



NASHVILLE AREA

**Metropolitan Planning Organization**



## Meeting #5 NOTES

### MPO/GNRC Joint Steering Committee on Regional Coordination

Wednesday, March 29, 2017

- Mayor Reed welcomed and called the meeting to order. She revisited the Joint Committee's last meeting (February 2), reviewing the recommendation to integrate the MPO and GNRC. Mayor Reed asked committee members to engage and ask questions, stating that she wanted everyone to feel good about the discussion.
  - Mayor McMillan provided a more detailed recap of the February 2 meeting. She stated that the questions brought up during that meeting (and others) have been addressed by MPO and GNRC staff, and Michael Skipper and Michelle Lacewell will be reviewing those during this meeting.
  - Mayor Reed asked Michelle Lacewell to review activities since February 2 meeting.
  - Michelle Lacewell (MPO) provided an overview of activities since the February 2 meeting. She stated that staff has:
    - Held meeting on March 16 with state and federal agencies that fund the MPO or GNRC, including TDOT and FHWA, to solicit feedback on the answers provide in the packet today and to solicit feedback on additional concerns. (list of agencies included in packet)
    - Held meeting on March 16 with area non-profit organizations who work with either the MPO or GNRC to share with them the answers to common questions about integration. (list of non-profit organizations included in packet)
    - Corresponded with TDOT via letter on March 2 to address questions and concerns enumerated in TDOT letter dated 2/13.
    - Held joint staff meetings with MPO and GNRC staff discussing outcomes of the February 2 meeting;
    - Conducted a survey of staff to get further input;
    - Held several one-on-one meetings with various public and private sector partners;
    - Extended the timeline of the MOA through action of the MPO Board and GNRC Executive Committee.
  - Michael Skipper (GNRC) reminded the Committee that both the MPO and GNRC boards endorsed the Committee's initial recommendation in February. That recommendation was based on an analysis of four options to improve coordination. The proposal to fully integrate the MPO program into GNRC was chosen among those four as the committee's initial recommendation. The Joint Committee then asked staff to help illustrate what
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integration would look like and to provide answers to common questions and concerns about integration prior to the committee's finalizing their decision to recommend full integration to the boards. He stated after today's discussion, he hoped the Committee will feel comfortable enough to finalize their recommendation to integrate the two organizations.

- Skipper told the Committee that he and Lacewell would walk through the GNRC and MPO organizational charts, as well as the potential organizational chart for an integrated organization to give the Committee a sense of how the MPO's staff and responsibilities could be integrated with GNRC.
- Lacewell provided an overview of the MPO organizational chart.
- Skipper discussed the GNRC's current organizational chart, board makeup, and committee structure.
- Skipper presented potential organizational chart for the integrated organization.
- Lacewell provided the Committee with a look at where the MPO functions would exist in the integrated organizational chart.
- Skipper discussed potential committee structures, how a Joint Transportation Committee could provide a space for discussion and potentially region-wide transportation planning activities. He stated that this structure does not propose any changes to the MPO board, but simply a way for the MPO to work with the RPO and others on transportation planning.
- Vice Mayor Briley stated that the mechanics of the merged organization were unclear. For example, he pointed out that the MPO has an interim director now and asked who would be responsible for hiring the next Executive Director. He continued asking if the MPO would have a CEO.
- Skipper replied that in an integrated organization there would be an MPO coordinator to oversee the day to day functions of the MPO staff and to ensure the Unified Planning Work Program is executed as adopted, a similar structure to MPO's across the country. He stated that the GNRC executive director would be held accountable for performance of all the programs supported by the GNRC.
- Briley asked for clarity on how funds contributed by members of the MPO would be spent, specifically if MPO staff would still be working solely on MPO work.
- Skipper replied that given the significant amount of work associated with the MPO program, that it is highly likely that current MPO staff would continue to work exclusively on MPO products, but that they would also have an opportunity to work on other things as interest and availability were present. That said, Skipper, assured the Committee that time and funds would be tracked appropriately. He stated that it is not uncommon for MPOs (even in TN) to be staffed by people not working solely on MPO products. Skipper added that while the MPO is tasked with producing specific, required products, we can go above that, producing other products.

- Briley asked if there would be a document that outlines the acquisition of the MPO by the GNRC.
- Skipper replied that integration was probably a better word than acquisition. He stated that the MPO Board would simply have to agree to accepting GNRC as its staff support, as opposed to the Metro Planning Commission. Skipper added that the MPO would have to amend its Prospectus document, UPWP, and other federally-required documents in order to reflect the change in structure and/or planning process.
- Mayor Moore stated that he thought staff had done a nice job on the organizational chart, though it does seem complicated. He asked what input staff had on its development.
- Sabrina Davis (FHWA) asked how the MPO would function under the Joint Transportation Committee.
- Skipper restated that the MPO would still exist and that the prospectus, bylaws, and UPWP will be amended to spell out the specific roles. The Joint Transportation Committee is not intended to replace the MPO function, but to provide an opportunity for members of the two MPOs and RPO within the GNRC region to coordinate on transportation planning.
- Tanisha Hall (TDOT) asked for clarity as to the purpose of the meeting.
- Skipper stated that the meeting was not to work out all the procedural/operational details of an integration, but to confirm with the Joint Committee members that they still believe that integration is the best option for improving regional coordination, having now seen the potential organizational chart and answers to common questions and concerns.
- Tanisha Hall (TDOT) questioned how the Committee could make a decision today without more detail.
- Skipper replied that the decision before the Committee today would start the integration process which would be the result of several subsequent board actions over the next several months.
- Tanisha Hall (TDOT) suggested that the misunderstanding was perhaps semantics, but that TDOT still had some questions.
- Skipper replied that integration was a complex process and that there were likely going to be questions throughout the process that staff would be happy to address.
- Vice Mayor Briley stated that there are basic legal questions that should be addressed, such as changing the MPO bylaws.
- Skipper stated that the staff has brought examples from peers as to how agreements between a transportation policy board and a regional council could be constructed. An amendment to the bylaws would be necessary, but those changes would need to be discussed and agreed to by MPO board members during the process.
- Theresa Claxton (FHWA) stated that the Committee seems to be discussing two things -- just changing the fiscal agent of the MPO to GNRC as well as full integration of the MPO and

GNRC. She also asked if staff was talking about having a UPWP that covers the entire GNRC region.

- Lacewell stated that we are just discussing a move of the MPO program and staff to the GNRC, not an expansion of the Nashville Area MPO's planning area.
- Mayor Burgess asked if goal was to get one organization with one board.
- Lacewell replied that that was the goal -- one board and one organization, overseeing multiple programs.
- Skipper added that the goal is to integrate staff, planning efforts, and regional decision-making. He stated that he understood that not everything could be put on a definite timeline, such as TDOT contracting which is dictated by external factors. He said there are a lot of steps that will need to be taken after the decision to integrate.
- Vice Mayor Briley stated that he is in favor of integration, but it unclear as to the difference in today's decision and the decision made by the Committee to endorse integration in February. He added that he would like to see a contract.
- Lacewell stated that at the February meeting the Committee decided to pick one of the four options presented. Between now and that meeting staff addressed many outstanding questions specific to integration option selected by the Committee at the last meeting. There isn't necessarily a different outcome from the last meeting if the Joint Committee still feels comfortable with their prior recommendation. This was an opportunity to revisit that recommendation with the benefit of additional information before moving forward.
- Mayor Burgess asked if there has been a decision as to how the Boards would be integrated?
- Vice Mayor Briley asked if the Transportation Committee would report to the GNRC board.
- Lacewell stated that it would not. The committee would be comprised of a subset of GNRC council members who serve on the MPO now and will provided the authority to make MPO-related decisions.
- KB Aboagye (TDOT) asked how often the Joint Transportation Committee would meet.
- Lacewell replied that the committees would determine their meeting frequency and schedules.
- Mayor Reed suggested that the Committee should probably have another meeting to address some of these questions. She asked the Committee to please read the Q&A in their meeting packet and to email staff any specific questions. She stated that the Committee should try to meet again prior to April 19.
- Vice Mayor Briley stated that some members on the Committee needed to see the specific changes to the bylaws and other mechanics. He suggested that another meeting might not be necessary and that the Committee could endorse and let the MPO and GNRC Boards hash out details.

- Skipper confirmed that staff is happy to produce additional information and provide draft documents for review at the pleasure of the Committee.
- Mayor Carman stated that he hasn't changed his mind and that only the Boards have the powers to change the bylaws, etc. – the Joint Committee's role is only to make a recommendation.
- Mayor Kirkman (Westmoreland) agreed.
- Mayor Norman (Maury County) made a motion for the Committee move forward.
- Mayor Carman seconded the motion.
- Vice Mayor Briley questioned what was being asked in the vote and asked how the proposed vote would differ from that taken on February 2.
- Skipper replied that staff had tried to answer some of the questions that were outstanding, addressing those in the Q and A and the potential organization chart in the meeting packet.
- Mayor Burgess stated that he needed to better understand how the boards would function.
- Mayor Holt suggested that it might be good for the staff to provide the Committee with some different scenarios, specifically mentioning how the MPO would work.
- Mayor Reed reiterated the need to meet again.
- Mayor McMillan stated that the Committee needs to have a good understanding of what we are talking about before going back to our Boards.
- Vice Mayor Briley stated that he specifically needed to understand how the GNRC bylaws will need to be changed.
- Mayor Norman withdrew the motion to endorse the recommendation to integrate.
- Skipper asked the Committee to tell the staff what specific questions or documents they need to see.
- Lacewell said that staff will poll Committee members to find a meeting date.
- The meeting was adjourned.

Join Committee Members in Attendance:

- Howard Bradley, Robertson Co.
- David Briley, Metro Nashville
- Ernest Burgess, Rutherford Co.
- Jill Burgin, City of Brentwood
- Carroll Carman, Hartsville-Trousdale Co.
- Anthony Holt, Sumner Co.
- Randall Hutto, Wilson Co.
- Jerry Kirkman, Westmoreland
- Kim McMillan, Clarksville

- Ken Moore, Franklin
- Charlie Norman, Maury Co.
- Mary Esther Reed, Smyrna
- Jessie Wallace, Humphreys Co.