Kent County and statewide averages. Council and staff members had questions about specific sections of the project area, including the West Dover Connector and proposed projects in the Camden Comprehensive Plan. Mr. Koenig asked if those projects had been modeled; Mr. Weiser said they had, including the US13 widening. Seventy percent of the accidents are rear-end collisions and are congestion-related. Mr. Kirby asked if the West Dover Connector was taken into consideration when the widening project was modeled. Mr. Weiser said no, but there are charts that predict the area working at or above capacity when the West Dover Connector is finished. Mr. Koenig felt this would have a huge impact to the area, although maybe not in total volume of traffic. Mr. Weiser noted that a map of the project area was reviewed at the Technical Advisory Committee's request, and the area falls within the State's Strategies for Investment Level One designation for investment. Mr. Koenig expressed concerns about encouraging growth. Mr. Boyce said that DelDOT has been working with the Population Consortium, but that it is hard to speculate what would happen in the future. This project would allow for future development in the area. Mr. Kirby asked about service roads and whether or not they could be considered. Mr. Weiser said they were not being considered for this project. Mr. Boyce said there are restrictions on service roads; when DelDOT was planning SR1 they made an agreement with property owners in the area to never consider service roads. DelDOT plans to honor that commitment. He also said that this area is identified as a commercial corridor and they had to balance access with transportation. A service road would be great where they are able to put them in. Ms. Gray asked if "tweaking" the traffic signals or any other solutions offered an alternative to this project. Mr. Weiser said that DelDOT has done all of the low-cost improvements, and that it keeps coming back to safety. He said that in developing the project, they would look at alternatives, such as warning signs, striping, left turn lanes, lane reconfiguration. Mr. Boyce said there are more cars than roadway capacity. Ms. Gray asked if a study could be done to look at this; Mr.



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Weiser said that would be part of the project development. Ms. Gray wanted to know what other studies have looked at this; Mr. Weiser said it was a “mixed bag” that some studies address the issue, and that future growth has been addressed by capacity analysis. Ms. Gray wanted to know what was used to determine whether or not this project was beneficial; Mr. Weiser said it was determined by Level of Service. Ms. Gray asked what level it was; Mr. Weiser said it was not determined yet, but they were looking for “D” or “E.”

7. Discussion Item: Proposed FY2015 UPWP Transportation Studies – R. Vetter

Mr. Vetter noted that most of the proposed studies are continuations from the previous year. New projects include the Dover Bicycle Plan update, a DTC survey for Fixed Route Transit to Sussex County, and a study for Milford of the northeast corner of SR1 and 14.

8. Discussion Item: Draft FY2015-2018 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) – J. Galvin

Mr. Galvin noted that there are some major changes in the new TIP. The Hazard Elimination Program (HEP) program is much larger now. He noted that the changes were illustrated in red on the distributed materials. He reported that the TAC has not seen this yet, that he received the new draft Capital Transportation Program (CTP) after the February TAC meeting, and that there are new projects included. The draft CTP is based on the new gas tax, if approved by legislature. Mr. Vetter asked if there was other revenue; Mr. Boyce said the CTP was based on Governor Markell’s ten cent gas tax increase and \$50M in borrowing by the Department of Transportation over the next 6 years. Mr. Boyce also said that since the debt service has declined, there will be no increase in debt. He also noted that it’s not a “slam dunk,” that out of \$228M in state spending, \$100M is from the proposed increase. If the tax increase is not approved, none of the new projects will be done and the CTP will be basic “life support.” The Governor has announced that the \$40M in escheat monies will not be coming to Transportation. There was further discussion concerning possible revenue from an increase in tolls. Mr. Boyce said that the Governor and Secretary Bhatt are working to illustrate the need for the increase in the gas tax. He noted that Maryland and Pennsylvania both increased the gas tax and have put a lot of money into infrastructure; Delaware doesn’t want to get behind, and needs to stay competitive with neighboring states.

9. MUNICIPALITIES/KENT COUNTY REPORTS: Mayor Carey, Mayor Tinari, Comm. Eaby

Mayor Tinari reported that a major developer has submitted new plans for residential development, and that there is a request for annexation into the town by a commercial property along US13. He also noted that traffic is picking up on Rte. 42, and that growth is being encouraged.

There were no reports from Dover or Kent County.

10. TAC Report – R. Vetter – No report

11. PAC Report – K. Layton

Ms. Layton reported that the PAC had participated in an IPA focus group on a traffic application launched by DelDOT. It was a lively discussion, and was the last in a series of focus group meetings.

12. Staff Report –

12.1 Outreach Activities – K. Layton

12.2 UPWP Progress & Financial Reports – R. Vetter (enclosure)

12.3 Other MPO Projects & Updates – R. Vetter

Ms. Layton reported that she is now in her “tabling season.” The MPO is participating in a number of festivals and seasonal events, including the 55+ Expo, where the MPO partnered with the Dept. of Motor Vehicles, DTC and Mid-Atlantic AAA. The partnership allowed them to obtain a larger booth, and it was the only transportation-related booth at the Expo.

Mr. Vetter updated Council on a number of projects. He reported that the Delaware State University Pedestrian Study was completed. There was discussion concerning the results of the study, and subsequent projects related to the findings (landscaping, wall extension, sidewalk sections).



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Mr. Boyce asked about the recommended amendments for the Metropolitan Transportation Plan; staff said that those amendments would be brought to Council for action in May, along with the new TIP amendments.

MOTION By Ms. Gray to adjourn the meeting. Seconded by Mr. Boyce. Motion carried.

Next Meeting: May 7, 2014