

APPROVED

**2/18/2016 MINUTES
SOUTH WESTERN REGION
METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION**

Chairman Jayme Stevenson -- Vice Chairman Robert Mallozzi

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888 Washington Boulevard, Stamford, CT 06901

SWRMPO MEMBER ATTENDANCE

DarienFirst Selectman Jayme Stevenson
Greenwich.....First Selectman Peter Tesei
New Canaan..... Alternate Steve Kleppin
NorwalkAbsent

Stamford.....Alternate Michael Pollard
Weston.....First Selectman Nina Daniel
Westport.....First Selectman James Marpe
Wilton.....First Selectman Lynne Vanderslice

Norwalk Transit. .Chief Executive Officer Kimberlee Morton
Stamford Transit. Transportation Bureau Chief Joshua Benson
Westport Transit. Absent

OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE

Bethel First Selectman Matthew Knickerbocker, Bridgewater First Selectman Curtis Read, Brookfield First Selectman Stephen Dunn, New Milford First Selectman David Gronbach, Newtown First Selectman Patricia Llodra, Redding First Selectman Julia Pemberton, Ridgefield First Selectman Rudy Marconi, Sherman First Selectman Clay Cope, Richard Schreiner of HARtransit, Roxane Fromson and Patrick Zapatka of CT DOT, Susan Duskow of Johnson Controls Inc., Greenwich Deputy Commissioner of Public Works James Michel, New Milford Town Engineer Daniel Stanton, Tracy Alston of Eversource, WestCOG Director Francis Pickering and staff David Hannon, Michael Towle, Patty Payne, Rob Sachnin and Jon Chew.

CALL TO ORDER

Jayme Stevenson called the SWRMPO meeting to order at 2:13 PM after which Rudy Marconi called the HVMPO meeting to order. The two chairs then lead the joint segment of the meeting thru alternative management of agenda items.

FEATURED GUEST

Patrick Zapatka, Program Manager of the CTDOT Community Connectivity Program, then made a Power Point presentation. He noted that CTDOT is now accepting applications for its new Community Connectivity Program.

An approved application enables a Road Safety Audit to be provided by a CTDOT consultant, roadways under both state and local jurisdiction being eligible. Key project components of the Audit are bicycle and pedestrian access, safety improvements and accident reduction.

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A professional report will be prepared at no cost to the municipality, an important result of which is that project stakeholders in the municipality will be better organized. The current projection is that \$44 million will be available over five years to fund the resulting report recommendations, he said.

A question and answer period followed. Regarding Route 1 in Darien, detailed planning for pedestrian improvements has already been completed, yet the Town is having difficulty determining how to move forward. And in Ridgefield the Rail Trail is already constructed but there are safety concerns as to priority use by pedestrians, joggers and bicyclists.

Mr. Zapatka stated that the policy intent of the new Community Connectivity Program is broad enough such that it is fully applicable to these specialized needs. After additional discussion he was thanked for his presentation.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There was no public participation.

JOINT INFORMATION AND DISCUSSION ITEMS

Federal Transit Administration 5310 Program: Rick Schreiner of HARTransit reviewed this grant related item, which requires each MPO to set priorities for grant applications to CTDOT for wheelchair accessible vans serving seniors and persons with mobility impairments, also for projects and activities supporting same.

It was noted that for past application cycles HARTransit had managed program administration for HVMPO, and for this cycle is so serving both HVMPO and SWRMPO, reviewing and ranking applications received utilizing CTDOT's criteria and point system.

Applications are due by the end of April, Mr. Schreiner said, with six applicants identified thus far and inquiries from two others received. There was brief discussion. Mr. Schreiner is to report back with recommended priorities for each MPO's consideration, following consultation with other stakeholders.

Draft MPO Operating Procedures: Francis Pickering reviewed draft MPO Operating Procedures that are identical for the two MPOs within WestCOG, referencing the draft in the agenda packet.

The goal is to maximize efficiency and reduce the potential for confusion with three closely related regional organizations operating simultaneously, he said.

To accomplish this the MPO Operating Procedures should promote uniformity between the structures of SWRMPO and HVMPO, then identical relationships of both MPOs to their host agency WestCOG.

The starting point for achieving these objectives is a revision of the 2006 SWRMPO Operating Procedures, approached primarily through updating to new federal standards and some streamlining. The SWRMPO revision is then structured to serve as a single reference document for use by both MPOs.

Mr. Pickering also noted that as HVMPO relies solely upon Robert's Rules of Order its operation needs more comprehensive management as protection from liability if a decision is contested.

A discussion followed. Kim Morton stated that rather than "each MPO appoint one or more transit operator representatives", the Norwalk Transit District should be

specifically mentioned as one of those transit operators in the new procedures, or at least contain reference to the designated recipient of federal transit funding.

There was then additional discussion of this agenda item, which will be addressed at the next meeting.

CT State Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan Update: Francis Pickering noted that CTDOT has initiated an update of its 2009 Connecticut Statewide Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan and accompanying Statewide Bicycle Map. Increasingly in the Region, importance is being placed on creating bike friendly environments and walkable communities, he said.

The schedule for the update was included on an agenda attachment. During the discussion there were comments that the projected high costs associated with the proposed Merritt Parkway Trail at \$250 million show that proposal is not viable.

VOTING ITEMS: HVMPO

HVMPO Minutes from 1/21/2016: After review and on a motion made Matt Knickerbocker and seconded by Stephen Dunn, the minutes of the HVMPO meeting of 1/21/2016 were unanimously approved.

HVMPO Transportation Improvement Program Amendments: Dave Hannon reviewed Project 0016-0098 entitled "Safety Improvements in the Vicinity of Wewaka Brook on Route 133 in Bridgewater, CT." The scope of work includes roadway reconstruction, slope stabilization, drainage and safety improvements, mill and overlay and retaining wall construction, he said.

The project budget of \$10,000,000 is currently programmed for 100% state funds, but is proposed to be revised to 80% federal funds matched by 20% state funds. The specifics of proposed federal funding are \$4,000,000 thru the federal STPA funding category and \$4,000,000 thru the federal STPO funding category.

Mr. Hannon explained that the change is to insure the full programming of federal funds in federal fiscal year 2016 and that there are no revisions to the project's specifications due to the proposed switch from state to federal funding sources.

There was brief discussion during which Bridgewater First Selectman Curtis Read expressed his support for the amendment. Then on a motion made Curtis Read and seconded by Matt Knickerbocker the Transportation Improvement Program amendment for Project 0016-0098 was unanimously approved.

VOTING ITEMS: SWRMPO

SWRMPO Minutes from 1/21/2016: After review and on a motion made by Peter Tesei and seconded by Jim Marpe, the minutes of the SWRMPO meeting of 1/21/2016 were unanimously approved.

SWRMPO Transportation Improvement Program Amendments: There were no amendments for consideration.

HVMPO ADJOURNMENT

Chairman Rudy Marconi stated that the next joint SWRMPO - HVMPO meeting would be held at 11 AM before the WestCOG meeting scheduled for 3/17/2016 at the Ridgefield Library.

Then on motion made by Curtis Read and a second by Matt Knickerbocker, it was voted unanimously to adjourn the HVMPO meeting at 2:53 PM.

SWRMPO INFORMATION AND DISCUSSION ITEMS

Responses to 1/21 Meeting Questions: Rob Sachnin provided members updates to questions raised at the 1/21 SWRMPO meeting, including the type of information displayed on Variable Messaging Signs (VMS), stakeholder involvement for project 173-472, and the process for updating/changing information on road signs.

South Western Region LOTCIP Update: Rob Sachnin provided an update to SWR LOTCIP activities, noting the current project solicitation to expend the remaining multi-million dollar balance. Mr. Sachnin encouraged municipalities to submit project applications, and explained that applications would be reviewed by the Transportation Technical Advisory Committee (TAG), with staff assistance, to determine priority projects within the region.

MPO Alternates and Transportation Advisory Group Representation: Rob Sachnin offered members an opportunity to update their listing of MPO Alternates, including Transportation TAG Representatives and Alternates. He noted that since the last update, there may have been staff turnover or other changes, and this update would serve to ensure adequate municipal coverage at meetings, if desired.

Route 1 Bus Rapid Transit: Rob Sachnin next informed members of the recently convened inter-regional meeting to discuss a Route 1 Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) study. Mr. Sachnin explained that while still early in the process, this CTDOT-sponsored project seeks to identify feasible locations and methods for implemented BRT. He added that such efforts are consistent with Connecticut's LetsGo CT 5-year ramp up report, which references BRT service along Route 1 between Norwalk and Stamford.

SWRMPO ADJOURNMENT

Chairman Jayme Stevenson stated that the next joint SWRMPO - HVMPO meeting would be held at 11 AM before the WestCOG meeting scheduled for 3/17/2016 at the Ridgefield Library.

Then on a on a motion made by Lynn Vanderslice and a second by Peter Tesei, it was voted unanimously to adjourn the SWRMPO meeting at 2:59 PM.