

## **TECHNICAL COMMITTEE**

Tuesday, August 1, 2017

9:38 to 11:24 A.M.

### **MINUTES**

The meeting was called to order at 9:38 A.M. by Mr. Kwaku Duah.

#### **1. APPROVAL OF JULY 12, 2017 TECHNICAL COMMITTEE MINUTES**

Mr. Duah directed the Technical Committee members to review the minutes of the July meeting. Mr. Chris Witt made a motion to approve the minutes and Mr. Steve Cohoon seconded. The members voted to approve the minutes as is.

#### **2. SHA CASE STUDY: MOVING A PROJECT THROUGH THE NEPA PROCESS**

Mr. John Schmidt, Ms. Karen Arnold, Mr. Joe Kresslein, and Ms. Kristi Kucharek of the Maryland State Highway Administration (SHA) presented information on the NEPA/MEPA agency and public involvement processes. The presentation covered an overview of the NEPA process, Section 4(f) requirements, TERP and agency coordination, public involvement, planning and environmental linkages (PEL) studies, several SHA projects, and SHA's role in local government projects.

There are two categories of projects: (1) system preservation and (2) major capital projects. The vast majority of projects are system preservation. These projects do not have a significant impact on the environment. NEPA evaluations are required for federally funded projects, and MEPA evaluations are required for state-funded projects. MEPA is the Maryland Environmental Policy Act and NEPA is the National Environmental Policy Act. Mr. Schmidt then described which situations call for Environmental Assessments (EAs), which call for Environmental Impact Statements (EIS), and which call for Categorical Exclusions (CEs). CEs are performed when it appears from the outset that there will not be any environmental impacts. Environmental effects reports are performed for State projects that do not need federal funds.

Information on Section 4(f) of the U.S. DOT Act of 1966 was then presented. The most common Section 4(f) effect is from the use of historic bridges. Section 4(f) evaluation is required if the project requires use (conversion) of property from significant historic/archeological sites and/or publicly owned public parks/recreation areas, or wildlife/waterfowl refuges.

SHA reviewed components of their process, including development of a public involvement plan and outreach tools, and the Transportation Environmental/Regulatory Process (TERP). TERP is a streamlined process for major projects, which provides agencies a framework for how planning is conducted. There are monthly interagency review meetings, which the MPO attends, and local jurisdictions are invited to attend. It was also mentioned that the SHA shares a public outreach process with the Army Corps of Engineers.

Information on the Planning and Environmental Linkages (PEL) process and a PEL case study were presented. PEL is an FHWA approach to transportation decision-making that considers environmental, community, and economic goals early in the transportation planning process, prior to NEPA. Information, analysis, and products developed during planning can be used to inform the NEPA process. The PEL case study presented was MD 32 in Howard and Carroll counties. There was a question regarding whether federal aid can be used for PEL studies.

Ms. Karen Arnold described the NEPA approach for U.S. 219 in Garrett County. She also presented information on the planning process for MD 198. SHA was able to consider impacts to MD 295 as de "minimus" and temporary use. It was mentioned that the NEPA process goes to just under 30% Preliminary Engineering (PE) for a project.

Two other projects were also presented: MD 30 – Hampstead Urban Reconstruction and the U.S. 40 bridges over the Gunpowder River.

Mr. Kresslein stated that SHA can coordinate with the MPO during the PEL process. Ms. Regina Aris asked when is the best time and place to discuss any MPO thoughts that come up in our outreach process. Ms. Martha Arzu McIntosh shared that her county closely coordinates with SHA. In response to another question, Mr. Kresslein said signed EISs need to be re-evaluated every 3 years.

Mr. Kresslein said there is an environmental procedures manual, although every project is unique. SHA does a tour every couple of years to roll out their process to local governments. He will check to see when the next tour is, so that MPO representatives can attend. Also, there is NEPA and PEL information on the FHWA web site.

***[PowerPoint: MDOT SHA's NEPA/MEPA Agency and Public Involvement Process]***

### **3. OTHER BUSINESS**

There was no other business

## **ATTENDANCE**

### ***Technical Committee Members***

Martha Arzu-McIntosh – Anne Arundel County Department of Planning and Zoning  
Ken Choi– Maryland Department of Planning (MDP) (by phone)  
David Cookson – Howard County Department of Planning & Zoning  
Kwaku Duah – City of Annapolis Department of Transportation  
Steve Cohoon – Queen Anne’s County Department of Public Works  
Emery Hines – Baltimore County Department of Public Works  
Alex Rawls – Harford County Department of Planning & Zoning (by phone)  
Chris Witt – Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT)  
Ted Yurek – State Highway Administration (SHA)

### ***Staff and Guests***

Bala Akundi - Baltimore Metropolitan Council (BMC)  
Regina Aris - BMC  
Karen Arnold - SHA  
Terry Freeland - BMC  
Blake Fisher – BMC  
Don Halligan- BMC  
Victor Henry - BMC  
Mara Kaminowitz, BMC  
Zach Kaufman – BMC  
Sanghyeon Ko - BMC  
Joe Kresslein - SHA  
Kristi Kucharek - SHA  
Todd Lang – BMC  
Doug Simmons - JMT  
Sara Tomlinson - BMC