



HEPMPO TAC Meeting – LRTP Existing Conditions

Tuesday, July 27, 2021

1:00pm –3:00pm

Attendees:

Kwame Arhin, FHWA

Jill Baker, Washington County

Rebecca Bankard, MBI

Ian Beam, MDOT TSO

Jim Bender, City of Hagerstown

Luke Benson, MDOT MTA

Jennie Brockman, Jefferson County

Brian Carr, WV DOT

Kevin Cerrone, Washington County

Ken Clohan, WV DOT

Derek Cutler, EBP

Josh Diamond, Foursquare

Kevin Donohue, HEPMPO

Edward Erfurt, City of Ranson

Megan Flick, City of Hagerstown

Jim Frazier, MBI

Tory Gibler, Fehr and Peers

Daryl Hennessy, City of Charles Town

Laura Hoffmaster, Berkley County

Dana Keith, City of Martinsburg

Chris Kinsey, WVDOT

Matt Mullenax, HEPMPO

Tamara Pitts, Washington Co. Engineering

Matt Ridgeway, Fehr and Peers

Kevin Sullivan, WV DOT

Dan Szekeres, MBI

Sean Varsolona, MDOT SHA

Karen Branch Wieland, Integrated Designs

Jason Workman, FHWA

Introduction & Welcome

Matt Mullenax welcomed members to the TAC Meeting and invited attendees to introduce themselves. He reviewed the agenda for the meeting and noted the purpose of the meeting is to provide a status update on the LRTP.

LRTP Project Status and Review

Jim Frazier provided a project status overview and reviewed the LRTP schedule. He noted they are currently finishing up with Phase 1 and will be reaching out soon to local jurisdictions to discuss future developments and growth as part of Phase 2.

Public Outreach Survey Results

Rebecca Bankard gave an overview of the two public outreach surveys and noted that 649 people either completed the MetroQuest Survey or the Intercept Survey. The results of the surveys will help to prioritize the goals for the region as well as identify concerns, needs, and potential projects.

Rebecca shared the results from the MetroQuest Survey. Key takeaways include:

- Traffic congestion, roadway safety, and the environment are the 3 top priorities for the region.
 - Roadway Safety
 - Concerned about the high rate of speeds vehicles are traveling on the roadway
 - Concerned about the number of accidents & the role speed may play in these
 - Identified areas for safety concerns: I-81, US 340, WV 9 north of Martinsburg
 - Traffic Congestion
 - Need for additional lanes
 - Need for public transit and bike/pedestrian facilities to help provide local and regional connections and reduce the number of vehicles on the road
 - Use of alternative routes & back roads to avoid congestion
 - Concerns about the impact of new development on congestion
 - Identified areas for congestion concerns: I-81, I-70, US 340, WV 9 north of Martinsburg
 - Environment
 - Impact of development on flooding and resiliency of infrastructure
- Most anticipate minimal or no change to commute or non-work trips as a result of Covid-19
 - Top employment industries (healthcare, education, manufacturing) may not allow for flexible work from home options
 - Consolidating/grouping trips to reduce frequency of trips made

Intercept Survey Results

Karen Branch Wieland provided an overview of the intercept results and highlighted Key differences from the MetroQuest Survey. She mentioned that the survey teams deployed in Hagerstown, Martinsburg, and Charles Town to target environmental justice communities within the region. Key differences and takeaways include:

- Economic Prosperity identified as a top priority for the region
 - Highlights the need for higher paying opportunities within the region
- Greater Reliance on transit/walking
 - Larger percentage of work trips with shorter trip distances
 - More participants took public transit or bikes/walked to work as primary mode
 - Need for new transit service and more frequent transit service
 - Need for sidewalks & crosswalk

Review of Studies for Local & Regional Needs and Issue

Dan Szekeres gave an overview of the local & regional needs and issues that were identified in the review of plans for Maryland and West Virginia. I-81 in Maryland, WV 9, WV 51, and US 340 have been identified for improvements within these plans. He also noted that truck parking and rail crossings will need to be addressed and emphasized moving forward.

Dan asked if there were other plans or studies that should be looked at or are there any specific transportation/land use needs that should be reflected in the plan.

- Jennie Brockman noted that transit agencies are currently having trouble finding bus drivers and cannot keep routes open on a regular basis. Are other public transit agencies also having this issue? Josh Diamond noted that this is an industry-wide issue, and it may be a long-term issue that has to be dealt with.

Project Financial Forecasts

Dan explained that the LRTP needs to be fiscally constrained. He noted the 'Expansion' from the Maryland Operating & Capital Expenditures chart and 'MPO Improvements' from the West Virginia Improvement Funding chart are funds that are usually given to the MPOs. He mentioned needing to get a better handle on how the money being spent on maintenance, system preservation, bridges, etc. to better understand what HEPMPO's pie chart would look like.

Dan also noted that the dollars available has increased except in Washington County. This could be due to the reallocation of money to maintenance. He explained that funding for capital expansion projects is more limited than in the past.

LRTP Component status report

Dan provided a brief overview of the goals, objectives, and strategies. He noted that the 7 goals line up with the State's DOT goals. The objectives have not changed since the last LRTP but as you go through the needs assessment and public input, the objectives will be reassessed to see if there are objectives that should be added or possibly removed. The objectives guide the performance measures and lead to the development of MPO strategies that will help accomplish the goal. Dan also noted that the performance measures will continue to be revisited throughout the process to better reflect discussions. He mentioned that not all of the performance measures have to be qualitative.

Demographics

Dan discussed the current and projected population and employment trends in the region. These can be used as part of the project prioritization process to focus projects. He mentioned reaching out to local jurisdictions to get a better understanding of where growth is occurring in region. This will help guide the land use vision for the region and the identification of potential transportation impacts into the future.

Traffic Congestion

Dan noted that TomTom GPS data was acquired to calculate peak travel periods for the region. The data will be used to identify needs and see how traffic congestion in the region has changed since the last LRTP as well as the impact of previous investments.

Safety

Dan discussed the Regional Traffic Safety Study and the important role it will play in accessing safety in the region and in the LRTP. He did note that the Study's crash data was from 2013-2017 but new crash data is being obtained. The data will allow for the identification of new priority areas and to see if there are areas with changes in crashes.

Travel Connections

Dan gave an overview of travel connections within the region. The goal is to identify top trip generators in the area. These generators will guide priorities for transportation and multimodal infrastructure in order to better support and enhance these connections and movements. Additional assessments that assess travel from the HEPMPO region to outside the region, commuting connections, and trips by time and purpose are in progress.

Transit

Josh Diamond gave an overview of existing transit service within the region. He noted that Covid-19 had a large impact on transit ridership in the region with agencies seeing sharp declines in ridership in March/April 2020. He also noted that regardless of teleworking opportunities, it is important that transit continue to service those who must perform their jobs in person. Josh also reviewed the transit need analysis and the transit propensity analysis to show where transit is supported and needed in the region. He discussed recent regional transit recommendations from the previous LRTP and TDPs and mentioned that recommendations for this LRTP will help to fill gaps and improve the transit experience for all users.

Freight

Derek Cutler gave an overview of the freight and freight activity in the region. He discussed the data sources that are being incorporated and noted that they are running into a data issue. HEPMPO region is a subset of two state regions. In addition, he mentioned that the available Freight Analysis Framework (FAF) is from 2017 so freight forecasts using this data would not be relevant and that new FAF data would not be available until the Fall. He asked what the best data option would be moving forward. He noted that there are opportunities to include data sets that may be updated in the fall and they will also be completing stakeholder outreach survey.

Bicycle/Pedestrian

Tory Gibler reviewed the approach for enhancing bicycle/pedestrian facilities within region, which includes a review of existing plans as well as mapping and overlaying data sources. This will be used to identify gaps map within the network and see where there are opportunities for connections. Tory discussed next steps which includes taking the existing and proposed infrastructure and applying safety and equity overlays to identify gaps and needs assessment. She noted that they will be build upon the MetroQuest survey results and use the results to identify where people believe infrastructure is needed. Tory also identified groups for outreach and asked if there were other groups that should be included.

LRTP Website and Data Repository

Dan discussed the Direction2050 website and the data repository that have been developed as part of this LRTP update. The website will provide LRTP updates. The data repository, while still in development, will serve as an archive and resource to understand what data was collected since not all of the maps and data will be in the final LRTP document. The data repository can also be shared with other regional planning partners.

Future Emphasis Areas – Next Steps

Dan briefly discussed Asset Management & Resiliency and Lower-Cost Operation Strategies & new Technology. Both areas of emphasis will involve and rely on outreach to the DOTs.

Jim discussed the next steps, which includes the future conditions analysis as well as outreach to local municipalities to learn about future developments and project needs. He noted the next TAC meeting will be in December/January and will focus on the fiscal constraint portion of the plan.

Matt thanked everyone for attending and their participation and asked for any additional comments.

- Sean asked if Maryland's TSMO efforts were going to be included in the LRTP. Matt noted that we will be following and ensure that those recommendations are incorporated in the long-range plan.