

HRMPO TAC Minutes September 3, 2020, 2:00 p.m.

Via Zoom Video/Audio Conferencing Call

Voting Member	Alternates	Staff
City of Harrisonburg	✓ Patrick Wilcox, Rockingham	✓ Ann Cundy
✓ Tom Hartman	Jay Litten, Bridgewater	✓ Jonathan Howard
✓ Bill Blessing, Chair	Shane Stevens, Mt. Crawford	Rita Whitfield
✓ Thanh Dang	Dennis Driver, Mt. Crawford	
✓ Erin Yancey	Avery Daugherty, Harrisonburg	Others
✓ Gerald Gatobu	Cheryl Spain, Harrisonburg	✓ Sam Styers, McCormick Taylor
Rockingham County	Dan Rublee, Harrisonburg	✓ Burgess Lindsey, VDOT
✓ Rhonda Cooper, Vice Chair	✓ Jakob zumFelde, Harrisonburg	✓ Sarah Rhodes, Richmond Regional TPO
✓ Bradford Dyjak	✓ Jeff Lineberry, VDOT	✓ David Birkenthal, Shenandoah Alliance
Casey Armstrong	✓ Brad Reed, VDOT	✓ Katie Schwing, OIPI
Town of Bridgewater	Josh Dunlap, VDOT	
✓ Alex Wilmer	Grant Sparks, DRPT	
Town of Dayton		
Susan Smith		
Town of Mt. Crawford	Non-Voting Members	
J. C. Smythers	Kevin Jones, FHWA	
VDOT	Michelle DeAngelis, FTA	
Terry Short	Bill Yates, JMU	
✓ Don Komara	Rusty Harrington, Aviation	
VDRPT		
✓ Wood Hudson		

Call to Order

Governor Ralph Northam declared a state of emergency in Virginia on March 12, 2020, in response to COVID-19. In light of this emergency, the September 3, 2020, HRMPO TAC meeting was conducted via video conferencing using Zoom. The September 3, 2020, Zoom Video/Audio Conferencing call of the Harrisonburg-Rockingham Metropolitan Planning Organization Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) was called to order at 2:00 p.m. by Chairperson Blessing.



Minutes

Chairperson Blessing presented the minutes from the July 2, 2020, TAC Zoom Video/Audio Conferencing call. Mr. Dyjak moved, seconded by Ms. Cooper, to approve the minutes as presented. Motion carried unanimously.

Public Comment

Chairperson Blessing opened the floor for public comment. There were no comments from the public.

SMART SCALE Round 4 Program Update (TAC Memo #20-12)

Chairperson Blessing presented SMART SCALE Round 4 Program Update. Mr. Howard gave an update on SMART SCALE, noting that the SMART SCALE program distributes transportation funds based on a transparent and objective evaluation of projects to determine how effectively they achieve the needs outlined in Virginia's Multimodal Transportation Plan, VTrans 2045. He stated that in coordination with regional partners, HRMPO staff submitted 3 project grant applications on behalf of the localities. Mr. Howard noted that a total of nine SMART SCALE regional project applications were submitted within the HRMPO region, totaling \$36.7 million. Mr. Reed stated that the Staunton District, which covers 11 counties, submitted 45 SMART SCALE applications for Round 4, totaling \$230 million; and approximately 400 applications were submitted statewide, totaling \$7.4 billion.

FY 2021 Small Area Study Update (TAC Memo #20-13)

Chairperson Blessing presented FY 2021 Small Area Study Update. Mr. Howard gave an update on the Port Republic Road Bicycle-Pedestrian Bridge proposal that was selected by the HRMPO in July as the FY 2021 Small Area Study. He stated that the Study will determine the feasibility of a Bluestone Trail bicycle-pedestrian bridge over Port Republic Road at the intersection with Bluestone Drive and Hillside Avenue. Mr. Howard reported that two pedestrian-vehicle crashes occurred at the Hillside Avenue crosswalk; one in 2016 and another in 2017. He noted that after the review of proposals from three engineering firms, the study team selected A. Morton Thomas and Associates, Inc. (AMT) as the consultant lead. Mr. Howard stated that the study kicked-off on August 6, 2020, and Phase 1 of the study is expected to wrap up in October. He noted that the study team selected two bridge design concepts which are currently being analyzed by AMT, and a third bridge design concept is still under preliminary review. Mr. Reed reported on the congestion analysis, noting that the Virginia Department of Transportation is providing services to do the before and after operational analysis. Mr. Howard reviewed the next steps, noting that AMT will complete the analyses of all three bridge concepts,

develop cost estimates, and evaluate bike/pedestrian level of service as a performance metrics. The study team will then rank the bridge concepts using a decision matrix table that uses goal-weighted factors such as the desirability of bicycle pedestrian use, cost, utility impact, impact on traffic during construction, and environmental impact.

Vtrans Mid-Term Transportation Needs Presentation

Mr. Howard introduced and welcomed Ms. Katie Schwing, Program Analyst, Office of Intermodal Planning and Investment (OIP), Office of the Secretary of Transportation. Ms. Schwing presented a PowerPoint presentation on VTrans: Approach to Prioritizing the Mid-Term Transportation Needs (attached to file minutes). She stated that the VTrans Mid-Term Needs are a companion to the long-range element of the VTrans update process, and provides direction toward achieving the plan's overarching vision and goals. Ms. Schwing noted that the Commonwealth Transportation Board (CTB) accepted the VTrans Mid-Term Needs in January 2020. She stated that based on the CTB's direction, the Prioritized Mid-Term Needs may be used to inform state-level planning and project developments processes, develop policies related to transportation programs and activities, and inform other programmatic or planning related functions. Local and regional planning agencies may utilize the prioritized needs to inform local and regional planning efforts. Ms. Schwing reviewed the Prioritization of VTrans Mid-Term Needs context and significance, and next steps. Questions were raised and responded to regarding how congestion is calculated in college/university areas, how prioritization will be utilized moving forward, and allocation of funding.

Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) Update

Mr. Komara reported on several bridge and paving construction projects and mowing in the HRMPO area. He reported on Interstate 81 improvements, noting that VDOT has launched a new website www.improve81.org, which offers updated information on funded operational and capital improvement projects. Mr. Reed gave an update on the U.S. 33 Arterial Management Plan in Rockingham County, noting it will be kicked off on September 18, 2020.

Department of Rail and Public Transportation (DRPT)

Mr. Hudson gave an update on the Six-Year Improvement Program and reported on recommendations DRPT is presenting to the Commonwealth Transportation Board (CTB) to be considered. He gave an update on Virginia Breeze, noting that it has resumed service after temporary suspension of service due to the COVID-19 pandemic, and reported on the new Virginia Breeze routes.



Harrisonburg Department of Public Transportation (HDPT)

Mr. Gatobu stated that HDPT is currently working with area public schools on school routes and with James Madison University (JMU) regarding holding classes virtually and plans to resume in-person classes. He stated that HDPT is working with riders and staff to meet all safety needs and social distancing.

Other Business

Mr. Howard announced that VDOT has released their fall Quick-Start Mini-grant applications. He stated that these grants are \$1,000 reimbursements grants that can be used to start and continue Safe Routes to School programs and activities that encourage safe walking and bicycling to school. Mr. Howard stated that the applications will be reviewed periodically on September 10, 2020, and October 8, 2020. He stated that CSPDC staff is available to provide assistance to the jurisdictions. Mr. Howard gave an update on state transportation revenues, noting that the Secretary of Finance announced that there is a lower than expected revenue loss due to the strong state economy and action taken at the federal level.

Upcoming Meetings

Chairperson Blessing announced that the HRMPO Policy Board will hold a meeting on September 17, 2020, at 3:00 p.m.; and the next HRMPO TAC meeting will be held on October 1, 2020, at 2:00 p.m.

Adjournment

A motion for adjournment was unanimously passed at 2:50 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jonathan Howard".

Jonathan Howard
Transportation Planner